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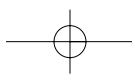
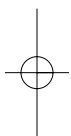
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TECHNOFUTUROS



TECHNOFUTUROS

Critical Interventions in Latina/o Studies

Edited by
**Nancy Raquel Mirabal and
Agustin Laó-Montes**



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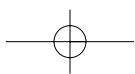
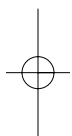
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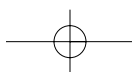
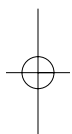
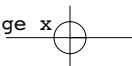


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Nancy Raquel Mirabal



Introduction

HISTORICAL FUTURES, GLOBALITY, AND WRITING SELF: AN INTRODUCTION TO TECHNOFUTUROS

Nancy Raquel Mirabal¹

So latinidad is about the “dimensions” or the “directions in motion” of history and culture and geography and language and self-named identities.—Juana María Rodríguez, *Queer Latinidades*

Technofuturos is an experiment, an exploration of the theoretical, of the political in Latinidad and Latina/o studies. Its aim is to provide an intellectual and creative space for destabilizing and reassessing our understanding of Latinidades during a period of accelerated globalization, transnationalism, transmodernity, and reconfigurations of empire. This volume is an opportunity for thinkers, writers, cultural workers, activists, and academics of all fields and disciplines to examine and question conventional modes and models of analysis, multiple tropes and narratives, and contending intellectual strategies, as well as critical pedagogical and political projects. It is also a site for investigating the spatiality of socio-historical processes, the varied constellations of power, the entanglements of form and context, and the geographies of desire, emotions, memories, and self that are part of, but rarely centered in, the production of knowledge and the discursive practices of Latinidad—in short, for complicating how we narrate, conceive, and reconstruct the workings of Latinidad and the field of Latina/o studies in the twenty-first century.

The title of the volume, *Technofuturos*, refers to the technologies—“techno”—present in our everyday negotiation and use of linguistic hybridity and translation, while engaging and acknowledging our collective “futuros” as one that consistently posits and imagines Latina/os as potential, as becoming, but never fully arriving. The politics of possibility, of the translocal productions of Latinidad, speaks to the globalizing of Latina/o studies that although born of and defined by the United States as its nation-state, remains influenced by globalism and transnationalism, including international migrations, economic globalization, global labor circuits, and neo-imperialist political policies. And yet, to regard Latina/os consistently in terms of potential, of a population whose power and strength is to be determined in the *future*, obscures the fact that Latina/os have a deep and long-standing history in the United States. The seemingly disparate pairing of history and future, the gaps in our shared U.S. historical memory, and the long-term geographic connections among all of the Americas, as well as the tendency to view Latina/os as perpetually foreign and new—despite evidence to the contrary—inspired both the title *Technofuturos* and the first section of the volume, *Historical Futures*.

This section echoes Gloria Anzaldúa’s well-known meditation that the “mestiza is the future.” Invoking sites of mixture, mestizaje, and *mulataje*,² Karina Céspedes employs Anzaldúa’s theorization of “el mundo zurdo” (the left-handed world) and mestiza consciousness to reposition the “unique conversations that take place between Latinas and among Latinidades—beyond race, class, gender, sexuality, spirituality, and the always uncomfortable etc.” In doing so, this volume posits the ‘uncomfortable’ as a necessary decolonializing space for reinvention. At the same time, it recognizes that definitions of mestizaje and mulataje can and have been used by hegemonic conceptions of nation and nationality to defuse the politics of difference and mixture by privileging the nation. As Juana Maria Rodriguez has written, “both popular and official projects of mulatismo and mestisaje have been used to “flatten and subsume differences and reinscribe margins and uphold whiteness. As with national identity, these cultural identities are very often grounded in hetero-masculinist narratives and highly stratified categories of racialized gender”(Rodriguez 2003: 13). She goes on to explain that mestiza consciousness must also be read as a “constant process of translation and

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transformation, a movement through and against sites of knowledge” (Rodriguez 2003: 23). By theorizing futures with the historical and allowing for complication and contradiction, we intend to resituate ‘uncertainty’ as a critical strategy rooted in feminist, queer, Afro-diasporic, decolonial, transamerican, indigenous perspectives that informs both our histories and our futures.

The fundamental premise of this volume is to question whether Latinidad and Latina/o studies can operate within a larger transnationalist, global, and/or hemispheric context. Or, as some of the contributors note, is Latina/o theoretical work inextricably tied to meanings of nation (i.e., the United States and home nations) regardless of what we attempt to reconfigure? Do definitions of Latina/o identity, Latina/o political formations, research, and thinking change when we move past the nation-state to a more globalized framework? Is it possible to conceptualize Latinidad as a project of change, of liberation against all forms of oppression (class, race, gender, sexuality, ecology), or is it a problematic tied to past definitions that must be unsettled and redefined? In short, as these questions reveal, much of our rethinking about Latinas/os in the twenty-first century centers on the tensions inherent in globality.

The articles in this volume range in topics, argument, scope, and theory. Some contributors disagree on the uses of Latinidad, while others argue for a complete overhaul of text and form if we are to effectively translate conceptions of Latinidad. Some of the authors insist on using subjectivity as a tool for disrupting silences and opening needed avenues of discussion, while others advocate moving past traditional notions of difference and intersectionality (i.e., race, class, gender, sexuality, self, community, etc.) to establish theoretical paradigms that favor multiplicity as a central organizing principle for understanding context, meaning, power, language, and geography.

Yet what connects all of the articles in this volume is a commitment to investigating meanings of Latinidad and Latina/o research and thinking. The definitions of Latinidad in this volume are varied. It is important for us, the editors, to note and acknowledge the different uses among the authors and to provide a space where they can challenge, rethink, and assert definitions of Latinidad as well as the ever-changing parameters of Latina/o studies. While Latinidad invokes process, fluidity, and evolution in naming, it is, as some of the authors note, limited in its capacity to fully

define complexity of self and experience—especially in regards to sexuality, gender, desire, and the body (Roman and Sandoval-Sánchez 1995; Aparicio and Chávez-Silverman 1997; Esteban-Muñoz, 1999; Laó-Montes and Dávila 2001; González 2003; Rodríguez 2003). Even in terms of race and racialization, where *Latinidad* has been most used, limitations exist (Flores 1997; Rivera 2003).³

Because *Latinidad* has been defined as part of the process of racialization and racism, there has been a tendency to accept it as a signifier for that which is not white or black; to instead use it to signal an alleged new *mestizaje* and hybridity, the so-called browning of America (Laó-Montes 2001). Dwelling in the ‘in-between,’ in the ‘browning,’ makes it possible to *not* engage in dialogues that have the potential to separate on the basis of racial classifications that privilege only discussions of blackness and whiteness. And yet, as Silvio Torres-Saillant has argued, Latina/os never fully escape U.S. dichotomized meanings of ‘whiteness’ and ‘blackness,’ even as they “boast their comfort with hybridity, proclaiming the potential to liberate the United States from the conceptual throes of racial binarism.” As Torres-Saillant points out, the “2000 U.S. Census shows Latinos hesitant to distinguish themselves from whites” (Torres-Saillant 2005). While this could be read as an attempt by Latina/os to negotiate a formulaic classification that leaves little room for mixture and ethnicity, it can also be read as an unwillingness to fully relinquish white privilege in the United States. In either case, it reveals a deep-rooted contestation and questioning of racial and ethnic definitions and meanings.

The unwillingness to distinguish, to remain in the ‘brown,’ reinforces a sense of self and community that is based on *not* being black or white, but racialized nonetheless. It is because Latina/os occupy spaces of racial imprecision that they are marked and defined *as* Latina/os in the first place, making the very term a racializing project. As Agustín Laó-Montes and Jossianna Arroyo assert in this volume, the politics and uses of racializations, of geographic otherness, are not always part of the lexicon of collective community experiences, even when historical narratives and testimonies point otherwise. Although “marginalized and even erased from most mappings of the African diaspora” (Laó-Montes 2006), Afro-diasporic solidarities, networks, and circuits have long informed constructs of Latina/o, Latin American, and African-American

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identities in the United States, creating a deeply complex production of identity and community formation that cannot be split, parceled, or divided to suit traditional and legal U.S. definitions of race (Torres and Whitten 1998; Bonilla-Silva 2003; Reid Andrews 2004; Dzidzienyo and Oboler 2005; Arroyo 2006; Laó-Montes 2006).

Despite the best of intentions, discussions of identity politics, formations, creations, and solutions are rarely satisfying. Yet they remain necessary if we are to craft, renegotiate, and attach meaning to analysis and form. As a number of contributors have stated in this volume, moving past identity is rarely enough; we are always in one way or another left with the task of defining ourselves and others on the basis of easily recognized categories and variables. And even though we might resist subscribing to such terms, they continue to have currency. It was this frustration that inspired the section on writing self. We saw this as an opportunity to think about not only *what* we write but *how* we write. In an effort to locate different dialogues and distinct methods and forms, we asked contributors to reevaluate text, form, and knowledge productions. For the contributors this process entailed confronting the role and place of emotion in academic work and the creative in intellectual production, as well as an expansion of what constitutes scholarship.

THE NATION IN THE TRANSNATIONAL AND GLOBAL

We occupy a nation that does and doesn't exist. We practice a nationalism that we do and don't believe in. We produce art and thought from useful scraps of norms we mock.—Laura Pérez

Questions of home as they relate to an in-between geography of location and self are part of how we narrate and construct our sense of borderlands, of the nation in the transnational and global—in short, of the spaces that never quite fit but resonate nonetheless. In her analysis on transnational caregiving, Teresa Carrillo asks us to reassess our understanding of how global capital demands for Latina caregivers and domestic workers has shaped U.S. conceptions of gendered labor, Latina migration, and family. It has become, as Carrillo reminds us, so common and everyday that domestic service and caregiving cannot help but be

associated primarily with Mexican, Central American, and Caribbean immigrant women. The growth of transnational motherhood, along with the transnationalization of domestic service, has contributed to an increased dependency on foreign remittances that are now fueling much of the Mexican, Central American, and Spanish-Caribbean economies.

Carrillo's investigation of the changing nature of gendered labor and its impact on reshaping definitions of family and care speak to a growing literature on the global demands of gendered labor. It also inspires a rethinking of how *Latinidad* operates in such a discourse. Carrillo argues that although the women employed are recent immigrants mainly from Mexico, Central America, the Philippines, and the Dominican Republic, the process by which they are made workers in the United States involves becoming Latina. Even though it can be argued that these women are 'global workers' (Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2003, Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001, Chang 2000), their migration and decision to settle in the United States identifies them as Latinas. How then does the process of *Latinidad* affect Latin American women global workers in the United States? By being identified as Latinas, do these women somehow transcend their position as global and transnational workers once in the United States?

While calls to expand and resituate *Latinidad* as global and transnational are necessary, it does not necessarily warrant a redefinition of *Latinidad* as devoid and divorced from the nation-state and the continual remaking of nation. The Latinization of communities and neighborhood spaces (Villa 1997; Dávila 2004; Gottlieb et al. 2004), the changing transnational economies of gendered labor (Chang 2000; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001; Hamilton and Chinchilla 2001), and the articulation of a shared cultural and political citizenship (Flores and Benmayor 1997; Duany 2002) are some of the areas where nation, in its multiple forms, operates. Nationness, as Norma Alarcón, Caren Kaplan, and Mino Moallem write, "is based on a normativity achieved through consolidation of the nation state" that, in turn, must continually be practiced and performed to render meaning. For Latina/os the performance of nation is a multivalent production that is remembered and forgotten, recollected and lost, but always part of what constitutes *Latinidad*. Such a dilemma leads to a questioning of whether it is even possible to be Latina/o without the specter, existence, memory, or acknowledgment of

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nation. Because there is, as the Fijian literary critic Subramani writes, “a connection between narratives and nation,” rearticulations of culture, ethnicity, and national identities based on the *memory* of the ‘home’ nation continue at the same time that many negotiate current realities of the present nation (i.e., the United States) that both considers and excludes them (Subramani 1999). The nation, whether cast as the homeland or the exterior, whether mythic or otherwise, has deeply influenced our experiences as multipositional, diasporic, and/or borderland peoples.

At the root is an attempt to challenge our conceptions of geography to recognize what Román de la Campa writes are the “cartographical errors and mythological tales” that imbue and shape territories that make-up the Americas. For de la Campa, the Americas is an invention dependent on “the arbitrary exercise in location, a site not far from the lines of utopia and nostalgia.” It is the physical and imagined landscapes, de la Campa argues that are the “blueprints” which have influenced our understanding of the north/south divide.

Cultural modernity and modern state formation lay at the heart of these contentions, with the United States serving as a marker for the finished product and Latin America as the failed unfinished version, notwithstanding the internal diversity of both constructs.

The distinction between the two, that which is unfinished and finished, undeveloped and developed, has allowed for an envisioning of the United States as superior to Latin America. It has even reconfigured our imagined sense of geography by locating Mexico, which is part of North America, south and in doing so, rendering Mexico as ‘incomplete.’ In scripting such a landscape, de la Campa asks us to think critically of what constitutes the Americas, especially as he notes, when Latin America continues to convey “an American otherness that was always relational,” always “blurred beyond border zones.”

The crafting of a language that speaks to and *of* the Americas has been a familiar and constant theme among Latina/o and Latin American thinkers. Questioning the concept of ‘America’ as pertaining solely to the United States and refusing to acknowledge any division within and among territories are two of many signifiers employed to call attention to the artificial reworkings of geographies needed to divide, rename,

and control. It is no coincidence then, that the territories used to define, mark, and reinscribe Latinidad are also the ones that have been continually reinvented (Rabasa 1993; Dussel 1995), silenced (Certeau 1984, 1988; Trouillot 1995; Pérez 1998), rescripted (Brady 2002; Sánchez 1995; Aparicio and Chávez-Silverman 1997; Gruesz 2002), imagined (Anderson 1983, 1991; Behar 1995), and haunted (Gordon 1997; Stoler 2006). Exile, imposed citizenship, 'undocumented' immigrations, colonialism, diaspora, 'legal' residency, cultural citizenship, or historical absorption as a result of the United States-Mexican War of 1846 and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo of 1848, land and landlessness, whether imagined and/or real, are all fundamental delineators of what constitutes being Latina/o. The very fact that the meanings attached to land and landlessness are in themselves unstable and continually haunted by the historical, strikes at the very root of the decentralized subject that is continually being redefined and born within and from a site of loss and remembering (Alarcón 1996, 1999; Pérez 1999; Villa 2000, Sandoval 2000; Brady 2002).

Loss and remembering, as Marcia Ochoa's article demonstrates, can also be scripted on the body through a technology that changes and shifts the body to suit multiple nationalist discourses (Stoler 1995). Ochoa's examination of Doña Catalina de Erauso's life as a Spanish soldier who in the early 1600s fled the monastery as a woman and ended up as part of the Spanish empire's military in Peru as a man is embedded in a gendering that should have conflicted with empire but instead provided her with an envious and protected freedom few women experienced during this period. Ochoa's fascination with a historical figure that was not only allowed to survive but "celebrated after she disclosed her birth gender" forces a reassessment of how historians have thought and written about histories that do not always fit within the dominant narrative. Ochoa manages a confluence of multiple theoretical sites, including coloniality, queer studies, cultural studies, and Latinidad, to get at the question of historical silences. Ochoa refashions our sense of the 'historical' to render two major points: the transgression of gender as historical phenomena and the silences needed to assert what does not get told, what does not get revealed in the larger historical imaginary.

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HISTORICAL FUTURES

Without even thinking about it, they began to cast their spells of forgetting across the new landscapes.—John Philip Santos

Any historical narrative is a particular bundle of silences.—Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*

The examination of silences, of that which does not get revealed as well as that which for them has been rewritten and retold, has a long and extended trajectory in Latina/o historical production, research, and meaning. Such a legacy has led to the destabilization of place and self, which in turn has contributed to the ever-changing nature of Latinidad.

For some, this destabilization results from the process of history making, which is predicated on the belief that history is constructed through the uses and naming of space. Mary Pat Brady explains the connections by contending that “space is not a transparent or irrelevant backdrop for history; the production of space is part of the production of history” (Brady 2002). Brady further argues that space is also shaped by power and control, leading to a silencing of counter-narratives and the creation of historical mythmaking critical to “those who produce narratives that sustain and naturalize places as opaque, natural or fixed and thus beyond contestation and negotiation” (Brady 2002). Implicit in and critical to the building of narratives that leave no room for questioning are the use and continual reinforcement of silence as method (White 1972; Certeau 1988), practice (Pérez 1999; Castañeda 1998; Fregoso 2004), and archive (Foucault 1972, 1980, 1983; Sánchez 1995).

If silence, as well as the multiple workings of silence, is, as the Haitian anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot has written, are “inherent in history,” then what stops them from also being inherent in memory, in being, in thought? Can Latinidad ever be divorced from the very process of history making, of the historical imaginary that infuses the continual reassertion of self? The section on historical futures refers to those dialogues and sites that depend on historical methodology and practices to signal the becoming as well as the futures of Latinidad. An important theme in this volume is how the historical has shaped our understanding of Latinidad and how, in grappling with the continual reinvention and

collective re-memorization of the historical, we confront that which has been erased, remembered, invented, left out, documented, and fictionalized. What makes the articles in the section on historical futures of particular importance is that, despite the differences in methodologies and disciplines, all of the articles are concerned with the historical, while still looking to the future. The pieces in this section engage with historical productions in ways that illuminate and inform what the literary critic Nicole Guidotti-Hernández considers the “sanctioned ignorance as a historiographic practice.”⁴

Guidotti-Hernández explores how violence during a period of colonial expansion and occupation of the Southwest led to a deep and persistent silencing and rewriting of history. The silencing, as Guidotti-Hernández reminds us, is never direct. It is layered, easily averted, and difficult to gauge. To understand this process, Guidotti-Hernández looks at how the competing accounts of the lynching of Josefa, a Mexican woman in California in 1851, has been interpreted and manipulated to confirm male domination, cultural superiority, and imperialistic practices in the borderlands. Because the reconstruction of a history of violence is ultimately centered on the body, or as Guidotti-Hernández would note, “written upon it,” past attempts to edit Josefa’s experiences from a larger historical narration of the Southwest can also be read as part of disciplinary lessons in citizenship that cannot escape the “imperialist project called statehood in the Southwest.”

For Guidotti-Hernández, the connections among violence, gender, citizenship, race, sexuality, and colonial incorporation are tied to how history is ultimately documented and recorded. It is not simply a case of the victors writing history, but of the “difficulties in writing a historiography of women who did not always have access to modes of self-representation.” And yet, to read Guidotti-Hernández’s study as solely an attempt to recover and archive the history of violence against Chicanas in the Southwest is to lose sight of a central tenet of her argument: the reading and examining of such texts to initiate a mourning of continuous state-sanctioned violence against racialized communities. One only has to look at the hundreds of women murdered and disappeared in Juárez to understand the legacy and political uses of gender, sexualized violence, and silence.

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It is not surprising that Latina/o scholars look to historical productions and methods to understand current debates concerning the making and sustaining of Latinidad. The labor of writing history, as Michel de Certeau has observed, is ongoing—perpetually suturing the past and present, consistently revealing fragments and making connections. It is those spaces where the ‘suturing’ takes place that has inspired scholars and writers to use definitions of historical ‘truths’ to access ongoing ahistorical fictions designed to set apart and create a community solely based on difference and divergence. For Jossianna Arroyo the tension between community and self is entrenched in the politics and practices of reinvention as performed by Arturo Schomburg in New York City during the late nineteenth century. In her study of Schomburg’s life and work, Arroyo looks at how he used archive, collection, and the power of text, and his political activism, to define himself, his vision, and his sense of community. They were not solely altruistic or community-centered activities as past scholars and writers have argued.

As an African–Puerto Rican intimately involved in Caribbean and Antillean liberation movements, in the Masonic lodges, and later in the archiving and documenting of Afro-diasporic cultural productions, Schomburg created what Arroyo calls a ‘technology of the self’ to negotiate the ever-changing and yet restrictive politics of self-identification that affected Afro-Caribbean immigrants in New York. This has often been characterized as mainly contesting the restrictive U.S. definitions of blackness and ethnicity. Yet, as Arroyo argues, Schomburg’s life and work reveals a larger struggle in understanding the role of nation within a larger global diasporic framework.

For Schomburg, ‘blackness’ could not be contained nor limited to the nation, regardless of individual national expressions. It is this personal testament that fueled Schomburg’s archival passion for “re-writing black history in the Americas.” The archival, in many respects, is the practice of remembering, of making a concerted effort to not let *others* forget. This, however, did not mean that Schomburg would remain fixed and unable to reassess his own political commitments. Schomburg was a complicated figure who, despite being involved and defined by Caribbean and in particular Puerto Rican politics and culture, nonetheless withdrew from Puerto Rican identity politics “for a definite identification with the

black movement in the 1920s and 1930s.” This shift did not go unnoticed. The African-American writer James Weldon Johnson, himself deeply interested in racial fluidity, marked this moment as “the change from Arturo to Arthur.”

This change, as Arroyo reminds us, should not be seen as mainly a practice of racial rethinking and meaning or as another example of social mobility and identity transformation. Instead, it reads as a commentary on the limits of nation and the impossibility of reconciling multiple definitions of nation into one’s own sense of self. This is why Schomburg’s Masonic writings are so central to Arroyo’s argument. As she sees it, the lodge is a space where the identity of “an Afro-Caribbean strongly influenced by the discourses of the colonial difference, globality, and subjectivation at the turn of the century” could be reconciled. By positioning Schomburg as both a diasporic and global historical figure, Arroyo expands the hemispheric linkages contained in the multiple workings of *Latinidad*. While *Latinidad* can be defined by the nation-state, it is not bound by it. This complication of self, of reasserting the space located in the transnational, informs how we look at globality as a possibility for expanding *Latinidad*.

GLOBALITY

Primarily used to define the transformation of an ever-expanding global economic system, meanings of globalization and globality continue to be debated. The arguments range from the belief that globalization is a late-capitalist, modernizing project to the idea that it is a very old concept that can be traced back to neolithic trade routes (Jameson and Miyoshi 1999). Globality, (*mondialité*) as defined by Edouard Glissant, localizes the consequences, manifestations, and workings of globalization. It allows for a thinking of globalization on a local and intimate basis necessary to understand the colonizing affects of globalization on the populations who have least benefited from its totalizing effects (Glissant 1989, 1997). Imprecise and unpredictable, globalization, despite studies to the contrary, continues to be defined by a dominant narrative that emphasizes hypermobility, international communication, and the neutralization of distance and place. Yet as Saskia Sassen has argued, the

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privileging of “upper circuits of global capital,” and the “hypermobility of capital rather than capital bound to place,” diffuses how globalization and globality has shaped international migration patterns, the exploitation and poverty of underdeveloped countries, and the role women play in the reinforcement of global policies, strategies, and labor practices (Sassen 2002).

An important question that contributors in this section pose is whether there exists a viable and necessary connection between globality and Latinidad. This is of particular relevance when one considers that the majority of migrants from Latin America travel to the United States to work and make a living, thus forcing a continual redefinition of Latinidad. By the same token, political, social, and economic conditions in Latin America cannot be divorced from U.S. immigration and trade policies. Together they inform and challenge how we view Latinidad as process and Latino studies as nation-centered projects. Mari Castañeda analysis of the media and the growing commodification of Latina/o images are, for her, a central component in the marketing of a globalized latinidad; in particular one that can be “exported to other media systems in South America and beyond.” The *beyond*, as Castañeda explains, is the development of a “Latina/o style” that travels past the United States and Latin America to Canada, Europe, and Asia, where “media executives are viewing the Latina/o media market as a hemispheric and worldwide phenomena,” and creating what Castañeda calls a “hemispheric brand” that can be marketed globally. The creation of a global Latina/o identity, one that can be marketed and in the end sold back to the same community that it was first borrowed from, is a necessary intervention in the relationship between media and image.

Arturo Arias’s examination of how transnational gangs transform Central American diasporic identities and communities further reconfigures our understanding of the connections between Latinidad and globality. The forced deportation and subsequent resettlement of Salvadorian born, but U.S.-raised, gang members of the Los Angeles-based *Mara Salvatrucha* reveals the unpredictability of globalized “Central American–American” identities. As Arias explains, by 2000 the “Mara Salvatrucha was a transnational gang operating in the cultural corridor extending south to north from Panama to California, with a true globalizing vision that has made it as emblematic of a regional power, as TACA Airlines may

be.” Arias’s analysis is a needed departure from past studies that both localize and limit gang activity to the United States. In tracing how gangs like the Mara Salvatrucha shape diasporic identity and communitymaking through a re-shifting of global circuits, migrations, violence, and community, Arias reworks what he contends is the “global trauma that is modernity”—a process that can no longer be ignored or avoided if we are to expand our understanding of global Latinidades.

Arias’s essay points to a common theme of this section: how we think, articulate, and produce the experiences of Latina/os as they respond to the rise in global economic, political, and cultural shifts. The rapid growth of Latin American female migration and work in the United States, what Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Russell Hochschild call a “worldwide gender revolution,” has dramatically changed perceptions of migrations and work. The rates of female migration from underdeveloped countries has increased so rapidly that sociologists have coined the term the “feminization of migration” to underscore the impact of third-world women labor on first-world labor markets (Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2003).

In regards to the United States, women from Mexico, Central America, and the Dominican Republic have been the ones to fill the majority of unskilled, labor-intensive jobs. Working as nannies, caregivers for the elderly, domestic workers, farm workers, and in sweatshops in the garment industry, these women have redefined women’s work in the United States. As the “most faithful remitters,” Latin American women migrants, Carrillo argues, that have renegotiated their roles as mothers, wives, and daughters, causing irreparable changes within and outside of the family. As the economic heads of the households, women have gained a certain status, power, and strength that has allowed them to reposition their place within the family and home society. As the poverty of nonindustrialized countries increases, so does the need for women to migrate to industrialized nations to work. The consequences of such global movement, as well as the transnational restructuring that accompanies these changes, have not been fully realized. Yet there is a real danger that the inequalities, injustice, exploitation, and economic disenfranchisement will lead to what Anthony Richmond contends is part of “broad, new ‘global apartheid.’”⁵

Another aspect of globalization is the growing phenomenon of what can be termed as “global intimacies”—that is, the emotional labor

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needed to satiate the global market's seemingly never-ending demand for caregiving, domestic work, and child care as well as the ever-present practices of sex work (Alexander 1997; Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994 and 2001; Cabezas 1999; Chang 2000; Menijvar 2000; Kempadoo 2001; Carrillo 2006; Céspedes 2006). For Céspedes, the Cuban women involved in the sex tourist industry are caught "in both the complexities of colonization and the presence of globalization." On the one hand they have chosen to do work that is more lucrative than free trade zone work, domestic work, and manual labor. While on the other, their participation in the commercialization of the "exotic dark body within imperial tourism" exacts a certain emotional labor that is tied to a performance of "culture" and tourism that borders on fetish. Céspedes argues that Cuban sex work is much like other global sex work industries in that it has become a critical component of not only the tourist economy but the national economy as well. With this in mind, sex work must be viewed within the purview of colonialism, cultural imperialism, and the specific local histories and traditions "that shape the sexual agency of women."

Positing global intimacies as a crucial and under-studied component of globalization allows for a larger discussion and investigation of the gendered workings of globality that are not necessarily visible or easily quantifiable. It provides a space to examine how intimacy in relationships, experiences, processes, and labor are continually being negotiated by global expectations and demands. In her analysis on Latin American women's use of technology, Felicity Schaeffer-Grabel shows how the "marketplace of desire" has shaped how Latin American women use and consume cyberspace. Schaeffer-Grabel contends that women use technologies such as the Internet to explore the possibility of cosmetic surgery and marriage abroad as a means to "become someone new, to re-configure their bodies in ways that translate across transnational imaginaries and places."

Drawing upon ethnographic research on cyber-marriage between Mexico, Colombia, and the United States, Schaeffer-Grabel learned that embedded within the use and understanding of technology there "were new theories of the body organized around pliable subjectivity, new race and class formations of mobility across space, and constructions of neoliberalism, development, and the march of social progress across borders." As intimate relationships such as marriage are negotiated over the

Internet and across geographies and economies, Schaeffer-Grabiel reminds us that those transactions are not without assumptions and notions of modernity. Latin American women who seek foreign husbands see marriage as a site of economic and geographic mobility. For the men, the women signify “purity, family, values, erotic sexuality, and spirituality that promise to rejuvenate men’s ability to capitalize on natural resources of the global economy.” So while technology signals modernity, it also reinforces notions of Latin American women as sexually available and submissive and North American men as highly masculine and superior. Owing to tougher immigration laws, marriage is seen as a legitimate and safe vehicle for mobility. Yet, as Schaeffer-Grabiel explains, while women turn to foreign men for a better life, they must also “confront the realities that their movement as spouses across borders may not ensure equal rights as citizens.”

In her article on the migration of gay Colombian immigrants to New York, Erika Marquez explores the personal and subjective to establish a paradigm for understanding how globality operates in the “elusive spaces of transnational migration.” Marquez notes how the American narrative of gay identity “has become the universal lexicon of homoerotic,” while at the same time, disparate communities have generated hybrid cultures of desire and modified both practices and political agendas. A main thrust of Marquez’s work is to disassemble the “Americanization of the homosexual” to, for example, challenge the developmental narrative where “coming out appears as a vanguard while other forms of queerness are underdeveloped.” Marquez looks to the culture of globalization to understand how immigrants reevaluate and create new meanings of same-sex desire. Using ethnography and interviews of Colombian gay men who have migrated to New York in the last twenty-five years, Marquez intentionally moves beyond conceptions of communities where sexual identities are unified to conceptions “of flexible networks that become visible strategically.” Because gay immigrants are not always part of established gay communities in New York, Marquez argues, “networks and spaces in the city become important points in the inquiry.”

Marquez’s decision to look at how gay male identities evolve when studied outside of U.S.-centered paradigms demands a revision of how

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movement, migration, sexuality, community, and self are studied. It forces a reconsideration of several key theoretical paradigms including the sociology of immigration and international migration theory. For Marquez, globality is defined as the outside moving within the interior and shaping community. Using Basch's definition of transmigration, which privileges a complex existence that "forces them to confront, draw upon, and rework different hegemonic constructions of identity developed in their home or new nation-states" Marquez traces the evolution of a community whose members must contend with the reasons that led to their migrations in the first place, as well as acknowledge that although they were gay and were geographically located close to a gay space (i.e., Greenwich Village) it did not necessarily mean "an automatic incorporation into it."

The politics of transcultural and transmigrant negotiations is also a central theme in Priscilla Renta's work on salsa, the body, movement and Latina/o cultural politics. Renta provides a detailed study of salsa dance and performance that focuses less on salsa music and musicians, and more on the mechanics of dance. Renta attributes the scarcity of work on dance to "Western religious and philosophical notions of disembodiment" which separate the body from the spirit and the mind. In turn, the separation has led to the belief that the mind and spirit are supreme and that the body is profane. Renta forges a study that examines the Afro-Caribbean beginnings of salsa dance (i.e., *danzón*, *son mambo*, *rumba*, *cha-cha-cha* from Cuba, and *bomba* and *plena* from Puerto Rico) which are all rooted in Yoruba/Lucumi practices. For Renta, dance is the language of Afro-diasporic connections, of historical traditions that move transnationally, and is continually re-interpreted as "tranculturating transculturations."

While the articles in this section range in subject, method, and analysis, they all question how globalization and globality affect Latina/o studies and to what extent *Latinidad* considers transnational and transgeographical linkages. Where they depart from traditional discourses is in examining the intimate workings of globality in relation to labor practices, religion, sexuality, and dance. In doing so, they relocate intimacy, relationships, emotion, and the self within an analysis that so often leaves the personal and the collective on the margins.

WRITING SELF

It is love that can access and guide our theoretical and political
 “movidas”—revolutionary maneuvers toward decolonized being.—
 Chela Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed*

Over the last decade feminists of color have looked to love, the self, the undoing, and the redoing as part of a politics of emancipation that concentrates on building wholeness and healing through love (Lorde 1984; Lugones 1990; Walker 1997; Sandoval 2000; Hooks 2000, 2002; Fernandes 2003). Instead of focusing on differences, the aim is to find those places where we connect and begin anew. As Chela Sandoval has so poignantly written, “We had each tasted the shards of ‘difference’ until they carved up our insides; now we are asking ourselves what shapes our healing would take” (Sandoval 1990). The movement toward creating a dialogue on commonality and spirit, however, necessitates that there also be an acknowledgment of emotion. Locating emotion in the academy, however, has never been easy or advantageous. As the cultural anthropologist Ruth Behar has noted, “Emotion has only recently gotten a foot inside the academy and we still don’t know whether we want to give it a seminar room, a lecture hall, or just a closet we can air out now and then” (Behar 1995). Behar’s quote highlights the academy’s ambivalence toward emotion as a viable theoretical tool. The emotion and the self are often dismissed as subjective ventures that although revealing, have little to offer in the way of academic research and accepted methodologies and knowledge productions.

The tension between emotion and the rational in academic discourse and analysis has also been for the anthropologist Renato Rosaldo both an artificial and even problematic duality. In his seminal text, *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis*, Rosaldo contends that the language of social analysis “is not a neutral medium” and that the observer “is neither innocent nor omniscient.” For Rosaldo, making such an assertion is not enough. The analysis must reflect subjectivity and emotion as well as science and impartiality if we are to understand the processes involved. To *not* reveal the self in the making of analysis, to *not* expose to readers the processes involved replicates colonial and imperialist methods and thinking. For Rosaldo researchers are “necessar-

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ily both somewhat impartial and somewhat partisan, somewhat innocent and somewhat complicit; their readers should be as informed as possible about what the observer was in a position to know and not know” (Rosaldo 1993). Making the reader both complicit and informed is a critical part of the section *Writing Self*. Doing so acknowledges that expressing the inexpressible and speaking the unspeakable are often part of the *becoming*, of the *revealing*, inherent in knowledge production. At the same time, it is also a key moment for disassembling form and finding options for thinking and writing about the multiple tropes, theories, and experiences of Latinidad that are not always easily contained or explained by academic and research paradigms. It is in those spaces that the creative, the spirit, the healing, and the love are warranted.

In his “AIDS Testimonial,” Alberto Sandoval-Sánchez crafts a powerful, profound, and sobering examination of AIDS, death, and love. A combination of poetry, music, memory, fiction, performance, theory, and autobiography, Sandoval-Sánchez’s piece experiments with form and structure because for him, it is the only way that this story, his story, can be told. Emphasizing content over form is integral to Sandoval-Sánchez’s wanderings of mind, body, soul, and self. It cannot operate otherwise. “Con la música skin deep, I can call upon a plethora of remembrances of myself: of being many times at one time, or at different times being the same one without being what I was before, but always en un cuerpo, an ever-changing body wrapped in a shroud of feelings.” By privileging the intimate, Sandoval-Sánchez speaks to the politics of sexual liberation, gay migration, pleasure, distraction, and fear. Quoting the writer Jaime Manrique, Sandoval-Sánchez highlights how coming out in Latin American and Latino communities is still a taboo, making AIDS dangerously invisible. “If homosexuality is the greatest taboo in Hispanic culture, AIDS is the unspeakable.” In speaking the unspeakable, Sandoval-Sánchez exemplifies the type of writer and scholar who chooses to write about the self in ways that do not fit traditional narratives or play into academic comfort zones. In doing so, he opens a needed dialogue regarding the relationship among the politics of knowledge, the definition of activism, and the need to express pain and fear, regardless of the consequences.

estheR Cuesta’s deeply personal essay causes us to think differently concerning meanings and manifestations of exile. As an Ecuadorian

woman who chooses to leave Ecuador, she is not a political exile forced to leave her country but instead a “self-exile” who has left a country “she did not choose to be born in.” Once in the United States Cuesta lives a life of everyday “illegalities” where there are no “papers,” little if any documentation, but much work. Self-exile, as Cuesta writes, is also full of peculiarities where there is comfort in the unlikeliest of places and fear in the familiar. Family, community, and love are continually reconstituted, and despite the distance and the many reasons for leaving, one’s homeland is never far from one’s psyche, mind, spirit, or as Cuesta puts it her skin, “the desconcierto is my home, mi única patria.” Living in and among the peculiarities of exile, regardless of how it’s structured and created, allows us to conceive of exile in completely different terms. By fashioning an exile born of emotion and longing and not the politics of the nation-state, Cuesta allows for a rethinking of exile that has little to do with the nation-state, thereby expanding our notions to include global realities that are not so easily solved by migration. Unlike migration, “exile” or in Cuesta’s case “self-exile” questions the return. So, while both can be caused by the politics and economics of the nation-state, only exile denotes an inability or unwillingness to return.

Cuesta’s decision to reconfigure exile as a personal invention directly relates to Ramón Solórzano, Jr.’s meditation on language and technology. Both are interested in exploring and disrupting traditional notions to suite the ever-changing nature of Latinidad. A central argument of Solórzano’s piece is that the practical dimensions of language, “lo necesario,” do not translate technologically. So, while Latina/os continue to grow in influence in power, their place as technological subjects, consumers, users, and experts remains limited. Solórzano attributes this to the dominance of English as a technological language that empowers and identifies access at the same time that the “availability of tools and services in Spanish has reached unprecedented levels in the United States today.” Solórzano examines the politics and employment of the “Spanish Option” to get at a deeper understanding of the relationship between technology and Latinidad. Solórzano crafts an essay that looks at how shifts in language and technology result in nationalist tensions that get revealed mainly through a resistance to technological “monolingualism.” The hybridization of the medium, as Solórzano argues, is not simply about making technology accessible to Spanish-speaking

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communities but about challenging the U.S. role, as defined through English dominance, in creating and controlling technology.

Locating and identifying those sites of tension that are not easily visible or rendered is also a critical part of Isabel Espinal's analysis of "reading." Much like Solórzano who problematizes and reconsiders practices and texts that we take for granted, Espinal argues that how we read, how we digest information speaks to what she calls "ideologies of Latin@ reading" that can be studied through an analysis of "Latin@ readerly texts." Espinal argues that the ideologies of Latin@ reading are those identified in texts that are written for, by, and/or about Latin@s. She compares two of Richard Rodriguez's books: *Brown: The Last Discovery of America* and *Hunger for Memory: The Education of Richard Rodriguez* with the anthologies *This Bridge Called My Back* and its sequel *This Bridge We Call Home* to examine the convergence, intersection, and divergence of common ideas such as "brown, borders, and bridges" from distinct positions and perspectives. Espinal argues that by analyzing how a community *reads*, we "understand ideas between reading and community, as well as reading and politics." Espinal's ability to problematize reading and use it as a lens for studying identity and community formation opens an altogether distinct dialogue on questions concerning access, language, self, politics, immigration, and the workings of Latinidad. Because the act of reading is by its very nature powerful, Espinal illustrates the multiple avenues that reading highlights, such as the interaction between the reader and audience, the inclusion and uses of certain texts as worthy and valuable, the omission of discussion as a way to erase and silence, the telling of events as a tool for empowering and making visible, the permission to use Spanish, speak in dialect, or Spanglish, and ultimately, the willingness to reimagine oneself, regardless.

The reimagining of text, form, literature, memory, and history is also a powerful theme in what Lisa Sánchez-González terms an "experiment in orchestrating discordant voices." Sánchez-González has crafted an essay that uses autoethnography, reader-response criticism, and post-Lacanian theory on language and unconscious to construct a piece that mediates fiction, feminist literary criticism, and self, among other methods, as a powerful intervention in negotiating the fictional divides between the creative and the academic, the observer and the actor, the

fantasy and the reality, the memory and the forgotten. Sánchez-González's unwillingness to forgo the emotional, literary, and academic in her criticism, analysis, and construction of text and form is a necessary and important intervention in how we think about literature and how we choose to write about it. In analyzing Rosario Ferré's *The House on the Lagoon*, Sánchez-González travels back and forth from critic, writer, architect, and observer. She employs many voices because it is, for her, what is needed to reveal the convoluted layers of meanings.

And yet the longing, the fact that "no one is hungry in Ferré's story," leaves Sánchez-González to ponder and ultimately decide to choose food, in all of its spiritual, material, and psychic manifestations, over Ferré's book, which she "doesn't buy then" and "doesn't buy now." Sánchez-González's willingness to play, to move through past, and beyond so many spaces while resisting occupying any one for too long transforms, blurs, and mitigates essay and criticism. Its final result and potential is a willingness to open discourse and dialogue, to reinvent form and content, and to continually experiment with intellectual, cultural, and artistic productions.

SPIRIT OF DISORDER: TEMPORARY CONCLUSIONS

Our collective vision for this volume, our only aim, has been to create a space for reinvention and reassessment—a place where contributors could follow what the critic Laura Pérez calls a "spirit of disorder," a spirit that allows us to converse "with images that 'sane' folks don't see" (Pérez 1999). The only stipulation given to our contributors was that they be rigorous and demanding with their experimentations, with their interventions; that they allow us to see the results of their willingness to work with and among the uncomfortable and the unnamed. For some, the image of disorder may seem too disconcerting, especially when thinking about connections and intersections. I don't think so. At the time of this writing, young women in Ciudad Juárez are still "disappearing"; civil rights are eroding through federal and state acts designed to deter terrorism; and the gentrification of urban areas such as New York, Washington, D.C., San Francisco, Chicago, and Boston are displacing numerous Latina/o populations. The disorder calls from all corners. Our willingness to create

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a different experience, to tell a different story so that we can confront the despiriting, the *desamor* (unloving) is as necessary as our faith in making change, in continuing to commit to a politics of decoloniality by refusing to accept the attacks, the violence, the open wounds that seemingly never heal. In remaking a world where as Dorothy Allison has written, “nothing is forbidden and everything is possible,” we are confronted with a constant whispering, a nagging if you will, that our work does not, can not operate outside of the everyday. The “possible” as Allison reminds us, is also part of the politics and evolution of wholeness, of finding love in the most unlikely of places, and knowing what to do with it.

NOTES

1. Dedicated to Alberto Sandoval-Sánchez in gratitude. Many thanks to all of the contributors and in particular my coeditor Agustín Laó-Montes for being part of this project. I am grateful to John Leañón for allowing us to use his brilliant artwork for the cover; to Robert Carley, Joseph Parry, and Molly Ahearn of Rowman & Littlefield for their support and editorial advice; to D. J. Cyphon for providing invaluable editorial comments and suggestions; to Christina Solano for last-minute assistance; and to Karina Céspedes, Marcia Ochoa, Mary Pat Brady, and Wendy Susan Walters for their expertise, insights, and friendship.

2. For a more thorough working of the term *multaje* see Laó-Montes's article in this volume, Jossianna Arroyo, *Travestismos Culturales: Literatura y Etnografía en Cuba y Brasil* (Pittsburgh, PA: Nuevo Siglo, 2003), José Buscaglia, *Undoing Empire: Race and Nation in the Mulatto Caribbean* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), and Lourdes Martínez-Echezabal, *Para una Semiótica de la Mulatez* (Madrid: Ediciones José Porrúa Turanzas, 1990).

3. As the editors, we recognize such limitations and know, as Suzanne Oboler has demonstrated, that definitions are born of imprecision and disruption. For some, to be Latina/o is a process that demands change and evolution. For others, it is seen as secondary to a more empowering and politicized self-identification such as Chicana and Nuyorican (Oboler 1995). As the Latina/o population in the United States continues to increase in influence and power, how we choose to define ourselves will continue to change and evolve.

4. Guidotti-Hernández quotes Laura Donaldson's discussion on historiography in *Postcolonialism, Feminism and Religious Discourse*, ed. Laura E. Donaldson and Pui-lan Kwok (New York: Routledge, 2000).

5. Quoted in Ehrenreich and Hochschild (2003), p. 19.

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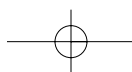
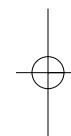
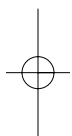
INTRODUCTION

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I

HISTORICAL FUTURES





LATIN, LATINO, AMERICAN

Split States and Global Imaginaries

Román de la Campa

America's hold on the universal imaginary has withstood the test of time. As a distant moment of discovery, a hemispheric marker, or the naming of a powerful modern nation, America's claims to unique transcendental dimensions continue to seem natural—if not necessary—to peoples, nations, and academic traditions. These outlines are only disturbed when the concept is asked to suit a plurality that rests beyond these ritualized references, when America's fate as a field of differences comes into full view, for then there is hardly any consensus as to what it might or could mean. To think simultaneously of Guatemala, Argentina, Haiti, and the United States as part of the same territory, for example, immediately brings an arresting challenge to bear on the idea of America, almost to a point of silence, even among those otherwise engaged in studying it. At that dramatic moment it becomes crucial to remember that the invention of America has always been an arbitrary exercise in location, a site not far from the lines of utopia and nostalgia.¹

Attempts to configure or define American landscapes have varied considerably through the centuries. Colonial powers, republican schemes, and individual pursuits have all left their mark. Yet, despite their number and disparity, they all seem to share a proclivity for cartographical errors and mythological tales—New World, El Dorado, the

Mayflower, and Caliban perhaps being the most dramatic. Systematic efforts to validate essential differences among the Americas occurred throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but they only managed to demarcate a game of inflexible oppositions that still animates fables of identity and republican fictions. Civilization/barbarism, Anglo/Latin, North/South, capitalism/one-man-rule—thus went the familiar cartography that followed these civilizing impulses. Further migratory and cultural shifts across the Americas in the past few decades appear to have yielded new iterations of the same tendency, coordinates such as postmodernity/subalternity, civil society/chaos, global order/ungovernable cultures. Deeply established academic disciplines, among them U.S. American and Latin American studies, owe their constitution to such divisions.² It remains an open question whether new metaphors and unexpected narratives can still claim these territories, or whether new constructs and unexpected subjects will aid in the blurring of these imaginary lines.³

American myths are abundant and prone to constant revision. The history of the North/South divide undoubtedly provides a key set of examples. One would be that of a continental mission inspired by providence—a myth that has long sustained national identity in the United States. To this America, thoroughly steeped in other narratives pertaining to language, race, and work ethic, correspond various Latin American retorts that have mainly survived in the realm of cultural and artistic imagination, though they still sometimes imbue political rhetoric. Simón Bolívar's ambition to unite the South as one republic in the nineteenth century immediately comes to mind, even though it ultimately encountered insurmountable obstacles. *Ariel*, an essay published in 1900 by José Enrique Rodó, called for a less utilitarian, more aesthetically balanced rendition of the North American model, thereby striking a chord among Latin American intellectuals whose sense of regional identity no longer came primarily from Bolivarian unification projects, or from opposition to the lingering Spanish colonial rule in the Caribbean, but rather from the modernist verve of a cultural critique aimed at the United States, particularly after the Spanish-American War of 1898. A few years earlier, José Martí, a great modernist as well, had taken a more direct route to his lifelong critique of the United States. His essay *Our America* sought to contest the cultural and linguistic des-

tiny of America as a signifier. It could be said that his utopia contained much more poetic symbolism than political specificity and that his high-brow modern aesthetic obstructed a much needed emphasis on modernization programs, but it introduced nonetheless a radically new American compass in which indigenous and African-American cultures claimed a seat alongside those of European ancestry.

Such blueprints have sustained the Latin American imaginary for nearly a century, particularly through philosophical and literary debates that take for granted the North/South divide. Cultural modernity and modern state formation lie at the heart of these contentions, with the United States serving as marker for the finished product and Latin America as the failed or unfinished version, notwithstanding the internal diversity of both constructs. Much lies in the balance of how one approaches this complex cluster of issues and their implicit models. Within literature, these contradictory motifs have often assumed an organic whole, as evidenced in artful essays like Octavio Paz's *The Labyrinth of Solitude* (1953), which sought to depict the history of the Mexican national character and its indigenous history as a tragic enigma behind which stood the failure of the state, a web of contradictory historical discourses without any possible resolution except as an artistic form which the Latin American modern aesthetic translated into a universal value.

The links between literariness and subjectivity took a more disjunctive turn with the fiction of Jorge Luis Borges around the mid-century mark, but the same constellation of motifs can still be traced through the magic realist constructs that fueled the area's novelistic boom at least until the 1970s, and perhaps beyond. This literary tradition, an object of veneration for most of the twentieth century, now claims the attention of deconstruction, often anxiously so, as if the latter's conditions of possibilities could only be found in the former's web of influence.⁴ One should note in this regard that the poststructuralist cycle, much of it elaborated through research universities in the United States, has no doubt contributed various critiques of the modern aesthetic in Latin America and opened new lines of inquiry, among which feminism has made pivotal contributions.⁵ But this paradigm must also sort out the perplexing effects of unexpected events on our understanding of the Americas as a whole, such as the end of the cold war, the termination of alternative paths to modernity inspired by revolutionary socialism, the

end of ideology claims by global capital, and, perhaps most critical of all, the advent of techno-mediatic culture.⁶ In the case of Latin Americanism, or for that matter U.S. Americanism, one must also consider another unanticipated element of crucial importance: the expansion of the Latino population in the United States, its political and cultural dimensions, as well as its potential for critical thinking about the Americas.

Most critics concede that globalization and postmodern constructs impact different nations differently, but it seems fair to say that beyond that broad generalization, few critical paradigms take such complications to heart. Imagining the other's nation as one's own may be an inevitable byproduct of cultural analysis and area studies. Sifting through these events and their impact on theory has been a difficult and challenging task, as one can plainly see in Jacques Derrida's *Specters of Marx*, as well as the more recent *Empire* by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri. The early lessons of literary deconstruction must also now contemplate questions posed by postcolonial, subaltern, and cultural studies that don't respond to neat modern/postmodern divides, nor to old Anglo/Latin splits of the American imaginary.⁷ Even if one takes a skeptical view of these new critical modes, it seems undeniable that they underscore the pressures brought to bear on academic disciplines by global capital and its migratory shifts.

LATINOS AND SPLIT STATES

The postmodern critiques of the Latin American state that generally issue from literary studies continue to harp on the most easily recognizable modern narratives, often reiterating old modeling tendencies and neglecting the impact of global pressures that foreshadow a new cartography of the Americas.⁸ These include new state formations and perhaps even different ways of reading literary texts. After all, the example of Derrida's suggestive rereading of Shakespeare, as well as Negri and Hardt's poignant rearticulation of Renaissance thought, could not fail to yield new vistas for other aesthetic traditions, including those of Latin America. In any event, the Latin American state now proffers a radical re-territorialization process driven by widely different impulses, such as narco-guerrillas, maquiladoras, indigenous subalternity, sexual indus-

tries, and post-socialism. The concept of split states also comes into play as a meaningful new category, given that more than half the Latin American nations now have in the United States permanent diasporas, whose dollar remittances constitute a leading item in their former nations' economies. A split state implies a permanently severed entity, a loss in many respects; but perhaps it could also suggest a post-national symptom that has many possibilities and applies to more than just states whose paths to modernity came under stress or failed to materialize altogether.

In that context it seems particularly important to situate U.S. Latinos within the historical blueprints of American imaginaries, given that their unsuspected gaze upon America often cuts through the customary North/South divide. It is equally important to ponder what their suddenly acknowledged presence throughout the Americas portends for the future of these territories, Anglo, Latin, and otherwise. The bare facts on Latinos generally involve their growing numbers and political value, although one could argue that the cultural and economic ramifications are far more important. It is estimated that there are between thirty and thirty-five million Latinos in the United States, a deceiving statistic in many ways, since it masks many racial, economic, and cultural histories, and often conflates people born of Latin American and Caribbean ancestry with those of direct Spanish-European background. Their presence now engenders a \$30 billion-a-year economy from consumer products advertised in Spanish in the United States, although not all of this population speaks Spanish, nor are all of the products advertised in Spanish purchased by them. The representation of Latinos in both the Democratic and Republican parties is also increasing, and in return both parties are paying close attention to the Latino vote, often through linguistic symbolism. The 2000 presidential campaign revealed an interest in speaking Spanish on the part of the candidates of both parties, Al Gore and George W. Bush. For the first time in current U.S. history, weekly national press conferences are being broadcast in a language other than English.

The term "Latino" often generates unending and unsatisfying debates. Some prefer to employ the "Hispanic" designator, perhaps to invoke greater proximity to Spanish language and culture. Reasons abound for the use of one term or the other, or both, but the details of that discussion could lead us far from what concerns me here: the ontological plurality

that comes from deriving an identity from more than one American imaginary, an aspect that has specific importance for all Latino groups, regardless of national, racial, or ethnic origin. This plurality can lead to different types of negotiation with language, culture, and even national bearings. It is not, therefore, a simple reference to a bilingual or bicultural condition, nor a call for a new twist in the melting-pot process of assimilation formerly bound to the history of European immigrants in the United States. It is rather a recognition of an unusual and persistent duality, nurtured by the constant flow of capital—human, symbolic, and financial—between the Americas. In that sense the Latino presence unsettles the civilizational models discussed earlier, be they of northern or southern provenance.

The implicit opacity of the Latino category may well constitute one of its most salient features. But then again, one must begin by recognizing that a bit of equivocation is already present in its morphological relation with the term “Latin America,” given that the latter carries within it a history of multiple referents, imaginaries, and imprecisions. Beyond its French connotations, “Latin America” conveys an American otherness that was always relational. It aimed to distinguish itself first from colonial Spain, then from U.S. expansionism, and at times from both simultaneously. As suggested earlier, the “Latin” in Latin America has often performed as a signifier in search for differences between cartographic errors, foundational narratives, and geopolitical pressures. Since these circumstances pertain not only to the Spanish-American realm, but also to Brazil and by implication, to the multilingual Caribbean, an even larger ambiguity comes into play that has often turned Latin America into a metaphor for America’s other, a motif very much present in the area’s literature and revolutionary movements.

The presence of Latinos or Hispanics in the United States has a long history dating to the eighteenth century, but it was barely studied in Latin America, at least until recently, when many governments suddenly awakened to their split-state predicament. In the United States that history is usually divided according to East and West Coast demographic patterns. Even today many academic disciplines continue to acknowledge Latinos only to the degree that their most visible communities demand it. It is customary, for example, to cite the Cuban and Puerto Rican presence in the East Coast since the end of the nineteenth century, a moment that features the Spanish-American War and its aftermath,

which left Puerto Rico under the direct control of the United States and Cuba occupied for a number of years. Ever since that moment, perhaps a foundational false start, the East Coast has come to know, and expect, many other migratory moments from the Hispanic Caribbean. The West Coast story has been much more difficult to assemble and tell. It involves the history of territories occupied by nearly all the Western and Southwestern United States, which Mexico ultimately had to relinquish in 1848, as well as the intricate history of migrations between these two nations since that time. Even less is generally said of the indigenous cultures displaced from their territories and fundamentally ignored by both the Mexican and U.S. national configurations.

By the middle of the twentieth century, waves of manual laborers from various Latin American countries, most from Mexico and the Hispanic Caribbean, began to migrate to major cities in the United States. No one suspected then that such a trail of anonymous masses would ultimately betray a political and economic interdependency among the nations involved, nor that global pressures would later intensify these flows into a full-fledged diaspora across the hemisphere. These early, or historical, Latinos appeared in literature in the form of the Nuyorican (Puerto Rican New Yorker) and the Chicano (Mexican American). But it was mainly through cinema and theater (*West Side Story* in 1961 and *Zoot Suit* in 1978) that they first gained national attention. Both portrayals, however, were bound by the preexisting stereotypes of these groups as problem or delinquent youths in New York and Los Angeles. Perhaps because of the important time lag between them, *West Side Story*, a highly applauded Broadway fantasy, only managed to enhance that negative casting, while Luis Leal's *Zoot Suit* attempted to critique it. However, the latter's success on the West Coast never materialized in New York.

As one would expect, such deeply ingrained Latino stories found other representations. Flashy antecedents to Chicano youth called *Pachucos* radiated a distinctive style that early observers like Octavio Paz could never quite forget. As the renowned Mexican writer tells it in *The Labyrinth of Solitude*, upon meeting a group of them in the streets of Los Angeles in the early 1940s, he suddenly felt as if his own sense of national identity had been blinded by their presence (1953: 57). Far, also, from the simplistic gang representation in *West Side Story*, or from

recent Broadway renditions such as Paul Simon's *Capeman*, is the complex narrative of the Nuyorican subject, which one could read in the early poetry of Miguel Algarín, founder of the Nuyorican Poet's Café in New York City. His narrative poems invite us to a world of characters, caught between New York and Puerto Rico, who nonetheless breathe a futuristic ontology, an unexpectedly refreshing sense of belonging nowhere, except in the verbal agility and poetic movement we have come to expect from border artists.⁹

Nuyoricans and Chicanos of the 1950s were not yet Hispanics or Latinos, but rather forgotten or disdained populations by both sides of their cultural duality, embodiments of a doubly negative sense of being: neither Puerto Ricans or Mexicans, nor Americans. Nationless multitudes, they fled to farming fields or to the industrial steel belt, just as the black population of the southern United States did before them, in time forging enclaves known for their cultural vibrancy in Harlem, Detroit, Chicago, and Los Angeles.¹⁰ As for Latin America, it had not yet discovered this side of its mirror image. Leading artists and intellectuals, like Octavio Paz, only had a disturbing intuition of its presence in the United States. The renowned literary prizes of the Cuban institution Casa de la Américas, for example, did not include Chicano literature among its categories until the 1980s and always kept Nuyorican literature as a subgenre of the Puerto Rican corpus. In time, it would have to decide how to regard the literary production of Cuban Americans.

Cuba joins this phase of the Latino mapping after 1959, albeit in a somewhat oblique sense. Earlier examples of Cuban migration have their own significance: the tobacco industry attracted Cuban workers to the U.S. South at the end of the nineteenth century, and the music business drew them to New York during the first half of the twentieth. Baseball also contributed a constant trickle, but 1959 marks the moment of no return as far as the history of Cuban masses coming to the United States for good. That early wave of Cubans was starkly different from those coming from Puerto Rico and Mexico; it constituted a wealthy class that left its country *en masse*, fleeing Castro's socialist rule. Their exodus turned into a political card in the cold war and, as such, was favored with economic and political benefits that no other migratory group has ever received in the United States. The economic success of professional Cubans, many of them children of Spaniards, ultimately

transformed Miami's destiny. For various decades it was held together by an exile identity caught in the nostalgic promise of a triumphant return to the island.¹¹ It could be argued, however, that Cuban-American identity assumes a bit of plurality in the 1980s and 1990s, about the same time the Cuban revolutionary regime discovers a void in its socialist imaginary. Massive waves of Cuban boaters and rafters from different racial and economic backgrounds arrived in Miami during those decades. Miami's Cuban other seemed to surface from these unexpected events, while the revolution's hold on the popular imaginary, which had cultivated a national path to modernity with the aid of socialist ideals, lost a good deal of its promise among the masses. The two Cubas were coming together in ways neither side had been able to foresee. Equally important, a new generation of Cuban Americans born or raised in the United States came of age, many of whom had never known Cuba firsthand. Outwardly, adherence to the old guard's ideological hold remained, but, inwardly, a shift could be seen in literary and artistic manifestations among younger Cubans.¹² Their sense of belonging to a plural American constellation began to respond to cultural rather than strictly political negotiations. Moreover, the dramatic surge in the population of Latinos and Latin Americans in Miami and various parts of Florida during the late 1990s introduced a more international flavor to the Cuban enclave.

If the arrival of Cubans reshaped Miami's history from the 1960s to the 1980s, the most recent chapters of that city's history are reshaping the Cuban imaginary, not only in the exile community, but in the split island nation as well. Hundreds of thousands of Latin Americans have taken up residence in South Florida, many of them from Central American nations caught in twenty years of guerilla and counter-guerilla wars. Latino internal migration followed in response to various stimuli: new economic possibilities in Central and South Florida, particularly after Disneyworld, Miami's advent as Latin-American international metropolis, and the growing anti-Latino sentiment in other parts of the country. Large numbers of Brazilians, Colombians, Venezuelans, and Argentinians have also arrived for various political and economic reasons. Needless to say, this is but one example of unprecedented population shifts with parallel histories in Los Angeles, Denver, New York, and Chicago. Together they have contributed to the transformation of urban America.

Perhaps more importantly, this flow of human capital spells a post-national condition of broader ramifications.¹³

Opaque though it remains, the Latino-Latina category nonetheless yields many undigested chapters in the history of the Americas that refuse to fit into national schemas or disciplinary paradigms. Moreover, its expanding hemispheric scope calls for new categories of analysis capable of gauging the uncertain terrain of new transnational migratory waves, new urban configurations, and the imaginaries of plural ontologies. Yet this work must proceed without forgetting the importance, as well as the limits, of specific minority groups that were once the exclusive narrative of Latino history. Latino and Latin American studies may now require a closer look at each other's shifting boundaries, but historically the two have had quite separate histories. Academic traditions in the United States, always reluctantly implicit in the study of Latinos as a racialized minority, now awaken to the full spectrum of the Americas within its own soil.¹⁴

POST-MELTING POT AMERICA

The melting-pot concept, perhaps the key narrative of U.S. Americanism, propounds that the paths to the national family remain always open provided one abides by various implicit tenets, among them an English-only definition of the nation. The question of race, always present but never quite articulated, often gets submerged or confused with ethnicity, at least as it applies to various populations of European origin. Groups once considered races—Irish, Jews, and Italians, for example—in time became one of many ethnicities within the American family. The same cannot be said, however, for African Americans, American Indians, and to a considerable degree Asians and Latinos, even after the latter master English. Race doesn't slip into ethnicity as easily in these cases. But it is the black/white divide that has always set the internal boundaries of the melting-pot concept. More importantly, it has done so by applying a strict line of demarcation that turns anyone with one drop of black African blood into a non-white, and hence black, person.

To the extent that Latinos comprise a population of multiple races, cultures, and languages, their future in the American imaginary remains

uncertain. It seems important to note, however, that their multiracial profile includes the three ancestries that have been historically excluded from the melting-pot equation: African, Amerindian, and Asian. This observation does not aim to suggest a celebration of putative “mestizo” identity formations in Latin America, which contain their own contradictions and forms of racism, nor any other form of exclusion or inclusion solely resting on race. My interest lies rather in the cultural complication of racial types, since black, white, and Asian Latinos don’t necessarily define their cultural identity primarily according to racial or even ethnic characteristics. In that sense, to cast Latino demographic growth in competitive terms with African Americans, or any other group, seems counterproductive and misleading. One might instead consider that amongst Latinos racial markers seem secondary to cultural affinities, and, as such, they might contribute to a critique of a deeply rooted binary of essentialized whiteness and blackness.

The languages of critical theory, in the humanities as well as the social sciences, often stumble when attempting to account for this post-melting-pot period of American history.¹⁵ New ethnic enclaves in the United States (Asian and West Indian, as well as Hispanic or Latino) respond to migratory pressures that have rendered meaningless many of the legal, psychological, and literary categories that define one’s sense of belonging to a nation. Today’s Latino, for example, must speak more Spanish than ten or fifteen years ago. Newly arriving Latin Americans, on the other hand, find a U.S.-Latino culture that precedes them, largely articulated in English. Communities and neighborhoods can change from Latino to Latin American in a matter of decades, often blurring the lines between the two. Latin- and Anglo-American literatures, another example, can no longer ignore the wealth of an in-between culture for which English may have become a linguistic home, but whose cultural references and tonalities require interpreters skilled in Spanish language and Latin-American cultures. This sort of border crossing—perhaps most prevalent in music—causes considerable grief among “disciplinary nationalists,” be they Latin- or Anglo-American or, for that matter, Latino.

The nexus between language, race, and Americanism finds a dramatic register in Richard Rodriguez’s memoirs on growing up on the West Coast as a Mexican American. His books are filled with ecstasy about

learning English and becoming American, as well as contradictory feelings about Spanish and his Mexican father. This is particularly true of his first memoir *Hunger of Memory* (1982), in which he assigns Spanish to the secondary, forgettable role of a private language, filled with sorrowful memories of a Spanish Catholicism that contrasts so much with the cheerful, futuristic, Protestant American culture he so admires. His sense of rebirth through English and Americanism allowed him to leave behind a world of Spanish he identified with a static paternal influence. But Rodriguez was too bound to his childhood traumas in that book to foresee the growing importance of Spanish language and culture that would take place in the United States during the 1980s and 1990s. Moreover, he remained dismissive of the cross-back insight that came with subsequent times—the thought that he can return to Spanish without losing his English, in short, that he can perform in more than one language, or one nation, for that matter.

Rodriguez's second book of memoirs charts a somewhat different route on the interrelationship between language, literature and national identity. Although *Days of Obligation* (1992) is still somewhat possessed by the author's need to censure ethnic politics, he lets it be known, playfully, that he hardly seems to know anything about Mexico or Latin America and its literature or other topics he is now being asked, and paid, to write about by credit card companies, lucrative magazines, news shows, and other enterprises that are active agents in the constantly changing nature of the American character. His second memoir can thus be read as a rather coy critique of his first. It remains to be seen if *Days of Obligation* finds as many fervent readers in high school and college English departments as *Hunger of Memory*, but it certainly charts new paths for Rodriguez, as some of his irony is now turned toward himself. It is particularly amusing to see how his brush with the land of this father spelled new contradictions for him.

Although Rodriguez remains a Victorian reader at heart, his writing is inching closer to experimental narration, particularly as he flirts with Latin American and postcolonial literary topics that sell well. The result is a highly ironic and wickedly equivocal attempt to write about contemporary Latin America and Latino-California themes with a nineteenth-century American sensibility that is itself inspired by fine British literature. One can't help but notice that a crossover aesthetic has found its

way to Richard Rodriguez, and he in turn seems to have discovered a new America in which he can be a Latino writer after all. I'm inclined to believe that the literary vigor of his second book seduced the ethnic fears of his first.

The growing Latin American awareness of the Latino construct also deserves attention, even if the constant migration across American border zones makes it hard to demarcate where Latino U.S.A. begins and Latin America ends, or vice versa. Latin America now watches Spanish language television packaged in the United States with Latino perspectives and sensibilities, even if these broadcasts often portray a white, upper class image of Latinos hardly commensurate with the majority of those living in the United States, or with the audience intended for those shows. This is particularly evident in news telecasts such as *Primer Impacto*, or even the more lighthearted programs such as *Cristina* and *Sábado Gigante*. Conversely, the influx of Latin Americans into the United States impacts the Latino condition by calling for closer contact with Latin American nations and greater levels of Spanish competence. The crossover effect in music also affects other forms of artistic representation and identity formations. Moreover, it doesn't just move in the direction of English; it also requires the capacity to cross back into Spanish markets, symbols, and signs, as evident in the careers of Christina Aguilera, Jennifer Lopez, Ricky Martin, and many others. This is the insight that Richard Rodriguez lacked in *Hunger for Memory*.

The lines of demarcation between Latino U.S.A. and Latin America have also blurred beyond border zones. It is quite possible to find a wider representation of Latin Americans alongside Latinos in the streets of New York, Miami, Chicago, or Los Angeles than in many Latin American capitals. Then again, one isn't altogether sure when a resident Latin American in the United States becomes a Latino, or when a Latino re-energizes his or her Latin-American provenance. Both return to their nations of origin at some point, as visitors, or in periods of oscillation. There they discover that they have changed and that they are perceived differently. Slang, attitudes, and perhaps even a bit of the local accent may require renewal. But this "loss," natural for anyone away from his or her homeland, isn't simply the result of absence, or from having gained some American English; it is also a result of intense interaction with other Latin Americans and Latinos in the United States. For Latinos to feel

“other” as they become Americanized seems logical, but to also discover a sense of plurality within the Spanish and Latin-American cultures found in the United States presents a unique phenomenon, most prevalent in border cities, but also quite evident in major capitals.

How does one approach these new ways of imagining the Americas within, as well as between, nations? The idea of a permanent Latin-American/Latino diaspora with more than one language, one culture, and one national identity once seemed to correspond only to Puerto Rico, a nation officially divided at the moment of birth in 1898. Of course, Mexican history has always contained a vast unofficial diaspora dating back a half century earlier, a story that remained repressed by both sides of its border until very recently. Today, the number of nations with analogous histories has multiplied considerably. It includes Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Colombia, Ecuador, and several Central-American countries. The list grows if one thinks of nations whose leading classes feel psychologically closer to Miami, New York, and Los Angeles than to their own capitals. Internal pressures have also created intense forms of dispersal in Latin America. New and highly intense indigenous demands for a multinational redefinition of the state abound, as do treaties for free trade that attempt to fashion new regional alliances, and neoliberal economies that force massive evacuation from the countryside. These breaks are, in every sense of the word, beyond the reach of the nostalgia of the old nationalisms, or of the literary critique of the modern aesthetic.

AESTHETICS AND NEW CITIZENRY

Any new conceptualization of the Americas will likely entail a more detailed look at culture industries whose main product today revolves around the manufacture of desire through television production and computer technologies. This impulse has succeeded in fusing the culture of marketing with the realm of performativity, creating a new epistemic niche in direct competition with universities and other institutions for the best creative talents. As such, this constitutes a deeply contradictory element, since it bridges the culture of globalization and academic production precisely at the time that schools are becoming sec-

ondary agents of education—indeed, at a moment in which mass media service industries have managed to bring the acquisition of practical knowledge and training closer to the interests of corporations. It all points to an intricate nexus that links citizenship with consumption, thereby comprising new forms of distributing and packaging the symbolic capital necessary to enter middle-class status.

It remains unclear, however, whether critical discourses can respond to this challenge. Cultural studies and deconstruction have yet to do so convincingly. To say that identity critique, multi-temporality, and multiculturalism have been made tangible in nearly all parts of the world only confirms the commonplace, celebratory side of postmodernism and cultural studies. Indeterminacy, in this case a global condition, requires a conceptual proximity to entanglements such as split states, modern dearticulation, permanent diasporas, post-national imaginaries, and the intensive realm of consumer subjectivity.¹⁶ Most of the Americas belong to this space: societies caught in discursive gaps between neoliberal capitalism and post-socialism. The focus on Latinos, one of various key groups, provides an important index of this problematic where least expected, within the United States itself.

The aesthetics of imaging—television, videos, advertisements, the Internet, performative arts, and other media constructions of consumer citizenship—clearly exact a totally new relationship with academic intellectuals. The space once known as “the street” now breaks into the fold with a new force and legitimacy, no longer just an intruder that overturns the high-low cultural divide. The place of the researcher, or intermediary, becomes irremediably more public and ultimately more anxious, because capitalism itself demands it. This perhaps explains Harold Bloom’s vehement attempt to revive the specific hierarchy of values implicit in literary studies: “There is nothing so essential to the Western Canon as its principles of selectivity, which are elitist only to the extent that they are founded upon severely artistic criteria. . . . One breaks into the canon only by aesthetic strength, which is constituted primarily of an amalgam: mastery of figurative language, originality, cognitive power, knowledge, exuberance of diction” (1994: 22, 29).

There are many reasons to celebrate great literature and to wonder, along with Bloom, whether contemporary culture has prematurely abandoned aesthetic qualities that might prove indispensable for the

postmodern age. However, today's students and consumers don't necessarily lack expressive exuberance and metaphoric idioms, some of which could qualify as "severely artistic." One immediately thinks of the visual excess in various forms of imaging, the oral exuberance of rap music, or the performativity invoked by the bodily movement of salsa music. Some will dismiss this contemporary anthology, others will claim it has no relevance, but few will deny its existence altogether. As for wisdom and cognitive power, it seems pertinent to recall that great art has always been suspicious of such categories, for knowledge always invokes a discourse of truth and power immediately claimed by philosophy, history, and, most of all, ideology.

How, then, does one bridge the growing gaps between academic disciplines, their object of study, and new phenomena? Some might allege that it can't be done, given that objects of knowledge are necessarily by-products of disciplinary thinking and that the latter have been dissolved by the twin forces of deconstruction and global reordering. Others prefer to look upon universities as places of resistance from which to reclaim disciplinary order. A third position might insist on a new approach in which critical theory explores a new role within, not outside, the growing nexus of cultural markets and the arts. Bloom, it would seem, wants to regain the value of great Western literature as reservoir of exemplary articulations of human experiences and to market his anthology to a reading public anxious about the demise of printed culture. But his proposal goes beyond that, since it includes non-European authors, including some Latin American greats difficult to categorize strictly in terms of West or non-West. His object of study thus shifts somewhat to the uncertain global scene, albeit in English only. Literary values would therefore be saved as translatable matter through the lingua franca of globalization, even if it means risking their most precious claim to artistry: uniqueness as texts in their own language, the site where "exuberance of diction" truly reveals itself. Equally important, they would be saved only to the extent that they conform to a singularly defined hermeneutic tradition that claims to speak in the name of humanity.

The work of Richard Rorty, perhaps the most prominent figure in current neo-pragmatic philosophy, provides another important instance of the confrontation between postmodern theories, the old lettered order, and the globalizing cultural dispersion. He understands, first, that

Derridian deconstruction and Foucauldian meta-narrative critique should be seen as the continuation rather than the rupture of the Western hermeneutic tradition. He adds that these theoretical paradigms only make sense within the realm of literature, philosophy, and the fine arts. The trouble for the humanities, he argues, only arises when these modes of critique are deployed in popular culture or politics, because these fields tend to take their liberatory impulse too seriously, as if one could engender new utopias from deconstruction, or preserve the social radicalism of modern meta-narratives through their critique.

Rorty insists that postmodernity has a natural milieu beyond which it should not reach and that it ought not to impose itself on others; rather, it should strive to consolidate communities which he calls "Postmodern Bourgeois Democracies of the North Atlantic," such as the United States, parts of Europe, and Canada (1991: 197–202). Only these nations correspond to the postmodern model in as much as they have managed to bring citizenship to the highest level known to history, an unsurpassed realm of individuation, satisfactions, opinions, lifestyles, and self-management. The citizens of these communities, like their philosophers, would thus live postmodernity as an internal dialogue that need not strive to attain universality because their national cultures have already reached what anyone could possibly imagine as universal. From this perspective, postmodern critiques need only attend to immanent movements within U.S.-American and European traditions, or conceive themselves as reflective explorations among postmodern democracies.

Rorty's reading may seem highly *sui generis*, but his call for a nationalist enclosure of postmodern philosophy should surprise no one. It registers an already familiar list of concerns that lie at the very heart of academic knowledge production: the active role of deconstruction in the dispersal of humanistic disciplines, the looming importance of marketing in academic endeavors, and the growing heterogeneity within the nation, more conflictive by the minute. One can see here, as well as in Bloom's construct, a poignant index of the uncertain future of national mythologies. Both register a breach that they hope to correct with an expanded Western aesthetic or a North American postmodern republic, but their disciplinary purview remains quite distant from the discursive exigencies of new subjects, be they women, ethnic minorities, or gays, or not-so-new subjects such as laborers, now forgotten by

both global capitalism and state socialism. Both also seem equally averse to exploring the nexus of marketing and imaging that now shapes, albeit contradictorily, the private ambitions of all subjects in all republics, including those with the most resources.

These pressures continue to startle academic structures, at times leading to surprising but revealing proposals that must somehow redraw the boundaries of the universal within national frameworks, be they linguistic, philosophical, or literary. Western, North Atlantic, or universal, each imaginary must now field unprecedented tensions, not only migration waves that disturb the national identity like never before, but, what is more important, the techno-mediatic performance industry, which has proven capable of designing a rich anthology of multicultural products on its own. Another important contributor to the turbulent conceptual space after 1989 has been the decline of official socialism and Third Worldism, a topic outside the purview of Bloom and Rorty, yet one that is intimately related to their field of concerns. The implicit utopia of Western postmodernity may have been challenged by the cultural order of global economies, but it is equally important to note that the teleological project inspired by Third-World modern narratives has lost even more prestige, as evident in Latin America and other areas once demarcated as such. This has led either to deep disenchantment or muted resistance among artists and intellectuals who continue to have a stake in imagining the world, even if, or precisely because, they live and work in states with compromised modernities.

Constructs such as Latinos must continuously unfold from such gaps and crevices in the current production of knowledge, sometimes explicitly, sometimes implicitly. It is not, however, just a question of Latinos, but rather of Americans, or more specifically, of the Americas, a hemisphere whose North-South relations have dramatically changed without warning or compass. The task seems to call forth a simultaneous examination of a multiplicity of elements—nation, genre, ontology, imaging, marketing, language, race—most likely within the purview of many disciplines, but clearly beyond the exhaustive reach of any one of them, even those with highly developed ways of absorbing difference immanently.¹⁷ New insights will obviously be needed for differential approaches to cultures and nations with divergent or discomforting modernities. But perhaps the most one can say about this mapping of

unsuspected encounters across nations, languages, and cultures in the Americas is that it can only proceed with a full awareness that the task will likely uncover mirrors bound to reflect the researcher's own unguarded gaze.

NOTES

1. Parts of this essay are drawn from my essay published last year in *Revista Iberoamericana*.

2. John Muthyala's recent essay offers a very thorough critique of literary Americanism, at least as it pertains to the way the field works in English. A similarly incisive approach to the Latin American and Latino sources he consults would have completed an important new mapping.

3. Many scholars have dealt with the "invention of America" theme as it relates to Latin America. Edmundo O'Gorman's book, first published in 1948, remains a point of departure and contention. See also José Rabasa's poststructural critique of that book and the theme in general.

4. For a detailed discussion of poststructuralism and contemporary Latin American literary criticism, see my *Latin Americanism*.

5. It seems clear that the combination of new theories and market forces has opened the way for women's voices, cultural studies, and new genres such as testimonio literature, through which various critiques of the modern Latin American identity are being articulated. One should emphasize, however, the disparate responses to such discourses in the United States and Latin America, even if these communities don't ever correspond to monolithic or opposite camps.

6. The recent anthology of essays *Mambo Montage: The Latinization of New York*, edited by Agustin Laó-Montes and Arlene Dávila, breaks new ground in this regard.

7. The tug of war between postmodern and postcolonial approaches to Latin Americanism finds a symptomatic register in Santiago Colás's reading. As for the difficulties, and ambitions, of the subaltern turn, they are fully exemplified in *The Real Thing*, edited by Georg Gugelberger.

8. Latin Americanists working in the United States have absorbed, and to a large degree advanced, a dramatic change in the role of literature and criticism within the humanities, even if the deeper question of the United States as the historically correct model of the Americas often remains unquestioned, if not implicitly reaffirmed. In Latin America, on the other hand, literary and cultural

criticism often preserve ontological, if not ideological, predicaments in which the aesthetic role of literature continues to figure prominently. To reduce these differences to nothing but a persistent remnant of Latin America's failed modernist ontology seems rather simplistic at this juncture.

9. I am referring in particular to two of Miguel Algarín's narrative poems, "Malo Dancing" and "Mongo Affair."

10. Latino groups continue to be studied and theorized by specialists in isolation from each other. Mexican Americans study Chicanos in the name of Latinos; Puerto Ricans and Cuban Americans follow analogous routes. Felix Padilla's study of Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans in Chicago remains a highly valuable exception.

11. For an extended approach to this topic, see "Cuban-Latino Seams" in my *Cuba on My Mind: Journeys to a Severed Nation*.

12. Although an important text in many regards, it is not often observed that the often-cited *Life on the Hyphen* by Gustavo Pérez Firmat comprises a deeply nostalgic look at the Cuban exile imaginary prior to the shift in 1980.

13. Mike Davis provides an important discussion of recent Latin migration to U.S. metropolitan centers in *Magical Urbanism*.

14. Suzanne Oboler's *Ethnic Labels, Latino Lives* provides an excellent discussion on this topic.

15. Néstor García Canclini's work suggests various new lines of dialogue for postmodern social sciences and humanistic disciplines.

16. The old paradigm of modern identity has also led to a state of mourning in many Latin American nations and metropolitan centers in the last decade or so. These communities now find themselves in the midst of demodernization, as is the case in Argentina, or coping with a sense of trauma that comes with the disintegration of modern narratives in the absence of viable new ones. Idelber Avelar argues that the "state of mourning" perhaps constitutes the best understanding of Latin American postmodern literature today, although his model only deals with Southern Cone nations. It also remains unclear, in his otherwise valuable approach to the postdictatorship literary scene, how mourning will position itself, as cultural criticism, within the global capital hegemony.

17. To pretend that deconstruction is exempt from these contradictions, or that it absorbs them effortlessly, would fail to recognize its need to clarify its critical edge in the context of global capitalism, as Derrida, Negri and Hardt labor to show in different ways. Such a pretense would also mean ignoring the symptoms behind Harold Bloom's turn against deconstruction, or behind Richard Rorty's proposal to confine it to a North American postmodern aesthetic domain.

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2

BECOMING A MAN IN YNDIAS

The Mediations of Catalina de Erauso,
The Lieutenant Nun¹

Marcia Ochoa

Señor, todo esto que he referido a Vuestra Señoría Ilustrísima no es así; la verdad es ésta: que soi muger, que nací en tal parte, hija de fulano y sutana; que me entraron de tal edad en tal Convento con fulana mi tía; que allí me crié; que tomé el hábito; que tuve noviciado; que estando para profesar, por tal ocasión me salí; que me fuí a tal parte, me desnudé, me vestí, me corté el cabello, partí allí, i acullá; me embarqué, aporté, trahiné, maté, herí, malee, correee, hasta venir a parar en lo presente i a los pies de Su Señoría Ilustrísima.—
catalina de Erauso, *Vida i Sucesos de la Monja Alférez*

We begin with a confession, a transformation, and many bad deeds. This is how Doña Catalina de Erauso narrated her life to her confessor Fray Agustín de Carvajal, bishop of Guamanga in the Viceroyalty of Peru, around the year 1618. This confession, made after the bishop's intervention in Erauso's² arrest, concluded some fifteen years of roaming through the colony dressed as a man and making a living as a soldier, troublemaker, gambler, businessman, murderer, and traveler. Erauso's habit of seeking sanctuary in the Church whenever his luck ran out brings him to this moment, where he is forced to reveal to Carvajal that he was a woman who had lived the past twenty or so years as a man, as a conquistador. Erauso gained fame in Spain and Spanish America as La

Monja Alférez, or the Lieutenant Nun. Her story traveled through letters, oral accounts, a play, and news pamphlets called *relaciones*. Erauso's own efforts were central to the circulation of his fame, through the publication of the memoir *Vida i Sucesos de la Monja Alférez*,³ his appearances before Philip IV, the King of Spain, and Pope Urban VIII, and his acquaintanceships with writers and painters of the time. Two copies of the manuscript of the memoir attributed to her, *Vida i Sucesos*, are known; one is known of but has not been found. The rest of what we have about him comes from official documents: petitions to the King and letters in support of his petitions attesting to his battlefield accomplishments and royal service.

The question that fuels my investigation into Erauso's life has to do with why she was allowed to survive, even celebrated after she disclosed her birth gender to Agustín de Carvajal, a man known for his zealotry against indigenous idolatry (Erauso 1992: 108n2). While it does not surprise me that a religious man in the Spanish Empire would "make an exception" for the behavior of an elite, I am surprised that given Erauso's vulnerability to criticism and the history of persecution of transvestites, Carvajal found this case exceptional. Although (and probably because) cross-dressing women at the time were "imaginable" to both the public and the authorities (the Catholic Church and the monarchy), there were prohibitions against women wearing men's clothing. That Erauso commits acts of cross-dressing, much less the murder, robbery, and gambling which are described with relish in her narrative, is fascinating in itself. Still more fascinating is that he avoided the Inquisition, successfully petitioned Philip IV for a pension, and was reportedly given a dispensation by the pope to continue wearing men's clothing. After receiving her pension in 1626, she settled in Mexico and reportedly died around 1650, living out the rest of her life as a trader and muleteer (she was an *arriero*, a merchant-class occupation).

Although there are some doubts as to the veracity of the *Vida*, or its authorship, the text is taken to be the representation of an extraordinary life, a historical case that proves different points for different people: the power of women, the superiority of the Basque nation, the historical existence of transgender people, the Spanish heritage of Latin America.⁴ It is not known if the *Vida* is in Erauso's own words, if it was dictated to a scribe, or if another person wrote it. What is known through the exist-

ing documentation is that a person named Catalina de Erauso existed, from Guipúzcoa, of elite Basque lineage (Erauso 1992: 32n2), who fled from the convent, who gained fame as “La Monja Alférez,” or the Lieutenant Nun, who was recognized for his “valor” in the campaigns against the Araucano people in what is now Chile, who submitted petitions to the court of Philip IV, who passed through Piedmont where he attested that he had been robbed and used the name Alférez Antonio de Erauso, who returned to New Spain with a monthly pension of five hundred pesos and an *encomienda* (Erauso 1992:147).

The twentieth century produced significant literature⁵ around the case, initially related to feminist or nationalist appropriations. More recently, the case has been appropriated as an example of the fluidity or inversion of gender—a transgender ancestor or at least an example of Butlerian “gendering” and gender transgression (Perry 1999; Erauso 1996; Feinberg 1996). I also became interested in the case because it documented the existence of a transgender man or a transvestite during this historical period. My interest deepened when I began to see the complexity of the case. Erauso is a very difficult character to celebrate or recover. But for the study of mediations,⁶ particularly from the point of view of an *antinormative* subject, the Erauso case provides various opportunities to consider the relationships between media, power, subjectivity, and ideology.

This essay vacillates in various counterpoints between Latinidad, queer studies, communication studies, cultural studies, and studies of coloniality in the Americas. I situate myself (at times uneasily) at the confluence of these different approaches, sometimes stretching to keep them together. It is this continuous *contrapunteo* that I identify as emblematic of the way my work is marked by and embedded within Latinidad—not just Latina/o studies in a U.S. context, but the experience of negotiating U.S. race, gender, and class relations as a Latina and a Latina of a particular migration (the brain drain of the 1960s and 1970s). Ultimately I locate my project within what Juana María Rodríguez calls “queer Latinidad”:

As an object of study, queer *latinidad* demands a practice that moves across geographic, linguistic, and imaginary borders, not simply because it is more provocative to do so, but because the very disciplines that divide Latin

American from North American, music from literature, politics from performance, or queer studies from Latino studies have been based on paradigms constituted through our marginalization. (Rodríguez 2003: 30)

More specifically, the case of Erauso allows me to engage the ideas of mediation, colony, and nation through the lens of queer *Latinidad*. It allows me to question the use of this figure to recuperate or validate identities, and yet my invocation of Erauso's story puts out in the world yet again that people have transgressed gender in many different ways and at many different times. As an ethnographer of media, I am interested in the social practices of representation that frame both Erauso's survival and how we come to know about her existence. As a researcher on transgender lives in Latin America, I want to explore how categories of gender apply to this case. In terms of both mediation and gender, what is important about considering Erauso is the question of technology. Erauso had different technologies of gender transformation and representation available to him. Considering this case will perhaps allow me to sidestep much of the technological mysticism that currently surrounds both fields.

Although it appears to be an obscure case, the story of the Lieutenant Nun has had its share of academic, folkloric, and even media attention (a movie was made starring María Félix as Erauso!). The story circulated through different media: letters, testimonials from people who knew her, plays, *relaciones*, the attributed autobiography (hereafter referred to as the *Vida*), appropriations or fictionalizations of this text, and most certainly through gossip and story. What is certain is that we know of Erauso today because of his *mediations*, the ways that the man became a message that circulated and still circulates. To me, the resounding questions of the case are very basic—they have to do with its conditions of possibility: Why wasn't he killed? Why wasn't she handed over to the Inquisition? Why, rather than being punished or eliminated, was he celebrated and given a reward? In this essay, I argue that the fame that Erauso cultivated in her day was one of the things that saved her life. This fame, and certainly his success as a conquistador before his confession, depended on the circuits of information and power between the colony and the metropolis, and on the possibilities of both gender and genre that existed in the colony.

THE QUESTION OF ERAUSO'S GENDER

De rostro no es fea, pero no hermosa, i se le reconoce estar algún tanto maltratada, pero no de mucha edad. Los cabellos son negros i cortos como de hombre, con un poco de melena como hoi se usa. En efecto, parece más capón, que muger. Viste de hombre a la Española; trahe la espada bien ceñida, i así la vida: la cabeza algo baja, un poco agoviada, más de Soldado valiente, que de cortesano i de vida amorosa. Sólo en las manos se le puede conocer que es muger, porque las tiene abultadas i carnosas, i robustas i fuertes, bien que las mueve algo como muger. —description of Erauso by Pedro de La Valle, *Vida i Sucesos de la Monja Alférez*

The use of terms like *transgender* or *transsexual* is clearly presentist and anachronistic in this case—these words have only been with us since the latter half of the twentieth century—however, I recognize them as part of my reading.⁷ In truth, Erauso complicates a bit our usage of these terms, mostly due to differences in technology between now and her time. Was Erauso transgender, transsexual, transvestite, or something else? My sense is that Erauso was, above all, unique, and that it was this uniqueness and ambiguity that facilitated his survival. I do understand her, ahistorically, as transgender. I define *transgender* broadly, as a person who employs identitarian, surgical, or medical interventions to live as a member of a gender that does not correspond to the gender assigned at birth by the social context. Instead of understanding “transgender” as an identity category, I have found it useful to consider it a set of behaviors; thus it is not necessary to impose a particular kind of identity on people in order to consider them transgender—they can be seen to be transgender from their actions, while they themselves may have another name or way of considering their identity (I believe Erauso’s was most likely *varón*—male—or *alférez*—lieutenant—based on his testimony before the court of King Philip IV).

I avoid the use of *transsexual* to refer to Erauso because of the necessity of psychiatric diagnosis and surgical “sex change” to the definition—technologies not even remotely contemporary with Erauso’s reality. *Travesti*, or *transvestite*, is perhaps the most historically accurate word that could be used to describe her, given that there have been many other documented cases of transvestites contemporary with Erauso. Mary Elizabeth

Perry (1999: 414n3) notes the documentation of cases of cross-dressed women and “mujeres varoniles” in the Siglo de Oro, but also says that Erauso’s case is different.

Erauso certainly used gender to his advantage and presented himself, in characteristically opportunistic fashion, as a member of the gender that was most advantageous for his situation at the moment. Although it might be said that Erauso problematizes a binary gender system by transgressing the norms of the gender she was assigned at birth, in fact her performance of masculinity is quite in line with the dictates of the binary. In the end, Erauso’s petitions elide his gender transgression in favor of emphasizing his loyalty to the crown and the project of colonizing the Americas. This is how she narrates her petition to the crown: not by presenting herself as an exception of gender but rather as an exemplary conquistador. What I find most interesting about the case is the ways it conflates the territory of gender and genre (both *género* in Spanish⁸): it allows us to consider the multiple genres of people Erauso inhabited. I would like to parse out some of the genders that Erauso employed, according to the *Vida* and supporting documentation. These would include: girl, novice, pageboy, young male noble (in the persona of his own brother), man, woman, virgin, *mujer varonil*, or virile woman, gambler, swordsman, traveler, and merchant.

Erauso’s ability to inhabit these gender, labor, and class positions worked in a matrix of mentalities, colonial relations, and technologies of the time. In this essay, I will discuss the conditions of possibility of the case, using the *Vida* and other sources for historical context. I situate my engagement with these texts in two key concepts, which I describe in the section immediately following this one. Then I will review the history of reproduction of this narrative. I go on to describe the circuits of information and power in the colony and the way Erauso used these to exercise social power. Finally, I discuss the possibilities of gender/genre, specifically the kinds of texts and masculinities with which Erauso was necessarily in dialogue.

MEDIATIONS, POWER, AND INTIMACY

Throughout this investigation, two main concepts have informed my analysis of the genre and gender of this case: Jesús Martín-Barbero’s

concept of “mediations” and a Foucauldian feminist consideration of the intimate dimensions of power, particularly in Ann Laura Stoler’s concept of the “internal frontiers” of the colony and Beatriz González Stephan’s study of the “design of the citizen’s body.” I will briefly outline these two concepts here, then explore them in relation to Erauso’s situation.

Mediation

By *mediation* I understand two distinct but related processes: first, the conversion of a being or happening into a message—what Stuart Hall calls “encoding” (1994); and second, the “function of a medium, that mass culture accomplishes day by day: the communication of the real with the imaginary” (Martín-Barbero 1987: 66), effectively, the link between ideology and practice. In *Communication, Culture and Hegemony: From the Media to Mediations* (1996), discussing what he calls the “historical matrices of mass mediation,” Martín-Barbero highlights the connections between conditions of production, the social practices of reading, the form of texts, and the development of genres in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe. Although Barbero studies television, a twentieth-century mass medium, he affirms the need to understand mediations in their historical and technological contexts. His study of Spanish *cordel* literature details what he calls the “long process of enculturation” to serialization, through which the reader/consumer becomes accustomed to the production, circulation, and form of serialized texts, the antecedents of the radionovelas and telenovelas of Latin America. I apply the idea of mediations to Erauso’s case to historicize two things that are currently seen—and that I saw—as profoundly (post)modern, without a deep past: mass media and “trans” lives. It was almost impossible for me to imagine the two without the technologies in which they are immersed: television, film, hormones, sex changes. What is mass media without radio, film, or television, or trans without sex change? In the case of Erauso, we find two sites of articulation with the theory of mediations. First, in the possibilities of *genre* related to the case, including technologies of production and circulation as well as practices of reading and writing—the relationship between the historical person (Erauso) and his imaginary projection (his fame and legend). The second site of mediation is in the possibilities of *gender*, including the technologies and practices of its accomplishment: the relationship of the physical person (Erauso) to

her embodiment and external gender (her masculinity and strategic use of her birth gender).

Power and Intimacy

The second concept I employ here is an analysis of power from a Foucauldian feminist perspective. This analysis is preoccupied with the management of alterity and difference. The “interior frontiers of the colony” were articulated by Ann Laura Stoler in a 1997 essay. Stoler identifies a mechanism of differentiation in colonial and national processes. She is concerned with “the construction of colonial categories and national identities and with those people who ambiguously straddled, crossed, and threatened these imperial divides” (Stoler 1997: 198). She defines the “interior frontier” as

the sense of internal distinctions within a territory (or empire); at the level of the individual . . . the moral predicates by which a subject retains his or her national identity despite location outside the national frontier and despite heterogeneity within the nation-state. (1997: 199)

This definition presents us with a problem: Stoler treats colonial categories and national identities as if they were similar. Is it possible that a subject of a monarchy, as was Erauso, can be interpellated through a nation-building process? The *Vida* and Erauso’s petitions demonstrated sentiments that I identified as nationalist: loyalty to a flag, Basque national identity, solidarity with his countrymen, an ideology of racial superiority that underlay the foundation of a nationality—for example, an episode from the *Vida*, in which Erauso fiercely defends her king’s flag (Erauso 1992: 57–58).

But two key elements are missing to define Erauso as a national subject: a modern nation-state and a print capitalist media infrastructure to create what Benedict Anderson (1983) calls an “imagined community.” Mass mediation, mass production, and mass circulation were missing. So, although we can say that Erauso’s narrative and the representation of his memoir demonstrate ideologies and practices that could be considered “nationalist,” in the sense that she has a strong sense of affiliation and identification with an imagined community (actually, two: the Basque and the Spanish), the political and technological conditions of

mass affiliation were not in place to qualify Erauso's politics of affiliation as "nationalism." So what do we do between the colony and the nation?

Stoler studies the colonialisms of northern European countries (the Netherlands, England, and France) in Asia, a process that was informed by the colonization of Latin America and that began in earnest after the colonization of Latin America had been institutionalized, at about the time of Erauso's life (c. 1592–1635). Stoler focuses on *empire*, a mechanism that can be seen working in multiple processes that produce different kinds of subjects: national, colonial, premodern, mediated, global, and others. Although the time period of interest here is pre-national because the modern nation-state does not exist until the latter half of the following century, during this time period there is another "long process of enculturation" (Martín-Barbero 1987: 96) going on that will eventually produce the national subject, its citizenship emerging out of the colonial categories employed in Erauso's time. These worldviews differentiated between the "civilized" and "savage," the "active" agents of history and the "passive" continents upon which they would be written (Juárez 1995).⁹

Erauso's position within these worldviews was quite clear: her sexual otherness did not prevent her participation in conquest. In fact, it facilitated it. In these processes of enculturation we can see the identity practices that preceded nineteenth-century national identity formation. According to González Stephan, difference is not only produced through administration, symbolism, or juridical means—it is produced over bodies themselves: disgust, care, nausea, shame, charity, vice, dislike, *fracaso*, illegibility, and the entire universe of feeling and corporality (González Stephan 1996: 21). These, identified as "structures of feeling" by Raymond Williams, are not imposed overnight; they are the effects of the aforementioned long process of enculturation. The "machine of otherness" (*maquina de otredades*) is the production of this universe of feeling, with both social and corporeal consequences. Although we cannot project "nationalism" onto the case of la Monja Alférez, just as we cannot project "transsexual" over his body (in other words, to recuperate our own present), we can see in his case the management of internal frontiers, the "machine of otherness" of his time.

More than a desire to "understand" the case, I am interested in how Erauso *complicates* the relationship between alterity and authority. In

González Stephan's argument, the process of differentiation marginalizes: that which stays on the margin, that which the law does not name, or that the rules punish is put in a subaltern position. But there also exists the possibility that those who fall into the "discursive gaps" of alterity find their own ways to traffic in power and that alterity, in and of itself, does not predetermine the "other's" marginality—every once in a while, that which is marginalized finds a way to center itself completely within this mechanism of othering. Here we can understand the case of Erauso and her management of the colonial politics of affiliation that become determinant of national categories later on.

But before you start taking me too seriously, let us understand that Erauso complicates alterity because he is an other within privilege: he has constructed his masculinity completely within his privilege as a Basque, as an elite, and as a conquistador. I maintain that *for Erauso it would have been less possible to become a man without a New World in which to do so*. A woman who did not wish to conform to her society's expectations—piety, purity, reproductive and marital availability—Erauso made decisions to avoid a destiny she did not desire. As with many women of his time, his parents handed him, along with his three sisters, over to the Convento de San Sebastián el Antiguo in Guipúzcoa so he could take his vows. She remained in the convent for her novitiate year, and fled just before taking her vows. As with many men of his time, he went to the colony to seek his fortune—and found it. His decisions to flee the convent, live as a man, and beyond that, as a Basque man in the conquest, stealing, killing, and roaming the colony—placed him on the "margin" of society in certain respects. But in these margins she exercised a great deal of power.

ERAUSO IN THE AGE OF MECHANICAL REPRODUCTION

This story, as much the *Vida* as its adaptations, has been published with some regularity over the last 350 years. Its permanence is due to various appropriations, as mentioned earlier: nationalist, Americanist, feminist, and transgender. It is also due to an interest in abnormalities (Merrim 1994)—considering Erauso as an extraordinary case. The most recent

spate of reproductions and engagements with the case began after 1992, when he drew attention for his part in the conquest. From there the case was analyzed in Latin Americanist literary contexts (Erauso 1992; Castillo Lara 1992; Juárez 1995, 1997) and in the context of feminism and queer theory (Cartagena Calderón 1998; Velasco 2000; Perry 1999; Martínez Carbajo 2000; Merrim 1994). During this time, the case was translated into English and presented as an autobiography of an extraordinary woman or transgender ancestor (Erauso 1996). Velasco deals with the appropriations of the Lieutenant Nun in the twentieth century in a manner that is far more complete than what is possible here. What is of interest in this piece is the history of the *Vida*, the conditions of its production and reproduction during Erauso's time.¹⁰

Erauso lived in an era prior to the age of mechanical reproduction that Walter Benjamin writes about, in which print becomes a mass medium. During Erauso's time, manuscripts were printed in much more limited quantities. Although in the scholarship, the "aura" of the original remains important—we cannot definitively say the *Vida* is Erauso's autobiography until we can establish a link (a sort of contagious magic) between the copies in existence and the "original" bearing Erauso's signature, here there is a relationship between the "original" (both Erauso as well as the manuscript that his hands touched) and the copies of this original, which would be the various "mediations" of the story through *cartas* and *relaciones* as well as the copies made by hand or in print of the manuscript. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, we see a change in the technologies of reproduction: the very beginnings of mass printing, both in the form of books and *relaciones*. Books, which were copied by hand or reproduced only for a few elites, began to be issued as printed editions for wider audiences (Chartier 1999). In Erauso's case we see two technologies of reproduction employed: hand-copied manuscripts and printed *relaciones*.

The copies of the manuscript that exist are made by hand from an original. The most well known is a copy made by royal historian Juan Bautista Muñoz in 1784. This copy was a copy of the one made by writer Cándido María Trigueros, from the original, that was held by the family of Juan de Urquiza during that time. In 1829 the Basque expatriate intellectual Joaquín María de Ferrer (Erauso 1992: 29n24) published a printed edition of *Vida i Sucesos* in Paris entitled *Historia de la Monja*

Alférez, Doña Catalina de Erauso, Escrita Por Ella Misma. This print edition was based on the copy made by Muñoz (that was, in effect, a copy of a copy of a copy). We are at least two steps away from establishing a lineage between the Muñoz manuscript and the hands or lips of Catalina de Erauso. This later becomes important to create a link between the historical figure and the *Vida*. With the Ferrer edition, the *Vida* passes from manual copy to “mechanical reproduction.” By this time, it has already floated off course from what could be called the original: dates and names have been changed, perhaps it has been “improved” a bit to give it the “novelistic character” that Vallbona detects.

There are doubts about the authorship of the *Vida*—and these change the possibilities of interpretation and the meaning of the text. Did Erauso write it or not? In order to read the text, this is of little importance—it exists, it was written, and it can be evaluated as such. By itself, the *Vida* can be read as an account of an experience that corroborates with the life of a person who existed. It may also be seen as a (somewhat unreliable) document of practices of travel, work, and conquest in the Americas (Juárez 1997), without linking these practices to any particular actor. In terms of practice, it is important whether or not Erauso participated in the production of the manuscript. If she did, then this is a thing done by a person who lived her life in a gender not assigned to her at birth. Vallbona puts forward the theory that Erauso dictated the story to a scribe, which seems feasible given the level of detail provided in the autobiography.

Various investigators of the case have taken their positions about this concern. Castillo Lara treats the manuscript’s authorship as fact: “arrancada de los propios labios de la protagonista” (1992: 8)—a story “ripped from the protagonist’s own lips.” He then goes on to embellish the story in the manuscript with what he imagines to be the context surrounding each incident narrated, based on his historical research and perhaps how he thinks someone would react in Erauso’s situation. This results in flowery passages describing Erauso’s interactions with the landscape, or dramatic attention to fight scenes, but surprisingly little embellishment in the “romantic” episodes described in the narrative, which appear to be unimaginable to Castillo Lara. For Castillo Lara, it is important to insist on the certainty of the manuscript’s authorship, because he bases his interpretation of the text and contributions to the story on the idea that Erauso was a real historical figure. But unequivocally attaching Erauso’s

hand to the manuscript allows Castillo Lara to narrate his interpretation of the *Vida* as if it were historical truth—the story contained in the manuscript is far more interesting, adventuresome, and detailed than that contained in the petitions or letters, for example. It allows us to more completely imagine this character.

Gabriel and Michelle Stepto, translators of the most recent version of the *Vida* into English, follow Castillo Lara in asserting the fulfillment of Lejeune's "autobiographical pact" that author, narrator and protagonist are the same person (Juárez 1995: 185). They, as well as Marjorie Garber in the introduction to the text, consider the *Vida* to be an autobiography. Perry recognizes that the manuscript may not have been written by Erauso but uses the *Vida* as an example of the practices that construct gender. This is closer to the way I understand the text: as a representation of some daily practices (such as writing, traveling, etc.) that construct the character's masculinity. I would separate that textual level of analysis from the actual practices performed by a "trans" person of this time period until authorship has been established.

Juárez is skeptical about the issue of authorship, following Vallbona, but argues that there are several characteristics that mark the text as autobiographical within its social context (Juárez 1995). She, like Vallbona, says that the likelihood of Erauso being the author of the manuscript is "very plausible" (1995: 185) based on its similarity to other soldiers' autobiographies written during Spain's Siglo de Oro. These autobiographies are written about a hundred years prior to Rousseau, who heralds, according to Juárez, the beginning of "authentic autobiography." These early modern, pre-Rousseauian autobiographies are characterized by "narrations of external events with little or no self-reflection" (1995: 186).¹¹ Juárez asserts that Erauso's motive in setting down his life story was, in effect, a need to get things off his chest:

Catalina de Erauso wrote the history of her life spurred on by the need to narrate the process of a total personality change, having adopted, at a young age, a masculine identity with which she sets up the rest of her life. At the moment in which her case, through years of anguished silence, becomes public, the Lieutenant Nun investigates her past to justify her present. With this goal in mind, both the structure of the work with other selected elements, including those considered fictitious, serve to build the author's self-concept. (1995: 186, translation mine)

Her characterization of the *Vida* as a search for identity and justification seems very much in line with the kind of reflexivity Juárez claims is *absent* from the narrative. I agree with Juárez that the narrative is devoid of self-reflection. In fact, I find the manuscript rather boastful and unconcerned with negative evaluations of the narrator. Erauso (the protagonist) appears to have absolutely no shame in narrating the events of the *Vida*, including stealing, gambling, murdering, attacking *indigenas*, romancing and deceiving ladies, and fleeing the law. But even if we were to establish that Erauso (the protagonist and narrator) was also Erauso (the author), there are several arguments to contradict Juárez's reading of Erauso's "incitement to discourse." First, we know very little about what Erauso thought of herself. To imagine we have access to his interiority lends the manuscript a kind of sincerity that it neither requests nor requires. Second, Juárez represents silence here as "excruciating," but Erauso had in fact benefited from silence up to the time of his confession, and the manuscript never invokes the need to break any silence or suggests that the narrator's suffering happens in silence. It does represent "close calls," where Erauso's birth gender may be called out, putting an end to what she considers a favorable situation. Third, Juárez's argument concerning transformation lingers on the fact of gender transgression, while if we read Erauso (the protagonist and narrator) as a *normative* figure, that is, as a man, the process of change is something that occupies relatively little space in the memoir. Gender transformation is described in most detail when Erauso flees the convent. More attention is given to narrating Erauso's exploits and travels than his transformation over the course of the rest of the memoir.

Vallbona maintains that although it is possible that Erauso wrote the manuscript, doubt is cast on this possibility because of chronological errors and apocryphal assertions made in the text. This doubt is augmented by the absence of the original manuscript (Erauso 1992: 11). The manuscript has various chronological discrepancies. For example, the protagonist's birth year is listed as 1585, but Catalina de Erauso's baptism, which occurred shortly after birth, is recorded in 1592. The manuscript itself is said to have been produced "en 18 de Noviembre de 1646 bolviendo de las Yndias a España en el galeón San Josef" (1992: 31), when logs consulted by Vallbona show that this galleon arrived in Cádiz on November 1, 1624, and that by 1646, Erauso had already filed

and been granted her petition before the crown and returned to New Spain. These discrepancies have been used by Ferrer to suggest that Erauso could not possibly have been the author of the text and that the true author of the manuscript is the poet Cándido María Trigueros (1737–1801), in whose collection is included the copy most copied and reproduced. If this is the case, Trigueros would have had to do incredible research on the details of daily life of the time period, as well as place names and travel times that coincide with historical figures mentioned throughout the manuscript. Vallbona, Berruezo (Erauso: 1956), and Castillo Lara have undertaken projects to “triangulate” the narrative using these details and have been fairly satisfied of the veracity of the manuscript. Vallbona rejects the theory that Trigueros invented the manuscript and takes an intermediate position:

The foundation of the text *Vida i sucesos* is supported by an original manuscript written by Catalina de Erauso (or the story of her adventures, as told by herself), expanded and interspersed with incredible narrative sequences, which have not been sustained through documents relative to the time or the actual Monja Alférez. These sequences contribute to the fictionalization of the discourse; in addition, this is also sustained by the story line itself, completely open and full of cynicism, which fits more into the model of the picaresque novel than into the autobiographical pact. (1992: 8, translation mine)

Merrim (1994: 196) also provides a convincing argument for accepting the “ghostwriter” theory. All signs point to the resolution of this question in the magic of the original manuscript, and perhaps this would answer many questions. However, we can’t ignore the possibility that even if Erauso did write the *Vida*, it still has its elements of fiction—not necessarily more nor less than if it were dictated to a scribe. The theory that most makes sense to me is that Erauso produced (dictated or partially wrote) the *Vida* with the help of one or several intermediaries who helped him structure the narrative to conform to literary conventions of the time, giving it the novelistic character noted by Vallbona. And of course it is possible that Erauso might have done this all by himself, although probably not likely. Several elements support this “ghostwriter” theory: the discrepancies in Erauso’s name and birth date, as well as the date of the manuscript, Erauso’s relationship to writing, and, as Vallbona

points out, the fact that Erauso's native language was not Castilian but Euskera, the Basque language. The dates could have been copyist's (or ghostwriter's) error, but not likely made if Erauso had written the manuscript on his own. Erauso's name is presented as "Catalina de Araujo," a hispanization of her name, which is in Basque language. Although there is evidence in the manuscript that Erauso did engage in reading and writing practices, we cannot make the mistake of tying this to Erauso (the historical figure). Of the historical figure, we have very little actual writing—the petitions before the crown are prepared by a scribe—outside of Erauso's signature, which appears both on the petitions and on the portraits he sat for. Vallbona asserts that Erauso's native language was Euskera and that it is very likely that Erauso was raised monolingual in this language to an early age, as were many people in Basque country. According to Vallbona, this would have affected Erauso's usage of Castilian and the linguistic character of the manuscript if it had not been intervened. It is also notable, then, that the manuscript was produced in Castilian Spanish and not in Euskera or Latin—another trait that speaks to its publicitary ends, or at least to its intended audience.

COLONIAL CIRCUITS OF INFORMATION AND POWER

Yo que vi que duraba mucho este negocio y más la fortuna en perseguirme. . . .determiné, consultándolo primero con la Grajal, de pasarme a Indias con ella y ver si mudando mundo y tierra mejoraría mi suerte. Y fueme peor, como V. Md. verá en la segunda parte, pues nunca mejora su estado quien muda solamente de lugar y no de vida y costumbres.—Francisco de Quevedo, *Historia de la Vida del Buscón Llamado don Pablos*

According to the *Vida*, Erauso leaves Spain for the Americas sometime around 1603, after having run away from her convent just before she was to take her final vows and having worked for a while in the Basque region as a page for Spanish nobles (Erauso 1992: 36–38). To avoid a return to the convent and continue his life as a young man, Erauso distances himself from the destiny of a daughter of a privileged family. She makes her way working within the society she knows, wherever she finds

work that suits her. He, like his four sisters, was raised in the convent, in preparation to marry or take his vows; these were the options available for the women of his society. Three of her sisters took their vows and another was married. His brothers and father were all officials of the king's army. All four brothers died in the conquest. Although it can be said that Erauso successfully avoided the fate of a daughter in her family, she followed to the letter the fate of a son of this family—with the exception that she garnered far more success than her brothers.¹²

This we know from historical research. As for the manuscript, it too provides some social context for Erauso's masculinity, particularly with respect to travel and place. Most of the *Vida* takes place in Yndias—the name of the Spanish colony at the time. The episodes of life in the convent and Erauso's time in Spain before leaving for Yndias occupy only two folios of the manuscript. These describe his travels through San Sebastián to Cádiz (some three years), roaming from one town to another, finding work and shelter, stealing clothes and money, fighting with other youths. As for motive for the trip to Yndias, the manuscript only reports that she has found room on a galleon captained by an uncle of her¹³ (Erauso 1992: 41). In other words, there is nothing about the decision to go to Yndias in the narrative that requires justification or even mention—it is completely natural and logical that a young man would travel to Yndias to make his fortune.

Throughout the sixteenth century, the profile of immigrants to Yndias changed: initially we find young men on military expeditions and very few women. Toward mid-century the numbers of unemployed men had decreased, and there was an increase in the numbers of professional men, artisans, and women with children traveling to reunite with their husbands. Boyd-Bowman (1976) affirms that by 1560, the immigration of itinerant men was not favored—it was considered that the colony was shamefully full of them (1976: 583). By the end of the century, women reached 28.5 percent of all migrants, and men who migrated tended to be bureaucrats, not the brash conquistador characters who composed the first migrations. Basque migration, although always smaller than Andalusian, tended to be more influential because of its contribution to high-ranking positions such as captains of fleets, merchants, and sailors. The Basque areas of Spain contributed proportionally more merchants to the migration than any other Spanish region (Boyd-Bowman 1976:

593). Of the Basque regions, Guipúzcoa stood out for its contribution of merchants. By 1600, 640 (documented) Guipúzcoanos had immigrated to Yndias. It is interesting to note that this migration was exceedingly masculine: only 1 percent of women who were documented to have traveled to Yndias in the sixteenth century were Basque.

The colonization of Yndias changes the ways that Spaniards seek and accomplish social status. While in Spain, lineage and nobility dictated access to riches and privilege, in Yndias there is incredible social mobility for merchants, artisans, *petit bourgeois*, and soldiers. In Yndias, these men become “hijos d’ algo,” sons of something (Rama 1984: 23). The colony is the site of production of privileged men who do not fit in the metropolis. This change in social mobility produces a transatlantic resentment and a rejection of those who become men in Yndias, initiating a criollo crisis of legitimacy:

The Spanish aristocracy refused to acknowledge the colonials as equals and were especially contemptuous of their descendants, known as creoles. As early as the second half of the sixteenth century, Spanish aristocrats were characterizing the American-born offspring of Spaniards as lazy, racially inferior, mentally deficient, and physically degenerate. (Seed 1995: 21)¹⁴

In this context, Erauso functions perfectly as a *hidalgo* and thus has the privilege to make himself a man in Yndias—something that would pose different challenges in Spain due to the high possibility of being discovered and returned to his family. Twinam affirms that “those men distinguished as *hijosdalgo*, or ‘men of importance,’ were exempt from some taxes and punishments and positively recognized because of their lineage” (1999: 41). In Yndias, Erauso has all the space and the right to become a man, just as many other Spanish men did. And the man she becomes is very charismatic and desirable, according to the *Vida*—the narrator must evade various proposals for marriage with women, she gets away with practically everything, including murder, and he receives the admiration and compliments of her compatriots. Even without the *Vida*, the fact that Erauso receives a royal pension rather than being burned at the stake indicates that the king approved of his service, and the letters provided to support his claim also demonstrate the admiration of his peers. Being class appropriate is at least as important to Erauso’s continued survival as seamlessly accomplishing her masculinity.

Erauso's masculinity is a nostalgic one, performed in a time when masculinity and socioeconomic status are transforming from a military model that privileges brute force and plunder to a more genteel, urban model that privileges participation in the bureaucracy (Cartagena Calderón 1998). In *Vida i sucesos*, Erauso is presented as a picaro, a rascal who manages to get away with murder and much else, while always coming out on top in the seedy fringes of decent Spanish society. Although transgressive, unlike the typical picaro Erauso is not a peasant making his fortune. She enjoys the protections afforded to Spanish nobles in the Americas. In a sense, Erauso gets the "best" of both worlds: abusing and cavorting with impunity while avoiding punishment or arrest when he gets caught, and being entitled to reward because of his elite status. Although Michelle Stepto, one of the translators of the 1996 English version, classifies Erauso as a member of the "itinerant underclass" of Peru, Erauso was only subaltern in the military sense upon her arrival in Yndias. A vision of power that understands power in the center and subalternity in the margins does not account for the way in which Erauso managed power. It might be more appropriate to say that another important element of the masculinity that Erauso produced was precisely the discontinuity of the margin and the colony. It stands to reason, then, that Erauso winds up distinguishing himself as a man and a soldier in one of the places that most fiercely resisted Spanish colonization, the Arauco province in southern Chile, on the margin of colonial institutionality.

In these discontinuities and margins exist what I understand to be "discursive gaps"—where the disciplining of the subject is negotiated, and reinvents and abstracts itself. Where the hand of the state does not reach, it is supposed that biopower reaches (as well as Stoler's intimate practices of power), but where these discursive gaps exist—silences, crossed lines—discipline is reinterpreted, interrupted, changed, perverted. Discontinuity is crucial to the narration of the *Vida*. In it, Erauso-as-narrator abruptly leaves bad situations (betrayals, rivalries, promises, and encounters with authority), roving from one end to another of the colony. We see this from the beginning of the story: she runs from the convent, then from the houses of priests and masters, from ships, from promises to marry, from business partners. The manuscript is ordered through its trajectory in space: "7. Desembarca en Sanlúcar, va a Sevilla,

buelve a Sanlúcar i embárcase”; “Capítulo XII: Parte de las Charcas a Piscobamba.” Erauso’s ability to leave at the drop of a hat is part of his masculinity in the narrative. She becomes a man upon voyaging.

I see these gaps, the space between places, between fiction and truth, the “itinerant underclass,” the inconsistent application of law, the vacillation between legitimacy and bastardry as intrinsically related. They are mutually informative places where definitions blur, where rules are unenforced, where people are invented. Not in the imagination of a writer, but in the possibilities of existence. In the things that could be imagined by a fourteen-year-old girl cloistered in a convent.

NOTES

1. This paper is dedicated to Gwen Amber Rose Araujo, murdered on October 2, 2002, at the age of seventeen in Newark, California, after four men discovered she was anatomically male.

2. The question of how to refer to Erauso has been dealt with in several publications (Velasco 2000; Perry 1999; Merrim 1994). Following Perry, I will use the name “Erauso” to refer to this person, and in terms of pronouns, these will alternate with each sentence.

3. The definitive edition of the manuscripts, *relaciones*, and some official documents regarding the case, including an extensive bibliography, were edited by Rima de Vallbona and published in 1992. This edition is cited as (Erauso 1992) in the text.

4. See Velasco (2000) for an extensive consideration of the appropriations of this character.

5. See the bibliography in Erauso (1992) and Velasco (2000).

6. See Martín-Barbero (1993).

7. Here I am informed by Judith Halberstam’s idea of “perverse presentism,” which she suggests be used strategically to invent the queer present. While Halberstam’s use of this idea encourages a recuperative project, I wish to project queer readings into the past in order to accomplish an antinormative reading of mediation and technology in the early modern period and explore the perversions of power in the Spanish colonial project. See Halberstam 1999.

8. The *Diccionario de la Real Academia Española* has recently circulated its evaluation of the term “género” in Spanish and determined that the appropri-

ate translation for “gender” is “sexo”: “las palabras tienen *género* (y no *sexo*), mientras que los seres vivos tienen *sexo* (y no *género*).” Citing a different tradition of usage for both words: “en la tradición cultural española la palabra *sexo* no reduce su sentido al aspecto meramente biológico.”

9. Many thanks to Encarnación Juárez for generously sharing her articles with me as I was writing this essay.

10. In a longer version of this chapter, I expand this argument with a detailed accounting of the conditions of publication recovery and re-publication of the manuscript. Vallbona’s bibliography (Erauso 1992) serves as the source of this synopsis.

11. “Narraciones de eventos externos con escasas o nulas reflexiones sobre la interioridad de la persona.” Translation mine.

12. See Castillo Lara (1992: 24–25) for a synopsis of Erauso’s family history and her brothers’ fates. According to the manuscript, Erauso killed one of her brothers in a duel.

13. “plaza de grumete en un galeón del Capitán Esteban Ciguino, tío mío . . .” (Erauso 1992: 41, translation mine).

14. For another look at this crisis of legitimacy, see Twinam (1999).

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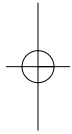
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3

**READING VIOLENCE,
MAKING CHICANA SUBJECTIVITIES***Nicole M. Guidotti-Hernández*

But we can surely accept the general proposition that, in our societies, the systems of punishment are to be situated in a certain ‘political economy’ of the body: even if they do not make use of violent or bloody punishment, even when they use lenient methods involving confinement or correction, it is always the body that is at issue—the body and its forces, their utility and their docility, their distribution and their submission.—Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*

“Woman does not feel safe when her own culture and white culture are critical of her; when the males of all races hunt her as prey.—Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*

In this essay, I consider an episode of violence in the Chicana literary/historical imaginary as a way to shed light on contemporary discussions of subjectivity. I examine Josefa’s, who was also known as Juanita, lynching that took place on July 5, 1851. Josefa/Juanita’s texts allow for an in-depth exploration of how Chicana lives are inextricably linked to disciplinary structures. Dominant narratives would suggest that disciplining the bodies of racialized women are somewhat acceptable and normalized. This essay suggests that such narratives create modes of representation that more readily question the presence of that discipline

in the everyday lives of Chicana/mestiza subjects. As I read this episode in its specificity, I isolate the events as a larger symbolic commentary about the status of the Chicana citizen-subject in the nineteenth century. My reading of the lynching provides a historiographic interpretive lens that questions the practices involved in the production of hegemonic historiographies. Therefore, I briefly track the shifting discourses of gender, race, identity, and Chicana subjectivity over space and time and explore how the not-so-recent past is considered.

Subjectivity, within western philosophies, is tied to citizenship and in particular, the construction of the compulsory male-citizen subject (Balibar 1991). That is, people of color are often not recognized as subjects and thus are not considered full citizens (Alarcón, Kaplan, and Moallem 1999: 1). For women specifically, notions of citizenship are tied to the body because the body constitutes property. Women's bodies have often constituted their only property; we can therefore understand discourses of violence against women's bodies as a core part of subjectivity. For Chicanas in particular, the past is filled with narratives about maligned Chicana/mestiza bodies that have been, in effect, used in violent ways to confirm male domination, cultural superiority, and imperialistic practices in the borderlands. Displays of violated bodies jolt and self-consciously counteract symbolic and actual violence. The claim that Chicana/Mexicana/indigena subjects are "made by violence" should be taken very seriously. This concept focuses on vital issues that are inadequately discussed in Chicana/o studies, U.S. Latina/o studies, and male-centered Chicano narrative/historical studies. Discussions of violence in Chicana/o studies almost exclusively reference domestic violence, state-sponsored violence, or the original contact with the "colonizers."

VIOLENCE, BODY, SUBJECTIVITY

Describing the material effects of violence on the flesh (physical pain and bodily markers: bloodshed, cuts, lacerations, bruising, or burned corpses), Arteaga (2003) points to the importance of language, represented by ink, to make violence against the sufferer legible. Language and more specifically, language printed upon the page, is what allows us to recall, theorize, and remember violence. Thus we can extend the

analysis of violence and the body to feminist theory and thereby address the gendered, racialized body as a “center of political action and theoretical production” (Grosz 1994: 14–15). With the body as a site of theory, as Moraga (1983), Anzaldúa, (1983) and Grosz (1994) have argued, it is necessary to theorize Chicana subjectivities with an ample discussion of the representational practices that elucidate the gendered and racialized bodies produced with violence.

As I discuss material and representational violence, I propose that they echo each other as material and historical cognates. Hence, a basic question grounds this essay: *why do scenes of violence against Chicanas appear sporadically in the historical record?* From this basic question, the issue of violence and its representation warrants further investigation. My own definition of violence is based upon physical or emotional coercion where an individual or a state attempts to gain power and control over another individual (Eiser 1998). Violence has a material effect upon the body, manifesting in some kind of physical or psychological injury and/or pain. I use the term violence in many different ways to foreground how numerous Chicana cultural producers focus on violence as the means by which subjectivities are produced through abjection and are destroyed simultaneously. Images of the dismembered body, both imagined and real, suggest that it functions as text. Grosz (1994: 117) argues that “the tools of engraving—social, surgical, epistemic, disciplinary—all mar, indeed constitute, bodies in culturally specific ways; the writing instruments—pen, stylus, spur, laser beam, clothing, diet, exercise—function to incise the body’s blank page.” If the body is a text that is written upon and rewritten upon as Grosz suggests, then we can also come to understand the violated body as a living narrative (1994: 118–121). Telling and retelling narratives with the body as text position it in relation to larger cultural and social narratives. When the “engraving” (to use Grosz’s evocative words) is done by force or without consent,¹ that force encapsulates the process by which punishment, discipline, and violence create docile bodies. Creating docile bodies highlights the disciplined body in relationship to the nation-state because discipline, confinement, and punishment inform citizenship (Foucault 1975). Through tracking these processes as they are represented in the historical record and in the national imaginaries, Chicana citizen-subjects must be theorized in relation to power and domination. However, I am not creating a portrait of

victims and victimization; rather, I demonstrate how multiple forms of violence against Chicana, Mexicana, and indigena women are complex, contradictory, and inescapable in larger discussions of subjectivity.

Epistemic violence cites the problematic power differential between intellectual production and individuals who write about the subjects of imperialism and its attendant violence, especially if they are unaware of the histories of their subjects of inquiry (Spivak 1996: 219). Spivak (1996: 219) further argues that such ignorance in the production of history, a conscious choice to not revisit sources with such knowledge, creates a situation where subjects are effaced with discourse. She (1995, 1999) revisits her claims made in "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in her later book *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present*. In her revision of the earlier essay, she argues that the problem is not necessarily whether or not we can hear subaltern women speak, but rather the ways in which "the figure of the woman disappears, not into a pristine nothingness, but into a violent shuttling that is the displaced figuration of the 'third world woman' caught between tradition and modernization, culturalism, and development" (1999: 304). Spivak's observations are quite useful because they question the production of history. Recalling violent shuttling, the process where female historical subjects disappear and occupy a representational space that exists somewhere amid silence, nonexistence, and "a violent aporia between subject and object status," this essay challenges ambiguous historiographies and genealogies that make the bodies of Chicana/Mexicana women disappear from the record (1999: 304). We must re-read these texts that mark a history of destruction of the female body and women's ideological self-debasement as a part of larger ideological and feminist critical projects to counteract symbolic (Bordieu 1995) and material violence (Spivak 1999: 303–311) against Chicana women.

In her discussion of sanctioned ignorance as a historiographic practice, Laura Donaldson (1991), like Spivak (1999), calls into question the "intertextual chain of information retrieval: those who have no firsthand knowledge cite highly touted sources . . . to produce authoritative, but often highly inaccurate, accounts of indigenous experience" (2001: 45). Donaldson critiques how information gets lost as scholars fail to return to the archive or reread it with an intensive background in the histories of Native peoples (American Indians) and native women in particular.

Such a lack of context prevents even the most well-intentioned scholars from escaping the reproduction of ignorance. Citing sanctioned ignorance for what it is, we can move toward a feminist methodology of rereading the archive that revisits the traces and fragments of women's voices and their responses to violence. To counter how "the colonial episteme is maintained by precisely such reiteration or circulation of certain statements and representations," (2001: 47), I reread the archive by examining the role of lynching in the production of Chicana/Mexicana citizen-subjects.

We must contemplate how scenes of reading violence act as disciplinary mechanisms and/or how these scenes of reading violence attempt to break the cycle of discipline. Following Richard Brodhead's argument that the American 1850s, the period following the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (which is no coincidence), constitute a period where "picturing scenes of physical correction emerge as a major form of imaginative activity in America and arguing the merits of such discipline becomes a major item on the American public agenda" (1995: 13) is useful because it engages the terrain of the disciplined body and takes into account the larger temporal scale of this essay. At the same time, his theory on the visibility of physical correction allows for the articulation of the concept—the *disciplinary lesson in citizenship*.

What I mean by *disciplinary lesson in citizenship* is that the practice of representing violence is necessary to heal and expose histories of colonization that force us to imagine ourselves as subjects created through some form of discipline. The editors of *Between Woman and Nation* (Alarcón et al. 1999: 6) argue that "[w]e have a never-ending experience of nation making, through which the vulnerability of certain citizens, some of whom are often in question can be mapped. Often these subjects stand on the edge of contradictory boundaries—equality and liberty, property and individual self-possession, and citizenship itself that the modern nation-state cannot resolve." A *disciplinary lesson in citizenship* is the result of experiencing the very social process they describe.

Through the bodies and lived experiences of women, the process of nation making is spatialized as violence relegates women into the marginal spaces of being unrecognizable to the nation as citizens. This in-between space, the contradictory boundary between the bodies of citizens and the body politic, marks the violent process by which the nation-state contains

the bodies of certain individuals with state-sanctioned violence and laws that limit the movement and actions of these bodies. As legal and extralegal means of social control set up the apparatuses of containment, the paradoxes and contradictions of citizenship or lack thereof emerge. The nation-state remaps itself onto the bodies of its noncitizens and raises the larger question: how do we begin to imagine ourselves in relation to acts of violence the state condones and/or performs?

Contradictory boundaries bring our critical attention to how Chicana historical and aesthetic projects reveal the borderlands culture of violence. These narratives, as a body of collective knowledge, explicitly reveal how violence simultaneously shapes our understanding of Chicana discourse and reframes histories of violence. Josefa/Juanita's multiple narratives dispute "the gap between the real and the discursive" (Brody 2002: 19), foreshadowing the shift to violence in Chicana aesthetic production.² These "texts" produce narratives that rewrite history. Indeed, I contend that violent images maintain omnipresence, which expresses political concerns about brutal and overt forms of violence in this particular body of texts by and about Chicanas. These representational practices, in part, extend to the majority of Chicana texts. As these episodes force us to return to narratives about violated women again and again, such a critical and cultural practice demonstrates that these interfaces can be viewed as the roots of contemporary discussions about Chicana/mestiza subject formation.

Rereading this archive of material is a response to atrocities that are often unspeakable. Judith Herman argues "psychological trauma is an affliction of powerlessness" (1992: 33). To counteract a sense of powerlessness that histories of colonization evoke, writing about trauma is both a formalistic narrative practice and a way to gain reparations for past violence. Representing images of violence against the gendered and racialized body, whether they are of rape, physical torture, or political disenfranchisement, historical and literary practices by and about Chicanas demonstrate that these forces are normalized, enraging, and extraordinary. Attempting to imagine "real" violence and how it was/is experienced by a collective of women who are explicit products of histories of colonization, the texts examined in this essay ask not only what we should see but also what is ethical to tell (Caruth 1996: 26). Thus, through a sense of political necessity and urgency, Chicana cul-

tural producers (and I include myself in this) reengage with a world that is made by violence. That is, they theorize the role of pain and suffering that results from violence against the body and the subject as integral to the production of Chicana subjectivities. To illuminate the prevailing ideas of domination, violence must be read as both a subject of representation and a historical factor. Yet what happens when “native” (Chicana) women disappear from the archive? (Spivak 1999; Donaldson 2001; Alarcón 1998).

A WOMAN OF NO NAMES AND MANY NAMES

The Independence Day celebrations that took place around the newly formed state of California in 1851 marked its one-year anniversary of admission to the Union. The festivities took a violent turn in a small mining community in Yuba County called Downieville. Senatorial candidate John B. Weller³ gave a speech on July 4. The small town erupted in riotous, drunken celebration that lasted into the early hours of the morning. On the following day, July 5, 1851, Josefa, also known as Juanita, stabbed and killed an Englishman named Fred Cannon as he entered her home for a second time. Josefa/Juanita was subsequently lynched because she killed him and he was a well-liked miner. There are many accounts of what actually happened to Cannon, why Josefa/Juanita stabbed him, and why she was lynched. The *Alta California* newspaper states that a scuffle occurred when, after celebrating the 4th of July, the drunken Cannon entered her makeshift home, tearing the door from its hinges, during what was supposedly a larger disturbance. He then returned the following day, apparently to settle his debts, and when he entered her house, Josefa stabbed him in the heart, killing him. The narratives and eyewitness accounts express a general sense of discomfort with the violence as they reveal a meta-narrative of Juanita/Josefa's lynching that differs dramatically from the dominant narrative, especially when speculating that Cannon had previously made unwanted sexual advances toward Josefa/Juanita.⁴ The narratives that follow express a larger ambiguity, shock, horror, and amazement about the lynching and whether or not there was the threat of sexual violence between Cannon and Josefa/Juanita.

This corpus of facts is what historians agree on. Everything after this point is disputable. Some say that the night of the 4th of July, Josefa/Juanita, who was alone in her home, was awakened by a rude disturbance. Cannon had torn the door of her shack from its hinges, trespassing in her home and possibly stealing her scarf from the floor (Seacrest 1967: 9). The drunken marauding episode apparently enraged Josefa, as it was perhaps not the first time that Cannon had accosted her.⁵ Some claim that he had been pursuing her for some time but to no avail. When Cannon returned the next morning to apologize and settle the damages to their home, Jose (her husband/partner) and Cannon engaged in a verbal argument that drew Josefa/Juanita into the conflict. (*Daily Alta* 1851). Apparently, they were speaking Spanish to each other, and in the midst of the argument, Cannon called Josefa/Juanita a whore. Without hesitating, she returned with a sharpened bowie knife and stabbed Cannon in the heart (Hurtado 1999: 134). He died instantly. After the stabbing, Jose and Josefa/Juanita fled to Craycroft's saloon. There, they were apprehended and Josefa/Juanita was brought to the town plaza, where a pseudo-trial took place (Barstow 1887: 7–8). The mob wanted them lynched upon the spot (Barstow 1878: 10). Cannon was popular along the river, and nativist sentiments were running high in light of the celebrations the previous day (Hurtado: 1999: 134). Only two men tried to defend Josefa/Juanita: one of them was Dr. Aiken, a physician who claimed she was pregnant,⁶ the other man, Thayer, protested on the platform. He was ordered by the crowd to think of his own safety and, like Aiken, was driven from the platform as she was sentenced to die (Royce 1886: 293, Older 1995: 223). Jose was run out of town and Josefa/Juanita was given three hours before she would face the lynch mob.⁷ She was escorted to the Jersey Bridge, climbed a scaffold, slipped the noose over her own head, and walked out on a plank that was cut out from under her (*Daily Alta* 1851). The crowd cheered in a scene of ritual male bonding, as the plank was hacked and she dropped to her death. Her body spun and struggled for a half hour before she was removed (Older 1995: 226). The future governor John B. Weller watched the whole event and was accused of pandering to the mob to secure votes as he participated in the lynching as a spectator (Barstow 1887: 9–10). Some speculate that Josefa/Juanita and Cannon were buried in the same grave until they were dug up to build a new theater.⁸

The discursive fight over Josefa/Juanita's body (in the historical documents and accounts that follow) reflects the ways in which Chicana subjects are constructed throughout dominant histories and dominant literary narratives as having no voice and no agency (Spivak 1985: 287). If they did exercise some sort of agency, they were often subjected to some of the most brutal gendered and racialized violence imaginable. In other words, Josefa/Juanita was punished for her agency. At the same time, my discussions of agency demarcate how Chicana/mestiza women had the capacity to act, improvise, innovate, and express dissent within histories of their own making (Donaldson 2001: 50). I track the competing discourses surrounding Josefa's/Juanita's body⁹ as larger battles over the truthful narrative of this woman's brutal death in front of a mob of up to 3,000 men.¹⁰ Lynching, as a socially symbolic act, dramatizes Chicana/o battles for recognition as both citizen and subject in the post-Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo United States. As the brutal treatment of Josefa/Juanita's body confirms, the treaty was ineffective in its promise to extend full citizenship to Mexican Americans. Instead of the possibility of citizenship, the nation-state offers *disciplinary lessons in citizenship*, where the gendered brown body is actually opened up to more violence as a result of the larger imperialist project called statehood in the Southwest.

The act of violence against her body makes this hypervisible. While the body of evidence is sparse, as are the traces of Josefa/Juanita's ability to speak from the archive (Donaldson 2001), her story has fascinated historians and literary critics alike for quite some time. Chicano critics and historians, in particular, evoke her lynched body frequently and in doing so create a sense of collective memory of victimization that is mapped onto the cultural/historical landscape. This is not enough. Revisiting this scene of violence against Josefa/Juanita with feminist methodologies provides a new understanding of how history influences the ways in which the Chicana body is imagined in historical discourse and contemporary critical discussions. In addition, we must also interrogate how Josefa/Juanita's desires are represented. By linking articulations of rage, agency, desire, and pain, we may better understand how radical subjectivities are produced.

Josefa/Juanita's name is unclear in the historical record and points to the larger problem of identifying marginal subjects in traditional

archival sources. Her multiple names and the multiple narratives typify how “native” women are consistently transformed into mestizas who have several names at once (Alarcón 1998: 378–379). She is the figure of *the no-named woman*, as I draw on Anzaldúa’s work in *Borderlands/La Frontera*. Having “no names and many names” signifies how we can reinterpret the narrative of Josefa/Juanita’s lynching as a complex and contradictory moment in larger discussions of Chicana subject formation and historiography because she is named and nameless.

William Seacrest suggests that her name has been adulterated; because of a lack of interest in her story, “she has gone down in history simply as Juanita—Juanita of Downieville” (1967: 7). There is nothing known of her prior to her lynching; it is as if she did not exist as a subject prior to that day. To further confound historians, even her name is in dispute. “Just how the name ‘Juanita’ became associated with the woman is hard to say, but the early newspapers and eyewitness accounts . . . refer to her as Josefa. I see no reason why this shouldn’t be assumed to be her real name” (Seacrest 1967: 7). However, Seacrest still titles his piece “Juanita,” perhaps to mark her “popular” name. In a majority of sources, she is referred to as Juanita. Cora Older begins her tale with a reference to Josefa/Juanita’s name: “at Downieville among the pines and cedars of the towering Sierras, there was Juanita. What was her last name? Quien Sabe? No one in the boisterous mining camp knew or cared” (1995: 219). Older is the only narrator who dares to even think that Juanita/Josefa might have actually had a last name. However, in the same breath that she raises such an important question, she undermines the importance of last names with the explicative in Spanish, “*Quien Sabe?*” which means “Who Knows?” and really, “who cares/cared.” Here, last names mark status in the community as well as status as a citizen. During this time, white women were addressed as Mrs. or Miss _____ and were not called by their first names; calling them by a first name would have been a sign of disrespect. Calling Josefa/Juanita by her first name, then, is an indication that a Mexicana woman was not afforded the same status as white women. In addition, the use of her first name only further feminizes her because a last name would identify her with a male subject (a father or a husband). The contradiction between her popular name and her actual name, for Acuña suggests that her last name was Vasquez, again signals another problem of how Chicana/

Mexicana women are unimportant in the dominant historical record because they are racialized and sexualized as different—so unimportant that no one knew for sure what her name was (Acuña 1988: 119).

I intentionally refer to Juanita or Josefa as Josefa/Juanita to express the unfixed nature of her identity in the numerous accounts that report her lynching. Both names simultaneously evoke fragments of cultural memory (Sturken 1997: 13) to reconstruct some semblance of her experience. At the same time, both names evoke the ambiguous nature of her story and the ambiguity with which the story is retold. Using both names points to why the society that reported her lynching did not even care enough about her as a human being to get her name right or to cite her last name. The shift in names also indicates the presence of her narrative in oral culture, folktales, and larger narratives of gold rush-era California. The story appears and reappears as a folktale where the transgressions of one Mexican woman and the lynch mob who hanged her are repeated to suggest such a horror should not and will not be repeated again. In each retelling, the name is skewed; sometimes she is Josefa, sometimes she is Juanita, sometimes she is simply “the Mexican woman.” Other times she is referred to as the “Spanish-American woman” (Royce 1886: 291), and she is also often called “the greaser” (Older 1995: 223).

Having multiple names or remaining nameless is a phenomenon that Chicana theorist Gloria Anzaldúa describes the state of being “alien.” She writes:

She has this fear that she has no names that she has many names that she doesn't know her names She has this fear that she's an image that comes and goes clearing and darkening the fear that she's the dreamwork inside someone else's skull She has this fear that if she takes off her clothes shoves her brain aside peels off her skin that if she drains the blood vessels strips the flesh from the bone flushes out the marrow . . . She has this fear she won't find the way back . . . Her body betrayed her.¹¹ (1987: 43)

Violence, both epistemic and material, enveloped in having no name and many names, returns us to the mestiza body in a historical context. Anzaldúa posits the potential for the nameless, racialized, sexualized, gendered body to betray itself. While she speaks of her own experience and a collective experience simultaneously, the resonance with Josefa/Juanita's “names” points to an explicit, time-honored Anglo tradition of

misnaming, renaming, and forgetting names and the bodies attached to them. Through the dominant culture's naming and renaming of her body, we experience her body as a historical text, a text that has been written upon by dominant historical narratives that embody the practices of racism, sexism, and nativism. By claiming all of Josefa/Juanita's names, we defy the practice of making her "nameless" and avoid the problematic question of truth in historical scholarship.

Rethinking the narratives that define Josefa/Juanita's subjectivity, to think about her as a speaking subject, and to discuss the terms underlying the historiography of the event reveals much more about the tellers of her narrative, who were, for the most part, white men who witnessed the event.¹² In my quest to understand Josefa/Juanita's story, it has been almost impossible to find a large amount of information about her in historical records.¹³ Even when we attempt to seek out individuals and histories to try to correct the dominant discourses of erasure, the lack of information says so much about how Chicana histories are or are not recorded. Lack of attention to the detail of this lynching, the conflicting accounts about it, and a larger analysis of the role of gender and sexuality are critical to understanding how and why Josefa/Juanita met her brutal death. Josefa/Juanita only becomes visible in the historical record because she was lynched. Had she not been lynched, we may well have never known she even existed. As historian H. H. Bancroft argues, "no one thought of her" until the stabbing and the lynching (1887: 582). Thus the competing narratives that begin with the discrepancy about Josefa/Juanita's name and end with the different version of what actually happened demonstrate how those who wrote eyewitness accounts of the lynching were implicated in the production of its larger meaning.

THE COMPETING NARRATIVES OVER JOSEFA/JUANITA'S BODY

In the article "Woman Hung at Downieville," the authors contextualize and legitimate Josefa/Juanita's rage in killing Cannon, in contrast to the accounts given by Bancroft (1887), among other historians, which attribute her rage to biologically deterministic stereotypes linked to racism. The editorial states:

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We are informed by Deputy Sheriff Gray, that on Saturday afternoon a Spanish woman was hung for stabbing to the heart a man by the name of Cannon, killing him instantly. Mr. Gray informed us that the deceased, in the company with some others, had the night previously entered the house of the woman and created a *riot and disturbance*, which *so outraged her*, that when he presented himself the next morning to apologize for his behavior, he was met at the door by the female, who had in her hand a large Bowie knife, which she instantly drove into his heart. (*Alta California* 1851, my emphasis)

With discourses of injury, assault, and violent disorder, the newspaper highlights the invasive nature of Cannon's presence in Josefa/Juanita's home. Cannon's entrance is marked as a crime of outrage and extreme disturbance to Josefa's living space and her body. On one hand, this account is not transparent, because it reinforces the stereotype of the angry brown woman. On the other hand, the article expresses a sense of sympathy for Josefa/Juanita because her outrage is justified by the editors.

The lynching is questioned by the staff at the *Daily Alta* as they interrogate the exceedingly contradictory nature of what it means to be an American citizen.

The violent proceedings of an indignant and excited mob, led by the enemies of the unfortunate woman, are a blot upon the history of the state. Had she committed a crime of really heinous character, a real American would have revolted at such a course as was pursued towards this friendless and unprotected *foreigner*. We had hoped that the story was fabricated. As it is the perpetrators of the deed have shamed themselves and their race! (July 14, 1851, my emphasis)

As the actual lynching puts Josefa/Juanita's citizenship into question (she is referred to as a foreigner), the editors clearly side with her by calling the perpetrators un-American. Sympathy denotes real discomfort because the victim of the lynch mob was a woman. The editors can only read Josefa as a foreigner and not as a Mexican American, because the assumption is that Mexicans are not Americans, without expressing a type of regional and national consciousness that is democratic and without appealing to extreme violence. Framing the lynch mob as un-American instead of belonging to a nativist framework

underscores the friction inherent in what constitutes a “real American.” Apparently, Josefa/Juanita does not represent “real Americans,” nor does the lynch mob. Women like Josefa/Juanita become the ultimate challenge to American democratic beliefs and Victorian notions of womanhood and the people who claim to uphold them. Josefa/Juanita is not seen as an American citizen, and her presence challenged the mob to think about citizenship rights in a different manner. Ironically, in an effort to defend Josefa/Juanita’s course of action as something outside of a “crime of a really heinous character,” the *Daily Alta* reinscribes how she is always/already un-American. Hysteria around the “foreign” body is quieted as the editors impose “racial shame” upon an unlikely object in that historical moment, upon the lynch mob. The mob stains American character and marks the literal shedding of the blood in Josefa’s body. Moreover, the *Daily Alta* is most concerned with portraying a sympathetic image of the “unprotected foreigner” to create a countercultural narrative of a highly contested scene of violence. Sympathy creates even more ambiguity surrounding lynching as a cultural practice and the larger processes by which Chicana subjects are constituted.

Many historians, such as H. H. Bancroft and Seacrest, make excuses that there were too few women in gold rush California to justify violence against them on the frontier. Narrative histories of Downieville claim that there was a shortage of women in the town in 1850 and well into 1851. Older (1995: 219) claims that in 1851 there were less than eight Mexican women along the Yuba River and that “most decent women kept away from Downieville and other camps” (1995: 219). Ferris and Smith state that there were less than a dozen white and Spanish women in the town (1882: 458). Seacrest further argues that one of the biggest problems in the settlement of the western frontier was the lack of women. Subscribing to a Victorian middle-class notion of womanhood, he writes, “women were venerated and cherished, because they represented homes and families that had been left behind” (1967: 6). Feminine presence is determined by the idea that women embodied civilizing influences. But it seems the racialized female body differs in the logic of Victorian femininity.

The meaning of Josefa/Juanita’s lynching was destabilized when a group of women were spotted entering Durgan Flat, a mining area out-

side of Downieville. One woman became afraid of the mob of men that approached her: "As they neared town it grew dark, and the miners crowded in from up and down the river, cheering and yelling up the crowded main street, till they landed at the Gem Saloon. One of the women was so frightened that when she entered she fainted, fearing that they were going to be lynched, as the Spanish woman had been hung by a mob on the 5th of July that same year" (Ferris and Smith 1882: 457). Downieville, as a place, was associated with a lynched woman's body. Effective production of space through memory, Mary Pat Brady argues, reproduces and "draw[s] attention to how the regulation of space reinforces the regulation of desire and pleasure, as well as the extent to which social reality, in all its minutiae, is spatialized" (2002: 135). Even an Anglo woman who journeys to the mining town to seek a wealthy miner/husband faints in horror when she is confronted by the spatial memories attached to Downieville. Here, the bodies of the two women are linked, as the white woman's body recalls Josefa/Juanita's body as it produces an emotive and physical response to this history. What seems like an anecdotal line in a history text is really a cultural narrative that points to how any woman who came to Downieville in the 1850s after Josefa/Juanita's lynching could identify with the peril of the violated female body. Just as memory haunts the women entering Durgan Flat, the Spanish/Mexican/mestiza heritage that identifies Josefa/Juanita disappears because of the way the white woman registers her own fear. In this way, Josefa/Juanita becomes a racially universal subject that represents the potential violence women had to contend with in mining towns.

During the kangaroo court that took place prior to the lynching, the bodies of wives and daughters were evoked to quell the hungry mob. Once again, Josefa/Juanita's body is linked to the bodies of other women outside of the event. David Barstow Pierce says he witnessed the following: "During the trial of the woman, ———(?)¹⁴ had to be brought into requisition to keep the mob back; they would once in a while make a rush for her, and the ——— (contenders) of the prosecution would have to appeal to them, calling on them to remember their wives and daughters, to give this woman a fair trial, and in that way they were kept quiet until the woman was executed" (1878: 10). As the prosecution calls on them to remember the bodies of their wives and daughters, women's bodies that they know intimately, bodies that they themselves would

hopefully never defile, the link between women representing civilization and purity is the only thing that temporarily saves Josefa/Juanita from being dismembered. The delay of her death is sadistic and torturous as well. Men's own sense of honor and masculinity are evoked so the trial can take place. The lynching would have taken place with or without the psuedo-court or the evocation of familial intimacy based on heterosexual gender norms.

Focus on Josefa/Juanita's body brings us to larger concerns raised by historian Antonia Castañeda's reinterpretations of portrayals of nineteenth-century Mexican women, often written in the travel journals of white settlers. These women, she argues, are represented as "purely sexual creatures. . . . [W]omen of easy virtue and latent infidelity easily led to the stereotype of the Mexicana as a prostitute in the literature of the gold rush" (Castañeda 1990: 216). While most of the accounts surrounding Josefa/Juanita's lynching do not overtly argue that she was a prostitute, they do point to a laxity of morals surrounding her character.¹⁵ In line with the tradition of highly sexualized accounts of Mexican women on the frontier, Bancroft, the newspapers, and Seacrest allude to Josefa/Juanita's beauty and her small feminine frame. Describing Cannon's murderer, Bancroft states:

It was a little woman; young too—only twenty-four. Scarcely five feet in height, with a slender symmetrical figure, agile and extremely graceful in her movements. With soft skin of olive hue, long black hair, and dark, deep, lustrous eyes, opening like a window to the fagot-flames which kindled with love or hate, hone brightly from within. Mexico was her country; her blood Spanish, diluted with the aboriginal American. Her name was Juanita. (1887: 581)

It is assumed that the violence in her nature ("the fagot-flames kindled with love or hate") makes Josefa/Juanita at once prone to disobedient, episodic outbreaks of rage and passion. At the same time she is desirable and beautiful. Although her blood is the product of racial *mestizaje* and Bancroft deploys the discourse of scientific racism to prove this point, he fixates on the idea that her "nature" makes her predisposed to acting with extreme and uncontrollable passion. Although she is portrayed as a tempting Mexican seductress, the fact that Josefa/Juanita kills Cannon

suggests that she did not desire him. As a result, Josefa/Juanita's story is one of a larger power struggle about desire and the thwarting of desire. Passion is a code word that rationalizes and pathologizes her anger, misreading her desire to be free of harassment. In these descriptions, she becomes a colonial subject of sexual fantasy (Perez 1999). Indeed, all of the accounts communicate the larger desires of the tellers.

Reinscribing the male gaze in his twentieth-century retelling, Seacrest further questions her moral standards through her relationships with her husband and/or live-in partner Jose:

Some of the miners stared hungrily at the young Mexican girl, but whatever her moral standards were, she seemed to be content with her Jose. Josefa was attractive by all accounts, and a contemporary described her as "rather low in stature, stout built, with raven tresses that flowed freely over her neck and shoulders—black eyes, teeth regular and of pearly white." She might be called pretty, so far as the style of swarthy Mexican Beauty is so considered. She dressed with considerable attention to taste. (1967: 8)

Josefa's appearance evokes miners' sexual desires instead of Josefa's own desires. In other words, either despite her racial identity or because of her racial identity, she was in fact sexually desirable. The lynching, perhaps, can be linked to a larger sense of animosity toward Josefa/Juanita, in that she did not concede to the sexual desires of any of the miners in the camp. Perhaps the lynching stood as a way to enact their sexual frustration and larger animosity toward the love object that they could never fully own. Destruction of her beauty through an act of disfigurement stands in complete contrast to the accounts that speak of her beauty, grace, gentility, and attention to taste, even if she was "the Mexican" (Bancroft 1887: 582).

David Pierce Barstow's *Recollections of 1849–51 in California* provides one of the few eyewitness accounts that counter these sexualized images of Josefa/Juanita: "She was a very comely, quiet, gentle creature apparently, and behaved herself with a great deal of propriety" (1878: 7). Reinscribing Victorian ideals of womanhood, Barstow understands Josefa/Juanita as harmless, a woman who conducted herself as a lady. However, the tension arises when Barstow later states "there was considerable bad feeling towards Mexican gamblers and women generally,

and there was no other way but to hang her" (1878: 10). Racial conflict demonstrates how the categories of identification, Mexican gambler¹⁶ and Mexican woman, collapse into singular meaning. Collapsing two signifiers reveals a desire to eliminate such cultural transgressors. While Barstow does not suggest that Josefa/Juanita was a prostitute, he does link gambling with Mexican womanhood. Slippage in meaning causes gambling and prostitution to be linked as socially deviant behaviors. Seacrest suggests that she was a saloon girl (1976: 7). After looking at the 1850 census records for Yuba County, I discovered that Josefa/Juanita's name was nowhere to be found. Most of the women recorded in the census were white—the number totaled 181.¹⁷ Four of the women were black. Mexican women were not designated on the census unless they were designated by place of birth or surname and not by their racial identities.¹⁸ Their occupations were innkeepers (10), store keepers (8), assistants (5), and cook (1). Older suggests that Josefa was a homemaker.¹⁹ Although it is unclear what Josefa's occupation was,²⁰ her status as prostitute or homemaker is not the most important issue, because her story was central to the formation of gendered and racial identities in gold rush California.

Josefa/Juanita's lynching has cultural implications for Chicana/o citizenship as well. Competing discourses (eyewitness accounts, newspapers, and historical texts), discourses that literally compete for ownership of Juanita/Josefa's body, frame a larger discussion of institutionalized/vigilante violence against Chicanas in the post-1848 American Southwest. While Josefa/Juanita's life and subsequent lynching do not represent all violence against Chicana women, her life and hanging do, however, shed light upon the nature of public violence and its relationship to subjectivity, race, gender, and sexuality in a particular historical moment. In light of the rights guaranteed by articles X and XI of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, how are we then to understand the infraction of these rights through the lynching as a larger part of the bitter disputes that Mexico's former citizens were disposable (Horseman 1981)? Josefa/Juanita's narratives, in their many incarnations, show a continuum of violence as a mechanism of socialization. They also show a crisis in meaning (Goldsby 1998), where lynching's violence defined and created boundaries between Mexican-American and "American" citizens. Texts on Josefa/Juanita's life and lynching are not uniform, nor do I mean to

suggest that they are. Josefa/Juanita's lynching and the competing narratives offer a commentary on the ideological construct of woman's body as nation and woman's body as land. Her lynched body functions as a sign of the transformation of governance in California. Violence intimately shapes the process of personhood becoming a subject. The gendered subtext does not permit her to completely speak for herself in archival records. Only her actions speak to us as utterances, which hypothesize a possible history of sexual violation, and provide fragments of agency. Josefa/Juanita becomes a speaking subject in the historical record only because she was lynched.

CONCLUSION

Josefa/Juanita's stories provide a complex point of entry to Chicana critical discussions of subjectivity. Her "texts" collectively recall a history of disciplining the body. Even though these histories can be misinterpreted with women in the role of the victim, historical narratives like these demonstrate why we should identify the inherent contradictions and difficulties in writing historiography of women who did not always have access to modes of self-representation (what most would consider valid historical evidence). If we dispute the multiple "records" that constitute historical discourses, we can formulate alternative readings of these "records" that mobilize contemporary discourse on the political implications of gender, race, and sexuality in the period we call post-conquest.

By returning to the scene of Josefa/Juanita's lynching, the events operate as models for understanding the how violence produces personhood. The narratives become assertions of identity and subjectivity. In effect, these narratives gesture toward a larger, more collective cultural memory that is shaped by violent histories. Dialogues on lynching question discourse and the symbolic meaning of women's bodies and citizenship in larger violence- and subjectivity-related Chicana and Latina critical projects. Here, property becomes the crux of a more complex feminist rendering of subjectivity in a borderlands context. Josefa/Juanita does not become a subject in the historical record until inhumane public violence is inflicted upon her body (her property).

Simultaneously, physical and symbolic violence can be read as an undoing of subjectivity in the sense that they are experienced as some type of extreme injury of the body, whether it is physical or psychological (Eiser 1998). In Josefa/Juanita's case, the lynching ended her life in a ritualistic, public, extremely grotesque fashion. In an attempt to exert agency over her body (for whatever reason it was and this we cannot readily determine), her lynching reinforces how Chicana/Mexicana women's bodies constitute the property of their citizenship. Reading the inconsistencies in the historical record around Josefa/Juanita's lynching provides a useful model for understanding the pitfalls in reconstructing Chicana histories. While we sometimes can only speculate and not reproduce ignorant histories that put words in their mouths, larger cultural and symbolic meanings complicate the facile deployment of the term "resistance" and allow us to look more deeply at the complex changes in citizenship that continue to effect Chicana, Mexicana, and indigená women in this present moment. One only need to look at the murdered, dismembered, sexually violated, disappeared women of Juárez for such evidence.

As a part of a collective Chicana/Mexicana communal memory, these melancholy narratives remind us of histories of brutality that meet at the interstices of gender, sexuality, race, and violence. Reading scenes of violence as a *disciplinary lesson in citizenship* provides a feminist model for understanding how violence produces personhood. When we read the narratives collectively, we learn that narratives commenting on violence (material, symbolic, epistemic, imagined) and cultural memory are shaped by brutal, vicious histories as a part of national public space (Holloway 2002: 187). From this archeology of violence and discipline, to use Foucault's words, I hope that the knowledge of the violent past can help us construct a feminist future that gives new meaning to our sense of hope and our desire to survive.

NOTES

1. Carl Gutierrez-Jones (1995: 44) argues that the consent/force paradigm is "embedded in a larger dismantling of patriarchal manipulations. In both Chicano and Chicana narratives, the consent/force dichotomy exists, from the nonlegitimate victim's per-

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spective, as a rhetorical tool promoting discrimination at the very least, and most often outright disenfranchisement.”

2. A longer version of this essay compares Gloria Anzaldúa's (1987) lynching poem “We Called Them Greasers” to Josefa/Juanita's lynching as a larger part of critical debates on Chicana subjectivity and violence. I suggest that Chicana/U.S. Mexicana writers like Anzaldúa invest in ideological and literary projects that expose overlooked or silenced bodily and social violations, both in Chicana conceptions of subjectivity and in dominant representations in U.S. history and popular culture.

3. Weller would later become the governor of California. He stopped in Downieville to sway voters in the upcoming election. Weller also witnessed the lynching and did nothing to stop it.

4. When Cannon entered her home for the first time, he tried to bury his face in her heavy hair (Older 1995: 222).

5. Josefa/Juanita testified that she took the knife to defend herself because a young Mexican boy had told her that some of the boys wanted to get in her room and sleep with her. She said she was so frightened that she took a knife to defend herself. (Mirandé and Enríquez 1979: 70). In addition, she told the deceased not to call her bad names and invited him into the house where she stabbed him (Seacrest 1967: 22). Seacrest's and Aldama's accounts are the only ones that suggest the threat of rape or that a rape occurred. In Seacrest's account, there are no footnotes indicating where the testimony came from.

6. Aiken's widow states that her husband lied about the pregnancy because “he would do anything to help a friend” (Older 1995: 228).

7. Barstow says she was given a half hour to prepare for her death (1878: 8). Older states she was given three hours to live (1995: 224). Seacrest states that she was given two hours to prepare for her death (1967: 24).

8. With this ending, Older's claims oddly put the story in terms of unrequited love between two ill-fated lovers. Perhaps their reunion through burial together is Older's way to classify Josefa/Juanita's lynching as a romance; this twisted ending suggests that Cannon and Josefa/Juanita are united only in death, much like Romeo and Juliet (Older 1995: 227).

9. There was also speculation that Josefa/Juanita was with child at the time of her lynching. Older claims that Juanita was not pregnant and that Dr. Aiken, one of her only known friends in Downieville, lied in an attempt to save her life (Older 1995: 228).

10. The number of men who participated as spectators varies from account to account, from as few as 500 to as many as 3,000.

11. Alarcón (1998: 374) argues that “the name Chicana, in the present, is the name of resistance that enables cultural and political points of departure and thinking through the multiple migrations and dislocations of women of ‘Mexican’ descent. The name Chicana is not a name that women (or men) are born to or with, as is often the case with ‘Mexican,’ but rather it is consciously and critically assumed and serves as a point of re-departure for dismantling historical conjectures of crisis, confusion, political and ideological conflict, and contradictions of the simultaneous effects of having ‘no names,’ having ‘many names,’ not ‘knowing her names,’ and being someone else's ‘dreamwork’ . . .

The idea of plural historicized bodies is proposed with respect to the multiple racial constructions of the body since the discovery.”

12. Johnson's (2000) *Roaring Camp* discusses the southern mines that did not include Downieville. She problematizes this question of racial homogeneity by discussing the role of Chileans, Chinese, French, black, and Mexican men and women in the mines. However, the 1850 census for Yuba County, where Downieville was located, is predominately Anglo-American. There are around 56 blacks and mulattoes counted on the census for that year, out of 4,982 total inhabitants.

13. Spivak discusses this problem of excavation. She argues that the “nineteenth-century European historiography had designated the archives as a repository of ‘facts,’ . . . The Colonizer constructs himself as he constructs the colony. The relationship is intimate, an open secret that cannot be a part of official knowledge” (2001: 203). As she questions how a colonizing historian constitutes an official history, Spivak marks the ways in which colonial epistemologies prevent the historical record from representing the voices of colonized women with accuracy. Josefa/Juanita emerges as one of those minimally documented individuals in frontier history where we are left to interpret the questions of agency and resistance from “official” fragments.

14. The handwriting on the document was illegible at this point.

15. Leonard Pitt states that she was a Mexican prostitute (1966: 73).

16. There were two miners listed by the name of Jose. Their place of birth was listed as Mexico. All of the narratives about Juanita/Josefa state that Jose was forced out of mining and into gambling.

17. The actual terms to designate racial identity on the census were “W” for White, “B” for black, and “M” for mulatto.

18. Because Mexican women and other Latina women and men are not designated by their own category on the census, it makes them particularly hard to find in these already unreliable and inconsistent records.

19. “In the sparkling morning air Juanita baked bread in the outdoor oven built by Jose. Her blithe fingers spun out flat tortillas for him. Afternoons she made fine embroidery and Mexican drawn work, or sang to her guitar” (Older 1995: 220).

20. Susan Johnson argues that Mexican women sold food, worked as laundresses for their own parties, and sold their gendered labor to other miners as such services were in great demand because of the lack of women. These shortages of gendered labor, cooking, and laundering also bent gender boundaries, as Chinese men were often forced into these occupations that further perpetuated a discourse of their femininity and racial inferiority. Perhaps Josefa/Juanita was there for a similar reason (2000: 30–31).

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4

TALKING ACROSS LATINIDADESDisidentificatory Feminism in *El Mundo Zurdo*Karina Lissette Céspedes¹

We have to figure out how to talk across *latinidades* rather than through disciplinary studies, you know what I'm saying?—Caridad Souza

This statement by Caridad Souza challenges those in Latina feminist studies to expand our understanding, our approach, and our scholarship on Latinas. It is a request for us to focus less on our respective disciplines, or “the field,” and instead talk and listen to one another with connection versus solution as our agenda. This statement is also a challenge to move outside our comfort zone, to talk across, yet beyond, race, class, gender, sexuality, spiritual differences, and the humble yet embarrassed “etc.” found often within the list of social inequalities and identities which must be addressed. The embarrassed “etc.” which often concludes this list in fact bursts with significance because it not only marks the limitation of dealing with named, identity-based politics² but moreover because the kind of transformation of self that we must have the courage to embrace cannot be contained within a finite list of external social identities.

Yet once we attempt to talk across *Latinidades*, to talk across all of the things we know the term “Latina” to mean, and to be used for, then a mode of approaching Latinidades emerges that is not solely about solving

a “problem” but is instead about remaining open to pursue new ways of thinking about what it means to *be* a problem, and what it means to simultaneously navigate the hostile institutional demands of managing diversity. Such an approach would lead to a conversation about what it means to reach a place where the legacy and integrity of differences can be valued and what it means to arrive at a place beyond the pressures of having “the answers.”

To talk across Latinidades imagines the possibility of creating meaning among landscapes of uncertainty. It asks us to consider what our research look like if we were to tap into the consciousness that bestows upon us the right to live and work toward possibility, as opposed to remaining paralyzed and dissatisfied with the falsities offered up as answers and solutions.³ If we take Souza’s challenge seriously, then what it conventionally means to talk across Latinidades, categorical “difference” changes and we no longer confuse a map with a place, a landmark with an epoch, a site with a consciousness. Moreover, for those of us grappling with the scripting of subalternity, in the Spivakian tradition, this approach extends toward a practice that not only asks whether the subaltern can speak but also questions whether she can be heard. Hence, to talk across Latinidades requires that we refuse to map “dysfunction” and access not only a consciousness of resistance but a methodology of love.

This process is not a new endeavor but a project that can be traced back to the political and theoretical interventions of women of color feminists,⁴ and to the multiple ways in which Latina feminist theory challenged the collecting of information on Latina populations while taking great risks to open up the exploration and celebration of sexuality and spirituality, attempting as Cherri Moraga put it, to “feed women in all of their hungers.”⁵ The ensuing theoretical contributions of Latina feminists⁶ produced a new vocabulary and provided a “standpoint” from which was summoned a theory and method of oppositional consciousness.⁷ This is precisely what led to the publication of *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* and *Making Faces, Making Soul, Haciendo Caras: Creative and Critical Perspectives by Women of Color*. These texts point to the racialized body as foundational to a Latina/women of color feminist standpoint; a theory in the flesh which is what Souza insists we tap into in order to talk not across disciplines but across Latinidades.

Cherrie Moraga, in *This Bridge*, states that a theory in the flesh is one where the physical realities of our lives—our skin color, the land or concrete we grew up on, our sexual longings—all fuse to create a politics born out of necessity. To this Moraga adds,

We do this bridging by naming ourselves and by telling our stories in our own words . . . We are interested in pursuing a society that uses flesh and blood experiences to concretize a vision that can begin to heal our “Wounded Knee” (Moraga 1981: 21).

Yet the flesh and blood theorizing needed to heal all our respective “Wounded Knee(s)” did not mean that connections or alliances were produced easily, prompting Cherrie Moraga (1983) to remark that “the idea of Third World feminism⁸ has proved to be much easier between the covers of a book than between real live women.”⁹ Moraga, interested in understanding why this was so, observed:

What lies between the lines are the things that women of color do not tell each other. As Audre Lorde states, “Difference is that raw and powerful connection from which our personal power is forged.” It is critical now that Third World feminists begin to speak directly to the specific issues that separate us . . . As Third World women, we understand the importance, yet limitations of race ideology to describe our total experience. Cultural differences get subsumed when we speak of “race” as an isolated issue: where does the Black Puerto Rican sister stake out her alliance in this country, with the Black community or the Latin? And color alone cannot define her status in society—How do we compare the struggles of the middle-class Black woman and those of a light-skinned Latina welfare mother? Further, how each of us perceives our ability to be radical against this oppressive state is largely affected by our economic privilege and our specific history of colonization in the U.S. Some of us were brought here . . . as slaves, others had our . . . birthright taken away from us, some of us are the daughters . . . of immigrants. (1981: 105)

And, perhaps the fact that differences, which are a source of connection (Lorde), get added to the list which concludes with the and embarrassed “etc,” are just as well erased when we racialize *Latinidad*, reveals that mapping power and talking across *Latinidades* requires something well beyond the ability to read forms of domination as “artifacts;” it re-

quires something beyond a standpoint or a position.¹⁰ Race becomes important and hence Latinidad is racialized because we want to and need to map power; we need to access a structure of feeling (Williams 1997) about oppression that addresses the powerful misrepresentation Latinas face on a daily basis and so an “artifact” is created out of racialized Latinidad and we pay the high price of subsuming difference. Loosing sight of the originating liberatory intent by gathering these artifacts as if they may protect us creates other limitations that lock us into counterstancial positions.

As Gloria Anzaldúa observed, in order for us to speak across Latinidades, it will not be enough to stand on the opposite riverbank, shouting questions, challenging patriarchal, white conventions (1987: 78). This shouting match merely places us within a counterstance which although refutes the dominant culture, is limited by, and dependent on, what it is reacting against. Anzaldúa believed that “at some point, on our way to a new consciousness, we will have to leave the opposite bank, the split between the two mortal combatants somehow healed so that we are on both shores at once and, at once, see through serpent and eagle eyes” (1987: 79). A massive uprooting of dualistic thinking in the individual and collective consciousness is only the beginning of a long struggle, but one that could bring us to the end of rape, of violence, of war (1987: 81). Once we decide to disengage and disidentify and decide to act and not react the possibilities of engagement that become available are numerous. This perspective, and these numerous possibilities, initially leaves la mestiza/la Scholar floundering in uncharted seas. For now that the act of reacting to a “problem” is not our focus then the question that emerges is “What is *our* focus and purpose?”

LA CONSCIENCIA DE LA MESTIZA

She has this fear
that she has no names
that she has many names
that she doesn't know her names
She has this fear

that she's an image
 that comes and goes
 clearing and darkening
 the fear that she's the dreamwork inside
 Someone else's skull . . .

She has this fear that if she digs into herself
 she won't find anyone
 that when she gets "there"
 she won't find her notches on the trees . . .
 she has this fear that she won't find the way
 Back

—Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/
 La Frontera: The New Mestiza*

The larger Latina feminist project at hand is that of collectively rewriting the story of "the fall" (whether it was Eve's desire for knowledge/power, or Malinche's betrayal) and the story of western progress.¹¹ As the Latina scholar attempts to reverse the Cartesian split that turned the world into an "other," her body is still "la otra," and though *pensamientos dualisticos* still keep her from embracing and uniting corporally con "esa otra," she dreams of the possibility of wholeness. Yet the Latina/woman of color scholar may fear that she is someone else's dreamwork, that if she digs into herself there may not be anyone there, and that she cannot get back—the "notches" she left as tracks are gone. Yet, getting "lost" is a path toward *la consencia de la mestiza* that may not guarantee that one "gets back" but that one arrives somewhere altogether different. This exact location where the Latina scholar stands feeling unsure if there is a way back, is the place where Anzaldúa believed "phenomena collide," and is precisely where the possibility of uniting all that is separate occurs. It is the place where one finds the courage to write against "the fall," western progress, and renditions of our bodies as "the problem." It makes way for the ability to inscribe into history those lived realities that would otherwise be erased—while revealing, and understanding, the complexity of Latina identities.¹²

One of many theorists that early on understood our counterstancial relationship to “the fall”/western progress and most importantly understood the disidentificatory potential of testimonial writing was Gloria Anzaldúa, whose crucial theoretical concepts, *mestiza consciousness*¹³ (1987) and “*el mundo zurdo*” (1981), served as a springboard for theorizing Latinidades in the academy. Anzaldúa described *mestiza consciousness* as the creating of a new mythos—that is, a change in the way we perceive reality, the way we see ourselves, and the ways we behave (1987: 81). For Anzaldúa,

whirlwinds of different belief systems build the muscles of *mestiza consciousness*, enabling it to stretch. Being Chicana (indigenous, Mexican, Basque, Spanish, Berber-Arab, Gypsy) is no longer enough, being female, woman of color . . . queer no longer suffices. Your resistance to identity boxes leads you to a different tribe, a different story (of *mestizaje*) enabling you to rethink yourself in more global-spiritual terms instead of conventional categories of color, class, career . . .

It calls you to retribalize your identity to a more inclusive one, redefining what it means to be *una mexicana de este lado*, and American in the U.S., a citizen of the world, classifications reflecting an emerging planetary culture. In this narrative national boundaries dividing us from the “others” (*nos/otras*) are porous and the cracks between worlds serve as gateways. (2001: 561)

This perspective reveals that the work of *mestiza consciousness* is to break down the subject-object duality that keeps her/the Latina feminist scholar and the Latina population under investigation, prisoner. Here, identity categories used to mark bodies as “Latina” are no longer enough, and one result of stretching our consciousness is what Anzaldúa calls a “retribalization” that serves as a gateway into other worlds. One of these other worlds is a space she called *el mundo zurdo* (the left-handed world). The vision of radical third world feminism, according to Anzaldúa, necessitated not merely a standpoint but, moreover, our willingness to live and work in *el mundo zurdo*. Anzaldúa described *el mundo zurdo* as a space, a consciousness, where the colored, the queer, the poor, the female, those abandoned, and the physically challenged reside. It is a two-way path—a going deep into the self and an expanding

out into the world, a simultaneous recreation of the self and a reconstruction of society" (1981: 232). To illustrate the concept of *el mundo zurdo*, Anzaldúa turned to the image of a milagro, a tiny silver left hand with a heart in its palm. This object (the milagro) characterized the possibility of engaging multiple worlds.

La mano zurda with a heart in its palm is for engaging with self, others, world. The hand represents acting out and daily implementing an idea or vision, as opposed to merely theorizing about it. The heart *es un corazón con razon*, with intelligence, passion, and purpose, a "mindful" heart with ears for listening, eyes for seeing, a mouth with tongue narrowing to a pen tip for speaking/writing. The left hand is not a fist *pero una mano abierta* raised with others in struggle, celebration, and song. (Anzaldúa 2001: 571)

Anzaldúa's left-handed world, or *el mundo zurdo*, provides us with a vocabulary with which to articulate our yearning to be in relation.

The ethos of those who occupy *el mundo zurdo* emerges from the understanding that not all of us have the same oppressions, or the same ideology, nor do we derive similar solutions. Some of us "are leftists, some of us practitioners of magic . . . some of us are both" (Anzaldúa 1983: 232). But these different affinities are not opposed to each other. In *el mundo zurdo*, "I with my own affinities and my people with theirs can live together and transform the planet" (1983: 232).

Those who choose to reside in or travel to *el mundo zurdo* tend to be those who are always/already "world travelers" as a matter of necessity and survival. Those who are "world travelers," according to philosopher Maria Lugones (1990), have the distinct experience of being different in different "worlds." Lugones states that there are "worlds" we enter at our own risk, "worlds" that have conquest and arrogance as the main ingredients in their ethos. These are "worlds" that we enter out of necessity and which we would be foolish to enter playfully. But there are "worlds" that we can travel to lovingly and traveling to them is part of loving at least some of their inhabitants. Through traveling to other people's worlds we discover that those who are victims of arrogant perception are lively beings, resistors, constructors of visions, even though in the mainstream construction they are pliable, file-awayable, classifiable (Lugones 1990: 395).

The act of “world traveling” for the purpose of speaking across Latinidades animates Anzaldúa’s concept of *el mundo zurdo*. The experience is one where one is on both sides of the process, sharing and generating *testimonios* and or “world traveling” as *la scholar*.

THIS SCHOLAR’S “WORLD TRAVELING” TO JULIETTE’S MUNDO ZURDO

We are the people who leap in the dark, we are the people on the knees of the gods. In our very flesh, (r)evolution works out the clash of cultures. It makes us crazy constantly, but if the center holds, we’ve made some kind of evolutionary step forward . . . the opus, the great alchemical work; spiritual mestizaje, a ‘morphogenesis, an inevitable unfolding.—Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*

For this Latina scholar “world traveling” becomes a significant method within a project on the emergence of Cuban sex work (Jineteras) during the decade of the 1990s, a project that would be otherwise more concerned with the questions of the “field” and the demand of solving this [version of Latinas as a] problem than with understanding what is being lived by jineteras. Utilizing Lugones’ definition of “world-traveling” becomes a way of grappling with the social category of jineteras and seeing them as more than a demographic and quantifiable group but as the racially mixed daughters of a socialist revolution who stand at a juncture where “phenomena collide.” Caught by both the complexities of colonization and the presence of globalization, they occupy a geopolitical space where “in their flesh (r)evolution works out the clash of cultures.” From such a perspective emerges the understanding that jineteras are not merely poor sex workers but that their existence is due to one of many such major clashes of cultures and commerce as the Soviets withdrew their neocolonial presence, alongside their trade and aid, from Cuba. The Soviet withdrawal resulted in an economic crisis that lasted “officially” for over a decade and “unofficially” stretches into the “historical future.”¹⁴ This economic crisis required the Cuban state to turn toward tourism, and it also required many Cuban women, particularly those within the post-Soviet era categorized as “jineteras,” to single-

handedly maintain themselves, their families, and the nation¹⁵ while all the while enduring the state's response to the "phenomena" of selling sex within a socialist nation of criminalizing sex work and promising to eradicate the "deviancy" that was producing the "jinetera problem."

One powerful example of Cuban jineteras's commitment to surviving this phenomenological collision can be found in the documentary, *Who the Hell is Juliette?* (1997), directed by Carlos Marcovichj which chronicles the life of a sixteen-year-old jinetera from Havana named Juliette. Juliette in this film is a savvy "world-traveler" occupying space within both a symbolic and brutally real "*mundo zurdo*" of her own. Juliette's world is marked by the remnants of a socialist revolution, and she inhabits a space where the abandoned, the outlaw, the poor reside and where retribualizations of leftists and practitioners of magic occurs.

When Juliette was asked by the director of the documentary what it was that she most desired for herself and other Cubans, she responded:

"I want people to have what they need without having to do things they don't want to do."

When asked what she sees as the outcome of the documentary on her life, she in one scene bitterly, and in another playfully, answers:

"This is the story of a young girl who may die for being a prostitute but not of hunger."

Juliette, with these two sentences, declares both her wish for a different lot in life and her commitment to survive the sort of hunger that forces racialized populations to endure the violence of commodification.¹⁶ Moreover, Juliette's brutally bitter and playful responses are pregnant with the hope for an existence beyond "justice"—for an existence that is compassionately nonviolent.

During the documentary it is discovered that Juliette's father left Cuba in 1980 during the Mariel boat lift, and her mother committed suicide a few years latter. While she has been prostituting to compensate for multiple abandonments by her parents, the Cuban state, and even the Soviets, Juliette is revealed to be the spiritual daughter of Ochun, the Afro-Cuban and Yozuban orisha/goddess of love, and

Obatala, orisha of justice. The documentary provides insight into the experience of young women, like Juliette, who are caught in the madness of Cuba's economic "Special Period" during the 1990s and are caught in the wars waged in the name of love and justice.

Juliette's ability to survive such chaos is part of the skills which make up the methodology of the oppressed (Sandoval 2000: 104).¹⁷ But moreover, these are also the skills of those developing a methodology of the disidentified. Such a methodology questions the fate of young women like Juliette beyond the usual markers of class, race, gender, patriarchy, globalization, and the demand to qualify a revolution and quantify conditions of oppression. Instead what the burning question becomes is how can we dig deeper to the core of her/our lot in life within this exact historical moment?

Such a questioning begins with the understanding that the referent "jinetera" is always/already synonymous with "Latina." Both terms signal bodies that are "of color," that are outlaws, and both are the daughters of colonialism confronting the violence of modernity. Both are produced by, and in the service of, their respective (cultural) nation-states. Both are commodified and both are more complex than their label of being a "problem" population or group suggests.

A Latina transnational feminist framework committed to a methodology of disidentification would ask: What is it that Juliette is saying, and what are we hearing, when Juliette speaks in translation through the director and in double translation through "analysis"? How do we understand Juliette's hunger as if it were our own? How do we deal with the realization that it is our own? How do we understand the ways in which she is failed by the state and by "community," as well as by those who would try to "study" her and/or "save" her? Can "the field" look beyond itself and our research and ask these questions? [It would ask,] how can we call forward a politics committed to a process which often times feels abandoned, the process of understanding and making peace. From these questions a disidentificatory¹⁸ transnational feminism can be created.

The process of connection, of talking across Latinidades, is not easy, and some may even argue that it is fraught with anxiety, betrayal, disappointment, complicity and even sadness. Yet the principles of those committed to working from such a political consciousness is tied to "the

great alchemical work” (Anzaldúa) as well as a methodology of love¹⁹ that hails the emergence of a new mode of citizen-subject, citizen-warrior, spiritual-activist. Talking across Latinidades and incorporating Anzaldúa’s articulation of *el mundo zurdo*²⁰ and mestiza consciousness, is more than merely an intellectual exercise. These gateways to a more profound inquiry into Latinidades are able to answer questions on and for racialized populations by not merely documenting but most importantly centering consciousness that allows problematic populations to survive. For many they are a sanctuary from the abandonment of (his)tory. They generate new accounts and trace the process of shifting from old ways of viewing reality²¹ by depicting (y)our struggles, recounting (y)our losses, reigniting (y)our hope for recovery, and celebrating the workings of the soul that nourish us with visions (Anzaldúa 2001: 562) that calm the pangs of our collective psycho-spiritual hunger. But most importantly they remind us that we have choices beyond either dying for being a prostitute (selling out or giving in to the demands of “the field”) or dying of hunger.

NOTES

1. For Gloria Anzaldúa and Juliette.
2. This is a point also made by Judith Butler.
3. These questions were posed in an earlier piece coauthored by Andrea Straub, Caridad Souza, Sarah Cervenak, and myself titled “The Politics of Listening and Learning in a Feminist Classroom”. In *This Bridge We Call Home: Radical Visions for Transformation*, edited by Gloria Anzaldúa and AnaLouise Keating. New York: Routledge 2002. In this present piece I am returning to these questions with the aim of answering them.
4. Early on, the feminist work of women of color in the United States. located itself within *un sitio y una lengua* (a political space and discourse) that both rejected colonial ideology and patriarchy—sexism, racism, and homophobia (Emma Perez 1991)—and proposed that feminist theory displace gender as its primary analytical category and consider race, class, sexuality, and questions of social and spiritual transformation (Alarcón; Lorde; Moraga; Hooks; Anzaldúa; Minh-ha; Davis; Sandoval).
5. Cherrie Moraga (1981).

6. Feminism has been defined as not merely a sexual politics but a politics of experience which in turn enters the public sphere of expression and creative practice, displacing aesthetic hierarchies and generic categories, and establishes the semiotic ground for a different production of reference and meaning (De Lauretis 1986: 10). Feminism has played a crucial role in pointing out, and critiquing, the gendered stories within various societies. Some feminists have extended this critique to the stories within feminism itself and have divided the history of feminism into three distinct waves of feminist politics. The third wave, which is characterized by postmodern feminist theory and women of color theorizing/political movements, is the wave in which Latina feminists self-locate. Latina feminists moving within Native, African-American, and Asian populations have argued that as a coalitional term, the word "Latina" is neither exhaustive of the many ways that Latinas may self-identify nor reflective of all the distinctive national-ethnic groups individuals reference. Latina feminists insist on an international/transnational approach to theorizing and fashioning an oppositional consciousness and de-colonial critique that challenges the Eurocentric and U.S.-specific project of hegemonic feminism. "Women of color" as a term also centered the racialized subject and bypassed national ethnic-racial divisions. Although, the term women of color does not mean that there is a "natural" affinity group. It identifies people who come together and by doing so affirms that their connection is greater to most of the population on the planet than it would be distinct or different.

7. One of the important contributions of this oppositional consciousness was its challenge to the conventional position that argued for the always already co-optive power of ideology. Among Latina/women of color feminists the debate over solidarity, sameness, and a unified feminist front was superseded and replaced with a focus on difference and differential consciousness (Sandoval 2000). Differential consciousness provided a structure, a theory, and a method for reading and constructing identity, aesthetics, and coalition politics that became vital to a decolonizing postmodern politics and aesthetics. According to Sandoval, through oppositional consciousness, groups and individuals "are able to effectively challenge and transform the current hierarchical nature of the social order by learning to identify, develop, and control the means of ideology while marshaling the knowledge necessary to 'break with ideology' while simultaneously speaking in and from ideology (2000: 361). This theory and method has many names and related concepts, U.S. third world feminism and differential/oppositional consciousness—for example, womanism (Walker 1990), mestiza consciousness (Anzaldúa 1987; Sandoval 1991, 1998), "world-traveling" (Lugones 1990) sister outsider (Lourde 1984); insider/outsider

(Trihn 1990), and identity-in-difference (Alarcón 1990) and disidentification (Alarcón 1981; Souza 1996; Munoz 1997; Fernandes 2003).

8. In their insistence for a third world scope (*sitio y lengua*), Latina feminists were hailing into existence a transnational/decolonial feminist framework. Latina transnational feminisms have been considered as a part of various comparative forms of feminist practices and alliances that oppose global versions of economic and cultural hegemony and that seek social change for women in different locations. They are enacting a politicized postmodernism in their critique of modern nationalist, capitalist, and patriarchal projects, and extending to postcolonial studies their critique of Western cultural imperialism. More specifically, Latina transnational feminisms incorporate feminist and postmodern concepts of multiple subjectivity to collaboratively investigate the limitations of nationalist communities and to elaborate alternative communities. Various practices and products of transnational feminisms are forms of resistance to the hegemonic policies of nation-states that promote and protect multinational capital for the growth of their economies. Global feminism, as many critics have pointed out, has suppressed the diversity of women's agency in favor of a universalized Western model of women's liberation that celebrates individuality and modernity. Latina Transnational feminism articulates differences in power and location.

9. The usage of the term "third world feminism" articulates what can best be described as a structure of feeling. A structure of feeling (according to Raymond Williams) captures actively lived and felt meaningful social experiences as it intricately interacts with and defies our conceptions of formal, official, and fixed social forms. A structure of feeling is precisely that conception, or sensuous knowledge, of a historical materialism characterized by the tangle of the subjective and the objective, experience and belief, feeling and thought, the immediate and the general, the personal and the social. A structure of feeling articulates presence. A structure of feeling "methodologically is a cultural hypothesis, actually derived from attempts to understand specific feelings, specific rhythms and yet to find ways of recognizing their specific kinds of sociality, thus preventing that extraction from social experience which is conceivable only when social experience itself has been categorically and historically reduced (Williams 1997: 132–133). Yet, Chandra Mohanty (1997) asked why use "third world," a problematic term which many consider to be outdated? The term "third world" for Mohanty is inadequate in comprehensively characterizing the economic, political, racial, and cultural differences within the borders of third world nations. She does acknowledge that the term "third world" retains a certain value and explanatory specificity in relation to the inheritance of colonialism and contemporary neocolonial

economic and geopolitical processes that the other formulations lacked. But she insisted that the deployment of the term produces the “Third World Woman” as a singular monolithic subject in (Western) feminist text while “Western” feminism and political practice is neither singular nor homogeneous in its goals, interests, or analysis” (Mohanty 1997: 7). Mohanty questions whether feminism is a liberating discourse and the realistic possibility of coalitions among (usually white) Western feminists and working class feminists of color around the world. Mohanty suggests that feminist writing is a genre, cannon with political significance yet conflated with imperialism in the eyes of “real” third world women.

10. Sandoval reminds us that the methodology that allows one to read forms of domination as ‘artifacts’ is a familiar behavior among powerless subjects, who early on learn to analyze every object under conditions of domination, especially when set in exchange with the master/colonizer (What is his style of dressing? Her mode of speaking? Why does (s)he gesture? When do they smile?) in order to determine how, where, and when to construct and insert an identity that will facilitate continued existence of self and/or community (2000: 85).

11. Gloria Anzaldúa 2002: 562

12. Souza and The Latina Feminist Group 2001.

13. The new mestiza 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—nothing is thrust out, the good the bad and the ugly, nothing rejected, nothing abandoned (Anzaldúa, 1987: 80).

14. Mirabal, Nancy. 2004. Introduction to *TechnoFuturos*.

15. At a time when tourism replaced Soviet support and an entire population found themselves living under desperate conditions the Cuban leadership turned toward tourism to replace Soviet trade and aid and the sexual labor of Cuban women became vital to the national economy. Cuba, like many other Caribbean nations, used the sex work of women of color as a way to ensure the continuation of national development.

16. Sex with an “exotic” is desired and valued among many tourists, and eroticized subjects devise strategies to benefit from this situation to the best of their abilities.

17. The tactic that became this differential strategy is guided, according to Chela Sandoval, by the imperatives of social justice that can engage in a hermeneutic of love in a postmodern world. According to Sandoval, the methodology of the oppressed provides what Barthes calls a “punctum” not only to the differential form of social movement enacted by U.S. feminists of color but also to a mode of consciousness that Gloria Anzaldúa calls “soul” or “Amor en Azt-

lan,” what Derrida calls “diff-érance,” Hayden White calls the “sublimity of the historical process,” and Barthes calls “prophetic love” (Sandoval 2000: 3).

18. According to Leela Fernandes, “the disidentified activist simultaneously engages in both a radical movement for complete social, economic, and political justice and in a profound spiritual journey. The simultaneity of this process lies in the simple fact that from the eye of the disidentified subject there is no possible separation between spirituality and social justice. The presumed separation in fact is only an illusory boundary that has been produced by the edifices of power of various religious political, economic, and social establishments. Furthermore, it is only a politics based on disidentification that can result in the kind of lasting transformation that individuals and groups committed to social justice have struggled for so long to manifest. Indeed, from the eye of the disidentified subject, this form of transformation is not a game of an inventive imagination but a realizable possibility” (2003: 38).

19. This method, its technologies and their interactions, and its effects on identity and social reality work to emancipate citizen-subjects from institutionalized hatred, domination, subordination: it is a methodology of love. To deploy it requires a concomitant evolutionary step for human consciousness.

20. For further reading on the concept of *el mundo zurdo*, see the work of AnaLouise Keating in *This Bridge We Call Home: Radical Visions for Transformation*, edited by Gloria Anzaldúa and AnaLouise Keating (2001).

21. Leela Fernandes 2003.

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5

AFRO-LATINIDADES

Bridging Blackness and Latinidad

Agustin Laó-Montes

In a conference on the future of black studies at the Harlem-based Schomburg Center, the demographic rise and increased visibility of U.S. Latinos was raised. The expressed concern about Hispanics outnumbering blacks echoed a media wave where Latinos are presented as a crucial voting bloc and a significant consumer market. Some saw it as an academic race of black against Latino studies. Others warned against corporate and governmental discourses of ethno-racial identity and indicated that African diaspora studies was a field that interweaves histories and cultures of people of African descent in the Americas while challenging us to rethink and remake modern knowledge. One of the main issues in this kind of debate is how terms of discussion framing a binary opposition of blacks versus Latinos renders Afro-Latina/os invisible.

In this article I will try to lay a different ground to transcend such terms of discourse in which blacks and Latinos appear as categorically distinct ethno-racial designations. I would develop the concept of Afro-Latinidad as a historical construct able to challenge essentialist notions of both blackness and Latinidad. We will discuss the specificity of Afro-Latina/o difference as a category and how an Afro-diasporic perspective could enrich both black studies and Latino studies by drawing on their points of intersection.

AFRICAN DIASPORA/BLACK ATLANTIC AND THE CONTESTED TERRAIN OF BLACKNESS

In a seminal piece Tiffany R. Patterson and Robin D. G. Kelley seek to develop “a theoretical framework and a conception of world history that treats the African diaspora as a unit of analysis.”¹ They contend that even though black intellectual currents, cultural forms, and social movements have been transnational since the very dispersal of African peoples with the inception of capitalist modernity and the institution of chattel slavery, languages of diaspora have only been used since the 1950s. I contend that geo-historical categories like the African diaspora and the Black Atlantic are crucial to analyze the translocal networks that weave the diverse histories of peoples of African descent within the modern/colonial capitalist world-system.²

Patterson and Kelley argue that diaspora can be analyzed as process and condition. “As a process it is constantly being remade through movement, migration, travel, and imagined through thought, cultural production, and political struggle. Yet as condition, it is directly tied to the process by which it is being made and remade . . . the African diaspora exists within the context of global race and gender hierarchies,” they write. Their analysis of the African diaspora as a *condition* linked to world-historical processes of capitalist exploitation, western domination, and modern/colonial state formation and as a *process* constituted by the cultural practices, everyday resistances, social struggles, and political organization of “black people as transnational/translocal subjects” is sound. I will add a third dimension of the African diaspora as a *project* of affinity and liberation searching to build translocal community and a global politics of decolonization. The African diaspora can be conceived as a project of decolonization embedded in the cultural practices, intellectual currents, social movements, and political actions of Afro-diasporic subjects. The project of diaspora as a politics of liberation community making is grounded on conditions of subalternization of Afro-diasporic peoples and their historical agency of resistance and self-affirmation. As a project the African diaspora is a “north,” a utopian horizon guiding black freedom dreams.³

I understand blackness as a contested terrain of memory, identity, culture, and politics, a historical arena in which different political projects, historical narratives, cultural logics, and self-designations are enunciated

and debated. Some arenas of these variations of blackness are the politics of self-naming, the question of color, and the ties that bind local, national, and transnational dimensions of black histories. A key question is about the relation between nations and diasporas. James Clifford argues that even though diasporas had always been part of modern nationalisms, “diasporic cultural forms can never, in practice, be exclusively nationalist” given their history and condition as “articulation of travels, homes, memories, and transnational connections” which place them in an “entangled tension” with both host and sending places. Diasporas are based on a principle of difference, and defined this way, diasporic identities challenge nationalist pretensions to be the master discourse of identity and the primary framework for culture and politics. Constructs like the African diaspora and the Black Atlantic could enable us to rethink histories, cultures, and politics beyond the nation while developing what Coronil conceives as post-occidental “post-imperial geo-historical categories.”

I conceptualize the African diaspora as a multicentered historical field, a complex and fluid geo-cultural formation and domain of identification, cultural production, and political organization that is framed by world-historical processes of domination, exploitation, resistance, and emancipation. If the world-historical field that we call the African diaspora, as a condition of dispersal and a process of displacement, is founded on forms of violence and terror that are central to modernity, it also signifies a global project of articulating histories of African peoples while creating translocal intellectual/cultural currents and political movements. The Afro-American diaspora is not a uniform formation but a montage of diverse histories linked by common conditions of racial, political-economic, and cultural oppression. African diaspora spaces constitute family resemblances based on commensurable experiences of racial subordination and analogous repertoires of resistance, cultural expression, intellectual production, and political action.⁴

DECOLONIAL MOVES: GENDERING AFRICAN DIASPORA DISCOURSES

Most accounts of the African diaspora tend to marginalize gender and sexuality.⁵ Gendering African diaspora discourse is necessary not only to

include women but to perform a feminist critique of the patriarchal forms, mediations, and practices that constitute modern/colonial regimes of power. Black feminists had redefined the theory, history, and politics of the African diaspora.⁶ Black feminist scholars like Michelle Stephens and Michelle Wright produced feminist critiques of Afro-diasporic cultural, intellectual, and political traditions led by male figures and characterized by masculine gazes and projects. Their gendering of the African diaspora has redrawn its character.

Michelle Stephens's *Black Empire* focuses on how early-twentieth-century Pan-Africanist, U.S.-based Caribbean intellectuals/activists (C. L. R. James, Marcus Garvey, and Claude McKay) developed a "masculine global imaginary" wherein the African diaspora was conceived as a transnationalist project in search of sovereignty and peoplehood, as a battle between Afro-diasporic and western masculinities. As in nationalist discourses, in this masculine narrative of the African diaspora, women tend to be represented as affective and cultural custodians of the race, and Africa feminized as a motherland to be protected and rescued. In *Becoming Black* Michelle Wright focuses on "African diasporic counter-discourses of Black subjectivity" by engaging in critical readings of canonical figures (DuBois, Césaire, Senghor, Fanon) in the black male cosmopolitan world, while contrasting their method and arguments on Black modernity to black feminist (Audrey Lorde and Carolyn Rodgers) writings. She argues that mainstream black intellectual traditions construct the black subject as masculine and that given that "Blackness as a concept cannot be . . . produced in isolation from gender and sexuality," there is a need for feminist and queer rethinkings of the African diaspora against the "heteropatriarchal discourse" of nationalism where "Black women do not exist." Wright defines the African diaspora as "a series of multivalent and intersected historical and cultural formations" and asserts that "Black feminist and queer discourses are intimately bound up in producing an African diasporic discourse." These black feminist and queer perspectives on the African diaspora reveal the particularly profound forms of subalternization experienced by women of color and black queers. In this vein, the African diaspora should be conceptualized as a contested terrain of gender and sexual politics where the very definitions of project, identity, and agency are at stake.

Gendering African diaspora discourses implies important epistemic breaks and political imperatives including revisiting and challenging the

masculinist character of mainstream ideologies of global blackness, centering women's histories and feminist perspectives, and recognizing the significance of gender and sexual difference among the multiple mediations that constitute Afro-diasporic selves. Feminist theory and politics provide important tools for the analysis and transformation of modern/colonial constellations of power and knowledge, including the capitalist world economy, empires, nation-states, cultural logics, families, formations of self, and intimacy.⁷

In the United States an intellectual current and social movement from "women of color" and/or "third world feminism" champions theoretical critiques and political opposition to global, national, and local modes of domination, revealing the workings of patriarchy through all social spaces and institutions while recognizing the agency of subaltern women in historical struggles and social movements and in the forging of alternative worlds.⁸ Women-of-color feminism stems from long-term intellectual and political coalitions between African-American and Latina women. This strand of critique and politics engages in "a critically transnational (internationalist) feminist praxis" based on "an antiracist feminist framework, anchored in decolonization and committed to anticapitalist critique."⁹ This transformative project aims for decolonization meaning a "profound transformation of self, community, and governance structures." In this sense, decolonization entails combating all forms of oppression (class, race, gender, sexual, geo-political, epistemic) in all social spheres at all scales (local, national, global). This search for decolonizing economy, polity, knowledge, culture, and subjectivity involves creating a "decolonial imaginary" to change the lens that informs transformative praxis.¹⁰

The critical theory and radical politics of women of color/third world women feminism converge in crucial ways with the analytics and decolonial project of intellectual-activists who analyze and seek to transform capitalist modernity from the perspective of the colonality of power.¹¹ Both analyze modernity from a world-historical decolonial perspective, and both see power as a complex pattern that integrates class exploitation and capital accumulation with ethno-racial, cultural-epistemic, and gender-sexual domination. In short, both women of color feminism and the colonality of power perspective stem from a "decolonial attitude" and act for a politics of decolonization.

Women of color/third world women feminisms had also elaborated concepts of diasporas as spaces of difference and places to build what

Maria Lugones calls “complex unity” or solidarity gained in the intersection of multiple chains of oppression and corresponding strategies of liberation. This border/diasporic decolonial imaginary have informed politically and intellectually fruitful coalitions between U.S.-black and U.S.-Latina feminists pursuing general goals of liberation and decolonization. In this specific sense of Afro-Latinidad as a feminist political identity, Afro-Latina difference serves as a crucial constituent within a coalitional political community and as a significant element within a field of intellectual production and critique.

One of the principal theoretical contributions of women of color feminism is the concept of politics of location that relates the “multiple mediations” (gender, class, race, etc.) that constitute the self to diverse modes of domination (capitalism, patriarchy, racism, imperialism) and to distinct yet intertwined social struggles and movements.¹² Building from this formulation I propose the concept of politics of translocation to link geographies of power at various scales (local, regional, national, global) with the subject positions (gender/sexual, ethno-racial, class, etc.) that constitute the self.¹³ Afro-American diasporic subjects should also be conceptualized as translocal because even though we are connected to nationality, we are also inscribed within larger geo-historical constellations (the Atlantic, the Americas, global blackness, the modern/colonial capitalist world-system), at the same time that black identities are mediated by a myriad of differences (class, gender, sexuality, place, generation). Afro-diasporic subjects can simultaneously be national (Afro-Cuban), local (Louisianan), regional (Afro-Latin American), and global (cosmopolitan black intellectual/activist). In sum, the notion of African diaspora signifies an ocean of differences and a contested terrain inscribed by distinctive gendered ideologies, political agendas, and generational sensibilities.

INTERTWINED DIASPORAS: PLURALIZING THE BLACK ATLANTIC

Afro-Latinidades tend to be marginalized and even erased from most mappings of the African diaspora, while African diaspora perspectives need to play a much more important role in Latino/American studies.

This reveals the marginalization of Afro-Latinidades from Latino studies, while it shows their invisibilization in most cartographies of the African diaspora. The Eurocentric ideology that places blackness at the bottom of the great chain of being and imagines Africa as a dark continent outside of history locates blacks at the margins of Latino/Americanist world-regional and national definitions. On the other end, the geo-politics of knowledge of British and U.S. hegemony in the modern/colonial capitalist world-system, informs cognitive mappings and historical accounts of the African diaspora focused on the Anglo world. In spite of this double subalternization of Afro-Latinidades from both Anglocentric accounts of the African diaspora and Latino/Americanist discourses, there is a long history of Afro-Latina/o diasporic consciousness and participation in African diaspora networks. A revealing example is the transdiasporic reciprocity of three cultural movements in three different nodes of a cosmopolitan network of black intellectuals, cultural creators, and political activists in the early twentieth century: the Harlem Renaissance, the Negritude movement, and Afro-Cubanismo. A telling relationship in this black cosmopolitan world was between writers Nicolás Guillén and Langston Hughes, whose friendship, intellectual-political exchange, mutual translation of poetry, and reciprocal introduction to their national contexts exemplifies Afro-diasporic solidarity within a translocal black public sphere.

Another example that should inform our project of remapping the African diaspora by inscribing Afro-Latina/o histories is the biography of Arturo Alfonso Schomburg. The life and legacy of Arturo Schomburg, a Puerto Rican-born mulatto who founded the most important world archive of black history, was a pillar of the Harlem Renaissance, and became president of the American Negro Academy, is a pregnant source for this discussion. The differential construction of Schomburg's biography by Puerto Rican, black American, and Afro-Caribbean intellectuals is revealing of how distinct diaspora discourses define their subject and space. In Puerto Rico Schomburg is barely known, while in U.S. Puerto Rican memory he is top on the official list of great Boricuas, and U.S. black historians remember him as black archivist Arthur Schomburg. Some researchers argue that Schomburg abandoned Hispanic-Caribbean militancy after 1898 and eventually let go of his Puerto Rican identity in favor of an Afro-diasporic one.¹⁴ But if we dig

into Schomburg's work and projects we will get a more nuanced view of his multiple locations and loyalties.¹⁵ His long-lasting commitment to Afro-Latinidades can be clearly seen in his struggle for inclusion of Afro-Cubans and Afro-Puerto Ricans in organizations like the Negro Society for Historical Research and to include Afro-Hispanic writers in anthologies of black literature. His research on Africans in early modern Spain pioneered the current revision of European history as multiracial. His advocacy for translation of Afro-Latino literature revealed his effort to articulate a plural African diaspora. Schomburg could not give up his Afro-Latino identity because his blackness was contested in light of his Puerto Rican origin and mixed color. Perhaps it was partly because of his border subjectivity and liminal positioning that Schomburg was the black figure in the U.S. early twentieth century who kept good relations with competing characters such as W. E. B. DuBois, Marcus Garvey, Claude McKay, and Alain Locke. My main point here is that Schomburg's project of black cosmopolitanism, in understanding the diversity and complexity of the racial formations and cultural practices in different African diaspora spaces, challenged narrow notions of both Africanity and Latinidad. Schomburg represents the translocal intellectual enacting a diasporic project in which identity and community are conceived and articulated through and across differences.

In mapping African diaspora spaces, we need to historicize them, specifying their diversity and complexity while analyzing their linkages. Earl Lewis's concept of African-American communities as "overlapping diasporas" is a useful tool to understand diversity and articulation within the African diaspora. I coined the concept of intertwined diasporas to signify not only the plurality of histories and projects articulated within the African diaspora but also the world-historical linkages of multiple genealogies of diasporic formation (African, South Asian, and East Asian diasporas composing a Caribbean diaspora space) and the transdiasporic character of world cities' populations (working classes and new immigrants as subaltern modernities). Afro-Latinidades as transdiasporic subjects can transgress essentialist conceptions of self, memory, culture, and politics corresponding to all encompassing categories of identity and community such as simply "blacks" and "Latinos." Afro-Latinidades in their plurality and disporicity demonstrate the limits of categorical definitions of both blackness and Latinidad at the same time that they

reveal the limits of diaspora discourses themselves. This begs the question of the genealogical and categorical character of Afro-Latinidades.

AFRO-LATINIDADES AND WORLD-HISTORICAL CONSTELLATIONS OF IDENTITY AND DIFFERENCE

The composed denominator Afro-Latina/o is beginning to gain currency in academic discourse, media texts, and popular parlance. Its semantic field is fairly broad, ranging from designating the subject of a field of research about Latino Americans of African descent and naming a political/racial identity for emerging social movements of black Latinos across the Americas, to serving as the commercial title for a collection of salsa music in the African continent. In light of this broad range and diverse set of meanings, we write about Afro-Latinidades in plural. But in searching to conceptualize Afro-Latina/o as a category, we need definitional clarity. Afro-Latinidad is an ethno-racial category that refers to the histories, memories, social locations, expressive cultures, social movements, political organizations, and lived experiences of peoples of African descent in Latino/America.¹⁶ Afro-Latinidad is a category of difference, in contrast to identity discourses based on hegemonic notions of nationality and race in Latino/America. Positing Afro-Latinidades as a designation of difference should entail an analysis of the conceptual and political values of related denominations (national, regional, ethnic, racial, civilizational) of identity/difference.

The hyphenated term Afro-Latino denotes a link between Africanity and Latinidad, two complex and contested world-historical categories of geography, identification, and cultural production that have their own particular yet intertwined genealogies. To deconstruct the categorical character of Afro-Latinidades, we should analyze the historical relationship of three key discursive frameworks in modern/colonial definitions of historical space and collective identity, namely Africanity, Americanness, and Latinidad. Such constructs have been produced and signified through a world-historical process of capitalist development, imperial domination, and nation-state formation that entailed the constitution of modern/colonial definitions of the self, based on gendered/eroticized hierarchies

of peoplehood (racial, ethnic, national). This world-historical pattern of domination and resistance that we call the coloniality of power is the overall framework from where we analyze the joint historical production (or invention) of Africa (and the African diaspora), the Americas, and Europe as world-regional discourses of social space, memory, culture/civilization, and identity/self.¹⁷

I conceptualize Afro-Latinidades using a world-historical/decolonial perspective. If elaborated as a category for decolonial critique and as a critical political identity, Afro-Latina/o difference could reveal and recognize hidden histories and subalternized knowledges while unsettling and challenging dominant (essentialist, nationalist, imperial, patriarchal) notions of Africanity, Americanness, and Latinidad.¹⁸ Such a lens would also allow us to conceptualize the black Atlantic and Afro-America as composed by intertwined diasporas wherein Afro-Latinos had historically played important roles, at the same time that we conceive Latinidad as a trans-american/translocal diasporic category. Thus, Latino/Americanism should be redefined and challenged by accounting for the histories of Afro-diasporic subjects, while African diaspora discourses should become more nuanced and pluralized in light of Afro-Latina/o histories. Given that Afro-Latinidades are marginalized from hegemonic narratives of Africanity, blackness, Latinidad, and Hispanicity and therefore from the corresponding world-regional (black Atlantic, Latin America, Afro-America, Afro-Caribbean) and national definitions of identity and community, Afro-Latina/o as a subalternized diasporic form of difference should be transformed into a critical category to deconstruct and redefine all of the above narratives of geography, memory, culture, and the self.

An important angle for analysis and critique is the ever-changing and always contested politics of naming. We could ask who is included and excluded from the designation *African-American* that replaced *black* that in turn displaced *negro* as the politically preferred self-designation by U.S. activists and intellectuals of African descent. Is confining African-American to the north a way of promoting the imperial reduction of America to the United States of North America? Is it playing the liberal game of hyphenated ethnicization in detriment of critical race theory and radical antiracist politics? Should we instead redefine the expression African-American to signify Africans in the Americas? Should

we choose between Afro-Latino and Afro-Hispanic, or does each of these hybrid signifiers denote particular meanings revealing specific genealogies?

We can trace the genealogy of modern/colonial ethno-racial categories to the historical shift from late medieval religious-linguistic notions of “blood purity” at the Iberian Peninsula to early modern racial classifications (*indio*, *negro*, *mestizo*, *African*, *European*) developed in the contexts of the conquest of the Americas and the organization of chattel slavery as a key institution of capitalist modernity. The vast territory south of the Rio Grande known as Latin America and the Caribbean is where people were first shipped from sub-Saharan or black Africa in the sixteenth century and where presently there is the largest concentration of Afro-descendants in the Americas.¹⁹ But in the United States, when we use the term African-American, it refers to North American blacks as a specifically U.S. ethno-racial designation. However, the suffix “Afro” to signify world-regional and national denominations had been used in the southern side of the American hemisphere since the early twentieth century. Cuban intellectual Fernando Ortiz wrote about an Afro-Cuban culture in 1904 and by the 1930s was one of the founders of the *Sociedad de Estudios Afrocubanos*. In Mexico an *Instituto de Estudios Afroamericanos* was organized in the early 1940s and published a short lived magazine called *Afroamerica*.²⁰ The Asociacion and magazine were launched and supported by a trans-american group of intellectuals from (or for) the African diaspora that included Euro-Cuban Fernando Ortiz, Afro-Cuban Romulo Lachatenere, Brazilian Gilberto Freyre, Martiniquean Aimé Césaire, Trinitarian Eric Williams, and U.S. blacks Alain Locke and W. E. B. DuBois. The point is not to establish where the language of Afro-America was first used or to show black consciousness in Latin America but to develop a method to understand particularities and articulations within the African diaspora in the Americas. Such globalized and pluralized Afro-diasporic perspective should be a basis for refashioning both black studies and Latino studies.

We should redefine the concept of African American to signify a complex and diverse diasporic field that encompasses the histories, cultures, and identities of Afro-descendants in the Americas. In this vein, the existential condition that DuBois characterizes as “double consciousness,”

referring to the “American Negro,” of grappling with a split subjectivity (American African) and denial of substantive citizenship by nation-states has been seen and classified as a problem by dominant racist regimes and should be extended to the whole of Afro-America. Despite local, regional, and national differences, this condition of exclusion from hegemonic definitions of national self and history that imply a devaluation of memory, a folklorization of culture, and submission to political-economic regimes of racial domination and class exploitation frame a common diasporic ground for people of African descent in the Americas. Here, double consciousness refers to Afro-diasporic expressions of belonging and citizenship based on Afroamerican identifications with places and spaces located below (Palenque de San Basilio in Colombia) and beyond the nation (Afro-Andes, Afro-AAmerica). Afroamerica can be represented as a creolized diaspora space, a translocal crossroads, a black borderland.

In mapping the multiple genealogies of Afro-Aamerican communities, we should account for both their heterogeneity and multiple connections. Afro-North America can be defined as a shifting historical formation, an ongoing process continuously recomposed by diverse constellations of African diaspora relocated from the United States, the Caribbean, Latin America, Europe, and the African continent. The eastern region of Cuba is largely Haitian and West Indian, while Afro-descendant communities in Central America are largely composed by offspring from immigrants from the Anglophone Caribbean and Garifuna people that the British expelled from Saint Vincent in 1789 after realizing their inability to colonize them. World cities like New York and Paris have been for many years diasporic crossroads and Afro-diasporic borderlands where Afro-descendants from different places meet, develop ties, and reach out to other peoples and diasporas.

Afro-American subjects-peoples are intertwined diasporas in their history, ethnic composition, cultural expressions, and political projects. One of the clearest examples of the diasporicity and translocality of Afro-Latinidades are Afro-Latinos residing in the United States, who are situated in-between blacks and Latinos in the U.S. national space at the same time that they link Afro-North Americans with Afro-descendants south of the Rio Grande. However, shortsighted perspectives attempting to become common sense in academy and public culture across the Americas try to divide black and Latinos as sharply distinct and even opposing definitions of identity, culture, and politics.

U.S. BLACK-LATINA/O POLITICS AND THE PITFALLS OF THE ETHNIC PARADIGM

To analyze the current tendency to oppose blacks and Latinos, I will discuss Nicolás Vaca's *The Presumed Alliance: The Unspoken Conflict between Latinos and Blacks and What It Means for America*. The main point of the book is that blacks and Latinos are in a "persistent conflict" that stems from competition for political leadership and social resources based on clashed interests (over bilingual education, language, immigration policy, jobs). The argument is based on a demographic logic according to which there is a relation between population increase and ethnic conflict caused by Latinos displacing blacks as the leading minority. Vaca sees this as part of a natural pattern of ethnic immigration. One of his main targets is the politics of black-Latino alliance of the U.S. social movements of the 1960s and 1970s. He contends that in the "1960s relations between Blacks and Latinos were viewed through rose-colored lenses." Now that Latinos have increased in number "the ethnic landscape has changed" and this "requires the reexamination of relations between Blacks and Latinos." Most of the book consists of examples of conflict between blacks and Latinos over electoral contests, access to jobs, and public policies. Immigration is portrayed at face value, simply as a source of Latino population growth and labor supply. The examples of political conflict are mostly electoral. Politics is conceived as a zero-sum game, and the political sphere is characterized as a terrain of competition where the units of identity and collective action are ethnic groups. Latinos are assumed to share interests, a common agenda, and a unified organization, and to speak with one voice. In this essentialist view the only relevant category of difference is nationality, while the concept of minority could only distinguish among equally homogenized ethnic groups such as Asians, blacks, and Latinos. In light of this interpretation of U.S. society and politics through the lens of the liberal logic of ethnic pluralism, Vaca assumes that Latinos will eventually achieve the American dream. He asserts that "Latinos have a history of oppression," but that they "freely acknowledge that economic opportunities in America are better than in their countries of origin." These generalizations correspond to an ideology of progress that obscures the persistent forms of domination and exploitation lying underneath the migratory processes and daily lives of U.S. Latinos.

The emphasis of the book is on how African Americans had reacted to the alleged emergence of Latino economic and political power, so most examples are of black reluctance to Latinization and black prejudices against Latinos. Hence, anti-black Latino racism is underplayed in the book. Vaca highlights that the black political class supported the employer sanctions clause of the 1986 Immigration and Reform Control Act (IRCA) and that 55 percent of the black electorate voted for Proposition 187. He also focuses on the alleged failure of black-Latino urban electoral coalitions. These examples do reveal tensions in black-Latino relations, but a more nuanced analysis would show a more contradictory terrain. The struggle for fair immigration policy in the 1980s did not have one voice in either the black or the Latino communities. Leaders of the black political class like Congressman Charles Rangel from Harlem were key voices against employer sanctions, while African-American lawyer Jim Wade from the American Civil Liberties Union was a leading advocate for immigrant rights. At the time of the approval of the IRCA, as a cochair of the New York–New Jersey Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, I spoke to black audiences in Harlem who were sympathetic to the cause and understood the links between anti-black and anti-immigrant discrimination. Many Latinos voted for Proposition 187, while 45 percent of non-Latino blacks voted against it.

There are different ways we can address the question of black-Latino alliances. Besides black-Latino electoral politics there are grassroots coalitions, caucuses within multiracial institutions (labor unions), and informal networks (hip-hop artists). In the 1984 Jesse Jackson campaign, New York's "Latinos for Jackson" mobilized the vote of more than 80 percent of Latinos. These efforts contributed to David Dinkins becoming the first black mayor of New York. Vaca's narrow political vision prevents him from noticing important alliances such as between the Latino Coalition for Racial Justice and the December 12 Coalition against the racist practices of Mayor Koch and the New York City Police Department and how this prepared the soil for one of the most potent transdiasporic movements against racism in New York that emerged in the late 1990s when policemen sexually abused Haitian Abner Louima and killed African Amadou Diallo.

Vaca's liberal view of the political sphere as a domain for ethnic competition matches his understanding of ethnicity as the basic staple of cul-

tural identity and political affiliation. This ethnicist logic utters a narrative of U.S. history as a succession of flows of immigrants who after having been discriminated against, achieve the American dream. This outlook based on an immigrant analogy with white Euro-American histories is oblivious to the centrality of empire, racism, and class exploitation. Concerning Latinidad, the tendency is to celebrate the so-called browning of America, a multiculturalist version of ethnic pluralism. This gaze neglects the multiple racisms experienced by Afro-Latina/os not only in the United States but also in Latino/America. The conflation of race and ethnicity in this ethno-racial reasoning tends to deny racism as a central component of power, reducing it to an element of ethnicity or making it a residual category. In contrast, I argue that race, ethnicity, and nationality are intertwined yet distinct modern/colonial categories of peoplehood that are central to the constitution of self and power in capitalist modernity. Latina/o subjects are translocated at the crossroads of race, ethnicity, and nation, and subjected to multiple modes of racialization and ethnicization. In this multi-mediated matrix of power, identity, and difference, the relationship between racism and Latinidad is complex and contingent. Light-skin U.S. blacks may be considered non-black in parts of Latin America, while a mulatto U.S. black Latina may be considered “Indian” in the Dominican Republic and “Trigueña” in Puerto Rico. The category of Afro-Latina/o ought to be specified in time-space. However, the persistent placing of the darkest bodies in the lowest echelons should guide our analyses of the specificity of Afro-Latina/o difference and of antiblack racism in modern/colonial regimes of power.

In analyzing black-Latino coalitions, we should notice Afro-Latina/o multiple identities and affiliations. To Arturo Schomburg we could add Denise Oliver’s double membership in the Black Panthers and the Young Lords. In their platform the Young Lords advocated Afro-Indio identity. Schomburg himself used the pen name Guarionex, who was a Taino warrior chief.²¹ Afro-Puerto Rican writer Piri Thomas, in his classic Nuyorican novel *Down These Mean Streets*, articulates with clarity how sharp distinctions between blacks and Latinos produce disturbing dilemmas for mulatto subjects like him. Thomas narrates how after agonizing about whether he was “black” or “Puerto Rican,” he realized that he was both, an Afro-Latino. He realized that his blackness and his *mulataje* were not in contradiction but constitutive of both his Puerto

Rican and Afro-Latino identities. In this context the concept of mulatto does not mean a racial hybrid between black and white and/or a brown product of *mestizaje*, but it is rather used to signify how Afro-Latina/o difference could transgress and transcend such ethno-racial binaries.²²

The liberal ethnic optic produces simplistic notions of justice, community, and coalition building. If the main basis of cultural and political affinity is de-racialized ethnicity, class and gender differences are irrelevant, and labor and feminist organization of marginal importance. Coalitions that matter are ethnic and in the electoral arena, while social movement organizations such as community-labor coalitions, broad-based alliances for racial justice, feminist of color alliances, black-Latina/o gay and lesbian networks, and the myriad of institutions and informal networks that compose an emerging wave of collective action north and south of the Rio Grande are written out. The forms of power and difference (class, gender, race, ideology) that distinguish Latino identities and agendas are erased, hence producing a false sense of sameness and a superficial notion of community. This results in a minimal concept of democracy as formal representation and of justice as a share of the pie for the ethnic community. Concerns on the relation between democracy, difference, freedom, and justice that give substance to these ethical-political principles are absent. Fundamental differences among Latino political traditions, ideologies of power, and projects are also ignored.

If we view blacks and Latinos as distinct groups, their relationship should be represented in its diversity and complexity. This means recognizing the “patterns of cooperation, conflict, and ambivalence,” as put by political scientist Mark Sawyer. There is a growing scholarship on black and Latino relations that analyzes the actual and potential roles of Afro-Latina/os as “bridging identities.”²³ This strand of research has taken important steps in identifying sources of conflict while analyzing bonds and potential forms of coalition building. Researchers have shown how similar histories and conditions of black and Latino subaltern sectors (and to some extent middle strata) account for shared sensibilities informing campaigns against racial discrimination (for affirmative action, against mass incarceration of black and Latino youth), urban injustices (in housing, education, and health care), and economic inequality (living wage, union organizing).²⁴ This should not deny how dif-

ferent forms of racism (Latino and antiblack) and xenophobia (nativism of black and Latino U.S. citizens), and how various political agendas and ideologies (ethnic-racial competition of black and Latino political classes) are sources of black-Latino conflict. The ambiguities and shifting character of black-Latino coalitions are shown in the electoral race of Antonio Villaraigosa who was elected mayor of Los Angeles in 2004 with the majority of the black vote but was not supported by blacks in the prior election. Our task is to develop analytical frameworks to understand the articulations of power and culture embedded in different definitions of blackness and Latinidad and distinct forms of black and Latina/o politics.

Vaca's critique of 1960s discourse on alliances between U.S. people of color and the connection between U.S. minority struggles and third world liberation movements have implications for black-Latino studies and their race, class, gender, and sexual politics. Feminist coalitions of women of color/third world women is implicitly dismissed as passé. An implicit target is perspectives (postcolonial, feminist, queer, race-legal, neo-Marxist) forming a new constellation of critical theory. These new archaeologies of knowledge and logics of inquiry reconfigured Latina/o studies and challenged essentialist notions of Latino community and politics. Women of color feminism critiqued and challenged the patriarchal character of the nationalist discourses of the 1960s at the same time they framed their analyses of domination in a world-historical decolonial perspective. This opposes Vaca's understanding of Latino community and politics that implies a view of the world as a sum of nations where Latinos are an ethnic group within the United States. A problem with this image is that it ignores domination (imperialism, racism, patriarchy) and exploitation (neoliberal capitalism) at the global level and its connections with regimes of inequality (class, ethno-racial, gender, sexual) at national, regional, and local scales. Third world feminism anchors a politics of decolonization in a critical analysis of the entanglements of capitalism, imperialism, racism, and patriarchy from the local to the global.²⁵ Its coalitional politics of sisterhood promotes alliances among women of color (black, Latina, Native American, Asian) as part of a broad-based movement for radical democracy and social justice. Likewise, this is the kind of decolonial critique and politics of decolonization enabled by Anibal Quijano's concept of the colonality of power.

AFRO-LATINIDADES AND THE DECOLONIZATION OF POWER AND KNOWLEDGE

The global spread of neoliberal imperial doctrines and policies since the 1980s has provoked the rise of a new wave of antisystemic movements epitomized by neo-Zapatismo, mass demonstrations of global reach (e.g., Seattle, Dec. 1999; antiwar, Feb. 2003), and the boom of social forums. We should frame the growth of Afro-Latina/o politics in the 1980s within this world-historical context. The rise of explicitly black currents and movements in Brazil, Cuba, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Ecuador, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Panama, Peru, Puerto Rico, Nicaragua, Uruguay, Venezuela, and Argentina and their growing links with U.S. Afro-Latinos reveal the emergence of an Afro-Latina/o hemispheric movement. The colonization by transnational capital and states of relatively unexploited Afro-American regions such as the Pacific Coast in Colombia, Esmeralda in Ecuador, and Pinones in Puerto Rico, inform social movements affirming Afro-diasporic identities and combating racism, while claiming place and ecological integrity and vindicating black cultures and local knowledges against the negative effects of neoliberal globalization. In spite of significant differences, the drive for Afro-Latina/o self-affirmation had produced local and national organizations that provided effective leadership within popular movements, articulated regional identities and alliances (Afro-Andino), convened world-regional meetings (black Latin American women's conferences), and participated in hemispheric meetings (Afro-Americans in and after Durban). Afro-Latinos in the United States are protagonist actors in these hemispheric networks at the same time that they serve as bridge in U.S. Black-Latino coalitions. On the cultural front, a good example is the exchanges between Afro-Cuban and Afro-North American politicized hip-hop artists that challenged commodified versions of rap while advancing a radical aesthetics of hip-hop culture as an expression of the African diaspora.

The scope and scale of such movements give them the potential of significantly contributing to questioning and challenging racist regimes and processes of domination throughout the Americas. An important feature of these emerging discourses of Afro-Latinidad is a diasporic-translocal perspective connecting racial democracy to class struggle, and wherein black women are championing feminist demands with campaigns against

imperialism and neoliberal capitalism. In this Afro-diasporic politics the question of power is clearly tied to the question of knowledge. Similarly to the social movements that created Latina/o studies and refashioned African-American studies in the 1970s, Afro-Latina/o movements are now claiming a space in the academic world while demanding authority and recognition for their vernacular modes of knowledge.²⁶ Hence, Afro-Latinidades are an important source for the decolonization of power and knowledge. Afro-Latina/o difference can pose a challenge to both black studies and Latino studies to revitalize the critical and radical paths that gave them birth while regaining their transformative decolonial character. Black radical cosmopolitanism has been a fountain of decolonial knowledge and politics since its very inception. We contend along with Nelson Maldonado-Torres that Africana Studies as one of the main modern traditions of critical cosmopolitanism has always been a field of production of critical theory based on a decolonial attitude.²⁷ Critical traditions of black and Latino studies converge in so far as they are both based in a radical decolonial politics of liberation (anti-imperialist and often anti-capitalist) framed by world-historical perspectives. Afro-diasporic feminisms entail particularly complex analytical frameworks and political projects wherein imperial power, ethno-racial domination, and class exploitation are systemically linked to gender and sexual oppression. If we understand diaspora not only as condition and process but also as a radical project for the decolonization of power and knowledge, this cross-fertilization of critical black and Latino studies could be a crucial resource for liberation in the epistemic as well as in the ethical-political fronts.

We should see decolonization as a process, a historical effect of everyday resistances, social struggles, and antisystemic movements. Given the centrality of racial regimes in the coloniality of power and knowledge, black struggles and racial politics are crucial in the *longue duree* of world decolonization. This has a long historical trajectory from the nineteenth-century Haitian revolution to the U.S. black freedom movement of the 1960s and the antiapartheid movement. The current rise of Afro-Latinidades places Afro-Latina/o difference at the heart of world processes of cultural and political contestation and construction of alternative futures. This includes struggles for the reconfiguration of the structures, logics, and categories of knowledge. An Afro-diasporic decolonial imaginary could be a foundation for a new alliance between

black studies and Latino studies, a transdiasporic alliance for which Afro-Latinidades should and must be a bridge.

NOTES

1. See Patterson and Kelley (2000).
2. Edwards (2000) makes a distinction between the African diaspora as a global category and the black Atlantic as a transnational regional category. The expression “modern/colonial capitalist world-system” is used as a theoretical representation of capitalist modernity as a historical totality in which coloniality serves as the underside of modernity. See Grosfoguel (2003), Quijano (2000), and Mignolo (2000, 2006).
3. I use the concept of utopia as a horizon of alternative futures grounded on the possibilities of the present and that serves as a source of hope and as a “north” indicating to us in which direction to go. See Bloch (2000), and Wallerstein (1998). For the concept of black freedom dreams, see Kelley (2003).
4. For the concept of family resemblances, see Wittgenstein (1968).
5. Clifford observes that gender is outstandingly absent from diaspora discourse in general. I am bracketing the question of sexuality in this article. However, this should not mean a denial of the centrality of mediations of sexuality in world-historical constellations of power, identity, and culture.
6. See, among others, Davies (1994), Gunning et al. (2004), and Brown (1998).
7. See, among others, McClintock (1995) and Stoler (2002).
8. See Moraga and Anzaldúa (1983) and Mohanty, Russo, and Torres (1991).
9. Mohanty (2003).
10. For the concept of decolonial imaginary, see Perez (1999).
11. For the concept of the coloniality of power, see Quijano (2000). I will elaborate on this concept later in this article.
12. For the politics of location, see Alarcón (1989) and Frankenberg and Mani (1993). For the concept of multiple mediations, see Mani (1990).
13. I propose a politics of translocation in the introduction to the co-edited volume *Mambo Montage*. See Laó-Montes and Davila (2001).
14. See Sinnott (1989).
15. See Sánchez-González (2001). Jossianna Arroyo (in this volume) also engages in an analysis not only of the differential racial significations of Schomburg in different contexts and according to distinct criteria but also about his gender and sexual locations.

16. The conceptual expression “Latino/America” signifies a geo-historical construct of a world-region that not only encompasses the nation-states south of the Rio Grande that emerged from the colonization and subsequent falls of the Spanish and Portuguese empires but also includes diasporas in the United States. These geo-historical constructs are limited and exclusive both in the ways the region is conceived (e.g., Is Haiti part of Latino/America?) and who the subjects in question are (e.g., Are Aymara people Latin Americans? Is Aymara a Latin American language?). See Mignolo (2006).

17. For the concept of the coloniality of power, see Quijano (2000). For the modern invention of Africa, see Mudimbe (1988). For the invention of the Americas, see O’Gorman (1961) and Dussel (1992).

18. In this formulation the concept of Afro-Latina/o difference, in so far as it designates subjects whose experience and knowledge are otherized and subalternized by hegemonic occidentalist discourses, constitutes a mode of Mignolo’s category of colonial difference. See Mignolo (2000).

19. Andrews calculates 110 million Afro-descendants south of the Rio Grande (Andrews 2004).

20. See Franco (1961).

21. Taino is the name given to the people who inhabited Puerto Rico at the time of Columbus’s arrival.

22. For two fairly promising elaborations of such sorts of concepts of “mulatto” and “mulataje,” see Arroyo (2003) and Buscaglia (2003). Also see Martinez-Echezabal (1990). The signifier “mulatto,” similarly to “mestizo,” is conventionally used to connote a false image of “racial democracy” in Latin America, the Hispanic Caribbean, and among U.S. Latinos. However, analogously to the way in which Anzaldúa redefined the “new mestiza” to develop a theory and politics of identification standing from the play of differences, the concept of mulatto can serve as an conceptual and political tool to challenge racial reasoning and to analyze “race” through its multiple mediations and myriad of historical articulations.

23. See Sawyer (2005).

24. See, among others, Dzidzienyo and Oboler (2005), Betancur and Gills (2000), and Jennings (1994).

25. For the “entanglements” of modern/colonial hierarchies within world-systemic logics, see Grosfoguel (2003).

26. An important example is the effort for an “Ethnic University” in the overwhelmingly Afro-Colombian Pacific coast of Colombia that parallels the Indigenous University in the Ecuadorian highlands.

27. For the concept of decolonial attitude, see Maldonado-Torres (2006).

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6

TECHNOLOGIES

Transculturations of Race, Gender, and Ethnicity in
Arturo A. Schomburg's Masonic WritingsJossianna Arroyo¹

"It is not the desire of a brother to injure his less informed, why
prate over this inferiority?—Arturo A. Schomburg, *Masonic Truths*

¡Mi deber es partir! ¡Partir . . . !¿A dónde? ¿Para qué? ¿Por qué
razón?—Eugenio María de Hostos, *La Peregrinación de Bayoán*

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In his autobiographical novel *La Peregrinación de Bayoán* (1863), Eugenio María de Hostos depicts his revolutionary project for Cuba, Santo Domingo, and Puerto Rico. In this novel, the family and love triangle between Bayoán (Puerto Rico), Marién (Cuba), and Guarionex (Dominican Republic) organizes Bayoán's exiled subjectivity, on the notion of pilgrimage. After the death of Marién, his beloved Cuba, Bayoán, an islander, never returns to Puerto Rico, dying adrift (*a la deriva*) on a boat in the Atlantic Ocean. History and revolution mingle to narrate Bayoán's story, one that represents Caribbean migratory experiences at the turn of the nineteenth century. In the novel, Hostos criticizes Spain's imperial projects in the Caribbean. Also, migratory subjects and politics appear, as key axes for representation for what Walter Mignolo

has recently called “the colonial difference.” For Mignolo, Latin American colonial histories since the conquest have organized this global “difference” in the continuous exchanges among subjects and capital, creating new forms of “knowledge.” As it is shown in Hostos’s novel, the knowledge of the colonized subject creates a new language in which the book becomes transformed in these itinerant displacements. An opening quote in Hostos’s prologue of *Bayoán*’s first edition (1863) published in Spain articulates this new type of knowledge, “the non-transient should not read”/“los que no peregrinan que no lean” (1863: 12)—a phrase that reveals a shift in *letrado* spaces and their connection to social and political transformations, what I will call the technologies of the word at the turn of the century.

In Latin American literatures and cultures, the metaphor of the “book that talks” subscribes, as Antonio Cornejo-Polar has argued, histories of violence, conflict, and inequality in colonial contexts. The “talking book” as a metaphor, which fuses orality and writing, is, therefore, part of a type of strategic technology in which diasporic Africans and also other *mestizo* and black writers in the Andes and the Caribbean, such as the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala, and Juan Francisco Manzano, understood their world. Many of what critics describe today as “national literatures” in the Americas originated from these unequal shifts of power and from forms of knowledge that were not egalitarian, as they were mediated by the imposed notion of the “word” and the book as tools of domination of indigenous cultures.²

For Henry L. Gates in *Pioneers of the Black Atlantic*, these narratives, gestures, and subaltern knowledges were subverting since the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries views of the enlightened subject. Some of these narratives—for example, the incredible voyages of Olaudah Equiano, the slave narrative of Frederick Douglass, and the life of John Marrant with the Indians—are stories in which the “book that talks” gets intersected with the “traveling book,” or to use Hostos’s words, “the transient book”/“el libro peregrino.” It is from this particular relationship between the “book that talks” and the changing and subaltern character of the “transient” word that I would like to analyze the Caribbean migrations of Arturo Schomburg, his different encoun-

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ters with the book, and his migratory shifts of identity in the United States. I will analyze his Masonic writings to locate his transcultural depictions of race, gender, and ethnicity, which define his views as a writer. I locate my analysis in an Afro-Atlantic-Caribbean map in which Masonic lodges provide places for interaction and circulation of subjects and knowledges.

This complementary venue of analysis links his civic connections with Caribbean *clubes* at the turn of the century and later with the Masonic lodge to shed light into the complexity of his racial politics, as well as his relationship with the Caribbean. In his civic way of doing politics, Schomburg confronted and negotiated the contradictions of being black and Puerto Rican in Puerto Rico and in the United States, while creating a “technology of the self” through his writings (Foucault). As Lisa Sánchez-González has pointed out, this modern ethic translates these dilemmas in Schomburg’s Afro-diasporic historical projects and, in similar fashion, the lives and dilemmas of the first generation of Boricua migrants to the United States—mainly, a condition that she describes as “paperlessness” a denial of not just citizenship and passport papers but a “legitimate existential pedigree in our colonial metropole’s socio-symbolic order.” As citizens of a country recently occupied by the United States empire in 1898, Puerto Ricans such as Schomburg confronted these political displacements with a recuperation of history, archives, and documentation as “an ironic legitimization of illegitimacy” (2001: 69). Sánchez-González’s call for new paradigms and research methods which describe this social and literary condition, makes Schomburg’s collection of books and archives a site for understanding this subjective colonial order.

For Arturo A. Schomburg, Freemasonry was a space for civic interactions, which coexist hand in hand with two main complementary agendas. First, the archival one, or his main task of rewriting black history in the Americas and second, with his fight for equal citizenship and against racial discrimination. He dedicated thirty years to his Masonic duties, which have been obscured mostly by his monumental labor as a historian and bibliophile. Nevertheless, many of these efforts were not separated from his commitment to revolutionary clubs and later to the African-American Prince Hall lodge. From his letters, we know that many books and manuscripts acquired for his collection were purchased

when he was secretary of the lodge, particularly the ones related to his Haitian-Dominican collection.

Masonic writing also offers other venues to underscore Schomburg's modern ethic, as Enrique Dussel and Michel Foucault have defined it, as a way of negotiating technologies or "arti-facts" of power which by consequence build ethics for social freedom. Also it would shed light on one of the main questions scholars have had about Schomburg—mainly, how Arturo Schomburg decided to "abandon" his commitment to Cuban and Puerto Rican independence after 1898 and commit himself to the civic, social, and political struggles of African Americans (James). Winston James has analyzed this shift in identity politics mostly as Arturo Schomburg's withdrawal from "Puerto Rican affairs," that is, from "Puerto Rican" identity politics for a definite identification with the black movement in the 1920s and 1930s. This shift has been referred to by James as "the change from Arturo to Arthur." For James, Schomburg is, in this case, a "political aberration" in contrast with other black Puerto Rican intellectuals such as Jesús Colón. James has argued that many of the political shifts and identifications in Schomburg's persona were related in part to his biographical relationship to the West Indies. Schomburg's mother, a native of St. Croix, was living in Puerto Rico when he was born. But biographers are still not sure if Schomburg spent all his childhood in San Juan or traveled back and forth between San Juan, Puerto Rico, and the house of a maternal uncle who resided in St. Croix. What is true about many of these facts is that he was part of an ethnic and cultural crossing, which is a reality for many Caribbean peoples.

In this sense, for Schomburg, who never wrote his life story, self-fashioning and representation, through his own book collection and through some of his writings, is a central strategy for this ethic. Some of these representations were for him, as for many other migrants, negotiated social identities created in exile, for which change as a "constant migration" becomes an ethic of the self. As Jesse Hoffnung-Garskof has argued, biographical analysis brings forward many of these continuous changes and "migrations" as a necessary tool for doing historical and cultural research. For Hoffnung-Garskof, of Schomburg's identity negotiations, such as "black from the West Indies in Puerto Rico, a Puerto Rican in the Cuban independence movement, a foreign Negro in Harlem and Brooklyn, [have] laid the foundation for the ideas of the African diaspora

that we have inherited" (2001: 33). What is, then, the convergence of these "migratory" languages and identities in Schomburg's writings? And how do they build on a dialectic of the self (with a third element) ("Arturo-Arthur-Guarionex") to create forms of agency?

A closer look at these forms of self-fashioning—book discoverer, traveler, and Guarionex, the writer—articulates forms of transcultural difference in which race, gender, and ethnicity converge with notions of the self. Guarionex, the pen name he used as a member of *Dos Antillas* and his pen name for his brief comments in *Patria*, was a name he borrowed from the Indian chief from Santo Domingo who was convicted by the Spanish colonial authorities for his uprisings and died in 1502 on a ship when he was taken as a prisoner to Spain. Significantly, this name also appears as a fictional character in Eugenio María de Hostos's novel *La Peregrinación de Bayoán* (1863). In this novel, Guarionex is an intellectual who represents the island of Santo Domingo (particularly the Spanish part of the island, the Dominican Republic) and goes along with Bayoán in his political pilgrimage throughout the Caribbean. The fact that Hostos, himself a sociologist, mason, and an exile, will fictionalize Guarionex is not a coincidence. His political project of a *Confederación Antillana* was nonetheless the main political agenda for Puerto Rican and Cuban radicalism at the turn of the century. I am not sure if Schomburg had the opportunity to read Hostos's "transient book" during his years involved with *Club Dos Antillas* in New York.³ But it is well known that Schomburg was connected to this project specifically through the figure of Ramón E. Betances, the Puerto Rican mulatto leader who was a brother mason and who also mobilized and directed the actions of the Revolutionary *clubes* in New York from his exile in Paris (Estrade; Ojeda), as well as through the many meetings of the *clubes* and the presence of various Cuban and Puerto Rican radicals, such as José Martí, Rafael Serra, and Sotero Figueroa.

In this sense, the Indian rebel and the black are ethnic constructions that are not separated from each other, but rather overlap in Schomburg's imaginary, creating a complex view of his definitions of *antillanía*, Caribbean *mestizaje*, and Puertoricaness. The fact that in his later years as activist wholly involved with the African-American community and Prince Hall Masons, Schomburg maintained the transcultural imaginary forged in his past alliance with revolutionary *clubes* sheds light on his

own personal ways of arguing for difference in those same contexts he was participating. While the Masonic lodge provided Schomburg a site to articulate a black civic manhood in the United States, it gave him, at the same time, the necessary discursive technologies that make possible the representation of these transcultural identities. From the *clubes* and the Masonic lodge, tropes such as the artisan-bricoleur, the self-made man, and the translator are present. While these tropes create a “technology of the word” in which identity and language construct a discourse of “difference,” it is in this discursive realm that the binary “Arturo-Athur” brings forward a subjective dilemma: how to be black and Puerto Rican, or Puerto Rican and black, in the United States. Hence, from this “transcultural difference,” Schomburg’s views of the talking book articulate other identities as a black man, a mason, a Caribbean Afro-Hispanic man, and finally a third element that encompasses all, Guarionex “the writer.”

ARTURO SCHOMBURG: THE FREEMASON

The Negro mason is really beginning to understand that Masonry means progress, and that progress should not be made without agitation.—John E. Bruce, “The Significance of Brotherhood”, Address to Prince Hall Lodge, #38.

A black man crosses the Atlantic in a boat from the island of Puerto Rico, a colony of the decadent Spanish empire. He is seventeen years old. The year is 1891. He does not return to his native island Puerto Rico, in fact, as many of his friends recall, Arturo rarely makes any reference to his early years growing up on the island or to his visits to St. Croix with his maternal uncle. Although he continues to speak his native Spanish and to be in contact with Spanish-Caribbean migrants, he interacts mainly with the community of migrants of the West Indies and with African Americans. After a few years, he will be more involved with African Americans and migrants from the West Indies. During those years, Schomburg became part of a vibrant community that since the 1860s, was reshaping the social, cultural, and racial configuration of the United States mainland. In the streets of San Juan Hill, Harlem, and

Brooklyn, these different subjects were interacting as “overlapping diasporas,” to use Earl Lewis’s term. We can imagine that the difficulties in adjusting to a different language and social customs were dissipated by Schomburg’s constant interaction with the members of these communities. If, as Fernando Ortiz has argued, the power shifts, displacements, and ruptures in cultural contact are part of the complex process of transculturation, migrants like Schomburg were translators of their reality. In this sense, culture is not a passive way of being subjugated to a hegemonical group but a space of negotiation in which the subject develops skills and strategies with which to adjust to political, social, and economic changes (Gramsci). “*Clubes*” or associations of different sorts became the places where part of these adjustments took place. The club as a phenomenon from the fin de siècle became for women and minorities in the United States an axis for sociopolitical interaction, particularly for the middle class. They were also, for Afro-Caribbean migrants, sites of political activity and radicalism in their own countries.⁴ In this sense, they were not only social gatherings but places in which a praxis of politics was developed. In Latin America as in the United States, the *clubes* became centers for secular mores and were symbols of intellectual and social status.⁵ In Puerto Rico and Cuba, Masonic lodges were meeting sites for *criollo* and artisan elites and after the 1820s, became centers of closed meetings and revolutionary conspiracies. In 1868 the revolutions of Yara (Cuba) and Lares (Puerto Rico) had a strong Masonic leadership and an abolitionist agenda (Ayala 1991; Ferrer Benimeli). These middle-class and poor artisans were mostly white *criollos*, black, and mulatto. These local chapters were separated from peninsular lodges affiliated with the Great Lodge of Spain (Ayala 1991).

In the United States, Schomburg would become affiliated immediately with two societies at the turn of the century, the *Club Revolucionario Dos Antillas* (1892–1896) and *El Sol de Cuba* (1892, founded in 1881), a Prince Hall Masonic lodge formed by immigrants from the Spanish Caribbean. In Harry Williamson’s words,

from the humble beginning of a Master Mason in his Lodge, in later years Brother Schomburg developed into one of the outstanding members of the Craft of this generation and because of a wide sphere of activity in the Fraternity his name will go upon the records of the Negro group along

with those of the distinguished brethren of a previous generation whose names are revered in many grand jurisdictions throughout the United States. (1941: 1)

Later, Williamson states that Schomburg became a member of the lodge *El Sol de Cuba* in the year 1892. In this sense, Schomburg's activities in *El Sol de Cuba*, a Prince Hall lodge erected in 1881, whose membership consisted mostly of Spanish-Caribbean migrants and Spanish-speaking migrants of the West Indies, coincided with his membership in the revolutionary *Club Dos Antillas* of which he was Secretary from 1892 to 1896.⁶ About *El Sol de Cuba* meetings, a Prince Hall document states:

During the years 1891–1895 when the Spanish speaking colonials of Cuba and Puerto Rico were actively engaged in furthering their campaign for independence, the soil of the American States have already dedicated to liberty. *El Sol de Cuba* no. 38 was comprised of Cubans who exercised the esoteric principles of Masonry, and many brothers who lived far away from home would find the Spanish speaking lodge a haven for rest and comfort. At one time there were visiting brothers to *El Sol de Cuba* from almost every republic of South America, and the exchange of fraternal greetings were cordial and pleasurable. The lodge was unique in that all business and ritual was conducted entirely in Spanish.

Dos Antillas also worked for the independence of Cuba and Puerto Rico. At the same time, Cuban and Puerto Rican members were joined together by the charismatic leadership of a black cigar maker turned journalist, Rafael Serra, and the conciliatory and powerful speech of José Martí. In these clubs and Masonic lodges, views of the artisan not only as a self-made man but also as a brother who is part of the Craft (as Freemasonry is called) shaped his notions of masculinity, citizenship, morals, and politics (Wallace 1997). A mason himself, Martí created with Serra a school for artisans composed of cigar makers and tailors, *La Liga de Patriotas*.⁷ At the same time, *Dos Antillas* published a journal, *Patria*, with articles written mostly by Martí, Serra, and Schomburg (alias Guarionex). Here they imagined an integrated national project in which blacks and whites would serve in the politics of their future nation with civic pride. Education and racial integration was the main task of this nation imagined outside of the colonial borders of Cuba and Puerto Rico and within the everyday inter-

actions of the migrant community. From Harry Williamson's pen, we also know that Schomburg was a member of *Dos Antillas* and at that specific historical juncture, he translated *El Sol de Cuba's* initial constitutions and lodge rosters from Spanish into English.

It is at this time of political activism—his revolutionary struggle for Cuban and Puerto Rican independence and his Masonic duties in the Prince Hall lodge—that Schomburg creates two intermingled civic identities, one as Guarionex the writer and the other as brother of the lodge. If, as Arcadio Díaz Quiñones and Walter Mignolo have argued, the 1898 Cuban-Spanish-American War inaugurated another imperial frontier in which the United States reorganized the global economic-political map, it is clear that these revolutionary and pro-independence clubs and the Masonic interventions in politics were also shaped by these changes. These revolutionary clubs disintegrated after 1898 and after these years Schomburg dedicated his efforts entirely to Prince Hall Masonry and other duties until 1932. What was Schomburg's compromise with Prince Hall Masonry? To what extent did the lodge shape his radical or conservative views of black struggle in the United States?

Oratory and rituals of Prince Hall Masonry were for Schomburg as they were for his other black Mason brothers a school of discipline of citizenship and morals. For Prince Hall Masons at the fin de siècle, racial equality and citizenship were main concerns. Prince Hall, a free-born slave from Barbados, organized the first Lodge No. 459 (Most Worshipful Lodge) with a group of black soldiers in Massachusetts in 1787.⁸ This lodge was erected with a warrant conceded by the Grand Lodge of England. Years later other lodges were established in Philadelphia and Providence, Rhode Island, and in 1808, they joined together in Boston under the name African Lodge No. 459.⁹ Although the Masonic law of global brotherhood is the key component in the Masonic ritual, Prince Hall lodges have been segregated from white lodges in the United States since the lodge's inception. Though they share similar laws and rituals, which are secret and sacred, related for the most part with morality, citizenship, and virtue, Prince Hall lodge affiliations have been different from many white lodges.

For these black soldiers who later became the first black Masons, as for Schomburg at the turn of the century, the Masonic lodge became a place for defining discourses of citizenship through a "revolutionary"

moral practice of the word. The Masonic lodge defines itself as a “workshop” in which brothers as artisans (and future architects) work on their own process of initiation, through the help of other brothers. In allegorical ways they are cornerstones who are meant to be polished to perfection by ritualized practices. In this sense, and as Michael Wallace has pointed out, the brother as a polished stone is, at the same time, a “builder” to whom masculinity and self-reliance appear as ideals of citizenship. The ideal is a perfected stone that will be part of the universe, which is visualized as the Temple of Solomon. Symbolic words and signs are part of the ritual that mixes esoteric knowledges, readings of the Bible, and symbols from architecture, such as the square, the compass, and the rule, among others. As Schomburg will make clear in his work as a secretary of the lodge, Masonic debates act as a practice of writing the word. Ritual initiations are a symbolic manifestation of politics. To be an initiate would be to know the mysteries of this language of freedom, in the “praxis” of the *taller* or workshop. In Spanish the word *taller* is related directly to the artisan class. It is the place in which the artisan makes his work of art from different materials, with the mastery of his own hands. In Masonic and esoteric language, it is connected with the laboratories of alchemy in which science, art, and philosophy converge as forms of knowledge. Freemasons based their workshops not only in the mastery of their architectural/engineering arts but also in the sharing of materials and mastery of their work.

During his life, Schomburg would intertwine his definition of the Masonic workshop with his own story as a self-made man, his interaction with other masons who were also freeborn slaves who became leaders and mentors of other African Americans (such as John Bruce), and finally his work as a bibliographer and historian of the African diaspora. If the workshop locates the space in which the worker or artisan perfects his own skills as a subject and in politics, it is also a place where specialized knowledges come together in an atmosphere of shared education. In his article about the Puerto Rican mulatto painter José Campeche, Schomburg intermingles the workshop with the natural instinct of art:

His instinctive ability in design, his well-executed chalk and charcoal drawings on the city pavements on his home were notable for their life-

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like fidelity. Clearly drawn in detail, animated with a vivid resemblance, each character depicted was easily recognized by the actual passerby. Education on the island was almost sterile. A doctor taught him anatomy privately as an aid to better study of the nude from life. (1934: 2)

In this quote, Campeche's drawings are intuitive designs of his future paintings. They were drawn in "city pavements on his home" in the urban streets of his poor mulatto neighborhood in San Juan. Here, Schomburg addresses issues of race, class, and self-education for the future artist. For Schomburg, as for other writers, art, rhetoric, and good speech were traits related to the humanity and the "soul" of the black race. If "education on the island was almost sterile," as Schomburg states, the benevolent education of a doctor (as a mentor and master) will continue Campeche's "formal education." Hence, disciple and master create a form of "brotherhood" and apprenticeship that reformulates the educational ways of the *taller*.

If *taller* or workshop is a way of creating habits—of citizenship, morals, and creativity—*patria*, or fatherland, becomes the center of this creation. It is possible, thus, to integrate morality and politics if every man works in the atmosphere of the *taller*. Solitude, the mastery of individual creation, and brotherhood, which comes from the interaction with others, are the ways of creating "fatherland," or *patria*. There is a process of recognition in these technologies in which the Hegelian master-slave (lordship-bondage) dichotomy is integrated and displaced at the same time. In the *taller* of present and future, every man is the master of his own work, and at the same time, workers depend on their "raw materials" and sometimes on the protection of a master (in the case of Schomburg, W. E. B. DuBois, John Bruce, and Harry Williamson) to get away from their slave condition. The slave is the subject perfected through his or her work, with a kind of "embodied consciousness" in which the body and the spirit act together in the mastery of art and politics (Russon 1997).

For Prince Hall Masons, as for Masons around the world, the Masonic temple is also the allegory of another temple, the Temple of Solomon, and the legend of its architect Hiram Abiv (or Abif). Though it is based on the biblical story, this particular legend is an elaboration of Gnostic medieval and Enlightenment texts. Hiram, the architect of the

temple, is the body desired and emulated by his disciples for his perfection and philosophical knowledge. He is killed by three of his disciples in an act of love, desire, and revenge. They mourn their loss by learning how to polish themselves to perfection. This incident makes the temple incomplete and creates an allegoric search for Hiram and a narrative of revenge from the other disciples. For black Masons in the United States as well as in the Caribbean, this language came together with political issues of legitimacy, representation, and brotherhood (Ayala 1991; Williamson). If the white Masons did not recognize black men as honorable men, or not even as men, and if the U.S. Constitution was proposing “equality” but “segregation,” how could this imaginary of brotherhood be shaped (Wallace 1997)? For Prince Hall Freemasons, and particularly for the historians such as Harry A. Williamson, solving this dilemma took most of their lives. Language and an understanding of the word as technology was the way to address these questions. In his Masonic and historical writings, Arturo Schomburg would share this confidence in the power of the discursive word, not only as a formal strategy, but also as an understanding of the self in politics.

The press, as a modern-mechanized technology of circulation, represents in the publication of the “pamphlet” or “booklet” in the Masonic debate an ideal space for these languages. Thus, the printing machine becomes a “workshop” for the word, from which Latin American modernity, as Francine Masiello and Julio Ramos have argued, inscribes its own contradictions. For African Americans in the United States, the pamphlet became a way of articulating a public discourse. Mediating between the print word and orality, “the value of the pamphlet lay in the very possibility inherent in it, the luxury of experiment it permitted, and the access it promised to a variety of audiences” (Newman, Rael, and Lapzansky: 7).¹⁰ In one famous pamphlet from 1797 entitled “A Charge,” Prince Hall, the Worshipful Master of the First African Lodge, declares:

My brethren, let us not be cast down under these and many other abuses we at present labour under . . . Although you are deprived of the means of meditation; by which I mean thinking, hearing and weighing matters, men, and things in your own mind, and making that judgment as you think reasonable to satisfy your minds and give an answer to those who

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may ask you a question. This nature hath furnished you with, without letter learning, and some have made great progress therein, some of those I have heard repeat psalms and hymns, and a great part of a sermon only by hearing it read or preached and why not in other things in nature. (1797: 48)

Here Hall reminds his fellow disciples of other types of knowledge that are given by the lodge and that brother Masons can receive by the power of the word “without letter learning.” Brothers reunited in the temple follow the master and become masters themselves as part of a critical pedagogy in brotherhood. In this sense, Prince Hall Masons gave Arturo A. Schomburg the forum to exercise, understand, and negotiate the contradictory nature of this language. Three main themes are depicted in this negotiation: (1) rewriting of history, (2) education, and (3) citizenship for blacks and black cultures. All of these themes are intertwined in Schomburg’s writings, and the Masonic lodge was an active forum for the discussion of all of them. Many of these concerns have been understood by Schomburg’s critics and biographers as a unique “Pan Africanist” perspective (James). What then is the connection of these rewritings between history and politics? And how are Masonic views of brotherhood and revolution embedded in them?

Schomburg traces the global history of black struggle in two main directions, to Europe and the Old World, and to the post-revolutionary Americas, specifically the United States and the Haiti. As Benjamin’s “angel of history,” Schomburg’s Janus, a double-faced enterprise, wanted to restore the pieces of past memories to shape political agendas in a violent present. The Haitian Revolution gave Schomburg, as it gave blacks all over America, a sense of pride in which brotherhood was intermingled with revolutionary struggle, as was made clear when one of their first black lodges was named *Boyer No. 1*, after Charles Boyer, the Haitian military leader.¹¹ In his three years as secretary of the Prince Hall lodge, Schomburg was the contact brother of Prince Hall lodges in New York with lodges in Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Africa (Liberia). He used his Masonic contacts to buy more books for his collection and to get acquainted with hidden facts about Haiti’s revolutionary past. In revolutionary struggles and, specifically, the shared struggles of African Americans, Haitians and other

Caribbean blacks in the United States were a point of departure for his rewriting of history:

The Haitians have rendered to the cause of Independence invaluable and meritorious services. The historians Madiou and St. Mery have chronicled in pages of their books the undisputable facts that over 800 Haitians, free men of color, fought for the cause of North American Independence. In South America, Simón Bolívar hailed president Pétion with words of the highest praise for the great service he so generously rendered for the cause of South American Independence. (1904: 202)

Most of these revolutionary connections made precisely through Masonic lodges at the turn of the century were accounts recuperated orally in lodge meetings, and for Price Hall Masons, they were a way of recovering a glorious past—a past in which connections were built not on a return to Africa, but in an in-between locus, from a (North and South) “American,” Afro-Atlantic perspective. But also, with this intervention, Schomburg not only wanted to make a call for the black Caribbean presence in revolutionary struggles in North-South America but also criticized the imperial politics of the United States in Haiti and the Dominican Republic, a critique he would pursue in his essay entitled “Is Haity (sic) Decadent?” (1904). In this essay, Schomburg proposed a practice of politics for Haitians based on Booker T. Washington’s model for self-reliance, “uplift,” and “raising up” from slavery. In this sense, it can be argued that racial ideologies “traveled” from the United States to the Caribbean, and vice versa, through migrant subjects, intellectuals, print materials, and Prince Hall lodges. From this point of view, racial ideologies were also discourses that were remade and changed continuously.¹²

For Arturo Schomburg, as it happened with many black migrants from the Spanish Caribbean, racial discourses were organized through many dialogical formations, coming from Spain as a colonial power and from the *criollo* (creole) discourses of miscegenation created in nineteenth-century Latin America. In other words, if national projects in Latin America wrote racial diversity as an “integrative” but not participatory (citizen) model, Schomburg confronted race and racism from a different point of view than the one he encountered in the United States. It is my belief that his fight for racial equality in the United

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States, and the way he understood racism, was always mediated by this fusion, what I will call a “transcultural mulatto subjectivity.” For a mulatto such as Schomburg, class and upward mobility appeared as options sometimes in the hierarchical racial models of Spanish-Caribbean societies. Nevertheless, the idea that money “whitens” in the Spanish Caribbean draws a more complex picture here. In the Spanish Caribbean, racism is embedded with hierarchical-complex models of color and class, which also work on a binary model (black and white) based on skin color (Dinzey). In other words, black men’s and women’s racial discrimination or acceptance in society, is influenced by how dark your skin is. As Arlene Torres and Zaire Dinzey have shown, the Puerto Rican racial democracy model, or “prejudice of having no prejudice” (to use Samuel Betances’ phrase), constructs “blackness” or the epidermal mark on the skin as a signifier that plays itself inside/outside the national borders of cultural-political imaginaries. For example, Schomburg’s racial identity as a man from the Virgin Islands (because of his mother’s connection to St. Croix) could be racially marked as that of someone who is an “islander” (from the Virgin Islands), that is, a black man who is “outside” of Puerto Rican imaginaries of nationhood.

This ideological crossing of racial discourses refers directly, as James has argued, to Schomburg’s involvement in the U.S. black movement, or what he describes as his change from “Arturo” to “Arthur.” In this sense, Schomburg confronted subjective and political dilemmas similar to the ones of faced by Latino/a subjects in the United States, particularly in the ways that black migrants from the Spanish Caribbean identify themselves with cultural and political agendas of African Americans (Flores 2000). Schomburg’s encounter with U.S. racial paradigms creates a new form of consciousness or “transcultural difference” that is not separated from but that interacts and intermingles with his notions of race and nation building brought from the nineteenth-century Spanish Caribbean. To understand the complexity of these facts, it is necessary to understand why some of his historical contributions were embraced, while others were a case for debate—or not understood at all—in Afro-American black intellectual circles. Schomburg’s “double consciousness” as a black man from the Spanish Caribbean, therefore, differs from DuBois or John Bruce or Harry Williamson, his brother masons, although they share the realities of being black men in the United States. So if some of his travel accounts

of his visits to Spain in the search of black brotherhoods, Cuban black writers and painters, and Puerto Rican mulatto artists seem far away from the political struggles of citizenship of African Americans in the United States, my proposal is that they offered a transcultural knowledge, a third space, and “a transmodern way of understanding the colonial difference”(Dussel; Mignolo 2000).

But at the same time, he understood the importance of arguments for citizenship and internationalism in his defense of colonized black races and cultures around the world. His few articles in defense of the Prince Hall Masonry and his biographical account entitled “Two Negro Missionaries to the American Indians” are examples of these notions. In the Masonic articles, a quest for Prince Hall legitimacy is woven with the universal “claim of the citizen of the lodge” and the unique presence of the narrator, whose voice translates at the same time these discourses.

“Masonic Truths: A Letter and a Document” (also published as “Freemasonry vs. an Inferior Race”) is Schomburg’s most famous defense of the role of Prince Hall Masonry in the United States. It is the answer to an article by Professor Arnold P. Whiting published in the Masonic journal *National Trestle Board*. The language of the article organized around “oration,” has the rhetorical strategies of a Masonic address or discourse. Blacks as subjects of history appear as a central theme, while notions of brotherhood are articulated from the Masonic lodge to national politics:

We believe men, no matter of what race, can respect each other without the hobby of raising the dust of social equality. What we demand and are entitled to is plain justice, nothing but equality before the law. Where is the white brother or the honest man who will deny to any citizen a right to work, eat and live with his ability in the republic of opportunities, without going out of his way to slur him because he wears the livery of the bur-nished sun? (1922: 2)

Claims of citizenship and equality before the law are therefore connected to the unequal practice of politics, whereas the lodge should become the ideal space of integration under the protection of “the Great Architect of the Universe” (Schomburg 1922: 3). This impossibility creates a double critique in which the lodge becomes society and society

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becomes the lodge: "It is no longer the true and plain Masonry handed down to us, but as provided by a variety of the American people, who have injected all their prejudices and their 'beautiful abstractions' by which evasion can be kept up" (1922: 4). If white masons and his voice (that of Prof. Whiting) are represented as a "whitening" discursive agent vis-à-vis black Masons, natural law becomes a way of creating consciousness: "What of it the darker races are creating consciousness? Isn't the world large enough for people of all bloods to dwell therein?" (1922: 3). This type of consciousness will put both races together in a civic realm.

In his article "Prince Hall Masons of the State of New York," Schomburg associates this notion to the uplifting of the race: "How to work without discord and yet cement the Fraternity in one bond of usefulness and uplift, praying for the spirit of toleration so well handed by the great Locke in his essays" (1923: 1). As in the former article, wars brought participation and citizenship to free black men. Notions of freedom are, therefore, intrinsic to what "fatherland" means as a phallic identification with "sacrifice" for the land, because as Schomburg states: "truth, perseverance and patriotism" are articulated "when men forget all distinction of color and stand together in defense of the fatherland as human beings with a right to live as well as to die" (1923: 1). If war, as Schomburg states, makes "citizens" of black men because "in the Spanish American War we find the negro at San Juan Hill leading Roosevelt to victory, in Europe, aiding the white race to save itself to the ferocity of the barbarians," this citizenship is nevertheless "second class." Also, it extends itself to global imperial conflicts in Europe and the Americas, particularly the Cuban-Spanish-American War of 1898. After making a statement about the global character of the "colonial difference," Schomburg closes his argument with a curious statement:

Yet he [Prof. Whiting] does not give the tell-tale facts that the souls of white men did not revolt when they were raising millions of mixed breeds in the country; when they were bleaching or whitening up the masses of blacks, making possible such a large number of individuals whose racial nomenclature is uninterminable by any rule; they do not belong to the black, and have by all rights a better position with those in whose veins courses the best blood of the southland. (1923: 4)

In this quote Schomburg makes reference to the relativity of race as a marker and signifier, while he builds a type of “third space” in the U.S. dichotomies of black versus white. It is not clear whether Schomburg wants to end his discussion of how Masonic discourses on civil pride contribute to debates about citizenship and equality with an emphasis on *mestizaje*. In this case, Caribbean views of *mestizaje* described the social realities of the U.S. south. Here *mestizaje* works together with transculturation as a process of unequal exchange in social, political, and cultural realms in which, as Fernando Ortiz has pointed out, races but also cultures mix with each other to produce a third element. Another two-sided argument can be detached from this relationship. On the one hand, fusion of blacks and whites “culturally” will produce a process of whitening of the race that would mean “civilization” and socialization. And, on the other hand, the uses of the Masonic debate serve as a space for providing a third alternative, that is, a transcultural discourse in which race and culture intermingle in a power relationship—a discourse which will build a “third element” in the conception of U.S. segregation and racial binary in political and social realms. Although not argued clearly, the “Arturo-Arthur-Guarionex” (i.e., black, Hispanic Caribbean, African-American, and Taino identities) is articulated here as a form of transcultural difference.

These forms of transcultural difference from Schomburg’s Afro-Caribbean perspective are best articulated in his article entitled “Two Negro Missionaries to the American Indians, John Marrant and John Stewart.” Here both knowledges and positionalities, the black and the Indian, will intersect. In this case, the Native Indian is not of Taino ancestry, as in the Caribbean, but of U.S. Native American heritage. Schomburg traces a biographical sketch of the life of the two black missionaries and their experiences as educators of several Indian nations. In his narrative account of John Marrant, the narrator organizes the narrative of his life to finish his account with Marrant’s initiation as a Mason under the first African lodge in Massachusetts in 1784. In fact, Schomburg will edit the famous address to the African lodge “A Sermon Preached on the 24th Day of June 1789 Being the Festival of St. John the Baptist by Reverend Brother John A. Marrant” for the *Masonic Quaterly Review* and will purchase the first edition of John Marrant’s story for his library. To understand the transcultural knowledge proposed by Schomburg’s depiction of

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Marrant's story, I need to focus on Schomburg's introduction to Marrant's "Sermon." Marrant, as a self-made black man, a Methodist preacher, a migrant in London, and a Mason, was, in many ways, an interesting character for Schomburg, first because of his historical persona, and second, because of his account of his life with the Indians. In his introduction to his edition of the "Sermon," Schomburg writes:

Marrant was born in New York City, June 15th, 1755, and at the age of five, after his father's death, was taken by his mother to St. Augustine where he was sent to school "and taught to read and spell." He remembers having heard when a young man the great Whitefield preach in Charleston on the text, "Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel." This brought about his conversion and he became a Christian, suffered the privations of life, became a missionary and an itinerant preacher, learnt the Indian tongue from an apprenticeship with an Indian hunter. He was the first man to carry the word of God and the teaching of Jesus Christ to the Cherokees, Creeks, Catawar and Housaw Indians. (1936: 1)

Education and the master-apprentice relationship of the Masonic craft appears in this quote. Also, preaching the word of God becomes a way of education for African Americans. Christianity and Masonry are two discourses that do not contradict each other; rather, they complement each other to create a different type of knowledge of the "word" in which a liberatory strategy appears. Here, the word appears as a marker that indicates strategic views of freedom. Native Americans (Indians) are, nonetheless, the carriers of "another tongue" that the black Marrant has to learn for his transmission of the word of God. The apprentice becomes a master and, most of all, has a "divine quality" in his mastery of the main word, the word of God. It can be argued that this passage articulates relations of power in the subaltern colonial discourses, in which blacks as subalterns educate themselves in the language of the "other," that is the "Indian," as a subjectivity marked outside the imaginary frontiers of discourse. Later, and after his cultural contact with the Indians, Schomburg states that "Marrant served in the Revolutionary War with the English . . . then preached the Gospel in Nova Scotia and was made a Mason in African Lodge No. 459 by Prince Hall . . . Reverend John Marrant by his services to the conversion of the Indians noted, will in time come into his own" (1936: 1).

As the narrative follows in an interesting shift, Schomburg as a narrator fashions himself as “the other” carrier of the language, that is, as an Indian. In a rare passage in Schomburg’s writing, a real encounter between him, Nathaniel Cassell, John Bruce Grit, and Bishop Alexander Camphor is depicted:

It was on an August afternoon, in Brooklyn, New York; the southern zephyrs were blowing calm and refreshing breezes over the home of a modest bibliophile. In the library, there were present Bishop Alexander Camphor of the A. M. E. Church, President Nathaniel Cassell of Liberia College in Monrovia, Liberia, journalist John M. Bruce Grit and Guarionex, the writer. At first the conversation dealt with education in the Republic of Liberia . . . [John] Bruce Grit cast his reflective mind exploring from another angle, such as the men who had sailed over the seas to help in the work of giving prestige to the black man.(1936: 1)

Later, as the conversation develops to the subject of John Marrant and Stewart and their encounters with the Indians, Schomburg-Guarionex, the writer, states: “Many years ago while browsing in an old bookshop, I ran across a booklet containing a narrative of the life of John Marrant in New York . . . The next copy that came into my hands was the London edition, of 1785, in which John Marrant was put down as ‘black’ . . . The book related that the contents were taken down, arranged, corrected and published by Reverend Alridge” (1936: 2).

Here, the Guarionex-bibliophile-writer encounters Marrant’s book. Again, from the fictionalization of a “real” encounter with the book, we see how Guarionex the bibliophile assimilates the word of Marrant. Recovering the alias he used as a member of the Cuban–Puerto Rican *Club Dos Antillas*, the writer Guarionex, or Guarionex the Indian chief, positions himself *ante el libro*/before the book.

In this form of self-fashioning, Schomburg-Guarionex the writer plays both roles; he is the Indian Guarionex, the warrior who died at sea by Spain’s colonizer’s power, and also the black man, as he discovers Marrant’s book. In this sense, he becomes the master and the apprentice of “the tongue of the other” (the Indian) and articulates with Marrant a mastery of the word and a new kind of subjectivity: “by constant and patient study [he] became a preacher among his people . . . was welcome to the Indian tribes around the state of New York” (1936: 3). Although

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Schomburg used his alias Guarionex in two writings for *Patria* at the turn of the century, it is interesting that it is precisely his Indian “name,” recuperated in a Masonic text, which depicts his ethnic and language difference as a Caribbean migrant and member of the lodge. Schomburg is Guarionex the writer but is also Marrant, the black brother Mason, who is also a Christian. In this language with crossed and shifted identities, he is also Guarionex and Marrant, Caribbean, Puerto Rican and black. If the Indian is a type of “dead,” but mythical identity for the Spanish Caribbean, it is interesting that it is precisely an Indian name that disguises, in an allegorical way, Schomburg’s narrative.¹³ In Schomburg’s case, to be Guarionex could be read as a displacement of his blackness for an indigenous race, as has been argued in a different context in Jorge Duany’s article entitled “Making Indians out of Blacks.” Though this construction might seem problematic because of his commitment to black politics and his self-identification as black, it can be argued that as a politics of identity, it embraced his way of understanding Caribbeaness, within cultural constructions of Puerto Ricanness. In this sense, I prefer to argue for a transcultural politics of identities, in which ethnicity as language of self-representation is problematized, and in which “Arturo-Arthur-Guarionex” coexist as transculturated notions of the self.

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Your country? How came it yours? —W. E. B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk*

Time is a river and books are boats. Many volumes start down that stream only to be wrecked and lost beyond recall in its sands. Only a few, a very few endure the testing of time and live to bless the ages following.—R. and Rev. Joseph Fort Newton, “The Bible in Masonry”

In conclusion, a close analysis of Arturo Schomburg’s writings articulates a technology of the word written from languages of citizenship, radicalism, and internationalism for blacks in the United States. Transculturations of these languages would address in the space of the lodge an ethic for the self and a site for rewriting history from an ethic of “difference.”

This ethic relies on the constant transpositions, shifts in Schomburg's subjectivity, particularly on his negotiated understanding on how to be black and Puerto Rican in the United States. The fiction or a fictionalization of the self in his uses of Arturo-Arthur-Guarionex—conceived as a revolutionary alias when he was a member of the revolutionary *clubes* at the turn of the century—was then the main strategic jump for this ethic. As I have shown in my analysis of Schomburg's Masonic writings, his view of a Caribbean-Antillean ideology was never displaced by his active involvement with the African-American community and political struggles. The lodge therefore became a space in which identities could be reconciled: the public space as a black man in the United States, and the ideological as an Afro-Caribbean strongly influenced by the discourses of colonial difference, globality, and subjectivation at the turn of the century. Schomburg's insistence on "reinterpretation" or "rediscovering" a "Negro history" was in many ways a global cultural and historical project because of this conflation of racial, cultural, and political discourses that he experienced. If race and cultural identity were the main paradigms for this contradictory formation (Schomburg as a Puerto Rican but also as a West Indian–Virgin Islander), he is a figure who remained "outside" the imaginary constructions of "nation" in both geographies. Nevertheless, discourses of miscegenation in his writings articulate a more problematic stance, which as I mentioned before, tries to dissolve the dichotomy of black versus white, not for a discourse of harmony or "racial democracy," but for a transcultural shift in power, politics and self-representation in his "Arturo-Arthur-Guarionex" positionality.

The Masonic lodge gave Schomburg a public persona as a black man, a citizen of the lodge in search for validation, respect, to whom morals and discipline were hand in hand. But it also gave him the opportunity to address in the strategic forms of oratio, gramma, and rhetoric, which articulated an "ethic of freedom" in which the master-apprentice relationship in the self-made man model were explored. Also, it located a strategic confluence of discursive realms in which the encounter with "the talking book" becomes, at the same time, a metaphor for the "traveling-transient book." In this sense, Schomburg as a black man born in Puerto Rico but not an official citizen of the United States until 1917, Caribbean migrant and exile, Secretary of the lodge, translator, and con-

tact between Prince Hall lodges, Africa, and the Caribbean, builds his transcultural politics as negotiating realms for subjectivity. For Schomburg, that is, the black citizen and the pilgrim, the traveler, and the bibliophile, this space exists in his notion of a “self-made man,” in his struggles with English and Spanish, between orality and the written word, and between blackness and whiteness. Transculturation articulates relations of power but also problematizes fusions and translations; in other words, it refers to the semiotic—and strategic—uses of language and culture. It is in this contradictory axis that I propose we read Arturo Schomburg’s various “encounters” with “the book” not only as a technology of the word but also as an ethic of the self.

NOTES

1. To my father, J. R. A.
2. This essay is a short version of a chapter in the forthcoming book titled *Fin de Siglo: Secrecy and Technologies of the Word in Caribbean Freemasonry*. My deep gratitude to José Amador, Diana Lachatañeré, Myriam Jiménez, Colin Palmer, Jacqueline Goldsby, Robin G. Kelly, and the members of the Scholars in Residence Program (2001) at the Schomburg Center for their thoughtful comments. Also, I am greatly indebted to Jorge Duany, Susan-Buck Morss, Yolanda Martínez-San Miguel, Ben Sifuentes-Jaúregui, Jarrod Hayes, and Kelvin Santiago-Valles for their comments and help on drafts of this paper.
3. Nevertheless, this fusion of indigenous and European techniques or forms of knowledge, was not an egalitarian exchange. This unequal relationship made of the “talking book” a space of confrontation, violence, and constant mediation. global Capital markets in colonial times put slavery of Indians and blacks as a historical mark of Enlightenment, inscribing, at the same time, a colonial relationship between self and other (Mignolo 2000). For the definition of the “talking book” in African-American literatures and cultures, see Henry L. Gates’s essay *The Signifying Monkey*. The same metaphor has been used in Latin American colonial and subaltern studies; see the works of Antonio Cornejo Polar and Walter Mignolo.
4. The first edition of Hostos’s novel was published in Spain in 1863 and submitted to political censorship. Nevertheless, many volumes arrived hidden from the authorities Puerto Rico. If Schomburg had read *Bayoán*, it would be possible that he had access to the second edition published in Valparaíso, Chile, in 1873.

5. See Winston James's essay *Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia: Caribbean Radicalism in Early Twentieth Century America*.

6. In the Spanish Caribbean, black brotherhoods were a reality in colonial times; however, associations of people of color, particularly men of color, were prohibited at the turn of the century. The fear of "another Haiti" was then part of the social milieu of countries such as Cuba and Brazil with larger black populations. Conspiracies were "invented" by these colonial governments, which managed to suppress and exterminate the black powerful artisan middle class (i.e. tailors, watchmakers, teachers, engravers, painters, poets).

7. As it is stated in a Prince Hall no. 38 document, "On June 26, 1880 Lafayette Marcus, Andrew N. Portos, John Johnson, Manuel R. Coronado, Abraham Seino, and Sixto Pozo of Mt. Olive no. 2 and Abony Brown of Celestial no. 3 (two Prince Hall lodges) presented a petition to the Grand Lodge of New York for a dispensation to set up a Spanish speaking lodge to be named 'El Sol de Cuba.'"

As Jesse Hoffnung has noted, maybe some of the petitioners with English surnames were migrants from the West Indies or Jamaica who spoke Spanish because they had lived in Cuba, Puerto Rico, or Panama.

8. Martí's involvement with Freemasonry, mainly whether or not he was a mason, is a source of debate in contemporary socialist Cuba. As Jorge Mañach has argued in his biography of Martí, he was initiated in 1872–1873, during his exile in Spain, by the lodge "Armonía," affiliated with the *Oriente Lusitano Unido*, a Portuguese lodge. Cuban Masons in Cuba and in exile have used historical references, particularly from his life in the United States, to make clear that he was a brother mason grade 18th and that his visits and addresses to many lodges around Tampa, Key West, and New York proved this point. For many Cuban historians such as Luis Toledo Sande, Martí was "reappropriated" by Cuban Masons for symbolic, esoteric, and political reasons, but there is no historical document which proves his initiation. For the relationship of Cuban freemasonry and politics, see Eduardo Torres-Cuevas's article titled "La Maçonería Cubana en las Décadas Finales del Siglo XX: Escenario y Alternativas Ante el Nuevo Milenio."

9. It was believed that Prince Hall, the father of black Freemasonry, was a freeborn slave born in Barbados. His father, Thomas Prince Hall, was an Englishman, and his mother was from the French Antilles. For Michael Wallace this is part of a legend. I believe that even if it is not historically accurate, it opens good venues for analysis and discussions on the construction of a diasporic black subjectivity in the United States.

10. To erect or to "constitute" a Grand Lodge, there has to be at least seven members who ask for permission from a Great Lodge. In colonial times these

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warrants came mostly from England, though as John Upton has argued, there were lodges in Louisiana and Florida that were affiliated with the Great Lodge of France or the Great Lodge of Spain. This fact was related mainly with the cultural background of migrant populations and also was more common during colonial times when Louisiana was part of the Spanish and French empires.

11. In Prince Hall rituals, these pamphlets were published and read in the lodge meetings and also were part of the Masonic press and journals such as the *Caravan*, the *Craftsman*, the *Freemason*, the *Masonic Quaterly*, and the *Eastern Star*, among many others (Williamson).

12. Besides Schomburg's many references to Haiti in articles such as "Is Haity Decadent?" many scholars have covered the importance of the Haitian Revolution as a key historical moment for Europe and the Americas. Many have focused on the Haitian Revolution as a pivotal event for the Americas that nevertheless, as Michel-Rolph Trouillot has pointed out, has been "silenced" by history. See his book *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* and Susan Buck-Morss's article entitled "Hegel and Haiti."

13. For the intrinsic connection between racial ideologies and Freemasonry, see Schomburg's essays about Haiti and the political investment of Prince Hall lodges with Freemasonry in West Africa and Liberia. Arturo A. Schomburg, as a Great Secretary, organized the reception for the visit of Cyril B. King, the Most Worshipful Great Master of the Lodge in Liberia, Africa in the 1920s. For other references, see Harry A. Williamson's *History of the Prince Hall Masonry in New York* volumes 1–5 and Arturo A. Schomburg's papers. For influences of U.S. racial ideologies in the Caribbean and vice versa, see Gustavo E. Urrutia's article about Schomburg entitled "Teamwork," in which he criticizes some of the political agendas of African Americans in the United States while supporting the notion of "teamwork" as a way of social and civic collaboration between blacks and whites: "It is true that there is racism in Cuba and a global mediatization against blacks, therefore we need to practice "teamwork" of our racism against whites and mediate to maintain our limits while we assert our power."

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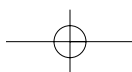
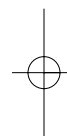
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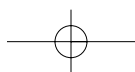
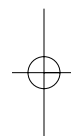
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II

GLOBALITY



7

CENTRAL AMERICAN DIASPORASTransnational Gangs and the Transformation of
Latino Identity in the United States*Arturo Arias*

In March 2005, Francisco gave a testimony of his situation to an enthralled student audience at Miami University of Ohio. A Guatemalan presently living in Cincinnati, Francisco was explaining to local students the reasons that forced him to come illegally to the United States. Francisco is not a poor peasant. He is a civil engineer by training who studied at the University of San Carlos in Guatemala and speaks fluent English. After finishing his degree, he started his own business in Guatemala, got married, and had three children. He was unfortunate enough to engage in a business deal with cadres of the corrupt Alfonso Portillo government (2000–2004) at the beginning of his term. What appeared at first to be a normal construction business deal became the nightmare that drove Francisco out of his country. Though technically in charge of the construction project, Francisco discovered soon enough that the accounts were not being kept correctly. He inquired into the matter but was basically told to mind his own business. Soon after, he discovered that the materials he had ordered had been substituted with cheaper materials that could endanger both the structure and the quality in general of the construction in process. He considered this his business and confronted his contractors. Soon after, the first of many death threats appeared at his doorstep. Francisco decided to shut up, finish

the job, cut his losses, and move on. Nevertheless, after the project was finished, he was told, virtually ordered, to start a new one right away. This time there was not even the semblance of legality. The numbers had been doctored upward, the materials were of the poorest possible quality. Francisco tried to squirm his way out of the deal and soon received his second death threat. He continued to work, but hired a lawyer and filed a complaint. Days later, he was driving from his hometown, Chimaltenango, to Guatemala City in his red pickup truck. A practicing Catholic, Francisco believes that God sent him a signal. He stopped at a country store to buy some refreshments and lingered, for no good reason, longer than usual. He then went on his way. When he reached the first crossroads on the highway, he saw an accident. Another red pickup, similar to his own, had been machine-gunned. The driver was dead. Francisco panicked, gathered his family, and left for the United States. He was lucky that, as a professional, he had already come to the United States as a tourist on a previous occasion. They had visas. Francisco and his family went first to Chicago. Nevertheless, in that city's vast Guatemalan community, he was discovered by a relative of one of his government partners, heard that the person in question had taken over his business, and was told that he could still be found, even in the United States. As a result, they fled Chicago for the relative safety of Cincinnati, where he works illegally as a construction worker under an assumed name. He is now applying for asylum in the United States.

Francisco's plight is one of the still-unexplored consequences of Central America's civil wars of the 1980s. As it has already been documented by other books and articles, the massive flow of Central American immigrants to the United States was a direct result of the brutality of these wars and of the toll they extracted on peasant communities. As armies advanced, destroying village after village and massacring its occupants, thousands of refugees, primarily from El Salvador and Guatemala, seeking safety for themselves and their children, fled to Mexico. Some remained there in UN-sponsored refugee camps, but many more continued on to the United States and Canada. Anti-Sandinista Nicaraguans also fled from their country, flying primarily to Miami and the Florida area.

Ostensibly, peace was signed in El Salvador in 1992, the same year that the Los Angeles riots took place, and in Guatemala in 1996. This implied,

in principle, a process of social reconciliation, reconstruction, and development. Nevertheless, the peace dividend never took place in either country. The arrival of peace did end actual military combat, as guerrillas turned their weapons in and formed legal political parties that now play the role of a loyal opposition in Congress and have, in El Salvador's case, succeeded in winning many municipal elections, including the city of San Salvador. But the much-promised international aid never did arrive in sufficient quantity. What was expected to be a massive Marshall-like plan to fully modernize these nations to uproot a model of underdevelopment marked by massive amounts of landless peasants, racism against Maya indigenous peoples, and an inability to train the bulk of their populations in the basic rudiments of modern life, including reading and writing, all of these major issues that fed into the civil wars' conflicts, became only a trickle that dwindled to almost nothing after 2000. The most delinquent country in terms of economic aid was the United States, the country that caused the biggest damage to both the infrastructure and the economy of all three countries from 1954 to 1990, the result of its prolonged counterinsurgency campaigns and low-intensity warfare targeting Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua. Despite these negative activities that de facto prevented nationalist modern nation-states to emerge in the region and despite President Clinton's apologies to the population of these three countries in 1997, the U.S. Congress only approved negligible aid to them in the postwar period. As a result, the actual effect of the end of the war was little economic growth, massive unemployment (officially recorded at 50 percent in both Guatemala and El Salvador, but most likely higher in both countries), and a sense of bitterness and lost illusions as legible cultural signs produced when the excitement generated by the signing of peace treaties and the great expectations of modernity finally arriving at the end of the twentieth century were replaced by the gradual emergence of a nonregulated parallel power to the state produced by criminal gangs. These gangs gained muscle, wealth, and prestige as unemployed youngsters and immigrants deported from the United States joined their ranks. These last two factors were direct consequences of the United States reneging on most of the promises made prior to the signing of the peace treaties after the election of George W. Bush in 2000, and most markedly after 9/11 when Central America became thoroughly invisible in U.S. foreign policy,

while the immigration escape valve began to be closed, allegedly for security reasons.

The lack of economic opportunity, combined with the massive amount of unemployed soldiers, including known torturers and other criminals who had been a big part of the implementation of counter-insurgency policies in both countries, as postwar armies were reduced in size and military budgets much reduced, led to a rapid rise in banditry and street crime. This unexpected factor meant that instead of enjoying greater safety as a blissful consequence of the end of the war, most Salvadorean and Guatemalan citizens became exposed to the greatest crime wave they had ever experienced in their history, with the added caveat that neither individual citizens nor governmental institutions had any control over these mobile, translocal, transnational groups. Within a short period of time, most social sectors lost all faith in the state's capacity to control these criminal elements and began to arm themselves, to pay for private security, or to endorse draconian measures to eliminate them, even when they trampled hard-won civil liberties.

During the civil war years, violence had been black and white. If an individual sympathized with the guerrillas she or he knew that government death squads would come after her or him. The opposite was equally true. But there was a rationality to the system. An individual knew what activities she or he was involved in and thus could envision who would come after her or him, and why. This was no longer true after the end of the civil wars. In the postwar period, most people were liable to be attacked, robbed, kidnapped for ransom even, regardless of social stature, political ideas, ideological stand, or religious belief. And there was no possible appeal to "those on your side" (guerrilla comrades, governmental paramilitary forces). Guerrillas were no longer active, and the downsizing of the military, and of the government in general, as demanded by the World Bank's neoliberal policies, combined with the lack of economic assistance flowing to these countries, meant that the newly elected democratic governments had de facto lost control of both their societies and their territories, submerging the nation-state in a serious crisis.

The transnational conditions of this crisis associated with globalizing tendencies and the emergence of major criminal social sectors meant that Guatemala and El Salvador became a sort of Wild West, a lawless

site where gangs gradually achieved sovereignty as they became a lived *copresence* alongside the state's institution, transforming the production of locality and the orderliness of the nation-state (Appadurai 2005: 338; Dalton 2006). Needless to say, impunity—a major trait among military and paramilitary forces during the civil war whose abrogation became a major rallying cry for democratic sectors—continues to rule in these countries, though no longer exercised by the same forces, or in the same conditions. At the same time, *la ley del más fuerte*, the law of the jungle, has become the only validated kind of law. Private security companies offering every conceivable gadget available to protect local homes and individuals have become a key segment of local economies, as has the bodyguard business. Despite this, the number of kidnappings increased geometrically after the signing of peace treaties. This statistical increase became even more marked after 2000 and has continued to rise steadily. One of its very visible consequences, shocking even ruling elites, has been the 1930s Chicago-style gunfights that have become the norm even in chic upper-middle class malls.

Given these conditions, as well as the local subjectivities of unemployed ex-soldiers and ex-guerrillas with the singular memories and uncanny attachments that their behavioral codes evoke, it was inevitable that in this war-torn psychological and social climate, powerful gangs would grow like mushrooms, as have vigilante groups opposing them. Their presence has generated a typical trait of post-national cartographies—an entire system by which gangs impose their will on large territorial spaces, creating, and controlling, a powerful transnational criminal economy that has changed territorial habits. Gangs, for example, collect taxes from citizens and businesses under their control, and have created a parallel “legal” system as they attempt to normalize and reorder those areas. Significantly, the criminal economy is the only segment of the economy that keeps growing at an impressive rate, though its formal invisibility belies official economic statistics and predictions. The conditions of gangs in El Salvador and Guatemala prove Appadurai's contention that sovereignty and territoriality live increasingly separate lives (Appadurai 2005: 347).

Of all the gangs operating in these two Central American countries, the two most powerful ones were U.S. exports. Both the Mara Salvatrucha and the 18th Street gangs were started in Los Angeles. These

gangs were the inevitable response of many alienated adolescents uprooted from their country and nurtured by their extended family, who ended up fending for themselves in the alien urban landscape of the area. In the Central American case, their parents most often did not speak any English, they were illegal, and they suffered the triple taint of being perceived by Americans as both “illegal” and “Communist” because they were fleeing a war that the U.S. government supported, and by themselves as lesser than Mexicans.¹ This triple jeopardy made them hide their own identity, as I documented in a previous article (Arias 2003). The rigorous interrogation of Central American cultural and political representations and the paradoxical cultural and political invisibility attached to Central American populations in the United States has only recently been initiated on theoretical domains, and has yet to be linked to emerging street gangs. In previous articles I have suggested the designation Central American–American as a deliberate complex linguistic oddity, a term originally borrowed from poet Maya Chinchilla (Arias 1999–2000, 2003). Claudia Milian has further problematized this contention, arguing that Central American–American suggests Latina and Latino as a possibility and marks a deviation from President Reagan’s empire-centric stance that “Central America is America.”² As Milian argues, U.S. representations of Central Americans are about as incisive as Central Americans’ absence from the “American” imaginary. This leads her, after problematizing my concept of Central American–American, to conclude, quite appropriately, that this theoretical beginning warrants a larger analysis. My proposed repetition, as Milian has already pointed out, “can pertain to the application of marginal versions of America in relation to normative America and the Americas ‘of color’ that are far from murky” (Milian forthcoming). In this sense, the notion of a Central American–American, as a performative contradiction, “elucidates the need for U.S. Central Americans to begin constructing and asserting symmetrical terrains within the makings of U.S. Latina and Latino” (Milian forthcoming). Yet, as she rightly contends, we still have to analyze the ways that Central American–American “unhyphenated hyphenation”—a creation by Milian to explain my own anadiplosis—might operate in relation to another hyphenation, that of Mexican–American. Once again in Milian’s notion, through the incorporation of Central Americans within the Chicana and Chicano world, we now have

to explore how the triad Latino-Chicano-Central American reconfigures the identities of those involved in this triangulation. She asks how Salvadorans might negotiate their own Chicanization, but we can pose the question in the opposite sense as well, and in the direction of other Latino groups.

Indeed, one way in which Salvadorans negotiated their own Chicanization was with the formation of the Mara Salvatrucha street gang in the Pico-Union area (Rodríguez 2005). James Loucky and Marilyn Moors have described it this way:

Two streets symbolize the residential contrasts and the contradictions between international labor and international capital that confront the Maya in Los Angeles. Bixel Street lies on the east edge of Pico-Union. On the east side of the five-hundred block rise the gleaming corporate headquarters of ARCO Plaza. On the west, literally in the shadows of the downtown corporate and financial district, are decaying brick tenements crowded with Central Americans, the majority of them Maya. The first and third worlds also find ironic juxtaposition on Los Angeles Street. On all corners of the 8th Street intersection lie the notorious sweatshops of the garment district filled with sewing machines and piles of fabric worked by Maya alongside other Latino and immigrant workers. A block north are the twin towers of the extravagant Cal Mart building, the fashion center of the California apparel industry, closed to outsiders so that designers and marketers can produce and protect the next season's fashions, at markups many times what the machine operators are paid. (2000: 217)

Thus, Central Americans fleeing to the United States not only had to cope with the trauma of dead relatives or villages razed in their home countries, but now they also had to deal with survival in near-impossible conditions in an environment totally different from the one they left behind and with the *angst* of having to pass for Mexicans while living as illegals in economically dire conditions, unsafe neighborhoods, undesirable jobs, and with the risks of deportation. Thus, it is reasonable that, for some of them, passing as Mexicans might have been a desirable benefit of megalopolis. Being confused with Mexicans sometimes worked to the Central Americans' advantage, enabling them to camouflage themselves as a mechanism of survival. But it failed to confuse street-hardened Chicano gangs that began extracting tolls on their presence among

the Southern California Latino community. Initially as a mechanism of self-defense copied from rural villages in war-torn El Salvador, desperate teenagers formed the Mara Salvatrucha. The latter included only Salvadorans, at least initially, and was formed to defend themselves from existing Mexican-American gangs. At this point, however, identity had already become somewhat entangled in the politics of Latino identity in Southern California. Some Central Americans were “acting Mexican,” namely, identifying with that internalized and idealized image, a stereotype, of what Mexicans in the area were. Perceived as the dominant group, quantitatively the largest, and the ones who had been in the area for the longest time, it was tempting for many Central Americans to try to “pass” for Mexicans, given the physical similarity of both ethnic groups. But whereas a few “crossed over,” many more were left in the limbo of no longer being Central American but not being accepted by Mexicans either. The latter two groups conflated defensively in the 18th Street gang, originally Chicano, but accepting of “crossover” Salvadorans, Hondurans, and Guatemalans, who joined for still one more defensive move, this time to defend themselves against the Mara Salvatrucha.

The Mara Salvatrucha first gained notoriety during the Los Angeles riots of 1992. A noted aspect of this episode was their attack of South Korean businesses, because of their perception that South Koreans were exploiting their families. The violence between both groups was so intense that the government ended up placing the bulk of the blame for the riots on Latino gang members.³ This led to a more concerted effort to capture and deport Latino gang members to their countries of origin. They were easy to pick because of their tattoos covering most of their bodies, especially black tears, which represented a dead gang member. According to Luis J. Rodríguez, as many as 40,000 people accused of belonging to either the Mara Salvatrucha or the 18th Street gang were deported every year to both Mexico and Central America.

Most of these young men had never been in their countries of origin, since they arrived in the Los Angeles area as babies. They spoke no Spanish, or else heavily accented Spanish. They were acculturated in the United States and in U.S.-based popular culture, used to all kinds of electronic gadgets, and familiar with the drug trade, with significant amounts of cash floating illegally in their crowded neighborhoods. They clearly

stood out among Guatemala City's, San Salvador's, or Tegucigalpa's own urban glue-sniffing homeless youth, themselves organized in gangs but, dare we say it, underdeveloped in their own "third worldish" looser structure of parochial petty thieves (though hardened killers as many other Guatemalans and Salvadorans, one of the inevitable outcomes of the civil wars) lacking organizational know-how and connections with the international drug trade or people smuggling across international borders. Soon, those deported Central American-Americans joined the local gangs, gained ascendancy over them, began recruiting with the promise of a trip to the United States, and started making their way north.

In relatively little time, the expelled members of both L.A. gangs took control of local groupings and established local channels for both the sale and transportation of cocaine, undoubtedly establishing connections with existing cartels in both Mexico and Colombia and opened up mobile, translocal spaces where they exercised power and control. Gangs were also involved in gun trafficking, prostitution, and contraband of all sorts, and gradually came to monopolize people smuggling across Central American borders and through the difficult Guatemala-Mexico border. By the beginning of this century, the Mara Salvatrucha was a transnational gang operating in the cultural corridor extending south to north from Panama to California, with a true globalizing vision that has made it as emblematic of a regional power as TACA Airlines may be.⁴ After 9/11, it operated in most U.S. cities, with a significant presence in the New York area, Washington D.C., Newark, Miami, and Texas (Thompson 2004: 1, López, Connell, and Kraul 2005: 1). Mara Salvatrucha is now reported to operate in thirty-one states, with 100,000 members (Rodríguez 2005).

The post-9/11 syndrome brought the gang to the attention of the newly created Office of Homeland Security. Soon, the latter was describing the gangs as the fastest-growing and most violent in the country, and hysterical comments even began mentioning possible ties to Al Qaeda. "Mara Salvatrucha is not a gang, it's an army," said Officer Frank Flores, a gang expert with the Los Angeles Police Department, as quoted in the *New York Times*.⁵ He added: "Within the United States, these guys pose as much a threat to the well-being of ordinary citizens as any foreign terrorist group." Just like the specter of communism was associated with yesterday's national liberation movements, the specter of

terrorism is presently associated with Central American gang members. For young men of Central American origin, the transition from modernity to postmodernity, then to globalization, might very well be the just the transition of labels along a structural continuum.

Certainly from this statement we can claim that the relationship between the emergence of global capitalism and the emergence of concern with the local as a potential site of resistance and liberation has taken a decidedly unexpected, and quirky, turn. Indeed, when we look at the phenomenon of Central American-Americans captured in the United States and deported to their alleged country of origin, where they are perceived as tattooed aliens—that is, doubly alien, alien in the sense of being foreigners to the nation-state that does not recognize their blood tie to it, their belongingness to their particular sovereign space, and aliens in the sci-fi sense of appearing to be a different species altogether with their innumerable tattoos, postmodern space travelers of a sort—who is global, and who is, indeed, local? What does it mean for the cultural ideologies of Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras that they discriminate among different categories of citizens and evade civil rights and responsibilities for them, concentrating this particular growing segment of the population in fortress-prisons the state cannot control, bringing to the surface the fissure between local, translocal, and national space and a disjunct problem of jurisdiction and loyalty (Appadurai 2005: 340), as well as pitting special paramilitary groups dressed in black and wearing masks, such as El Salvador's Grupo de Operaciones Policiales Especiales (GOPES; Special Police Operations Group)? Especially in a context in which local law enforcement gets advice and aid from American law-enforcement agencies, including the Los Angeles Police Department, much as the military did from the CIA and the Green Berets during the guerrilla period (1960–1990). The local continues in this case to be a site of predicament, but can it possibly still be one of critical localism? Indeed, it may now serve not so much as a way to disguise oppression, since oppression has never been disguised in the Central American context, but, rather, as a new way of doing business at the local level in a globalized lawless climate.

Indeed, the transition from civil war to postwar at times is more one of nuance than a truly structural or even a symbolic trait. Nowadays, a *mano dura* (firm hand) policy is an official governmental policy applied

to the implementation of specialized police action against transnational gangs. However, *mano dura* as a concept has been in existence since the 1960s, when it was defined as a counterinsurgency measure applied to combat revolutionary subversion. In both cases it has been an expression of state panic, a euphemism for illegal torture and killing, for masked impunity against unprotected citizens deemed to be troublesome, an institutionalization of ghastly procedures installed within the violence of a system designed by a reactive state that is desperately trying to regiment its population as it proceeds from domination to domination, in Foucauldian terms.

In the 1960s, an extreme-right paramilitary organization, allegedly independent of the army, named *mano blanca* (white hand) proceeded to exterminate guerrilla members and its sympathizers, though their unchecked violence degenerated in the extermination of many outstanding citizens whose only crime was advocating democratic principles and the rule of law. A similar policy, structured on the same principles, is now being implemented on gang members, who can, like past guerrilla members, be arrested simply for suspicion of membership in a gang, regardless of whether a crime has been committed or not. And, like the revolutionary left of decades past, gangs are gradually understanding that their struggle is political. They are presently trying to establish alliances to defy the state, and their discourse has become more political as a result (Dalton 2006).

In the case of gangs, needless to say, their tattoos operate as physical markers, a space where bodies are their own signs, portraying a symbolic writing that, while it mimics the infliction of trauma, is also a representation of enforced silence. Their tattoos problematize the state's very claim of normalization. They pose a threat to its discursive coherence, embarrassing the narrative that attempts to naturalize the claim that democracy and rule of law "American style" has taken root, and threaten to violate its territorial integrity. Still, they are a dead giveaway for any onlooker, which is why many deported gang members have taken pains to remove them. Nevertheless, Central American jails are filled with alleged gang members. Some have been executed illegally in "jail accidents" and analogous incidents staged by prison authorities. Horrifying pitched battles have taken place both between detainees and between detainees and prison wards, where riot police and the army often arrive

to implement a prearranged onslaught. However, what saves some gang members, if they survive at all, and can play into their hands is the enormity of corruption. Jails are also full of many other fraternal organizations, local gangs of smugglers, narcotics dealers, and white collar criminals arrested for banking schemes gone wrong, laundering drug money, and corruption scandals of all sorts. Thrown together in a fortress-prison, these heterogeneous groups gradually form a new community, fleeting and conjunctural, yet united by economic interests that can open a multiplicity of possibilities and generate unheard-of alliances.

Indeed, in Guatemala, at present, Juan Francisco Reyes López, vice president under Portillo's government, whose shady business deals forced Francisco to leave the country as recounted at the beginning of this article, is in jail. So are the two top financiers of his party whose banks crashed, the former treasury secretary Eduardo Weymann and a couple of cabinet members accused of embezzlement of public funds, including Juan Virgilio Alvarado Hernández, implicated in the theft of over one hundred million dollars from Guatemala's Social Security Institute (IGSS, in Spanish) alone. Even President Portillo is on the run from international justice and was last seen in Mexico in February 2005 before he went into hiding. In this climate of corruption, it is easy to make important connections in jail, find business partners, participate in new joint-ventures, finance daring escapes—if a prisoner survives in the first place. Therefore trading favors, such as selling protection, can lead to new transnational business deals where gang members might have ex-government functionaries last seen at a U.S. embassy reception as their partners.

We can place in this latter context the research done by journalists Bertrand de la Grange, correspondent for *Le Monde*, and Maité Rico, correspondent for *El País*, Spain's major daily. They traced the well-publicized assassination of Guatemala's Bishop Juan Gerardi on April 24, 1998, at his residence in San Sebastián Church, one block away from Guatemala's National Palace, to the Valle del Sol gang. Gerardi was the founder of the Catholic Church's Human Rights Office and the author of the human rights report that blamed 90 percent of all human rights violations during the country's civil war on the military. Thus, elementary logic implied that the latter had taken revenge on Bishop Gerardi for his report. However, this was not the case. The crime was carried out

by the Valle del Sol gang, composed of petty thieves in and out of prison and led by Ana Lucía Escobar, illegitimate daughter of Bishop Efraín Hernández, Chancellor of the Guatemalan Curia, and an alleged friend of Gerardi's. The crime's objective was indeed to taint the Guatemalan government of President Alvaro Arzú (1996–2000) with this murder to prevent his party from being reelected. When the crime took place, the Arzú government was at the peak of its popularity because of its signing of the peace treaty. Monsignor Hernández also used his daughter's gang to operate a ring that stole statues of saints and Catholic memorabilia, but the gang was equally linked to Salvadoran bank robbers. At the same time, it had recently established a working relationship with the Moreno Network, the largest contraband gang in Guatemala, operated by the head of the Guatemalan Customs Office himself. Moreno was caught and arrested by President Arzú. However, he was linked in turn to Alfonso Portillo, leader of the opposition who became president in 2000, and to his party, the Guatemalan Republican Front (FRG, in Spanish), founded by ex-dictator General Efraín Ríos Montt, whose daughter married a U.S. Congressman. One of Portillo's first acts as president was to free Moreno.

Indeed, were we to continue down this line, we would write a thriller instead of an academic article. Yet one of the very conditions of globalization is the breakdown of traditional social strata that prevent individuals of different classes, nationality, or legitimacy from interacting with each other. The complex relationship between Central American–American gangs, the Central American diaspora, immigration to the United States, homeland security, the contradictory implementation of the U.S. Patriot Act, calls for tougher border legislation, and Machiavellian political crimes in Central America itself is but a case in point. Indeed, what emerges here is the merger of some heretofore powerless victims of underdevelopment who gained ascendancy by way of crime with those who, already empowered in the previous state of affairs, have acquired new power through illegal profiteering from the ill-conceived sutures of globalization.

Another phenomenon taking place within this continuous diasporic circle is the power these gangs have gradually accumulated in the country to which they were deported and where they recruited new local gang members. On March 28, 2005, Guatemala's newspaper *Siglo XXI*

reported that gangs were now preying on elementary school children—not to sell them drugs or to recruit them, though they did both as well. They were “taxing” them. Children attending school in most popular neighborhoods in Guatemala City had to pay gang members one to five quetzals a day to be allowed in their respective schools.⁶ Otherwise, they would receive a severe beating and have their utensils or schoolbooks stolen. On the other hand, school children could also hire gang members to scare their teachers if they were mistreated or received bad grades. Panicked parents were planning to migrate illegally to the United States to save their children, not knowing the irony that, if they succeeded in getting through, the odds of their children joining the very same gang in Los Angeles were even higher.

How do we trace Central American–American gangs to contemporary Latino identity issues? Ten years ago there was already an overwhelming presence of Central American–Americans in the United States. Yet what was most notable about them was their invisibility. This is no longer the case. But visibility is now associated with gang membership and international terrorism. If Central American–Americans lived before on the murky margins of those marginal hyphenated others, now they may have made the world of all Latinos equally murky in the eyes of many mainstream Americans obsessed with terrorism or border issues, and translating their traditional foreign-phobia and racism as “homeland security.” In the recent past, a Latino identity oftentimes was constructed through the abjection and erasure of the Central American–American. Nowadays, the latter might be in the process of spreading abjection to all Latino identities. Often, these representations of Latinos ignore national, class, ethnic, and ideological barriers or hierarchies within these cultures, as well as the discursive power relations that valorize certain forms of victimization over others within an essentialized subaltern U.S. world. They compound into a palimpsest the latest descriptions of particularized traits among a subgroup of Latinos, that is, tattoos used by Central American–American gang members, upon a previously established essentialized image of what Latino identity is supposed to be from a hegemonic perspective. One of the risks implied is that more established Latino groups, in a mixture of attempts to obtain better jobs, legal status, or better schooling for their children—all of these, legitimate aims—might lean, given the times, in the direction of a conservative

moralism that turns all people from Central America into a generalized “gang member/terrorist” that is then used to flog an equally generalized Latino community in a xenophobic campaign against Central Americans. Why else claim nonexistent links between Mara Salvatrucha and Al Qaeda, or else define them as “not a gang, but an army”? In a previous article we stated that Rey Chow has discerned a neo-Orientalist anxiety in the anthropological desire to retrieve and preserve the pure, authentic native (1993: 12). If we were to argue that some Latinos in the United States have an analogous desire to retrieve and preserve a pure, authentic Latin American or essentialized Latina/o subjectivity, an imaginary construct made in their own idealized images and one in which Central Americans never fit, the arguments provided by the Department of Homeland Security would be ideal for just such a gesture.

The latter issue, if it were to happen, would be a severe blow to the gradual empowerment of the U.S. Latina/o community as a whole. It has already been stated how diasporas are emblems of transnationalism because of their embodiment of border issues. This should not be a teleological statement, because it is not so much that illegal subjects give way to legal ones as it is about a condition of which “illegality” itself is an ongoing fabrication. In this logic, diasporic consciousness would not be a rationalization or else nostalgic longing of dispersal from the homeland, as an ongoing reality, the reality of being Latino.

The basic irony is that we have now in the United States a Central American population that is largely disconnected emotionally from the source of its own identity and whose forced exile is built on anguish. If most of them arrived in the 1980s traumatized by war, with families torn apart by the physical disappearances of their loved ones through violent, arbitrary acts of wanton bestiality, whose hideous deaths were often accompanied by torture and a visible display of their mutilated bodies along highways or in town squares, their children now have to deal with deportation to what constitutes for them a space as foreign as the one found by their parents in *el Norte*, guilt by association, the actual risk of their joining a gang for survival purposes and then transforming this reflexive action into a short-lived life of crime where borders meander as empty signifiers, relics of another age, yet all too real at the same time, standing tall as sites of postmodern militarized fortresses. Nearly a quarter of a century later, their identity remains fractured, it still dissolves

into nothingness, and most Central American-Americans are still living not only between borders but also between identities.

NOTES

1. Guatemalan immigrants José Mercedes Sotz, René Funes, and Byron Titus spoke openly of their ambiguity in relating to Mexican immigrants. Personal communication. Cambridge, Mass., April 6, 2002.

2. "Foreign Affairs: Reading Salvadoran Migrations in Demetria Martinez's *Mother Tongue*," forthcoming. In this article, Milian problematizes my own concept in a subsection titled "Extending Inter-Ethnic Relationships: Central American-American Experiences and the Un-hyphenated Latina and Latino Hyphen."

3. African-American gangs were also blamed. See Rodríguez (2005).

4. Originally a Salvadoran airline with capital from Pan American World Airways, TACA, acronym for Transportes Aéreos Centro Americanos (Central American Air Transport), bought all other Central American national airlines, Guatemala's Aviateca, Honduras's SAHSA and TAN, Nicaragua's Aeronica, and Costa Rica's LACSA, in the wake of neoliberal globalization in the early 1990s. It is now a truly Central American airline, with headquarters in San Salvador.

5. "100 Members of Immigrant Gang Are Held."

6. In 2005, one dollar equaled approximately eight quetzals, but the average salary of a working class Guatemalan seldom topped 1,000 quetzals per month.

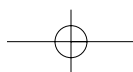
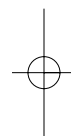
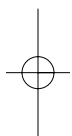
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8

THE BEST OF CARE

Latinas as Transnational Mothers and Caregivers

Teresa Carrillo

I wheel my two-year-old daughter in a shopping cart through a supermarket in Eastchester [New York] in 1967, and a little white girl riding past in her mother's cart calls out excitedly, Oh look, Mommy, a baby maid." —Audre Lorde,¹ *Maid in the USA*

The Marxist adage “you are what you do” is only partially correct; we are what we are as a result of much more than our work. Yet it is the work or better, the type of work that can render invisible questions of migration, policy, gender, race, and economic disenfranchisement. It is only when these aspects of identity become indistinguishable and an indelible part of labor practices and processes that we can begin to understand Audre Lorde's recollection that a maid is always, in the end, not white. How and why has domestic service and caregiving work been racialized? What is the role of government policy in creating connections between migration, racialization, and care? In answer to the question, what makes the association between Latinas and domestic service so strong? I consider the role of the government in regulating the lives and work of Latina women. I argue that government policies, including immigration, immigrant labor, and welfare policies, work in conjunction with other forces, such as employment, the media, the economy, and the public education system, to push Latina women into the informal sector

of work. For Latinas in this age of globalization, domestic service is one of the most viable and attractive options for work in the informal sector. In a review of governmental policies that affect Latina women in the United States, I will focus on *Latinidad* and Latina women in domestic service and assess the role of the government in defining and producing the Latina maid.

In today's global cities, there are many forces at work making Latinas the new "baby maids." Each workday morning there is a silent reverse commute of women taking city buses from the barrios to the suburbs. They will spend their days cleaning houses, cooking dinners, and changing diapers, both Pampers and Depends. In New York she might be Dominican, in Dallas, Mexican, in Los Angeles, maybe Salvadoreña; regardless of place, if she is doing domestic service, she is likely to be Latina. Documentation status is often at the root of the exploitable nature of Latina domestic service workers; lacking documents, these women lack the leverage they need to defend their rights and improve their compensation, hours, working conditions, and standards (Chang 2000). Even workers with legal status can suffer the consequences of devalued labor because they are competing with undocumented workers for limited work. In addition, domestic service is a realm of work deeply embedded in a historical legacy of slavery and subservience of people of color (Romero 1992; Hunter 1993).

Historic and economic factors combine with contemporary exclusions and inequities that deny equal opportunity for education, pushing Latina girls into an exploitable position, yet I would argue that the strong association between Latinas and domestic service is also linked to something much deeper than history, economy, or opportunity. The low hourly wage and exploitable nature of Latina women operate in concert with an idea that Latinas are, by nature, nurturers and caregivers. On a daily basis, middle-class families across the nation confront the need for care of their babies and elders, their sick, and their homes and find those needs at odds with the demands of an educated workforce and their desire to liberate themselves from the drudgery of housework in order to get a "real job." The quest for good help matches up conveniently with a pervasive confidence that Latina caregivers will lovingly and attentively tend to their employers' family needs, putting the families' needs above all else. Whether this association is born of truths or

myths, this is a side of Latinidad that defines the Latina woman as the consummate “domestic help.”

Domestic service workers are motivated to be as invisible as possible, and domestic service is done in the shadows of our society. An excellent maid is one who silently, almost magically, leaves the home clean, the meals cooked, the laundry done, and the children sleeping. The next day the cycle begins again, and as we all know, “a woman’s work is never done.” Ironically, one of the few cumulative effects of a domestic service worker’s productivity is the degree to which she has pleased her employers by being invisible. In creating the illusion of the family with two wage earners that “does it all,” the domestic service worker unwittingly participates with her employers in the devaluation of her own labor. These inequities can be rationalized in the minds of even the most sympathetic employer when the employee is undocumented, has limited English language skills, lacks education and training, and is willing and eager to accept a low-wage position. Both employer and employee lack a sense of entitlement for the domestic service worker to the point that offering work to an immigrant woman is seen almost as an act of charity.

All over the world, women from poor countries are crossing borders in search of work, often as domestic service workers in the rich nations of the first world. Fueling this pattern of migration is what Ehrenreich and Hochschild call a “care deficit” in rich nations—a shortage of citizens willing to work in childcare, elder care, and domestic service under the conditions and at the pay scales of immigrant workers (2003: 8). In the second wave of feminism, women in the United States, especially white women, increased their access to education and employment opportunities. The women’s liberation movement pulled a critical mass of women into professional positions and jobs at all levels of the formal paid labor force. Instead of redistributing domestic chores among family members, the feminist movement liberated its beneficiaries by hoisting the cleaning and caring work onto the backs of exploitable women of color. Liberal feminists did not advocate for a radical revaluation of reproductive labor; the work they left behind is still considered “women’s work” and is devalued as such. The movement failed to bring status and an acknowledgment of value to “women’s work” and also failed to challenge the norm of a very low level of tolerance for the distractions of home and family in places of employment. Beneficiaries of

liberal feminism, mainly white middle-class families, found a way out of the homemaking dilemma by hiring low-wage immigrant workers. In this new economy of social reproduction, it makes sense to work-full time and hire a house cleaner, nanny, or elder-care worker. The pervasiveness and new buying power of dual-wage families fuels the transnationalization of domestic service.

You may ask, what is wrong with this arrangement? There is an undeniable demand for domestic service workers among today's busy families in the United States and a seemingly inexhaustible supply of immigrant workers to fill that demand. Caregivers willingly come to the United States or other first world nations and deliver top-notch cleaning and caregiving services at affordable prices. They support family members at home by faithfully sending a portion of their wages as remissions to their home countries. Natural selection among women in the sending countries favors women with a strong sense of agency to be the ones who actually migrate. Like larger processes of globalization, the transnationalization of domestic service is a response to both individual choice and supply and demand on a global scale. But at what cost, and who bears the costs? Children in poor countries go years without seeing their parents. Mothers leave their children "of tender years" in the care of relatives or friends to go care for other people's children, thus entering into the ranks of transnational motherhood.² They work long hours in the homes of their employers, often in total isolation due to a lack of language skills, friends, transportation, and freedom to spend leisure time with companions of their choosing. Contact with their own children is typically limited to occasional telephone calls and correspondence that may accompany a monthly remission for their support. As transnational mothers, it is impossible to deliver the attention, care, and love they lavish on their employer's children to their own children at home. In this arrangement, "care" is one of many resources being transferred from the third world to the first, and from the children and families of the third world to those of the first (Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2003).

Like other arrangements of global capitalism, the transnationalization of domestic service is the result of specific policies designed to encourage certain practices and discourage others. It is no accident that there is a growing trend involving Latin American women who are leaving their homes and families in order to take domestic service positions in

the United States and other receiving countries. U.S. immigration, immigrant, labor, and welfare policies have resulted in the growing practice of transnational motherhood and the transnationalization of domestic service. What follows is an examination of specific policies, practices, assumptions, and beliefs that enable our society to garner the work, care, and love of a whole army of women from Latin America for the benefit of middle-class families in the United States and the U.S. economy as a whole. I also evaluate the toll this transfer takes on the sending families, the sending countries, and the very definition of *Latinidad* in the United States.

What is *Latinidad*? Latinos are defined by a complex interplay of what we do, how we perceive ourselves, and especially how others perceive us. *Latinidad* is something that grows out of all these aspects of identity. *Latinidad* is our culture, our language, our appearance, our work, our actions. Latinos do not solely define *Latinidad*; it is a notion that takes shape around a myriad of practices, processes, and perceptions—both Latino perceptions of ourselves and non-Latino perceptions of Latinos. These result in part from actions by Latinos but also in response to how we are projected by the media, regulated by the government, cast by public opinion, and racialized as a group. Latinos and non-Latinos alike form a sense of what our rights and entitlements should be based on these projections, and a sense of entitlement or lack thereof becomes a major factor in determining Latino empowerment or disempowerment. I am interested in exploring the relationship between *Latinidad* and immigration and the process by which Latinos are cast as other: migrant, un-entitled, and undeserving. I will focus on immigration policies and how they affect perceptions, practices, and possibilities involving Latina women specifically.

U.S. IMMIGRATION AND IMMIGRANT POLICIES

One of the oldest elements of U.S. immigration policy is the “public charge” law—since 1882 the United States has banned from entry any immigrant “likely to become a public charge.” The first form of border control on the U.S.-Mexico border targeted women and children by enforcing the public charge law against minors accompanied by adult

females. Border crossings on the U.S.-Mexico border were unregulated until 1917 when provisions of the Immigration Act of 1917 were first enforced to selectively control and restrict Mexican admissions. Rule six of the 1917 Immigration Act set forth conditions for the lawful admission of minors under the age of sixteen, including that a parent or close relative would commit to the proper care and financial support of the minor, that the minor was never a charge of public charity in Mexico, and that the minor be healthy. An enforcement protocol was introduced at selected sites along the U.S.-Mexico border in which a border agent would single out women accompanied by minors. The women would be detained and interviewed with the intent of determining if the minor children were likely to become public charges if admitted. In a review of twenty-four interviews conducted by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) in 1917 resulting from this protocol, Amaro found it was "the women who are legally detained and who bear the burden of proof in this matter" (1997: 8). Women were presumed to be the caretakers of children and were consequently singled out for denial of admission if the child was judged likely to be a public charge.

Although more recent immigration policies have been written in gender-neutral language, their results have been anything but gender neutral. The 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA), for example, contained a provision for legalization of immigrant workers who could prove that they had been working continuously in the United States for a five-year period. Of the 1.9 million beneficiaries of the amnesty program, only 20 percent were female. (Arp et al. 1990) Female immigrants found it almost impossible to meet the documentary requirements of the amnesty program, given the nature of their employment in the informal sector of employment in domestic service, child care, and elder care. The public charge law also played a part in making women ineligible for amnesty; one of the requirements of the program was that during the five-year period the applicant could not have received public assistance. Even women who received public assistance for their citizen-children as a part of the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) welfare program were wrongly told that they were ineligible for amnesty. This INS practice was successfully challenged in a class-action lawsuit against the INS, but redress came to only a small proportion of female applicants and potential female ap-

plicants to the amnesty program (*Zambrano v. INS* 1992). Because the mother's name (and not the father's name) appears on a welfare check, it was the mother's eligibility for amnesty that was questioned, even in cases in which the dependent children were citizens. The special agricultural Worker (SAW) provision of the IRCA was equally gender biased in favor of males, providing permanent residence to 1.1 million agricultural workers, the vast majority of whom were male. By including field workers but not cannery workers, for example, the gender-neutral language favored males.

In conjunction with a limited amnesty program, the stated policy objective of the 1986 IRCA was to reduce illegal entries and increase control of the border. The IRCA increased funding to the border patrol, and a series of regional operations were implemented, culminating along the California/Baja border in Operation Gatekeeper in 1994. Operation Gatekeeper and similar operations in Arizona and Texas focused on the major twin cities along the border. These operations increased manpower, updated technology, and allowed for the construction and placement of physical barriers to control movement across the border in the urban centers. The new policy focused on cities, and successfully projected an image of control within the border's urban areas. These efforts pushed illegal crossings out of the cities and into the more precarious settings of the deserts and mountains surrounding the border's urban centers. For border crossers, these changes made the journey north more costly and dangerous (Andreas 1999; Nevins 2002). The border has become a type of obstacle course, allowing passage to the most physically fit and resourceful immigrants. Recent border crossers are increasingly choosing to contract with a *coyote* or a middleman paid to assist immigrants in illegally crossing the border. Migrants, especially female migrants, find that it is too difficult and dangerous to cross without a *coyote*. The California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation's Border Project monitors border deaths. They reported that between 1994 and 2002, since the implementation of Operation Gatekeeper, an estimated 2,000 people have died crossing the border. This number represents a 500 percent increase in deaths as compared to before Operation Gatekeeper (California Rural Legal Aid Foundation 2002). June 2002 was the deadliest month on record when Mexican officials counted seventy deaths and the U.S. Border Patrol's figure was sixty-two.³ Most of the

deaths in June 2002 occurred in the scorched desert of southern Arizona where temperatures reach up to 130° Fahrenheit (54° Celsius). In other areas, immigrants have drowned, died of exposure or dehydration, or been hit by cars while trying to cross the border.

The increased cost and peril of border crossing has caused immigrants to make hard choices to leave their children at home, postpone or cancel visits home, and take greater precautions to eliminate any risk of deportation. The average price paid to a *coyote* is \$1,500 per person. The price to cross a child is not discounted; to the contrary—some *coyotes* refuse to cross children because they can be harder to cross than adults. The new pattern of fewer crossings in the cities and a growing number of crossings in the deserts and mountains has highlighted the fact that illegally crossing the border is not child's play. Crossing children illegally over the U.S.-Mexico border is so dangerous, costly, and risky that the border itself is one of the primary reasons that immigrants decide to leave their children at home. Although apprehensions along the border have actually declined since the implementation of Operation Gatekeeper, the image of control projected from border cities has been successful in creating a sense that those who have made it across are lucky and should do everything possible to avoid being detected or deported. This preoccupation creates an environment of control and a climate of fear for undocumented immigrants that is no longer confined to the border itself, but permeates into all aspects of immigrant life in the United States.

In 1993, the debate around immigration policy changed dramatically when anti-immigrant forces headed by Governor Pete Wilson sounded an SOS with the "Save Our State" campaign. Proposition 187 did nothing to curb the number of immigrants crossing the border; rather it attacked the rights of immigrants to access services for their children and dependents. Proposition 187 sent a clear message to immigrants: come and work in the United States but leave your children at home. The proposition would have excluded children of undocumented immigrants from access to health services, public education, and birthright citizenship if born to undocumented parents in the United States. Teachers and health workers would have been obligated to report those they suspected of being undocumented to the INS. Even though Proposition 187 was immediately enjoined and was found to be unconstitutional by

the courts, some its main provisions became law in the 1996 Welfare Reform Act (the Personal Responsibility Act, PRA) and the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (IIRIRA).

After 1996, immigrants were cut off from almost all forms of public assistance, affordable in-state tuition and financial aid in universities, and health insurance programs such as California's Healthy Families Program. Only after a long and protracted struggle, undocumented students who graduated from a California high school regained the right to pay in-state tuition to California public universities through Assembly Bill 540 in 2002. In 2003 similar bills were introduced in the U.S. Congress, first as HR 1684 by Representative Chris Cannon (R-UT), and then as S1545 by Senator Orin Hatch (R-UT). The Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act would allow an estimated 50,000–65,000 students who graduate from American high schools but who have limited prospects because they were brought to the United States by parents lacking immigration status, to qualify as residents of the state in which they reside solely for purposes of in-state tuition or other state education benefits. The DREAM Act would also provide a mechanism for certain long-term resident immigrant students to apply for legal residency. As of 2007, the DREAM Act is still pending and Latino civil rights organizations such as the Mexican American Legal and Education Defense Fund (MALDEF) and the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) are spending time and resources lobbying for its passage.

At first glance the DREAM Act appears to counteract the anti-immigrant bent that characterized policy reform in the 1990s, including California's Propositions 187, 209, and 227 along with the Immigration and Welfare Reform Acts. But there is a common theme that ties the DREAM Act to the rest of the legislative initiatives; the proposals focus on the costs and benefits of educating and caring for immigrants, attempting to pass off the expense of dependent immigrants by limiting investments in education, health, and support services for immigrants, whether they be young or old. The DREAM Act appreciates the investment the United States has already made in successful students who have graduated from high school and are on their way to college. The DREAM Act would facilitate documentation of a very select group of students who have succeeded against all odds to graduate from high

school and become eligible for college admission despite limited educational resources and other disadvantages. These students represent an investment already made; the DREAM Act would help the United States to reap the benefits of the collective investment the United States has made in this very select group of successful immigrant students. The DREAM Act is similar to the aforementioned anti-immigrant reforms in that it is based on a belief that resettlement of immigrant families in general is to be discouraged and that only those students that have experienced success in U.S. schools are deserving of earned citizenship. There is an unspoken assumption that even though the United States is profiting from the labor of migrants, the responsibility for the cost of raising, educating, and maintaining their children and dependents remains in the home country and not in the United States. Immigrant policies that encourage lone migration and discourage resettlement of immigrant families in the United States pushes off the enormous expense of raising and educating the future labor force onto the sending country, while also neglecting the responsibility of caring for workers when they become aged, injured, or unable to work.

One of the mechanisms used in immigration policy to limit family resettlement was the redefinition of “family” in the 1996 IRIIRA. For purposes of family reunification, the term “family” was redefined by the INS and constricted to the nuclear family unit, strictly curtailing the possibility of visas for adult siblings, aging parents, even a resident’s own offspring if they were no longer minors. These policy changes created obstacles for family reunification, promoting once again the practice of lone migration of adult workers without dependent children or parents.

The public charge law, California’s Proposition 187, and the fortification of urban centers along the border in projects such as Operation Gatekeeper are examples of U.S. immigration policies and practices that encourage transnational workers to migrate without dependent children and family members. The convenience afforded to employers and citizens of the United States of having ready access to immigrant labor is heightened immensely by the fact that many newcomers come solo. Without the interruptions of children with fevers or parents with broken hip bones, immigrant workers are more reliable, more available to their employers. Those to whom they are no longer available are silent and far away.

MEXICAN MIGRATION POLICIES

Migrants receive the message to leave children and family at home from both sides of the border. On a visit to the offices of the National Institute of Migration, the Mexican counterpart agency to the U.S. INS, I was struck by the alarmist nature of the posters and public service information materials warning migrants of the dangers of U.S.-Mexico border crossing. One poster showed a sun-baked desert with the caption "Nobody told you that you'd be thirsty, cold, and scared." All the posters have the same message across the bottom: "The search for a dream can become your worst nightmare." Informational brochures such as the *Guide for Mexican Migrants*, published by Mexico's Ministry of Foreign Relations, describe the dangers of the border and warn migrants that it is not responsible to take children on the journey north.

Remissions drive Mexican migration policy. Mexican migrant workers sent home an estimated \$10 billion dollars in 2002, \$12 billion in 2003, and \$16 billion in 2005. This level of remissions surpassed the maquiladora industry and the tourism industry and is now vying with the Mexican oil industry for the number one spot for generation of foreign exchange. Mexican nationals in the United States have shown a headstrong determination to send remittances home, even though their average income is very low. The Mexican Migration Project (MMP) is a collaborative research project based at Princeton University and the University of Guadalajara. The MMP reports that even with an average annual income of \$7,455, Mexican immigrants managed an average monthly remittance of \$240 (annualized, this is \$2,880) (USAID 2002). Adding to this figure are transfers that take place irregularly, such as through accumulated savings personally delivered by returning migrants, grants made through hometown clubs, and gifts or contributions such as cars, merchandise, electronics, or clothes.

Women are the most faithful remitters and remit a larger proportion of their earnings than men (Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2003). Mexican women working in the United States are also less likely than Mexican men to become involved in a second family abroad. In many ways, female migrant workers are the ideal type of migrant laborer in the eyes of the Mexican government; women ensure a steady source of foreign exchange through remissions, while presenting a lower risk of abandonment of

their dependents in Mexico. The negative consequences of women's absence from the formal Mexican labor market is far outweighed by the benefits of their remissions. The cost of their absence is quietly born by their children, their families, and by the migrant workers themselves.

TRANSNATIONAL MOTHERHOOD

Latin American families enjoy the benefits of remittances often at the expense of family separation, and increasingly that separation is between mother and child. Transnational motherhood results from the practice of mothers leaving their children in their home countries in order to migrate to another country, where they often spend their days "mothering" children of their employers. Of the estimated 120 million legal and illegal migrants in the world today, half are women (Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2003: 5). In Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo's excellent analysis of domestic service workers, *Doméstica: Immigrant Workers Cleaning and Caring in the Shadows of Affluence*, she found that almost half of the workers with children had at least one of their children "back home" in their country of origin. Among the live-in domestic workers, the percentage was highest at 82 percent; among domestic workers who did not live in, it was 42 percent, and for hourly-waged house cleaners, it was 24 percent (2001: 50). The irony of the situation is that in caring and nurturing the families of others, immigrant women are often denied the opportunity to actively raise and nurture their own children. It is the grandmothers who are often left to raise the children while the mothers are caring for children other than their own.

This is the paradox of transnational motherhood. Hondagneu-Sotelo and Ernestine Avila point out that this is not an entirely new phenomenon—that there is "a long historical legacy of people of color being incorporated into the United States through coercive systems of labor that do not recognize family rights" (1997: 568). In attacking immigrant access to social services and public education, California's Proposition 187 and other anti-immigrant initiatives challenge the right of immigrants to live with their families and to provide for their dependents. By creating an environment hostile to children, recent policy reforms reinforce the message to leave the dependents at home. This impedes immigrant par-

ents from parenting, while forcing sending counties to pay the costs of raising and educating the next generation of migrant labor. Extended families are made up of dependents, both young and old. By cutting off access to services for older migrants, new U.S. policies also externalize costs associated with elderly dependents while infringing on the Latino tradition of extended, multigenerational familism. The new formulation of “family” for purposes of family reunification in the Immigration Reform Act of 1996 further curtails immigrant family rights by redefining “family” as the nuclear family and creating new exclusions for extended family members, including adult siblings, adult offspring, and aging parents (Fix and Zimmerman 1995).

There is a long history of immigration exclusions affecting Latino families. The Bracero Program, for example, recruited only adult males from Mexico to fill U.S. labor shortages during World War II. Even after the troops began returning home, Mexican *braceros* continued to fulfill demands for low-wage labor until finally in 1964 the program was officially ended. Like Chinese immigrants before them, male Latino immigrants were encouraged to migrate solo while family resettlement among both Asians and Latinos was pointedly discouraged. Later policies such as California’s anti-immigrant Propositions 187, 209, and 227 were unwelcoming to families by restricting or excluding children and dependents from educational, health, and social services. Legislative reforms, including the sweeping welfare and immigration reforms of 1996, sent a clear message that immigrant families would enjoy no social safety net in the United States. These policies reinforced a pervasive anti-immigrant climate that resulted from the campaign to pass Proposition 187. The public was bombarded with the idea that immigrants were to blame for the dismal state of the California economy. “Illegal aliens” were cast as unworthy of having families and dependents with them here in the United States. Regardless of the actual patterns of migration and settlement, male workers were associated with temporary migration, while females and children were associated with family resettlement and permanence. Families come with all kinds of needs, including health, education and social services, family leave from work, and transportation and safety needs. Children and elders introduced unique challenges such as language diversity in the schools, the need for child and elder care in the home, and a strong sense of

Latino community and culture that is constantly reinforced and renewed with each wave of newcomers.

In the past, laws and policies such as the Page Law of 1875 and the public charge exclusion sexualized and racialized immigrants, resulting in disproportionate exclusions for Chinese and Mexican women and children (Amaro 2004; Luibhéid 2002). The Page Law prohibited immigration of Chinese and other Asian women for the purpose of prostitution,⁴ while the public charge exclusion deemed inadmissible “an alien who is . . . likely to become a public charge.” Enforcement of both laws required that agents routinely and instantly make determinations about the purpose and intention of female immigrants or the likelihood that she or her children might become public charges. Amaro summarizes Luibhéid’s conclusions that women are sexually constructed in the process of being inspected, scrutinized, and questioned by agents. Amaro writes, “She [Luibhéid] also notes that it is significant that immigration legislation, beginning with the Page Law, penalizes any sexual behavior that falls outside of marriage. Indeed, polygamy, adultery, and pregnancy are grounds for exclusion, as is homosexuality. Moreover, this sexualization can be applied to public charge as well, for women with children are immediately suspect. Single women are also targeted by the public charge stipulation because their sexual behavior would be potentially unregulated. If they are unmarried, they are likely to be immoral as well as a public charge” (2004: 16).

Contemporary immigration and immigrant policies racialize and sexualize immigrant women in some of the same ways as pointed out in Amaro’s and Luibhéid’s historical analyses. Women have been excluded due to even the slightest indication of a “likelihood” of becoming a public charge, and although there have been concerted efforts to counteract the gender bias in immigration policy (i.e., *Zambrano v. INS*), the fact remains that the laws and policies result in an unequal opportunity for legalization and permanent residence for female and male immigrants (Arp, et al. 1990). The most common mechanism used by women to acquire legal status in the United States is the process of family reunification through a male partner/sponsor. Successful applicants are often women who have remained married to a permanent resident or citizen throughout the protracted process of legalizing their immigration status. Female immigrants have also been the target of negative press

and accusational public opinion when they are associated with practices such as coming to the United States to give birth to “anchor babies” that will ground the family in the United States with at least one citizen-child. The motives and intentions of immigrant women and families are scrutinized and their rights to have children, live with and raise their children, and actively nurture and parent their children are constantly questioned.

An equally debilitating aspect of immigration and immigrant policy for women is the focus on male realms of work in the few policies that have offered protections and amnesty for immigrants. The provisions of the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA), for example, favored men, resulting in a ratio of four men for every one woman successful in achieving permanent residence through the amnesty program. Another provision of the IRCA, the special agricultural worker (SAW) work visa program, also favored men due largely to the realms of work that were either included or excluded in the program. For example, field workers (predominantly male) were eligible for SAW work permits, while cannery workers (predominantly female) were not. Even the most recent proposals for immigration reform raise questions of equity between female and male immigrants due to gendered divisions of labor. Many of the contemporary immigration reform proposals feature guest worker programs, but based on past formulations of work permit programs, the work permits are usually concentrated in traditionally male realms of work (i.e., agriculture, construction, night-shift janitorial services), while female-dominated realms of work such as caregiving and domestic service are left out. Even minor reform proposals, such as the agreement to more actively protect immigrant workers while they work in the United States, are gender biased. In July 2004, the U.S. Labor Department signed an agreement with Mexican officials to improve compliance with U.S. labor laws so as to increase safety for immigrant workers in the United States.⁵ The plan is implemented by the Labor Department’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the Wage and Hour Division, but like most labor policy reforms, the plan targets workers in the formal sector of the workforce and has no impact on safety and working conditions for maids, nannies, caregivers and other domestic service workers in the informal sector. In these predominantly female occupations, workers are overlooked for

work permits, workplace regulation, and minimum-wage enforcement, and have a hard time producing the documentation required for eligibility for any kind of amnesty or earned citizenship program. Gender-neutral language produces gender-biased policy results within a gendered division of labor.

The common theme that runs through this review of immigration and immigrant policies is that the doors of opportunity did not swing open for Latina immigrants coming to work in the United States. Like Chinese female immigrants before them, Mexican and Latin American female immigrants are associated with undesirable permanent settlement of Latino families and a fuller, more costly incorporation of immigrants as communities rather than lone workers without family obligations. Female immigrants are cast as likely to be “immoral” or to become a “public charge” in an effort to broadcast an unwelcoming message. Legalization and work visa programs consistently favor male immigrants by focusing attention on male-dominated realms of work while neglecting the many informal sector occupations that are traditionally filled by women. Even while the demand for low-cost domestic service steadily rises in response to the care deficit in the United States, the prospects for female immigrants working in this sector to acquire legal status remain dismally low. As the U.S. Congress and the U.S. public engage in a passionate debate over immigration reform, there are no indications that the needs of female immigrants will be addressed. If nothing is done, domestic service will remain as an informal, undocumented, unregulated, and exploited realm of work for Latinas.

The overall result of confining domestic service work to the informal sector is to devalue the work and ensure that these paid services will remain affordable to middle-class families in the United States. Like the policies that discourage immigrants from migrating with their dependents, the policies that isolate domestic service work to the informal sector contain the costs of social reproduction: raising, caring for, and socializing the next generation of workers. If the dependents of migrants are left at home in the sending country, the receiving country is relieved of the responsibilities and costs involved in raising, socializing, educating, and maintaining that population while they are not yet a part of the labor force. If a migrant worker is injured on the job in the United States, our policies prompt her to return home to seek the health ser-

vices and care she requires. This pattern of externalizing the costs of social production of the labor force to the sending country is part of an inequitable international division of labor that results partly from U.S. immigration and immigrant policies. On a global scale, “women’s work,” the vital work of parenting, nurturing, educating, caring, and socializing, is once again devalued.

Latina women are hit with the devaluation of domestic service work and social reproduction from all sides. Governmental policies, including immigration, immigrant, labor, welfare, and even education policies, push Latinas into the most exploitable corners of the workforce. Anti-immigrant campaigns cast immigrant women as unworthy of the right to raise their own children here in the United States despite the fact that they are hard-working participants in the U.S. workforce. Even the liberal feminist movement has failed to acknowledge the value of domestic service work for fear of pricing themselves out of their own liberation. Unfolding alongside the global restructuring of production is the global restructuring of reproductive work. Migrant women crossing borders to fill the care deficit in the United States and other receiving countries are living the contradictions of transnational motherhood, illegal documentation status, invisibility, and lack of representation and voice. These disempowering trends are rooted in a fundamental devaluation of the vital role of social reproduction involved in providing the best of care.

LO FEMENINO: TRANSLATIONS OF FEMINISMS IN THE AMERICAS

Latina and Latin American feminist writings advance the notion of *lo femenino* (the feminine) and its progressive potential in valuing and politicizing reproductive work as a unique element of transnational feminism (Kaplan 1982; Alvarez 1990). For example, the article “Cross-Border Talk: Transnational Issues of Race, Gender, and Sexuality” outlines the class and community survival issues forming the foundation of the Mexican popular women’s movement, arguing that the U.S. feminist movement could learn a thing or two about broadening the movement’s basis of support and creating links to other movements from this Mexican feminist development (Carrillo 1998). The article acknowledges the confluence of

class and community survival issues with feminist issues in the popular Mexican women's movement and looks at this Mexican feminist development as a unique offering to transnational feminism. Unapologetic in its embrace of traditionally feminine realms of work and activity, the Mexican popular women's movement seeks to bring attention to the plight of the poor who are struggling for community survival. The popular urban movements, for example, organize residents of the *colonias populares* around basic rights to housing, public utilities, and infrastructure to facilitate transportation, cooking, housekeeping, and family life. In the absence of access to public services, the hours required to complete "women's work" increases and the burden of that work falls squarely on the shoulders of poor and working-class women. Instead of rejecting the connection to women's work, the popular urban movements politicized this realm of activity and made demands based on the traditionally feminine realm of productive and reproductive activity.

In the context of globalization, the devaluation and depoliticization of traditionally female realms of activity and work has resulted in the marginalization of domestic service and caregiving work and workers, even within the realm of immigration policy reform. From this marginalized position, policy reform proposals designed to address the needs and rights of migrant workers often do not apply to the informal sector of domestic service. Moving from the notion of *lo femenino*, visionary migrant rights advocates have advocated for legalization and regulation of domestic service—changes that could move this type of work out from the shadows and offer improvements to be shared by all parties involved. A greater emphasis on valuing "women's work" could lead to outcomes as diverse as more accurate estimates of increased productivity in the U.S. workforce attributable to nannies and caregivers, or a greater availability of legal work visas for domestic service employees. Improved information and understanding of this realm of work might include a more logical accounting of the benefits of caregiving and nurturing or a more accurate gauge of the sending country's contributions to the production and reproduction of the U.S. workforce. U.S. policy reforms that recognize this contribution could be crafted to facilitate mutually beneficial employment practices such as enforcement of labor laws or regulation of health and safety conditions in the place of work, even if it is a private home. Through a work permit program, domestic service could be brought into

the legal, regulated realm of work, offering workers recourse to respond to abuses. These changes, of course, would raise the cost of domestic service along with the prestige and desirability of the job, making the work more attractive and viable for citizens.

With public acknowledgement of the importance of nurturing and caregiving work, policies could be crafted to offer greater access to public services and infrastructure to facilitate family life, such as child and elder care facilities, improved public health, nutrition, and well-being, or legislation to facilitate family leave, paternity leave, and pauses in employment due to the demands of family. These reforms in turn could promote self-sufficiency of families and lead to improved family and gender relations and a more equitable distribution of caring and nurturing roles between the sexes. If followed to their logical conclusion, these improvements might ease the growing dependence on paid domestic service that is developing in the United States and force families and employers to make space in the work day for nurturing and caregiving. Instead of denying its importance and value, if we were to embrace this realm of activity, we might have a fighting chance of maintaining the opportunity to perform these very human functions in our everyday lives. We could enjoy the enormous luxury of giving ourselves and our own families the best of care. This improvement would lead to an extension of children's rights, women's rights, civil and political rights, reproductive rights, and in their truest sense, human rights, as outlined in the UN International Covenants.

In this imagined future in which domestic service and caregiving work is respected, openly recognized, and legal, it would be less important whether maids are Latina or not. As domestic service work becomes a more viable way of earning a living wage with dignity and respect, there would be less of an incentive to deny the value of the contribution domestic service workers make to society. There would be no need to differentiate domestic service workers by immigration status, education, or language skills in order to rationalize their wages and working conditions. The questions of migration, gender, and race dissipate as they are disentangled from labor processes and practices. Policy reform can act as a catalyst in the process of disentangling identity issues from labor and migration practices so as to empower domestic service workers and free Latinos to give meaning to the concept of *Latinidad* on their own terms.

NOTES

1. From Mary Romero's *Maid in the USA* (New York: Routledge), page 72.
2. The UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child. states, "The child, for the full and harmonious development of his personality, needs love and understanding. He shall, wherever possible, grow up in the care and under the responsibility of his parents, and, in any case, in an atmosphere of affection and of moral and material security; a child *of tender years* shall not, save in exceptional circumstances, be separated from his mother," [UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child. Principle 6. 1959].
3. Mexican figures include deaths along the border that occur on U.S. or Mexican territory. U.S. Border Patrol figures include only deaths on U.S. territory.
4. The Forty-third Congress signed into effect the Page Law on March 3, 1875, which prohibited immigration of Chinese and Asian women to the United States for the purpose of prostitution. The law read that "in determining whether the immigration of any subject of China, Japan, or any Oriental country, to the United States, is. . .for lewd and immoral purposes . . . said consul-general or consul shall not deliver the required permit or certificate . . . the importation into the United States of women for the purposes of prostitution is hereby forbidden" [Forty-third Congress. Session II. Ch.141. March 3, 1875 Chapter 141]. The Page Law called upon individual officers to ascertain whether an immigrant is of a class whose importation is forbidden.
5. The Associated Press reported in July 2004 that the death rate for Mexican workers killed on the job in the United States had soared during the last decade. In the mid-1990s, Mexicans working in the United States were about 30 percent more likely to die than U.S.-born workers; in 2002, they were about 80 percent more likely. The AP report was released just as the Hispanic Safety and Health Conference was taking place in Orlando, Florida, on July 21, 2004. U.S. Labor Secretary Elaine Chao used the occasion to publicly speak out against the problem and to sign an agreement with Luis Ernesto Derbez, the Mexican secretary of foreign relations, to step up inspections and enforcement of U.S. labor laws in an attempt to increase safety for Latino workers.

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TRANSMIGRANT SEXUALITIES

The Closet and Other Tales by
Colombian Gay Immigrants in New York City

Erika Marquez

Since the mid-1980s, a half dozen bars at the core of Jackson Heights, Queens, have hosted a joyful crowd of Latino gay immigrants. A distracted look at these gatherings would picture them as natural results of a happy transition toward sexual liberation after a tortuous voyage to find New York, an internationally recognized mecca of queerness. Yet a closer look at these spaces raises some questions about the nature of homoerotic desire lived across the borders of the heteronormative nation. Why would this liberation be taking place out of the usual queer circuits of the city? Do these encounters represent a different type of engagement with the prevailing meanings of same-sex desire? Is this an example that the “gay nation” is indeed the dreamed land where queers from all over the world have a place?

As I attempt to show in this work, both gay bars and narratives on same-sex desire located out of the margins of white queer New York pose a challenge to the idea of freedom and rights embodied in the discourse of gay identity as conceived from the American-born gay rights movement. Both spaces and narratives question the assumption that disclosure and a language of rights are central features in the constitution of sexual identity. For one thing, rather than assuming an identity that revolves around their sexual orientation, Latinos utilize what Quiroga (2000: 18) calls strategic silences through their engagement with networks of lesbian and gays who

play with the visibility of their sexuality and refuse to “proclaim their own desires as an identity” (2000: 19).

A recent body of scholarship (Quiroga, 2000; Cruz-Malavé and Manalansan 2002; Manalansan 2003; Gopinath 1998) has started to address these problems through the analysis of the encounter between the American idioms of homoerotics and the meanings that same-sex desire takes at other geographical and cultural coordinates. This literature highlights that the American narrative of gay identity has become the universal lexicon of homoerotics up to the point that available meanings of same-sex desire are deeply associated with such powerful images as the closet or the process of coming out, typical of the American context. At the same time, disparate communities around the world have engaged in distinct ways with this dominant discourse, generating hybrid cultures of desire and modifying both practices and political agendas. Thus, in the same way that notions like democracy and human rights have ended up being part of the political vocabulary throughout communities with different levels of understanding of or commitment to such ideas (Appadurai 1990: 10), the mainstream narrative on gay identity has become a powerful source shaping homoerotics much beyond the spaces where it originally emerged. In an early work, Altman (1982) wrote about the Americanization of the homosexual. More than twenty years later, the result of this process continues to be the progressive conflation of peripheral homosexualities on a single, fixed identity—the gay identity—and the lack of recognition of those subjects that do not rely on disclosure as the core of their sexual identity.

The experience of gay immigrants shows that having sexuality as the main marker of a person's identity conflates other levels of marginalization related to one's subordinated positions as a racialized and disenfranchised subject. Moreover, having a single-voiced discourse on same-sex desire leads to the problematic assumption that all those oppressed due to their sexual choices face the same kind of issues and therefore, that their agendas should be univocal.

RECOLORING THE RAINBOW

As with many Colombians from my generation, I became aware that immigration to the United States had become a common fate for co-

nationals in search of better economic perspectives very early in my life. In my case, this realization came through fragmentary news from a relative who had left home to settle in New York City during the early 1980s. News about him often narrated the many hardships of the sudden downward social mobility that ensued from leaving his original position as a schoolteacher to take on jobs as dishwasher or delivery person. In many other occasions, though, news from him related his encounter with a Latino universe that was not at all unknown for us at home. Letters came often with cassette recordings of old Antillean singers whose work was first released in the Big Apple, and sometimes it was books or videos from Latin Americans in exile. On one occasion, the postal packet brought an issue of Cuban writer Reinaldo Arenas's novel *Before the Night Falls*. The book, which narrated Arenas's own life as a homosexual in Cuba later exiled in the United States, came with a note unmistakably drawing a parallel between the sender's vital experience and Arenas's double identification as homosexual and migrant. A voiced secret, this "revelation" of my relative's homosexuality was not as much a confession of his sexual preferences as a transient moment of self-affirmation.

More than twenty years passed before my relative's migratory status allowed him to go back to Colombia. In the meantime, other members of the family, including myself, were able to visit him and have a taste of his life as a sexile¹ in Queens, New York. Besides owning a prolific collection of books with homosexual themes, including a photocopy of Arenas's book and a dozen other Latin American and U.S. authors, the guest would often meet some of the other Latino sexiles that stopped by his apartment to chat or maybe to share some food, music, or just the latest gossip in the neighborhood. Apart from more than one tour through the Colombian restaurants and *panaderias* (bakeries) in the area, I joined some of these folks for a couple of excursions to beaches like the legendary gay sanctuary, Fire Island. In this quintessential New York gay location, our putative whiteness remained intact if we did not speak in Spanish too loudly, but we definitely were outsiders in this land of the white and wealthy. It is the crossing and bridging of geographical and social borders that I witnessed in these excursions that first interested me in the issue of immigration. The puzzling feeling I had in successive visits to my new friends in Queens, New York, as well as my own position as an alien in the United States, encouraged me to inquire about the

multiple locations from which immigrants negotiate discourses shaping their identity. My focus on sexuality seemed relevant, for it made apparent that despite Colombian immigrant gays' commonalities with the thriving New York gay community, they remained as marginalized as their heterosexual peers. I then decided to ask my relative as well as some of the people I knew through him how their sexual identity had affected their migratory experience and how this immigration had in turn affected their sexuality. In particular, I was interested in assessing the extent to which moving to a different, apparently more tolerant, environment changed sexual practices and meanings. I asked interviewees directly about how their arrival in New York modified their lifestyle, values, and practices, but also asked them about more concrete aspects raised by their immigration to New York such as their engagement with the "mainstream" gay community's symbols (i.e., the rainbow flag or the pink triangle) and rhetoric (represented in the "gay pride" and other slogans). Although the group that I interviewed could hardly be considered as a representative sample, it was broad enough to reflect some diversity in terms of backgrounds and times of immigration.

One of the first difficulties in this analysis is precisely how to frame the inquiry without reproducing the conceptual tools that feed prevalent interpretations. This is the case of the concept of community. Traditionally, the idea of community has been key for understanding how sexual identity is constructed. A whole body of literature has argued that sexual identities are not fixed expressions of a bodily reality but that they are constructed through collective interactions in the space of a community. Gay communities are seen as a source of social capital, as the basis to build an ethos, as the locus for political mobilization, and as the space to build one's identity (Weeks 2000). Yet the notion of community obscures the experience of those who are unwilling or unable to be visible by living and organizing around a common identity as gay men (Hindle 1994: 10). At the same time, portraying immigrant homoerotic territories imposes an obligation to consider the multiple locations where repertoires of desire are shaped and embraced. Taking the case of same-sex desire among Colombian immigrants, I call attention to the need of switching the focus from the community as a defined space where individuals build more or less unified identities, since strategies to construct sexual identity draw from sources that go beyond the com-

munity of sexual peers. Rather than participating from stable communities, immigrants move throughout flexible networks that become visible strategically. For this reason, networks and spaces in the city become important points in the inquiry.

A GREEN CARD FOR THE GAY NATION

The location that Colombian gay men share is particularly interesting because it poses the challenge of interrogating about the multiple intersections where they define and perform same-sex desire. Jackson Heights is a place where keeping deep ties with Colombia is possible. Among others, one can find the headquarters of both traditional Colombian parties and the New York offices of RCN, one of the two major TV and radio networks in the country, as well as a set of cultural, social, and political associations. Through Telemundo, Univision, and LTV, it is possible to follow Colombian news, soap operas, or sports transmissions, often at the same time that they are being watched in Colombia. Colombian people followed with attention *Adrian esta de visita*, a soap opera co-produced by Colombian and U.S. Latino networks that narrate the drama of two homosexual men that fight for living openly their sexuality. COLEGA, the Colombian LGBT organization organized a round table to discuss the impact of this kind of production on the homophobic attitudes among the community. Engaging in this discussion is a way of being positioned as transmigrants. In that sense, they find themselves challenging meanings and rebuilding their identities. I use the term transmigrant to signify that people who immigrate move between the space of their original place and the country of reception in such a way that their identity and practices are the result of negotiations at different levels. As Linda Basch and her colleagues contend, transmigrants “live a complex existence that forces them to confront, draw upon, and rework different hegemonic constructions of identity developed in their home or new nation-state(s)” (Basch et al. 1994).

In spite of changes in patterns of Colombian immigration, Jackson Heights has been and continues to be the place of residence of a number of Colombians in New York. There, transmigrants encounter products from their places of origin, from journals to food, soap operas,

patriotic celebrations, and political candidates. At the same time, the neighborhood harbors populations from Asia, especially India and Pakistan, the Middle East, and Latin America. Yet rather than representing a nonconflicting mix of cultures, Jackson Heights should be seen as the locus where a number of immigrants construct their identity in a dialectical interaction with people from disparate locations: Other Colombians of similar or different regions of origin; other Latino/as from southern and northern countries, people from India, Cambodia, China—all this complicated by daily negotiations around class, race, and gender positionalities.

Reframing one's identity in this setting implies a number of perplexities. The first one is that of identifying oneself as part of an ethnicity or a community of immigrants. As an interviewee told me, "I didn't know I was Hispanic until I arrived here." Being part of the gay Latino networks in Jackson Heights required one to assemble a number of pieces of one's identity, all at once. It required, for instance, becoming a member of the "gay community," the "Latino community," the "immigrant community," and ultimately, the "Latino gay community." However, knitting networks of friendship and solidarity is a matter of survival before the prospects of facing unknown and harsh regimes of discrimination. Immigrants' narratives underscore that despite the appealing images of liberation promised by glamorous queer New York, assimilation is not a plausible or even desirable option.

Interrogated about their migratory experience, interviewees mentioned how they were attracted by the ideas of freedom, tolerance, and rights so common in the American gay rights discourse. However, their accounts about "how" (rather than "why") they migrated provided multiple clues about the abysmal space that separates theirs from others' experience. When they answered my questions about the reasons for their migration, the same reasons as those adduced by economic immigrants were the rule—people immigrated because job opportunities were limited in Colombia, and by using some existing social networks of friends and relatives in the United States, they would be able to work and save, help their families economically, and eventually come back to Colombia with accumulated capital.

Here, their testimonies seem to coincide with Cantu's (2000) findings in the sense that sexuality and economic issues cannot be analyzed sep-

arately. For him, immigration for Mexican gay immigrants is related to limited economic opportunities given their sexual orientation. In the Colombian case, class issues are apparent when one compares the changes in the type of immigrations throughout the years. We could roughly talk about two waves of identifiable Colombian gay immigration in the last thirty years. The first one started in the early 1980s as part of the wider wave of Colombian immigration to the United States. The second one initiated around the late 1990s, relying more on the already existing gay and straight immigrant networks. A number of immigrants in this second wave are people in independent jobs like designers, actors, or writers. They are less likely to deal with the pressures of having to migrate as an alternative to find better socioeconomic opportunities. However, for other immigrants in more conventional occupations or with working-class backgrounds and usually from the first wave of immigration, sexual orientation is an issue both at the moment of immigration and once in the United States.

Thus, as Cantu (1999) states in his work, in the context of immigration, sexuality and economic aspects go hand in hand. Both within and outside of the community of Colombians, issues of sexual identity were mediated by their situation as immigrants. As I have stated, most Colombian men who immigrated at the beginning of the 1980s were able to come thanks to the networks of other Colombian acquaintances or relatives where homophobia was the norm. For many of these men, their status as undocumented only allowed them to get service jobs like waiters, security guards, retail sellers, or cooks. In these cases, as an informant expressed, the fact of being more or less open about one's sexual identity was not an option. On the other hand, wealthier immigrants that work independently or in progressive professional circles may be more likely to actually come out and live their sexuality openly.

The same was true with respect to relatives who hosted them at least until they found a place of their own. To the extent that Colombians in general have acquired citizenship rights throughout the 1990s, this has partially changed. Among the late wave of immigration, it is more common that gay immigrants are more open with respect to their sexual practices to the extent that they are less reliant on heterosexual immigrant networks. However, issues of language, race, and citizenship rights also complicate access to the elusive gay nation.

A common referent among my interviewees was that independently of their commitment to the idea of coming out or to the idea of a gay nation or a community of people tied by their common sexual orientation—the idea of gayness as ethnicity—to a greater or a lesser extent they thought of New York as a gay mecca. A young hairdresser that came in the late 1990s through other friends in the business of design and fashion told me that prior to his immigration, his image of New York was that of the “Disney of Gays.” He meant that New York was like an amusement park with all the features that a gay person might dream of—gay bars, gay beaches, gay neighborhoods, gay stores, gay parks, gay streets . . . However, he, as well as other interviewees with similar images of New York, emphasized that in reality when they arrived in New York, their contact with the traditional gay circuits of the city had been more as tourists, or at most as occasional visitors. People I interviewed remember that upon their arrival, they visited places in Greenwich Village almost as part of tourist trips that other friends already in the city had prepared for them. They remember having visited “exotic” places like bathhouses when they existed, nudist or sado bars, and other sites with a reputation as places for cruising and sexual activity. And although progressively they incorporated these sites as references in their own experience with the city, their alien character is also stressed throughout the limits of the promised gay city.

What this shows is an approximation to the gay city but not an automatic incorporation of it. People remained part of the networks of their arrival, and that implied being tied to the physical space where these networks were anchored. On the one hand, they did not have anything in common with the visible networks in the traditional gay circuits—indeed, they had different languages, occupations, vital experiences, and importantly, a different engagement with the story of the gay movement. On the other hand, given that many of them were illegal immigrants, Jackson Heights offered a relatively safe space in terms of providing some cultural referents and refuge from police harassment and other forms of hostility.

JACKSON HEIGHTS: AT THE MARGINS OF THE CITY

Belonging to queer spaces at the margins of the margins may not be a condition so loudly celebrated as the triumphs of the Colombian na-

tional soccer team or the national Colombian independence parade every 20th of July. However, for more than twenty years there has been indeed a set of spaces and nets of relations where Colombians as well as other Latino/as, and to a lesser degree Americans and Asians, converge for entertainment, personal contacts, and sporadic mobilization. Gay people may not be vocal in claiming a single identity to which they relate themselves, nor a sense of belonging to a determined community, but they have had a continual and vital presence in strategic locations at the core of the immigrants' territory.

In a study of Castro, the gay district of San Francisco, Manuel Castells (1983) argued that the building of this district was inseparable from the development of the gay community as a social movement. This has not been the case for Jackson Heights, to the extent that mobilization has been sporadic and has not always worked under the umbrella of organizations and institutions. However, Jackson Heights is a powerful reference for the construction of identity. Although not the site for a community gathered around a single identity, it is a central resource for building distinctive networks and spaces. Just like lesbians and women in general have tended to rely on networks rather than on public spaces due to a historical burden to access the public sphere, immigrants knit strong ties that work beyond the institutional and visible sites of the city (Almgren 1994).

Burdened by the invisibility attached to the condition of immigrating, transmigrants make strategic uses of the space. In this way, bars, as well as sporadic gatherings in parades and rallies, become transgressive locations to create and perform identity. The use of public space is conditioned to their positionalities as immigrants and gays who are subjects of homophobic and racist practices.

There is not a distinguishable "gay ghetto" in Jackson Heights. Yet in the early 1980s, a circuit of same-sex desire started to be delineated out of the traditional geographies of both Latino immigrants and American mainstream gay communities. This circuit did not have an identifiable center but was rather tied by networks that eventually led people to share housing and to congregate in bars.

The antecedents of this spatial divide are the older networks of lesbian and gay (nonimmigrant) activists that existed in Queens in the late 1970s and early 1980s. According to Almgren (1994: 52), "these organizations

cooperated in lobbying efforts to get New York City's gay rights bill to pass, but eventually they dissolved." However, episodes of violence and the impact of AIDS have also been points of inflection where Colombian and other Latino immigrants have strengthened their networks and ties with communities from outside the area through fleeting moments of public visibility. One of them is the murder of Julio Rivera in 1991. Twenty-nine-year-old Julio Rivera was killed when he left his job as a waiter at a gay bar in Jackson Heights. The act itself and the police reticence to consider it as a hate crime triggered a wave of activism that gave place to the creation of "Queens Gay Pride," an organization formed by residents of the borough of Queens—regardless of their ethnic origin—in order to provide social services to the local population. In 1992, Queens Gay Pride also organized the first Queens Gay Parade that still takes place annually in Jackson Heights. The other fact that propelled the constitution of gay networks in Jackson Heights and other areas of Queens like Elmhurst and Corona was the AIDS crisis. In the late 1980s, mainstream organizations like Gay Men, Health Crisis approached the emerging gay organizations in Queens in order to develop preventive programs targeted to Latinos. This effort favored the recent institutionalization of Latino gay networks in the area, as it has offered resources to emergent Latino gay and lesbian organizations.

Throughout the years Jackson Heights' gay bars have also served as central spaces for networking, catharsis, entertainment, desire, and community building for the Colombian and Latino gay community. Gay bars owned or massively attended by Colombians have been a central part of Jackson Heights' landscape. They coexist with an array of businesses on Roosevelt Avenue, Jackson Heights' main street. There, bars are just a part of the multitude of businesses that offer folk music, food, travel packages to Latin America, long-distance phone call services, and more recently, the best Indian food in the city. From the outside, gay bars are not distinguishable from other bars mostly attended by heterosexual Latino/a immigrants in the area. As other sites in the geography of immigration, they seem to be visible only for strategic purposes. Manalansan (2003: 72) notes the peculiar position of these places in his observation of two Latino gay bars in Queens. He points out, "These sites display and invoke intersections of temporalities and places. They are not intrinsically separate from their own mainstream immigrant com-

munities, but are somewhat integrated into the geographical layout of diasporic life. Gay bars ‘out there’ are no more gay bars in the stereotypical sense than they are places in which immigrants participate in claiming their own location in the city.”

Colombians were not the only ones who attended these bars, for the area also fostered other populations from Central and South America, and this implied that the networks were not tied along lines of nationality. However, this also implied that identity had to be reframed along new cultural coordinates. The perplexities of being part of the category of gay Latino can be observed even today when some of my interviewees, who have achieved social and geographical mobility and are now in better positions in terms of their migratory status, say that they have stopped going to certain Latino gay bars because the new clientele is composed by populations of indigenous or peasant descent.

Jackson Heights’ gay bars were identified by my interviewees as Colombian not only because of their ownership but also because in a time of splendor—the last part of the 1980s—they hosted a number of Colombians that gathered there to listen to “Colombian-like” music. In the mid-1980s Bon Heure, El Bote, Billy the Kid, La Carreta, Estudio 88, Lllamarada, Real People, Duran’s, Lucho’s, Friends, Music Box, and Atlantis became the key places in which a community started to *anonymously come out*. Roughly between the second half of the 1980s and the early 1990s, Colombian and other Latino gay entrepreneurs who were part of the rising Latino gay networks in the area established some of these bars. There is still the perception that at least at their origins these bars were “Colombian,” probably because of the huge growth of the Colombian population during those years and the consequent predominance of Colombian gay men among these emergent Latino gay networks. The arrival of other waves of immigrants, especially from Ecuador and Central America, has had an impact on the ways in which people socialize and use the spaces—now the most popular bars are bigger, better equipped, and play more varieties of Latino music than they did in the past. However, in essence, the bars have remained throughout the years.

It is possible that the partial visibility of bars is related to the illegal migratory status of many of their clientele, especially in their initial stages when naturalization rates among Colombians and other

Latino/a immigrants were lower. However, I interpret this partial visibility as a manifestation of the idea that sexual liberty is reached not through the act of coming out but by enjoying one's own, although anonymous, spaces. In this sense, bars have been the best way of appropriating the space of liberation/anonymity offered by New York. Also, bars are a way of bringing or reproducing the kind of social organization that characterized homoerotics in Colombia. Gay bars have been quite popular among the gay community in most urban areas in Colombia, despite that, as an interviewee told me, you had to "wait 'til a bus passed in front of the bar so you could hide yourself behind the bus in motion and then get into the place." Thus, bars are an ideal space for being out, at least inside their own community, at the same time that they remain relatively invisible to the straight community, which despite living in a friendlier space towards same-sex sexuality, may still be as intolerant as it was before migrating.

I see the bar as the social space that connects the idea of coming out with that of remaining anonymous for the straight community: a sort of exposed and collectively lived closet. Bars are actively used by organizations to disseminate information about events and AIDS prevention, and places of meeting for political activities, etc. There are always posters and flyers on the bars' walls inviting patrons to shows and performances; there are piles of the *Village Voice* at the entrance, and there are booklets and fliers informing about sexually transmitted diseases or announcing activities organized by American and Latino LGBT organizations. To this extent, bars are also bridges to the social spaces of the broader New York gay community. In the late 1980s, Jackson Heights gained a reputation as a sort of free-trade zone for sex and other pleasures that traveled beyond its frontiers. Since then, a little street near the main strip where most bars are located has been known as Vaseline Alley. The alley, which is in reality a street, became a place for cruising among gay people from inside and outside the area. Yet, as Colombian writer Jaime Manrique explains, these exchanges occur in an economy of desire marked by unevenness. He states:

The reason gay people bond is because of sex. It is like the hatred between blacks and whites, white men are like slave owners. They didn't marry black women but having sex with them was fine. There is a lot of objecti-

fication going on in gay culture, and all cultures: Blondes who like Blacks or Latinos. It is just objectification of the other for sexual gratification. Actually, it is more prejudice, I think, with objectification, because the other person is not a person, but a type, an archetype. (Interview with Hans Almgren 1994: 57).

THE CLOSET AND OTHER TALES

It is in this context of strategic visibility and uneven belonging to the broader gay community that we should start to read processes of identity construction. For one, Guzman (1997) has addressed the crossing of identities lived by Latino gay men in the United States, showing the paradox posed by the encounter between a gay sexuality that does not work as an organizing existential principle in Latin American countries and the way this identity *comes out* in the frame of places or practices typically white and American. Colombian gay men also face this paradox, and in order to deal with it, they recreate a repertoire of meanings that come from their positionality toward different regimes of control and emancipation. Yet it is important to remember that the process of immigrating represents more continuity than rupture. As is evident from the interviews I conducted, the fact of immigrating did not represent the transition from a heterosexual to a homosexual life or from furtive and sporadic contacts with other men to a life of stable coupling and identification as gays. Even the youngest people I interviewed (in their early twenties) pointed out that they already engaged regularly in same-sex sexual activity before migrating. For some people this was more problematic because their family and social and work environments were more intolerant, but in all of the cases they declared that they frequented gay bars or parties and had gay social circles in Colombia. They emphatically added that gay bars in Colombia are not a new phenomenon; indeed, according to my interviewees, they have existed at least since the mid 1970s, and now they have just become somewhat more open or even fashionable for the straight youth.

Latin American scholars like Silvano Santiago (2002) make us aware that the concept of the closet cannot be automatically applied for understanding “peripheral” sexualities. He defends the private character

intrinsic in Latin American same-sex sexuality because it is part of the way these societies manage to deal with both marginality and normativity in a social space that transcends another dichotomy, that of the private and the public.

On the other side, it may be argued that living homosexuality in a gray semi-secret zone is just a way of coping with rampant social prejudices and discrimination. It is very difficult to make an assessment of the extent to which same-sex desire in Latin America is shaped by homophobia, but it certainly is not accurate to appeal to this notion as the only one determining sexual meanings. To my interviewees, the meaning of the closet is not absolute and allows for relativizations and nuances; it is not about either staying or coming out. As an interviewee told me, "Coming out of the closet means that everybody knows; I have come out for the gay community, not for the straight one."

Oscar's experience with a gay couple he met in Colombia on one of his recent trips offers some clues about this point. Oscar commented how the couple lived hidden because they refused to declare as gays. Oscar's opinion was that "it is not about declaring yourself. It is about defending the right and freedom; it is doing whatever you want. You have to get out because people still whistle at homosexuals, and also because they have the right to inherit (their partner's goods). I'd like to be able to be in the street and hold someone's hand without having been stared at by people. Things would change if gays weren't gays only from Friday to Sunday." At the same time, he was not concerned about the fact of coming out as a declaration because, as he put it: "I have not told my mother that I am gay and I will not tell her; it is not necessary. I was never in the closet." To him being gay was beyond performing either the hidden sexual act or the public declaration of identity.

I interviewed Mario and Eduardo at their respective apartments in Jackson Heights. Mario's place was full of objects representative of the American gay culture. He had a rainbow flag and wore a pink triangle button, and on his freezer door there was a sticker with the line "I can't even stand straight." Eduardo's apartment did not have any object or image that talked about his sexual identity; it was pretty formal and looked more like the house of any conventional middle-class Colombian family. These presentations of the self have to do with meanings of same-sex sexuality among immigrants. These meanings, of course, come from

their different positionalities in terms of class or ethnicity in both their old and new communities: the Latino and the American queer and straight ones. An interviewee related his openness toward an attitude of sexual disclosure with his language proficiency and the autonomy this provides in terms of claiming rights and participating as an informed citizen rather than as an immigrant not acquainted with American politics and culture. For him, acquiring a “gay consciousness” had to do with the fact of becoming more proficient at reading in English. By being able to read more literature in English (some of it by and about gays), he started to embrace a flexible citizenship that accounted for his erotic and linguistic needs. In the same way, narratives of freedom are a common reference in interviewees’ accounts. Residing in the city and constantly appealing to the image of the closet become the gay nation’s unfulfilled promise despite the fact that, as an interviewee told me, “coming out of the closet means that everybody knows; I have come out for the gay community, not for the straight one.”

The sense of anonymity narrated in these interviews is beyond the dichotomy of public/private that is seen as key from American standards for analyzing Latin American sexualities. Jose Quiroga (2000) has written about Latin American same-sex sexualities as *strategic silences*. He analyzes the world of Latin American queer writers and artists as an example of this kind of sexuality: “they engaged with whole networks of visible, invisible, out, closeted, semi-closeted, partly open, flaming or circumspect lesbian and gays” (2000: 18). For this immigrant community, performing sexuality in an anonymous social space is a strategy through which they live the advantages of a tolerant environment while resisting the act of confession implied by coming out.

CONCLUSION

One might be tempted to talk about a distinctive type of identity where disclosure (outing) is not the rule but rather the exception. However, I would not say that Colombians—or Latinos in general—experience same-sex desire in ways inherently different from Americans. Granted, in this case people do not stress the centrality of their sexual orientation as the core of their identities. But what is really different is the strategic

way in which sexuality has to be enacted. Identity is defined by factors like the strong marginalization because of homophobia among straight Latinos, the discrimination and racialization experienced as Latinos and as immigrants (this is in and outside gay circles), and the lack of citizenship rights and precarious migratory status. These exclusions have not precluded Colombians from enacting same-sex desire in a consistent network of spaces and relationships for more than fifteen years—bars, friendships, and waves of more or less organized mobilization have been the scenarios where sexual identity is constructed. But even though economic and personal autonomy offers a path toward an identity more marked by disclosure, there is evidence to think that sexual identity is less articulated to the definition of rights than to communitarian practices as those cultivated through extended families and bars.

Latino gays find themselves in a paradoxical situation given their position in both Latino and American spaces. In light of heterosexism and discrimination within Latino communities, American queer spaces seem to provide some safeguard and a promise of empowerment. However, the possibility of a dialogue at this level is constrained not only by different sexual practices and attitudes but also by the limitations tied to the fact of being immigrants, even when they have a middle-class background. Moreover, prejudice and racial discrimination are factors that make it difficult to enjoy the same level of liberation that seemed to be a common expectation among immigrants.

We need to enlarge our knowledge about same-sex desire among people who do not label themselves in uniform ways (I'm gay, you're straight; I'm out, you're in the closet) or for those whose trajectory does not lead them to identify as members of a community. In this way we challenge essentialist approaches to sexual identity—those that define sexual identity along a distinctive sexual identity and also complicate the constructionist argument that ties the construction of identity to the existence of a community. As a relatively recent body of (especially gay, lesbian, and feminist) literature shows, "sexual identities are not simple expressions of bodily truth but are historical phenomena—and therefore constantly changing" (Weeks 1995: 40). We need to create new cartographies that problematize identities. We need to retrace histories by mapping the points of encounter (common spaces, symbols) but also the divergences and the different experiences of marginality because of

class, racialization, citizenship rights, and so on. This will hopefully contribute to understanding identities not as fixed markers but as referents. This type of understanding will be more inclusive for people who do not embrace fixed identities, but will also give clues to organizing political struggles in terms of these people's own trajectories. As Laclau (1990) points out, "the constitution of a sexual identity is an act of power and (that) identity as such is power" (quoted by Weeks 1995: 40). Thus, empowering can only be achieved by appealing to images of community rather than to a definite "imagined community." Imagined communities take the form of more or less defined identities, spaces, and trajectories. Immigrant same-sex desire cannot appropriately be analyzed as forming imagined communities but rather as networks of relations and common spaces. In these semi-visible spaces, conjunctural mobilizations, experiences of marginality, and no sense of belonging to a unified whole oppose the idea of community that has been common among a big sector of gay politics.

As I show in this work, semi-visibility (using bars as "colossal closets") and moments of convergence are also appropriate coordinates for understanding how sexual identity is constructed. This does not mean depoliticizing identities but rather understanding their political sense along the lines of their particular historical trajectories. At times this might imply focusing on differences rather than on commonalities, but in any case I think it is fundamental to get a more accurate sense of the process of identity building as well as a more realistic picture in order to foresee alternatives of empowerment and mobilization.

As I try to show in my research, tracing these cartographies is important countering the rigid definition of identity enacted in traditional gay politics. Weeks (1995) argues that "if sexual identities are made in history, and in relations of power, they can also be re-made." My proposal is to continue remaking the history of same-sex desire along more flexible definitions of sexual identity. This point is particularly relevant for those studies that deal with the so-called transnational communities. We need to rethink the way in which identity construction is understood among these "communities." We need to recognize that people in the Colombian (or the Filipino, Salvadorian, etc.) "communities" possess diverse experiences as citizens, workers, and subjects subjected to oppressive racial and sexual regimes. In the case of sexuality, this need is

even more acute because, as I have pointed out, the definition of same-sex desire has been constructed around the affirmation of a somewhat strict boundary between those who are gays (or lesbians or transgender) and those who are not. Just like this type of categorization reinforces the sexual hierarchy between the norm and the exception (heterosexual/homosexual), continuing to mark the homosexual around a single identity (being gay vs. being straight) masks the different experiences that get grouped in those uniform categories. Studying transmigrants' trajectories helps us in the task of de-essentializing identities because it forces us to complicate the argument about the multiple features, alliances, and experiences that lead to certain formations of identities and communities.

NOTE

1. *Sexile* is a term created by Manuel Guzman (1998) to talk about the migration of people that leave their homelands due to their sexual orientation. Despite the evidence that the migration of this research population is chiefly induced by economic reasons, I will show later that other motives related to their "sexual liberation" seem to be of great importance as well.

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10

**FLEXIBLE TECHNOLOGIES
OF SUBJECTIVITY**

Mobility Across the Americas

Felicity Schaeffer-Grabel

For more than a decade, Internet marketing campaigns have celebrated the unfettered mobility of identity and travel in cyberspace, invoking the idea that one can leave behind the drudgery of life and enter cyberworlds where bodies, race, gender, and class no longer matter. Some Internet and technology scholars perpetuate this corporate marketing by arguing that the transgressive qualities of electronic mediation reside in the ability of individuals to flexibly recombine their identity and social power in cyberspace, de-linked from the constraints of the body. For thousands of women from Mexico and Colombia, they turn to foreign men, marriage, and burgeoning technologies in which the self can be remade in order to access transnational mobility, opportunities, and citizenship, especially when access to movement across borders is denied. And unlike that of their U.S. counterparts, Latin American women's use of technologies is structured by the marketplace of desire where they must augment the tropes in the global economy that accompany their bodies—such as hyper-femininity, domesticity, malleability, sexuality, and family values. Women use technologies such as the Internet and for others, cosmetic surgery to become someone new, to reconfigure their bodies in ways that translate across transnational imaginaries and places, and in ways that incorporate neoliberal values of democracy and unfettered

mobility in both exciting and dangerous ways. Rather than turn to technologies for their promise of disembodied citizenship, women's use of the Internet and cosmetic surgery is mediated by a desire for a corporal affiliation to the promises of democracy and transnational mobility. I draw upon ethnographic research from my project on the cyber-marriage industry between Latin America and the United States to flesh out the possibilities and dangers of theorizing flexible subjectivity and mobility via technologies women use to meet new people, marry, and move through spaces and across borders.

While many U.S. Internet scholars celebrate the ability to mold oneself into various modes of subjectivity dislodged from the stable signs of the body, my research with Mexican and Colombian women demonstrates that the desire for pliable subjectivity is not merely an arena for play but one that women embrace in the hopes of mobilizing new formations of subjectivity and safe migration across national borders. Women do find ways to use technology and representations of their bodies as decolonial tools that help them improve their lives and more of their families. Yet what is oftentimes unexamined in theories of the body in cyberspace are the salience of the boundaries of cyber-subjectivity, such as how women from the global South negotiate the expectations of a U.S. palate in ways that eroticize their difference from U.S. women. I argue that the hyper visibility of transcending the body or recombining one's identity in cyberspace is a privileged position that elides the labor of the body and asserts neoliberal values of choice and democratic notions of upward mobility. Behind the desire for mobility by some Latin American women searching for U.S. husbands are disparities over movement where heightened border control and economic recession leave few options for either migrating or remaining in place. Women from Latin America utilize technologies of modern subjectivity to creatively transform the master's tools yet also perpetuate a dangerous terrain for resolidifying their objectified status and use-value as malleable objects for Western desire. Corporate marketing of flexible strategies cautions us not to be too easily seduced by mobile identity as a means of achieving democracy, freedom from the constraints of the body, and liberal ideals of choice.

In my larger project on cyber-marriage between Mexico, Colombia, and the United States, I analyze interviews and ethnographic data with

over a hundred men and women at "Vacation Romance Tours,"¹ through Internet chat rooms and e-mail conversations, and in restaurants and in their homes, to understand the process by which participants turned to technology and the foreign "other" to mobilize dreams across borders. While the majority of women at the Guadalajara Tour are well educated, were from the professional class, and have access to the Internet, the majority of female participants at the Cali Tour are more racially mixed, from the working class, and have less access to the Internet. For this reason, and because beauty is a form of social mobility in Colombia, many women turned to cosmetic surgery to attract men at the tours.

Through this research, I discovered that embedded within the use and understanding of technology were new notions of the body organized around pliable subjectivity, new race and class formations of mobility across space, and ideals of neoliberalism, development, and the march of social progress across borders. Through their use of the Internet to find romance and marriage, many women described this process as a form of self-help, of discovering their "true" self that transcended local meanings of their identity. Similarly, women from Cali turned to cosmetic surgery to emphasize their desire to become more "authentic" in the eyes of foreign courtiers and to bring into harmony the outer signs of the body with the inner self.

Men and women who turn to the Internet and cosmetic surgery to find companionship, romance, and marriage with others outside the nation also come to understand their social value in relation to the transnational marketplace. In analyzing the mutual construction of desire, however, the ways men and women imagined each other were oftentimes at odds. For male participants, the search for "better genes" or superior "raw materials" (Schaeffer-Grabiel 2006) through foreign marriage marked their role in the uplift of the family and nation through the importation of more traditional wives. U.S. men imagine themselves as the benevolent force saving globally "disadvantaged" middle-class women as well as the U.S. nation from the so-called disintegration of the family brought about by feminism, women's entrance into the labor force, and U.S. women of color stereotyped as welfare recipients.

For Latin American women, turning to technology to find a foreign husband is tantamount to developing oneself as a modern subject committed to democracy and equitable exchange within the transnational

marketplace. Access to the Internet and cosmetic surgery is congruent with the imagined progress and uplift of technology and of entering the simultaneous time and space of modernity, regardless of national, racial, and class differences. This contrasts greatly with the ways national and gendered inequalities continue to be mapped onto desire. There are mutual scripts shaping the virtual play of identity in highly eroticized fantasies across borders. For example, U.S. men are valuable for their association as hard workers with a high quality of life and as equitable partners in the domestic sphere. Women, on the other hand, gain currency as traditional, family-oriented, passionate, sexual, and feminine, whether or not the meanings attached to these stereotypes correspond.

MODERN TECHNOLOGIES AND THE BODY

The potential for identity play and self-transformation on the Internet have been eagerly theorized by Internet scholars, especially those who find refuge in the anonymity of cyberspace. A prominent early scholar of the Internet, Sherry Turkle (1995), raises the possibility of escaping social hierarchies on the Internet to transform the self and to play with fluid and multiple identities. She states, "The anonymity of multi-user domains (MUDs) . . . gives people the chance to express multiple and often unexplored aspects of the self, to play with their identity and to try out new ones. MUDs make possible the creation of an identity so fluid and multiple that it strains the limits of the notion" (1995: 12). Other feminist scholars have turned to the Internet as a space for theorizing alternative ways of articulating a political affiliation that exceeds the confinement of the body and identity politics. For example, Shannon McRae says that all the "things that separate people, all the supposedly immutable facts of gender and geography, don't matter quite so much when we're all in the machine together" (1996: 262). Theoretically inspired by Judith Butler's work, many feminist and queer scholars celebrate the queering of cyber interactions that contribute to the dislocating of sex and/or gender from a natural location in the body and for tearing apart the visual cues of the body from the inner realm of the self. Allucqu re Stone asserts, "In cyberspace the transgendered body is the natural body. The nets are spaces of transformation, identity factories in

which bodies are meaning machines, and transgender—identity as performance, as play, as wrench in the smooth gears of the social apparatus of vision—is the ground state” (1996: 180–81). The radical potential placed in cyborg identity play is inflated through the notion that “nothing in a cyborg body is essential” (Fuchs 1995).

Internet interactions do, in fact, raise some fascinating possibilities for denaturalizing the assumed coherence between the inner and outer self. However, the emphasis on play and fluid identities has led to a theorizing away from the materiality of the body and borders that limit one’s flexibility, mobility, and expression of subjectivity on- and off-line. For women from Latin America, their use of Internet technology is mediated by their use-value in the global economy as erotic subjects for first world consumption and as laborers in the service economy and domestic sphere. I focus on women’s voices and reasons for turning to new technologies and foreign men as one that marks an empowering shift in their lives. Yet I also acknowledge that their stories are complicated by men’s expectations and the broader neoliberal advertising arsenal that celebrates technology’s ability for unfettered mobility and pliable subjectivity. This does not mean that they themselves do not play with their identity, but that we need to be more cautious when addressing questions of mobility and flexibility in ways that erase the continued salience of borders, the marketplace of desire, neocolonial legacies of sexuality and race, and state immigration control.

Embedded within theories of cyberspace are shifting understandings of the role of the body. Traditionally, the body was associated with the natural and immutable, with qualities donned by God and the “fatedness” of human life. Through modern science, the body has been treated as the biological bedrock of theories on self and society—the “only constant in a rapidly changing world” (Frank 1990). More recently, Internet scholars, influenced by postmodern thinkers such as Judith Butler (1993), view the body as a social construction. This concept of the body as a social construction is also affirmed and reproduced in corporate advertising campaigns which present the “natural” body as obsolete. Popular discourses that accompany genetic manipulation, cosmetic surgery, and its reiteration in Internet cybersociality rearticulates the notion that the body is increasingly of less importance and is instead a malleable and democratic surface that can be changed at will in the search to become someone new.

Internet Romance and Marriage

The marketing of women's bodies on company websites—many of which also advertise tours—reinforces the shaping of women's bodies within tropes of family, nature, and malleability, while men are often the unmarked consumer whose bodies matter less than their association with mobility, affluence, and benevolent power on the global stage. International Internet romance and marriage encourages self-help and development, as participants are enticed to join matchmaking companies with the promise that taking the plunge abroad will dramatically improve one's identity and life. For example, websites depict women as stuck in place and locked in nature, yet also flexible or adaptable to new challenges when given the opportunity (presumably by U.S. men and capital). This is visually apparent in website images of young, modern women set against ancient landscapes such as pyramids, marking their present identity through their *mestizaje*/mixed blood that is rooted in a past breeding of Spanish and indigenous genes. María Josefina Saldaña-Portillo (2003) argues that we must be critical of the labor that *mestizaje* does in Chicana/Latina and Latin American studies, reproducing development through its formation as a biological and cultural form of national identity. She scrutinizes the foundation of *mestizaje* in biology for its depiction of indigenous people as the dying breed of an evolution in which *mestizas/os* figure as the present and future. Throughout scores of company websites I analyzed, the history of colonial contact and the idea of the frontier are cleansed of violence and instead imagined as a morphing of cultures in which women “choose” which cultural and genetic traits they will carry into the future.

This notion of choice is central to the technological ability of the Internet to reassemble history, lineage, and one's sense of self. *Mestizaje* was crafted during Mexico's independence from Spain as a way to build a common lineage for the making of a national citizenry, to unify Mexico's starkly different populations of indigenous peoples and Spaniards through the national symbol of the *mestiza*. Today, Internet marriage websites use the idea of *mestizaje* to highlight women's flexible affinity for adaptability or their ability to assimilate into foreign culture. It is through women's long history of contact with other cultures and ideas that cyber-narrations define their ability to blend into a wide variety of

cultural spaces, thus orienting their history and genetic lineage toward a natural affinity for traditional domestic life untainted by feminism and global capitalism in the United States.

Internet dating sites promise viewers that new opportunities can be found in the global marketplace of love and that participants will encounter economic and social mobility lacking at the level of the nation. Cyber-travel promises self-transformation and a change in status. Web companies advertise across a broad spectrum of male clients by stating that women care more about them than their physical traits (such as age, race, body fitness, and attractiveness). Women's bodies, on the other hand, mark their need for development and simultaneously situate their moral capital in their body, the locus for spiritual rejuvenation, family values, unpolluted nature, and femininity thought to be lost within U.S. capitalist society. Women who are barred from mobility across national borders must thus appeal to their role in the global labor force as caretakers, docile laborers, and malleable subjects, traits that garner more respect and value from U.S. men but that also resign their mobility to the trends and inequalities of the global marketplace.

These women's use of their bodies as a means of accessing mobility raises questions about the inability of global theories to account for the ways women bypass uneven geographies of power. There is a dire need to bridge Latin American and Chicana/o and Latina/o studies during a time when social life for many people converses with ideas, imaginaries, and processes that extend beyond one's local context. While I acknowledge that women's understanding of themselves extends national borders, the role of the border continues to shape women's choices for upward mobility. It is through cyberspace that a new language of global flows and borderlands grate against each other.

Despite the popular construction of the Internet as a space without a grounding in place, individuals are wired to particular places by what Manuel Castells (2000) calls different nodes and hubs, places with differential access to flows. In the case of Internet dating, technological networks and cyberspace bring places and people into spatial affinities of desire. Neocolonial geographies of desire between the United States and Latin America put into question the purported equality that the language of connectivity—defined as being joined across time and space—assumes. Latin America and the United States share a history as two

colonial interactive places that continues to discipline exchanges as being between tradition and modernity, between nature and culture.

The social force of globalization and technology has been theorized via the language of flows, simultaneous vectors of global circulations across time and space. Both Arjun Appadurai (1996) and Manuel Castells (2000) argue that flows constitute the processes of exchange between multiple levels of interaction, from information, people, technology, images, capital, and communication. Rather than describe current global processes in terms of uneven and contentious movements across national borders, Castells defines the network society as “the material organization of time-sharing social practices that work through flows” (2000: 442). In describing networks as socially connected in time and space, there is an assumption that networks and flows level hierarchical renderings of modernity versus tradition. I argue that cyber-contact zones continue to be mediated by discrepant understandings of tradition and modernity.

Women’s search for foreign husbands must be analyzed alongside neoliberalism in Latin America. Neoliberalism describes an economic, social, and, I would add, personal strategy in which governments and people turn to the foreign marketplace for economic recovery. This neoliberal climate has infiltrated individual desire and strategies for improving one’s life through the consumption not only of foreign goods but also of foreign bodies. Technology, as a tool and ideology associated with modernity, is used by women to transform themselves into modern subjects, to share these identities with others online, and, in the case of cosmetic surgery, to improve their return on the symbolic weight of their bodies as they gain currency in the global arena. Neoliberalism also defines the process whereby government-imposed restrictions on movements between countries are lifted in order to create an open marketplace and “free” trade, ushering in a borderless world economy. The turn to foreign marketplaces, bodies, and imaginaries delineates the influence of neoliberal policies that have shifted economic, cultural, and personal strategies away from a reliance on the state and instead toward the foreign marketplace (Schaeffer-Grabiel 2004). While I am politically committed to foregrounding Latin American women’s perspectives and agency, we cannot forget the fact that the percentage of Internet use in Latin America and outside the West is statistically small. Thus, women’s

use of the Internet as a strategy for mobility must be tempered by larger questions about access.

Through Latin American women's turn to technology, they aspire to alter their relationship within the global economy from producers to consumers, from those who provide service for others to visual consumers and actors who participate in the spectacular life of mobility, consumption, and leisure. Increasingly, participation in the glamour of modernity, globalization, and citizenship demands one gain visibility through participating in a cosmopolitan lifestyle, including limitless mobility and the consumption of goods. This departs from an understanding of class and citizenship through the production of labor, as contemporary capitalism conflates the buying of goods with leisure. Capitalism perpetuates U.S.-style democracy around the globe through the spread of marketplace values of equality. Thus, the technological boom has created a two-tiered social imaginary between those who become visible through the consumption, use, and creation of technology and those who perform the invisible labor.

Corporate Advertising and the Glamour of Modernity

In the world of marketing, technology is synonymous with global mobility as well as transcultural identities and opportunities, influencing women's desire to assert themselves as modern and future orientated. In 2000, America Online (AOL) launched a series of Internet advertisements and campaigns across Latin America exploiting the glamour of individual actors and performers such as Salma Hayek and Ricky Martin. In exemplifying the crossover success of open markets through a cultural nationalism less rooted in territory and instead extends across borders, the success and glamour of previously local artists typifies the progressive routes of global circulation. In fact, the launching of this marketing campaign in Guadalajara, Mexico coincided with the shift of the region's identity as solely steeped in tradition (known for mariachi music and rodeos) to its burgeoning image as "the Silicon Valley of Mexico." Dialing into technology was depicted as synonymous with joining "America Online" and an elite class who benefits from "free" trade and its positioning in the U.S. global marketplace. Regardless of whether one lives in the United States or Latin America, the middle and elite classes are

envisioned as those who transcend geographic places or those who are connected to the communicative and interactive pathways of the United States. Geographies across Latin America bear witness to the effects of foreign capital as entire neighborhoods have been profoundly upgraded by migrant remittances and connections with the United States.

It is important to juxtapose the corporate marketing of mobility alongside women's desire to travel across borders, as this foregrounds the differential value of men's and women's bodies within the global marketplace. The women I interviewed hoped to move safely across geographies as middle- to upper-class citizens rather than illegal immigrants. The promise of unfettered mobility via technology translates into corporate endorsements of segregated mobility where the global North offers mobility for the global South in exchange for cultural alterity. From the U.S. side, corporations such as Continental Airlines offer technological modernity in their advertising campaigns targeted to the Latina/o diaspora who demand culture and tradition alongside modernity. An ad that appeared in multiple issues of *Hispanic Magazine* brings to light questions regarding race, class, sexuality, and identity in relation to development and technology. In bold letters that stand out in front of Continental's signature logo of the blue globe crossed by white equator lines reads: "You have Roots, We have Routes." In this simple ad campaign, the "you" refers to the Latina/o readership and the "we" refers to the airline company. This relationship between the consumer and the producer also functions as a metonym for a broader relationship of Latinas/os to the technological prowess of the mobile white male elite. Continental Airlines embodies corporate nationalism whose global reach models the heroic image, limitless mobility, and benevolent reach of universal U.S. citizenship. One is immediately drawn into the hierarchical relation of spatial dimensions of race. On the one hand, "roots" conjures an image of Latina/o migrant bodies gripping the earth in a slow undulating path that spans a great distance across geographic borders. On the other hand, "routes" demonstrates the speed, efficiency, and decisive characteristic of the mobile class imagined from a gaze way up above. The body and racial relations continue to be embedded in the technological and disembodied gaze from a mobile roving eye high above, while those close to the earth continue to justify the need for technological uplift. The maternal image of roots as located in the earth versus the thrust-

ing masculinity of taking off into space are echoed in the broader advertising arsenal that creates an affinity between global manhood and the language of penetration into virgin marketplaces (Hooper 2001). These spatial hierarchies of mobility tend to split out of discourses of technology focused on connectivity and networks that assume horizontal geographies of access and mutual empowerment, erasing the vertical relationship of the disembodied gaze and the materiality of the body.

The juxtaposition of roots and routes, however, is more complex than this Cartesian split between the mind and body, or the binary relationship between Latinas/os and white corporate America. *Hispanic Magazine* pitches itself to upwardly mobile Latinas/os who see themselves as connected to a common pan-Latina/o culture—hybrid subjects sutured to flows of traditional culture as well as a galactic vision linked to the corporate business class. Pan-Latinidad is reproduced in the magazine's content, ads, and sections on traditional culture, business, technology, and some version of the "Most Successful Latinos" section. For this reason, Continental's advertising board capitalizes on this middle-class market by appealing to this target group's sensibilities for cultural rootedness and the reliance on technology to maintain their "roots." Technology offers Latinas/os the flexibility and play to construct their identity as part of the U.S. nation-state, as authentically Latina/o, and as part of a mobile global class differentiated from that of "illegal" migrants. Thus, the relationship between consumer and buyer is posed as reciprocal. Latinas/os enter the future time and space of transnational consumption, while the corporation brands itself through the metaphor of roots, a company with a long legacy (and future) based in their mix of conservatism and innovation across the globe.

The contrasting image of curvy rootedness as the alterity of technological precision helps to justify techno-progress as necessary for the disciplining of nature/bodies characterized as spontaneous, loyal, malleable, and out of control. This depiction of nature relates to what Donna Haraway (1997) calls the New World Order in which corporate interests in techno-science have turned nature into a hybrid breeding of the human and the artificial (or culturally enhanced). She defines nature as the foil for culture, "the zone of constraints, of the given, and of matter as resource; nature is the necessary raw material for human action, the field for the imposition of choice, and the corollary of mind" (102). The depiction

of Mexican (and Asian) bodies as naturally docile, malleable, and dexterous is part of this machinery to link bodies and the techno-power of progress as a mutually beneficial system in which the North's discipline and the South's malleability converge in perfect harmonized nature. This logic has been central to the implementation of maquila shop-floor logic, trade agreements, and development programs across Latin America. The reconfiguration of technology in the form of nature, as flexible, was also central to the re-spatializing of capital in the 1970s, when a U.S. recession and new developments in technology enabled corporations to move to off-shore sites as the new frontier for higher return on capital investments, flexible shop-floor strategies, and an abundant flow of cheap labor.

TRANSCENDING SOCIAL NORMS VIA INTERNET ROMANCE

In a similar fashion, women seeking a foreign husband described turning to the Internet for romance as a shift from local economies of desire (where local men were identified as macho, poor, and having dark skin) to global economies (where foreign men were imagined alongside the desire for tall, professional, and hard-working men). The fact that women place their faith in changing their lives via Internet exchanges with foreign U.S. men speaks to a shift in understanding the self in relation to global nodes of power. These women replicate problematic views of modernism by associating the local with the degraded space of stagnation (or being left behind) in comparison to the foreign space of cyber-interactions, where U.S. men represented future possibilities, the professional class, global capitalism, and scientific and technological progress.

Many women identify Internet romance as similar to the process of discovering one's true self, unobstructed by the disciplining eye of their families and social norms of behavior. During interviews with mostly middle-class women at the Guadalajara Tours about their use of e-mail correspondence to find a foreign husband, many older women described the streets and bars as unsafe places to find romance in contrast to the safe and controlled environment of the Internet. The Internet also proved to be an ideal place for less restrictive forms of courtship. While women's bodies are guarded and watched closely, the Internet affords them the opportunity to communicate or date multiple people and

to develop sexual intimacy in a society that heavily moralizes women's sexual activities outside of marriage. Because masculinity depends on expressions of independence and fraternity with other males, men are afforded much more liberty to frequent bars, clubs, and other social spaces. Blanca, a fifty-two-year-old divorced homemaker, explains how restricted she feels her movements are:

Right now I am very confined, I almost never go out. I go out once in a while into the street and they follow me, people speak to me, but I don't like to get to know people off the street because I think, I *think* that they think that I am easy, and I'm not easy, I'm not an easy kind of woman.

I asked her whether it was also difficult for women to meet people at bars. She says:

Well, look . . . another time I went out with some friends, only one time, we went out at night. It's not difficult, they had come up to me, but in reality they are people that are drinking, that think that if a woman goes to a bar . . . the men think that if one goes to a bar alone, she is looking for a sexual encounter. (Schaeffer-Grabel 2004: 43)

Meeting people in bars or in the streets is associated with those who drink excessively, are uneducated, and are from the working class, and more broadly, with unsafe spaces for the potential rape or spoiling of women's moral standing. I interviewed Blanca in her luxurious home set within a gated community within the tourist section of Guadalajara. As a single mother, she was able to raise her son (without any support from her ex-husband), send him to college, and pay for his education by working as a nanny in the United States and housing foreign students in her home in Mexico. She described this as very hard work and continues her search for a foreign husband who can provide her with the luxuries she is used to without the backbreaking labor.

Thus women's search for foreign men o-line or at the tours (held at five-star hotels away from the purview of others) speaks to women's desire to secure both their local and transnational movement through moral and middle- to upper-class forms of interaction and travel. Virtual travel and dating in cyberspace sets up the desire for mediated relationships and safe travel across borders that U.S. men afford Latinas in comparison to illegal migrants (or low-paid laborers) who slowly pass across

the desert under the dangerous gaze of border surveillance. Through the connective tissue of Internet communication and technologies of travel, women bypass the gaze of the state and are safely transported to the middle class of the United States. Women's mobility alongside the icons of modernity—technology, Western men, and marriage—also ensures that women cross the border and maintain or augment their class and social standing.

Many Latin American women also describe their search for love on the Internet as an enterprising activity that encourage their personal development (otherwise stunted by work or attention to family). They discover aspects of themselves—such as their fidelity and commitment to the family—to be highly valued and respected by U.S. men. Through Internet interactions with others outside the nation, they come to understand themselves and the world from a different perspective. U.S. films may provide an *apertura*,² or opening into different perspectives and worlds, but through the Internet, women envision themselves as actively narrating and altering their lives. Women's association with the United States as a meritocracy, a more open, fair, and democratic society, bleeds into their e-mail interaction with U.S. men in which open communication is the central component of the romantic interlude.

Both men and women share the desire for safe travel across borders. For men, however, this travel is imagined as moving through anachronistic time, while for women, they see their movement across virtual spaces and borders as travel into the modern future. While these men gain currency for their association with the mobile class, Latinas gain currency in electronic currents for their association with roots, their supposed grounding in a pure state of family cohesion before industrialization and capitalism. Women embody eroticized and domestic labor and more generally signify the frontier to new forms of global masculinity. Men imagine Latinas' bodies as signifying purity, family values, erotic sexuality, and spirituality that promise to rejuvenate men's ability to capitalize on natural resources of the global economy.

Technology as Pliable Subjectivity

The promise of Internet marketing that you will become someone new, or even to become the more "authentic you" unencumbered by the

body, resembles the ways women described turning to cosmetic surgery at the Cali Tours. Colombian women's use of surgery demonstrates new avenues for understanding the body in relation to scientific configurations of pliability, democracy, and mobility. At the Cali Tour, which takes place in a region with the highest black or *moreno* population (due to the region's history of African slave labor), there were many more darker-skinned and working-class women than there were at the Guadalajara Tours in Mexico. And unlike in Mexico, where tradition carried more symbolic cultural weight, many female participants at the Cali Tour were young and had undergone cosmetic surgery. Because of the different political and economic climates and the fact that these women had less frequent access to the Internet than women in Guadalajara, snatching a man at the tour was more urgent. Some proudly flaunted extreme breast implants, others had a combination of breast and butt implants, and still others had liposuction procedures. Celia, for example, was planning to have the fat sucked out of her stomach and transferred to her buttocks. I followed various couples on dates during and after the tour and spent the evening with them as the translator. I accompanied an African-American man, Seth (who is a taxicab driver in his mid-forties), and his Afro-Colombian date, Celia, to a restaurant that catered to tourists.³ During our meal together, Celia excitedly told us that she was going to have a liposuction procedure done, even though, as Seth reminded her, this was a dangerous surgery. Celia explained that she had saved up money for several months to afford the \$1,300 for the liposuction. She told us that her sister, who is now married to a man in the United States and has had a successful liposuction procedure, contributed to her decision. While Seth and I both told her that her body was perfect, she explained that while she liked her body, she wanted to improve it by thinning her stomach and fortifying her behind. She said, "If I have the opportunity to change something about my body, to improve myself, then I will. Just like Seth made the choice to come to Cali [to the tour], I also decided to improve my life by choosing to do the surgery. It's an investment in myself."⁴

Celia's desire, like that of many other women I interviewed, to invest in her body with the hopes of improving her chances of finding someone indicates how women use beauty for their own aspirations and to willingly transform themselves into marketable products of exchange.

Women described having to submit photos and physical descriptions with job applications. And women thirty or older complained they had a much harder time getting jobs and attracting foreign men who went after the young girls. Celia also participates in a well-worn development narrative that many men congratulate themselves about through their journey to Latin America: if you can change your life, you should, and if you don't, you deserve the consequences that await you. Modern states encourage a citizenry organized around self-help, or what Foucault labels "self-cultivation" because it shifts the gaze from larger social critique (revolution) and the state to the self. Working on the body is equated with the embrace of an entrepreneurial spirit where women's bodies become the object of self-improvement, self-help, and the promise of a democratic future. Hard work on oneself is equated with one's entrance into modern subjectivity and citizenship where one can become transformed into the image and lifestyle she desires. In Cali, any reliance on the state—as a corrupt and violent force—has shifted to the arena of science, new technologies, the marketplace, consumption (rather than production), and individuals as the arena for change and mobility.

For Celia, her soft voice, graceful gestures (reminiscent of women groomed for beauty pageants), and desire for an enlarged behind articulated a complex desire for a more pliable construction of identity, ethnicity, and sexuality that had both local and global currency, that situated her subjectivity as both embodied and translatable in a broader context. Depending on the spaces and social situations, she could rework the meanings of her race and class. Because the tours are held at expensive hotels with men searching for "high-quality" women (and the class implications that accompany their desire for "quality"), women must upgrade their bodies to blend into these tourist zones so they are not mistaken for prostitutes or "green card sharks." Yet at the same time, women garner currency in their local context and with foreign men for the embodied signs of authentic difference and hypersexuality. Perhaps influenced by beauty pageant culture where women are groomed for respectable femininity, Celia alters her body in ways that confound the boundaries between sex work and marriage, increasing the visible markers of class, ethnic capital, and sexual appeal toward the goal of mobility locally and/or across borders.

Women's sense of their bodies as a pliable commodity is also a response to the foreign male's, and especially African-American men's, erotic desire for large buttocks and a curvy physique. Unlike the tours in Mexico where the majority of men were white and Latino, 20 percent of the men at the Cali Tour were African Americans (including two from Europe). For Afro-Colombian women, emphasizing their physique may be more than mere conformity to the demands of the tourist market and patriarchal desire; it is also a chance to pleasurably accentuate characteristics (such as large butts) that have been degraded by mainstream notions of ideal beauty in Colombia characterized by whiteness, straight hair, and large breasts. Accustomed to being scrutinized on the grounds of physical beauty, these women capitalize on new cosmetic technologies and foreign configurations of desire to display their motivation and self-enterprising spirit in the face of limited opportunities for jobs, travel, and mobility at home.

What we witness in these notions of self is the sleight of hand from the alteration of the outer signs of the body to its meaning for the interiority of the self. For those transgendered subjects Allucqu re Stone (2000) argues are the natural occupants of cyberspace, electronic and textual morphing of the body belies the harsh reality that prosthetic alterations by transgendered prostitutes speaks to. The association of flexibility with transgression violently erases bodies that cannot escape the hegemonic readings visible on their bodies. Such is the case for transgendered subjects whose labor resides squarely in their bodies, evident in the self-narratives by Brazilian prostitutes who inject silicone into erotic zones of the body such as the hips and butt as a means of increasing the return on their sexual labor (Kulick 1998). The use of technologies for many subjects of the global South are relegated to the increased marketability of the body, which then reinscribes race, class, and sexual differences rather than enable their transcendence.

The prevalence of "choice" as a central tenet of neoliberal market values and individualism corresponds with recent constructions of the body as pliable via popular discourses of technology, science, and genetics. These new discourses and uses of technology and pliability continue the propaganda of neocolonialism but also offer the possibility of providing Latin American women a decolonial strategy for portraying themselves as ideal global citizens with superior reproductive and

moral characteristics. The dangers of pliable subjectivity via technology and science have to do with the conflation of a consumer ethic and gene mapping that are marketed as socially beneficial not only for the ridding of diseases but also for offering people the flexibility not only to *be* themselves but to *produce* themselves, to alter the inner and outer reproduction of the self. It is worth recalling here that early cosmetic surgery was critical in erasing the markers of disease such as leprosy, enabling subjects to pass as able-bodied and free of disease. In this contemporary case, cosmetic surgery masks the violence and harsh economic conditions of everyday life in Cali from women's bodies. Similarly, the body as a malleable resource can serve as the raw material for making oneself into a more appropriate citizen in which the skin stretches its meaning across global space.

Technology offers a model of living that empowers the individual to act out against tradition and fate and to alter one's future. This is the discourse at work for women from Mexico and Colombia who see their turn to technology and foreign culture as complicit with modern notions of the self in charge of, rather than at the mercy of, their fate. For some women from Cali, cosmetic surgery enables them to augment their body capital and chances of advancement in foreign romance or to enter into a variety of labor markets. For women and men who do not choose to improve their chances of romance or personal uplift, this refusal to help oneself is equated with a character flaw, or with lack of motivation, initiative, and unwillingness to change.

It is also apparent that a new language of privilege and modernity is being articulated through cosmetic alterations. It is through one's adherence to the norms of heterosexual femininity and male desire inscribed onto the body, rather than skin color, that the body has become the new language of global ascendancy. Cosmetic advances rearticulate long-enduring colonial legacies of racial difference as biologically based to one that is pliable, "democratically" available, and reliant on innovative technologies. Being civilized is equated with technologies of self-cultivation, working hard, taking risks, and jumping at opportunities that come your way. This is directly related to the role of U.S. state immigration in discouraging citizenship to those who may become a public charge, in other words, accepting only those whose enterprising spirit will contribute to the surplus labor of the nation.

CONCLUSION

Internet dating and marriage across the Americas reveals tensions in the debate over how subjects use technology to become part of the visible machinery of global mobility. Chicana/Latina scholarship is often left out of the debate on globalization that has tended to focus on the cosmopolitan subjects of flows rather than those whose bodies disrupt the gears of technologies that promise flexibility and mobility. The understanding that a flexible sense of self is expressed in the departure from the body and geography is entangled in neoliberalism and a post-body utopia of liberal individualism.

Technological representations celebrating flexible identities elide the uneven access bodies have to flows, yet also generate new gendered tactics. Women turn to foreign men for a better life but must confront the realities that their movement as spouses across borders may not ensure equal rights as citizens without the fear of discrimination or estrangement from the benefits of belonging. I have demonstrated the ways technological embodiments of the self render insidious the narrative of development. Instead, values of rugged individualism take on new forms as the unsuccessful bodies of late capitalism are defined by their need for technological uplift or as subjects who lack initiative. For women who choose to genetically enhance their bodies, improving the self through contact with modern technology and foreign culture offers a model of the ideal citizen whose worth can be exchanged for a higher value in the transnational marketplace. If we are to follow the flows of power across borders, then we are in more dire need of a critical "post-national" American studies paradigm that interrogates the continued influence of Western individualism and hides the uneven consequences of flexible citizenship for diasporic Latina/o populations on both sides of the border.

NOTES

1. These tours are usually three-day social events held at five-star hotels where couples meet one another. Men usually pay from \$500 to \$1,000 for the event (not including their travel expenses), while women are often invited free of charge.

2. The Spanish term *apertura* usually refers to a historical moment when Mexico's economy opened up to foreign trade and business. I use the term to bridge the economic, social, and cultural opening of Mexico through globalization.

3. They both knew I was a researcher writing a book on the matchmaking-marriage industry, and as such I did not charge for my translating services, although Seth paid for my meal and offered me a "tip" at the end of a long night.

4. Other women I spoke to similarly described their oftentimes multiple surgery procedures as an investment in themselves, careers, and their futures.

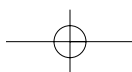
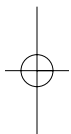
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II**SEGMENTATION, MIGRATION, AND
RECIPROCITIES****Cultural Policy and the Growth of Spanish-Language
Media in the United States***Mari Castañeda*

Scholarship examining cultural and media policy in the United States has largely focused on English-language forms of cultural production. This may in part be due to the fact that Spanish-language media is commonly examined as part of Mexican and Latin American media, and thus policy analysis is done in relation to countries located south of the border. Although a large portion of the programming is certainly from Latin American companies, Spanish-language media must be analyzed within the United States context of media policy in order to understand how American broadcast policies have shaped the development and expansion of the industry. The political economy of communication has especially emphasized the role of policy in the creation of cultural industries, but scholars in this tradition have underestimated the importance of Spanish-language media within U.S. broadcast policy and the broader political economy of telecommunications.

The influence of immigration in the development of cultural and media policy in the United States has also been understudied. In large part, communication policy is viewed as a set of objective rules that help organize and safeguard the infrastructure that supports the channels of discursive and trade circulation. Major demographic shifts of immigration patterns are not considered important factors in the development

of media policy in the United States, since the telecommunications regulatory regime is “seen in essentially administrative and legalistic terms” (Schiller 1999: 139). Thus, policymakers regard media regulation as existing outside of cultural policy as well as broader political and economic processes that are not directly related to the maintenance of the telecommunications infrastructure.

Yet Miller and Yúdice argue that “issues of migration and citizenship were critical to the relationship of government and art” from the very beginning of the formation of the United States (2002: 119). Geopolitical exchanges, challenges to conquest and colonization, and the segmentation of markets have deeply influenced the processes of media policymaking in the United States, and thus the conditions of (im)migration as well as transcultural political economy are particularly important in the study of Spanish-language media. Miller and Yúdice further contend that the early twentieth century marked a shift in the United States in which the government, along with private corporations and nonprofit organizations, utilized domestic and foreign cultural policy “in order to manage political and economic matters in ways that did not appear to be coercive” (2002: 39). By using cultural spaces as pressure points, emerging policies not only affected the traditional fields of public art, museums, music, and print materials in the United States and abroad, but increasingly, the omnipresent landscape of electronic media became a critical space for modernization.

Although the U.S. government claims that unlike countries in Latin America or Europe, it has rarely created cultural policy especially for broadcasting, both the historical and contemporary record show that in fact, the state has had an important role in culture, including the growth of Spanish-language media. Miller and Yúdice note that in the early 1960s, during UNESCO’s Monaco Round Table on Cultural Policies, there was “a profound American commitment to keeping the state separate from production and restriction of meaning, notably evident in the free-speech guarantees of the First Amendment to the Constitution, [and] . . . the Federal Government purportedly decline[d] to elevate, discriminate, or even differentiate artistically” (2002: 35). In an effort to begin investigating the historical record of Spanish-language media in the United States, this chapter reviews the contentious origins of Spanish-language broadcasting and the ways in which regulatory changes

continue to restructure the industry and help produce a de facto cultural policy that is furthering the commercial segmentation of Latina/o communities as well as the marketization of a globalized Latinidad. Ultimately, as a cultural institution, Spanish-language broadcasting is the byproduct of U.S. cultural policy along with the cultural practices of Latina/os. The next section reviews the origins of Spanish-language broadcasting further.

ORIGINS OF BROADCASTING EN ESPAÑOL

The genealogy of Spanish-language media in the United States is intimately linked to the transnational movement of people from Mexico, Latin America, and the Caribbean, and the corporate conceptualization of Latinas/os as viable consumers (Rodriguez 1999). The development and consumption of immigrant-oriented media outlets, particularly broadcasting and print, were linked to the transnational strategies utilized by immigrants in order to adjust to the Anglo-dominated, English-language world of the United States.

Rodriguez notes that programmers, many of whom leased airtime from English-language stations, took into account “the perceived needs of their audiences [and] often assumed the informational and political advocacy role more commonly associated with immigrant print journalists of the period” (1999: 29). Spanish-language radio producers would often mix music and live performances with updates and information about employment, public services, and local as well as international news. For many immigrants, Spanish-language radio played an important role in staying connected with *la madre patria* while also socializing them to the U.S. economic, political, and cultural landscape.

This socialization process, however, was also about advocacy. In Los Angeles during the 1930s, Spanish-language radio programmers advocated for and defended their Spanish-speaking, largely immigrant audiences. This wasn’t without controversy. Throughout the West and Southwest, political forces pressured radio stations to restrict their foreign-language programming, especially Spanish-language programs, and developed media policies which made it more difficult to license ethnic-oriented broadcasting. Rodriguez (1999) argues that although

radio stations promoted Spanish-language programming blocs in order to attract Spanish-speaking listeners, there was also a real fear about the social and political role of Spanish-language media in Latina/o immigrant communities. Government officials, such as those in Los Angeles, supported the prohibition of Spanish on the airwaves and attempted to dismiss the political and cultural contributions of Spanish-speaking communities. As a result, many Spanish-language radio programmers “moved their operations to the Mexican side of the border, out of the reach of U.S. authorities” (Rodriguez 1999: 29).

Thirty years later, Spanish-language television emerged in the United States as more Latinos migrated north of the border and immigration policies began to accommodate the family networks of immigrants as well as the employment needs of the country (Chavez 2001). The immigration reform of the 1960s encouraged the resettlement of refugees and undocumented immigrants, and Mexicans and Cubans in particular constituted the bulk of the immigrants resettling in the United States. According to Chavez, the large influx of Latin American as well as Asian immigrants after this period was the result of a “preference system” established by the 1965 immigration law which abolished national origins quotas and instituted a structure that privileged family unification and exceptional professional expertise. Between 1961 and 1980, immigrants accounted for 34 percent of U.S. population growth. For Televisa, the largest Spanish-language media conglomerate in Latin America at the time, “the U.S. market was an obvious and potentially lucrative arena. Televisa was producing profits in Mexico; a U.S. subsidiary would redouble those profits” (Rodriguez 1999: 36).

Univision, the largest Spanish-language television network in the United States, began as SIN, the Spanish International Network, in the early 1960s. The Azcárraga family exploited Televisa’s capital and resources in order to expand the franchise beyond the northern Mexican border through SIN. With two broadcast stations, one in Los Angeles and another in San Antonio, and the creative use of cutting-edge broadcast technology, Televisa sought to create a Spanish-language television network that would eventually extend across the United States.

According to Rodriguez, “the vertical integration of Emilio Azcárraga’s transnational entertainment conglomerate gave tremendous economic advantages to early U.S. Spanish language television” (1999: 36).

With thousands of hours of Mexican programming in its possession, Televisa was able to create a media outlet that was both entertaining and linguistically accessible to Latina/o communities in the United States. This was important since Spanish-language television was conceived not only as an extension of Televisa but also as an apparatus for commercially targeting a growing Spanish-speaking population. Unlike local broadcast radio, SIN was developed with the intention to create a national distribution system that would construct a distinctly transnational U.S. Spanish-language television audience. Although local news and information were sporadically included in the largely Mexican-influenced programming, the commercially oriented Spanish International Network aimed to create a marketing system that linked Latinos into a seemingly cohesive consumer market.

The development of Spanish-language television in the United States was thus a capitalist drive to develop new markets with cheaper materials and labor. According to Gandy, "the speed with which the commercial imperative has come to dominate the process of cultural reproduction has consequences for the ways in which the media can be relied upon to serve an ideological role within the context of racial projects" (1998: 99). In the case of Spanish-language television, the system has largely worked to sell Latina/o audiences to regional and national marketers without necessarily serving the informational needs of local communities. Yet Spanish-language broadcasters, particularly local radio, has done a much better job of serving Latina/o communities in the United States than have their English-language counterparts. Consequently, the capitalist drive to develop new (cultural and linguistic) markets in the United States has been strained by debates over the role of media outlets in local communities and a desire to develop reciprocity between communities and ethnic media. However, as the Spanish-language media market, and broadcasting in particular, becomes an integral part of media globalization, regulatory policies are being employed in order to expand the market prospects of the industry and likewise, diminish its public-interest foundation. The implications of such a shift are many, but the most important is the creation of a globalized Latinidad that privileges consumption rather than citizenship and as a result, limits the ability of Latina/o communities to utilize Spanish-language media for political, economic, and cultural empowerment. The

following section discusses the impact of deregulation on Spanish-language broadcasting since the Telecommunications Act of 1996 and the ways in which regulatory actions are the state's attempt to influence electronic culture for Latina/os in the United States and abroad.

DEREGULATION AND THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE INDUSTRY

Since the passage of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, the U.S. media landscape has undergone vast transformation. By eliminating ownership caps and cross-ownership rules, Congress, as Paredes (2003b) notes, overhauled broadcast regulation, allowing media companies to own multiple radio and television stations in the same market. Although the relaxation of broadcast rules has deeply affected the English-language media industry in terms of ownership, programming, and employment, it has also permitted companies to invest more capital in Spanish-language broadcasting. As a result, many communities with emerging Latina/o populations are now experiencing a boom in Spanish-language media outlets (Paredes 2003b).

In cities like Charleston, North Carolina, and Walla Walla, Washington, Spanish-language media outlets are now becoming part of the community landscape. Spanish-language radio stations, television affiliates, and an array of publications are increasingly available to consumers, which was unheard of less than ten years ago in those markets although they were growing elsewhere in the United States (Castañeda 2001). Washington, D.C., for instance, has been transformed into a mid-level Spanish-language market. The changes in the city are apparent by the rise in Spanish-language advertising, particularly on buses and highway billboards. Only a generation ago, communities like D.C. and Walla Walla with slowly emerging Latina/o communities did not have local or national Spanish-language media offerings. With the boom in population signaling a demographic shift, marketing imperatives have expanded in the effort to attract the largest minority group in the United States. Not only are rising immigration rates making Spanish-language media an important component in strategic advertising and marketing campaigns, but the bilingual reality of many second- and third-generation Latina/os

also reinforces the benefits of utilizing Spanish-language media outlets to attract potential consumers (Ward 2001).

Although the ever-growing Spanish-language media industry is today regarded as a critical component in the production of any successful advertising and marketing campaign, the effects of media deregulation have not been entirely positive for the industry. Similar to the English-language media industry, Spanish-language media has also experienced consolidation and concentration. Fewer and fewer hands are controlling and managing media outlets. This is especially problematic in the Spanish-language context since the industry is still limited and under-sized compared to its English-language counterpart (Ward 2001).

Compared to the English-language sector, which has 1,600 television stations, 8,000 radio stations, and countless publications, the Spanish-language sector has approximately 200 television stations, 600 radio stations, and limited amounts of Spanish-language and Latina/o-oriented publications. Although Spanish-language media has plenty of space to grow, its limited size also illustrates why the concentration of media in this sector is extremely problematic. The sector, while growing, is still quite small compared to its English-language counterpart. If a monopoly or oligopoly paradigm is allowed to exist in the Spanish-language context, then this has the potential to severely limit ownership and programming diversity. Government regulators and Univision, the largest Spanish-language television network in the United States, have argued that Spanish-language media is simply a niche that, similar to the Travel Channel on television or the jazz station on FM radio, is competing for viewers in the general market (Beard and Demitri 2003). Spanish-language media is not its own market but rather a specialized programming niche. The acceptance of this argument allowed federal regulators to approve the merger between Univisión and the Hispanic Broadcasting Company (HBC). The combined assets of these two companies have created a gigantic corporate powerhouse not only in Spanish-language media but also within the English-language landscape (Grover 2004).

Both the relaxation of broadcast rules through the Telecommunications Act of 1996 and the regulatory approval of the merger between Univisión and HBC are policies that are having and will continue to have a cultural, economic, and political impact on the sector. These forms of cultural policy are indeed reconstituting the industry in interesting and

problematic ways. Communication policy scholars, small-market media outlets, and Latina/o consumers have critiqued the merger and its potential to curtail localism and the emergence of a dynamic Latina/o media industry (Paredes 2003a). According to Alejandro Carrasco, owner of WACA-AM in Wheaton, “the consolidation is crazy. It is not good for minorities. We will end up losing that touch with reality that is important for the community” (Ahrens and Williams 2003: A1).

In the radio industry, local and politically oriented musical artists are especially feeling the pressure toward homogeneity that is being produced by media concentration. Paredes notes that although there are more radio outlets in the United States, many of them fall under recognizable program niches such as Mexican regional, tropical ballads, and pop rock (Paredes 2003b). There are only about seventy-five songs that have a regular rotation on broadcast radio, although there are thousands of songs available in Mexico, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Much of the contemporary music heard over the U.S. airwaves is now produced in Miami by an expatriate group of media executives who are much more interested in cultivating a depoliticized Latina/o audience that advertisers and marketers can view as nonthreatening (Paredes 2003b). As a consequence, commercial Spanish-language media programming will not necessarily inspire audiences to question the status quo, and the same can be said of English-language media in the United States (McChesney 2000).

In some cases, it is not the musical content but the country of origin that is the problem. It is very difficult for Cuban musical artists, for instance, to attain airtime because of the U.S. embargo against one of the last remaining Communist countries. In this instance, the Miami-based expatriate executives also work as gatekeepers and restrict the music from Cuba since they oppose Fidel Castro. Yet music isn't the only content being affected. News and information programming are also being constrained in the wake of changing cultural policy and media regulation. Once more, Miami is an important site for examining how communications deregulation and concentration are influencing the kinds of content available to listeners (Miller and Yudice 2002). In an effort to streamline programming, companies with several Spanish-language radio stations in Miami have replaced politically oriented content with conventional entertainment formats. Listeners, however, protested and

broadcasters received the message that radio is an important media outlet for Latina/o communities.

While the post-Telecommunications Act of 1996 environment has increased the number of Spanish-language media outlets, particularly in the radio industry, it has produced some problematic results. Not only have audiences and independent owners protested the increased amount of watered-down homogenous programming, but they've also criticized the rapidly shrinking world of Spanish-language media ownership. Many opposed the merger between Univision and HBC because the new conglomerate would control the lion's share of the Spanish-language broadcasting market. The Univision-HBC combination currently dominates 85 percent of the Spanish-language and bilingual broadcast markets and operates the highest grossing publications.

The problem with the merger is the fact that Spanish-language media is a relatively small market compared to its English-language counterpart. Although the sector is growing, Spanish-language media's \$9 billion in advertising profits is undersized compared to the \$100 billion in profits that U.S. English-language media produces. In addition to the marketing (racial) bias against Latina/o media, there are also fewer outlets. Media concentration thus compromises diversity because there are fewer owners, an increased amount of nationally syndicated programming, and lesser amounts of locally oriented content. The decline of diversity thus influences the endeavor to create and market a globalized *Latinidad*, which the next section will discuss.

MARKETING A GLOBALIZED LATINIDAD

The role of policy in the reconstitution of the industry is indeed having explicit, and implicit, cultural and political consequences within and outside Spanish-language media. Not only does conglomeration further exacerbate the already problematic monopolistic and anticompetitive practices of Univisión, but this particular transnational corporation also aims to promote a globalized and pan-ethnic *Latinidad*. This brand of "Latin-ness" is one that tends to erase the histories and struggles that each distinct Latina/o cultural group has faced. Although there are many similarities between Latina/o cultural groups, there are sociohistorical distinctions that

are often glazed over in the effort to produce a coherent Latina/o consumer identity (Paredes 2001).

According to advertising executives, it's difficult and expensive to develop specific Spanish-language advertisements that target particular groups in regional areas. Rather, companies are more interested in developing a marketable globalized Latinidad that can be exported to other media systems in South America and beyond. One of the first things that marketers have done is to standardize Spanish in order to use language more efficiently and effectively in global advertising campaigns. Dávila notes that marketers have traditionally viewed the Spanish-language and Latina/o consumer markets as homogenous, although clearly they are not. Although the presence of ethnic and Latina/o advertising agencies has increased awareness of diversity within the market, the quest for the bottom line has made it very difficult to develop multiple campaigns that directly target specific cultural and ethnic groups. Consequently, the development of a commercially viable *lenguaje en español* has become critical in the marketization of a globalized Latinidad.

Not only is the globalization of Latinidad important for attracting consumers in the United States, but the creation of a globalized Latina/o culture also facilitates the international trade of Latina/o (media) products. Creating a consistent image of Latinidad allows non-Latina/o consumers to become comfortable with imported products from Latin America, Mexico, and the Caribbean. As U.S. companies increasingly invest in products, services, and industries geared toward Latina/os, these companies are also searching for ways to cross over into the U.S. mainstream and international markets. Although Spanish-language television programming has traditionally boasted a Mexican orientation, producers are seeking to extend the representation of Latina/os in order to reach as many people as possible, even non-Latinos in both the United States and abroad. Thus far, the strategy has worked particularly well in advertising, in large part because marketers have "champion[ed] pan-Hispanic culture and traditions" in order to neutralize the sensation that one particular ethnic group is being pursued commercially (Morales 2004: 28–29).

Increasingly, marketers and programmers alike are viewing the Latina/o market as existing beyond the United States and even south of the border. As more people from South America immigrate to the United

States, but more importantly, to other countries such as Canada, Spain, England, Switzerland, Italy, and France, and consequently, more non-Latinos becoming fascinated with the “Latino style,” media executives are viewing the Latina/o media market as a hemispheric and worldwide phenomena. With advanced information and media technology fostering the rapid transmission of content across international borders, corporations are thus exploiting the opportunity to diversify, expand, and market a globalized Latinidad that more profitably reaches a broader audience.

It is no coincidence that the movement toward globalization is also occurring during an era in which free-trade agreements are becoming important tools for public policy that are shaping the market and culture in significant ways. The 1994 passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement opened the floodgates for greater trade exchanges within and across the Americas and inspired subsequent trade agreements such as MERCOCUR and the Free Trade of the Americas. Although U.S. Latina/o media were not explicitly discussed in these agreements, the push for greater liberalization within the cultural industries was indeed viewed as an important step toward creating not only a framework for accelerating cross-border trade but also a hemispheric trading bloc that would compete with those in Europe and Asia.

The creation of a globalized Latinidad embodies more than simply attracting the various ethnic and cultural groups within the United States. It is an attempt to create a “hemispheric brand” that can be marketed alongside the other more popular brand, the U.S.A. With the U.S.A. brand under tremendous flux, the creation of a globalized Latinidad actually expands the former by linking the American brand to the fastest growing population on the continent and thus, to the community that will most influence the United States in the future. Consequently, as Dávila notes, “Spanish-language media and the importation of Latin American programming [are] at the center in the transnationalization of Latinidad beyond U.S. borders” (2001: 157).

CONCLUSION

This chapter attempts to raise more questions than to provide a definitive rationalization of the growth of Spanish-language media in the

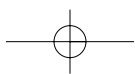
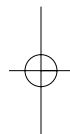
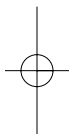
United States. It aims to show how community debates over media resources have influenced the development of Spanish-language media and the ways in which regulatory action have become de facto cultural policies. The chapter also hopes to demonstrate how the recent changes to telecommunications regulation are affecting the industry and bolstering the creation of a globalized Latinidad. Ultimately, any study of Spanish-language media has to examine the larger political economy and historical context in which the industry is functioning, but it must also contend with the very real ways in which the state is helping develop nonthreatening forms of Spanish-language media and Latinidad. By emphasizing the commercial rather than political, the state and the market are able to more successfully “reorient the social purpose of any media, [and] substantially [affect the] organization, content, and relationships with audiences” (Schiller 2000: 124). This is the moment for media and Latina/o studies scholars to critically examine the transcultural political and economic components of Spanish-language media and its contentious involvement with formulations of Latinidad as a culture, a movement, and a marketing strategy. Perhaps this will lead some of us to develop alternative media outlets that better serve the community rather than exploit it.

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SALSA DANCE PERFORMANCELatina/o History in Motion¹*Priscilla Renta*²**SALSA DANCE: A SPACE OF ITS OWN**

Although much has been written on the manner in which Latina/os utilize salsa music to construct and affirm an individual and collective sense of cultural identity—particularly as a form of resistance to assimilation into dominant culture—little has been produced in terms of movement practices, dance techniques, gestures, aesthetics, pleasure, and the body.³ The scarcity of work on the dancing body in relation to salsa functions within a larger, overarching issue concerning the marginalization of dance scholarship across disciplines such as cultural studies and anthropology (see Desmond 1997: 33–35, 60 Kealiinohomoku 1996: 17). Yet salsa dance and music, like their Afro-Caribbean beginnings, are inextricably tied, each existing as a consequence of the other. For instance, the transcultural predecessors of salsa such as “the [Afro-Cuban] *danzón* evolved into the mambo and the cha-cha-chá, [both considered] dance rhythms . . . the name cha-cha-chá came from the sound produced by the dancers’ sliding feet” (Gerard and Sheller 1998: 82). In the rumba and the Afro-Puerto Rican *bomba*, also ancestors of salsa, “the highest drum . . . responds to the movements of the dancers” (Gerard and Sheller 1998: 82).⁴ Similarly, Vernon Boggs, who

compiled the anthology *Salsiology: Afro-Cuban Music and the Evolution of Salsa in New York City*, calls salsa “the popular dance music of the moment” (1992: 225).⁵ It is precisely because of this close relationship that the dance and music often share the same spaces—in other words, living rooms at home, street festivals, nightclubs, and stages. It is perhaps also for this very reason that the dance and music are often spoken about interchangeably. Yet salsa dance is worthy of more thorough investigation in a space of its own, while still honoring its inseparable connection to its musical form.

Further, in U.S. mainstream media, salsa dance and music are typically stripped of their cultural politics for mass consumption, despite the colonial and imperialist heritage from which they emerge. This paper historicizes salsa dancing with the aim of providing more multifaceted representation. I also share the interest of Celeste Fraser Delgado and José Muñoz in examining “dance as a privileged site in the production of cultural identities, national boundaries, and subversive practice,” that is, the “historical and potential function of dance in social struggle in Latin/o America” (1997: 4). However, where there is resistance, there is also compliance.

This work also seeks to articulate how the codification and professionalization of salsa dance in New York represents a transcultural negotiation between both resistance and acceptance/compliance with dominant culture. In this sense, I am in agreement with Karen Mary Davalos with regard to Mexican and Mexican-American art when she writes: “Mestizaje is both an expression of cultural affirmation and self-determination and a result of domination. It is the combination of these expressions that gives rise to the hybrid forms that are not ‘co-opted’ or ‘authentic’” (2001: 523). The same can be said about salsa dancing practices, which are currently being packaged and sold for and by Latina/os and non-Latina/os alike: they are neither wholly authentic nor entirely co-opted. But they are worthy of examination because it is within this struggle that many salsa-dancing Latina/os find themselves.

By addressing such issues, this project aims to present a case for the inclusion of the salsa-dancing body in the fields of salsa scholarship and Puerto Rican and Latina/o studies, as well as dance scholarship, performance studies/theory, the broader field of anthropology (which also informs these disciplines), postcolonial studies, and popular culture.

METHOD

The lack of documentation on salsa dance, in contrast to the increased amount of scholarship on salsa music, necessitates a focus on what Ana Ramos-Zayas calls “grassroots historiography” (2003: 5). By engaging in salsa dancing, teaching, and performing myself, I am involved in what Dwight Conquergood calls “co-performative witnessing,” a form of performative rather than strictly informative ethnography that moves beyond participant observation. As a practitioner of salsa dance, which is how I began this work, my research draws from a variety of sources, including experiences, conversations, informal and formal interviews with fellow salsa dancers, performers, and instructors in New York (1996–present), which involves my time taking classes at the Eddie Torres Latin Dance Studio, as well as dancing and performing with the Eddie Torres Latin Dance Company (1997–1999), and my experience with salsa dance in various Latina/o nightclubs and other social events. Added to this is the work I have done since then as a salsa dancer and instructor in various organizations, including the Dance Manhattan ballroom dance studio, colleges and universities, public schools, nonprofit organizations, fitness facilities, and corporate functions. I also utilize articles, films, and books on salsa music and the theoretical frameworks provided by dance scholarship, ethnography, and performance studies.

In addition, this work may seem overly political, given the popular perception of salsa dancing as a seemingly benign pleasure. This may indeed be the case, as it is informed largely by my own subjectivity as a Puerto Rican woman who became a salsa dancer while working in the white-male-dominated financial industry—an intensely political experience for me. Dancing, performing, and writing have been my own tools of resistance, both consciously and unconsciously. My transition into the academy has been an exercise in gaining greater power, freedom, and self-determination. For me, salsa dancing, the movement and writing of it, is both politics and pleasure.

SALSA DANCE PERFORMANCE AND THE PERFORMANCE OF LATINA/O IDENTITY

Puerto Ricans and other Latina/os in the United States often employ salsa dance performance (in many cases, along with language and music)

to construct and affirm an individual and collective sense of cultural identity (see Concepción, 2003: 171–172). For Latina/os, the need to affirm their cultural identity grows in part out of their diaspora experience, which brings with it the pressure of assimilating and of being subsumed and homogenized by the Euro-American culture that dominates U.S. mainstream society. This occurs within the social position of marginality that reflects the larger asymmetrical power relations inherent in U.S. imperialism and colonialism. Michel Foucault asserts: “Where there is power, there is resistance” (1978: 95). Within the scheme of inequality, Latina/o cultural affirmation vis-à-vis salsa dance possesses a kind of counter-hegemonic potential that involves the body and accompanies the same often-stated potential in the music.

Although many scholars have given the affirmation of Latina/o identity vis-à-vis salsa music preference over dance, feminist salsa scholar Frances Aparicio has been one of the few to acknowledge the relevance and importance of movement within this phenomenon. She asserts:

Dancing (el baile) is another act of acquiring knowledge and self-knowledge . . . For the masses and for working class communities, it is something they can truly call their own . . . composing, performing, and dancing to Salsa differentiates the Latino from the rest of North American society .(1989–1990: 55)

As such, if we are also to take Michel Foucault’s idea that knowledge equals power into consideration, Aparicio’s comment can be expanded to suggest that the knowledge employed by the Latina/o salsa-dancing body in relation to identity is an act not only of resistance but also of power.

In contrast, dance scholar Karen Backstein charges Aparicio with ignoring the “physiology of the dance” (2001: 455) in her assertion that Latina/o identification with salsa has a political component in comparison to the exoticism and “fetishizing” that Aparicio also states she has noticed in some Anglos interested in the dance (Aparicio 1998: 99).⁶ Further, Backstein asserts that Aparicio treats salsa, “both musically and physically” as “a purely intellectual and political concept—one that seems to ignore other statements by her Latino subjects . . . and the functional history of movements” (2001: 455–456). Yet Backstein’s con-

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tention does not seem to take into account the unequal power relations between Latina/os and Euro-Americans in U.S. society and how that may translate into unique and distinct experiences based on their differing social positions. While I agree with Backstein that the physiology of the dance is of extreme importance regardless of who is performing it, it is not mutually exclusive from the Latina/o identity politics described by Aparicio.

For many Latina/os, the cultural and political value of salsa dance with regard to the construction and performance of identity is often made tangible (consciously and/or unconsciously) through movement in connection to music both individually and collectively.⁷ The intentions behind Latina/o performance of salsa dance in its social and staged contexts are multiple and vary from person to person. For example, some men assert that the desire to meet (more) women is an important motivator. However, many Latina/o salsa dancers in the New York-based community I highlight here also assert that it is the kinesthetic and visual pleasure of the movement—in relation to the auditory enjoyment of the music—that is among the most significant of motivators aside (although not exclusive) from cultural affirmation. The response to whether or not salsa dancing is a form of cultural affirmation is sometimes met with nonchalance, as it seems to be a given that rarely comes into question. With regard to the political potential of pleasure, John Fiske asserts:

[The] right to enjoy popular pleasures may not in itself change the system that subjugates . . . but it does preserve areas of life and meaning of experience that are opposed to normal disciplined existence. They are oppositional pleasures, and insofar as they maintain the cultural territory of the people against the imperialism of the power-bloc, they are resistant. (1990: 54)

While some scholars have treated resistance and pleasure as being mutually exclusive, Fiske views them as going hand in hand. José Muñoz and Celeste Fraser Delgado also position their work against the dichotomy between pleasure and resistance. Drawing from the work of these theorists, we see that Latina/o performance of salsa dance can often fall within the scope of what Delgado and Muñoz call “identity-affirming

pleasures" (1997: 21), albeit not exclusively. In this sense, salsa dance also has the potential to function in opposition to the pressures of assimilating into Euro-American culture, which dominates U.S. society. However, despite the unique power and meaning salsa dance and music may have for many Latina/os, the genre is typically represented as apolitical and ahistorical in U.S. mainstream media and culture. At the same time, however, salsa dance is rooted in resistance to assimilation, subjugation and deculturation. It is a transcultural phenomenon that has been negotiating between subjugated dance practices dating back to its colonial history in the Caribbean and Latin America.

Performance studies scholar Diana Taylor suggests that both the theory of transculturation and the social process it represents also bare counter-hegemonic potential (1991: 64, 66). Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz coined the concept of transculturation in the 1940s as an alternative to the term *acculturation* that was beginning to take hold in anthropology and sociology.⁸ Ortiz took the idea of acculturation to actually mean assimilation (Spitta 1997: 161). As such, this Latin American theory positions itself against what Silvia Spitta refers to as a "one-way imposition of the culture of the colonizers" in order to "undermine the homogenizing impact implicit in the term acculturation" (1997: 161). The theory of transculturation also denotes a process that, according to Ortiz himself, "necessarily involves the loss or uprooting of a previous culture, which could be defined as deculturation . . . [and] carries the idea of the consequent creation of a new cultural phenomena" (1970: 102–103). Salsa dance is this type of "new" cultural phenomenon. However, Spitta adds that "the 'new' culture is never achieved," that "it is forever deferred and forever in the making" (1997: 161). Such is the case for the transcultural expressions of salsa dance and music in relation to Latina/o identity.

Juan Flores theorizes Latina/os in the United States as an imagined community, referencing Benedict Anderson as having developed the term from a sociological perspective. Flores also addresses the multiplicity of Latina/o identity as opposed to its homogenized commodification and representation by U.S. culture. As such, the unifying concept called Latina/o, according to Flores, may "obscure more than it reveals." Ultimately, however, Flores asserts that the "Latino imaginary" contributes to "a greater sense of autonomy and self-referentiality that finds

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vibrant expression through visual arts (including murals), poetry, theater, music and dance” (2000: 202–203). Salsa dance is among these expressions that allow us to examine what can be both liberating and limiting about asserting both an individual as well as a seemingly unified and collective Latina/o identity.

Since the umbrella term *Latina/o* encompasses so many different cultures from Latin America, the Caribbean, and the United States., neither Latina/o identity nor salsa dance can be reduced to fixed, homogeneous characteristics. Similarly, the collective roots of salsa dance come from many heterogeneous sources based on a complex history that extends from the colonial encounter—that is, the violence and oppression of slavery and the plantation economy in the Caribbean and Latin America—to U.S. migration. A brief history can serve to illuminate salsa dance in relation to transculturation and its negotiation between resistance and compliance. Doing so accomplishes the unearthing of the Afro-Latin(a/o) history underpinning salsa dance, which has been silenced by colonialism and imperialism—that is, the liberation of “subjugated knowledges” (Foucault 1980: 82). It also challenges the myths of racial democracy in Latina/o culture, as well as the internalized racism that has resulted from the colonial and imperial context. Rather than seeing salsa dance strictly as a form of entertainment, which cultural theorist Theodore Adorno calls “the opiate of the masses,” its history allows for greater understanding of its political value, thereby defying exoticized representations.

LATINA/O HISTORY IN MOTION

The power of dance and its potential for military mobilization made the dancing body of color a particular threat for Europeans in their efforts to colonize the Caribbean and the Americas. Although they allowed African slaves to practice their dances in order to ensure productivity, slave owners exerted strict control (Hazzard-Gordon 1990: 7–9), often restricting such activity to particular days of the week and/or times of the year. These constraints, however, could not stop the political mobilization leading up to the Haitian Revolution in the late 1700s, which was inspired by the sacred music and dance practices of *Vodun* on the

island, whereby choreographic patterns became military strategy (Browning 2002). This rebellion led in part to the continual banning of transcultural dances like the Afro-Cuban *son* (Boggs 1993: 11) and Afro-Puerto Rican bomba. As such, colonialism brought with it a physical oppression that included the suppression of Afro-Latin(a/o) dance forms. Historically, Afro-Latin(a/o) dance communities have resisted this form of oppression in part by keeping their dance forms alive, a practice that persists in Latin America, the Caribbean, and the United States among Latina/os. Salsa dance inherits this legacy of resistance against colonial subjugation from its Afro-Caribbean ancestors.

Born from the transculturation of Africanist dance principles such as improvisation and polycentrism/rhythm (movement from multiple centers of the body) and Europeanist values such as contact-oriented couple dancing, turn patterns, and choreography, the salsa dancing body “narrates”⁹ this history as it negotiates between dominant and subjugated Afro-Caribbean dance practices that were at one time banned and continue to struggle to exist and be acknowledged in their own right. In addition, the indigenous contributions to salsa dance are much more obscure, reflecting the rampant decimation of indigenous cultural practices by European colonialism. It is in this way that the body can become an “inscribed surface of events” (Foucault 1977: 148). In combining these elements, salsa dance expresses a transcultural Latina/o identity that remains in constant motion.

Polycentrism/rhythm is closely aligned with the music’s polyrhythm. Polyrhythm, which characterizes salsa music and emerges from the African traditions that underpin Latina/o culture, is a type of rhythmic organization whereby multiple rhythms are playing simultaneously. Dance scholar Brenda Dixon Gottschild defines polycentrism/rhythm in contrast to European dance aesthetic principles as follows:

From the Africanist standpoint, movement may emanate from any part of the body, and two or more centers may operate simultaneously. Polycentrism runs counter to academic European aesthetics, where the ideal is to initiate movement from one locus—the nobly lifted, upper center of the aligned torso, well above the pelvis. Africanist movement is also polyrhythmic. For example, the feet may maintain one rhythm while the arms, head, and torso dance to different drums. (1996: 14)

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Polycentrism/rhythm is employed to varying degrees in many of the Afro-Cuban and AfroPuerto Rican dances that preceded salsa dance, which are transcultural expressions in themselves. These include the *orisha/santo* [saint] dances, rumba, son, mambo, cha-cha-chá (Cuba), *bomba*, and *plena* (Puerto Rico). All of these dance practices, like the African dance traditions that have influenced their development, place a high value on improvisation and on dance as an integral part of community life. In doing so, such traditions have empowered dancers to enact individual and collective acts of cultural affirmation throughout history and the present.

In addition, Tato Conrad—musician, independent scholar, and director of the Arthur Murray ballroom dance studio in Puerto Rico—asserts that many of the turn patterns executed by salsa-dancing couples today come from the *contradanza*/French *contradanse*. Contradanza reached the islands of Cuba and Puerto Rico in the 1800s, shortly after the Haitian Revolution (Cabrera-Infante 1994). At one point it was a choreographed group dance that evolved into the *danza* (Manuel 1994: 277), a long-standing symbol of national identity in Puerto Rico (due in large part to its primarily European heritage), while in Cuba it developed into the *danzón*. It was on the islands that it became a couple dance that allowed for improvisation (Manuel 1994: 277).

According to dance instructor and independent scholar Fran Chesleigh, the *danzón* was danced with a basic 1-2-3, 1-2-3, left-right-left, right-left-right step that was also done to many different types of Cuban music, including the Afro-Cuban son, which developed later in the early 1900s. Author Hernando Calvo-Ospina writes:

Because of the popularity of its origins on the margins of society and its extraordinary popularity among the working people, the son was violently rejected in the elegant salons of the Cuban aristocracy, who succeeded in having the government ban it. The main reason alleged was the obscenity and immorality of the movements in it provoked in those who danced it. (1995: 24)

However, the rejection of the Afro-Cuban son was based not just on class, but also on race; of course, historically, class and race have been radically intertwined. Although the *danzón* became part of the

upper-class European ballroom dance tradition in Cuba, it was also at one point very controversial due to its African influences. This was certainly the case when Afro-Cuban bassist Israel López Cachao and his brother cellist Orestes López Cachao invented the mambo section of the *danzón* and its sister rhythm *cha-cha-chá* in the 1930s (Salazar 1992: 10). The mambo and son were influenced by North American jazz and the swing-band era, which paved the way for some of the dance traditions that emerged from the Palladium ballroom and nightclub during the 1950s mambo craze in New York. The Palladium dance tradition in turn gave rise to a number of contemporary salsa dance practices that serve as forms of resistance to assimilation among Latina/os in New York. The pages that follow will demonstrate some of the ways this is so.

SALSA DANCE TECHNIQUES IN NEW YORK: TRANSCULTURATING TRANSCULTURATION

Out of the Palladium dance tradition in New York came two prevalent techniques for dancing salsa, which is frequently called mambo in the two practices I describe here. The basic movements from each technique are done in a straight line forward and back rather than the more circular or side-to-side fashion of dancing salsa that has typically been attributed to Cuba and Puerto Rico in the past. I use the word technique in the same sense as anthropologist and sociologist Marcel Mauss, who says: "I call technique an action which is effective and traditional . . . There is no technique and no transmission in the absence of tradition" (1973: 75). These techniques are all of those things: based on tradition, effective, and as a result, able to be transmitted through codified dance instruction.

The first is commonly called the Palladium technique (see figure 12.1), although it is also referred to as *son montuno* (López 2003) by many Palladium dancers themselves. This technique has been elaborated on and codified by the American ballroom tradition. Aside from the success of the ballroom dance studios in packaging and selling the Palladium approach, Puerto Ricans Angel and Addie Rodríguez have

been particularly adept at advancing this approach among Latina/os in New York for over two decades. The Palladium technique is traced back to Puerto Rican dancers like Freddie Rios and Cuban Pete during the Palladium era. Rhythmically, the approach is designed to respond to what is called the *tumbao*: gu-gung-pá, played by two open tones and a slap on the conga drum. Starting from a neutral position, the weight of the body is shifted to the right side. On the gu-gung, the dancer sits into the right hip and bends the left knee to then “break” forward with the left foot on the pá (Ocasio, pers. comm.). This is repeated on the left side by shifting the weight of the body to the left leg, sitting into the left hip, bending the right knee, and breaking back with the right. The feet go left-right-left, right-left-right. The *tumbao* is underpinned by the clave, the rhythmic pattern played by two wooden sticks over a bar (two measures, each composed of four beats) of music, or eight beats. The sound produced is clá-clá, clá-clá-clá/1-2, 1-2-3 (2-3 clave) or clá-clá-clá, clá-clá/1-2-3, 1-2 (3-2 clave). The clave forms the basis of most salsa music and underpins its polyrhythm as well as the corresponding polycentric/rhythmic movement that can happen simultaneously in the upper and lower regions of the dancer’s body.

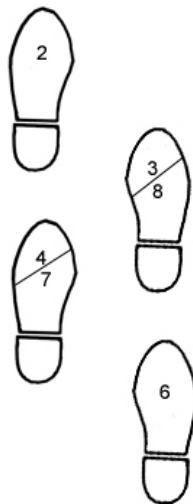


Figure 12.1

Polycentrism/rhythm is one of the African contributions to salsa dance that has resisted complete annihilation throughout colonialism and postcolonialism. In salsa dance, polycentrism/rhythm can play itself out as follows: while the marking of the rhythm is going on in the lower body, the upper body can move along with it. The rib cage can sway back and forth in opposition to the hips as the arms follow with a flexed elbow above waist level. This action is what the American ballroom dance studios call *Cuban motion*, and what I will call here *Latin motion* and *polycentrism/rhythm*, since it is evident in many other forms of Afro-Latina/o dance such as Dominican *merengue*, for example. The fact that the American ballroom dance tradition tends to use the term *Cuban motion* reflects a focus on the relationship between Cuba and the United States prior to the Cuban Revolution in 1959.

Interestingly enough, Latin motion/polycentrism/rhythm is one of the most difficult aspects of learning salsa dance. It requires a level of immersion that resists the packaging and selling, that is, the commodification of Afro-Latina/o dance. Mastery of polycentrism/rhythm to the point that it seems “natural” is often conflated with the perception of authenticity attributed to Latina/os who dance salsa. Yet salsa dance is about exposure, experience, education, and immersion. As an embodied skill, it requires repetition and “informal” or/and “formal” training (see Drewal, 1991: 1–2).

If the dancer is responding to the tumbao, he or she will be in time with the music. Numerically, the pá falls on the two, that is, the second beat in a bar of music. This technique is often referred to as dancing or “breaking on 2” because the emphasis or the break is on the 2, upon which the pá of the tumbao, or the slap of the conga, falls. Numerically, the basic step in its entirety ends up falling on 2-3-4, 6-7-8 (left-right-left, right-left-right) in a bar of music. The 1 and 5 are transition periods in the hips (perceived as a pause to the naked eye), making it possible to break forward and back. In terms of tumbao, the gu-gung happens on the 8 of the previous bar as well as on the “and” before the 1 of the next bar. This is repeated on the 4 “and,” before the 5 of the next bar. Here is how it plays out for the dancer in terms of the rhythm and timing of the music:

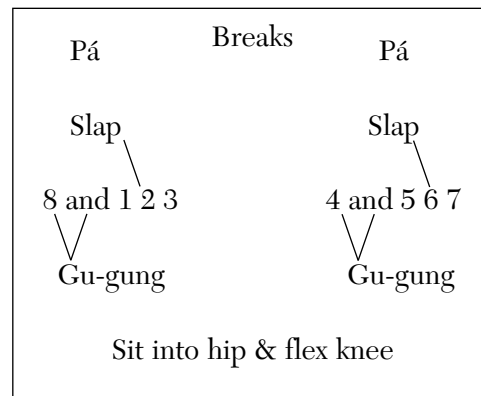


Figure 12.2

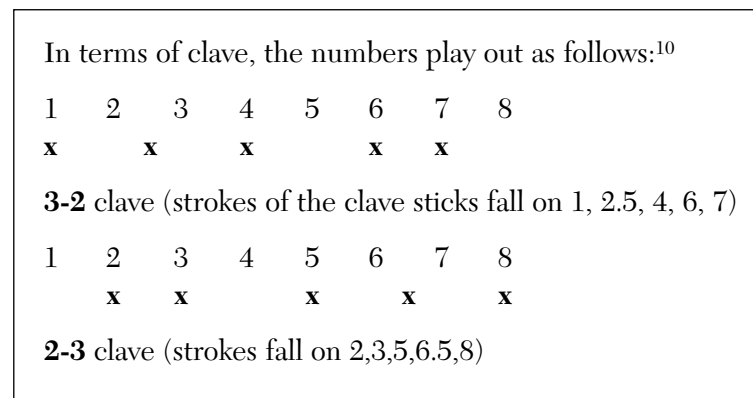


Figure 12.3

Note: The depiction above refers to the *son* clave that underpins much of salsa music. However, there are also some salsa compositions that are arranged in *rumba* clave, where the "third stroke falls half a beat later" than it does in the *son* clave (Gerard and Shelle, 1998: 84).

Building upon the Palladium technique is Eddie Torres, a Puerto Rican born and raised in East Harlem who developed another approach to dancing and teaching salsa dance on 2 in New York, along with the help of his dance partner and wife María Torres. This technique is also designed to be danced in time with the clave, which underpins the polyrhythm of the music, as well as the tumbao that is layered on top of it. However, Puerto Rican dancer, performer and instructor Nydia Ocasio—a contemporary of Torres and Rodríguez who has been in the New York–Afro-Latin(a/o)

dance scene since the 1970s, and who also teaches the Palladium technique independently—argues that the Torres approach advances dancers too far ahead of the music by making them step on the first beat, thereby slightly missing the tumbao. This is because in the Torres technique the dancer starts with the right foot on 1, the first beat in each bar of music, but the emphasis is with the left foot on 2 (see figure 12.4). This extra step makes the form faster and perhaps a bit more “frantic,” earning dancers of the Torres approach reputations such as “turbo dancers,” based on the commentary of salsa dancers outside this tradition.

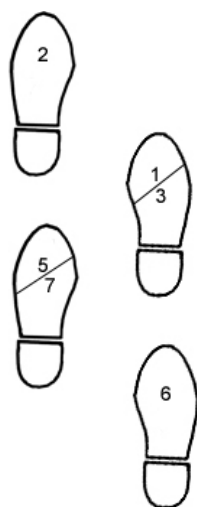


Figure 12.4

In the Torres approach, the feet move 1-2-3, 5-6-7, right-left-right, left-right, left, short (step)-long (step)-in place (step), short, long-in place. Beats 4 and 8 are used to change the direction of the body from breaking forward to breaking back and vice versa. The feet only come slightly off the floor during this transition. The movement during this change in direction generates largely from the hips and knees as it does in the Palladium technique. The rib cage can also sway from side to side contrary to the hips; in other words, when the dancer sits into the right hip to move forward with the left foot (knee flexed), the rib cage moves to the left, the left arm goes back, while the right arm comes forward. As such, Latin motion/polycentrism/rhythm can also be employed in this technique, which is often referred to as nightclub style—how Eddie Torres got most of his training. Journalist Mary Kent elaborates:

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There were no studios where one could learn how to dance this style, so the nightclub scene was the nurturing ground for aspiring dancers. And not all dancers were generous . . . [Eddie Torres] observed dancers like Louie Máquina, who got his name for his ‘real rapid-fire footwork’ . . . and Jo Jo Smith, a professional jazz teacher with a unique style of mambo jazz dancing. The pros at that time were Freddy Rios, the Cha Cha Aces, Tommy Johnson, and Augie and Margot (34) . . . with an uncanny ability to imitate . . . he picked up from every one of their styles: Jo Jo Smith’s jazz movements; Freddy Rios’s very Cuban typical style; a little of Louie La Máquina. (1995: 36)

As such, the Eddie Torres nightclub technique, much like the music that came to be known as salsa in New York, developed from a number of diverse sources. These include the Afro-Cuban son, mambo and North American jazz dance, which was an outgrowth of black vernacular social dances such as swing. For example, swing includes steps like the suzy-q,¹¹ one of the first steps students learn from the Torres repertoire of choreographed dance arrangements that are used for improvisation. These steps are also called “open work” (as opposed to closed partner work) or “shines,” derogatory terminology that harkens back to the days when African-American shoe-shine boys would offer to dance for change (Chesleigh 2003). “Open work” and “closed work” is terminology designated by the American ballroom dance tradition.

Open work steps or shines are typically done solo, and they include the mambo jazz; the Cuban, which is a variation of the basic Afro-Cuban rumba step; and the “slave” step, whose footwork bares resemblance to the type of footwork employed in bomba and some orisha/santo dances. Bomba dance scholar Halbert Barton proposes that the solo improvisations that characterize bomba dancing are akin to the improvisational open work that Torres has elaborated (1995), and I tend to agree. Others might say that improvisational footwork also has much to do with the swing influence. Both bomba and swing have in common their Afro-diasporic heritage.

Torres as well as the salsa dancers and instructors who follow and elaborate on his method can be seen as “transculturating transculturation.” Diana Taylor describes the concept this phrase conveys as the way in which both the social process and theory of transculturation evolve over time. The salsa dance tradition Torres and others are expanding on in New York continues the line of transculturation, which is rooted in a

colonial history whereby the African contributions to Latina/o culture have resisted subjugation in the Caribbean and Latin America through the dancing body. At the same time, it adjusts to the contemporary demands of the diasporic milieu that is the U.S. context for Latina/os. Salsa dance in New York as represented by the Torres approach also reflects what musicologist Raúl R. Romero highlights when he quotes Néstor García Canclini: “the socio-cultural hybrids in which the traditional and the modern are mixed.” Romero further adds that these are “indeed those societies or populations that continue to maintain their identities while at the same time keeping up with the development of capitalism” (2001: 23). As such, the transculturation inherent in this type of salsa dance in New York, due to the combination of its colonial history and its diaspora context in the imperialist United States, necessitates negotiation between both resistance and compliance. This is evidenced by the way in which Torres has transformed his technique into a lucrative salsa dance business.

Although the Torres nightclub technique has only recently been incorporated into the curricula of some ballroom dance studios, its codification and its syllabus of dance steps has been influenced by the American ballroom dance tradition, which has been capitalizing on Afro-Latina/o dance for decades. Kent explains:

The late June Laberta, a ballroom dance teacher, was Eddie’s greatest influence. She taught every ballroom dance in the book, but her greatest love was mambo. On occasions, June accompanied Eddie to the Corso, where the odd couple danced up a storm. He was in his twenties, she was in her late fifties. Creating kooky intricate little moves that come from jazz and everything that she knew, the lean Laberta would spin like a top. June’s mentoring was decisive in Eddie’s teaching career. She said, “Eddie I can help you learn the language of teaching.” She took him to ballrooms on Friday nights . . . Thanks to June Laberta, Eddie’s steps all have names. Today, Eddie’s class syllabus documenting 180 steps bolsters the traditions of those old scholars of dance at the ballrooms. (1995: 36)

Torres has since developed many intricate turn patterns and spin combinations in connection with the experience Kent describes him as having above.

PERFORMANCE OF GENDER AND SEXUALITY

Torres's repertoire of turn patterns was influenced in part by the hustle dance tradition that developed in the 1970s. In contrast, however, ballroom dance instructor Brandis Riba states:

All couple style dancing went into decline in the 1960s and early 1970s as dancing apart overtook the general American culture . . . While the Americans were influenced by the genius of Gene Kelly and Fred Astaire, who easily blended open dance styles with ballroom, the British kept their ballroom dancing closed, structured, and more disciplined. Their idea of Latin dancing was also more structured and did not have the authentic influence enjoyed by the Americans. (1998: 44)

The decline of partner work in the 1960s and 1970s is also attributable to the feminist movement, says Anita Amirrezvani (1998: 130). But partner dancing (closed work) has become very popular as part of the Torres salsa dance repertoire in addition to his codified choreography of dance steps (open work). Referring to the same community, Amirrezvani writes:

As any dancer will tell you, partner dancing is fun. There's an exuberance and a raw sensuality to doing it on the dance floor. But I'd like to suggest that it is also a form of resistance. When you're dancing you can't buy anything. You can't be deluged with ads like when you're watching TV, listening to the radio, or watching a movie . . . As a friend of mine says, "Dancing is one of the few kinds of entertainment where you're not just a passive consumer. You participate and immerse yourself in it, instead of standing outside watching it." You're an active creator of your own fun. (1998: 134)

In addition to what Amirrezvani so aptly describes, salsa dance also provides a powerful kinesthetic experience for constructing oppositional Latina/o identities that resist assimilation. However, these patterns are, of course, gendered, reinforcing heteronormative male-female couple dancing, as well as the active/passive paradigm associated with the masculine/feminine in the lead-follow structure that harkens back to the European contradanza, which developed into the danza in Puerto Rico

and the *danzón* in Cuba. In fact, the closed dance position can be seen as a colonizing force in that it can limit the opportunity for the follower (usually female) to improvise and choose how to express her (or his) auditory connection to the music through movement. For example, while it is not clear who is responsible for its nomenclature, one of the most basic turn patterns used across different salsa dance communities is called “she goes, he goes, she goes,” which consists of a single right turn for the follower; a single right for the leader; and ending with a single right turn for the follower. The follower has to remain prepared, waiting for direction/cues coming from the person assuming the role of the leader (typically male) on where and how to move next. Is it one, two, three or more turns/spins to get through in half a bar (one measure of four beats) of music? Is it a right or left turn? Or does one glide across the floor, waiting for the next turn pattern? All of this happens within seconds. Some female followers are comfortable with this, while others are not. For some it is fun and pleasurable, while for others it is a struggle to learn how to do this with ease. For many it is both, representing struggle at first and providing pleasure in its kinesthetic accomplishment down the road.

Despite the strong emphasis on partner work in the Torres technique, the large repertoire of codified improvisational open work creates an opportunity for women to express themselves independently. While some women are intimidated by the chance to show what they can do, others are inspired and empowered by it. One male dancer states that “most of the best dancers, at least for females, are the ones who are not afraid to express themselves. I think the women who just let it all out are the ones that [sic] excel.” Within the closed dance structure, women also create opportunities to express themselves in the way in which they stylize their reception of the lead. This can mean the inclusion of an undulation or a double-timing of the hips in a particular place in the music in a way that does not disrupt the lead, often expressing female sexuality/sensuality from a place of strength rather than weakness. However, the most respected among these female dancers are sometimes critiqued by men for being difficult to lead. Dancing with such women gives the male dancer status because, as some say, they “look great,” but “dancing with them does not always feel good.” Yet recently dancers of the Torres technique have been switching roles, with more men allowing them-

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selves to follow and women learning how to lead.¹² This is particularly common among instructors. It has also become increasingly frequent to see men who identify as heterosexual openly dancing together, switching back and forth between leader and follower roles—this is particularly subversive, in that dance is already considered a “feminizing” practice. Women also dance together, although this has traditionally been more accepted socially. However, there are few individuals in this community who identify as gay. In fact, nightclubs like the Wild Palm in the Bronx used to host separate gay salsa nights, demonstrating how queer identities are still very much marginalized in Latina/o communities, while at the same time reflecting a push to create space for same-gender dancing that crosses the boundaries of heteronormativity.

There has also been a surge in female instructors of the Torres technique as of late. Female salsa dance instructors of the Torres approach are typically pursued for their stylization, or the way in which they move their bodies, while males are more often consulted for their technique in leading and intricate footwork. However, there are many women who “masculinize” themselves by choosing to perform athletic footwork that tends to be more common among men. It is in these ways that salsa dance becomes a crucible whereby gender, race/ethnicity, and sexuality/sensuality are performed/expressed, that is, through which multiple “social identities necessarily overlap” (Manning 2004: 21).

SALSA DANCE PERFORMANCE ON STAGE

The Palladium gave rise to a visual economy of exhibition dancing, whereby “knowledge was performed” (see Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998: 3) and cultural capital was acquired through movement on stage. The performance of such knowledge was, and I would argue, continues to be an exercise of power in its contemporary manifestations, which has both positive and negative implications. On the one hand, it empowered countercultural resistance in relation to the dominant public sphere. On the other, it replicated social hierarchy based on an industry of dance exhibition and virtuosity.

Building on the choreographic tradition that was articulated in the Palladium ballroom and nightclub in its heyday, the community surrounding

the Torres technique is also credited with a high level of virtuosity, which is strengthening the professionalization of salsa dance led primarily by Latina/os in New York, providing opportunities for them not just as dance instructors but as stage performers as well. Such performances have been occurring in social spaces such as Carnegie Hall, Madison Square Garden, Lincoln Center, and Radio City Music Hall, to name just a few. In addition to resisting assimilation through salsa dance performance, Latina/os in this community are also resisting marginalization from the mainstream stages of dance in New York, setting their sites on crossing over to the realm of “art” and performing on Broadway. What are the implications of staging what used to be the everyday as spectacle? Now it is the preparation for stage performance, which includes learning choreography, rehearsing, being fitted for costumes, and makeup, which are rapidly becoming the everyday for salsa-dancing/performing Latina/os. Adaptation to the concert stage includes limiting improvisation, a “frontal orientation” that “accommodates the proscenium stage,” lighting, and a “tendency toward the virtuosic, athletic, and spectacular” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998: 64–65). Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett asserts that this type of aestheticization is radically intertwined with depoliticization. Added to this is the fact that, though I have taken the liberty of framing his work as political, Torres himself asserts that he is not interested in politics. According to him, he is strictly in the business of entertainment; other instructors and performers of the Torres technique also echo this sentiment.

WHAT ARE THE COSTS?

Alberto Sandoval and Nancy Saporita Sternback state that the concept of transculturation takes us back to the point of contact. They view transculturation as “gesturing toward relations of power constructed between the dominated and dominator.” They also assert that the concept of transculturation brings us back to the point of violence, the encounter, the struggle for power and hegemony. With this in mind, they reference Silvia Spitta, who, according to Sandoval and Sternback “reminds us that discussions on transculturation must start at the initial moment of violence, for a transcultural subject is a resisting one” (2001: 24). With mi-

gration to the United States, Latina/os and their dance practices undergo another level of transculturation involving (but not limited to) Euro-American, African-American, and other Latina/o cultures. This is what Sandoval and Sternback call “transculturation to the second power,” which is akin to Diana Taylor’s concept of “transculturating transculturation.” Also, Sandoval and Sternback view transculturation not only as a form of resistance but also as a process with great potential for aiding in decolonization, since it reminds us of the colonial encounter. However, Ortiz’s original theorizing on transculturation took into account not only the creation of a new cultural phenomenon but also the partial loss of the previous culture(s).

Although I agree with those who theorize transculturation as representing resistance to domination, there is also a degree of compliance—that is, a price to be paid and, as Ortiz suggested, some loss involved in this process. If we are to treat the professionalization of salsa dance as a form of contemporary transculturation (“transculturation to the second power” and/or a form of “transculturating transculturation”), I ask: what is lost, if anything at all, for Latino/as in professionalizing salsa dance as they simultaneously adhere to “tradition” and diverge from it in order to keep pace with the rapidly changing capitalist landscape that is the U.S. context in terms of codified dance instruction and staged performance? How does professionalizing salsa dance afford Latina/os an opportunity for greater power, resistance to domination, freedom, and potential for decolonization? How does the aspiration to make salsa dance worthy of the title “art” or even paid entertainment replicate social hierarchies that harken back to our colonial history and imperialist expansion; to what extent does it empower and enrich the Latina/o community economically and culturally? While seeing pleasure as potentially resistant, John Fiske also asserts its limitation in changing the system that subjugates. As such, salsa dancing, its codification and professionalization, can be both liberating and limited in its potential to transgress structures of inequality.

Examining such complexities provides fertile ground for continued research of this rich topic, which can serve to challenge assertions such as Backstein’s when she writes that “consigning” Afro-Latin(a/o) dance forms “to the ghetto of ethnicity . . . de-emphasizes the technical demands of the dance” (2001: 454). Rather, the technical demands of salsa dance in New York serve to illuminate how Latina/os negotiate their

identity through movement, while balancing the demands of resistance and acceptance/compliance, tradition, and modernity.

NOTES

1. A previous version of this article appeared in *CENTRO: Journal of the Center of Puerto Rican Studies*, volume 16, number 2, Fall 2004. Typographical corrections made to the diagrams of the piece were published subsequently in volume 17, number 1, Spring 2005. Also, this article summarizes conclusions from some of my earlier work on salsa dance. More recent developments in the project will appear in my forthcoming dissertation, bearing the same title as this paper.

2. Special thanks to those who were kind enough to provide feedback on previous versions of this work, particularly Cynthia Renta, Michelle Joan Wilkinson, Susan Manning, Sandra Richards, Margaret Thompson Drewal, Wilson Valentín-Escobar, Fran Chesleigh, Rodney López, Joanne Kealiinohomoku, Drid Williams, Agustin Laó-Montes, Barbara Browning, Ana Tavares and Marie-Eleana First. Additional appreciation goes to dancers/performers/instructors Nydia Ocasio, Addie Diaz, and Manny Sivierio, as well as to my dance teachers Ismael Otero, Eddie Torres, Xiomara Rodriguez, Halbert Barton, Awilda Sterling-Duprey, and Tito Rodríguez for sharing their knowledge of dance and performance with me.

3. Puerto Ricans are one of the largest and oldest Latina/o populations in New York. As such, the majority of Latino/as I reference in relation to this topic turn out to be Puerto Rican. In addition, this project deals with salsa dance as it relates to Puerto Ricans and other Latino/as primarily. A discussion of its significance in relation to the many non-Latina/os who participate in its performance and development requires a much larger space. Furthermore, my focus on Latina/os at this juncture in my work in no way implies the belief that in order to dance salsa one need be Latina/o. The biologically based stance that the ability to dance salsa is “carried in the blood” and therefore more “natural” for Latina/os does not have any bearing on this discussion.

4. For the purpose of this paper, I focus on Cuba and Puerto Rico since, historically, the two largest Latina/o populations in New York (the area this study concentrates on) have come from these locations (see Dávila and Laó-Montes, 2001: 19–23). This is with the understanding that salsa dance has developed in its own distinct forms in many other areas of Latin America, the Caribbean, and the United States (as well as many other “non-Latina/o” parts of the world). As such, investigation of salsa dance practices in these areas is also greatly needed.

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5. At the same time, however, historically there have been musicians who have consciously aimed to disconnect Afro-Latin(a/o) music from dance traditions, wanting to cater more to listening audiences of a higher social class.

6. Some Latina/os themselves also engage in auto-exoticization. For more on this, see Marta Savigliano, *Tango and the Political Economy of Passion*. Also see the concept of self-tropicalization as theorized by Frances Aparicio and Susana Chávez-Silverman, editors of *Tropicalizations: Transcultural Representations of Latinidad*.

7. Based on conversations with fellow salsa dancers, performers, and instructors from 1998 to 2003. Particular thanks to Addie Díaz, Manny Sivierio, Rodney López, Nydia Ocasio, and Lydia Serrano for sharing so extensively about their experiences.

8. Though using the prefix “trans” can simply mean “across” different cultures (e.g., as in transnational), Ortiz deploys transculturation specifically as a political term that is connected to the history of violence and oppression of African people in Latin America. Ortiz’s concept of transculturation should also not be confused with transculturalism, defined by Richard Schechner as “working or theorizing across cultures with the assumption that there are cultural ‘universals’—behaviors and concepts of beliefs that are true of everyone, everywhere, at all times” (2002: 244).

9. See Browning, *Samba: Resistance in Motion*.

10. See the Eddie Torres audiocassette: “*It’s All in the Timing: How to Find and Stay on Beat*.” Many thanks to Rodney López for his assistance in sketching clave on paper.

11. See Sonny Watson, www.streetswing.com/histmain/z3suzyq1.htm. 2004/01/02.

12. Sporadically, I taught salsa dance to large groups of teens from Canada who would come to visit the Boys and Girls Harbor Conservatory for the Performing Arts in East Harlem, New York, directed by Ramón Rodríguez. From 2002 to 2003, I began giving girls and boys the choice to either lead or follow. During this time, I realized that, given the opportunity early on, young people are willing to subvert traditional gender roles in salsa dance. These groups were typically composed of primarily European-American and some African-American teens.

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SALSA DANCE PERFORMANCE

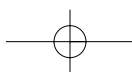
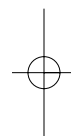
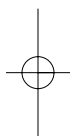
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III

WRITING SELF



13

AN AIDS TESTIMONIAL

It's a Broken Record/*Ese Disco Se Rayó*¹

Alberto Sandoval-Sánchez²

Death is the sanction of everything that the story teller can tell. He has borrowed his authority from death.—Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*

Allegories are, in the realm of thoughts, what ruins are in the realm of things.—Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*

A happy ending. How much we all dream for romance and happiness. And music is always there to make our fantasies come true. I can't sing and I'm not good at remembering the lyrics of songs. I can only hum them. Or mumble 'la la la la.' Out of so many songs, I just love John Paul Young's rendition of 'Love Is in the Air.' It is magic. It is about finding love everywhere and in everything at all times when one falls in love. Its repetitive and emphatic crescendo refrain of 'love is in the air' is infectious, una melodía contagiosa that hooks you for life. Love is something you must believe in. But so is music if you want to embrace la vida loca 'til you die.

Music conjures up my memories. El SIDA is music to my ears. Music AIDS. AIDS is in the air every time I find myself tunefully taking a breath on a gurney at the E.R. or on a hospital bed or recovering at home in my bedroom. Con el SIDA under my skin, music is my passport to cross over the borders of life and death, health and illness,

pleasure and pain, danger and safety, home and exile, oblivion and hope, trauma and survival. For me, each sound, cada sílaba, each word, cada nota, and each song, cada ritmo has the potential to transport my body to a given moment in my past. Con la música skin deep, I can call upon a plethora of remembrances of myself: being many times at one time, or at different times being the same one without being what I was before, but always en un cuerpo, an ever-changing body wrapped in a shroud of feelings. At the sound of music, mi cuerpo, mi piel, mi sangre, mi corazón, mi mente, mis seis sentidos locate me at a crossroads where I exist only in the echoing, indented scratch of a broken record. In a state of insomnia, which results from the turbulence of the stagnancy and monotony of IVs and catheter needles stuck in the surface of my skin and deeply entrenched in my veins, I stay alive by pounding my index finger over my chest, like a playful kid making it dance between the intervals of my heartbeat. I can float with music, revisit my yesterdays with a few dance steps without anchoring, or project myself to the future under the spell of an endless tiempo de vals. Only then, sólo entonces, I remember Lana Turner's prophetic words in *Madame X*: "I am not alive, I only exist." Do I? The answer is (t)here when I simply paraphrase Cher by asking myself: "Do you believe in life after AIDS?" La música exorciza mi memoria encrypted in the lived experiences of my body.

Music sets in motion my skeletons in the closet with
dancing feet.
I invoke the undead to dance with me.
My phantoms of memory unleash the rhythms hidden in the
bones of the dead.
My specters of lost selfhoods come back to sing along.
My ghosts of whispered resonant musical silences left
behind once again make me listen to interminable lyrics
I had long dismissed and desired to dance to.

Under the side effects of a 104-degree fever, each note of a song punctures my body with moments of my existence that had been locked in a time capsule until melodious snapshots recover once again my sensibility and corporeality:

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(click) a seductive gaze
(click) a tempting proposition
(click) a tender caress
(click) an innocent smile
(click) an ardent kiss
(click) a sensual dance step
(click) a one-night sexual encounter
(click) a deliberate hickey
(click) a passionate sigh
(click) un orgasmo explosivo
and then . . . la petite morte.

My body parts and bodily sensations, archived in my staccato memory, are a Polaroid shattered jukebox both in black and white and in color. Indeed, my longtime gone feelings become alive in the chambers of remembrance and emotion when I watch my body radiating blood, sweat, and tears under the rays of a revolving disco ball that turns into the blinding light of surgical lamps; what's more, even years after, *siempre con la música por dentro*, I can retrace and unlock the wounds on my body: my scarred embodied memories, ever-present forgotten photographs of constant migrations to the hospital and of surgical intrusions to install catheters for infusing medication so that I don't go totally blind now that my right eye was disposed of or incinerated in one of my many hospitalizations. An enveloping choir reminds me: "Be aware, a long-drawn-out sentence is a calculated effort to staying alive in the outer limits of the dance floor."

In the twilight zone of my embodied memory, the past is a tumbleweed fleeing in no direction on a turntable. At times, by playing a record, I make the tumbleweed of things vanished stop. At each stop I hold a concave mirror that reflects and refracts what I am not today and what I was no longer yesterday before CDs were in vogue. Unlike records, which can incessantly flash a word when scratched, CDs just skip leaving a vacuum. Nonetheless, both implicate a loss of language, a caesura in bearing witness to and putting into words my traumatic existence and survival after AIDS. I must find the way to make the unspeakable speak: Silence=Death. But what if there is no language to narrate my own testimonial other than the fragments of songs? How far

can I go with words that linger on stolen melodies and eclipse my own testimony? I must start all over again. I must allow my writing to skip like the needle on a record after a bump.

Music conjures up my memories. (Skip) con el SIDA under my skin, music is my passport to cross over the borders of (oops, another bump) insomnia and dreams, imagination and boredom, words and silence, nonsense and meaning, prose and poetry, the abject and the sublime. My past is a chaotic upsurge of fragile, fractured, fragmented memories and their frantic shadows buried in the lyrics of songs. The dispersed residue of my remembrances of things past and lived events accelerate a circuit of flash-like recollections that rewinds errantly and erratically my previous selfhoods in the realm of music, like the loose ribbon in a tape cassette player. In the songs I play, my past is a puzzle with non-fitting and mainly missing parts. In each recovered musical piece, I see myself as a cascade of Albertos before and after migration from Puerto Rico to El Norte, before and after el día de mi diagnosis del SIDA. I contemplate my existence in a whirlwind of music that gyrates, superimposes, and amalgamates a cornucopia of identities: todos los que fui, los que pude haber sido y no fui, los que están por ser, los que soy y los que no podré ser. Puertorriqueño. Boricua. Colonial. Latin American. Caribbean. Immigrant. American. Latino. Hispanic minority. Person of color. Professor. Lover. Homosexual. Faggot. Gay. Sissy. Queer. Maricón. Loca. Pato. Ese no se cria. Comemierda. Person living with AIDS. Moribundo. Survivor. OTHER.

Any time I enter the Tower Records located in my memory lane, I find myself inside the ghostly gusty walls of a hurricane where life plunging into death is caught in the spinning eye of a broken record. As musical wind gusts furiously hit my body, only remnants of all the Albertos are left unsheltered, a la intemperie with the sound of loud music. Deterritorialization strikes my memory twice with the force of a category-five hurricane: my migration from my native home Puerto Rico in 1973 and my AIDS diagnosis in 1990. I can only see the ruins, debris, and ashes of my embodied memories submerging in a monstrous, cadenced tidal wave of airports, hospitals, airline tickets, X-rays, runways, examination tables, take offs, surgeries, landings, recoveries. Inhale. Exhale. In and out of the airport. Exhale. Inhale. Out and into the hospital. Inhale. Exhale. In and out of the hospital. Both landfalls mark a rite

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of passage in my life accompanied by an orchestra of traumas that cannot be comfortably heard because of the noisy entanglement of side effects and medical jargon. Both migratory journeys locate my body in a constant and alarming state of liminality sustained by unfamiliar musical notes that mi corazón believed to know by heart. I forgot that I can't forget. If I did, I would witness a vertiginous silence only detectable between the interstitial time spans between songs. Both migrations make my body a territory in a perpetual state of alert and continual emergency where emotional tornadoes wreck, tear, and drag my embodied memories like broken records thrown against the wall. In this turmoil of colossal proportions, my previous and future identities collapse, crack, dismember, emerge, and submerge ad infinitum in an ocean of music, un océano de música. Music memorializes my carnal practices and photocopies my carnal desire in each one of my many past identities: it makes me feel alive. Estoy vivo.

I had to reinvent myself after both acts of migration. If by leaving Puerto Rico I had to cross geographic, linguistic, social, cultural, and national borders, after AIDS I found myself back to the future crossing sexual, political, existential, pathological, and life-threatening borderlands. I had to resist nostalgia for my homeland, as well as nostalgia for a youthful and energized body. There was no return to my "Isla del Encanto," nor to my healthy body.

All I had were records to be played.

(T)here I stood homo-alone in a cyclone of panic, inside the eruption of a fierce volcano of sickness, at the epicenter of a catastrophic earthquake of despair, in the deepness of uncontrollable flood waters of infections, in a blizzard of pain, and in the fury of an avalanche of medication.

All I had were records to be played.

Or was it more like a horrendous plane crash where I was the only survivor? Or rather, like the predictable dismemberment of a strategically placed dummy in a speeding-car test? Can these disasters really give voice to my bodily devastation after AIDS? Can they speak out better than music what my body has gone through? (T)here I stood, naked body with my bare skin, mi piel desnuda en carne viva.

All I had were records to be played.

Alberto, homo-alone, in the middle of an emotional cataclysmic tempest of side effects: I had become a timeless tumbleweed heading

nowhere at the end of the last song on a record revolving on a turntable. At times I was just sitting (t)here paralyzed like a deer on a road confronting the car headlights in the darkest night or caught in the flames of a forest fire.

And all I had were records to be played.

(T)here I was juggling identities after opening Pandora's box. (T)here I was reconfiguring the past, like Penelope weaving the thread of my memory tricks. (T)here I was deciphering out of scratch the riddle posed by the Sphinx. Was I to be hypnotized by the chant of the Sirens? Was I willing to plunge into the abyss of AIDS? It was a matter of life or death: I had to negotiate with my body and my homeland. What was going to happen to my body? Had I become a walking corpse? Was nostalgia going to overtake me? Or was it an immediate frenetic and exasperated AIDS reality? Was I condemned to the myth of the eternal return? Did I have to succumb to nationalist ordinances and imposed sites of death and burial?

"Truly the Puerto Rican national anthem should not be 'La Borinqueña' but 'En mi viejo San Juan,' a song written in 1947. It narrates the eminent state of nostalgia after migration since the Puerto Rican air diaspora to New York City started in the mid-forties of the twentieth century. The migrant's myth was to return to the Island as the song says: 'Me voy . . . Pero un día volveré, a buscar mi querer, a soñar otra vez, en mi viejo San Juan.' Nonetheless, the utopian return was betrayed and a round-trip ticket became a one-way one. The song uncannily prophesied the possibility of dying abroad: 'Mi cabello blanqueó, y mi vida se va, ya la muerte me llama, y no quiero morir, alejado de ti, Puerto Rico del alma.' When I migrated in 1973, I never brought the record with me. In a way, I have always resisted its lyrics that are tattooed in my memory since my childhood: my mother would play records and sing out loud when cleaning the house on Saturdays. I still remember her voice and the intoxicating odor of King Pine and boleros."

Yo lo confieso: I never planned to play Puerto Rico's national anthem at my deathbed. So why would I after my AIDS diagnosis? The agonistic and existential obsession with dying or being buried in Puerto Rico, inevitably a required act of abduction for most Puerto Ricans in the

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United States, never crossed my mind. But, con el SIDA, the inevitable return became a challenge. Was I obliged to forcefully include our songs of diaspora in my portable hit parade? How could I fuse them with my new top ten éxitos musicales after AIDS? I decided to stay alive con Puerto Rico en mi corazón while dancing to a transnational salsa beat. I am not afr/AIDS to chant in broken English: “Mi cuerpo es Puerto Rico, my body is home t/here, w/here I am.”

My birth certificate reads that I was born in San Juan. Puerto Rico was home once upon a time. I have lived in Wisconsin, California, Idaho, Minnesota, and New York City. My passport shows that I live in Massachusetts. Home is Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, a name that some students of mine have changed to How Sadly. I simply prefer to rename it “epicenter of nothingness tangential to the black hole of the universe.” Truly, there is only one place where home is for me: my own body, mi cuerpo, in particular at the hospital.

My college ID cards, my driver's licenses, my employment IDs, my passports, and my handicap permits show a series of letting-go photos of un sinnúmero de Albertos: each one of them constituting different bodily reflections and affective gestures of what I looked like through time: cada una camouflaging buried or fleeing identities I incessantly rehearsed. As I lay down my identity tombstones to see where I have been and who I thought I was, I find myself in my own funereal procession of metamorphosed Albertos never consummated into a final destination—since I am not yet physiologically dead. Even so, the rows of ID cards display my own private mausoleum. Each photo is a reminder of how fugitive time is, how null and void identity is, how transmutable the body is. Who was I? Who am I? There is no room for hesitation. It is not a matter of vacillation, of “to be or no ser.” It is an awakening and contemplation of my life allegorized as a series of corpses with faked smiles. Each photo is a memento mori embedded in a pose that evokes the rigor mortis of the dead me I naively failed to see when the photo was taken. I involuntarily find myself in a sort of a wake where I stand in front of my selves immobile and embalmed, laying in a multiplicity of coffins. It is a spooky revelation of what I thought I was and was not, or pretended to be, and for sure, what I cannot be anymore and never will be. As Roland Barthes uncannily points out in *Camera Lucida*: “‘myself’ never coincides with my image . . . the Photograph is the advent of myself as other”

(1981: 12); “the Photograph does not necessarily say *what is no longer*, but only and for certain *what has been*” (1981: 85); “each photograph contains [the] imperious sign of my future death” (1981: 97).

Without a doubt, I recognize those frozen, almost-erased faces in my ID paraphernalia that evidence an unfathomable and ghostly presence and ephemerality of my many selves, that which is no more, a condition of a “this-has-been” that Barthes attributes to the photograph. I face face-to-face what he lucidly discovers in his semiotic reading of the photo and what I see as entombments of my many corpses at given times and as haunting souvenirs of my many deaths engraved in every single photo: “it certifies, so to speak, that the corpse is alive, as *corpse*: it is the living image of a dead thing” (1983: 78–79). For me, this means that every snapshot entombs a prism of my past identities. How come I did not ask myself until now if I was dead before AIDS? I vehemently echo Barthes’s words in seeing in the materiality of the photograph “the return of the dead.”

“Photography is a kind of primitive theater, a kind of *Tableau Vivant*, a figuration of the motionless and made-up face beneath which we see the dead” (1981: 32). “By attesting that the object has been real, the photograph surreptitiously induces belief that it is alive, because of that delusion which makes us attribute to Reality an absolutely superior, somehow eternal value; but by shifting this reality to the past (‘this-has-been’), the photograph suggests that it is already dead” (1981: 79).

With AIDS, as I approach imminent death in due time, my identity archives flash moments of my past that reveal an infinite number of questions and incertitude: Who have I been? Where is the Puerto Rican in each picture? Where is the immigrant? Where is the Latino? Have I forgotten who I was? When did I cease to be a Puerto Rican? Was I ever a Puerto Rican? Where are the secrets tattooed in this body of mine? Can I unbury my deepest desires, pleasures, secrets, and silences? Where is hiding the boy who was sexually molested and never said a word about it? Where is the closet Puerto Rican? When did I become gay? How did my body feel before and after migration, before and after AIDS? What did my body look like while it was incubating AIDS and I was unaware of it? When did my immune system start to collapse? Can I identify my many faces of AIDS after my diagnosis? Are there other

ways of feeling alive without engaging in a perpetual mourning for my body? Is there anything other than mourning when I look at my collection of photo albums? With Barthes by my side, I appropriate his existential clairvoyance: "I am the reference of every photograph, and this is what generates my astonishment in addressing myself to the fundamental question: why is it that I am alive *here and now*?" (198,: 84). Music brings me back to life but it is also my epitaph.

There is always room for une chanson de protestation. One thing I know for certain: I was never haunted by, nor ever felt guilty about, leaving Puerto Rico. Going to college in Wisconsin was an act of rebellion, liberation, and independence. Having grown up with restrictive and disciplinary parents, in a homophobic culture, under a condemning Catholicism promoting homophobia and compulsory heterosexuality, under the rule of living to the laws of *del qué dirán* (as García Lorca terrifyingly dramatized in *La casa de Bernarda Alba* "¡Carbón ardiendo en el sitio de su pecado!" 1981: 176), my only way out was to pack and leave for college on the mainland. I just wanted out without knowing what it meant. Revisiting my past, as I looked down from the clouds, my "post-memory" (Hirsch 1997) reenacts the occasion of my singing "Don't cry for Puerto Rico" on some karaoke night at a bar.

"The moment I heard for the first time Elton John's 'Rocket Man' I knew that if I stayed in Puerto Rico, I was going to be as lonely as a rocket man in outer space. I knew that I was not the kind of man they thought I was at home. I was surprised when I found out that Elton John was gay. He had written the song just for me. I had read the queer message between the lines. But instead, I left on a jet plane and I left no lover behind waiting for me. I just played Peter, Paul, and Mary's 'Leaving on a Jet Plane' over and over again."

My s/exile abroad offered me the opportunity in the coming years to come out of the closet, to define and articulate my sexual identity. It was not until graduate school in Madison, Wisconsin, that I discovered gay life and the disco. Without any trauma at all I was out of the closet. I was on my own. As the years passed by, my "touristic" return visits to the Island diminished. Indeed, each return evidenced the fact that Puerto

Rico was not home anymore. Or was it that I was not a Puerto Rican anymore? My body did not feel at home after migration. And after AIDS, my body was homeless but never homesick. After both migrations I began to live in the cracks of Otherness. My body became aware of its illegal status under the possibility of a haunting deportation. My skin, my hair, my nose, my lips, my eyes, my ears, my accent, my gestures, my wasted body marked the exiled condition of a second-class citizenship: a Puerto Rican with AIDS. UNDOCUMENTED. PERSONA NON GRATA. Undead. I had to reinvent myself, home care for my body. With the passing of time, con trabajos y vicisitudes, my body became HOME. After the day of my AIDS diagnosis, when everything fell apart, one thing was for sure: life was unscripted. Now here, in my testimony, there are only memories, photos, and music: my life support.

"I still replay Diana Ross's 'I'm Coming Out.' It was our queer anthem. At the first beat we rushed to the dance floor and euphorically spun under the disco lights. It was our credo. We wanted the whole world to know. We wanted to let it show. And the disco was home. We were gay. We were young and beautiful. All we wanted was love and to be loved."

Once out of the closet and liberated, I did not have to explain, justify, fear, or keep secret my sexual desires and pleasure. For me, in many ways, coming out was the outcome and advantage of migration, hand in hand with the privileges acquired with a formal education and the promise attached to my teaching in a liberal arts educational system and environment. Besides, I had other privileges: I had an American citizenship and an American passport. I had my credit cards to live the American Dream. And I spoke English fluently. Let's make it clear. I am politically informed that in Puerto Rico, like in the rest of Latin America and in Latino communities in the United States, coming out, or being gay in the open, is still a taboo. Latino writer Jaime Manrique has precisely voiced how homosexuality and AIDS are conceived in Latin America and U.S. Latino enclaves: "After all, if homosexuality is the greatest taboo in Hispanic culture, AIDS is the unspeakable" (1999: 51). Although "Silence=Death" was an effective campaign to create an awareness of the AIDS epidemic, coming out and speaking out in other countries as well as in the United States—like in the case of Matthew

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Shepard—can inflame harassment, physical abuse, and even a violent death.

As I look back to the 1970s and 1980s, I realize that many of those that made up my generation had migrated under the pretext of going to graduate school or getting a job. Only the loquitas and drag queens had the courage to flaunt their sexual orientation and live la vida loca, mainly in San Juan and New York City. The truth was that we all had tacitly migrated for sexual liberation and in search of pleasure. We were s/exiled. And SEX was (t)here awaiting for us in the temple of Eros, The Disco.

“We danced all night long. The disco hits kept on coming. We loved the nightlife and wanted to go where the people danced, just play ‘The Nightlife.’ We wanted our names to be remembered and to live forever, just play ‘Fame.’ We wanted to make love and desired for more, just play ‘Love to Love You Baby.’ We wanted a one-night stand to deliver a perfect lover, just play ‘I Need a Man’ and ‘Where Is My Man?’ Some of us found him, many of us didn’t. Too many died too early.”

Two decades after the AIDS plague, we have inhabited the temple of Thanatos. Our pilgrimage came to a halt. We have survived among the traumas of loss and grief. We have buried and mourned our dead. We have lived with cuerpos en ruina y corazones rotos. The cure is not here. We have all borne witness to the premature death of friends, relatives, and lovers north and south of the border, east and west. How can we forget nuestros muertos? How can we compensate for a lost generation? I have my own inventory of the sick flying home, the dead being air-transported to Puerto Rico, the ashes being delivered to Colombia, Venezuela, Mexico, Illinois, Minnesota, Idaho, Wisconsin. Gone are Orlando, Hernán, Manuel, Enrique, Steve, Bob, Comrado, Nick, Otto . . .

“I have cried for them. They are gone. I still miss them. Todavía lloro. And still for me music has the power to bring them back to life. Loud music is my consolation. It is my rosario para los muertos: song after song. Es una letanía interminable. I still hear the deafening echoes of Thelma Houston’s super hit ‘Don’t Leave Me This Way.’ I still ask them not to leave me because mi corazón is full of love y deseo. I tell them that

I can't survive and stay alive without them. I reach for their bodies in every single song."

My embodied memories revivify intermittent snapshots of the dead in every single melodic note of my favorite songs. How life-giving are their photographed body parts and feelings, photos now exhibited in the museum of my heart that is my survival kit:

(click) cruising eyes
 (click) erotic hair
 (click) seducing lips
 (click) excited tongues
 (click) sweaty skin
 (click) bared chests
 (click) snapping fingers
 (click) pleasing hands
 (click) dancing legs
 (click) magnetic hips
 (click) exposed genitalia
 (click) penetrated rectums
 (click) una noche de pasión
 (click) only a one-night stand
 (click) broken hearts
 (click) nomadic dancing feet
 (click) AIDS is in the air.

My own private photo exhibit on the dance floor of my kaleidoscopic traumatic memory! What a jubilant exorcism of ecstatic dancing bodies becoming ill in a postmodern Dance of Death engulfed in an aura of hallucination, dementia, and delirious fever, lots of fever, mucha pero que mucha fiebre.

"You gave me fever and sweat. When I kissed you, you gave me fever. You gave me fever day and night, de noche y de día. Oh my, Peggy Lee really prophesied it and Madonna confirmed it in her version of 'Fever.' And Diana Ross turned it into a hangover, and like her we did not want a cure. And we all screamed our lungs out on the dance floor with 'Love Hangover.' We did not want a cure for it. It was the sweetest hangover. What started on the dance floor and ended up at the E.R."

AN AIDS TESTIMONIAL

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The living and the living dead are obliged to compulsively play, rewind, and replay for the dead the favorite songs of our portable hit parade in order to scare the fear out of our skin and heal our open wounds. We are the guardians of their memory. We bear witness to their existence. ¡Qué vivan los muertos!

Songs come and go. My hit parade transmutes day by day. It all depends on my emotional moods, my bodily experiences, and my embodied memories. But there is always music in my life.

Oh Donna, there is always hope for a last dance that could promise a last chance. Play "Last Dance."

Oh Cher, if I could turn back time, if I could change my life and start all over again, still I would dance to the same tune. Play "If I Could Turn Back Time."

Oh Gloria, believe me, I will survive. Play "I Will Survive."

Oh Bette, I still want to dance under the moonlight. Do I. Do I. Do I. Play "Do You Want To Dance?"

Oh ABBA, still I can dance, I can jive, and be the Dancing Queen. Play "Dancing Queen."

Oh Madame Piaf, you are right: "Je ne regrette rien." You keep me going. Play "Non, je ne regrette rien."

In ecstasy I dance to life. Alberto's vida is a broken record. Ese disco se rayó. I did not die. No me morí. Time to live. I am still here. No me morí. Sobrevivo. Deseo. Quiero. Puedo. No me morí.

Don't stop the music. I am going to live. I still want to dance. My dancing is a performance of mourning. It is my pilgrimage to living memory and embodied survival for all of us, por todos nosotros.

I have lived longer than expected. Like the advertising campaign for *Six Feet Under* at Times Square once read: "Every day above ground is a good one."

NOTES

1. When this piece is performed, only a significant fragment can be played of each song. If read individually, it is up to each reader to recover from memory whatever lines come to mind.

2. For my John, siempre a mi lado since he asked me to dance.

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14

GUAYAQUILEÑA (IN)DOCUMENTADA

One-Way Ticket to My Diaspora(s): A Testimonio
estheR Cuesta

*Eran las 7 de la mañana
y uno por uno al matadero
pues cada cual tiene su precio
buscando visa para un sueño*

*El sol quemándoles la entraña
un formulario de consuelo
con una foto 2 x 4
que se derrite en el silencio*

—Juan Luis Guerra y 440¹

ASKED FOR PAPELES ... NOT FOR THE FIRST TIME

I put on a summery skirt and blouse, brown sandals, and head for a job interview at a midtown restaurant in New York City, where I am offered a job as a waitress and receive training for three days. Free lunch included. At the end of the third day of training, the supervisor asks me for my social security number. For the past three days I pondered what to say when I'm asked for papeles. I want the job, but don't know how

to present the card I got for \$35; eventually, the IRS will know about it, another letter will reach my employer and me, and she or he will candidly tell me I cannot work there anymore. As I wrote on the job application, I have waitressing experience. Is there any way I could work without that number?

No. I'm sorry. This is a corporation with stores all over the country and abroad. If I hire you, we may get caught and get fines from the government. And you won't pay for that! Look for waitressing jobs in family-owned restaurants, small businesses. They are more likely to hire you, not us. Walk around. Go to Queens. Good luck!

More than good luck is what I needed when I could apply only to a limited number of jobs. In New York, I didn't need a social security number to work as a

lap dancer
babysitter
dishwasher
busgirl
domestic worker
sex worker
factory worker
or in retail (in small- to medium-sized businesses)

I was aware of my condition as a disposable worker and worked within the limitations imposed by the U.S. judiciary and socioeconomic systems.

I continued looking for jobs available to people like me, out-of-status. One way or another, society has always reminded me of this 'out-of-status' status. When I looked for jobs, when I attempted to apply to college or for a driver's license. Or when I wanted to go to a bar with some friends to listen to music and have a beer, and I was denied entrance because my Ecuadorian passport—which showed I was over twenty-one—didn't have an unexpired visa issued by the U.S. government. "Where's the visa?" the door bouncer kept asking. There's no visa. There has never been a visa. And for some time there was no passport either; only an ID I got on Thirty-seventh Avenue, in Jackson Heights.

FROM GUAYAQUILEÑA TO UNDOCUMENTED DIASPORIC SUBJECT

I was nineteen when I left the country and the society I did not choose to be born in. I tried to leave before the age of eighteen (considered underage by Ecuadorian law), but I could not get parental consent. I then thought that I should at least secure a high school diploma and leave with it.

Pero aquí viene la parte triste del pasillo, as tía Hildaaura would say. I lacked assets and connections. A high school diploma would not get me any farther than Huaquillas.² Being an Ecuadorian citizen was not a choice I had made. Not everyone has the fortune and the privilege of being born in the United States, its territories and colonies.

I left Guayaquil—Ecuador's largest city with about 3 million people without a single thought of going back. I am still in exile. A self-exile. A socioeconomic refugee without a legal refugee status. I am now part of the diasporas ecuatorianas indocumentadas, in the United States, in Spain, in Italy, in Peru, and in other parts of the world. I have joined and others have joined us later—the undocumented Ecuadorian diasporas, or rather, the illegal Ecuadorian diasporas, los ilegales.

You may ask: why is this woman making such a big fuss out of a juridical/legal status? Is it really that important? There are so many people who are undocumented! She's not the only one! She's definitely not the first one or the last one! Other people have it worse! You may say all of this because you take for granted the status I lack. Or is it because you don't have to worry about going to government offices, rain, shine, or blizzard to stand in line for three or four hours before the offices actually open to the public so you can be within the first few hundreds? The warmth of people's bodies keeps you somewhat warm; we keep close to each other; we talk a little. We're all scared, hopeful, cold. You get your hand inked with a marker and continue waiting. You enter the building, and there are already hundreds inside. Your hands and face hurt, you want to be warm. One of the main doors stays open and is where the line makes you stop. You're yelled at when you attempt to close it to stay warm. "Keep the door open!" you hear from the guard. You keep the door open without opening your mouth. The guards know they can yell.

But this of course has not happened to you. You are used to opening your mouth and standing up for your rights!

A naturalization certificate, a green card, a work authorization, a SS#, a visa to travel to most countries are things that have no direct impact on your everyday life. They do not concern or worry you on a daily basis. You have a stable job, a good salary, and your retirement planned. You worry about paying bills, the mortgage, your next publication, your next conference, getting promoted at work . . . you can plan your documented life.

In my experience as a full-time, undocumented/illegal worker, I could not have even conceived of demanding such “perks” as medical insurance, sick days, holidays, personal days, unemployment benefits, retirement plans (let’s not even mention 401(k)!), paid vacations, travel expenses, and the like. I felt blessed just having a job, making a living in a country into which I was denied “legal” entry. I was always cognizant of my position as an easily “disposable” worker. I was subservient, obedient, and submissive; I kept silent. Silent. That silence was the echo of the oppression and repression I lived everyday. I knew I had much more to lose than my employer and the co-workers who had the pieces of paper I lacked. In asking an undocumented how she or he feels living and wanting to stay in the country that keeps her or him undocumented, invisible, repressed, oppressed, silent, subservient, submissive and simultaneously one is grateful for the “opportunities”—you are unlikely to fully comprehend the intricacy in the construction of this alterity, this otherness.

Yes, we can talk about the courage of the undocumented, her or his resistance to the structures of the nation-state, how she or he transgresses these borders and not only survives but transcends and forms translocal communities, but we have already been (and continue to be) subjects of those kinds of studies. These borders may be seen as artificial and arbitrary, yet they are palpable for those who transgress them as “illegal immigrants.” Many experiences and lives of undocumented immigrants from South America who may or may not consider themselves Latinos—but are studied as Latinos—have been historically excluded from academic discourses, without a space of their own to discuss the specificities of undocumented South American immigrants outside their intimate circles.

Because in New York I was perceived as a Latina, among Latina/os and non-Latina/os, I learned to play that role. I got used to it, and it became part of me.

LATINA SEEKS TO BE DOCUMENTADA

I was afraid. Anxious. Frustrated. I wanted to “fix” my status, but I could not find a way. The fastest way to become “legal” was through marriage: getting married to a man that was a citizen of the United States of America. Thus, I had to conform to societal limitations in terms of gender, since gay marriage is still unlawful in the state of New York, where I resided at the time. I met a lot of men who showed interest in me, but I did not trust them to marry me for love, money, or charity.

Upgrading my legal status also meant being in more fear and at more risk by allowing a man—whom I barely knew and did not love—to become a fundamental part of my existence for juridical-legal reasons only. His U.S. citizenship could potentially free me from this “illegality.” Simultaneously, marrying him meant severing that freedom I had achieved throughout my short adulthood. I had left my parents’ house, my city, my country. Since that time, I lived in distant cities with acquaintances and lovers and other times by myself, moving from Greenwich Village to an attic in Jamaica, Queens, to Central Park West, to cheap motels, to affluent areas of Massachusetts.

Not having to report to anyone or any institution made me think twice about signing a marriage certificate. Once married, regardless of my feelings and my intimate relationship with my husband, I would have to stay married at least three years in order to obtain permanent residence. I would have to prove that it was a bona fide marriage. The “would have to” list is much longer . . .

Yes, there are other ways to get a “green card” that is white, but only another “wetback” will probably understand when I write: I tried. I learned about the requirements, but I did not qualify. Being adopted by a U.S. citizen would not help me obtain legal permanent residence in the United States; I was too old. I could not qualify as a refugee or request political asylum.

I was desperate. I felt like a prisoner of the most powerful empire, a prison I have somewhat created by coming the way I did, and was not willing to escape—by returning to Ecuador. Or as the Antillean proverb goes, “Là où la confiance te mène, ta force ne te fait pas sortir.” It has been my determination not to give up on myself.

ECUADOR FROM SELF-EXILE

In recent decades, Ecuador has not officially declared nor has it been strategically labeled by foreign governments or international organizations as having civil wars, human rights violations, or tyrannical dictatorships, even though—one way or another—indigenous communities, workers, students, and senior citizens constantly shut down government institutions or the whole the country demanding from the government social justice, human rights, a fair judicial system. The government retaliates. The people try again.

Most Ecuadorians want a radical change in the country, and they are willing to “try” a candidate who offers the most radical change in the country’s socioeconomics.³ This is how—among other things—Abdalá Bucaram and Lucio Gutiérrez were able to seize power and form alliances. Government officials are elected mainly by making unrealistic and empty promises of unattainable goals that seek to radically boost the economy, reduce unemployment, and eradicate poverty. For a brief period of time, public officials are supported by the people, but once citizens notice things do not change, or worsen, they emphatically put pressure on elected and appointed officials. Lack of trust in the government, its overt corruption, and continuous unfulfilled promises wear out the spirit of the Ecuadorian who is not part of the upper-middle class or the elite.

Some lose faith and leave . . . when filling out forms to apply for permanent residence in a foreign country, being dead poor or dead broke, having lost one’s crops for the last three years, utterly distrusting one’s government and political economy, and being willing to work in anything to provide more opportunities for oneself and one’s children simply do not count for those working at a consulate or an embassy. Socioeconomic asylum—that is, asylum for socioeconomic reasons—does not qualify an individual to legally migrate to another country. Had I been born in Europe before the 1920s, my luck would have been different. I could have

migrated to the United States on the basis of not having food. Being at imminent risk of being killed by hunger or poisonous water does not count. Having political enemies and living in fear of being killed by them or living in an “officially declared” politically unstable nation-state—often times as a domino effect of U.S. foreign policy—gets you out. Assets, formal education, connections, becoming “visible” accelerate migratory processes.

STRADDLING (NON) ACADEMIC WORLDS

This work is not a psychosociological study of the identity of the undocumented in the United States, because in the world outside of many academics’ comfortable offices, there is no such thing. I am writing this piece from a very specific geographical location: the Northeast of the United States. Although academics’ eloquent ideas may at times reflect the processes of identity formation and immigration in general terms, and within different contexts, the specificities of las diásporas (in)documentadas in the United States, as well as their subjectivities, are not necessarily found in surveys, the U.S. census, and previously published research in the social sciences or the humanities.

In this paper, I expose my experiences as an undocumented/illegal Ecuadorian immigrant in the United States, where:

I’ve been a Latina
and felt so South American—so out of place—among lively
Caribbean people.
a college student
and told on the face: you’re not eligible for this fellowship. It’s only for
U.S. residents and citizens. I appreciated the man’s honesty—I
couldn’t wait to leave his office so my tears could fall freely.
an Ecuadorian
who never felt part of that nation within the borders of the nation-
state
an immigrant
in an all-immigrant party
undocumented
among all documented.

BECOMING PART OF THE ECUADORIAN DIASPORA IN NEW YORK

With Ecuadorians born and raised in Ecuador, I had to show familiarity with Julio Jaramillo, and a sense of longing for Ecuadorian popular dishes such as yapingacho, caldo de bola, caldo de pata, guatita, encebollado, its beautiful landscape, its wonderful people to show my Ecuadorian-ness, but immigration (whether legal or illegal) was never a topic of serious lengthy discussions. It was not their problem anymore. They had accomplished what they had set up for themselves: a house, a family, a job, a secured retirement.

With the undocumented young immigrants with whom I worked in a factory in Brooklyn, I was afraid to tell them the complete truth about my illegal status but felt more at ease talking to them about my problems, because our situations were often similar. Knowing full well about the ethnic conflicts among the Mexican and the Ecuadorian women in the factory, I never made alliances with either group. I had Coronas and danced punta, salsa, cumbia, and quebradita with both Mexican and Ecuadorian women. But I was more myself with the Mexican women who were about my age than with the Ecuadorian ones who were my age or older. Because some of the Ecuadorian women had recently migrated to the United States, they still had what I call the Ecuadorian baggage, which carries a kind of shield to protect us from others seeing us as poor and dark, and with countryside roots.

In New York City, undocumented Ecuadorian immigrants are “visible” in almost every neighborhood. We are seen in grocery stores, restaurants, parks, schools, banks, factories, streets. We are, however, still “invisible” in the discourse of ethnic studies and Latino studies in the United States. We are marginalized in already marginal interdisciplinary studies in U.S. academia.

Within this subalternity in U.S. academia, there is a clear hierarchy in which Ecuadorian immigrants (documented or otherwise, women or men) are at the lowest ranks of Latino studies. Perhaps it has to do with the fact that a large number of Ecuadorians are still that—immigrants—or if they go up the social and legal ladder (becoming U.S. citizens), they are often detached from academia. Ecuadorians and U.S.-born citizens of Ecuadorian descent are a miniscule group in U.S. academia. Com-

pared to other national groups, Ecuadorians are still a fairly recently arrived group of immigrants, since they have migrated to the United States in large numbers only in the last thirty years. Most of them migrate to work, work, and work. Often times, once they have built their houses in their hometowns or more urban areas and have accumulated enough capital to open a business in Ecuador, they return. Some of them and/or their children attain higher education but are less concerned about academic discourses than other Latin American national groups. They usually take on degrees related to technology or business. They don't necessarily become academics. Take a look at the existing bibliography; we are still subjects of study in U.S. academia, not the ones making the studies.

LACK OF PRIVILEGE OR PRIVILEGE OF LACKING: HIGHER EDUCATION

About three years ago I heard from an activist, reading a paper, that undocumented immigrants in New York City could attend high school and college.⁴ Yes, I said to myself. They can; we can. *Lo sé en carne propia*. Undocumented immigrants can have a high school diploma, but when you want to go beyond what it's expected of you (a high school diploma), things get more complicated. In New York I was admitted to college, but I could not enroll. After submitting a bunch of papers to document my residence in the City of New York, I was finally able to take classes.

But Ivy League schools, most scholarships, student loans, grants, study-abroad programs, participating in projects and conferences outside of the United States are some of the things I consider impossible because of my "illegality" in the United States.

While I am very cognizant of my privilege since I have been sitting at classrooms of U.S. universities for seven years now, I am not only a participant-observer of the experiences of "wetbacks" (usually associated with Mexicans, sometimes Central Americans) in the United States, but I am one myself. As such I had to negotiate who I was and how I envisioned myself. I am from further south, if you are reading this in the northern hemisphere, which is probably where you are comfortably sitting right now.

I had the privilege of not dehydrating myself while sweating in front of steel machinery and/or being exposed to noxious chemicals and not working as a twenty-four-hour maid. I had the privilege of working as a clerk for an accountant who filled out immigration forms. I had the privilege of aiming to go to college and working to pay my college tuition, books, and transportation. Because I always managed to have a roof over my head and get food one way or another, I had the time/space/comfort to think about obtaining formal education and desiring—but being unable—to get the sort of jobs you would want your children to have to be financially independent.

THE ILLEGAL/UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANT: EN ROUTE

Since a sizzling February day in Guayaquil and a later one below zero in New York, I live an “illegality” everyday. There are millions who take days, months to travel from their homeland to the country they are migrating to: from Colombia to Ecuador to Spain, from Peru to Puerto Rico to the U.S. mainland, from Haiti to the Dominican Republic to Puerto Rico. If I get a deportation notice this afternoon because I was “caught” lacking “documents” that I have been unable to obtain because I don’t meet the minimum requirements to have those documents, it will be because I have been residing illegally in the United States. This is the crime I have been committing since the age of nineteen, and I have not been able to decriminalize myself. You need this document. To get it, you need to have this other one first but cannot get it without that other one. Call it a Catch-22, if you like.

Throughout the past ten years, I have created a fluid *identity* that involved my transition from being a Guayaquileñean woman (from mainstream Ecuadorian culture) to an *illegal subject* (as part of a preexisting racialized group labeled Latinos) but most importantly, as part of the undocumented Ecuadorian diaspora in the United States and the European Union, that aims to regulate (regularizar—the term the Spanish government uses) its legal residence. I decided not to conform to every notion that was constructed by individuals (and their institutions) in power for people with similar immigrant statuses (or rather, out of sta-

tuses) or phenotypes. I had choices. If I did not have them, I created them. Many times, I did the opposite of what I, as an undocumented immigrant, was expected to do: cling to the culture, language, and customs of the country I left. Here, language becomes an important element in the transmission and exchange of that culture. The people with whom an immigrant associates, the food she eats, the places in which she socializes, the type of entertainment she chooses all have to do with her socioeconomic status, as well as the language(s) she speaks and the cultures to which she feels she belongs. I did not feel part of the Ecuadorian community in Jackson Heights, Elmhurst, Woodside, Queens, and other neighborhoods in Brooklyn. I did not feel part of the larger U.S. society either. I, however, saw myself similar to the immigrant workers from India, Pakistan, Venezuela, Croatia, Paraguay, and Brazil that I met along the way. We spoke an English, Spanish, or Portuguese we understood.

As a Guayaquileñean immigrant, newly converted into a Latina, I had to assume an Ecuadorian-ness or Latino-ness among other Latina/os, depending on the context. Among European Americans, I put on the Latino hat, or the Ecuadorian one when other Latinos (non-Ecuadorians) were the targets of racist comments. I also wanted to dissociate myself from certain groups of Latinos born and raised in the United States because I saw myself having very different experiences. Being born to parents or grandparents whose countries of birth had been at some point colonized by the same empire did not bring us together. Some of them spoke fluent Spanish; others, only a few *key* words and expressions. They seemed confident. They had a way of carrying themselves that told me that it was their right to be in the United States and obtain the benefits of every American. They seemed to believe that they deserved paid vacations, good working conditions, lunch breaks. They felt entitled. I envied that, feeling entitled. Their ancestors and other peoples of color had fought for the rights they were enjoying now, and I was even benefiting from these won battles. No doubt there's still so much unfairness, injustice, and discrimination, especially in post-9/11 times, but as an undocumented, I realized I hadn't had it as hard.

There were times when I saw Latinos doing drugs or selling them, others were high school dropouts, teenage parents, or simply not working

toward the upward mobility I thought I could achieve if I had that citizenship they enjoyed by birth. I avoided self-identified working-class U.S.-born Latinos and Latin Americans, not because I felt ethnic or racial shame, but because many of their neighborhoods, their customs, their languages, their businesses, their houses seemed a grotesque distortion of the world I had left behind in Guayaquil. A world I was afraid to feel in my skin again. My poverty, I knew, that was still better off than those living in floating houses at the end of my street, my sense of feeling inferior next to my rich classmates in the expensive schools my parents sent me to. Of course if you ask my family in Guayaquil, they would say we were not poor; we were middle class. We are middle class!

Gradually, I started to associate myself with other recently migrated Latin Americans and Spanish- and English-speaking Caribbean peoples. I felt at ease interacting with them. I rarely had to explain myself, what Ecuador was like, why I came.

Because I was broke and did not have documents to travel outside the United States and come back, I decided to at least taste world cultures while living in New York. I frequented expensive restaurants and bars whose bills I rarely paid. I attended many theatrical performances in Manhattan. I visited museums, galleries in search of culture and new landscapes. Simultaneously, I attempted to understand U.S. cultures. I immersed myself in different environments and was exposed to a diversity in terms of class, ethnicity, sexuality, race, national identity that I had not experienced in Ecuador, not because it doesn't exist, but because I didn't care about it. My relatives and Ecuadorian acquaintances in New York often criticized me, whereas my family in Guayaquil applauded my behavior and my desire to be "part" of a wider U.S. culture and to master the English language.

I have not reached that point. I never will. I am still struggling with English. Bringing these thoughts and feelings out of my system in a language that—to this day—is foreign to me has not been easy, but I need to use a dominant language, otherwise, most likely, you would not have encountered this text. It might be as hard to write this paper in Spanish, because I feel and think about this pain, this dislocation, this ambivalence in English, not in Spanish.

While I often hated myself for having come to the United States the way I came, putting myself at a juridico—socially 'inferior' position—

and therefore, at a steeper socioeconomic disadvantage than most of the people around me, I felt deeply grateful for being alive and healthy and having food every day. I realized that my life in the United States allowed me to obtain formal education that would be highly valued worldwide. I was able to buy many books I wanted. I had access to a lot of information I never even dreamed of having. I wondered if my greed (as a result of the process of my Americanization) was what was leading me to feel that all the great things I had were not enough for which to be grateful. I wanted more. I wanted to glow as I saw others around me glowing. I thought they were glowing . . .

Having crossed the Mexican-U.S. border has made me an illegal subject, an illegal immigrant. It does not make me, however, an illegal being.

No one holding this book, reading this page, would ever guess that I am an illegal alien. “You don’t have the look. You don’t act like them. You’re different,” I have been told countless times. What is the look? What is the behavior? What is the identity of the undocumented, according to the experts? I am not afraid or ashamed anymore to say or write that I do not have any papers that legitimize, that legalize my presence in the United States.

Four years ago, I came to a point where it became unbearable, feeling not only like the “Other,” but the “Illegal Other.” I viewed the term “undocumented” as a euphemism utilized by academics, intellectuals, politicians, and even good-hearted activists to show their political correctness in their speeches, books or articles when referring to people who could not achieve what they already had a dignified position in society.

And as I am writing this, I also feel like I am dumping my words “into a very deep and very dark hole” because this text, most likely, will not reach the people I grew up with, my family, my childhood friends (Moraga 1983). It is reaching a very specific community, an academic community, although, it is my hope to be proved wrong.

MEMORIES OF “HOME,” A TRANSFORMED GUAYAQUIL

I remember my mother being constantly insulted and yelled at by my father. For him, she was *la negra*, *la campesina*, *la pata caliente*. She was

darker than my father—although among her huge family she was one of the lightest, *lavadita*. Her father was a poor peasant, whereas my paternal grandfather was a captain in the Ecuadorian Navy who often socialized with what many consider distinguished Ecuadorian families. In ships under his command, he traveled several times to the United States in the early 1900s, when only the wealthy were able to travel abroad, returned with pictures, and told a story for every picture. I saw those pictures hundreds of times, as well as the pictures of Guayaquil taken by my grandfather during the first half of the past century. The chalets along narrow streets, the elegant faces of men and women, the American imported cars of the wealthy all seemed to belong to a different part of the world, not the poverty-infested city I came to know, with extremely limited opportunities for its citizens.

Today I am told that Guayaquil has become a beautiful “modern” city, with McDonald’s, Marriott, Bell South, and an impressive Malecón 2000, a main tourist attraction. Many people have cellular phones, cable TV, but even more people from the countryside continue migrating to Mapasingue, Bastión Popular, and La Isla Trinitaria in search of jobs and education, living alongside the wealthiest. *El pobre sigue haciéndose más pobre, y el rico, más rico.*

My parents were schoolteachers and my dad is also an adjunct professor. They did everything in their power to provide my siblings and me with love and the material things we needed. I always admired my mother much more than my father, perhaps because I saw her life as being much harder than my father’s. She had no memories of her mother; she did not remember being kissed by her father. My grandmother died when my mother was eighteen months old. Upon her death, the six children were distributed several places. Lucy, my mother’s sister, then a thirteen-year-old, raised my mother in their aunt’s house in Guayaquil. In that large and wealthy house, the two sisters were always the cousins, the *arrimadas*, the poor orphans.

My father had it different. Being born in Guayaquil and growing up in an environment that protected him—where his father was a respected member of a community and his mother, a pianist and a music teacher—my father grew up thinking that he was better than half of the people he met. When I started paying attention to the way he treated my mother, I realized he put her in the category of “less than him” and made sure to

remind her of that almost every day, or at least the days I paid attention to the way they interacted with each other. Looking back, I think my father was envious of my mother. She succeeded in spheres he had not. Unlike my father, my mother was born in Ventanas, a rural town, and migrated to Guayaquil, where she obtained a professional degree without her parents' support: emotional, financial, or any other kind. She even graduated much earlier than my father (she was five years his junior). She made almost as much money as my father, with only one daytime job. She was loved by far more people. I was one of them.

I still love her, even though her body has been buried in Guayaquil since 1989. During a hysterectomy, she got an overdose of anesthesia, which put her in a coma for twenty-one days. Then, the screen finally showed a straight line.

Her death awakened me to see myself somewhere, like a condor, with large and thick wings, flying far away. A condor, whose nest is in the Andean region of this world, who learned how to fly over high hills and then is willing to travel large distances to get her food. A condor that needed other landscapes, tougher hills, unknown oceans. I yearned for something, but it was not for the type of food my mother put every day on the table.

My mother's sudden death marked a certain "distanciamiento" between Ecuador and me. When she died, our house stopped being home. Ecuador stopped being home.

Guayaquileñean society, its superficiality, its pretentiousness, its overtly corrupted legal, judiciary, and medical systems (all of which I came to personally experience when my mother was the subject of medical negligence), el quemeimportismo, el que dirán, the emptiness at home caused by my mother's death, all asphyxiated me. I wanted to escape.

CROSSING (B)ORDERS

Soon after I was eighteen, I applied to get a visitor's visa to the United States. I filled out the application forms, taking the risk of being honest, confessing that I lived in a working-class neighborhood, had no credit cards, no car, only a local bank account that showed a balance of the

equivalent of \$1,000 in sucres.⁵ The clerk at the U.S. Consulate in Guayaquil told me that I lacked sufficient financial funds and suspected that I wanted to get a visitor's visa to work and remain illegally in the United States. She was partially right! I wanted to get a visa to stay in the United States, but if I had been allowed to enter the country according to its laws, of course I would have never done things the way I did them. Not everyone in Guayaquil lived in casa propia, worked for an airline company, or had the equivalent of \$1,000 in sucres, but of course that meant nothing to the consulate officials. Needless to say, given U.S. living standards, I was una muerta de hambre.

Weeks after this incident at the U.S. Consulate, I got permission to enter Mexico as a tourist. I flew to Mexico City and then to Monterrey, where I met with my cousin Jenny. She was smart and energetic, and had beautiful hazel eyes. She had rented an SUV and drove from New York City to the south of Texas to help me cross the Mexican-U.S. border. She returned the car in Texas, and took a bus to Monterrey. At that point, we barely knew each other. We had met during her first return to Ecuador in fifteen years. Fifteen years prior, I was too small to remember her, but she remembered me. In this visit, we became friends.

We stayed a few days in Monterrey and enjoyed its beauty and warmth. Jenny understood that I had an urge to leave the society I knew in search of adventures, but not the kind Columbus had, with all the greed and genocide involved, not only to conquer, but to have some equality in the adventure: to conquer and be conquered, to love and be loved.

The following morning, we took a bus to Laredo, del lado de México. Someone referred us to a man who would cross me over the border, and by 8 pm, we had done business.

*we shook hands,
talked for two minutes,
—seiscientos dólares porque viene de lejos.
I came from farther south,
so he thought he had the right
to ask for more, six hundred.
I had no choice.
I wanted to cross
from one Laredo to the other Laredo.*

I gave the young man half in the beginning; I would give him the other half after crossing me to el otro lado. Jenny got in a cab and crossed the bridge checkpoint, the way legal “aliens,” U.S. citizens, and anyone with documents would cross the border. We would meet later.

I stayed on the Mexican side of Laredo, standing alone in a plaza, waiting to meet the man who would help me change my life—either for better or for worse. ¿Ya estás lista?” He asked. “Sí,” I said. I was ready. He then ordered me to follow him. We walked for about ten minutes and met another man who waited for us by the shore. The three of us got into an inflatable boat. I was afraid of the Rio Grande. I thought it looked dark purple. The large white spots coming from the potent reflectors set up on the other side made me feel that we would get caught half way through. The river seemed endless, hungry for me; maybe it was my own ensimismamiento that made me think I was important to a river. I was just one of many millions, una más del montón. Millions of people have crossed and continue crossing that river and many other borders and checkpoints, fulfilling or crashing their goals and dreams, with their own fears and frustrations. I was una más.

The navigation seemed long, even though I had heard that the river was narrow, that the trip would be short. To me, it lasted hours. But the running, after we reached the shore, actually seemed longer. Although I held the young man’s hand tightly as requested, I fell several times. I dirtied myself with mud and hay and cut myself on the low branches and had blood on my wrists and hands. I was exhausted but had to continue. I had heard many horrifying stories about coyotes, and I was afraid the man leading me to el otro lado would rape me, would take the first half of the payment and leave me naked in that swampy forest. While running, I was wondering what to do if he tried to insert himself in my body. I was unsure how I ought to react. If I should just go numb and let his dick inside as part of the price I had to pay. I stopped thinking. I kept running.

NEWYO-RK

Once I crossed to Laredo, Texas, Jenny and I took the Greyhound to New York City’s Port Authority. I ended up in “the capital of our time,”

as Edward Said has called New York City. New York's "strange status as a city unlike all others is often a troubling aspect of daily life, since marginality, and the solitude of the outsider, can frequently overcome one's sense of habitually being in it" (Said 2000, xi). In New York, I locally traveled around the world. Many of my travels were from Eighty-sixth Street and Thirty-seventh Avenue in Jackson Heights to my clerical jobs in the Upper East Side, or on the A Train in Brooklyn to Greenwich Village to serve cocktails, smile, and entertain customers. My diasporic existence would vary depending on my locality. I was in Ecuador when I was at my aunt Lucy's, eating a hearty soup she learned how to make by watching her mother in the kitchen of their wooden house in Ventanas. A short subway ride later, I felt that I was indeed in the "capital of our time," reading or simply glimpsing printed versions of newspapers from all over the world, tasting the food from distant countries I may never go, dreaming I'm outside of the jail bars that U.S. borders have meant for me. A luxurious and privileged prison, a prison nonetheless.

I later became involved in a series of unfulfilling romantic relationships, and I came to understand that I was confusing my desire to be a part of the general society with the true feelings I had for various individuals. I wanted to marry them. I wanted to have a number, a card, the privilege to travel outside the U.S. borders, to visit my family in Ecuador and be able to return to the United States.

THE AWARD OF COLLEGE AND NUMERICAL AWARDS

After years of doing all sorts of odd jobs, I gave myself one year maximum to prepare (to work harder and save money) for my return to Guayaquil. Once there, I would think about what to do with the money that I would have brought from the United States. Perhaps open a business or apply to a university in a foreign country and then apply to that government for a student visa. Then I figured that a college education was the only thing that could justify my undocumented stay in the United States. In fact, college was the only nest in which the remnants of my condorness found a space. Some college administrators thought I did not belong there.

*I wanted a room like Virginia Woolf's.
 I wanted shoes, but they said I had hooves.
 —you're illegal, you're not supposed to be here,
 said the university clerk.
 —I want to study. I want to learn.
 But that, the clerk could not understand.
 He wanted to see me using my hands
 serving the coffee, sewing coats,
 ashamed for being in his 'Land'
 feeling like an alien
 even before being a legal alien.
 When the day I graduated came,
 the clerk—by chance—was also there:
 —I can't believe you came this far.
 —I'll keep learning
 and not just
 in ciudades letradas y numeradas.*

In college I felt that I was accomplishing my educational and intellectual goals. I met wonderful people who introduced me to new ways of thinking and understanding the world. The classroom, conversations with professors and classmates outside of it, libraries, novels, poems, theory enamored me. But somehow, I thought that obtaining legal residence in the United States was a priority, and I used to feel that I was less than the people I met. The pounding constraints of my undocumented status persistently reminded me of the limitations I had. I could not qualify for scholarships, loans, or internships. I could not get jobs I was qualified for. I could not visit my family in Ecuador in the summers or holidays. Nor could I go to my sister's wedding in Ecuador; I have never met my nine-year-old niece. I invented a story every time I was asked why I did not visit Ecuador; stories I myself did not believe. Well, I could have gone to Ecuador, but then I could not have come back to the United States, and I felt I still had something to complete here. I wanted the United States. to become *a home*. I wanted to be able to go to *a home* in Ecuador and return to *another home* in the United States, like most immigrants. Ecuador could not become home until I had another home elsewhere.

But I lacked that number, that code that as soon as someone enters it in the right computer will tell her or him how much you make, how much you owe, what you own, where you live, your spouse's name, your children's names, their ages, and everything they want to know, just by clicking another icon. It's all there.

So, I was not part of that system yet, but other macro- and microsystems. I do not run now. I walk. Sometimes like Dante and Lenin, taking two steps forward and one backward, not because I am *going back* in the sense that I am receding, but in a way that allows me to step back and reflect on what I am actually doing. This is the way I imagine the walk of a condor, envisioning her flight, envisioning a change, aware of my dignified existence in spite of my still invisible status on a screen. But I may have been visible on another screen, the one you get by typing a code that brings all the ones "in process," "in between." I also appear on many other screens, in my friends' e-mail accounts, for example. So, the invisibility is only partial.

It took many painful moments for me to conceive of the idea that I had certain choices in my life. I have so much to be thankful for. I am alive. I am healthy. I have a roof over my head. I had breakfast this morning. I am studying. I am writing this right now. It's raining outside. I can smell la tierra mojada that transports me to the window of the dining room in my house in La Chala, where I would sit like a macetero, a flowerpot, (my mother would say) to see how the flowers and leaves hugged the rain.

Although some may consider my social reality simply the basic needs in life or the rights of every human being, when I look into the lives of other women and men around the globe, I see that I probably enjoy the "privileges" many people have been denied and continue to be deprived of. "Y el rico se hace más rico, y el pobre, se hace más pobre." "Y nadie te da nada de gratis. Siempre la gente quiere algo para ellos, y matan y hacen lo que sea por conseguirlo," and it is just another sad day in the world.

As an Ecuadorian living in the United States for almost a decade, as a woman meeting the external qualities of the idea of mestiza, many people in the United States would consider me a Latina. I'm still struggling with that imposed label. In a room full of Latina/os in Belchertown or Elmhurst, I can feel just as estranged as in one full of European Americans, African Americans, or Asian Americans. The friendships and com-

monalities I have found with so many immigrants, who know what it is to fill out an immigration form, create a new language that only we can understand.

The locality and specificity of my undocumented exile, *mi diáspora indocumentada* may not be much different from that of other immigrant women and men who may not be considered Latina/os, who may also speak English with an accent, but not a Spanish accent, with those who may speak neither English nor Spanish but also work without a social security number, and with those who have been used and abused. I envision solidarity among women that is based not on ethnicity but on the commonalities in our goals, our struggles, and our love.

I no longer attempt to dissociate myself from Ecuadorian cultures. Instead, I am beginning to understand our fragmented national identity. I am returning—in my skin—to Ecuador. Here, I remember Mario Benedetti's words:

ahora no me quedan más excusas
 porque se vuelve aquí
 siempre se vuelve.
 La nostalgia se escurre de los libros
 se introduce bajo la piel
 y esta ciudad sin párpados
 este país que nunca sueña
 de pronto se convierte en el único sitio
 donde el aire es mi aire

 Quizá mi única noción de patria
 sea esta urgencia de decir Nosotros
 quizá mi única noción de patria
 sea este regreso al propio desconcierto.⁷

I ignore the question of whether I will ever physically return to Ecuador. But that *desconcierto* is my home, *mi única patria*. It is not knowing what will happen, where I will be next week, next month, next year, what my brother and my sister are doing these days, whether I will ever catch up with all the things they have been doing the past ten years; I still wonder whether I will buy a one-way ticket to Ecuador if I am notified that my father is sick and dying. I have reached a point in the construction of my

otherness that allows me to come to terms with *my otherness within Latinidades and outside of them*: a part of me that has learned to feel at ease, despite many fears, in New York, Massachusetts, or other parts of the United States. And yet there is a part of me that was dormant, silenced, subdued by the numerous experiences that have shaped me. I have begun to accept the complexities within me where my love-hate relationship with Ecuador and the United States intersect with the love and absence of my mother. Anesthesia took her body from this world, but not her eyes looking out for me. She is here right now reading these words. I hear her voice. She is here right now. I hear a voice talking to her. It's my voice; I now recognize it. She is here right now, a part of me, of my self.

NOTES

1. From Juan Luis Guerra, "Visa para un sueño." *Grandes Exitos*, © 1996 Juan Luis Guerra y 440 and Karen Records.

2. Border city with Peru.

3. For the purposes of this paper, and as an Ecuadorian who lived in Ecuador, I will take the risk of making some generalizations about Ecuadorians living in Ecuador. Writing about Ecuador and Ecuadorians could easily be turned into a book-length project. It is not the purpose of this paper to actually delve into a detailed analysis/study of Ecuadorians living either in Ecuador or the United States, but rather, to reflect on a personal experience.

4. The educational rights have a long history of immigrant-rights activism that started in Chicago, and was a precedent that encouraged immigrant-rights politics in the City of New York.

5. At the time, sucre was the national currency. Since 1999, Ecuador uses the U.S. dollar as its national currency.

6. I am changing her name to protect her identity.

7. From Mario Benedetti, *Noción de Patria* (Buenos Aires, 1985), reprinted with permission of Guillermo Schavelzon & Assoc., Agencia Literaria. Translation by author. © 1985 Mario Benedetti.

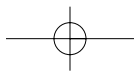
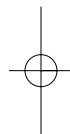
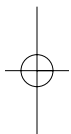
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15

ACCENT GENERACIÓNTechnological Choice and the Spanish Option in
Post-9/11 América*Ramón Solórzano, Jr.¹*

The latest reconceptualization of America by Latinos is a cultural map which is all border, like the inter-lingual speech (or Spanglish) of Chicanos and Nuyoricans.—Juan Flores, *Divided Borders*

Dialog América

America (no accent) encounters daily reminders of América,
of enclosure in a linguistic contact zone,
to hear *música* with one good ear paired with one tin ear.
¡*Vaya!* Will America, no accent, take notice?

Are rights still endowed
In a Constitution written in another language?
We the people, buscando América, speaking in silicon-coated tongues,
labeled *en tu idioma*, “our” own José’s,
we listen to our silent s’s in THX

Will globecradling satellite transmissions
offer Latina/os deliverance?,
household arrays that embed us in a criss-crossing
2+ Ghz web. Multi-coded. Multi-coated.
A monlingual din raised,
Dislocation courtesy of the dominant ear.

Intersecting within America,
What languages can you speak and call your own?

Meeting linguistic dislocation face to face
mouth to mouth,
is *verdaderamente* to inquire within . . .
o sea, from sea to shining . . . see,
from Quebec to Ciudad Juarez,
to ask Latina/os the same question about marginality.

People wearing linguistic marginality
like so many undergarments—
a necessary evil, daily changing, wearing thin,
revealed fully and freely
only to those who speak our languages,
unfiltered and honestly rendered
a fully colored multi-dialectical noise.

Ramón Solórzano, Jr. is a name that scarcely could have been imprinted faithfully onto my birth certificate when I was born. The accented vowels were undoubtedly unavailable in the assortment of available type-faces on the hospital's IBM Selectric that typically would have been used to print it. A similar form of cultural discontinuity has erased the accents from countless others named Ramón, María, José, and so on. Taking such erasure to be emblematic of deeper cultural processes of abridgment, how different is the situation today in an age of electronic voting machines and e-commerce?

I recall the first time I became acutely aware that my name carried accents. In day-to-day transactions with my father, I often played the role of designated translator, a role frequently given to English-language-accultured second-generation Latina/o daughters and sons. Countless times I watched the tip of my father's pen land sharply *once*, then *twice* on his signature, freshly written as always with a slow reverence on every check and bottom line he needed to sign. "¿Qué son esos puntos?" I asked. He responded matter of factly with something like "*Son necesarios*." Given his level of education, I'm not sure he could precisely articulate the rules for applying accent marks in Spanish, but he insisted on using them.

Yet these marks were not deemed *necesarios* to an elementary school teacher of mine, who first asked me to write my name. I wrote “R-a-m-o-n” (unaccented). Instead of observing my missing accent, the entire name apparently was unacceptable to her because she immediately suggested (and a suggestion is all a young child needs sometimes) that I change it to “R-a-y-m-o-n-d.” And so inscribed, I remained “Raymond.” Everybody loved “Raymond,” a contributing designator to the nominal Latino incognito I would become, until a new high school environment afforded me the opportunity to take at least one positive step forward (or back, depending on your perspective) to “Ramon” (still, no accent). Still, neither the newer typewriters nor the first personal computers replacing them at that time, seemed to let me render my name fully.

FROM *SE HABLA ENPAÑOL* TO “*EN ESPAÑOL*” YOUR “*EN TU IDIOMA*”

Today, the availability of tools and services in Spanish has reached unprecedented levels in the United States today. It does not seem so long ago that the handwritten “Se Habla Español” signs displayed in the storefronts of travel agencies and real estate offices gave potential Latina/o customers, like my own immigrant parents, some hope (too often unfulfilled) of encountering at least one fluent Spanish speaker with which to conduct business. Yet today, I frequently receive telemarketing calls that begin in Spanish from the first syllable uttered. Hispanic-targeted “junk” mail in Spanish arrives at home on an all too regular basis.² Not to mention that I have the option of obtaining automated airline flight status information interactively in Spanish if I “press 2.”

How is it that we seem to be transitioning from a period of *Se Habla Español* literacy to one *En (In) Español*, and what challenges do such changes present?

This moment raising Spanish to a new plateau with respect to English has been precipitated from the convergence of several economic, technical, and sociocultural developments. On a broader economic scale, the growth of multinational corporations since the 1970s and more recent international trade agreements such as NAFTA have placed language-related technologies and services squarely within the context of

economic globalization. Technical developments have sought to answer the increased demand for international communication and larger-scale media distribution that has accompanied the march of global capital. These include (a) the success of the personal computer and client-server network architectures, (b) lower costs of computing power, (c) the meteoric rise of the Internet, (d) advances in real-time automated language translation software, and (e) developments in related voice-recognition software and technology (not only in English, but also in other languages including Spanish).³

In the case of the United States, the attraction of the Spanish language to industry works on two axes, one radiating outward and one pointing inward. On the one hand, the Spanish language can serve as a medium of exchange with foreign Spanish-speaking countries, the majority of which exist in Latin America.⁴ Internally, communication in Spanish is seen as a vehicle by business for capturing a “hot” Hispanic market.

Before considering the deeper cultural implications of this nascent techno-cultural phenomenon, I will give a brief snapshot of a set of tools and services that, for the sake of discussion, I have characterized as the “Spanish Option.” The Spanish Option consists of an assemblage of human (e.g., interpreters, call-center representatives) and technological (e.g., TV and radio broadcasting networks, websites, computer programs, PCs, high-tech gadgets, video games, toys, electronic books) actors that I treat as techno-scientific network (Latour 1987). This Option seems to appear everywhere for technophiles and is becoming inevitable for the technophobic and dedicated technocritic. It offers a choice of Spanish-language interaction to perform an increasingly broad and mundane set of tasks. For the purposes of analysis, I have subdivided the Spanish Option into three functional and intersecting categories. The Spanish business option, the Spanish learning and entertainment option, and the Spanish communication option.

The Spanish business option dedicates hardware and software to process day-to-day commercial transactions: retrieving money from ATM machines, inquiring about a checking account balance by phone, setting up a VCR, deleting images from a digital camera, paying for groceries in an automated supermarket checkout lane, obtaining customer support for a newly purchased product. All of these provide aural and/or visual content in Spanish. Voice-messaging systems for credit card inquiries or airline reservations prompt: “For English, press one—*Para*

Continuar en Español, marque el dos.” On the Web, Yahoo! provides a Spanish-language interface as the local “U.S. in Spanish” option (along with U.S. in Chinese).⁵ Computer companies employ specialized call centers to handle customer requests in Spanish. Dedicated translation agencies provide combined automated-human solutions to a business’s document-translation needs.

A second category into which the Spanish Option can be divided is geared toward language entertainment and language learning. In terms of entertainment, one popular satellite TV provider, Dish Network, offers “Latino Max” packages that offer over twenty-five TV channels, several Spanish-language music channels, and pay-per-view channels “en Español” (see table 15.1).

The actual affiliation to Spanish-language consistency and “purity” varies greatly among these Latina/o-centric offerings. For SÍTV, a network that specifically caters to English-dominant Latina/os, the Spanish language appears mostly as a vestige limited to the name of the network itself.

Table 15.1. Sampling of Dish Network’s “Dish Latino” TV and Satellite Radio Offerings

TELEVISION

Majority Content in Spanish

CNN en Español	Cine Latino	De Película Clásico	Discovery en Español
Fox Sports en Español	Galavisión (Univision)	Gol TV	HITN
HTV	MTV Español	Mun2	Playboy en Español
SUR	TV Azteca	TV Española International	TV Chile
TV Colombia	Telefuturo Este, Oeste (Univision)	Telehit	Telemundo Oeste, Este
Toon Disney	Univisión Este, Oeste		

Patial Spanish Content

COLOURS

Majority Content in English

SÍTV

SATELLITE AUDIO

Fiesta Mexicana	Latin Styles	Latino Pop	Tejano
Viva Mariachi	SIRIUS Mexicana-Regional Mexican		

The lineup of TV channels with programming in Spanish includes new regionally targeted versions (East, West) of the early-entry networks (Univision, Telemundo); other networks of South American origin (TV Chile, TV Colombia); channels with a Pan-Latino approach (SUR); stations originally in English that have “internationalized” to provide Spanish-language and Latin-targeted content (CNN en Español; MTV Español); channels specializing in areas such as sports (Gol TV), pop music videos (Telehit), classic Mexican cinema (De Pelicula Clasico); stations with Spanish-translated audio (Discovery en Español, Toon Disney); channels where Spanish is one among several languages used (COLOURS); and a channel like SÍTV providing content geared toward English-dominant Latina/os. Major cable providers (Comcast, Viacom) and satellite providers (DirectTV) have similar, though not identical, Latino packages. Overall, the early dominance of Mexican-oriented content and standard Mexican dialects (for example on Univision) has been weakened significantly by emerging competition from other Latin American and Latina/o-directed stations in the U.S. market.

Beyond these dedicated Spanish-language and/or Hispanic-centered channels, Dish Network expands the Spanish language choices available to its customers by providing an “Alternate Audio” option (also available for French, German, Italian, or Japanese). The Alternate Audio feature allows viewers to tap into the Spanish-language audio feeds of channels like Lifetime and the Cartoon Network by default. Once chosen, these audio feeds will provide translated Spanish audio automatically for any stations providing this service.

As for learning Spanish, never before have as many instructional tools been available for acquiring Spanish-speaking skills in the United States. Channels like Hispanic International Television Network (HITN) teach a variety of subjects, including the language itself, in Spanish. Spanish dictionary and spell-checker devices are replacing pocket-sized books as language reference aids. For those desiring more than mere exposure and reference, developers of “computer-assisted language learning” (CALL) software provide increasingly interactive multimedia environments for learning the language. These almost universally assume the learner is a non-heritage speaker learning Spanish as a “foreign language.”

The goals of entertainment and learning Spanish become fused most clearly in the large variety of products marketed to children in the boy-

blue and girl-pink coded aisles of children's toy stores and departments, and on the Web at websites like SpanishToys.com, based in Tampa, Florida, and San Juan, Puerto Rico. This includes a host of software, video, music, toys, and assorted gadgets. At a press of a button, a version of Barbie recites numbers, colors, and common phrases first in English then in Spanish. Conejo Lector (Reader Rabbit) software teaches reading, science, math, spelling, and vocabulary from preschool through elementary. Entire seasons of *Los Picapiedras* (*The Flintstones*) may be purchased on DVD, as well as the popular Mexican children's television shows *El Chapulín Colorado* and *El Chavo del Ocho*. Vtech offers VT-Neo, a bilingual children's "computer" with dozens of activities for learning in Spanish, and Fisher Price sells a version of its Sing 'n Count Sheep toy that teaches numbers and colors, and sings songs like "Baa Baa Black Sheep" in Spanish.

The Spanish Option also appears in interfaces that are more purely dedicated to communication. Here I include Spanish interfaces in home and business telephones and voice-messaging systems, menu interfaces in computer operating systems and in the menus of peripherals like printers, and in interfaces in personal digital assistants (PDAs) like the popular Palm Pilot. Still limited mostly to a textual Spanish interface, these technologies are rapidly enabling us not only to read Spanish but also to listen to Spanish and to do so with greater facility than ever before, but there is much more to the story.

All the aforementioned facets of the Spanish Option are combining in an expanding horizon that, on the surface, seems to be placing Spanish beyond the distant-second-place presence it has maintained with respect to English. However, a closer examination of the state of the art reveals tensions inherent in this apparent incipient departure from the monolingualism that has long dominated the national ideology in the United States.

AN INADVERTENT HYBRIDITY IN AN EMERGING MEDIUM

Akin to a World's Fair that has been hastily constructed and is not fully ready for opening, the services that make up the Spanish Option in the

United States range widely in their quality, in their availability, and in the freedom of expression they present to their users. At times the Option is simply absent. As of this writing, some of the most frequented and exemplary websites, such as that of the U.S. Postal Service, do not possess such interfaces, though efforts in this direction are underway in many cases.⁶ One study of the Internet reported that in 1999 less than a quarter of all websites of U.S.-based companies even offered a choice of translated content into any language (Parr and McManus n.d.: 6).

When the Spanish Option is available, at times inaccurate, awkward, and/or incomplete interfaces clue the user in to the immaturity of the state of the art.

For example, a large portion of Spanish-language services in broadcasting are provided by what most would agree is the less-than-ideal format of dubbing in Spanish. Once the province of “foreign films,” content dubbed into Spanish from sources originally produced in English appears with increasing frequency today. The Hispanic International Television Network (HITN), for example, broadcasts a number of educational programs in dubbed in Spanish on everything from basic sketching to the solar system. Many *en Español* channels offer programming originally intended for an English speaking audience. Their translated audio matches what some other stations only provide through “closed captioning,” or a service that enables users to select an alternate audio feed by choosing the SAP (Second Audio Program) or equivalent switch on a VCR or cable/satellite receiver. The awkwardness of dubbed content to Latina/os is underscored by the mismatch between the lip movements and the audio in these films, documentaries, game shows, and cartoons produced originally in English. Dubbed content does provide a relatively inexpensive means of recycling and delivering existing programming otherwise unavailable to a Spanish-speaking audience. Undoubtedly, it is unlikely to ever completely disappear in a multilingual world. Yet more streamlined and authentic content *en Español* will likely be demanded by interested Latina/o consumers and English speakers.⁷

The Spanish Option is sometimes curiously peppered with non-native pronunciations. Occurring most often in smaller companies that have recently adopted a Spanish-language automated telephone interface, this phenomena consists of a highly Anglo-accented pronuncia-

tion of the Spanish Option prompt (Pah rah es pah nyol, oh pree mah ehl dose), followed by the native voices of a professionally produced third-party Spanish interface. The “entry point” voices in these Spanish Option systems appear to come from local employees, whose speech often bears a marked contrast in accent and “professional delivery” compared to the more polished language interface itself. Occasionally, an anglicized accent is accompanied by nonstandard usage, like the use of the familiar “opprime” instead of the more standard subjunctive “oprima” by the entry-point person of a major airline company I called recently.⁸

A phenomenon I call “partial translation media” also signals the transitional nature of the Spanish Option. For example, although I can conduct my relatively modest transactions in Spanish after inserting my debit/credit card in one of my local bank’s ATM machines, the advertisements enticing me to learn more about various bank services contain text in English and appear to be mere carryovers from the English interface. English is the only language available at a different local ATM machine used by the same bank. This device is manufactured by Diebold, Inc. (a division of which makes electronic voting systems) and uses older, character-based screens. At a local automated supermarket checkout aisle, I have taken the opportunity to scan items on a touch-screen system manufactured by Elo Touch Systems Inc., which announces the price of each scanned item in Spanish at a decibel level I self-consciously found “loud.” The menu interface on the screen presented a consistent Spanish interface, but the system worked in combination with a card-reading keypad (manufactured by a different company) whose interface was only available in English. Translations appear quite unevenly as well in the aforementioned dubbed-content television stations, mixing English audio commercials with Spanish audio programs, or even mixing the two languages within the same show.

Together, these various attempts at delivering the Spanish Option are producing inadvertent English-Spanish hybrid forms. These form a brand of technologically induced neo-Spanglish symptomatic of a changing linguistic landscape signaled by significant new applications of translation and language processing currently underway. For me to call this condition “technologically induced Spanglish” may seem like an assault on the designers of these systems. After all, are not simplicity and

consistency universally favored design goals? Designers may also resent the pejorative associations with “mixed” linguistic varieties like “Spanglish.” However, quite the contrary, as a fluent Spanglish speaker myself, I welcome this loosening of the grip with which a closed allegiance to English speaking has held this country. Yet I also wonder whether this is another situation in which the novelty associated with technological change is in some sense “ahead” of forces that would constrain linguistic diversity, even as Spanish and other languages are added to the set of available choices.

The novelty of linguistic hybridity may be contrasted with what is considered a uniform and standard linguistic composition. In terms of technological design, uniformity has been interpreted as a seamless interface offering a single language in a single prestigious dialect or accent. Traditionally, prestige has been granted to Spanish in the United States only when cast as a “foreign” language whose greatest expressions exist in standard dialects of select countries, preeminently the Castilian dialect of Spain, and secondarily standard dialects of Mexico, Argentina, and Colombia. Attempts to standardize the Spanish Option to a uniform Spanish delivery cling to these traditional language ideologies.

I will describe some websites that exhibit more uniformity through a “full Spanish immersion” approach. As of this writing, CNN.com offers Spanish as one of its “International Edition” portal options, along with German, Korean, Arabic, Japanese, and Turkish. Choosing Spanish provides a consistent and tailored Spanish-language interface. Choosing the *Tiempo* (Weather) link, for example, provides weather information for major Latin American cities. At Yahoo.com, clicking the aforementioned “U.S. in Spanish” Local Yahoo! choice does not simply provide direct translation into a word-for-word Spanish equivalent. Content instantly changes to news and entertainment custom-tailored to a Hispanic market. When I clicked the “U.S. in Spanish” link, the resulting screen included an image of a scantily clad Brazilian woman next to a link to “música brasileña” available from their Radio Launchcast service.⁹

Yet in many cases uniformity is achieved by way of framing Spanish and Spanish speakers as foreign entities. Thus U.S. Latina/os must often “pretend” to be residents of Spain or a Latin American country in order to get content translated into Spanish. For example, Dell, Inc. has been recognized as exemplary in its efforts at developing alternate language

support for its primary website (Parr and McManus n.d.). Dell's "Home" website enables a shopper to choose an alternate country or region of residence. When this author chose a predominantly Spanish-speaking country or region (Nicaragua, Puerto Rico), a full-fledged Spanish interface was indeed provided. However, this technique in general is precarious for actual purchases because pricing and other features may apply strictly to the non-U.S. country or region selected. As many Latina/os have lamented their invisibility in the programming of major Spanish-language networks such as Univision, they also appear left out in what we are witnessing as the initial stages of a Spanish Option moving toward greater uniformity.

THE SPANISH OPTION AND LINGUISTIC FREEDOM

The above overview of the Spanish Option leads to some basic questions that must be asked: Who is selecting and tuning into the Spanish Option? What is it enabling them to accomplish? Who stands to benefit most from the selection? Given the likelihood that Spanish-language interfaces in machines, in gadgets, on the Internet, in software, and in broadcasting will penetrate more deeply into the daily routines of all users, including Latina/os, will issues of linguistic and cultural freedom of expression be substantially enhanced with the advent of these technological developments? How will technological standards and linguistic standards currently being developed in laboratories, in cubicles, in homes, and "on the street" defend or deteriorate linguistic rights and the struggles for justice that underlie such rights? As the encounter between Spanish and English intensifies in the media and cyberspace, has language technology been employed, or will it be, in a manner that respects the rights of María and José to the full expression of their names, accents, dialects, languages, and unique voices?

While the answers to these questions are currently being negotiated, Latina/os and other historically underrepresented and oppressed groups have good cause for skepticism and vigilance in this arena. As research in the area of language ideology in colonial history has demonstrated, there have been many attempts to ignore and erase the languages of colonized and minority speakers though assimilation to standards established by

state and corporate interests. Despite the explicit recognition in company literature of the need for “cultural sensitivity,” “adapting to local needs,” and “placing the user first,” the homogenizing effects of capital accumulation present marked challenges for businesses to earnestly honor cultural differences through language.¹⁰

Still, resistance to linguistic oppression is never absent in such cases, and the same tools that attempt to distort or mask the tongues of linguistically marginalized have been used, and often can be adapted by them, to make their concerns known. The novelty of current relatively unregulated technologies (the early Internet was compared to the mythic “Wild West”) could conceivably provide a window of opportunity for those asserting language rights. At the same time, while access to the Spanish Option may in itself close off realms of possibility for Latina/os, alternative approaches that use older, outdated, and “underground” techno-scientific systems (what I have elsewhere called “technojunk”) remain viable avenues in the struggle of Latina/os to have a voice and impact (Solórzano, Jr. 2003).

THE SPANISH OPTION AND THE MAINTENANCE OF BORDERS POST-9/11

The question of language rights in connection with the Spanish Option can only be fully assessed considering its role in a U.S. geopolitical context that includes the outward reach of globalization, the watchful fortifications of the fight against terrorism, and the regional dynamics of Latinization across the Américas.

The discourse of global capital permeates the marketing literature and mission statements of several prominent Spanish Option vendors. One only needs to glance at the slogans of these companies to see how language and culture themselves are perceived as instruments of global corporate expansion. SDL International, a pioneering leader in the field, announces its principal goal as “e-nabling Global Business.” WorldLingo dedicates itself to the business of “Translation, Localization, and Globalization.” TRADOS corporation and Idiom Technologies like to use a term for a new type of software which they call a “global management system” to describe their products. Alis Technologies de-

clares that “the more globalization becomes an undeniable fact, the more language and culture are critical to international commerce, communications, and trade.”

The recurring narrative that can be composed from common themes in the advertising copy of these companies and reads as follows:

The growth of the Web and global e-business has created a huge demand for translation. To take advantage of worldwide market opportunities, U.S. companies must communicate with non-English-speaking customers, suppliers, distributors, and employees. This is imperative for e-commerce now that non-English speakers are beginning to outnumber Anglophones on the Internet. The pressures arising for increased interlingual communication will likely result in significant investment and improvement in these technologies in the coming decades.

In the case of Spanish, this characterization positions the Spanish language primarily as a foreign language through which access may be gained to markets in Spanish-speaking countries, which are concentrated in Latin America, though some recognition of its use in the United States is beginning to surface.

At the same time that improved language translation has gained the attention of business leaders as a neglected component of sustained growth, recent international conflicts have highlighted its role as an important factor for international security. The ink had barely dried on two reports by market forecaster IDC forecasting robust growth in globalization software, when the events of September 11, 2001, significantly altered the direction and significance of these technologies (PC Newswire 2001).

Linguistic skills, military intelligence, and technological advances have gone hand in hand from time immemorial (Kahn 1996). Military strategy necessarily involves coding sensitive internal communications and decoding potentially relevant enemy communications, both of which involve skills in foreign natural languages as well as cryptanalysis of various codes. The initial enthusiasm for investing research into machine translation (MT) in the United States sprung from successes in code breaking during World War II:

Soon after the first appearance of “electronic calculators” research began on using computers as aids for translating natural languages. The begin-

ning may be dated to a letter in March 1947 from Warren Weaver of the Rockefeller Foundation to cyberneticist Norbert Wiener. Two years later, Weaver wrote a memorandum (July 1949), putting forward various proposals, based on the wartime successes in code breaking, the developments by Claude Shannon in information theory and speculations about universal principles underlying natural languages. Within a few years research on machine translation (MT) had begun at many U.S. universities, and in 1954 the first public demonstration of the feasibility of machine translation was given (a collaboration by IBM and Georgetown University). Although using a very restricted vocabulary and grammar it was sufficiently impressive to stimulate massive funding of MT in the United States and to inspire the establishment of MT projects throughout the world. (Hutchins n.d.)

Translation and military intelligence are again paired in the contemporary conflicts. Soon after the events of 9/11, it became clear that the U.S. intelligence community severely lacked translators skilled in the Middle Eastern languages that so quickly became the center of anti-terrorist focus. In October of that year, a call went out by the U.S. Department of Defense for contractors to bid on contracts for using various technologies to combat terrorism. Alongside requests for bids on technologies for detecting and neutralizing weapons of mass destruction were some items related to language processing and translation. A “Voice Print Identification” category sought to “develop a system to use voice prints to locate, track, and correlate suspected terrorists and their associates” (Technical Support Working Group (TSWG) 2001). The first category of technology listed, item R-101, dealt with systems for incorporating Pashto, Urdu, Farsi, Arabic dialects, and other minor Middle Eastern and central/south Asian languages into an existing Automated Speaker Recognition System.¹¹

It is striking how political, economic, and cultural divisions can make even an unaltered natural language perform as a secret code that is as effective to intelligence as the most advanced computer-aided scripts. The historical marginalization of American Indians is precisely what made the Navajo language so advantageous to Marine communications in the Pacific during World War II (Takaki 2000). Similarly, divisions between Middle Eastern Islamic societies and the United States have enabled languages like Urdu to function in insular domains and have placed a premium on translation skills in Middle Eastern languages.

The current international situation creates a climate of tension between the assertion of international commerce and the insertion of linguistic surveillance in which providers and users of the Spanish Option find themselves. Both fields can be played simultaneously. Some of the same companies that are providing the Spanish Option are providing language-based security options to the military. While anti-U.S. terrorist networks have not been linked significantly to Spanish-speaking countries, although some cases of authorities profiling Spanish speakers who phenotypically “look Middle Eastern” have been reported, Spanish speakers in this country are not seen as terrorist threats. However, a reassertion of xenophobia, racism, sexism, classism, and other forms of bigotry and intolerance in the name of “national security” does present a challenge with which Spanish and non-Spanish speakers must be concerned. Language, in its role as a means for establishing and maintaining borders, is never far from politics, and likewise the current political climate has implications for the adoption and development of the technologies and services that make up the Spanish Option.

In a controversial article in the journal *Foreign Policy*, Samuel Huntington, cofounder of the journal and chairman of the Harvard Academy for International and Area Studies, provides one of the clearest examples of how nativist fears, arguably tinged with racism, are manifested as policies that would restrict linguistic rights.¹² Huntington’s vision of America is that of a nation with a “core Anglo-Protestant culture” whose key characteristics include the English language, Christianity and religious commitment, English concepts of the rule of law, and a Protestant work ethic. While admitting that this core has been altered by immigration, Huntington’s primary goal is to preserve that core, and he sounds the alarm that Hispanic immigration poses a significant threat to its integrity. A host of critiques have noted how he fails on several fronts. First, the “core culture” he advances is narrowly conceived and rigid. Even granting some validity to his claims about such a culture, his argument becomes self-contradictory when he fails to accurately assess the ways in which many Mexican immigrants *do* conform in some respects to the profile of an English-speaking, Christian, law-abiding, and hard-working people who identify as Americans. At the same time he clouds the broader historical circumstances that make the United States responsible for promoting

illegal Latina/o immigration as a de facto means of securing, and often exploiting, cheap labor. Instead, Huntington relies on the selective use of data and an arguably racist demographic discourse (Krause 2001; Santa Ana 2002) replete with “flooding” metaphors and references to wild “fertility rates” to lay the blame for various national problems squarely on the shoulders of a specific ethnic group and a specific language he reductively associates with that group.

This latter association of language to ethnic group is of primary concern here. Huntington’s monolithic understanding of language leads to a reactionary stance against linguistic change and curiously pits him against fellow conservatives who see the Hispanic market as a prime business opportunity. For Huntington, linguistic diversity, like population diversity, is just fine—as long as the contributors to diversity occupy a fractional position of power. Using statistics selectively chosen to suggest Mexican population growth is overwhelming the existing population of cities and regions of the United States, questionable in itself, Huntington then makes the leap that the Spanish language is similarly in the process of eradicating the use of English. What must be emphasized here is that any language, including English, is never static and solidly fixed to a given nation and speech community. Just as many languages were spoken and undergoing change when the Declaration of Independence and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo were being written (including African-based languages, American Indian languages, various European languages, and Spanish), numerous dialects of English also flourished. There is no single English language or Anglo-Protestant culture, nor single Spanish language or Hispanic culture. There are, however, powerful interests who see the fluidity of language as threatening and who seek a means for setting up borders between people and linguistic interaction.¹³

Huntington finds fault with business groups that he sees as supporting bilingualism in an attempt to corner the Hispanic market. In this version of linguistic border patrol, the Spanish language as a whole is rejected as a polluting influence on national unity. Here, María’s diacritic is not only shaved off, but she just as well should change her name to Mary and forget about Spanish grammar altogether, even if it might help her make a living as a Spanish interpreter in a hospital clinic.

Ironically, an all-or-nothing approach to citizenship via English blinds those with Huntington’s view from a finer level of inquiry which is also

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adverse to linguistic diversity, one in which particular norms regarding the Spanish language and Spanish speakers are favored over others. Diversity, and the insights of politically engaged difference engendered by it, suffer in this instance, even as “the Spanish language” is advocated and supported for a Latina/o market. Referring to the language policy of a major Spanish-language television network, Dávila argues:

The industry’s promotion of so-called generic Spanish has been accompanied by the privileging of some accents over others. Mexican upper-class Spanish, supposedly devoid of regional accents, rather than Hispanic Caribbean or South American Spanish, has thus become tantamount to “generic Spanish.” What also merits attention, however, is that the stations’ preoccupation with language purity has led to the inauspicious containment of language difference among U.S. Latinas, for whom language is not solely an issue of different Spanish accents . . . Yet on the networks it is only “correct” Spanish that is reciprocally and symbiotically connected to a Hispanic/Latina identity. Spanish is thus used in a way that “corrects” rather than validates people’s linguistic repertoires. (2001: 167)

**GLOBALIZATION AND
THE CLASH OF LATINIZATIONS**

Much as the mere presence of a person of color in an organization’s brochure does not alone make it a de facto equal-opportunity employer, the inclusion of a Spanish-language option alone does not ensure that linguistic expression will be adequately addressed and respected. Thus the attention focused on the delivery of translated-language content, much of it in Spanish, does not mean that defenders of the rights of linguistic minorities, especially Latina/o defenders, can consider their cause won. As Dávila has shown in her analysis of the complex set of factors that come into play in processes of Latinization through Hispanic marketing in the United States, mere visibility must be scrutinized:

What we cannot assume, however, is that language and cultural visibility always equate with social gains or political entitlements. As Santiago-Irizaray (2001) notes in her critique of language visibility as a measure of Latina acceptance, the apparently widespread use of Spanish in public

life, such as in urban signs, is less an expression of inclusion than an instrument for organizing everyday life: the direction or containment of populations in their own language does not equate with their ostensible acceptance or inclusion. Neither should we forget that, as noted by Flores and Yudice (1993), the commercial use of Spanish is not about the recognition of Latinas but about constructing them as consumers . . . Specifically, we need to inquire whether Spanish TV networks actually enlarge the idea of who and what is considered an American, and promote a more complex view of what it means to be Hispanic/Latina in the United States, or whether, instead, it helps to validate dominant norms of good American citizenship in ways that reproduce rather than challenge the race/class and gender norms of U.S. society. (2001: 166–167)

Dávila goes beyond mere visibility by examining how marketers have constructed the image of Latina/os in marketing literature and in broadcast images. She found instances where marketers slip into the use of generalizations and long-standing stereotypes that, while delineating a specific identity, contribute to social inequalities. For example, a typical Hispanic has been cast as a “family-oriented, Catholic, traditional, conservative, and immigrant Spanish-speaking individual” who “prefers audio-visual media.” (2001: 60). Comparing the approaches toward Latino identity between the two Spanish-language television networks Univision and Telemundo, Dávila demonstrates how the drive to outline a specific Latino identity shortchanges the reality of U.S.-Latino experience, particularly for second and third generation Latinos. Neither wholly Spanish dominant and bound to Latin American tradition nor fully invested in American ideals of upward class mobility, many such Latina/os are at odds with such advertising models.

Another way of approaching this dichotomy between the construction and delivery of Spanish and Spanish speakers on the part of marketers and the lived reality of language among Latina/os is to see it as a manifestation of the tension between what Laó-Montes has called *Latinization* from above and *Latinization* from below. In general, *Latinization* is “a power process of social differentiation and cultural production.” As such, it entails the production of *Latinidad* “by both the dominant powers and the subordinate social sectors.” Thus, *Latinization* from below “refers to the processes of Latino self-fashioning that arise from resistance against marginality and discrimination and as expressions of a de-

sire for a definition of self and an affirmative search for collective memory and community. The main agencies for Latinization from below are social movements and community institutions” (Laó-Montes and Dávila 2001). Latinization from above, “at the other end, results from “practices of othering (classification and homogenization) racialized and ethnicized populations by governmental, corporative, and intellectual discourses” (2001: 17).

In terms of the Spanish Option, Latinization from above fetishizes Latina/os and the Spanish language by placing them in highly circumscribed boundaries to suit the needs of capital and the forms of oppression based on notions of race, gender, class, and other social categories. Left unchecked by the demands of a given market or activist intervention, capital formation tends to erase difference and produce the most sanitized, standardized, and easily reproducible product, in this case, language and speaker representations. “Spanish,” under these constraints, tends to be defined in monolithic terms, with a limited set of linguistic variation present, and “Spanish speakers” often appear as a sanitized, whitened, and “safe” population.

Under processes of Latinization from below, Latina/os employ the Spanish Option to assert their own distinct forms of linguistic diversity and to maintain their linguistic and human rights. They occur in bilingual classrooms, community technology centers, clinics, community access television stations, and in a myriad of under-investigated day-to-day interactions with technology where people assert their rights to speak and read Spanish and Spanglish in public and/or see their own particular dialect represented accurately and respectfully.

INVESTIGATING THE SPANISH OPTION: AN ELUSIVE NEXUS BETWEEN THE TWO CULTURES AND ACROSS THREE DISCIPLINES

As the foregoing discussion makes clear, the technologies and services that make up the Spanish Option are embedded in a sociopolitical context that requires that they be investigated more than as just bits of hardware, software, textual fragments, and images. As Dávila and Sandoval-Sánchez (Sandoval-Sánchez 1999) demonstrate, the analysis of widely dispersed

phenomena such as television advertising and theatrical productions require a broad spectrum of analysis that includes both a Latinization from above, or “studying up,” component and a Latinization from below component. In other words they require a close examination of the privilege enjoyed by the producers of images and artifacts that circulate widely in society, as well as the ways in which Latina/os and others with less privilege and power cope with the level of access denied them.

CONCLUSION

While Samuel Huntington responds to the statistic that “José” replaced “Michael” as the most popular name for newborn boys in both California and Texas in 1998 with “trepidation,” and as electronic voting machines in India, Venezuela, and the United States offer citizens choices in multiple languages, the Spanish Option is playing itself out as a unique techno-cultural American experiment in translation challenging U.S. national linguistic prejudices. An informed cultural citizenry would do well to consider those who do not officially have the right to vote and how much choice is actually being offered by the multiple selections of *La Opción en Español/The Spanish Option*.

NOTES

1. This article is dedicated in memory of Gloria Anzaldúa (1942–2004), who taught us many lessons about attempts to tame wild tongues.

2. I recall a brief skit of comedian Paul Rodriguez parodying the ultra-heavily Anglo-accented Spanish of a Euro-American physician who greedily solicited Spanish-speaking patients with “se habla Español.” I immediately recognized this fitting with a number of such commercials by used-car salesmen in my youth.

3. For a comprehensive collection of materials related to machine translation, see the website dedicated to it (as a subtopic of natural language) provided by the American Association for Artificial Intelligence: www.aai.org/AITopics/html/machtr.html#global, accessed July 29, 2004.

4. Many market researchers have rated Latin America well behind Europe and Japan in market potential for machine translation, but increasing trade

agreements across the Americas and the spread of technology in these countries could significantly change this picture.

5. As of this writing, the Yahoo! Local options are organized continentally into the categories “Europe, Asia Pacific, Américas.” Under these groupings are links to non-English interfaces according to nation (Spain), region (UK and Ireland), language (Catalan), and disputed territory (Taiwan). The United States falls under the Américas categorized by two languages: “U.S. in Spanish” and “U.S. in Chinese.”

6. I included eBay and Amazon.com among the list of sites without interfaces in the first draft of this piece but found that they had both added content in Spanish during preparation. eBay had added a “Global Sites” section that included Spanish sites for doing business from several Latin American countries, and Amazon.com had included an “International” tab leading to a “Spanish/Espanol” section offering books, CDs, video games, and computer products (native and translated) in Spanish. Also, my main local post office has just added an ATM-like machine offering service “en Español.”

7. The concept of dubbing is stretched to the limits when, for example, people are employed to translate the soundtrack of the sex acts appearing on Playboy en Español, complete with the translated exhortations of staged mechanical love-making. The description for this channel reads: “With a commitment to providing the Spanish-speaking audience with targeted and high-quality entertainment, Playboy offers its popular adult programming with a Latin accent.” Web source: www.dishnetwork.com/content/programming/channels/index.asp?NetwID=50452, accessed July 30, 2004.

8. Call made to Delta Song domestic reservation system (1-800-359-7664) on August 8, 2004. Exact text: “Para Español, dime ‘Español,’ o oprime el nueve.” A similar phenomenon occurs in all English voice-messaging systems where the “local” voice persists among the “canned” voices available globally to all customers. At other times, attempting authenticity, the initial greeting of a Spanish interface is uttered by a native-speaking company employee whose voice, and more importantly accent, is clearly distinct from that of the third-party Spanish interface.

9. As of June 9, 2004, note that Yahoo! offers three major “Local Yahoo!” regions: Europe, Asia Pacific, and Americas with local language support. In fact, Yahoo! actively invites speakers of other languages to contribute to translating the Yahoo! interface into their language.

10. After the infamous case of the introduction of the Chevrolet “Nova” in Latin America, cross-cultural communication has become institutionalized to some extent for MBA students and corporations through course instruction and consultants specifically dedicated to this topic. This topic covers linguistic and cultural differences often with the specific goal of facilitating business dealings

and maximizing profit. See *Intermedio*, the journal *Intercultural Communication* from the University of British Columbia Centre for Intercultural Communication, www.stephweb.com/forum/.

11. The political implications of translation in intelligence have recently gained media attention in the case of Sibel Edmonds. She is a Turkish-American translator who claims to have been silenced and dismissed from the FBI after attempting to call attention to errant translation practices that she claims could have played a role helping to prevent the attacks on 9/11 and add to national security in the aftermath.

12. Huntington's article is introduced on the cover of the magazine with the phrase "José Can You See?" an example of what Hill describes as "mock Spanish," a covert form of racist discourse. Contrast Sandoval-Sánchez's reappropriation of this phrase in his analysis of Latin American stereotypes on Broadway.

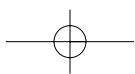
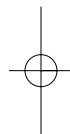
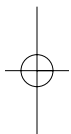
13. Huntington's claim of a national attachment to the English language from the time of the nation's founding is contradicted by historical accounts: In contrast to the views of critics of bilingual education like U.S. senator S. I. Hayakawa, Urciuoli notes:

English in the United States was not always seen in quite such ideologically monolithic terms (Marshall 1986, Heath 1992 [1976]). The linguistic philosophy of the architects of the founding institutions was to leave local languages alone so as not to encourage a destabilizing separatism by giving people a political cause around which to rally. In fact, several founding fathers were unhappy with the idea of language pluralism but treated it as the lesser of two evils. (Urciuoli 1996: 36).

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16

A BRIDGE TO BROWN

Politics and Theory of Latin@ Reading

Isabel Espinal

It is a kind of possession, reading. Willing the Other to abide in your present. His voice, mixed with sunlight, mixed with Saturday, mixed with my going to bed and then getting up, with . . . —Richard Rodriguez, *Brown: The Last Discovery of America*

Whose books do I read? Whose books do we read? How do we define, and not delimit, our community?—Susan Guera, *This Bridge We Call Home*

Is this what others feel when they read *This Bridge [Called My Back]*? Did reading this book radically alter their lives too?—AnaLouise Keating, *This Bridge We Call Home*

I say: read and listen. We may, then, have something to share.”
—Judith Moshkovich, *This Bridge Called My Back*

Chela Sandoval argues that reading power is one of the “technologies that embody and circumscribe identities necessary for recognizing power and changing its conditions on behalf of equalizing power between socially and psychically differing subjects” (Sandoval 2002: 23–24). Yet reading has been little studied in terms of Latino identity and politics. In this paper I examine Latin@¹ reading in relation to

Latin@ power and theory. The methodology is to uncover ideologies of Latin@ reading through analysis of what can be called Latin@ readerly texts. These texts are starting points for uncovering major ideas regarding Latino reading. Using Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa's *This Bridge Called My Back* and Richard Rodriguez's *Brown* as catalysts, the paper will touch on the metaphor of "brown" through Latino reading. It will also look at how Latino reading highlights whiteness within Latino identity. From the perspective of Latino librarianship, the discussion will consider the idea of "dangerous" reading, with *Brown* as an example of a dangerous text. It will look at how the non-reading of Latino texts results in greater power for the dominant group, so that contrary to the slogan "knowledge is power," in many cases it is the ignorance of the non-Latino reader that is associated with power. The politics of language is one area where ignorance through non-reading has reigned to the detriment of subaltern Latinos, but greater power for hegemonic cultures (such as whiteness) and ruling elites.

"Readerly" texts are self-conscious about the role of the reader/audience and discuss reading within the texts. Readerly texts both theorize reading as well as provide testimonial data regarding reading. By reading some Latino readerly books that both embrace and resist the Latino label, we can learn about reading and audience in relation to Latino writing. These works examine the intersection of cultural location and ethnic identity construction vis-à-vis cultural reception. They shed light on the concept of the Latina/o reader, understood both as the reader who is Latina/o as well as the reader of Latina/o texts. This paper takes up the issue of reading traditions and explores, as a counterpoint to Richard Rodriguez's 2002 *Brown: The Last Discovery of America*, the anthologies *This Bridge Called My Back* (1981) and its 2002 sequel *This Bridge We Call Home*. With the addition of Rodriguez's first book *Hunger for Memory: The Education of Richard Rodriguez* (1982), a chronological and cultural reading matrix develops showing important convergences and divergences in Latino reading and political practice. Certain common metaphors and concerns emerge, including brown, borders, and bridges. All four of these books have been concerned with the borders of ethnic and Latino literature and with the placement of brown writers in the greater literary community and in institutions such as bookstores and libraries. This Latino reading and politics goes beyond

Latinos ourselves as a category, and implicates other communities who have had power over Latino lives. The different representations of Latinidad also imply contending projects of Latina/o studies and distinct ways of reading and writing Latina/o history, culture, and politics.

Mainstream theories and popular U.S. thinking on ethnicity have left much to be desired in explicating the situation of Latinos. So Latino writers have independently come up with various metaphors to describe our situations, including borders, bridges, even mambo (Laó-Montes and Dávila 2002). Rodríguez joins this tradition without referencing it. He posits the color brown as a metaphor for the future of the United States and for the past of Latin America. Brown is the true “gray” area between black and white as racial categories. Rodríguez states: “I eulogize a literature that is suffused with brown, with allusion, irony, paradox—ha!—pleasure . . . You will find brown in this book as the cement between leaves of paradox” (2002: xi). Rodríguez’s writing style often beautifully brings out the pleasures of paradox. Contradictory words blend into each other, oxymorons play themselves out across the pages. High-brow and low-brow are purposely juxtaposed to great effect. Words are transformed. The word *brown* itself is used in myriad ways, even as an adverb: brownly. This sense of play and pleasure also furthers Rodríguez’s compelling discussions of sexuality and the erotic, which are fused with politics, history, and sociology. He observes, “In light of post-modern America’s obsession with sex, it is remarkable how reluctant we are to sexualize American history” (2002: 132).

In the American classroom we preach the Canadian gospel of cultural relativism until every head nods with boredom: *Celebrate diversity. Unity through diversity. Mahala. Yo!* But after school we become more like Mexicans: The Filipina flirts with the African American. Difference is danger; danger is sexy. (2002: 164)

But what about the pain of brown’s origins, the rape and violence? Most of us need not go far to find racial violence, regardless of our particular national origin. This is knowledge that Latin@ readers are likely to bring to the book which “colors” our reading. The knowledge or lack of it that *other* readers might bring to *Brown* will influence how it is read and *acted* upon.

Rodriguez sees himself, and by analogy Latin@s in general, as “the third man,” the third racial category between black and white that undermines any notion of a fixed race. He states that in the fifties as a child “I remember wondering what my brown would have meant to Little Rock, how my brown would have withstood Little Rock” (2002: 50). During that same time period of Rodriguez’s childhood, an adult Dominican woman poet, Aída Cartagena Portalatín, made similar musings—“de su vientre nacieron siete hijos/ que serían en Dallas, Memphis o Birmingham un problema racial/(ni blancos ni negros)” (2000: 207)—in a work that very few readers, even Latino readers, would know because of the marginalization of Dominican literature, a marginalization finally being addressed by non-Dominican critics (Arnold 1994: xiv). That I would know this comes from my being a Dominican reader who at points in my life has sought the literature of other Dominicans, something Rodriguez might strongly disapprove of. Yet reading Rodriguez’s words, I was immediately brought to the Cartagena Portalatín poem. Thus I have a different reading “repertoire” from other readers, to use Wolfgang Iser’s term. Like another reader-response critic, Stanley Fish, we may ask who the interpretive community of *Brown* is. Or we can try to see how various communities interpret *Brown*. This is Jacqueline Bobo’s approach in regarding middle-class black women as an interpretive community. Inspired by Rodriguez, we can ask if there are brown readers and white readers. Surely, brown readers will come to *Brown* and leave *Brown* with different readings from white readers.

Rodriguez asserts, “It is that brown faculty I uphold by attempting to write brownly”(2002: xi). And yet there is something very unbrown about the writing in this book, something very “white” indeed. In this way Rodriguez utilizes what Helán Enoch Page refers to as “ideological whiteness.” Like Rodriguez’s use of brown, white can be used as a metaphor, as a term for a set of cultural practices, and not with the intention of stating that there exist any essentially or biologically white characteristics. Yet, as scholars and communities of color have demonstrated, white certainly exists as an ideology that has oppressed brown people and been dismissive of brown communities. Rodriguez’s writing is white at those times when he is dismissive of other brown writers, other brown people, other brown ideas. Ironically, in *Brown*, it is as if the particular brown traditions did not exist, as if Rodriguez had no

brown colleagues and no brown community. He writes as if he is making revelations that no one has thought of; yet his ideas have actually been discussed in communities of color for years. Which begs the question, who is *Brown* written for? If it is written for everyone, if it includes Chicanos, how is it that Rodriguez can get away with writing, “Surviving Chicanos (one still meets them) . . .”? (2002: 108). In his review of *Brown*, Ilan Stavans points out the history of brown as a concept in Latino history: “But the term ‘brown’ has specific political connotations as well. It is, to a large extent, a byproduct of the civil rights era, the era of César Chávez and the Young Lords, coined in reaction to the black-and-white polarity that played out in Washington policy corridors and the media.”

Rodriguez is very concerned with where books are located in bookstores and libraries: “How a society orders its bookshelves is as telling as the books a society writes and reads” (2002: 11). Has he not read books by writers of color, also known as brown writers, because they are shelved in the Latino section or in the women’s section, or in the gay and lesbian section, as opposed to some “universal” section? He confesses: “I trusted white literature because I was able to attribute universality to white literature, because it did not seem to be written for me” (2002: 27). Thus he buys into the idea of the public sphere as a white (not brown) sphere, without critiquing the political oppression that is created in this white public space, to use the term coined by Page. At various times in the book, Rodriguez complains that libraries and bookstores segregate books by ethnicity, but why should that stop him or anyone else from actually *reading* the books? Librarians know that many readers of color have a very different reaction from Rodriguez to the shelving question. Many readers ask for a Latino section or a black books section or other sections. Such is the hunger *they* (we) have for books that are written for them (us).

In 1982, when Rodriguez’s first book, *Hunger of Memory: The Education of Richard Rodriguez*, was published, you could have forgiven him for not knowing about books such as *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, published a year earlier and edited by Latina writers Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa. Like his book, *This Bridge* has also become a standard in Latino studies. It makes an interesting point of comparison to *Brown*, as it foreshadows

many of the ideas in *Brown*. However, twenty years later, when *Brown* comes out, there is no excuse for Rodriguez. Rodriguez's conservative politico-ideological positioning lies underneath his lack of recognition of Latino writings paradoxically at the same time that he claims and proclaims brownness.

The essays and poems in the Moraga and Anzaldúa anthology addressed many of the same contradictions that Rodriguez addresses in *Brown*: the rigidity and absurdity of essentializing identities and thinking of categories such as lesbian, Chicana, feminist, American as mutually exclusive; the racial differences and diversity within any of the categories, such as Chicano and black and gay. There is even an essay titled "Brownness," by Andrea Canaan. In 1981, Aurora Levins Morales's essay addressed sexuality and its cultural and political implications, a theme of Rodriguez in 2002 (Rodriguez 2002: 58–59). Likewise, the 2002 *This Bridge We Call Home* also touches on many of the themes in *Brown*, including the erotic, as in Chela Sandoval's foreword, where she states "sex is perhaps the most charged of all [contested issues]. For only in freeing our erotics as readers, writers, activists, thinkers, spiritualists, lovers, bodies can we fully engage this methodology of emancipation" (2002: 26). The books also have in common that they both resist and embrace the Latino label: *Brown* does so explicitly by embracing, in tongue-in-cheek fashion, the label Hispanic over Latino; *This Bridge[s]* by using the terms Latina and Latino repeatedly but by also critiquing the ways it dissolves differences between Latino groups lumped in this category and by often embracing the woman of color identity over Latino. Like *Brown*, *This Bridge Called My Back* was also interested in readership and in the availability of the book to the reading public: "We want the book in libraries, bookstores, at conferences, and union meetings in every major city and hole in the wall in this country." Also, like *Brown*, *This Bridge* was against the fragmentation of audiences and against being ghettoized as a book that was just for minorities: "We envision the book being used as a *required* text in most women's studies courses. And we don't just mean 'special' courses on Third World Women or Racism" (2002: lvi).

These books differ from Rodriguez's book in many ways, however. They are written and published in community, as anthologies presenting not just one [brown] voice but many voices. Another major difference is that while the essays in both *This Bridge[s]* often elaborate brutally hon-

est critiques of the communities the authors are from, they still affirm community in a communal way, with an emphasis on many types of community, from very local to global. A common theme in *This Bridge[s]* is how to create communities whose energies are focused on inclusion, not exclusion, to the extent that even white has a place in a people of color project, a controversial move which Gloria Anzaldúa discusses in the preface of *This Bridge We Call Home*: “To include white is not an attempt to restore the privilege of white writers, scholars, and activists; it is a refusal to continue walking the color line” (2002: 4). Thus the matrix of books advocates diametrically opposed political projects. In the case of Rodriguez, the political project is aligned with Republican conservative individualism that relegates Latino culture and language to the private sphere. In contrast, the two *Bridge* books are predicated on the complex unity of an emerging political community founded in fighting a diversity of forms of oppression (sexual, gender, class, imperial/colonial, racial-ethnic).

Rodriguez asks, “What of white then? . . . White is an impulse to remain innocent of history” (2002: 139). In *Brown*, he mockingly points to the contradictory position of a light-skinned Latina calling herself a person of color (2002: 128, 136). In her essay “La Güera,” which appeared in *This Bridge Called My Back*, Cherríe Moraga had years earlier addressed the privileges that come with her own light skin, while not denying that it was still possible to be a light-skinned person of color. Mirtha Quintanales also took up this theme: “I am a bit concerned when a Latina lesbian sister generalizes about/puts down the ‘white’ woman—especially if she herself has white skin. In the midst of this labeling, might she not dismiss the fact of her own white privileges” (Moraga 2002: 170).

However, Moraga also addressed the fluidity and contextual nature of whiteness in the preface: “A few days ago, an old friend said to me how when she first met me, I seemed so white to her. I said in honesty, I used to feel more white . . . But at the meeting last night, dealing with white women here on this trip, I have felt so very dark” (2002: xlvii). Similarly, in her poem “For the Color of My Mother,” Moraga wrote, “I am a white girl gone brown” (2002: 10).

Other writers, especially Latin@ writers, have done the same. Their positions do not necessarily contradict Rodriguez’s points. It is Rodriguez himself who seems to take the notion of “white” skin a bit too

literally. Perhaps if he were to apply his own brown theory, he could see how a Latin@ could be simultaneously white in skin color and a person of color in a cultural sense. In this moment, Rodriguez fails in his attempt to write brownly. In 1981, Levins Morales stated, "Writing this I am browner than I have ever been. Spanish ripples on my tongue and I *want* the accent" (1981: 55). In *This Bridge We Call Home*, writer Tatiana de la Tierra also takes up this theme explicitly: "One day, as an adult, upon hearing the words for the first time, I instinctively identified with being a 'woman of color,' even though I am racially white. My alliances were not with white culture or politics; my experience as an immigrant in this country Othered and de-whited me" (2002: 359). In the multi-racial mix that are the two versions of *This Bridge*, it is Latina writers who most consistently articulate the lived experience of being physically white while feeling culturally and politically brown.

On the other hand, the writers in *This Bridge* also spoke of the process of being whitened and of its unacknowledged pain. Moraga wrote, "Everything about my upbringing (at least what occurred on a conscious level) attempted to bleach me of what color I did have" (2002: 25). Quintanales: "Yes, lighter-than-black skin color *may* confer on some ethnic minority women the option of becoming 'assimilated' . . . but is this really a privilege when it always means having to become invisible, ghost-like, identity-less, community-less, totally alienated? The perils of 'passing' as white American are perils indeed" (2002: 171). Barbara Cameron admonished herself for not trusting white, but she also provided the context for this distrust:

I spent a part of my childhood feeling great sadness and helplessness about how it seemed that Indians were open game for white people, to kill, maim, beat up, insult, rape, cheat, or whatever atrocity the white people wanted to play with . . . Because of experiencing racial violence, I sometimes panic when I'm the only non-white in a roomful of whites. (2002: 48–49)

Of course Rodriguez is not alone in his lack of reference to brown writers, in particular to Latino writers. As the writers of *This Bridge* pointed out years ago, even "progressive" writers are guilty of this. The lack of reference to Latino thought is very blatant in the last few years that discussions of hybridity, mixture, and post-ethnicity have been in

vogue. For example, David Hollinger's book *Postethnic America: Beyond Multiculturalism*, seems to take Latino ideas without giving credit or even mentioning Latino authors who've posited similar ideas—many going back to the nineteenth century. Given the presentation of both Hollinger and Rodriguez as highly self-conscious of their supposed originality, the reader of Rodriguez and Hollinger is implicitly assumed not to have read these Latino authors, otherwise the reader will question the claim to originality. Ignorance is tolerated and rewarded. On the other hand, consider the phenomenon pointed out by media scholar Ang-harad Valdivia, who writes of a "quandary experienced by women of color audiences in viewing almost every film or television or popular mainstream product. It just takes 'too much work' to get any enjoyment out of it" (Valdivia 2000: 150). Thus Valdivia speaks of the necessity for a "frustration theory" to account for women of color's reception of these cultural products.

The word *dangerous* used previously is not to suggest that readers are passive receptors for whatever "message" is transmitted from a writer. Indeed, if it were only Latino readers reading Rodriguez, the writing would be annoying at worst but certainly not dangerous. It is often when non-Latino readers read Rodriguez that the potential for danger emerges. The danger exists when the non-Latino readers read *only* Rodriguez as their Latino author, or read his ideas second- and even third-hand from non-Latino sources. The danger exists because these are the readers who are still in the voting and governing majority and who wield power acquired and exercised through their reading and non-reading. A non-Latino reader, defined as a reader who is not Latino or who does not read Latino texts, inhabits a reading world that does not include Latino experience. In that scenario Rodriguez may be the only Latino voice heard by the reader. The reader will get a false sense of being "informed" about Latino issues through Rodriguez's writing. We also need to ask to whom the texts are dangerous. Rodriguez becomes dangerous reading not so much to his readers but to Latinos, who may disagree with the ideas, but who still constitute a minority of the U.S. population even though we are growing in numbers. The use of *dangerous* here is complementary although not the same as Delia Poey's description of Latin American texts as "dangerous cargo" when imported to the United States by readers who lack cultural context.

Because of the power differential, it's in the interest of Latinos for the mainstream to become readers of Latino texts. It may not be in the short-term interest, however, of mainstream readers and writers to become Latino readers, or for writers like Rodriguez. It may be in the interest of a Richard Rodriguez to continue to omit or ignore Latino writers because they would contradict some of his points, most notably, but not exclusively, his views on bilingualism and bilingual education, a stance that he has hung on to for so long that he wouldn't seem himself if he ever were to let go of it. He does not correct the practice of being presented as not just *a* Latino voice but *the* Latino voice. Politics and power are undoubtedly at the heart of why mainstream writers do not consider Latino writing, indeed may not even read Latino writing, and refuse to become Latino readers. It is customary for writers to show mastery of a subject by reading widely and citing widely. So why wouldn't they then be interested in showing mastery of Latino writing? The answer likely lies in the power the mainstream writer would stand to lose. In some cases it is power of originality that would be lost. Rodriguez and Hollinger would have to admit that their ideas on hybridity and cultural blending are not new and would lose points in a standard of reading that demands originality. In other cases, it is the writer's power of truth telling that would be lost, especially when most Latino reading would contradict some of their notions, such as the notion that bilingual education is only a "failed bureaucracy." Rodriguez also falls in this category. In other cases it is the very power of mastery that is at stake, since Latino reading itself may require, as David Colón indicates, a mastery of codes that the mainstream reader and writer will not be versant in. Since Latino writing is now a large and growing body of literature, the mainstream writer will need to give up another important resource in order to become a Latino reader—time, the time to read Latino texts.

And what of readers, non-Latino readers—what do they stand to gain by continuing to ignore Latino texts, and what, conversely, do they stand to lose by becoming Latino readers? In a society that supposedly values knowledge, wouldn't they want to gain knowledge about as much as they can, including Latinos? Like the mainstream writers they can maintain their position as knowledgeable by ensuring mastery over only those texts that they are better equipped to handle, while eliminating from

their reading repertoire texts that will make obvious their lack of knowledge and mastery. Thus, what results through non-Latino reading is a production and reproduction of ignorance rather than a production of knowledge, an ignorance that functions best when hidden through normativity, just as its parent, whiteness, also functions best when not acknowledged or “seen.”

And why is it so important for mainstream readers and writers to maintain their (false) positions as knowledgeable? Perhaps it is due to the symbolic and material rewards, such as book contracts and academic positions that accrue to a population that is able to define what counts as knowledge and mastery. But the politics go even deeper than the power and benefits that come with defining knowledge, for the acceptance of Latino writing may require giving up other resources in order to address the truths in those texts. If one remains ignorant of the needs and lives of Latinos, one does not need to allocate society's communal resources that would address those needs or that would take responsibility for one's part in the history represented in those texts. There are countless examples. Schools would not need to provide interpreters, translators, and bilingual teachers, and thus there would be more budget money left over for the needs of mainstream students. Taxes could continue to be cut for mainstream property owners to purchase even more consumer goods. Money would not need to be allocated for the purchase of Latino materials or for services for Latinos in libraries. The job market would continue to be defined based on the cultural skills and interests of non-Latinos. And so on.

Perhaps a brown or Latin@ reader is more likely to come to *Brown* having read Gloria Anzaldúa's 1987 book, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, like *This Bridge*, another easy point of comparison for *Brown*. Anzaldúa wrote: “To live in the Borderlands means you / are neither hispana india negra española / ni gabacha, eres mestiza, mulata, half-breed / caught in the crossfire between camps / while carrying all five races on your back / not knowing which side to turn to, run from” (1987: 194). Likewise, in 2002, Rodriguez states, “Brown marks a reunion of peoples, an end to ancient wanderings. Rival cultures and creeds conspire with Spring to create children of a beauty, perhaps of a harmony, previously unknown” (2002: xiii). Rodriguez invokes José Vasconcelos in *Brown*. In *Borderlands*, Anzaldúa also invoked Vasconcelos and his vision of the mestiza

race, the cosmic race “embracing the four major races of the world. Opposite to the theory of the pure Aryan, and to the policy of racial purity that white America practices” (Anzaldúa 1987: 77). In *Brown*, Rodriguez also criticizes the notion of racial purity, “I write of blood that is blended. I write of brown as complete freedom of substance and narrative. I extol impurity” (2002: xi). But Rodriguez does not cite Anzaldúa or any other Latin@ writer who’s made similar points.²

In *This Bridge We Call Home*, Chela Sandoval invokes “the Mayan code of honor: In Lake’ch: I am another yourself” (2002: 23), a blurring of self which supports Rodriguez’s *Brown*:

Brown bleeds through the straight line, unstaunchable—the line separating black from white, for example. Brown confuses. Brown forms at the border of contradiction (the ability of language to express two or several things at once, the ability of bodies to express two or several things at once). (Rodriguez 2002: xi)

But what about the ability of people to know two or several languages at once? In her chapter “Spic Spanglish? The Reception of *Borderlands/La Frontera* and Linguistic Resistance,” Delia Poey looks at how mainstream critics have glossed over or ignored the use of Spanish and other non-English languages in Anzaldúa’s text and have thus produced inaccurate readings, not so much because the critics did not understand Spanish, but because they misunderstood or were unwilling to take up a politics and an aesthetics of language difference that is so prevalent in this and other Latin@ writings. Bilingual Latin texts are tied to the political struggle for bilingualism, especially bilingual education. The dichotomy of bilingual versus English is a completely false one, but one that the right wing got away with promoting. It seems to be the kind of dichotomy that *Brown* is trying to break down. Mitt Romney in his 2002 Massachusetts gubernatorial election campaign ran television ads that proposed to eliminate bilingual education so that children could “learn English.” Many of us in bilingual communities wondered what he thought bilingual meant; we suggested that it was he who needed to learn English so he could know that *bilingual* education in Massachusetts meant English *and* another language, thus children in bilingual programs were already learning English! Where was Rodriguez in 2002

when we needed him to explain to Massachusetts voters how it's possible to contain two things at once—English and Spanish? In contrast, Moraga in *This Bridge Called My Back*, included different *languages* as part of one's identity, in addition to different "races": "I think: what is the responsibility to my roots—both white and brown, Spanish-speaking and English? I am a woman with a foot in both worlds; and I refuse the split" (2002: 32).

Rodriguez tries to credit the contributions of African Americans to the development of American culture and American language:

My conclusion is a measure of thankfulness: I cannot imagine myself a writer, I cannot imagine myself writing these words without the example of African slaves stealing the English language, learning to read against the law, then transforming the English language into the American tongue, transforming me, rescuing me, with a coruscating nonchalance. (2002: 31)

But again, what about the pain of that experience of Africans with language, with losing their languages along with their freedom when they became slaves? They did not "steal" the English language but had their own languages stolen from them. They are not nonchalant about the history of what white dominance did to them. That is just a pop media image so that other Americans can all appropriate and enjoy the culture African Americans created *in spite of the terror they were subjected to* without taking on any responsibility in that history.

Rodriguez also does not allow for the possibility, indeed, reality of Latinos today who want to be bilingual or Spanglish code-switchers or proud *pochos*. He calls bilingual education, for example, "a leaky boat theorem ostensibly designed to sink into the American current. (In fact, the theorem became a bureaucracy preoccupied with prolonging itself" (2002: 114). Rodriguez's writing sets up a false dichotomy between liberal elites who espouse multiculturalism on the one side and the "true" desires of Latin@s on the other. The choice becomes an either/or choice. Very un-brown it would seem:

I remain skeptical of the effect pragmatic Spanish might have on the assimilation of Latin American immigrants. Working-class newcomers from

Latin America do not suffer the discontinuity that previous generations used to propel themselves into the future tense. But middle-class Americans, friends of mine, composites of friends of mine, of a liberal bent, nice people, OK people, see nothing wrong with bilingual education. In fact, they wish their own children to be bilingual. In fact, they send their kids to French schools. In fact, they ask if I know of a housekeeper who might inadvertently teach their children Spanish while she dusts under the piano. *Nope*. (2002: 115)

This passage is admirable, brilliant for its style, and also for its spoofing of the privileged liberal, hinting at “the white supremacy of the left” and what many of the writers in *This Bridge* critique about progressive white-dominated women’s organizations of the seventies and eighties. From that perspective, a working-class person of color can get some pleasure out of it and can thus be assumed to be an intended reader. However, many Latin American working-class newcomers (or their children) might take issue with the implication that they do not suffer from discontinuity with their previous geography and culture (Rodriguez does seem very intent in denying any pain on the part of brown people, doesn’t he?). Secondly, many working-class Latin@s also do not see bilingual education as wrong. On the contrary, in various national polls of our preferences and interests, bilingual education is a consistent top vote-getter, with as many as 95 percent of Latin@s nationwide showing a preference for it. (*HispanicBusiness.com* 2002; NCLR 2002). But in his presentation here, bilingual education is presented as something that only the misguided upper-middle-class American supports.

Paradoxically, questions of language are a repeated focus of *Brown*. Rodriguez posits that Spanish in America is changing English in America. This is a view and a trend that he may not have admitted or even recognized in *Hunger for Memory*, where he asserted that English was the public language and Spanish the private language of family. In *Brown* he doesn’t draw that public-private line and is willing to mix things up. Or perhaps he is forced to see that Spanish too is a public language hard to escape from in the United States. But here again, Rodriguez makes no mention of the *tradition* of Latino bilingual, code-switching, and Spanglish, especially its literary tradition. When he attempts to use Spanglish, it comes off as awkward, empty, even offensive: “*Soy Hispanic* is a brown assertion” (2002: 110).

To be fair to Rodriguez and find a bridge to brown as opposed to a blanket condemnation, his whole brown project may be read as a critique of the racist right wing who would want to see us negatively and keep us down. Also, the total context of his work can be called in: in other writings Rodriguez has criticized the hypocrisy of the right as well as the liberals. For example, in an article appearing in the black newspaper the *Philadelphia Tribune*, Rodriguez criticized the “family values” motto of the right:

The irony is that the same Americans who most loudly profess family values are the ones most suspicious of recent immigrants from places like Latin America and Asia. Here in California a common complaint against Chinese immigrants is that they are too tribal, too family oriented. Mexican immigrants are ridiculed for continuing to speak Spanish in the U.S. (1995)

To which a reader can respond, “Wait a minute Richard. You mean you think it’s wrong to ridicule Latin@s speaking Spanish? You mean you are sorry for ridiculing us?” This passage, alas, does not seem to have made its way into Rodriguez’s next book, *Brown*. In that same article, he also states:

On the cultural right, Americans morally separate themselves from the inner cities, non-Christians, their gay children, and violence in the media, yet insist on upholding family values. The question for the future is: Can we Americans moderate our individualism long enough to recognize that we share values in common, that our lives are intertwined and that we belong to an American family? (1995)

Taking off on the value of family, another way to bridge to Rodriguez, to forgive him, is to acknowledge that Rodriguez feels like a member of our families and not disown him. The Latino category and other identities subsumed in this category is not a monolith of ideology, which is often quite clear at the level of our Latino families, who may express quite disparate opinions. In a classroom discussion of *Brown*, another Latina student said the same thing: that Rodriguez felt like a family member. That doesn’t mean she agrees with him. We can respectfully listen to what he has to say, read his work, and engage with it. But we also should not let this one family member dominate the conversation.

We can apply principles from Latin@ librarianship to address Rodriguez. Frankly, as a librarian, I would excuse Rodriguez if he weren't so arrogant and if he showed evidence of or even interest in reading and listening to other brown voices himself. Also, as a librarian, I might suggest that Rodriguez continue his education. Many of us Latin@s can relate to him because we've had similar educational experience and also come from Spanish-speaking working-class households. Like him we may have gone to Catholic schools and even to Ivy League colleges. The Latin@ writers invoked here were not part of the curriculum of our formal education. But they have come to us often through a self-education process that has been greatly facilitated by using libraries and bookstores.

Thus, by looking at certain writing as dangerous to Latin@s, we need not leap to censorship as the antidote. Danger is combated not by censoring but *by more Latin@ reading*, by promoting a greater audience for Latin@ writing. Readers Advisory is an established function within librarianship. In that vein, a Latin@ librarian, might give "the reader" some advice as well. Do read *Brown* but make sure you also read *This Bridge Called My Back*, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, *Woman Hollering Creek*, Guillermo Gómez Peña, Nelly Rosario, and countless other writers of brown traditions. And if you haven't read these, *know that you are missing a lot*. The very year that *Brown* was published, one of the other few canonized Latin@ writers, Sandra Cisneros, published a book whose title *Caramelo*, also means among other things, brown. Two years before *Brown* appeared, *The Karma of Brown Folk* by Vijay Prashad was published. If you aren't one, become a brown reader.

Critic Manuel Martín-Rodríguez has also been concerned with what knowledge different readers bring to Latin@ texts. He focuses on knowledge of language and the use of Spanish and Spanglish within the text and points out that language itself can be very problematic for a bilingual Latin@ writer trying to reach a multicultural audience that will include non-Spanish speakers. Other critics have focused on how to render entire cultures accessible to middle-class white readers. In his discussion of the strategies that Chicano and Chicana writers use to create multicultural audiences, Martín-Rodríguez states, "Since blanks and negations will probably be increased in a transcultural text,

it is the (complex) task of the author to take the necessary steps to alleviate potential reader alienation" (1999: 19). Perhaps this is too heavy a burden to place on the Latin@ writer writing about Latin@, hence transcultural, topics. We should acknowledge that the reader also has an important task and part in the conversation. This is a lesson of *This Bridge* that runs through both versions. The very metaphor of the bridge is invoked in order to draw attention to the inordinate burden that is placed on the woman of color writer when the mainstream expects her to explain everything in one reading and to be a resource center of the non-white world. In the preface, Moraga asks, "*How can we—this time—not use our bodies to be thrown over a river of tormented history to bridge the gap?*" Barbara says last night: 'A bridge gets walked over.' Yes, over and over again" (2002: xlvi). This line of criticism is powerful and necessary twenty years later. In *This Bridge We Call Home*, Rebecca Aanerud cites *This Bridge Called My Back*: "In her essay, '—but I know you, American Woman,' Judith Moshkovich writes: 'I don't usually hear, 'Hey, what do you think of the work of such and such a Latin American feminist author?' but rather, 'Teach me everything you know.' I say: *read and listen*. We may, then have something to share'" (2002: 77). Two sentences in the original essay that were left out of this quote: "Latin American women write books, music, etc. A great deal of information about Latin America is readily available in most libraries and bookstores" (2002: 83–84). Libraries and bookstores again! Thus, *This Bridge* calls up libraries as places of education about Latin@ writing.

In an interview, Rodriguez uses the conversation metaphor to discuss his writing.

Truly, I am falling into despair. I despair of finding many serious readers in America or the Americas. I've given up expecting Latin America to translate my work. But the United States seems increasingly now to have grown deaf. A book like *Brown* is simply too difficult for the "common reader," I suspect (after reading a handful of idiot reviews). Oddly enough, my inclination is to turn away, to become more allusive and more complex in my writing, precisely as I sense that no one is "out there" reading. Indeed I no longer write from the expectation of speaking to future generations. I write, instead, as a form of communication with the dead. I see my writing, indeed, as a conversation with the writers (often

so-called dead white men) who created me. I write for ghosts. (Milian Arias and Rodriguez 2003: 281)

Hmm . . . in the spirit of conversation, how to respond to Rodriguez? Where is the bridge to brown from this passage? One bridge is in reading *Brown*. Another bridge to brown is to enter into conversation with him, as I have attempted to do here. Although, before that, we would need to simply assert our existence to Rodriguez, just as he is trying to assert his existence and more broadly the existence of brown in black/white America. Richard, is there really no one out there? Who counts as a someone in the world of Richard Rodriguez? Who counts as a reader?

In a survey on the sociology of literature, Wendy Griswold suggested in 1993:

Recent ethnic and nationalist struggles prompt a new look at the relationship between literature and identity. Studies are needed of how macrostructures of language politics and regime transformation interact with microprocesses of reading and meaning construction, with institutions of education and literary production mediating. These studies will help us to understand what part literature plays in the ongoing process of identity construction and maintenance—a process for which people continue to be willing to die. (464)

Indeed, macrostructures of language politics are inextricably tied to Latin@ literary production and reception. And yet when the writers are there, who reads them? Who outside of our communities is willing to enter our lives? Scholars such as Laura Agustín and Pamela Anne Quiroz have uncovered how even when Latinos and Latinas—whether they be female sex workers from Latin America as studied by Agustín or Latin@ schoolchildren in Chicago as studied by Quiroz—are “empowered” or empower themselves to document their voices, those voices are routinely ignored or silenced by local mainstream power elites. Quiroz found that “by filing the [Latin@ students’] narratives in folders never to be seen or heard again, educators had effectively silenced these students’ voices.” Falling on deaf ears can have very damaging effects when those ears have power over you. Quiroz emphasizes the responsibility of the readers: “By giving witness to these voices, we as readers help en-

sure that through their writing, these Latin@ adolescents do not just speak but that they are heard.” And so in this context, reading has a moral imperative and *not reading* becomes a violent act with very real consequences for the lives of Latin@s.

Rodriguez’s writing also partakes in this and other kinds of violence. For all his emphasis on pleasure it seems his writing can produce a lot of pain in many readers with the insulting tone that he takes. He fosters even more divisions with his derisive tone. He sets up us/them boundaries. Rodriguez writes, “And I defy anyone who tries to unblend me or to say what is appropriate to my voice” (2002: xi). Who is he defying here? The Chicanos who are in his view near extinction and akin to Puritans? Here he is taking on the stance, the defiance of writers of color especially of Latino writers who’ve essentially been saying we defy anyone telling us what language is appropriate to literature, what type of English is appropriate to writing. So Rodriguez is “appropriating” their stance yet not giving credit to them. Using the word *defy* without specifying a clear target leaves the statement open to interpretation. In this very paper, by taking a critical look at his writing, do I myself become one of these who Rodriguez would defy? The vagueness of this statement can become a way for Rodriguez to become complicit with those who would repress Latin@s, allowing himself to become an ally to the right wing. If he wants this freedom of expression, he could be generous enough to grant it to Latin@s who want to express themselves in Spanish and who want to pass it on to their children.

By contrast, *This Bridge Called My Back* presented readers with a different challenge, ultimately blurring the very distinction between reader and writer, between production and reception, between different color readers, brown and otherwise:

With the completion of this anthology, a hundred other books and projects are waiting to be developed. Already, we hear tell in the wind from other contributors the possibility of a film about Third World Feminists, an anthology by Latina lesbians, a third world feminist publishing house. We, women of color, are not without plans. This is exactly the kind of service we wish for the anthology to provide. It is a catalyst, not a definitive statement on ‘Third World Feminism in the U.S.’ . . . We see the book as a revolutionary tool falling into the hands of people of all colors. (2002: lv)

NOTES

1. I use the form Latin@ as an alternative for Latino and Latina/o in order to subsume both feminine and masculine forms. The term can be read as either Latina or Latino.

2. It is interesting to note that when pressed by interviewer Milian Arias, Rodríguez does acknowledge the similarities in the arguments he makes with Anzaldúa's writing.

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17

MAMBO NO. 5

Montage of the Other Woman

Lisa Sánchez-González

Beauty is nothing but the beginning of terror we are still just able to bear.—Rainer Maria Rilke, *Duino Elegies*

Entrada/Entrance: *An exquisite exschizoid crisis of colonial ontico-ontological difference* (Irigaray 1985: 145). *And a prioritized ontico-hunger . . .*

Río Piedras, 1991. What is it I feel when I sit down to write? Dengue? Abjection? Homesickness in the homeland? Hatuey's revenge? I know what my family wants to hear: that I'm safe, that I'm happy, that I've been embraced with open arms by the *madre patria*.

But I can't tell them the truth. I'm no Cassandra. I'm here of my own volition. To study. To teach. Yet there are no clear words I can use, no names, just metaphors, metonyms, and slogans. The island is a Labrador puppy dying in the gutter soaked in puss the color of antifreeze. La gran familia puertorriqueña is anemic. Mi dentista, ¡mi esposo!

I don't want to break their hearts.

On the backside of a cheap cardboard triptych—beach, university, flag—I write instead:

The beaches are amazing! You should see the fat mangos just plopping off the trees near the UPR tower! Tell grandma I can't mail her any fruit, it

won't make it past customs. But I'll smuggle her some quenepas on the plane when I come home for Christmas break. I miss you!!! Your loving daughter, Lisa

P.S. My vueltas are improving.

I stare at the mirror, and stare at the postcard, and stare at the tourist map of the *isla del encanto*.

For where he [the subject] projects a something to absorb, to take, to see, to possess . . . as well as a patch of ground to stand upon, a mirror to catch his reflection, he is already faced by another specularization.

The heat is suffocating me slowly, but that's not it.

Whose twisted character is her inability to say what she represents. On the wall behind me is a portrait of Che Guevara, courtesy of the neon orange flier from the latest student walkout. The sun through the window, draped with a Puerto Rican flag, is fading Che to tangerine. I stare, but I see no form, just lines and color. I take a Polaroid snapshot of the mirror. Every glare and image is captured but me. I'm lost in the reflection of the flash.

The quest for the 'object' becomes a game of Chinese boxes. Infinitely receding.

There's more to it. On the roof under the moon and a streetlamp, with the deafening sounds of the jackhammers pummeling the cement and the night crew fishing for rotting sewage pipes below, I reread Spivak, I reread Marx, I reread Althusser. All on an empty stomach. Because "no child will be left behind," but the fellowship check is lost in the mailroom of the UPR and what little money I had, my credit cards, and all my jewelry, even the plastic bits, were robbed from my apartment last week. I'm starving. I feel dizzy.

The most amorphous with regard to ideas, the most obviously "thing," if you like, the most opaque matter, opens upon a mirror all the purer in that it knows and is known to have no reflections. Except those which man has reflected there but which, in the movement of that concave speculum, pirouetting upon itself, will rapidly, deceptively, fade. (Irigaray 1985: 134)

Yet this is a time-space all its own, I reason. Food—my only object—molds a desire that does not fade. The reflection intensifies. Starving, I can see something beyond the concave mirror now, refracting off my own dark pupil. At last, a truth—a void with a name: Hunger. Hambre. *Fome. Às vezes, as mães das favelas engordam os filhos com papel, numa mistura de leite Nestle enlatado dado aos mais fracos, literalmente alimentando-os com o jornal do Brasil. Porra.* But I'm plump and all grown up. I eat words on paper with my eyes in lieu of my mouth. When it becomes late, and the apartment cools to 85 degrees, I feed my body through other orifices, my ears, dancing till I drop. The mosquitoes feast on me, but in the morning I feel nothing, nothing at all, but a gaping hole in my belly. My lips swollen with thirst.

That's until I hear him at the kitchen door. The bastard's breaking in again. I get up from bed and face him. In my pajamas I chase him out the door, down the stairs, and halfway down the street, and I swear in every language I know that if I catch him I'll cut his balls off. Though I have no knife, no weapon at all. I resist. I speak. I am not hysterical, I'm in hot pursuit. It's hard running barefoot on burning cement and broken glass. I am not hungry anymore. But the crackhead, frail and blond, outruns me, because as weak as he is, he's high on my things, my debt, my gold, my plastic, and his profit, and he has shoes on.

ANAMORPHOSIS OF THE OTHER WOMAN: THE HYSTERICO-TRANSCENDENTAL

Identify with the law-giving father, with his proper names, his desires for making capital, in every sense of the word, desires that prefer the possession of territory, which includes language, to the exercise of his pleasures, with the exception of his pleasure in trading women—fetishized objects, merchandise of whose value he stands surety—with his peers. The ban upon returning, regressing to the wound, as well as to the language and the dreams upon which the “subject” will continue to stand, to advance, to unfold his discourse, even to make it whirl. (Irigaray 1985: 140)

No one appears hungry or thirsty in Ana Lydia Vega's story (1994: 127–141). Just a mad, mad woman. When her man humiliates the criolla, pegándole cuernos, as they say, pimps her to the local 936 company (he's

unemployed), makes love to the mOther in her own bed, brags about it even; she does nothing but argue, hysterically, with him. But when she sees the mOther's tight jeans wrapping a pregnant belly, pregnant with the seed of her merchandise, bought at a dear price—her cheerful chastity—compounded with daily interest on her self-respect and labor, she goes silent. The specularization of the black woman drives her to patricidal violence. Then she calmly drives over to the mOther's house with a “gift.”

She'd known the address for a long time, 'cause she'd been planning to find somebody and give 'im a contract to slap some sense into that fucking whore. Anyway, she came to the house, and she leaves that pretty package, with a gift card and everything, just like your birthday, you know?, right in front of the door, where the bitch would have to find it when she came out . . .

Can you picture the face on that bitch when she takes off that bow, tears off the wrapping paper, and opens the box? I tell you, it's a pity the stupid whore didn't know how to read, so she could have gotten the fucking enjoyment out of that present.

. . . According to the recipient of the message, the block letters, written in suspiciously red ink, read as follows:

CONGRATULATIONS! YOU WON THEM. (1994:139–141)

The same thing will always be at stake. The profiteering will barely have changed hands. A barter solution that she would adopt out of the void of her desire. And always one step behind in the process, the progress of history. (Irigaray 1985: 141–42)

In Nicholasa Mohr's story, back on the mainland, the mOther is the narrator's little sister in affection and affinity, not blood (1997: 42–65). She has a name, a voice, and a history. Her name is Iris Martínez. Iris's boyfriend, Dennis Garza, also pimps her for his own profit. And Sarita Garza, Iris's friend, Dennis's sister-in-law, but Iris's sister by affection and affinity regardless, says: “Now I think back and attribute her lack of self-esteem to the persistent abuse she endured. Iris was convinced she was ugly beyond remedy, repulsive without hope of improvement.” Abjection, exacerbated by physical and emotional abuse. Her history. She loves Dennis. *Hay amores que matan, es verdad* (Silva Bonilla et al. 1990). “These feelings were blatantly reinforced by the man she adored and whom she supported, Dennis”:

Of all the many women Dennis had been with, Iris was the best. She was educated, smart and had a heart of gold. If you needed a few dollars, all you had to do was ask. Many of the folks in the neighborhood owed her money. Most paid her back, but she never hassled those who didn't. As my mom said, she was *buena gente*. Iris worked downtown as a paralegal. Was finishing college and wanted to become a lawyer. In spite of her reputation for being unkempt and homely, everybody commented on how intelligent Iris was . . .

It was true Iris appeared less than sexy and unattractive, yet there was also something impish and upbeat about her. She had a vitality in her demeanor, as well as a wonderful smile that lit up her face, and I thought all that was downright appealing. I figured those grotesque glasses she wore and the way she dressed contributed to making her appear homely. But whenever I suggested that she wear nicer clothes and use contact lenses, she'd always say no.

"I don't have money to spend on fancy clothes. And I already have contacts, just can't get used to them. They tire my eyes when I read for long periods. Besides, I like it when people say my glasses are bigger than I am and that's how they know it's me who's coming. My horn-rimmed glasses are my trademark." (Mohr 1997: 44-46)

And this is what Dennis has to say for himself to his sister-in-law, Sarita: "Women ain't nothing but cunts, man. All you have to do is say you love them, and they fall right into your bed. They don't care if you mean it or not. *Ay, papi, dime que me quieres*. Bitches love to be bossed around, too. Just give them a few serious slaps when they don't behave. Then fix them with your magic wand and tell them all that love bullshit they wanna hear. And you got it made, bro" (1997: 47). And this is what Dennis has to say to his lover, to Iris: "You're such an ugly bitch. I don't know what I see in a toad like you. Your mother must have been married to that Quasimodo, or Quasifeo. You, know, the hunchback of Notre Dame" (1997: 53). This is what he tells Iris, in front of Sarita and other in-laws: "Do you know that this bitch barks for me when I ask her? Go on, Iris, show 'em. Bark for us, bitch. Bark. Wuff, wuff. Bow, wow . . . grrr. I whip her skinny butt with my belt; she whines and yelps. Go on, show us how you cry for Daddy. Ouch, geez, oooh, ouch . . . gee. Show them, you ugly mongrel . . . Do you know that this motherfucking bitch has one tit larger than the other? Imagine having to make love

to two different tits on the same skinny body. I'm fucking a freak." His mOther's milk is poisoned. (By her blackness? "I remembered how she would struggle to keep her hair in place by winding hair bands and placing clips all over her head. Yet tufts of her brown hair always stuck out every which way like soft cotton" (1997: 43)). "You are so smart Iris," Sarita has told her, "Why don't you leave that mean bastard?" "I don't care what people think or say," she told me, wincing in pain. "I got the handsomest guy around. Dennis Garza is my man and he loves me. Me, ugly little Iris" (1997: 48). Her right, by title, by deed. Dennis resumes, "'she's a freak show . . . come on, Mami, show them. Take out your tits.' All of this time Iris sat recoiled in a corner, crying silently" (1997: 53-54).

But as Dennis moves to strike Iris, Sarita blocks him with her own body.

In contrast to the lack of feeling I held for my father, my longings for my mother and fear of her dying were the most passionate feelings that had ever lived inside my young heart. (Moraga 1983: 93)

Finally Iris reciprocates the violence. What puts her over the edge? It's not his beatings and verbal assaults. It's supposedly about Dennis coercing her to abort the interest accruing in her belly from his deposit. He says: "This bitch went and got pregnant on me. I bet nobody knew that, right? Then she wanted to have the kid. No way! She got an abortion because I told her, do you think that kid's gonna come out with my beautiful looks? You too ugly . . . I can't take no chances on fathering no freak and . . ." (Mohr 1997: 54). Not in his name. That's the stake. Not for her. Not for the mOther's child.

At last, the dark continent strikes back. Notice mOtherhood at stake, and the law of the father crumbling. "You're a miserable motherfucker," she rasped. "You bastard! [a word obliterates paternity, not at stake] Motherfucker [Oedipal?], I hope you die!" A death wish for (the desire of) the father of a child that is not to be one. Dennis is shocked. "You just cursed my mother! [again the stake] Did you hear the bitch, Gerry? [his brother's mother too is the stake] She cursed our mother. Nobody in this world curses my mother. Nobody. Shit [the anal-aggressive boy fetishizes something. The baby? The sex which is not one, the little girl-

boy that Iris must become to satisfy his pederastic, sodomizing fantasy, to be, in other words, a normal woman? What he cannot rule and therefore must destroy?], my mother's a saint [return to the transcendental, the law of the father]. *Una santa*. [just to be sure it's clear]. A fucking saint!" (1997: 55). Oedipus Rex in Roman Catholic garb? Yet hyperdulia only goes so far to explain this man-child's pathology.

Notice the price. In Nicholasa Mohr's story, Dennis responds to Iris's curse by beating her to a pulp in front of at least a dozen witnesses. "Her face had disappeared under a thick coat of blood, shattered bones and lacerated skin. All the men, about eight of them, jumped on top of Dennis and held him down while we lead Iris, who was reeling helplessly, inside the house. My mother, Aunt Dora [Dora, the woman whose hysteria upended Freud's entire theory of female sexuality, who became his *punto final* and his alibi for his misprision of the second sex] and some of the other women cleaned her up, put ice packs and raw steak on her face, neck, and arms. Aunt Dora gave Iris some of her painkiller pills that had been prescribed for arthritis [Did Dora always have the antidote hidden somewhere in her purse? That would have been a good joke on Sigmund, but at what price? In the fray, 'poor Aunt Dora received a nasty bump on her forehead.' Indeed.] My aunt and uncle gave her their bed. The older women took turns tending to Iris all night long" (1997: 57). A vigil for the murdered mOther.

Through a speculum contrived of her own abjection, Sarita understands something vague. "I lay awake in bed that night beside Gerry, who slept as soundly as a baby. All I could feel for my husband was a void that sank into my chest." Gerry, whose brother's mother has been vindicated, regresses. The sister-in-law sees, beyond the concave glass, through her own pupil, the other woman becoming her Self. Is the heteroscopy a success? The anamorphosis is imminent.

Dennis almost killed Iris, somebody so small and frail. For the first time in my two years of marriage I understood that I had committed to a man who would never allow me to take charge of my own life.

"No, Mami," I whispered to myself. "I'm not doing it like you. I can't." It was that very night when I first considered a future without Gerry Garza. (1997: 58)

But, may come the objection—defending again the objective and the object—the speculum is not necessarily a mirror. It may, quite simply, be an instrument to dilate the lips, the orifices, the walls, so that the eye can penetrate the interior. So that the eye can enter, to see, notably with speculative intent. Woman, having been misinterpreted, forgotten, variously frozen in show-cases, rolled up in metaphors, buried beneath carefully stylized figures, raised up in different idealities, would now become the “object” to be investigated, to be explicitly granted consideration, and thereby, by this deed of title, included in the theory. (Irigaray 1985: 144–145)

But what if the subaltern, the mOther, speaks for her sister in affection and affinity? What if Ismene covered Antigone’s back, chased the mourners away from the cave, and with Eteocles’s army, rescued her? What if her sister in affection and affinity tells what she sees, calls the crime by its name, calls Iris by her name—victim—calls Dennis by his name—perpetrator—and calls the police? “Iris looked so hideous that I burst into tears and began pleading with her to press charges and put Dennis in jail” (Mohr 1997: 58).

But Iris forgives him. Sisterhood cannot withstand the power of the state, even when it outlaws abuse. Let’s keep it all in-house, because you know what happens to “our” men. We must protect them, at the cost of our own lives. Good mOthers. She goes into the cave, the secret is safe.

*I write this book because we are losing ourselves to the gavacho.
I mourn my brother in this. (Moraga 1983: iii)*

Is it for love of the brother, or to protect the father’s seed from the usurping King?

Unlike most white people, with the exception of the Jews, Third World people have suffered the threat of genocide to our races since the coming of the first European expansionists. The family, then, becomes all the more ardently protected by oppressed peoples, and the sanctity of this institution is infused like blood into the veins of the Chicano. At all costs, la familia must be preserved: for when they kill our boys in their own imperialist wars to gain greater profits for American corporations; when they keep us in ghettos, reservations, and barrios which ensure that our own people will

be the recipients of our frustrated acts of violence; when they sterilize our women without our consent because we are unable to read the document we sign; when they prevent our families from getting decent housing, adequate child care, sufficient fuel, regular medical care; then we have reason to believe—although they may no longer technically be lynching us in Texas or our sisters and brothers in Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi—they intend to see us dead. (Moraga 1983: 110–111)

Yes, I know Texas too, Cherrie. The violence continues, and the “they” in power are now, as often as not, Chicanos themselves.

Let’s keep clinging to familia, you say, but create it anew, minus “the man in a dominant position over women and children.” If only it were so simple. The life of the mind, the life of the body, the life of a family, the life of a nation, these are all much more complicated than you make them seem. Oppression and domination are much more complicated than you make them seem. The world is no longer composed of victimizers and victimized, of the colonized and the colonizers.

FALSE CONSCIOUSNESS.

Oh, shut up already.

My view is that the distinction between the symbolic and the social cannot finally hold. (Butler 2000: 19)

One can always say no. No. No. No. Forget the Alamo, the Treaty of Paris. After all, we know why Cortés prevailed then, as he would now. Could this be an ancient, precolonial scene? Ismene pleads, but Antigone stands firm in her death wish:

Antigone: Is he not my brother, and yours, whether you like it
Or not? I shall never desert him, never.

Ismene: How could you dare, when Creon has expressly forbidden it?

Antigone: He has no right to keep me from my own.

Ismene: I do not defy them; but I cannot act.

Against the State. I am not strong enough.

Antigone: You need not fear for me. Fear for yourself.

Ismene: At least be secret. Do not breathe a word.

I’ll not betray your secret.

Antigone: Publish it! To all the world! (Sophocles 1947: 128–129)

If the symbolic and the social are one, then Antigone and Iris's tomb—their “bridal chamber”—is a deadly familial trap:

After all, Antigone appropriates the stance and idiom of the one she opposes, assumes Creon's sovereignty, even claims the glory that is destined for her brother, and lives out a strange loyalty to her father, bound as she is to him through his curse. Her fate is not to have a life to live, to be condemned to death prior to any possibility of life. This raises the question of how it is that kinship ensures the conditions of intelligibility by which life also becomes condemned and foreclosed. (Butler 2000: 23)

But there's a twist. There are secrets within secrets where the state's not looking. She reemerges from the cave. Sarita runs into her, twelve years later, at a restaurant. Iris has become a lawyer. Sarita divorced Gerry, and is working on a PhD. Now Iris looks great—expensive clothes, no glasses, her “hair was impeccably cropped in a short, becoming afro” (Mohr 1997: 44).

Like Ismene, Sarita had given up Iris for dead. But we forgot—Iris is smarter than Creon and no longer affianced to her brother-in-death. It turns out forgiving Dennis was a ruse. She actually usurped the law of the father for her own material profit, for her own pleasure, for her own things.

“You want to know what happened and why I left Dennis?” she asked as if reading my mind.

I could feel myself blushing and said it wasn't my business. “Dennis killed my baby. You see, Sarita, I didn't have the abortion because I wanted the kid. I thought something that belonged to both of us would make a difference, would change Dennis. But that night, he beat the child out of me and I had a miscarriage. All the feelings I had for Dennis died with my baby. After that, I couldn't love him any more. It was all over.” Iris paused and took a long drag on her cigarette.

“By the time we got back to the Bronx, I had already decided to leave him. And when I saw the damage in the apartment, I asked Dennis to testify that he was there when the ceiling fell on me. You know how good Dennis was at conning people. He used his acting talents well and made a very convincing witness. The insurance company settled out of court. It was wrong to take the money. As a lawyer, I know it's a felony. But I

needed to get away, far away from Dennis, and the money gave me a fresh start.” (Mohr 1997: 63–64)

But at what price, Iris?

Iris and Sarita exchange numbers, promising yet knowing they will never call each other. Heteroscopy can be traumatic, perhaps: “reminiscences of beatings and humiliation at a point in time that once linked us both to the Garza brothers were memories neither of us wanted to recall. In the past twelve years we each transformed our lives.” Closure is necessary sometimes. Dilate the lips and the eye one moment and let them contract another. Averting their mutual gaze and their conversation, they order dinner and drink champagne at separate tables, each with her new boyfriend.

I watch my changes in the women I love. (Moraga 1983: v)

And here again, here too, one will rightly suspect any perspective, however surreptitious, that centers the subject, any autonomous circuit of subjectivity, any systematicity hooked back onto itself, any closure that claims for whatever reason to be metaphysical—or familial, social, economic even—to have rightfully taken over, fixed, and framed that concave mirror’s incandescent hearth. (Irigaray 1985: 144)

Yet I’m still satisfied, even if the hint of a healthy career and romance connote foreclosure or condemnation of a sort. A life was saved. And they are not starving.

WHO’S AFRAID OF THE HOUSE ON THE LAGOON?

The “analysis of *‘la criolla loca en el ático’*” would have to take into account specific race and class issues (Castro-Klarén: 1985). It will be necessary to complement study of “la criolla loca” (that is, American-born white women of Spanish descent) with studies of other women, perhaps less literate, less proficient as writers, or at least less published, but altogether dominant in sheer numbers: *la mestiza*, *la indígena*, *la negra*, *la mulata*. They too are mad, in both English senses of the word, and perhaps in both the English and Spanish sense as well. But given the predominance of the

criolla voice, who speaks when speaking of them? Who are they? Who is the subject, and who is the object of discourse? Who is the writer and who the critic? (Castillo 1992: 7)

In Rosario Ferré's story, the protagonist is the rich criolla, Isabel Luberza; the other woman is a rags-to-riches prostitute, Isabel "La Negra."

She heard that Isabel Luberza was a bit mad. (Ferré 1992b: 138)

It is difficult to read them as equals in the narrative's ecology. Luberza is sympathetically portrayed as a victim; "La Negra" is a trope of connivance born from abjection. Characters do not evenly develop in this tale. The story is difficult to read as anything but an elite and solipsistic feminized metaphor for Puerto Rican social history. The glorious criollo past is wealth and culture—a mansion, a sugar plantation, respectability, literacy, husbands unable to resist the sexual allure of black women, and chaste, tormented Spanish brides on silver-gilded balconies. Luberza unsuccessfully presides over the aesthetic and ethical production of pearls, diamonds, silver napkin rings, embossed monograms, and rose-scented linens. The other woman is shrewd, never a victim. "La Negra" successfully presides over the production of sexual ethics and aesthetics among the sons of criollo elites. She takes pride in her work teaching these teenagers the ropes and is amply rewarded for it. She is an entrepreneur. She builds a brothel, a "dance hall." The patriarch, Ambrosio (plantation economy) died. In his (its) wake we have illicit but lucrative commerce, devolving on the sexuality of poor black women, revolving around the "dance hall." His will left half the house to "La Negra," half to Luberza. "La Negra" cashed out. Luberza sits tormented on her silver-gilded balcony. The decline and fall of a white criollo empire, the rise of a degenerate, mulatto bourgeoisie? Sounds like national allegory. Sounds like jackhammers pummeling the cement and the night crew fishing for rotting sewage pipes below.

This is what Luberza has to say for herself, to her dead husband (father, brother?):

The first year of our marriage, when I learned Isabel was your paramour, I thought I was probably the unhappiest woman on earth. I always knew when you were coming from her house; I could tell by the heavy way your

hand fell on my neck, or by the way you dragged your eyes over my body like burning sparks. It was then I had to be most careful of my satin slips and French lace underwear. It was though the memory of her rode you when you weren't with her, and she'd sit on your back and hit you mercilessly with arms and legs, tormenting you so you'd go back to her. So I had no alternative but to stretch out on the bed and let myself be made. As you bent over me, I'd keep my eyes wide open and look out over your shoulder so as not to lose sight of her, so she wouldn't think I was giving in to her, not even by mistake. (Ferré 1992b: 143)

This is what Toni Morrison has to say, by extension, of Luberza and Ferré's relationship to blackness:

Again, an internal devastation is aligned with a socially governed relationship with race. She was a colonist, a white child, loving and loved by Arabs, but warned against them in relationships other than distant and controlled ones. Indeed, a white camellia "svelte in appearance but torn apart inside."

. . . Black or colored people and symbolic figurations of blackness are markers for the benevolent and the wicked; the spiritual (thrilling tales of Allah's winged horse) and the voluptuous; of "sinful" but delicious sensuality coupled with demands for purity and restraint. These figures take shape, form patterns, and play about in the pages of [Marie Cardinal's] autobiography . . .

Many other examples of these narrative gearshifts—metaphors; summonings; rhetorical gestures of triumph, despair, and closure dependent on the acceptance of the associative language of dread and love that accompanies blackness—were piling up in my file. Examples I thought of as a category of sources of imagery, like water, flight, war, birth, religion, and so on, that make up the writer's kit. (Morrison 1993: ix–x)

Luberza responds:

Thus, Ambrosio, as the years went by Isabel la Negra became for us a necessary evil, a tumor that grew in our breast, but which we nursed tenderly so that it wouldn't be bothersome. It was at dinnertime that her presence was most clearly felt. A fragrance of peace would then waft up from our dinner plates, and as the icy beads slowly ran down our water goblets, it was as though happiness would remain forever posed on the fragile edge of our lives. I would then begin to think of her gratefully, reassembling her

features in my mind in order to see her more clearly, in order to imagine her sitting next to us at the table. It was she that brought us together, Ambrosio; she that made our marital bliss possible. (Ferré 1992b: 143)

Should Rosario Ferré be considered a Euro-American writer? Like Poe, like Melville, like Kate Chopin, or like some other American writers with Spanish surnames? Because “the transcendental keeps its secret?” (Irigaray 1985: 145). Essentialism? Niche marketing? “Latina?” Ferré is a powerful and fine craftswoman. I once heard a woman in San Juan say she was the Puerto Rican equivalent of Papa Doc’s daughter. Maybe, like Coco Fusco (1995), she imagines herself as Shakespeare’s Miranda. Or is it common sense reducible to a structured, linear argument? That is, for better and for worse (ethically and aesthetically), contemporary literature by women of color in the United States centers the socially and symbolically eradicated subject position of women of color as precondition of narrative voice and silence: Edwidge Danticat, Sandra Cisneros, Paule Marshall, Nicholasa Mohr, Sandra Maria Esteves, and so on. It is also a matter of an unequal dialogue with the transcendental. Who are our literary sisters, by affection and affinity? (What a struggle, those sentences.)

This is what “La Negra” has to say for herself in Ferré’s story:

Because in teaching those boys how to make love, Ambrosio, I also showed them what a real woman is like. A real woman is not a sack of flour that lets a man throw her on a bed, just as a real man is not a raping macho, but one that has the courage to let himself be raped. So I devoted myself to teaching the boys how to share a pleasure without having to be ashamed of it; I taught them how to be generous with themselves. Once they left my bed they could rest easy as to their future performances; they could parade confidently before their girlfriends like strutting young roosters. After all, someone had to show young men how to take the initiative; someone had to show them in the first place, and that’s why they all come to Isabel la Negra—sinful like the slough at the bottom of the gutter, wicked like the grounds at the end of the coffeepot—because in Isabel la Negra’s arms everything is allowed, son, nothing is forbidden; our body is our only paradise, our only fount of delight, and Isabel makes us understand that pleasure can make us live forever, can turn us into gods, son, though only for a short while—but a short while is usually enough,

because after having known pleasure no one should be afraid to die. So be quiet now, my son, be still; nestled here, in Isabel la Negra's arms, no one will see you, no one will ever know you were merely human. Here no one will know, no one will care that you're trembling with ague in my arms, because I'm just Isabel la Negra, the scum of the earth, and here, I swear by the holy name of Jesus that is looking on, no one will ever know that what you really wanted was to live forever, that what you really wanted was not to die. (1992b: 141)

By converting her to a discourse that denies the specificity of her pleasure by inscribing it as the hollow, the intaglio, the negative, even as the censured other of its phallic assertions. By hom(m)osexualizing her. By perversely travestying her for the pederastic, sodomizing satisfactions of the father/husband. She shrieks out demands too innocuous to cause alarm, that merely make people smile . . . And when she also openly displays their power fantasies, this serves as a re-creation to them in their struggle for power . . . By resubmitting herself to the established order, in this role of delirious double, she abandons, even denies, the prerogative historically granted her: unconsciousness. She prostitutes the unconscious itself to the ever present projects and projections for masculine consciousness . . .

Unconsciousness she is, but not for herself, not with the subjectivity that might take cognizance of it, recognize it as her own. Close to herself, admittedly, but in a total ignorance (of self). She is the reserve of "sensuality" for the elevation of intelligence, she is the matter used for the imprint of forms, gage [sic] of possible regression into naïve perception, the representative representing possible regression into naïve perception, the representative representing negativity (death), dark continent of dreams and fantasies, and also eardrum faithfully duplicating the music, though not all of it, so that the series of displacements may continue, for the "subject." (Irigaray 1985: 140–141)

Why is the black Puerto Rican woman always the mOther in the criolla imaginary and the symbolic order of their ever-so-popular colonial discourse? Does that compensate for something—the absent phallus, the father, the husband/brother, language, land? Why does "La Negra" consider herself hideous, like Iris does? If Luberza and "La Negra" are one Isabel, are a "we," as the narrator would have us believe, then why doesn't Luberza also despise herself? Why isn't this depreciation mu-

tual? Still, Ferré would have us believe that Luberza and “La Negra,” la gran dama y la gran puta, are one, are “we”:

We, your lover and your wife, have always known that every lady hides a prostitute under her skin. This is obvious from the way a lady slowly crosses her legs, rubbing the insides of her thighs against each other. It's obvious from the way she soon gets bored with men; she never knows what we go through, plagued by them for the rest of our lives. It's evident in the prim way she looks at the world from under the tips of her eyelashes, as she hides the green-blue lights that swarm between beneath her skirt. A prostitute, on the other hand, will go to similar extremes to hide the lady under her skin. Prostitutes all drown in the nostalgia of that dovecotelike cottage they'll never own, of a house with a balcony of silver amphorae, with fruited garlands hanging over the doors; they all suffer from hallucinations, such as listening for the sounds of silver and china before dinnertime, as though invisible servants were about to set the family table. The truth is, Ambrosio, that we, Isabel Luberza and Isabel la Negra, had been leaning more and more on each other; we had purified each other of all that defiled us; and we had grown so close that we no longer knew where the lady ended and the prostitute began. (Ferré 1992b: 134)

I'm not convinced.

Where is Luberza “defiled?” In having to share her patrimony—her house—with “La Negra”? To me, this notion of “nostalgia” is so very odd. It makes no sense, not to me, not to my “we.” Could “When Women Love Men” be a faux feminist specularization of the other woman, one that fails in its attempt to fathom, genuinely, Isabel's consciousness? In its stead, do we have yet again the dark continent, and no device that can fathom her as anything more than the sexual unconscious of the Mistress (another hackneyed rhetorical figure, whose historical privilege renders her the Master's castrated, incestuous twin)? Is she/we merely a hyper-sexualized trope of the dark continent? Regardless of the author's gender and intent, this trope is all too familiar in Latin American letters, feminist and otherwise. (*Perhaps the alibi is: Ferré knows all of this, and Luberza is a cynical projection of this knowledge. Perhaps Luberza is the only narrator after all. But wait: “I identified myself with Isabel la Negra and with Isabel Luberza, who*

both talk in the first-person singular. But I was also the ironically detached voice which narrated the story of both women in the third-person singular . . . which implied for me a search into the double nature of my own conscience”—*unconscious, really, no?*) (Ferré 1992a: 148). “La Negra” is a willing victim, a body for purchase of pleasure, who trades her wares on the open market, intentionality intact, and in lieu of her history we have a plantation that is not haunted (though its Mistress be), a metonym for the obliteration of her subjectivity, of her history, of her unique languages (including the corporal), and a spectral projection of illegitimately privileged white desire turning upon itself, unable to acknowledge the freed slave’s authentic being-in-herself. Narrator: “Most society women were jealous of her, because, with the crash of the sugar market, the old families were now ruined and had only the empty pride of their names left to them.” Another alibi for a mortal sin. Ferré: “My own discovery of erotic sensations at the time sometimes made me feel more a wishful accomplice than a disapproving judge of Isabel’s activities . . . I realized then that if Isabel had been a victim of sexual exploitation, she had managed to turn that exploitation around in her favor” (Ferré 1992a: 150). A trope of connivance. The words forced into her mouth (like the gag on Santa Anastasia?): “‘They haven’t even enough money to take a little trip to Europe once a year like I do; they can’t even afford the copies of my designer clothes,’ she’d tell herself with a smile” (Ferré 1992b: 139). It first pivots around the patriarch, the female competition for the Master’s private property, the old cliché of envy, then around a commodity fetish standing in for Isabel’s private parts and property; European fashions (black affluence and ostentation, another prime racialized fear and stereotype in the Spanish Caribbean). Another gag and nail polish the color of blood, of “Cherries Jubilee” (the fetishization of “La Negra’s” sex?): “to begin with, it was unusual that I, Isabel Luberza, having such refined tastes, should like the shrill and gaudy colors that Negroes usually prefer” (Ferré 1992b: 136). Ferré would have us believe “La Negra” also covets the Master’s private property: “her yearning to live in the house, her dream of sitting out on the balcony behind the silver balustrade, beneath the baskets of fruit and garlands of flowers, answered to reasons deeper than economic expediency” (Ferré 1992b: 138). I’m not convinced.

At some early point, Luberza starts painting her nails red, in imitation of “La Negra’s” (sex?). And when “La Negra” arrives at her house, Luberza wants to kiss her. “I almost didn’t dare look at her. I wanted to kiss her eyelids, tender as new coconut flesh and of a beveled, almond shape” (Ferré 1992b: 139). Xanthagunephagia? But by the end of the tale, it’s not about beauty anymore but the authority of telling the story. It is Luberza’s lack of sexual purchase, punished with poverty and humiliation, and “La Negra’s” excess, rewarded with pride and wealth: “I could almost see her strong white teeth [vagina dentata?], which she rubbed daily with baking soda to whiten them [the white phallus and sperm?], and then I thought of mine, delicate and transparent like fish scales, barely showing under my lips in a perpetually polite smile [the soft, the chaste vagina dentata?]” (Ferré 1992b: 144). Never mind the extraction, *mi esposo, ¡mi dentista!*: for this dread wobbling as it turns upon itself, upon an eternal, internal, and projected resentment of the other woman’s mouth, is all wrong. The surrogate orifice; the abyss, torqued by history. Luberza considers making peace, taking the moral high ground, impersonating her twin, when a putrid hole she projects hits back:

But then she began to sway her hips provocatively in front of me, balancing herself back and forth on her sparkling red-rime heels, her hand on her waist and her elbow askew so as to flaunt before my eyes the stinking hole of her armpit. The terrible shadow of that armpit hit me square on the forehead, Ambrosio, and suddenly I remembered everything I had suffered because of her. Beyond her armpit I glimpsed the open door of her Cadillac, a piece of her chauffeur’s gilded buttoned jacket. So I flung the door open defiantly and asked her to come in. (Ferré 1992b: 145)

I don’t buy it when, in the closing moment, their consciousness bleeds into one and they become a dark continent, merging into a mutual resentment spinning wildly on a desire for purchase power, for shellac the shade of “Cherries Jubilee.”

No one is hungry in Ferré’s story. I roam around La Tertulia, trying to decide whether to purchase some food or her dusty book. I didn’t buy it then, and I don’t buy it now.

EXIT/EXITO (NO HAY SALIDA)

Northridge, California, December 2000. I'm fresh back after seven months living in Rio de Janeiro. I saved half of the fellowship checks in my account here. It just sits like a lump in the bank. Purchasing anything seems counterintuitive. Leaving the house seems counte-intuitive. Nothing coheres. I think I'm in synesthetic shock. To cheer her up, I take a friend to the cineplex. Strange, it smells just like the one in the Botafogo mall. But the sound at the movie theater here is so loud, deafening, the images so shrill and fast, it panics my body. To cheer me up, my mother takes me to the mall for the Christmas sales. It's too cold outside. Everyone seems so ghostly pale. I remember: I used to enjoy this ritual. I joke with her in the car, about Rio Sur, the "shopping museum," not a mall, because no one buys anything there; it's more like an elaborate maze of curators, guards, and visitors.

We enter the mall at the north entrance. The sight of so many things, so much of so many things, and the crowds and all the freakishly large bags being dragged to the freakishly large SUVs in the parking lots, the sheer immensity of size—people, things—the sheer speed of things—images especially, but also the mail, the news, and people in traffic too—is shocking my senses. I ask my mother, can we please go home? She looks worried, so I make another joke, something about the phrase "tudo bem, tudo bom."

I recall that when I got home from the Northridge mall I put on my horn-rimmed glasses and sweats and curled up on the sofa with a book. Nothing unusual, so my parents would not suspect what was going on inside my head. It terrified me, and it would have terrified them more. My body was in shock and my mind was in my body. I will not feel this way again until the week after September 11, 2001, and then the week after the massacre in Jenin. Then, as when I returned from Brazil, I willed myself to concentrate, finish some old projects, start some new ones. Reenter the scene. Leave the cave. Cogito ergo . . . I think therefore . . . I wanted to write something about poverty and Boricua women writers. I wanted to explore how the insular women writers have borrowed so much from us, especially their narration of feminine sexuality. But I read. And reading I can almost hear my mother's teeth chattering as a

child. She shivers, wrapped in a frayed towel, waiting for her only dress to dry:

“Mami, what’s there to eat?”—I asked, though I already knew, I was hoping for something more. As she turned toward me I felt as though I could hear her forty-two-year-old bones creaking. Her bloodshot eyes looked down and away from me. Her tired face twisted, distorting itself as though uncomfortably anticipating my reaction to her answer. She spun her words in front of her like a spider’s web shield which vindicated her while at the same time, leaving my anger unjustified:

“Some of that bread from yesterday . . .”—she said. But quickly added with an uneasy cheerfulness betrayed by a crack in her suddenly louder voice—“I’m making some coffee with powdered milk for Grandma. You can have some t—”

“THAT HARD BREAD! I’M HUNNGRY!”—We had been eating from that bread for days. I never drank coffee and she knew that.

“I want something to EEAT!”

“That’s all there is.”—She answered with meek finality.

“Then I don’t want it!” (Cenen 1983: 50–51)

I think: this is a time-space all its own. Food—her only object—molds a desire that does not fade. My mother’s desire, my sister’s in affection and affinity. The reflection intensifies. Starving in empathy, I can see something inside her, beyond the concave mirror, refracting off my own dark pupil. At last, a truth—a void with a name: Hunger. Hambre. Fome. Às vezes, as mães das favelas engordam os filhos com papel, numa mistura de leite Nestle enlatado dado aos mais fracos, literalmente alimentando-os com o jornal do Brasil. Coño. I look at the glossy picture postcard I sent my parents from Niterói. A bahia de Guanabara. Levi-Strauss called it the gums of an old, toothless woman. Tres triste tropiques. I lack the courage to read the fiction I wrote on the back. Beaches no doubt, lots of plump fruit. I am glad I had firsthand experience in some eyes of being a rich white woman in Rio—that alienation, that guilt, that feeling of being precious yet only marginally attractive, like a valuable but homely porcelain heirloom doll under glass. No one on the buses spoke to me, no one tossed me a piropo, until I got some sun. “Stay out of the sun, Lisa, or they’ll think you’re a n—” Who said that? I baked myself at the praia de Piratininga, hoping to find some semblance of myself in the mirror again. It’s hard to rebolar barefoot on burning sand and

melting plastic. I never got it right. The best I could do was to menear. Cabocla was the best I could do.

The Brazilian navy ships sometimes moored and exercised in the harbor of Piratininga. The sailors were plump, all grown up. I was always too worried about the children. At every opportunity—not enough—I fed them. A little girl sidles up to me at the grocery store. My cart is full. In her small basket is a pound of sugar, a liter of Coke, a bag of coffee, and a loaf of bread. A senhora . . . ? Sim, minha filha, eu pagaré. She is tiny, frail. She smiles. I'm plump and all grown up. I'm almost in tears. She's about eight years old. She leaves, rebolando. I look forward to being a lower-middle-class brown woman when I get back to the states. I'm ashamed. I was desperate to leave behind me these little girls at the grocery store, on the street, at the mall, begging for food in their mouths. What was left of the other half from the Brazilian government and the U.S. State Department I gave to the orphanage. Not enough. Eu pagaré.

My parents' cupboard is always full, a full four generations later on the mainland United States, purchased at a dear price. I eat food with my mouth in lieu of reading. Slowly I eat. I am glad my parents own a nice house. I am gladder still they are my best friends. I am grateful for the fricassee my mother prepares in the kitchen, the crackling and the slightly burnt scent of the sofrito hitting the oil. I am grateful for my father's gentle voice. I am happy my mother taught me how to fight back. I am glad my grandmother schooled me never to rely exclusively on any man for my own happiness. I am grateful for the fellowship checks. It almost seems like a prayer—I am grateful, I am glad, I am happy,

Ave María, gratia plena, Dominus tecum . . .

I missed the Bronx in all their voices.

Mirror of justice . . .

I listen intently to the silence outside.

Morning star . . .

I sit at the patio table with the laptop glowing and wheezing in front of me and stare at the crimson bougainvillea by the pool. I worry about the children dying of hunger and shoo the worry away.

I take another bite.

‘αμην

I determine to will my self whole again. Cogito ergo . . . Hum. Eventually, I know, she will reemerge from the mirror's warped refraction

into a dark continent. What I don't know is that part of her will return from the light, from the other continent, while part of her must stay behind. As her hunger subsides, I begin to think again in the long dark shadows of full sentences, paragraphs, and pages.

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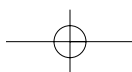
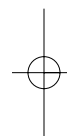
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CONTRIBUTORS

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Román de la Campa is the Edwin B. and Lenor R. Williams Professor of Romance Languages at the University of Pennsylvania. His publications take a comparative view of Latin American, American, and Latino literatures, theory, and other cultural practices. They include nearly a hundred essays published in the United States, Latin America, and Europe, as well as the following recent books: *Late Imperial Cultures*, coeditor (1995), *América Latina y Sus Comunidades Discursivas: Cultura y Literatura en la Era Global* (1999), *Latin Americanism* (2000), *Cuba on My Mind: Journeys to a Severed Nation* (2001), *América Latina: Tres Interpretaciones Actuales Sobre Su Estudio*, with Ignacio Sosa and Enrique Camacho (2004), and *Nuevas Cartografías Latinoamericanas* (2006). His next book, *Split-States and Global Imaginaries*, in progress, is scheduled to appear in 2007.

Isabel Espinal is a librarian at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, specializing in anthropology, Afro-American studies, and Native American Indian studies. She is currently a doctoral student in American studies at the University of Massachusetts. Espinal has earned

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Nicole Guidotti-Hernández is assistant professor of women's studies at the University of Arizona. She is also a faculty affiliate in Mexican American studies and the department of English. She received her doctorate degree from Cornell University in English, with a graduate minor in Latina/o studies. She is working on a manuscript titled *Unspeakable Violence: Narratives of Mourning and Loss in Chicana/o and U.S. Mexico National Imaginaries*. Her research and teaching interests focus on larger questions of race, gender, sexuality, and violence within the fields of Chicana/o and American studies. She is the author of *Gender, Epistemology, and Cooking: Rethinking Encarnación Pinedo's El Cocinero Español*.

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Marcia Ochoa is assistant professor of community studies at University of California Santa Cruz. She received her doctorate in Cultural and social anthropology at Stanford University. Her dissertation, titled "Queen for a Day: Transformistas, Misses, and Mass Media in Venezuela," explores the ways beauty pageant contestants and transgender women use beauty and femininity to imagine the possibilities of their survival. In her field research, she combined activist and media research methods to make possible an engaged and community-based scholarship.

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Priscilla Renta is a Ph.D. candidate in the department of performance studies at Northwestern University. Her research focuses on Afro-Latino/a dance in New York, Puerto Rico, and Chicago. She has published several articles in *AHA! Hispanic Arts News*, where she also served as associate editor.

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Alberto Sandoval-Sánchez is professor of Spanish and U.S.-Latino literature at Mount Holyoke College. He is a cultural critic and a creative writer who received his Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota in 1983. He has published a bilingual book of poetry *New York Backstage/ Nueva York Tras Bastidores* (1993), edited a special issue of *Ollantay Theater Magazine* on U.S.-Latino theater and AIDS (1994), authored *José, Can You See?: Latinos On and Off Broadway* (1999), coedited with Nancy S. Sternbach, *Puro Teatro: A Latina Anthology* (2000), and authored with Sternbach, *Stages of Life: Transcultural Performance and Identity in Latina Theatre* (2001). Sandoval-Sánchez's present research and scholarship centers on the staging of monstrosity, enfreakment, queerness, and abjection on Broadway and in minority theater. He is also working on trauma, memory, death, and mourning in U.S.-Latino/a theater and performance.

Felicity Schaeffer-Grabiell is assistant professor in the feminist studies department at the University of California, Santa Cruz. Her research interests include border and migration studies, feminist transnationalism,

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Ramón Solórzano, Jr.'s research focuses on the intersection of linguistic and racial ideology, technology, and Latinidad, with particular attention to unraveling discourses of diversity. He earned an interdisciplinary B.S. degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology with heavy concentration in the program in science, technology, and Society. After several years working for software start-up companies in Silicon Valley and on the East Coast, he took on his current studies as a doctoral candidate in cultural anthropology at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. His research has been supported by several grants, including a Ford Foundation Pre-Doctoral Fellowship for Minorities and a National Science Foundation Dissertation Improvement Grant. He currently lives in Amherst with his spouse, three children, a growing set of "eSpanglish" speech technologies, and cat Jimmy.