Ciphering Nations: Performing Identity in Brazil and the Caribbean

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Abstract

This dissertation explores the interaction of theories of hybridity, *mestizaje*, *mestiçagem* and popular culture representations of national identity in Cuba, Brazil, and Puerto Rico throughout the 20th century. I examine a series of cultural products, including performance, film, and literature, and argue that using the four elements of Hip Hop culture—deejay, emcee, break, graffiti—as a lens for reading draws out the intra-American dialogues and foregrounds the Africanist aesthetic as it informs the formation of national identity in the Americas.

Hip Hop, rather than focus solely on its characteristic hybridity, calls attention to race and to a legacy of fighting racism. Instead of hiding behind miscegenation and aspirations of romanticized hybridity and mixing, it blatantly points out oppressions and introduces them into popular culture through its four components—thus reaching audiences through multiple modalities. Tropes of *mestizaje* or *branqueamento*—racial mixing/whitening—depoliticize blackness through official refusal to cite cultural contributions and emphasize instead a whitened blending. Hip Hop points blatantly to persistent social inequalities. Diverse and divergent in their political histories, the geographic and nationally bound sites that form the foci of this study are bound by their contentious relationships to the United States, an emphasis on the Africanist aesthetic, and a rich history of intertextual exchanges. Rather than look at individual nation formation and marginalized bodies' performances of subversion, this study highlights the common tropes that link these nations and bodies and that privilege an alternative way of constructing history and understanding present day transnational bodies.

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Introduction: De-Ciphering

> "The practices of b-boyin, MCing, graffiti writing, and deejaying had never been seen before, but the aesthetic concepts that underwrite them were updated, not invented. As with everything in hip-hop, the key is how everything is put together, and the energy with which it is suffused" (Adam Mansbach, 93)

This study engages performers, film, and literature that address national identity development in the African diaspora, specifically in Cuba, Brazil, and Puerto Rico. In particular, the performers, protagonists, and writers selected for this project are connected to the more than century-long critical investigation into the relationship of minority identities and constructions of nationalism. In his chapter "Outside in Black Studies: Reading from a Queer Place in the Diaspora" (2005), Rinaldo Walcott asks, "why is it that the black studies project has hung its hat so lovingly on U.S. blackness and therefore a 'neat' national project? And how does a renewed interest in questions of the diaspora seem to only be able to tolerate U.S. blackness and British blackness? Finally, how does imperialism figure in national subaltern studies?" (92). The purpose of this investigation is not only to highlight multiple routes by which identity and cultural markers travel but also to further integrate scholarship on diaspora, performance, and nationality in the Americas. My dissertation addresses three diverse locations that, because of their common tie to the Africanist aesthetic, provide unique insight into questions of racial mixing, popular culture, and globalization in the Latin American context.

I am primarily interested in examining representations of intersectional identities and transnational dialogue in the latter half of the twentieth century in the Americas. Though diverse and divergent in their political histories, the geographic and nationally bound sites that form the foci of this study are bound by their contentious relationships to the United States, an emphasis on the Africanist aesthetic, and a rich history of intertextual exchanges. As theorized by dance scholar Brenda Dixon-Gottschild (1996), the Africanist aesthetic emphasizes repetition-as-intensification and “democratic equality of body parts” (8); it is characterized by a polycentric dancing body and polyrhythmic engagement with music. This study emphasizes embodied histories and a plurality of disciplinary approaches in order to rethink intra-American dialogues and the construction of national and community identities.

In theorizing bodies like that of Brazilian film star Carmen Miranda and lenses like that of director Carlos Diegues (Chapter Three), I am asserting that the African diaspora in the Americas must be read beyond those bodies that are defined by African roots or legacies of direct racial oppression. I am arguing that the dialogic exchanges among American citizens—broadly defined—theorized over the last century has not adequately accounted for the ways that Afro-diasporic citizens have impacted transnational communities and delimitations of nations. I am attempting to simultaneously call into question formulations of exclusionary national identity and constructions of 'Africanness' within the Americas. To call into question the ways that national identities are constructed necessarily requires a critical inquiry into the formulation of transnational communities and exiled citizens. This project seeks to link these terrains through the tropes and tensions held within Hip Hop underground.

A variety of theoretical, socio-historical, and methodological approaches facilitate the interpretations of the texts I highlight in this project; however, taking an interdisciplinary approach alone will not adequately address the multifaceted relationships present within them. While early films starring Brazilian icon Carmen

Miranda and musical productions by Cuban pop star Celia Cruz engage histories of modernization, and performances of race, gender, and nation, fictional texts by Puerto Rican Mayra Santos Febrés illustrate legacies of globalization, US imperialism, and performances of sexuality. Throughout these and contemporary performance texts, like the concert performances by Cuban rap trio Krudas Cubensi or the 2007 Brazilian film *Antônia*, the struggle to reconcile postcolonial subjectivity, gender subordination, and transnational positionalities is a common thread. Rather than channeling my study through a single disciplinary approach or engaging in an interdisciplinary intersectional analysis, I am turning to an alternative source of knowledge, Hip Hop culture, to read the artistic exchanges and nonlinear histories embodied by the subjects of analysis.

My initial interest in this project started with noticing the ways that specifically raced, gendered, and classed bodies were associated with particular national contexts. Beyond a simple phenotype and stereotypical association, I perceived how specific dance movements led to the delimitation of (national) borders and how particular bodies were emblematic of national citizenship. As a text to be read and a writing agent, the body lends itself to multiple interpretations and utterances; it is changing and malleable. The performing body is active in signifying; reading performing bodies is a way to understand how space is shaped and continues to evolve. At a time when bodies are devalued more than ever—continued wars around the world, physical abuse, eating disorders, misogyny—analyses of moving (performing) bodies are extremely important. Moving bodies mark gender, race, class, and nation and have the ability to alter the ways that these intersecting identities are circulated and reified both locally and globally. One of the primary movement forms that exemplifies this scope of movement is hip hop dance or, break.

The methods of Hip Hop, the ways that Hip Hop spreads its message—of racial inequality, of social injustice, of gendered oppression—are characterized by a ‘flow,’ by throwing ‘waack,’ by acrobatic movements that draw attention to bodies that are constantly contending with invisibilization and demonization. It is sometimes characterized by hyper-sexuality, strong words, explicit lyrics. It dresses in baggy clothes, side-ways turned hats, gold chains, high-top sneakers. It is always both an aesthetic and a politic. It tells a story, it reads the news, it comments on contemporary politics and social realities. It sells itself through beats that get spectators bumping, through lyrics that make the audience participate and call back, through bringing a little bit of everyone in (mixing beats from Jamaica, Brazil, Japan, India, etc.). It is associated with contradictions: both starting from a place of non-privilege and also becoming a location for global dissemination of ideas and forms. It blatantly judges the world around it and seems to mock the exclusion of marginalized bodies through reversing this exclusion onto privileged bodies. Though it claims to have its origins in the streets of New York and the mixing of Puerto Rican, Jamaican and African American artists, Hip Hop is always constantly global. It is always telling the story of passages and distant localities. The lyrics of early artists are inspired by stories from other localities; the body movements are inflected and rooted in movements deemed “national” in other locations. My project focuses on the intricacies of these postcolonial sites and the interactions between bodies as they stand in for nation and seek to represent their intersecting identities in ever more complex terms. I draw upon the genres of performance, film, and literature to locate these bodies.

For decades scholars have worked to construct the genealogy of nation formation but have, I believe, missed the opportunity to follow the calling of the early Independence and Revolutionary fighters of the Americas to imagine a united postcolonial America. From José Martí's call for a united Caribbean to Simon Bolívar's *Carta a Jamaica* urging a collective Latin American fight against colonial powers, the aspiration for solidarity has long been present. Though utopist in their visions and predicated on exclusionary practices, the emphasis on shared histories and intra-American dialogue are tropes that I believe remain important for conceptualizing identity and community formation in the last century. Rather than look at individual nation formation and marginalized bodies' performances of subversion, I am interested in common tropes that link these nations and bodies and that privilege an alternative way of constructing history and understanding present day transnational bodies. I am also committed to expanding Rinaldo Walcott's questions regarding the black studies project and the exclusionary practices that sustain a separation between U.S. and British black studies and the greater Americas. He points out that:

> [B]lack diaspora queers live in a borderless, large world of shared identification and imagined historical relations produced through a range of fluid cultural artifacts like film, music, clothing, gesture, and signs or symbols, not to mention sex and its dangerously pleasurable fluids. In fact, black diaspora queers have been interrupting and arresting the black studies project to produce a bevy of identifications, which confound and

> complicate local, national, and transnational desires, hopes, and disappointments of the post-Civil Rights and post-Black Power era. (92)

Walcott's emphasis on the collective identity "black diaspora queer" as a site of interruption and fluid historical relations inspires my search for citations, parodies, and ruptures. My project is not simply an addition of voices, bodies, performances from the greater Americas to an exclusive canon, it is an attempt to point out some of the details of the moments of these fluid interactions. Reading through Hip Hop culture, though arguably a U.S-centric artistic expressive form, I introduce a productive starting place for breaking down precisely those U.S.-centric narratives that dominate black studies and remain peripheral to Latin American Studies. Born out of a mixing of bodies, beats, and histories on U.S soil, scholars of Hip Hop are consistent in their citations of Caribbean artists and exiled Latinos as they chronicle the evolution and birth of Hip Hop in the U.S. Extending the value of Hip Hop artists to cite and recognize the legacy of mobile bodies, oppressive forces, and creative artistry, the chapters that follow draw out the moments of artistic exchange and the building of layers held within the American body.

"A love song from the Middle Passage, she is eternal" (Hiba Rasheed, aka Miss Lyrikal Nuisance, *Neither Here Nor There*, 2009)

This feminized love song, imagined by Miss Lyrical Nuisance, emphasizes the eternal and, I would argue, internalized reality of the Middle Passage. This historical reality crosses oceanic and historical limitations. Following Timothy Brennan's emphasis on iterations of musical forms and the transnational exchange of Africanist rhythms, my approach takes Hip Hop as a productive lens for deciphering "hard" national categories and colonial legacies. In *Secular Devotion: Afro-Latin Music and Imperial Jazz* (2008), Brennan asserts that “hard national-cultural categories do not seem to have weakened very much despite the explosion of writing today dedicated to transnationalism and hybridity” (8). This project addresses the tension between hard national-cultural categories and theories of hybridity not through economic or political explanations, but rather through privileging the performing body. Brennan’s study is concerned with the Latin American and United States separation and, by highlighting some of the most popular dances and music forms in Latin America, from Cuban *son* to *salsa*, he emphasizes the ways that concepts of national identity get formed through commercialization and global proliferation. Or, as Amy Kaminsky argues in her *After Exile* (1999), “to put it more strongly, and more generally, identity as a national subject depends on friction and is often tied to loss, lack, and longing" (29). It is precisely in these moments of tension and friction that I seek to tease out the contradictory processes of identity and identity-based community formation both nationally and within the African diaspora.

My study looks at performance texts in the form of choreography, film, and fiction and emphasizes the corporeal as the primary site of analysis. The texts discussed in the following chapters engage concepts of national bodies and rely on imported concepts of self while reinserting the weight of physical bodies into narrations of nation and identity. I am interested in the relationship between the formation of national bodies/citizens and the blurred borders that diasporic bodies represent. Kaminsky argues, "the institutional meaning of nation and the subject's role in it must be projected onto individuals whose own history, agency, desire, experience, and social location make them elusive targets. Manners and mores, even what is considered human nature, are produced locally and can be brought to consciousness by the contrast between home and elsewhere" (29, 1999). The performers, actors, and protagonists I discuss highlight the tension between subject identity formation and state sponsored images of nation. Because of their mobility, both through global media and in real time, these artists and protagonists draw attention to the important moment of exile, diaspora, and inbetweenness. Despite the influx of theories of hybridity and transculturation, there persists a tendency to reify national borders and to establish fixed concepts with which to define the nation. Analyzing the bodies that serve as referents for concepts of nation, like Carmen Miranda's early emblematic association as a Brazilian *baiana*, offers an alternative entry point for understanding constructions of identity. As discussed in Chapter Three, Miranda's representation of the typical Afro-Brazilian woman from the northeast, performing in the typical dress from that region, exemplifies the different ways that costuming shapes racialized representations of nation and reifies strict identity categories; her birth in Portugal and light skin did not deter choreographers and directors from fashioning her as the Pan-Latina representative in the U.S.

Disidentification allows minority subjects to "read oneself and one's own life narrative in a moment, object, or subject that is not culturally coded to 'connect' with the disidentifying subject" (Muñoz, 12). By claiming aspects of dominant identities as their own, minority subjects resist the top-down labeling of majority subjects. José Esteban Muñoz claims, "[d]isidentification is meant to be descriptive of the survival strategies the minority subject practices in order to negotiate a phobic majoritarian public sphere that continuously elides or punishes the existence of subjects who do not conform to the phantasm of normative citizenship" (4). In *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics* (1999), Muñoz maintains that "disidentificatory practices" are both strategies of resistance and of survival. For many of the artists, protagonists, and performers highlighted in this project, the tensions of disidentification are precisely where they begin to question the hard national categories with which they disidentify.

The subjects forgrounded in the following chapters are both minority and majoritarian; they include performers who identify as queer, female, Afro-Cuban, Afro-Puerto Rican, white-European, Afro-Brazilian, mother, *favelada*, with multiple overlapping and individuated iterations in between. Each of the subjects emphasized in this project accentuates an iteration of disidentification that has an important impact on the evolution of national identity and the ways that we read cultural citizens. Subjects like the rap trio Krudas Cubensi, discussed in Chapter Two, emphatically identify as Cuban, knowing that queer, female rappers are not part of the dominant national imaginary. Their claim to *cubanía* is necessarily one comprised of disidentification; simultaneously they emphasize their minoritarian status as women, queer, and Afro-Cuban. And, not unlike their foremother Celia Cruz, their relationship to *cubanía* as a personal and national construct is dramatically altered by their exiled location. Because disidentification can also reify categorical distinctions it is important to allow the performing bodies to address these boundaries. And, through a close reading of multiple performances, this study will illustrate an alternative method for approaching studies of disidentification and national identity formation.

Disidentifying Hip Hop

Timothy Brennan argues that rhythms traveled across national boundaries and established a *lingua franca* for Afro-diasporic subjects. Like the travels and evolution of this common language, I am interested in the intersections and exchanges of bodies and bodily signifiers in the African diaspora as they relate to formations of American national identities. At what points did both artistic and fluid bodily exchanges occur and how does this contact impact the formation of intra-American collectives? What are the aesthetic cues that are appropriated by nationalist rhetoric and what methods do performers engage in order to invert meaning? Scholars over the last few decades have engaged with national and identificatory crossings and have theorized postcolonial identities in terms of *mestizaje*, hybridity, and *mestiçagem*; this study contributes to this line of inquiry by introducing the elements of Hip Hop as a lens for understanding transnational identity formation. Hip Hop, rather than focus solely on its hybridity, calls attention to race and to a legacy of fighting racism. Instead of hiding behind miscegenation and aspirations of romanticized hybridity and mixing, it blatantly points out oppressions and introduces them into popular culture through its four components—thus reaching audiences through multiple modalities. Tropes of *mestizaje* or *branqueamento*—racial whitening—depoliticize blackness through official refusal to cite cultural contributions and an emphasis instead on a whitened blending. Hip Hop points blatantly to persistent social inequalities. Many earlier theories of race and national citizens find their etymological roots in racist biological discourses and conceptions of population whitening, I suggest that Hip Hop, as a mixed and transitory artistic form, productively serves as a frame for reading identity formation in the Americas.[1]

Hip Hop as a cultural form reflects a complex social history of racial discrimination and silencing of minority voices. For practitioners, artists, and community members, Hip Hop is a way of life; it is not only an artistic style. In its underground roots, it references a lifestyle that is politically engaged and community oriented. As a cultural form it grew out of community conversations, both verbal and artistic. It continues to carry the weight of this legacy as youth cultures around the world establish community and commit to local and global change. Hip Hop crosses the boundary of theory and practice. It is an on-the-ground struggle and it is based on multifaceted histories, interactions, and exchanges. To this end, it is a method of being. This method of being translates into a way of knowing the world, of interacting within a community and in dominant society. It is constantly evolving to incorporate new disidentificatory practices and to address social evolution. What does it mean to conceive of Hip Hop as a theoretical lens? What does this way of knowing tell us about nation formation? As an Afro-diasporic form, how does this lens allow for alternative readings of performances that represent the Africanist aesthetic in the Americas?

Hip Hop culture is recognized by four central elements: deejay, emcee, break-dance, and graffiti. The bridging fifth element, the cipher, symbolizes bodies connecting, and rhythms, arts, and politics merging; it represents the circular nature of history and the collective production of knowledge.[2] Defined by Austin's Hip Hop Project as "a circle of energy ignited by a community as they express artistic ideas," the cipher is the energetic component of Hip Hop that inspires continuous production and commitment.[3] For Gawker in his "Ghetto Pass,"

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[1] For a more detailed discussion of theories of racial formation in relation to national identity see the article by Edward Telles, "Race in Another America" (2004) and discussions found in *Trânsitos Coloniais* (2002) edited by Cristiana Bastos, Miguel Vale de Almeida, and Bela Feldman Bianco.

> The Cipher was hip hop's training ground, where the architects of the renaissance learned to express in different ways, and the crowd was always the final arbiter of talent...The truest ciphers are located on a stoop in front of someone's house, or have just popped up on a city street far removed from clubs or formal venues of any kind. Like unprotected sex, these ciphers are born of a recklessly carnal impulse that demands sating no matter the circumstances. (http://gawker.com/#!231470/ghetto-pass-classic-the-cipher)

It represents the circular nature of both artistic recycling and energetic reinvigoration. The cipher is the term that acknowledges the ways that communities and artists rely on one another for both inspiration and support. Originally an Arabic term "sifr" meaning "to be empty or zero" it was translated later from French into English where it maintains its association with zero and also takes on the ability to reference secret codes and concealed meanings. These later meanings clearly interact with the principal elements of Hip Hop as conjointly they establish a secret code and a system of signifying that is only fully accessible to those to participate in the cipher. Working both independently and in tandem, each of the elements of Hip Hop draws upon different ways of knowing and conjointly are productive sites for meaning making: together they make up Hip Hop as a theoretical lens.[4]

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[2] In the *Rap Dictionary*, "Cipher" is defined as: "something like a jam session in which everyone contributes to the creative experience. Be they DJs, dancers, rappers or graffiti writers, all the different artists that collectively make up the culture of hip-hop can have their own cypher. When dancers cypher, you'll see each taking a turn in the center of a circle, contributing a unique style, then resting. The center of circle is never empty and the energy of the cypher grows as the dancers push themselves into increasing levels of athleticism." (http://www.rapdict.org/Cipher)

[3] Websites like http://www.worldcypher.com/ "World Cypher: Hip Hop Blogs" creates a forum for rappers and artists to share stories, resources, and creative juices across the world. Termed "World Cypher" it is precisely this impetus to inspire creativity that is at the root of Hip Hop's Cipher/Cypher.

Highlighting Hip Hop as a method of being provokes an important questioning of what counts as knowledge and who gets access to such knowledges. Hip Hop bodies are distinct knowers. These artists and performers approach and know their daily reality *through* their particular formation and disciplining in the elements of Hip Hop. In her discussion of black feminist epistemologies, Patricia Hill Collins (2000) argues that the politics of race and gender influence knowledge. And, since knowledge only exists within context, these specific ways of knowing rely on validation or denial of personhood. Collins posits an alternative black feminist epistemology that relies on dialogue and a focus on lived, subjective experiences to inform scholarship. Such an approach emphasizes personal responsibility in scholarship and accountability without allowing individuality to overshadow collectivity. I wish to extend this assumption that knowledge is formed through daily-lived realities and, I argue, Hip Hop culture offers one such lens that relies on a simultaneous individual and collective experience of oppression.

This tension between individuality and collectivity is an important starting point for thinking of representations of identity. Throughout the following chapters I will draw attention to the ways that collective struggles and identity-based communities are both read onto bodies and formed transnationally through shared histories. Collins argues that changes in thinking may alter behaviors and altering behaviors may produce changes in thinking. Thus, for U.S. black women as a collective, "the struggle for a self-defined Black feminism occurs through an ongoing dialogue whereby action and thought inform one another" (30). In rethinking the construction of national identity it is important to think through the mutually informed dialogue of action and thought and the evolving cipher of intellectual and creative exchanges that circulate transnationally. "Black feminist intellectuals, then, function like intermediary groups," says Collins, "[o]n the one hand, they are very much in touch with their own and their confidants' experiences as a disenfranchised group; on the other hand, they are also in touch with intellectual heritages, diverse groups, and broader social justice issues" (7). I extend Hill-Collins' conception of black feminist intellectuals as mediators between multiple groups and experiences, to conceive of Hip Hop culture, the Ciphered experience, as an intermediary form between multiple sites, histories, and identities.

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[4] See Jeff Chang's *Can't Stop Won't Stop: A History of the Hip Hop Generation* (2007) for further discussion of the evolution and dissemination of the principal elements of Hip Hop.

In one element of Hip Hop, the deejay blends musical genres, beats, and rhythms, while in a second, the emcee raps and speaks poetry. Dancing b-boys and b-girls form a third element. They train their bodies to respond to the mixed rhythms and rhymes of the deejay and the emcee, and to express messages through movement; at times you find them locking and popping their bodies in stuttered movements to accentuate pauses and breaks and at others you'll see them manipulating the force of gravity as they perform acrobatics on the floor. These movements, like the blending of musical genres and histories, can be traced back across nations and oceans spanning from the U.S to the

Caribbean to Brazil and to Africa. The fourth element is the art on the walls. Graffiti combines the poetry and force of words found in emcee's lyricism, but relies on visual artistic impact. Graffiti marks space: its slight environmental alteration leaves a mark more permanent than the other elements. The cipher, the fifth element, encourages artists to recognize the importance of community and to acknowledge the creative capacity of collectives. It is precisely due to this recycling and openness to innovation that Hip Hop culture remains such a powerful force in social and artistic movements worldwide.

The five elements together are displayed through multiple media and become accessible to a wide range of audiences. Not confined to ethnomusicologists, poets, dancers, or artists, nor limited to a single located experience, Hip Hop has established substantial global capital over the last several decades. I am turning to Hip Hop to create a methodology for reading performance texts because no one academic discipline can fully account for the complexities of postcolonial nation formation; no one disciplinary approach is sufficient for explaining the intricacies of intersectional identities; and, no one epistemology can account for the contradictions present in the texts I highlight in this study. Though a seemingly undisciplined cultural form, Hip Hop sets out elements of a way of being that has the capacity to form an approach different from traditional academic disciplines. Though Hip Hop is often critiqued for being unruly and illegal, exemplified by characterizations of graffiti's vandalism and rap music's violent lyrics, I argue that through decades of artistic and bodily disciplining Hip Hop has become a powerful force that inspires collectives and cross-cultural dialogue. Through official and unofficial pathways, the rules of rap and break battles are disseminated and altered based on locale and cultural specificity. The commercial Hip Hop aesthetic though, even in globalized Hip Hop underground, dominates and guides the disciplining and reproduction of the elements. Through a series of repeated tropes each of the elements can be recognized globally in their struggle against hegemonic powers and marginalization. Motivated by the powerful voices, confrontational lyrics, and ability to claim space many youth cultures find themselves rehearsing break movements and sharing rhymes at a young age. In addition to the evolution of the elements of artistic expression, the element of the cipher, the cyclical inward looking, establishes Hip Hop as a disciplined artistic form and way of being.

Hip Hop's multiple forms of expression encompass a variety of ways of knowing and accessing the world around: poetic, bodily, artistic, political, historical, and multicultural. Reading literary, filmic, and performance texts through Hip Hop allows a renegotiation of the construction of the African diaspora in Brazil and the Caribbean, and a move beyond theories of hybridity, racial harmony, or multiculturalism. Employing Hip Hop culture as a method allows me to address the following questions using the tropes, vocabulary, and the aesthetic of the voices and bodies in question: In what ways do intra-American conversations on race inform one another? How has nationalist rhetoric been both influential and isolating in identity formation in the context of the Americas? How do iterations of nation in the Americas both articulate national differences and solidify the Africanist aesthetic/legacy?

Grounding

Before proceeding with this project it is important for me to include a note on my own standpoint and personal investment. While I have long privileged knowing the world through movement, dance and athletics, it was not until I began traveling that I came to fully appreciate the impact of these bodily interactions. I experienced the ways that I was allowed access to different communities based on a common dance vocabulary and shared appreciation for the legacies that the movements carry. When conducting research in Salvador da Bahia, Brazil, I was introduced to segregated dance spaces where common movement vocabulary and a general channeling of *axé* (or *tumbao*, as discussed in Chapter Two), in this context through samba dance, gave me access to spaces where other (white) foreigners were not admitted. This language expressed by moving bodies indicated some shared understanding and implied recognition of histories held within racialized bodies.

I have been interested in mixing (ethnic, social, cultural, 'racial') since I was a child and one of only three *haoles* in my predominantly Filipino and Hawaiian classroom on the Big Island of Hawai'i. The construction of racialized spaces and communities profoundly impacted my early years. I moved from this environment to one in California where the majority of my classmates were Mexican. These ethnic designations and the colonial histories that shaped the cultural and national contexts peaked my curiosity early on. I am fascinated not only by national and local histories that shape the formation of collectives but also the ways that the role of sexuality and performances of gender in contemporary scholarship and lived reality are altering the construction of spaces. Only as I have gotten older and had distance to reflect on these contexts, have I begun to think about my role in these environments and the ways that we shaped each other. The question of racialized and layered identities is not unique to my project but rather one that propels multiple inquiries in diverse sites and one that requires multiple methodologies. I am interested in looking at multiple sites—performances, film, and fiction—in order to see how bodies are used as markers of particular identities. I explore how these performances and movements signal particular identities and how this impacts their audience reception. I want to bring together a variety of media that are all taking on the task of questioning national identity and what it means to be a citizen. The questions: Where does my body belong? Which bodies qualify as citizens in this context? And, how is a nation defined by its bodies/citizens?, draw me into the stories told throughout this project.

Chapter Summaries

In my first chapter, "Ciphered Nations," I articulate the ways that the five key elements of Hip Hop can be jointly conceived of as an alternative approach to studies of national identity formation, citizenship, and identity. I discuss the ways that this lens can help illuminate new readings on the formation of identity-based communities and transnational collectives within the African diaspora. This chapter outlines some of the primary tropes that are repeated within Hip Hop's deejaying, emceeing, break dancing, and graffiti artistry. The deejay, for example, embodies the perpetual remixing of national and diasporic spaces and the ways that layering (of beats and bodies) has the capacity to reference multiple sites simultaneously. At the same time, the break dancer (b-girl/b-boy) and graffiti artist signal the tension of presence and absence as dancers and artists insert their bodies and their tags into spaces from which they are socially excluded. To make these expressions seen is to negotiate risk and safety. The trope of confrontation and vulnerability is important both to artists creating an avenue for social change and for the protagonists in this project whose performances embody this tension.

Finally, I suggest the Hip Hop Cipher as a productive lens that relies on a way of knowing born out of mixing bodies, ideas, and borders. By extending Paul Gilroy's notion of the mobile black Atlantic I argue that in order to understand the relationship of individual identity to nation formation it is necessary to conceive of collective identities and ciphered knowledges. Through a detailed analysis of the four components of Hip Hop the first chapter, highlights the ways in which each element offers a productive lens for analyses of border crossing and hybrid identities. This theoretical introduction interrogates constructions of physical national borders and highlights the performative nature of historical and corporeal boundaries.

The second chapter, "Defining Nation from the Outside-In: Krudas Cubensi and Celia Cruz," looks at the ways that these two exiled performers engage Cuba as an imagined homeland and form hemispheric communities of listeners. I theorize the tensions present in the space of exile defined by both mobility—movement away from the homeland—and confinement—restricted travel to the homeland—through the tropes held by deejays' mobility and musical innovation. I discuss the ways that these women's performances conceive of the construction of Cuban national identity in racialized and sexualized terms and thus negotiate multiple standpoints simultaneously.

As one of the nations that received the most African slaves during colonial times (after Brazil), Cuba's relationship to the African diaspora and the legacies of the Africanist aesthetic are particularly salient. Simultaneously, because of Cuba's history, both of Cuban-U.S. relations and the socio-political and economic situation, the instability of the national population and representation of national identity has been in great flux over the last century. Through experimenting with cultural and social roles these artists exemplify the ways that exile impacts notions of home and nationality. This chapter initiates the first of three case studies through reading live and recorded performances and thus drawing the close connection between Hip Hop's embodied knowledges and the lens' direct capacity for engaging Afro-diasporic exchanges.

The third chapter, "*Brasileiras no Palco*: Brazilian Women on Stage," focuses on film productions and the formation of identity-based collectives in twentieth and twenty-first century Brazil. My close reading of film star Carmen Miranda (1909-1955), and the films *Xica da Silva* (1976) and *Antônia* (2006) by directors Carlos Diegues's and Tata Amaral, emphasizes the complex negotiations and strong tie to "routes," both transnational and transhistorical, rather than "roots" that supposedly bind a national and gendered citizen. Moving from the live and video recorded images of the previous chapter, these choreographed and directed performances of raced, national, and gender identities move us to an inbetween space of agential live concert performances, like those analyzed in Chapter Two, and fictionalized accounts, like those discussed in Chapter Four.

This chapter engages three dominant themes that are relevant to studies of contemporary Brazilian popular culture as well as to Gender and Diaspora Studies. First, I trace the ways in which these protagonists and film stars both form part of a local community based on their minoritarian identities and also complicate identity-based theories of collectivity through their connection to a larger transnational diaspora. Second, through a close reading of the choreographed dance performances featured within the films I show how the relationship of *brasilidade* to hypersexualization of female bodies can both reinforce national discourse on citizenship and also slowly make movement to change societal machismo. Third, I illustrate how these protagonists and film stars engage Brazil's intellectual tradition and contemporary preoccupation with racism and racial hierarchies.

Finally, in the fourth chapter, "Breaking Time: *Sirena Selena vestida de pena* and *Fe en disfraz*," I explore the ways that historical narratives are embodied and layered in two novels by Puerto Rican novelist Mayra Santos Febres. Moving from live performance to staged fictionalized performances in film, this final genre study locates bodily exchanges in literary texts. My textual analysis centers on the protagonists' negotiations of identity as they perform and rework gender, sexuality, nationality, and racial categories. I rely on the concept of "breaking time" to literally break down narratives of progress by privileging a narrative space that emphasizes the non-linear relationship of past to present and to metaphorically imagine expressions of the break-dancing body as an articulation of layered histories. "Breaking time" speaks to the ways that linear narratives of progress and essentialized cultural identity are broken in the individual bodies that are responsible for carrying them. Santos-Febres's novels rely on protagonists and language that defy strict boundaries of identity categories and on contexts that evade straightforward chronological history. The two texts journey across the Caribbean, the U.S., and Brazil and feature characters that encourage readers to question the formation of embodied diasporic and gender identities.

I have organized this project to progress from live performance through film and then to literary movements; I put in conversation not only these distinct genres and national locations but also three distinct histories. This multidisciplinary framework allows different angles from which to observe the intra-American dialogue and intertextual performativity linked by the Hip Hop cipher. Performance, film, and literature—the featured cultural expressions and media throughout this study—though separated within the chapters by genre, jointly offer multiple entrypoints into the principal questions at hand. What I seek to illuminate for readers by the end of the combined analyses are the ways that the legacies of slavery and colonialism not only persevere in the social structures of those affected societies but also are also transmitted and embodied by individuals across the Americas. Through highlighting such embodiments across multiple genres and in three distinct national locations I also point out the persistent question regarding the formation of national identity in relation to disidentifying minority communities. Hip Hop as a lens of analysis links the texts and offers a way of reading born out of a collective struggle and an ablility to establish itself globally.

CHAPTER 1:
Ciphered Nations

This study is concerned with the layering of identity markers and the formation of national, diasporic, and exiled communities in the Americas. In particular I am interested in the relationship of legacies of colonialism and slavery to contemporary productions of national identity and intra-American dialogues. Looking to pop culture, like the music, dance, and artistic expressions of Hip Hop, allows analyses of the Africanist legacy—African and African American resonances, presences, trends, influences and general impact on modern arts and letters—to diverge from essentializing or ahistorical theorizations and to establish an embodied narrative.[5] It is my goal to engage this pop culture artistic form as an alternative lens for addressing contemporary debates regarding diaspora, citizenship, and identity.

Tracing the genealogy of Hip Hop leads investigators on a bi-coastal journey in the U.S., across the Caribbean Sea, and into the Atlantic Ocean. The seemingly arbitrary borders on land and in the water are reflected in the seamless evolution of this Africanist artistic form that looks both inward to the political climate and outward to the Oceans that border the North American continent. Beginning with the movement of bodies across the sea and transitioning to globalized media, this ciphered exchange has continued throughout centuries. Like the blending of musical beats, there are many bodily utterances that are better understood by those who have a wide range of experience with movement. The more familiar one is with jazz, tap, *salsa*, *capoeira*, and skank, for example, the easier it becomes to identify the ways that these dance forms influence break. One of the repeated elements within Afro-diasporic dance is the circle, like the fifth element of Hip Hop, the cipher. This spatial formation emphasizes the focus on the dancers at the center and also distinguishes the circle of surrounding audience members. Like other African-influenced movement forms, breaking is performed within the context of an on-looking circle. At times the circle surrounds a single dancer who may be performing solo and at other times it may contain two battling dancers. The "community" surrounding these bodies echoes the environment the form was born into both through its outward blocking impetus (separating dancing bodies from 'outsiders'), and through its inward looking community-formation.

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[5] Brenda Dixon Gottschild, *Diggin the Africanist Presence* (1996).

The tension of simultaneous inward and outward looking characterizes the development of post-colonial Latin America as individual nations throughout the early 20th century looked to both express singularity and protect itself against neo-colonial global forces looking on. "Ciphering Nationality" refers to the constant flow of ideas within the boundaries of the nation where individual citizens and expansive collectives influence one another and impact identity-formation on a personal and national level. The image of the simultaneously inward-looking and boundary protecting circle alongside the outward looking and environment assessing circle reflects the practice of ciphering nationality. I find this lens particularly useful for understanding the Latin American and Caribbean postcolonial contexts from within which the exchange of ideas, arts, soldiers, political leaders, and languages has been in constant dialogue since before the colonial period. The cipher as a Hip Hop concept reflects an Africanist sensibility from within which the power of one's own being can only be understood by recognizing and honoring the contributions of the collective and one's place within that circle. In this analysis of identity formation my research relies on a way of knowing born out of mixing bodies, ideas, and borders that has shaped the Caribbean and Latin American regions for the last five hundred years.

Within the context of post-colonial nation formation it is essential to find multiple entry points of analysis in order to more fully comprehend the subtleties of identity performance and confined national bodies. Brenda Dixon Gottschild theorizes the African legacy in particular. She discusses some of the primary modes where the Africanist aesthetic is present in today's arts and letters including the following forms of expression: "the 'cut' (being mid dance and then cutting the movement, showing the mind's control over the body, despite appearances); 'rhythmic poetry' (following drum beats with undulations); 'cool aesthetic' (one part of the body moves in a quick or technically difficult way while another remains 'cool' or static); poly-rhythm; ephebism (vitality); and juxtapositions" (10). My analyses rely on the knowledges present in the aesthetic outlined by Dixon-Gottschild (1996) as well as Paul Gilroy's theory of constructions of modernity as articulated in *The Black Atlantic* (1993).

I propose extending the limited boundaries of the Atlantic outlined by Gilroy to include the expansive Caribbean and coastal regions. The Caribbean Sea and the Antilles linked multiple sites within the black Atlantic circuit of the African slave trade and served as a stopping point for explorers and merchants. Like Dixon-Gottschild, Gilroy is also concerned with the underrepresented legacy of African culture as discovered in these multiple sites of analysis. Gilroy asserts that black musical expression "offers a means to get beyond the related oppositions between essentialists and pseudo-pluralists on the one hand and between totalising conceptions of tradition, modernity, and post-modernity on the other" (35). He proposes the study of the black Atlantic as a single unit of analysis rather than continued studies of individual and distinct national cultures. He argues that the black Atlantic produces a transnational and intercultural perspective: "the history of the black Atlantic," he explains, "provides a means to reexamine the problems of nationality, location, identity, and historical memory" (15-16). He engages the metaphor of the ship as a living and active central character that joins various points in the Atlantic and forms the basis for relationships among the slave trade, industrialization and modernization. Using a lens that emphasizes racialized crossings and forgotten legacies, Gilroy highlights the importance of theorizing identity as movement as compared with earlier texts that sought to link black political culture to an identity of roots and rootedness. I use these concepts to further open up analyses of nationality, location, and identity, by reading through a lens of a moving and shifting cultural form born out of the black Atlantic matrix.

Through engaging the theories of both Dixon-Gottschild and Gilroy, Ciphered Nations expresses the continued movement of identity through a globalized pop culture form characterized by the juxtapositions, rhythms, and disciplined bodies that inform Hip Hop Culture. As a lens for reading, the four principal elements of Hip Hop combine to establish a coherent collection of concepts relating to the formation of the dialogic relationship within the expanded black Atlantic through ciphered exchanges. Extending Gilroy's impetus to consider the Black Atlantic as an interconnected site of analysis, I link texts and locations that allow us to imagine the relationships among Caribbean, Brazilian, and U.S. citizens. Ciphering Nations, as detailed in this chapter, bridges these Paul Gilroy and Brenda Dixon Gottschild's work and extends the theoretical Black

Atlantic through the Caribbean Sea and Pacific Oceans. This performative cultural form brings into contact fluid liquid borders of the colonial period and 21st century globalization read through the Africanist aesthetic.

Attempts to locate cultural practices, motifs, or political agendas that might connect dispersed and divided diasporic citizens of the new world, Europe, and Africa, argues Gilroy, have been dismissed by scholars as essentialist or idealist or both.

> I suggest that weighing the similarities and differences between black cultures remains an urgent concern…diaspora is still indispensable in focusing on the political and ethical dynamics of the unfinished history of blacks in the modern world…it offers an heuristic means to focus on the relationship of identity and non-identity in black political culture…It can also be employed to project the plural richness of black cultures in different parts of the world in counterpoint to their common sensibilities—both those residually inherited from Africa and those generated from the special bitterness of new world racial slavery. (80)

Modern constructions of national citizens in the Americas have moved away from the "accumulation of symmetrical family units" and have declared diasporic and miscegenated bodies as valuable members and emblems of nation. This move, visible in the political rhetoric of the nation state and reflected in the development of national symbols in the arts, responded to the political context of the early twentieth-century and the drive for distinction among competing modernizing nations. The texts featured in the following chapters serve as concrete examples of the evolution of national symbols and the important relationship among popular culture, nation building, exile, and identity.

Allow me to share an anecdote in order to illustrate these points and begin to show how Hip Hop is a valuable lens for understanding constructions of national boundaries and fluid identities. Standing on a street corner under a McDonald's sign in Salvador da Bahia, Brazil the sidewalk changes from the *pedra portuguesa* (small cobblestone brought over from Portugal during the colonial period) to one-foot-squared, off-white tiles. Under the golden glow of the illuminated arch a small group of dancers gather on the corner on this impromptu stage. Traveling with his mobile speaker and amplifier, Ananias, his girlfriend Tina, and four friends pause at this intersection of Sete de Dezembro and Largo de Graça. City buses, taxi cabs, and small individual cars round the corner where Ananias and his friend Marcus, of the group Independente da Rua, perform Capoeira-Break, a new dance form that they have been experimenting with after having recently blended the two respective musical rhythms. Throughout the colonial period the players of *capoeira* helped to construct the cobblestone streets and saw the transformative modernization of the nation; they are all too familiar with the layers of history making the streets into palimpsests holding centuries of stories. Capoeira-break dancers perform a new kind of resistance that combines West African martial arts and African-American dance to create visibility. The players of *capoeira* who once practiced under the guise of dance in the colonial period now share their movements with b-girls and b-boys who also use their bodies to respond to oppressive social structures. Like the layers of earth, stone, and white tile, the dancer's bodies reflect the history of colonialism, the bodily palimpsest.

Cars slow their speed to watch as the two dancers ease into the *jinga*—the basic side-to-side swaying movement that is the foundational movement of the Afro-Brazilian martial arts/dance form *capoeira*. Right arm doubled at the elbow and held out in front protecting the chest, left foot straight back and knee bending towards the floor, the two dancers lock eyes in the *olhada* and mirror one another's steps. Marcus sweeps his right foot up and around to the left, his kick just barely floating over Ananias's head. Ananias's left arm shoots straight to the ground for his *esquiva*—duck—and then supports him as his body transforms into a sloping table. With increasing velocity he begins to swivel his hips and bounce from one arm to the other. His legs respond to the increased speed in his arms by completing the rotation and then leaving him facing the white tiles in push-up position. Marcus has since stepped to the side as Ananias eases from this bottom-rock move into a headspin. I am left standing with a small group of on-lookers and passers-by as the *berimbau*—principle instrument in Capoeira music—and techno beats blare and mingle with sounds of horns and sputtering engines.

I watched the transformation of the movement form as they danced, as well as the transformation of space as they claimed it as their stage. Where the *pedra portuguesa* of the colonial period and the white tiles of globalizing MacDonald's meet, so, too, did rebellious *capoeira* and break movements. The dancers illustrate the potential for bodies to absorb change and to inspire evolution while simultaneously telling the stories of transnational ciphers of knowledge and creative connectivity. Break is a traveling and improvisational form and circles can appear on strategically chosen street corners. The bodies pulse to contract and expand like breaths, responding to familiar and foreign instrumentation. They play with speed, balance, and gravity thus exemplifying an embodied self-control. The rhythmic opening and closing of the arms, the turning out of the foot and extending and retracting of the leg reflect the performers training in both break and *capoeira* and, more importantly, emphasize the cipher of creative knowledges that travels globally.

While in this instance there was no emcee present, no commanding voice, this description of two of Hip Hop's principal elements—deejay and break—illustrates the incredible potential for expressions of fluidity as they take place in space and continue to travel locally and globally. Dance scholars like Ananya Chatterjea, Brenda Dixon-Gottschild, and Thomas DeFranz have theorized the ways that moving bodies inspire audiences to rethink their own embodied histories. Like the parchment that held multiple iterations of historical events, dancing bodies and blended rhythms reflect and hold the non-linear and globalized present. Moving bodies have the capacity to articulate what recorded images, written words, and verbal utterances struggle with. It is precisely the physical weight of the body, the audible breath, and the facial expression, that make comprehensible the fluidity of *capoeira* and break, Brazil and the U.S., colonial slavery and contemporary race struggles. And it is the repeated *berimbau* chords layered over the steady bass-beats that signal the incredible capacity of music to take listeners on historical and physical space travels.[6]

The following analysis sets out the history, formation, and scope of Hip Hop as a way of understanding as well as a preliminary introduction to the sites of analysis.

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[6] See Fernando Arenas' *Lusophone Africa: Beyond Independence* (2011) for a discussion of the intersecting conceptual fields of postcolonial and globalization studies in the Luso-African context, and also in dialogue with the greater African matrix. His analysis locates postcolonial critique of globalization in the Luso-African context as highlited in popular music, film, and literary compositions.

Leaving Fingerprints All Over Histories

Scholars, activists, and performers alike are eager to attribute their work to some founding figures and to link the solidification of Hip Hop to a particular moment in history. To this end, there are multiple accounts of the origins of the genre's particular fusion of dance, music, and artistic expression.[7]

Like the composition of postcolonial nationhood in the Americas, Hip Hop bodies are layered. Not following one single musical or artistic genealogy, this artistic and cultural form is influenced by many histories and encompasses multiple ethnic and cultural mixings. In his article "Lit-Hop," Adam Mansbach notes that the culture "takes a specific kind of pleasure in the mash-up refreaking of technologies and texts, and understands history as something to backspin and cut up and cover with fingerprints in a particular kind of way" (93). Mansbach and other contributors to the 2005 collection *Can't Stop, Won't Stop: a History of the Hip Hop Generation* reference the history and the artistic reworking or "refreaking" that helped create present-day Hip Hop. In tracing the evolution of this blending of styles, impetus, rhythms, and roots, we learn not only the complexities of the form but come to better understand its dialogic nature and capacity as a theoretical lens for studying identity borders.

Afrika Bambataa is known as one of the key figures that helped develop Hip Hop as a culture. A youth involved in gang battles over territory within New York City, Bambataa took a trip to South Africa in the 1970s that inspired him to form the Zulu Nation and to promote non-violent and artistic methods for inciting social change within his community.[8] The documentary film *5 Sides of a Coin* (2003), directed by Paul Kell, tells the story of the culture's evolution and relies on interviews of some of the key artists to show how the four active elements of Hip Hop became integrated and solidified. Afrika Bambataa, DJ Kool Herc, and Phase 2, among others, reflect on the street parties, the early musical innovations, and the evolution of a coherent multi-faceted form. Phase 2, a pioneering graffiti artist, recalls his mother's stylized calligraphy writing and his early imitations of her script. As he began to make his own art he was known within the growing community for his unique graphic style and was solicited to create party flyers for neighborhood Hip Hop events. This unique form of written expression became an integral part of the advertisement for these gatherings and, like break dance, grew into a performative and political expression of individual and collective social struggles. The individual stories that each artist recounts in the documentary begin to give insight into the formation of distinct Hip Hop epistemologies. Further, there is a clear relationship between these individual iterations of self and the formation of the collective culture.

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[7] I will refer to Hip Hop with capital letters to signal both the concept as a proper noun and as a culture; hip hop, in lower-case will be used when referring to specific components of the culture, i.e. "hip hop dance" or "hip hop music".

As a globalized cultural form, it is important to understand the ways that it functions on the local and global scales to form transnational collectives. For many spectators and for some consumers, Hip Hop is a rebellious art form that brings the local to the global stage; it is music that assaults the ears and that relies on poetry that offends; it is attire that both hides and sexualizes bodies. These dichotomies illustrate the contentious and visceral nature of Hip Hop culture, one that provokes multi-layered responses and evokes uneasiness and curiosity. Hip Hop scholars today commonly refer to two dominant tendencies: (1) gangsta' rap, and, (2) hip hop underground. My project engages almost exclusively with the latter, although it must be noted that much of the pop culture publicity or interest in the genre may very well come from a curiosity regarding the former. The pop culture images that are disseminated through television, internet, and c.d. informational inserts often rely on an exaggerated "aesthetic of cool" that, though also present in hip hop underground, conveys sexiness and power through a stylized economy that attracts local communities around the globe.[9] Part of my interest in Hip Hop as a way of reading is inspired precisely by the way it reflects the transnational movement of the Africanist aesthetic in the Americas.

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[8] This looking to Africa for roots follows a trend also present in other postcolonial, post-abolition nations. Theorists like Aimé Césaire and Leopold Senghor articulated this relationship in their theories of *négritude*, which have greatly inspired scholarship on the Africa-postcolonial Americas discourse.

Rather than follow the European model of inherited nationality, whereby national citizens are born into their national belonging, modernizing nations in the Americas seized moments of political and economic transition to distinguish themselves from their colonizers. This reconfiguration of the genealogy of nation formation invites a re-theorization of boundary-formation and definitions of citizenry. Rethinking the evolution of national identity formation in the Americas relies on a set of theorizing practices that then open the door for more extensive analyses of individual and collective identificatory practices. Imagining the American body as not rooted or as a perpetual hybrid border crosser means that analyses must always contend with multiple languages—corporeal, artistic, and linguistic. Borderless in its inception, Hip Hop culture illustrates artistically what queer Chicana theorist Gloria Anzaldúa calls the "new mestiza" identity, one that is rooted in rethinking border crossings and a reconfiguration of *mestizaje*.[10] In addition to interrogating physical national borders as did she and her contemporaries, I will highlight the performative nature of historical and corporeal boundaries.

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[9] Carla Huntington talks about the relationship between Hip Hop culture and capitalism in her *Break Dance: Meanings and Messages* (2007).

[10] See her *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987) or her co-authored *This Bridge Called my Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (1981) with Cherríe Moraga.

Layering: Gender, Globalization, and Diaspora

My project, like that of other scholars of pop culture, is concerned with Hip Hop in relation to the global community. A review of the elements of Hip Hop necessarily references a convergence of artists in the U.S but the specifics regarding the precise development of the form are of less importance than the present reality of Hip Hop's global appeal. If Hip Hop has so many roots and if it historically borrows from many legacies, whose culture is it? Halifu Osumare's concept of "connective marginalities" is particularly useful for considering the formation of Hip Hop's borders. She states:

> Connective marginality particularly drives the global hip-hop underground, loosely connected localized groups of street-oriented hip-hop practitioners (as opposed to mere consumers) who participate in international b-boy conventions, hip-hop e-zines, and the bootlegging of hip-hop tracks via the Internet. Connective marginalities are the resonances of social inequities that can manifest as four particular configurations in different parts of the world—youthful rebellion, class, historical oppression, and culture. (63)

Osumare focuses on the ways that "hip-hop culture itself instigates global connections of understanding about various peoples' marginal status at the local level" (64) and, thus, like the black feminist intellectuals envisioned by Patricia Hill-Collins, becomes an intermediary force. Because of its underground roots, the Hip Hop aesthetic appeals to marginalized youth cultures at the local level. Hip Hop promotes the notion that social change can begin through artistic expression and this inspires communities locally to connect globally through their creations.

What are the unique ways that Hip Hop artists outside of the U.S both identify and disidentify with Hip Hop culture?[11] How do these performances impact the cultural-political form and also become a site of resistance for the performers? And, how does this cultural form help explain the borderless and hybrid nature of American identities? Chapters Two through Four will address these questions through analyses of embodied artistic expression in Cuba, Brazil, and Puerto Rico.

Like the elemental cipher, early formations of Hip Hop constantly reference and rely on “outside” input. It is this continuous dialogue that makes Hip Hop a useful approach for understanding identity formation. In addition, Hip Hop is characterized by its disidentificatory nature. By taking on aspects of majoritarian society and claiming them as their own, Hip Hop artists have become popular, mainstream, powerful—characteristics that were supposedly inaccessible to minority peoples. The dialogic nature of Hip Hop locally and globally makes it a particularly useful method for framing this study of disidentificatory performances.

The tensions expressed through the four principal elements—deejay, emcee, break, and graffiti—embody many of the unresolved and repeated questions that feminist, postcolonial, and cultural theorists have proposed throughout the last half-century. As national borders become more commonly understood as fluid, and as citizens question the criteria established for claims to nationality, historical legacies find new forms of expression. Marc Perry, in his “Global Black Self-Fashioning: Hip Hop as Diasporic Space” (2008), discusses the ways in which the “performative contours” of Hip Hop have allowed afro-descendant youth in Cuba, Brazil, and South Africa to overcome racist national constructs of blackness and make global connections. He questions the ways that Hip Hop has been conceived of as having a unidirectional producer-consumer relationship between the U.S. and other locales. He argues instead that the culture creates a performative space for youth in these contexts to conceive of their own notions of blackness. This creative space is attributed to transnational communication within the African diaspora made possible by Hip Hop culture. It is precisely through the constant exchange of ideas and interaction with internal tensions that as a culture Hip Hop remains dynamic and able to absorb multiple histories.

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[11] See José Esteban Muñóz’s *Disidentifications* and the Introductory chapter of this project for further discussion of this idea.

The subtle and blatant differences that scholars of globalized Hip Hop note in their analyses provide insight into the ways that connective marginalities both diverge and inform one another. Rather than uphold the unidirectional—U.S.-outward—concept of Hip Hop, I privilege the knowledges of global localities, expressed in performance, cinema, and literature, that provide insight into alternative methods for understanding disidentificatory identities and that highlight the ciphering of artistic and political knowledges. Geoff Baker’s analysis, in “La Habana que no conoces” (2006), highlights how Hip Hop has become a location of social construction. He takes the *habaneros*—Cuban youth residing in Havana—as a concrete example of the ways in which the socialist government in Cuba, mixed with capitalist practice, has both instigated and stifled artistic creation. The coming together of various youth rap groups facilitates both the creation of a congenial space and a place for critical reflection. Not only are the voices that are represented in these spaces essential to the (re)constructing of identity, but also, recognizing the bodies that are invited, permitted, and leaders in this space help us to arrive at a more profound understanding of subversive spaces. Baker notes that analyses of rap produced outside of the U.S. have focused on race and ethnicity while the music itself has focused on spatial marginalization (e.g. Brazilian *favelas* and *periferia*). This study relies on these alternative knowledge formations and histories of expression in order to understand transnational collectivity.

Globalized Hip Hop critiques national borders and constructions of citizenship through repeated tropes of creating, taking, or forming a space for one's self and community. I do not want to romanticize Hip Hop culture or insinuate that it offers an unproblematic space for *all* minority identities to establish visibility or to venture disidentification. As can be gleaned by not only the artists I have referenced but also by the scholars themselves, Hip Hop continues to be a highly masculine space. And, many of the qualities that characterize the four elements are abilities associated with hyper-masculinity and heteronormativity; performing extreme acrobatics, using commanding voices, and featuring risk takers seem to replicate the stereotypical gender binary. It is not, however, an exclusively masculine space nor do female artists and performers self select out of the genre. Like the easy association of Hip Hop to the U.S context, the culture is often imagined within a male aesthetic. I am interested in the ways that this seemingly highly masculinized form allows us to read masculinities and constructions of gender identity. In many ways the artistic representation and the scholarship on the genre reflect this gendering so, I wonder, how does gender play into each of the five elements?

And, what are the ways that Hip Hop provides a model for expressions of marginalized sexualities and minority identities? Because it purports to be a revolutionary art form, Hip Hop is potentially a site for revolutionizing gender relations.

My approach relies on queer and feminist theorizations of gender identity boundaries and gendered access to space. Gwendolyn Pough (2004) theorizes the ways that African-American artists bring “wreck” to negative images and stereotypes. “Wreck”, as defined in her epigraph, is a Hip Hop term which connotes fighting, recreation, skill or boasting and serves to shed light on things Blacks have had to do in order to gain access into the public sphere. They did so, she says, “by claiming control of the public’s gaze and a public voice for themselves” (22). The cipher of creative energies not only draws from artistic exchanges but also from responses to environmental changes and evolutions. This description of Hip Hop as a controlling force capable of manipulating the social environment reflects the role of politically engaged Hip Hop underground in dialogue with, but distinct from, the highly commercialized Gangsta’ rap.

In her discussion of the ways in which black women have entered into the public sphere—and later, into Hip Hop culture—Pough adopts Jurgen Habermas’ theory of space. She calls for a re-theorization of the ways in which the “public sphere” was conceptualized as a space where one’s “particularities” were to be left aside so that a mass culture could arise. This leaving aside of multiple identities—particularly race and gender—wrote black women’s experience out of early histories of the public sphere. Pough suggests “multiple publics” as an alternative conceptualization and emphasizes the need for a theory which encompasses the multiplicity of public spheres that exist and which acknowledges that some of these spheres marginalize others. While these multiple marginalizations are important, she maintains that black Hip Hop artists, while also capable of marginalizing other groups, have had to assert and claim space or, make wreck, in ways that other members of the public sphere have not. To theorize this claim to space Pough draws on theories of "spectacle" and the notion that one must be seen before one can be heard. In this way she addresses the ways that women's bodies have been objectified in pop culture and how these representations are also present in early Hip Hop performances. Through close readings of artistic production and engaging the tropes that arise from within the creative expressions themselves, Hip Hop's principal elements comprise a concrete example of the interactions between space, spectacle, and negotiations of minoritarian identities. For example, in Chapters Two-Four, I argue that the spectacle of sexuality is not entirely free of agency. Through contextual and close readings of Celia Cruz, Krudas Cubensi, Carmen Miranda, Xica da Silva, and Mayra Santos-Febres's protagonists, I analyze the ways that these individual and collective performers bring wreck through exaggerated performances of their gender, sexual, racial, and national identities.

Breakin' It Down

In the remained of this chapter I will review some of the literature focusing on the five elements and discuss the ways that I conceive of each element as a component of Ciphered Nations. As a culture that is dialogic, blended, and purports a non-linear way of knowing, Hip Hop provides a unique perspective for looking at performance texts. Here, I will highlight some of the key concepts and tropes that will be important throughout the following chapters.

Deejay (DJ) Mixing

The five elements of Hip Hop are inseparable when conceiving of the Culture as a whole; however, ethnomusicologists and artists often base their understanding of Hip Hop on the deejay component. "Without the music there would be no inspiration," says DJ Kool Herc, one of the founders of Hip Hop as an underground movement. Herc speaks of the art of mixing, of taking pieces from pop culture (like Led Zeppelin at the time) and mixing them with reggae beats and then re-looping these beats on top of one another. The deejay is the conductor: s/he brings the various tracks together in tandem, facilitating the accentuation of some and the crescendo of others.

Like complex classical musical compositions, deejays are composers blending the sounds of their orchestras where the multiple string and wind instruments are replaced with sound samples from multiple rock, R & B, and pop musical tracks. In tracing the history of this element one clearly sees the dialogic and hybrid nature of the roots of Hip Hop. The key characteristic of the deejay is the ability to blend rhythms and mix up genres. Not unlike Mary Louise Pratt's theorization of the contact zones of the colonial period in the Americas, the deejay finds a way of putting into dialogue disparate genres and experiences.[12] Taking primary roots and influences from Jamaica and Puerto Rico and influenced by the jazz and bebop periods in the U.S., the deejay manipulates histories, chronology, and purity of genre. These composers rely on constant access to old and new productions and form part of a larger global cipher that exchanges ideas and technique but also looks inward towards its own experience with rhythm. This intersection of multiple rhythms provides a seemingly simple metaphor for the mixing of cultures. Moving beyond the facile association of one national instrument or rhythm blending with another in a utopian and melodic hybrid world, the hierarchy and musical references at play in these mixings offer a complex lens for imagining the interactions among nations and the reproduction of identities.

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[12] Mary Louise Pratt (1991) talks about "social spaces where cultures meet, clash, grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today"(1) in the context of the *Nueva Coronica* written by Guaman Poma de Ayala in 17th century Peru. Her theorization is useful for this project in that introduces this term for speaking about the spaces where varying levels of assimilation can occur and the reconfiguration of community given these points of contact.

Deejay Leidis, the music mixer who works with Cuban Hip Hop trio Las Krudas, blends synthetic and borrowed beats with the Cuban *clave*. When deejay Leidis incorporates the Cuban *son clave* into synthetic beats, dancing bodies respond with the stuttered 3-2 taps and hip swiveling *salsa* steps. Each individual inflects the composition with her/his knowledge and creative response while simultaneously participating in a dialogic cipher of creative exchange. Though referencing various musical localities is not necessarily unique to hip hop music, the action of "mixing"—turntablism— is distinct within this musical form. The art of mixing, the ability to draw from multiple sources to create a sound that inspires both the rapping and breaking that is layered on, makes *deejaying* an active verb. Just as there would be no music upon which emcees could layer their lyrics, the deejay's beats are what inspire b-girls and b-boys to move their bodies in break. By highlighting elements from various musical genres, the moving bodies are inspired to invent movements that respond to a variety of cultural and historical musical inflections.

Since it travels through so many media—compact discs, videos, mp3s, and instruments—music is one of the most traveled forms of cultural production. Today with music videos, pirated discs, and easy file sharing, music exchanges take very little effort. In the 1970s when Afrika Bambataa introduced the turntable as an instrument it was just that: two turntables and two hands. The reliance on only records, turntables, and quick hands is not a forgotten art; however, it is common today to see deejays set up with computers and digital file converters for manipulation. Deejay mixing has greatly evolved over the last three decades, yet the basic principles remain. Deejays today also aspire to the quickness of hands, the innovation of new combinations, and the ability to compose smooth or meaningful transitions between tracks. These skills could be likened to the cultural theorists or early sociologists who sought to both explain and orchestrate the ethnic composition of the nation. Fascinated with the ethnic mixing and power hierarchies at play in the postcolonial Americas, scholars like Gilberto Freyre (discussed in Chapter Three) blended the stories of the master and the slave into one consolidated historical track of Brazil's history of modernization. Smoothly moving between these two evolving groups Freyre masterfully wove together a national narrative to be understood as Brazil's unique *mestiçagem*. Reading his theorization through deejay mixing makes clear the hierarchy of knowledges and the blended and dissonant socio-historical evolution of national identity in the Americas.

The ability to pick out compatible and sometimes dissonant rhythms makes the deejay an interpreter of multiple beats, connected to a variety of locations, and a multiplicity of historical moments. Cultural theorists trying to reconcile the mixed and multiple histories in the Americas call identities hybrid or refer to racial miscegenation; deejays illustrate these concepts through rhythmic mixings and challenge the invisibilization of minority identities of such theorizations.[13] While hybridity theory posits that multiple identity positions and histories come together to form one hybrid, the individual threads or tones that make up the blend then become subsumed and blurred under that title. The strong bass drum beat is one track with which the Cuban *clave*, the Brazilian *berimbau*, and other important national instruments fuse. Over these mixing rhythms the deejay layers the remixed lyrics of a pop song from yet another national context. Not simply a fusion that constructs a single track—song—the combination of these beats is valorized precisely because of the ways that deejays are able to bring together multiple distinguishable pieces. Like constructions of hybrid bodies, which theorize the multiple pieces of identity brought together into one core, simple readings of re-mixed beats might erase the subtle traces present within different songs. While ethnomusicologists may successfully trace the genealogies of rhythms and articulate the trajectories of instrument's travel, the moment of blending makes the deejay a unique historian whose stories are told through layering tracks.

Postcolonial theorists have successfully introduced alternative conceptualizations of identity that recognize the complex intersectionality of being. I propose the deejay's knowledge/art as extending Bhabha's theory of globalization (1994). Bhabha emphasizes the importance of location and the relationship of "home" to diasporic communities. The importance of location and of remembering national boundaries gains further saliency in the context of the diaspora. In order to identify with a "home" nation, the diasporic citizen must find a way to articulate the boundaries of nation in order to distinguish a unique belonging. Deconstructing the formation of the boundaries of "home" thus provokes inquiry into the boundaries of these borders. Due to colonization, globalization, and migration in general, bodily and national boundaries are re-writeable tracks that have the capacity to incorporate new layers. Understanding the dialogic nature of home and belonging is useful for telling the story of cultural exchanges. Rather than repeat an emphasis on fixed or knowable home spaces, postcolonial theorists and, I argue, deejays emphasize the perpetual remixing of these spaces. The musical mixings present in the deejay's beats embody this complex theorization and challenge analyses of "in-between" identities privileged in studies of postcolonial Latin America.

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[13] See Joshua Lund's *The Impure Imagination: Toward a Critical Hybridity* (2006).

Emcee (MC): "Poetry to the beat of music" (Grand Master Flash)

Emcees draw upon their personal and historical knowledges in order to create a rhyme that is not only powerful in its poetry but also rich in its socio-historical references. By drawing on personal and historical moments, the emcee simultaneously individualizes and collectivizes her/his message and establishes a trajectory that does not follow a chronological genealogy of progress. Alim et. al. argue that, "identities are perhaps better understood as outcomes of language use, requiring us to shift our focus from identity (which suggests a set of fixed categories) to identification as an ongoing social and political process" (10). This mobile and processual description of identity formation extends the deejay's deconstruction of hybrid identities by locating each iteration of self within the moment of enunciation.

Identification as a process recalls Muñoz's "disidentification" and the negotiation of identities as social and political. Emcees are trained and practiced in manipulating language and reflecting the mutability of their identities. They use their words to reaffirm subject positions and to break down socialized and stereotyped identity associations. By bringing the past and the present together, intermingling the individual and the collective, the emcee relies on a non-linear mode of interaction. In their song "Não, não, não," the all female Brazilian hip hop group Odisséia das Flores (Srt. Jo Maloupas, Chai, and Manchinha) sing about persistent machismo in Brazilian society and their own reliance on Hip Hop to further a feminist agenda. The trio formed in 2008 with an objective to "transmitir a mensagem"—spread the message. While they do not have a complete recorded album, they are part of São Paulo's growing Hip Hop Mulher social and cultural movement and form part of a collective of Hip Hop politics.

With rhythms that provide a constant flow of background beats, the women's voices are foregrounded and their fluid and poetic lyrics are boldly layered upon one another. "Eu vou respeitando para ter respeito," I live life respectfully in order to earn respect, the group declares. In this rehearsed and recorded version, the singing voices are not battling improvisationally, but rather are producing practiced poetry that speaks to a larger context—not an immediate localized situation. Whereas improvisation necessitates quick thinking and identity negotiation based on an ephemeral context, recorded rap songs speak to larger political phenomenon. I will rely on both knowledges of improvisation and rehearsed material to engage performances of identity in my three sites of analysis.

Like the message in their song, the three voices of Odisséia das Flores work together to complete one another's phrases to add to the strength of their message and to the emphasis on collectivity. In addition to reflecting on machismo and women's self esteem, the third verse of the song links their present reality to the colonial past: "Desejada pela massa/ é a escrava, de vida não tem sentido ali/pensamentos, tão submissos/se você quiser escrever…, abaixo o moralismo" [Desired by the masses is the woman slave, her life is devoid of meaning, thoughts so submissive/ if you want to write,…be done with your moralizing, "Não, não, não," 2008]. Like the status of women mentioned earlier in the song, Odisséia das Flores use their voices to speak out about misogyny and the objectification of women. These lyrics reflect upon the recording of history and the impetus to re-historicize the daily contemporary experience of women in counterpoint with that of the slave women they describe in the song. The use of political poetry and aggressive assertion of the voice layered upon the deejay's blended beats make this combination powerful for rethinking the historical legacies of discriminatory practices in postcolonial contexts.

There are many different elements to the emcee: improvisation, battles, lyrical innovation, and word creation. The principal instrument, however, is the voice. Singers of all genres are familiar with and characterized by their use of voice and ability to manipulate this instrument to create a particular effect. Hip Hop emcees, like deejays, reference multiple genres in both lyrical content and sound. The literary metaphor of "voice" has particular significance in this genre because of its revolutionary roots. Unlike other singing forms known for their style, grace, and beauty of sound, emcees are often recognized principally for their lyrical content. The power of the poetry they use and the creativity with which they put words together are the defining characteristics and bases for evaluation.

The four female rappers in the Brazilian fictional collective Antônia, from the film of the same name (2006), are primarily concerned with the dissemination of their feminist message. They sing, "Oh, Antônia brilha, Antônia sou eu, Antônia é você. Oh, Antônia brilha e qualquer uma Antônia pode ser…Oh, Antônia brilha, traz luz à vida! Antônia brilha! Viver! Vencer! Cantar!" [Oh, Antônia shine, I am Antônia, Antônia is also you. Oh, Antônia shine and anyone of us could be Antônia…Oh, Antônia shine, bring light to this life! Antônia shine! Live! Conquer! Sing!]. It is an individual message and a collective message; the singers make reference to the ongoing struggle of life and the optimism they feel regarding their futures. Antônia could be any woman, they assert. A collective of women's voices can transcend, conquer, and bring light into the lives of oppressed women. It is significant that these self-assertive women have chosen Hip Hop as their method of dissemination. Though traditionally a hyper-masculine form and one characterized by bold voices and passionate expression, these four female protagonists identify with Hip Hop as a culture and genre. Through their performances we see the ways that expressions of voice are gendered and how the genre itself interacts with gendered, racialized, and sexualized bodies.

Hip Hop culture crafts a call to collectivity and community formation where the creative cipher links ideas, experiences, and voices. Antônia turned to Hip Hop to establish this community and create a model of mutual reliance within their collective of mistreated, underprivileged, and struggling women. Through their lyrical poetry the four women emphasize that any woman can shine and overcome the social obstacles before them. It is not a utopist or unrealistic call to self-liberation, but rather an articulation of the power of collectivity. Every woman can be part of Antônia—the symbol of women combating misogyny, poverty, and racism.

This lyrical poetry, then, is used as a method for expressing ongoing shifting identities. The individual and the collective, the historical and the present, all form parts of the identities that are reconstructed and questioned through these texts. D'Bora, of the first all-female hip hop group Mercedes Ladies in the U.S., says that she wanted to be a part of the early Hip Hop movement not for money but "for respect and reputation" (*5 Sides of a Coin*). Like the singers of Odisséia das Flores and Antônia, D'Bora prizes her public image as it enables her to command respect. The recurring theme of earning respect reflects the underlying dissatisfaction felt by these female artists. Not unlike other famous singers and performers, early Hip Hop artists wanted to use their voices, bodies, and talents to say something that others might not have the chance to say. Through the hip hop stage, these artists created a space for making public the stories that had long been silenced, stories that were collective and numerous but oftentimes had no representative. The emcee embodies the familiar trope of using one's voice to command an audience and demand recognition.

Early R & B artists like James Brown and Gil Scott Heron established a discourse of underground struggles. The notion that "the revolution will not be televised" speaks to a community not represented in media, a collective concerned with gaining strength from within itself and revolutionizing the society around them from on the streets through an alternative method.[14] Ironically, Hip Hop music and culture today is likely the most televised and global pop cultural form. However, within its commercialization and distribution through digital media there remains the legacy of an underground revolution and of a cultural form that establishes a stage for voices to be heard and bodies to be seen and for alternative and non-linear histories to be told and reconstructed. Hip Hop underground develops in contradistinction to the commercialized form and sustains a constant tension. The artists who are committed to social critique and community formation maintain the underground circuit. The tension between commercial and underground expressions points to the dialogue of global to local, past to present, visible to invisible.

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[14] The Revolution Will Not Be Televised" (1970), first recorded as a poem spoken by Gil Scott Heron, speaks to the underground efforts of the Civil Rights and the community movements on the streets (like the Watts Riots in Los Angeles and women's liberation) as opposed to what was portrayed in the media.

Breaking: Busting Moves

The bodies that accompany the commanding emcee voice highlight an important connection between performances and access to space. The bodies of the emcees and the deejays are significant in the aesthetic of their performance, yet for b-girls and b-boys, whose bodies are their primary instruments, the visual impact is even greater. If deejays are re-looping and mixing up the genealogy of music in the 20th century, and emcees are articulating circular histories, dancing bodies iterate these mixes and histories through bodily poetics. As with all elements of Hip Hop, it is difficult to pinpoint a precise moment when break came into being. Within the designation of hip hop dance are multiple movement forms including toprock, downrock, power moves, and freezes as well as the West Coast funk styles of locking and popping and electric boogaloo.[15] Early films like *Flashdance* (1983) and *Breakin'* (1984) generated exposure to the West Coast forms of breaking while the Hip Hop scene continued to grow independently in New York and then in dialogue with national and global influences.

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[15] See J. Schloss' *Foundation* (2009). He articulates multiple break movements and their conceptual meaning: "Powermoves combine speed and control and grace that require momentum and physical power to execute (windmill, headmill, headspin, flare, float). Air moves are momentum balance using the upper body and keeping feet off the floor (backspins, headspins, air freezes); Freezes are stylish poses; they are used to emphasize strong beats in the music and often signal the end of a b-boy set. They can be linked into "freeze ladders" where breakers change positions to the music to display musicality and physical strength" (23).

It was the graffiti writer and emcee DJ Kool Herc who coined the term “b” for “break” boys and girls. Herc was attentive to the evolution of the dance form that was developing along with the music. Like early deejays and emcees, b-boys and b-girls dared to be different. They took pieces from early movement forms—tap dance, the Charleston, funk—and transformed them into the “Charlie Rock,” “Bronx Rock,” etc. Not unlike deejays who re-circulated old music forms in loops, b-girls and b-boys were attentive to their repertoire and yet inspired by mixed musics and lyrics. Again, one cannot say that breaking formed as something brand new but, rather, that it is made up of multiple creative exchanges. Susan Leigh Foster (1994) compellingly argues for the ways that bodies are unique carriers of history. She explains,

> [T]o choreograph history, then, is first to grant that history is made by bodies, and then to acknowledge that all those bodies, in moving and documenting their movements, in learning about past movement, continually conspire together and are conspired against…These past and present bodies transit to a mutually constructed semiosis. Together they configure a tradition of codes and conventions of bodily signification that allows bodies to represent and communicate with other bodies. Together they put pen to page. Together they dance with words. (10-11)

This study relies heavily on the layers of history documented in bodies and the variety of intertextual expressions found in the cultural artifacts and representations highlighted in the subsequent chapters.

Essential for understanding break as an evolved movement form today is the fact that it was, before anything else, street dance. The street parties that set the stage for deejay and emcee musical explorations were also the environments that inspired b-boys and b-girls to use their bodies for creative articulation.[16] It is essential to consider the impact of moving bodies on the streets. Just as early hip hop crews made their music mobile through portable boom boxes and amplifiers, b-girls and b-boys used their bodies to claim street corners, plazas, subway stations, and other public spaces. And, as gleaned by the names of some of the movements themselves, these dancing bodies were laying claim to a specific geographical space. The Bronx Rock, for example, links bodies to a particular neighborhood that they seek to represent. As crews formed and battled for territory, they sought recognition for their community. In her close analysis of break dance and globalization, Carla Huntington reads the meanings and messages behind distinct movements to explain exactly how these movements engage legacies of oppression and realities of discrimination: “The Lindy Hop for example, teaches that yes, African Americans have suffered much racism and oppression, but that we no longer have to bend and bow down to that oppression. We can lift each other up and over it. The Jerk metamorphasized into the Pop Lock. The discontinuity, lack of stability, and certain insecurity African Americans have faced throughout history, economically, politically and racially is documented here” (54). Like D’Bora, these early crews sought respect, not fame. Each stuttered, fluid, tensed movement reflects and responds to the transnational legacy from within which it arose.

Break is ephemeral. Bodies can be present and absent in an instant; dancers play with this dichotomy and exaggerate bodily control to show the ways that bodies are both oppressed and agential. The dancers’ physical body can at once be allowed or denied physical entrance into a space and, in such circumstances, can exercise agency over the way it responds as an individual. The unique practice of reading bodies gives insight into the body as a text that is not written, never repeated. Huntington claims, “Hip hop dance is black social dance offering texts that deliver strategic and tactical ways of being in the world and remembering worlds past. They contain metaphors and theories about existence and the life of the dancers collectively and individually, and the social fabric we are webbed with. There are macro—and micro—social, political and economic structures of Signification present in these dances begging exploration” (5). It is precisely these structures and un-interrogated messages that intrigue me about reading break into performance texts within the Americas.

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[16] See the documentary film *From Mambo to Hip Hop* (2008) for a more detailed discussion of the influence of Puerto Rican and Cuban musicians and performers in the Bronx neighborhood of New York.

From tiny cell-phone still and moving images to pseudo-professional *youtube* uploads, styles, beats, and attitudes now circulate globally. Today, images of dancing bodies circulate en masse—far beyond the 1980’s dance films that inspired many early artists and choreographers. While these captured representations make the exchange of locally inspired movements much easier than twenty years ago, it does not detract from the impact of live bodies in space. These captured images inspire youth cultures worldwide and are the basis of transnational conversations. While the impact of such global circulation is essential to this analysis, it is equally important to emphasize the different impacts of live vs. recorded images. It was precisely the combination of movements and physical location on the street that made early and present day street dancers powerful. It is not the objective of b-girls and b-boys to leave a permanent mark on the space they occupy; it is precisely the unpredictability and mobility of the dancing bodies that make this component of Hip Hop extremely powerful. The texts highlighted in the following chapters will provide concrete sites for locating these differences: live versus recorded and altering space versus permanent circulating images.

The annual B-Girl Be women in Hip Hop festival in Minneapolis, MN, provides one localized example of the ways that movement forms travel via digital media and mobile bodies. At the 2009 celebration, b-girl Aruna of Holland was featured in a video performance from a festival she organized in Amsterdam. As she and other Dutch dancers responded to beats and battled on the cobblestone streets of their city, dancers in Minneapolis cheered and whistled in support of this transnational dialogue. In 2010, b-girl Aruna arrived at the event to teach workshops and perform live in the showcase. Throughout the year b-girls in Minnesota were in touch with b-girls in Holland through videos and skype and exchanged both individual stylistic insights as well as pedagogical tools. The stage of Intermedia Arts later featured this collaboration as a live performance and sponsoring clubs around the city held improvisational battles between these transnationally dialoguing dancers. The multimedia outlets of recorded video and live internet interaction in addition to live bodies in dialogue reflect the contemporary capacity of break to establish these “connective marginalities” and draw upon a bodily language profoundly linked to the history of slavery in the Americas.

Throughout history bodies have been disciplined to comply with social standards, to reinforce dominant cultures and to be conscious of their formations. The particular disciplining that break requires illustrates the tension between self-discipline—whereby dancers rehearse movements and play with their bodies to achieve varying levels of mastery of a variety of moments—and socially imposed discipline—whereby individuals are members of a society that prohibits certain bodily freedoms, access to space, or adequate representation. Dance scholar and choreographer Ananya Chatterjea reflects on bodily knowledge in her *Butting Out* (2004). She argues, “it is not that the body responds *without* deliberation, but that it works through its own mode of considering options, and decision making, which may not be recognized as such in terms of the categories of intellectual activity” (24, emphasis in original). The bodily control exhibited by b-girls and b-boys offers a physical reminder of bodily disciplining and bodily intellect. A dancer who drops to the ground and holds her/himself afloat, hovering above the ground, and freezes for an instant not only displays extreme strength and balance but also embodies the dichotomy of presence/absence. For viewers, the bodies engage space and draw attention to the ways that moving bodies can alter such spaces. Meanwhile, physical strength and spatial consciousness characterize the experience of dancers. In one instant this same dancer can be throwing his/her arms open and inviting confrontation and in another hovering so near to the ground that s/he could be overlooked altogether. While clearly a performative expression, the notion that a body is capable of expressing both an exaggerated spectacle and a nearly undetectable stillness draws viewers into the discussion of presence and absence and stillness and speed. Who is present in different spaces? In what ways are the bodies present disciplined to follow an exclusionary set of regulations?

The tropes of presence and absence can be read alongside earlier analyses of Bhabha’s “home.” In a construction of self that seems to rely on a fixed home—sometimes a home that does not provide a space for “deviant” or minority identities—bodies can be simultaneously physically present and yet absented through social structures. Throwing their arms into the air, or kicking a leg aggressively outwards as if punching, replicate a struggle to fit into a space that is concretely home but is socially invisibilizing. The dichotomy of this spectacularized presence paired with a seeming immobility belies the constant contradiction of the identity in process. Break-dancers embody these tropes and perform the internalized struggle that is part of daily enunciations of self.

Spectacularized performances of a racialized and gendered dancing body are conscious choices that Hip Hop artists may also make in order to insert their bodies in certain spaces and times. The constant sampling that takes place requires dancers to put their bodies on display in such a way as to constantly acknowledge the both physical and social tensions in a way that only bodily performances can. While deejays can remain relatively hidden behind the blaring mixing of rhythms, and emcees are remembered for their poignant and often cutting words, b-boys and b-girls rely on individual style and the manipulation of their own bodily forms to express their artistry and political commentary.

Graffiti: Leaving a Mark

Like the other elements of Hip Hop, graffiti relies on an internal language. Its details are recognized and known to a local community while stylistic influences can be recognized by a larger global community. Because it is an element of a cultural form that is constantly evolving it requires insider status in order to be completely deciphered. The precise codes represented by the markings themselves may be particular to individual local contexts but there are general characteristics represented by the form that I will articulate here as components to forming Hip Hop culture as a lens.

As with b-boys and b-girls, a sense of style and individuality is key for graffiti artists. Unlike moving bodies that temporarily take up space, graffiti artists leave marks that strive towards some level of permanence. In literally marking space with codified graffiti, these artists attract attention and insert themselves into environments where they will gain exposure. Therein lies a constant dichotomy of individual recognition and community anonymity. To knowing “in” members of the community, the individual style of certain artists can be easily interpreted. Simultaneously, those “outside” of the community see the diverse yet generic writing on the walls as signals of a group of people whose art resides outside the realm of museums and galleries. The knowledges held and expressed by graffiti artists offer an intertextual approach to studies of individual subjectivity and national identities. The dichotomous impetus for fame and anonymity reflects the genealogy of the art form and the complex discriminatory practices present today and in the 1970s.

New York graffiti artist and neo-expressionist painter Jean-Michel Basquiat (1960-1988), of Haitian and Puerto Rican descent, created pieces that not only reflect the convergence of multiple histories but that move across space and break the two-dimensional borders of art. Spatially designating an opening for Hip Hop underground his murals reiterate the socio-historical themes expressed in emcees’ lyrics and deejays’ musical blending. In his “Irony-of-Negro-Policemen” (1981) he bluntly reflects upon the persistent racism and racial inequality that he lived and saw perpetuated in his environment. The theme of global inequalities and traveling oppression is expressed in this and “The History of Black People,” among other paintings, and mobilize alternative narratives of social reality and historical genealogies. In his analysis of Basquiat’s work, Fred Hoffman (2010) describes how “underlying [his] sense of himself as an artist was his innate capacity to function as something like an oracle, distilling his perception of the outside world down to their essence and, in turn, projecting them outward through his creative acts . . . His work appears to break down the dichotomy between the external and the internal, intuiting and revealing the innermost aspects of psychic life.” His outward projections transformed space and had the capacity to also transform viewers and those in contact with the altered environment. Basquiat’s creations emphasize the impact of street art and the ways that, beyond the traveling tag “SAMO” that he and a friend scattered throughout New York’s cityscape, the mixed images, vocabulary, and self truths infiltrate viewers conscious through visual impact.

Graffiti marks space and changes environments; through visual impact it speaks to a public that occupies communal space. In *Symbolic Exchange and Death* (1976), Jean Baudrillard theorizes the birth of tactile communication and an imaginary based on contact and sensory mimicry. Within this system he claims that art is everywhere, “since artifice lies at the heart of reality,” and therefore art is dead because it has become inseparable from its own image and cannot take on the effect of reality (75). For Baudrillard, the role of the graffiti artists and muralists in the late 1960s was to alter terrains and to intervene in the structure of the city. He explains that early graffitists derailed the common system of identity designations and shattered the social structure that imposed proper names and private individuality on everyone. He claims that the names adopted by graffitists are part of a “collective anonymity” and that the art “turns the city’s walls and corners, the subway’s cars and the buses, into a *body*, a body without beginning or end, made erotogenic in its entirety by writing just as the body may be in the primitive inscription (tattooing). Tattooing takes place on the body…By tattooing walls, SUPERSEX and SUPERCOOL, free them from architecture and turn them once again into living, social matter, into the moving body of the city before it has been branded with functions and institutions" (82, emphasis in original). The notion of the cityscape as a body upon which art can be written and thus resignified, in the Lacanian sense, is important in analyses of the impact of graffiti art on urban spaces. Not only a rallying point for graffiti artists seeking to alter socially inscribed identity designations, graffiti art challenges social inscriptions of spaces often segregated and ghettoized.

In the film *Antônia*, the *favelas*—shantytowns—are the graffiti in the city of São Paulo. The *favelas* are constructed and crafted by folks looking to create space for themselves and survive in alternative communities. The architecture is their art, the landscape their canvas. Instead of the walls of a city street, the shacks are spray painted densely onto the hills, valleys and outskirts of downtown. These lodgings at once violate space through off-grid construction and also through establishing a communal place for ghettoized and impoverished citizens. More than a setting and backdrop the images and visual impact of this muralistic visual image is striking like the words, designs and marks left on city walls. Like graffiti that one views on a street corner, the *favela* is the repeating mural that appears each time the protagonists return from the city center; it is the standpoint from which they speak and an extension of their artistic expression. It informs their bodies and becomes weathered and worn through time.

There is no shortage of painted graffiti in the film to accompany the landscape of the neighborhood. As Preta, one of the four protagonists, is moving her things from her ex-boyfriends' house we see her spray-painting "seu bosta" [you shit] over what appears to be a graffiti mural of the four women's faces on the couple's apartment wall. Not only does Preta have a can of spray-paint on hand, implying that it is an artistic device that she or one of her crew has used before, but it emphasizes the mutability of art and of space. In addition, the first two venues where the group performs are decorated with graffitied walls that contribute to the creation of a Hip Hop aesthetic. The mingling of lived and painted graffiti draws attention to the importance of space and the force behind this ostensibly silent, yet visually screaming, component of Hip Hop culture.

Graffiti art is the silent and visual component of Hip Hop culture. It puts color on the streets and tells stories of great heroes, of marginalized citizens, and of those who are often invisibilized. Compared to the other components it appears more fixed and static and, yet, it is part of a changing canvas upon which messages are written and realities recounted. Danger frames the practice of many graffiti artists as they seek out space. They may climb walls, hang over ledges, and work stealthily with the objective of "getting [their] name[s] somewhere" (Phase 2). The desire to be seen, heard, recognized, and to leave a permanent mark in space motivates both graffiti and Hip Hop artists. Painting a landscape that is inclusive of minority identities, graffiti artists create a reminder of the bodies that occupy and yet are made invisible in dominant public spaces.[17]

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[17] Not all graffiti is done stealthily or illegally. Because of Hip Hop's growing global appeal, many artists are now commissioned to create murals in their unique graffiti style. For example, see discussion of Jean-Michel Basquiat in bell hook's *Art on My Mind* (1995).

Tha' Cipha': Circling Back

Samy Alim et. al. (2009) comment on the formation of a Global Hip Hop Nation (GHNN) and attribute the plurality of Hip Hop Culture to "tha cipha," Hip Hop's fifth element. "Tha cipha—an organic, highly charged, fluid circular arrangement of rhymes wherein participants exchange verses—is essential to Hip Hop Culture and to its vernacular not only because it is the height of linguistic creativity and competition in the Hip Hop Nation, but also because it indicates an epistemology that is non-linear" (1). This concept, key to the authors' *Global Linguistic Flows*, is proposed as a way for understanding the formation of global communities. The non-linear epistemology, "tha cipha," in some ways mimics the deejay's blending of rhythms from various genres, moments, and time-keys.

As noted in the opening analysis of Paul Gilroy's notion of the fluid Black Atlantic, the cipher is the waters that link the performing, creating, experimenting bodies of Hip Hop underground. "A circle of energy ignited by a community as they express artistic ideas," Austin's Hip Hop project defines the cipher as the element that informs the incessant exchange of ideas and artistic expressions. Not bound by historical, national, physical borders, this creative energy is the driving force behind the formation of new combinations, revived histories, dissonant futures. My concept of ciphered nations will guide the flow of ideas throughout this study and will be a link between the diverse locations divided by oceans and connected through the force of the Africanist aesthetic and the search for expressions of mobile identities.

CHAPTER TWO:
Defining Nation from the Outside-In: Krudas Cubensi and Celia Cruz

A knee pops up then drives pointed toes back towards the ground, finding a new surge of energy from the earth. Accompanied by an upwards, pumping arm, the bursts reflect the powerful relationship between earth and sky, groundedness and openness. Transitioning from a quick rumba step to an exaggeratedly slow Hip Hop rock-step, the dancer performs an aesthetic that illustrates both a rooted African legacy and a diaspora in perpetual movement.[18] For many Cubans, the swiveling hips and weight changes from ball to heel signal a claim to a nationally constructed identity through the national dance, rumba. These movements are in dialogue with processes of acculturation, discourses of *negrismo*, and contemporary socialist politics on the island, and they mark national identity for those living off the island. [19] In the space of contemporary Cuba, the reification of a representative national dance, rumba, is challenged by contemporary globalized expressions like Hip Hop. Dancing bodies now respond to rhythms that reflect both the drumming of the Afro-Cuban spiritual form Santería and dropped bass beats of globalized Hip Hop. The analysis set forth in this chapter seeks to contribute to feminist scholarship engaged in tracing not only the impact of female artists but also in locating moments of confrontation within the trajectory of national identity development in relation to diaspora and exile.

This comparative study of Celia Cruz and Krudas Cubensi, two exiled performers (performance groups) from Cuba, shows how that nation is defined and refined from outside the nation through performance. In particular, the tropes inspired by Hip Hop's transnational counterpublic offer insight into constructions of racialized and sexual identities defined within the diasporic space of exile.[20] The knowledges that deejays and emcees draw upon from experiences within the creative cipher and international dialogue shapes the ways that these artists interact with dominant cultural constructs. The tensions present in the space of exile are defined by both mobility—movement away from the homeland—and confinement—restricted travel to the homeland. These artists' performances theorize the construction of Cuban national identity in racialized and sexualized terms. Beyond rejecting a masculinist, heteronormative, history-centric nationalism, these performers embody the contradictions and shifting boundaries that Hip Hop culture relies on.

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[18] See Gilroy (1993), Michelle Wrights' *Becoming Black* (2004), and Katherine McKittrick and Clyde Woods' *Black Geographies and the Politics of Place* (2007) for discussions of the African diaspora and pan-African identity.

[19] See Fernando Ortiz' discussion of *aculturación* in *Contrapunteo cubano del tobaco y el azúcar* (1940).

A preoccupation with finding space and a desire to confront a palpable lack of recognition led early Hip Hop artists to look to their places of origin and sites of their "roots" to inspire the music and dance of the emerging culture. The fusions present within the music speak to the persistent questions regarding roots, belonging, and displaced communities. For Afrika Bambataa, a trip to Africa in the early 1970s helped him to move away from the gang activity that was dominating his neighborhood and to discover the ways that his identity is connected to a legacy of African cultures.[21] This explanation does not seek to idealize the power of "Mother Africa" in prompting a spiritual awakening or to imply that Hip Hop is the non-violent solution to gang activity and drug abuse. The ways that Hip Hop reflects on (and perpetuates) violence, sexism, and heightened consumer culture has been well documented in popular culture critique.[22] In this chapter I am more interested in how this layered and dialogic musical form, the art of the deejays, displays the formation of identity and global communities. For a marginalized group of people who are looking to find images of itself reflected in dominant society, who are looking for confirmation of belonging, and who are then breaking ground to assert an identity that adequately represents, Hip Hop music's flexibility presents such an opening. In addition, its longevity and capacity to inspire local communities throughout the world speaks to the power of its mobility and palimpsest-like characteristic.

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[20] See Nancy Fraser's *Rethinking the Public Sphere* (1992) where she discusses the subaltern counterpublic in response to Jürgen Habermas' theory of the public sphere (1962). Also, see Gwendolyn Pough's *Check it While I Wreck it* (2004).

[21] See Jeff Chang's *Can't stop, won't stop* (2005).

Performing *Cubanía*

Bodies are on display and agency and parody come together in performance. This is where individuals (and collectives) have the space to satirize their own positionality. It is through performance that small iterations can lead to large changes. When Las Krudas opened their March, 2006, show in Santa Cruz, California the three rappers performed as the opening band to their own show by invoking the spirits of the past to set the stage for the upcoming Krudas show. Wanda Cuesta, of the trio, entered in her long black gown, bright orange wig, and high-heeled shoes. Her costume immediately marked her as a Celia Cruz-inspired figure. Yo soy la prima! —I am her cousin—she shouted upon entering. While not her blood cousin, the trio makes a conscientious effort to stretch the boundaries of family to include not only the extended Cuban and Caribbean kinship community that they have established in the U.S., but also the important ancestors who inform their music, politics, and movement. Pasita beats the tambor and Pelusa shakes the maraca as the two form the Afro-Cuban orchestra backing up La Prima. By donning a brightly colored wig and shimmery dress Las Krudas are referencing Cruz's style as portrayed in the later years of her career. The musical mixings and steady drumming of their opening piece places Las Krudas' performance in line with other exiled Cubans who negotiated multiple communities and shifting identities.

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[22] See *That's the joint! The Hip Hop Studies Reader* (2004) for further discussion of Hip Hop consumer culture.

Though traditionally an all male band would be the backdrop for the dancing female lead, the opening trio substitutes gender-queer bodies onto the scene. Calling themselves "Las Krudas," a play on the Spanish word "cruda" for raw or crude, the trio emphasizes the fresh and unfiltered characteristic of their lyrics and performance content. Wanda's tight-fitting gown, in contrast to her typical baggy jeans and large sweatshirt or t-shirt, reveals the drag aspect of her performance as Celia Cruz's cousin.[23] Performing hyper femininity both through her costuming and the accentuation of her swaying hips signals the complex relationship between gender, performance, and audience. Wanda's gender non-conformance and identification with a more masculine spectrum makes her performance as Celia Cruz a spectacle of both gender and nationality. She implicates herself as the cousin of the famous Reina de la Salsa Cubana and simultaneously parodies the association of hyper femininity to Latina bodies. As she charismatically introduces herself, her female crew including her sister, Odaymara, and her partner, Olivia, stand behind keeping the rhythm and encouraging her to work the crowd. They skillfully incorporate rhythmic syncopations and gendered alterations to create their own "spectacle" of ethnicity in exile. Dance scholar Jane Desmond comments on the ways that female performers and, more specifically, queer female performers are constantly faced with combating spectacularized images of sexuality or femininity. She notes that, “representations of lesbianism must work against or rework this feminization and thus the heteronormative pleasures of spectacle that posit a male viewing position and a female subject” (13). Through their costuming and physical staging the trio plays with performances of gender and nation to queer the reproductive spectacle of femininity and cubanía.[24]

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[23] Mario Rey's (2006) "Albita Rodriguez: Sexuality, Imaging, and Gender Construction in the Music of Exile" and Delia Poey's (2006) " '!La Lupe!': Performing Race, Gender, Nation and Excess" also discuss performances of gender and sexuality by Latina artists.

Here I focus specifically on the ways that relocation and diasporic space impact performance and the (re)formation of national and subject identities. I argue that the ways that these artists cite one another and make reference to the 'homeland' offer an important addition to modern constructions of the nation and the transnational. Rather than conceiving of strict national borders, my analysis privileges the intra-American and global cipher. Through a close reading of their concert and video recordings, I will show how these artists experiment with identity markers that are read onto them by their audiences in their relocated U.S. social context. In the course of their performances and through lyrical content, these artists not only illustrate the fluid aspect of identity but also complicate the ways that cultural theorists conceive of popular culture as hegemonic or counter hegemonic. Both Celia Cruz and Krudas Cubensi negotiate the flexible spaces between commercial and underground cultures, and national and global communities.

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[24] See Judith Halberstam’s *In a Queer Time and Place* (2005).

National Contradictions: Race and Artistic Expression in Twentieth Century Cuba

In order to interpret the multiple layers of both Cruz's and Las Krudas' performances in their relocated space of the U.S. it is essential to understand the evolution of artistic production with relation to Cuban nationalism and political transition in the twentieth century. After the Cuban-Spanish-American War (1895-1898) Cuba entered into a new political phase characterized both by U.S. antagonisms and violent dictatorships, as well as national unity and intra-Caribbean dialogues. The small island nation moved from formal Spanish colonialism to informal U.S. colonialism. The simultaneously conflict-ridden and liberating decades that followed Cuban independence inspired Cuban government, intellectuals, and artists to look to their Caribbean neighbors and their own history in order to define their transforming nation. José Martí's famous pre-independence text *Nuestra América* (1891) initiates this dialogue by calling for a pan-Caribbean identity that focuses on their collective histories of the island nations and the mutual economic and political support of the diverse populations. While his call to "arms," for Martí the pen, was not heard across all the Caribbean Sea during his lifetime, the notion of a collective Caribbean identity was addressed in later *négritude* discourse first emerging from Martinique.[25] In post-Revolutionary times, authors like Nancy Morejón took up the task of re-writing the nation's history to include voices of the long-forgotten: in her case Afro-Asian Cubans and female citizens. The important intra-island dialogue, though limited by disparate language and colonial relationships, is essential for understanding the development of the notion of "African roots" or the "myth of Africa" in the early to mid twentieth-century. And, by extension, this signals one of the primary interactions among Afro-American, Afro-Caribbean, and European artistic and intellectual movements.

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[25] This continues to be an important question for Caribbean scholars and intellectuals. For example, at the 2009 "Re-Thinking the Mangrove" conference held in Mayagüez, Puerto Rico, Dr. José Buscáglia organized a round-table discussion that asked participants to consider a pan-Caribbean identity for the purposes of gaining international visibility and being "counted" both nationally and in the diaspora.

The legacy of slavery and the myth of mother Africa was an important component of the collective history that bridged language, European influence, and contemporary social status in the Caribbean.[26] To call the connection of the postcolonial Caribbean to Africa a "myth" today acknowledges one contemporary critique of the theories and scholarship that came out of the *négritude* movement. At the turn of the 20th century, and in the decades that followed, the collective identity of not only Caribbean, but of other Latin American nations with profound histories of slavery, began to take into account the importance of "African roots" in the development of the modern nation. The writings of Franz Fanon, Aimé Césaire, Léopold Senghor, Marcus Garvey, and other creative writers and theorists of the time, denounced the historical invisibilization of blacks and the persistent racism that characterized their respective societies in the first half of the century.[27] Part of the critique suggests that "mother Africa" was what bound the black populations and that uniting based on this shared heritage was the best way to combat (French) colonial powers.[28] Contemporary scholars recognize that essentializing Africa as the homeland oversimplifies the diverse origins of the slave populations in the New World and creates a myth of an unchanging continent. In addition, feminist critique highlights the masculine, heterosexist voice of these founding texts and thus the textual emphasis on dichotomous configurations of "African" and "non-African," "motherland" and "adoptive nation" etc. following in the line of dichotomous and hierarchical gender spectrums.

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[26] Following the Haitian Revolution (1804) the island of Hispañola has experienced repeated attacks and contended with internal conflict, and, as discussed in Chapter 4, Puerto Rico also experienced a dramatic change at the turn of the century becoming "free" from Spanish governance and a territory of the U.S.

[27] While Fanon's theorization came later, he was inspired by and extended the Afro-centric writings of Césaire and Senghor. See Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) for a psychoanalytic analysis of the effects of colonization on the black man, specifically in reference to the French colonies in the Caribbean. Aimé Césaire's *Notebook of a Return to my Native Land* (1939) and Léopold Senghor's poetry and legacy as socialist-indigenous president of Senegal (1960-1980) initiated the *négritude* movement.

[28] Ironically, "mother" Africa was predominantly penned by male artists and theorists, and thus further established a lack of the home/woman on two important accounts.

The advancement of the *negrismo* movement in Spanish America coincides with the dissemination and development of *négritude* ideas in the Francophone Caribbean throughout the modernist period. While there was little direct dialogue among Caribbean islands across their oceanic borders, there were significant exchanges of ideas and texts within Europe. This diasporic Caribbean space provided an opening for imagining a pan-Caribbean identity. It was through this distanced relationship that intellectuals defined themselves as citizens of particular nations and simultaneously critique and reaffirm the limitations set out by such definitions. Understanding Celia Cruz and Las Krudas requires understanding that they were formed by exile. Reading nation formation at a distance is especially important in the Cuban case where more than one-third of Cubans reside off of the island.[29] This distance clearly shapes the ways that the nation is reified from without and emphasizes the ways that even polarized political beliefs can be joined in exile through other shared histories.

The self-conscious reflections and historical critiques that defined the twentieth-century instigated reconceptualizations of "nation" in postcolonial Latin America. In the Cuban context this meant, as the title of Robin Moore's text suggests, the "Nationalization of Blackness" (1997). [30] Blackness, then, becomes part of national identity with a socio-political agenda. The *négritude* movement, though at the time perceived as a potential threat to Martinican, Puerto Rican or Cuban governments, became the inspiration for a Black Nationalist rhetoric and transitioning politics after the Cuban Revolution. The multi-leveled contradictions regarding nationalist rhetoric and social inequalities both at the turn of the twentieth through the twenty-first centuries permeate the interactions between social movements, political agendas, and performances of citizenship.

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[29] See the Pew Hispanic Center's 2006 report for a more detailed break down and explanation for who was counted as Cuban.
[30] See also Yvonne Daniel's *Rumba* (1995) and Sujatha Fernandes *Cuba Represent!* (2006) for further discussion of the nationalization of blackness in twentieth century Cuba.

One example of the ways that the Cuban government attempted to articulate a particularly socialist approach to race relations can be found in the promotion of rumba as the national dance. Cuba, after the Revolution (1959), not unlike other nations during moments of political transition, identified a particular movement form as the "national" dance.[31] In line with other "modernizing" agendas, this process was not arbitrary or without controversy. Through national rhetoric and pop culture images, rumba was accepted and promoted as the national form in the 1960s. Specifically, rumba reflected the significant African influence on Cuban culture and implied a national celebration of racial diversity. Yvonne Daniel in her *Rumba and Social Change* (1995) chronicles the transition after the Revolution from danzón, a more waltz-like European influenced form, to rumba. She comments that, "rumba performance symbolizes, on one hand, the unity and solidarity of equality and, on the other hand, the rupture and tension of inequality. Cuba's identity lies somewhere in the gap between the apparent and the analytical levels" (120). Performers like Celia Cruz are born out of just such gaps. Cruz's music and style unify Cuban exiles and nationals while her compositions also draw attention to both Afro-Cuban (subordinated) identities and legacies of slavery on the island. Because dancers on the island were/are restricted by the nationalist agenda—including state regulated themes and exclusion of Santería movements—they thus perform a particular rendition of their African roots as sponsored by the government.[32] It is precisely through the productive space of the "gap between" that the performances of Celia Cruz and Las Krudas in exile illuminate the relationship of nation to exile and the importance of (re)producing nationalist tropes.

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[31] There are many texts which document a similar process in Brazil with the establishment of samba as the national form as the nation sought to project a unified and racially diverse image internationally and unify its populace nationally. See *O mistério do samba* by Hermano Vianna (1995); *Samba* by Barbara Browning (1995); or *Rhythms of Resistance* by Peter Fryer (2000) are a few such titles. Marta Savigliano's text *Tango and the Political Economy of Passion* discusses a similar phenomenon in Argentina.

Fidel Castro and other revolutionaries worked to devise a national character after the installation of a socialist government that would represent the values established by the revolution; however, after the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, Cuba had to re-invent and re-evaluate its socialist politics. While the beginning of the 20th century saw (1) a more relaxed policy with regards to the arts, (2) films which critiqued the malfunctions of the regime, and (3) artists whose works breached themes of gender, race and sexuality not previously condoned by the government, by the end of the century the economy had destabilized and censorship was back at work. It is within this context that Sujatha Fernandes, in *Cuba Represent!* (2006), situates the powerful function of art as a space for continuing the revolution and for facilitating critical discussions that cannot take place within public forums. The absence of state sanctioned avenues for making critiques does not mean that such conversations ceased to exist. What happens, argues Fernandes, is that artists become more political and find alternative outlets for their critiques and for creating spaces in which to discuss their disproval.

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[32] The *negrista* poets at this time were using their words to re-write Cuban history and insert the African legacy into contemporary conceptualizations of the nation. See the works of Luís Palés Matos, of Puerto Rico, and Nicolás Guillén and Nancy Morejón of Cuba.

The politics expressed both explicitly and subtly through the music and performance of Celia Cruz and Las Krudas highlight the constant negotiations between location, national identity, and audience. In their song "Cuba Linda," Las Krudas emphasize their growing kinship community and also their continued connection to Cuba. "No voy a ponerme triste/todo lo contrario/está creciendo a diario /nuestro familee/estamos aquí/ Cuba Linda Cuba Hermosa/Eres tierra poderosa/Yo te canto todos los dias/Más que isla tu eres diosa" ("I wont get sad/just the opposite/daily it is growing/our family/we are here/Cuba lovely, Cuba beautiful/You are a powerful land/I will sing to you every day/More than an island, you are a Goddess"). Sujatha Fernandes discusses several directors and rap artists who create such spaces and also highlights the ways in which the global market for Cuban products has grown throughout the past decade, thus facilitating the creation of a transnational space and a forum for negotiating local concerns. It is precisely because of rap's foundational anti-racist politics and its global appeal that rappers in Cuba have begun to serve as intermediaries between Afro-Cuban communities and political leaders.

Fernandes describes the ways in which Cuban Hip Hop arose out of the relocation of many Afro-Cubans in the 1990s. While the first major wave of Cuban migration occurred directly after the revolution and included those Cubans frustrated by the socialist agenda and redistribution of wealth, subsequent migrations included Cubans who experienced heightened discrimination and unequal distribution of power.[33] Celia

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[33] Between 1960-1979 hundreds of thousands of Cubans (mostly educated, white upper-class citizens) left the Island to start a new life in the U.S. Unhappy about the new socialist state they sought out refuge in the U.S. and, though replicating many of their nation's cultural traditions (in food, music, and dance), they sustained a strong anti-Castro rhetoric. Specifically, between 1960-1962, during *Operación Pedro Pan*, over 10,000 children were sent to the U.S. to avoid the threat of mandatory Soviet education. A second wave began in the early 1980s with the Mariel Boatlifts. These shiploads of transplants included those who

Cruz, though she did no flee for fear of losing her social status, is included in this first wave of Cuban immigrants. Las Krudas, arriving only in the early twenty-first century, are part of a Cuban exile community including those who suffered excessive racial, sexual, and gender oppression. After the most recent mass migration, Cuba saw a re-distribution of housing on the island and many folks were left without a sense of community; however, it was more the black youth, she argues, which felt the blow of this highly racialized movement of people. Since this youth culture was not present during the early revolutionary reforms and progress, says Fernandes, their experience of fragmentation and discontent is greater. The critique expressed by Las Krudas of the social inequalities and sexual oppression on the island is much harsher from that conveyed in Celia Cruz's interviews and performances.[34] From two separate generations and confronting different social realities in Cuba, these performers express a range of social realities interpellated from a nationalist and exiled perspective.

Exiled Utterances

> "Time itself, and history, have been codified by the memory of exile, frozen by the memory of empire, and placed on a permanent soft focus with nostalgias of meaning lost" (José Quiroga *Cuban Palimpsests*, viii)

Throughout this project I examine how history is recorded, remembered, and embodied and how the artists discussed break down or establish imagined and real communities. The Cuban case is especially complex as the Cuban exile community

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wanted to escape from the communist society as well as criminals and mentally ill persons that Castro sent directly to the U.S. Finally, the 1990s saw an increase in refugees arriving to the U.S. by boat and seeking asylum through the "Wet Foot, Dry Foot" policy which granted asylum upon stepping foot on U.S. soil. These arrivals predominantly include citizens looking for greater economic opportunity and more personal freedoms.

[34] In an interview portrayed in the documentary film *Celia the Queen* (2009) she states that all of her songs are very happy and that she "doesn't sing about protests."

makes up a very large percentage of the total national community. National identity is thus necessarily defined simultaneously from within Cuba and from abroad and necessarily holds the tensions of political and social discontent. In her song "Cuando Salí de Cuba" ("When I Left Cuba," 1968) Celia Cruz sings of her ties to the motherland and her inability to die because her heart remains on Cuban soil. It is there in Cuba, where she has left her buried heart, that it keeps beating: "Late y sigue latiendo/Porque la tierra vida le da/Pero llegará un día/Pero llegará un día/ En que mi mano alcanzará" ("It beats and it will continue beating/Because the land gives it life/But there will come a day/But there will come a day/When my hand will reach it"). It continues to beat across the ocean and someday, she vows, she will reach it again. This nostalgia is not uncommon for exiled communities who find themselves fragmented between the place of exile and their homelands. It is precisely through this distance that these citizens find themselves defining the homeland and reevaluating their connection to place and identity.

Though Celia Cruz did not arrive in the U.S. as an exile, but rather chose to stay on in the U.S. after Fidel Castro assumed the presidency, her relationship to her homeland is one of self-imposed exile.[35] Like many exiled Cubans, she was never able to return before her death and she remembers her home country with immense nostalgia and romantization. Amy Kaminsky in her *After Exile* (1999) discusses the important role of place and the sometimes contradictory relationship between the formation of nation based on collective and selective forgetting and the memory that exiled communities uphold. She notes that "[o]ften the subject's sense of connection to place is not conscious until s/he has been removed from it. For exiles, place, which 'represents both a context for action and a source of identity,' is crucial to identity and action, because they are separated from it" (33). This important connection to place and the sense that one has left a part of one's self, the heart for Cruz, implies a physical and emotional fragmentation. The split open and heartless body is reminiscent of tales of slavery and the bodies of those who were forced to leave their homeland and inhabit a constant place of longing or, as Quiroga states, “nostalgias of meaning lost.”

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[35] Cruz was touring in México and Latin America with *La Sonora Matancera*, her first collaborative band, when Castro came into power. Rather than return to Cuba, she and her husband-to-be Pedro Knight went to the U.S. and established citizenship.

Memory is embodied and different histories cannot be forgotten precisely because of their rootedness under the skin. "If memory is a key to nation, Renan points out, there must be as well some consensus concerning what is forgettable, in fact what must be forgotten, to consolidate the nation" (Kaminsky, 35). As a project of the state, certain historical and social realities must be collectively exorcised from the national imaginary in order to unify and consolidate the populace. Sometimes it is only with some distance, the exiled person can recognize the ways that pieces of her/his own body were being strategically erased from the national story. If, as in the case of many political and social exiles, those particular aspects of the nation that the state seeks to collectively forget are the very ones that isolated the exiled person within the nation, then the nation defined from outside by exiles becomes characterized by contradictions. The politicized and confrontational lyrics of emcees are precisely one such reminder of historical legacies and contemporary struggles that the rhetoric of the state might prefer to erase. Through reiterating these multiple realities emcees and the performers highlighted in this chapter keep alive those aspects of national culture that the nation would prefer to forget.

The performances of Las Krudas make reference to this embodied history and the ways that national and exiled identities interact. Through citing Celia Cruz as essential to their lineage of artistry they are locating *cubanía* in the body of an exile. It is not only the simple citing of Cruz as a figure and musical influence but also the reference to both the legacy of Cuban migration and essentialized Cuban identities that make this connection particularly powerful. Christina Abreu explains that, "Celia may have known that she was physically separated from Cuba, but through the imagery and emotion in these songs she allowed herself and her Cuban-American listeners to maintain a connection—albeit solely in their memories—to their homeland" (110). "La Reina de Salsa" as an emblem of *cubanía* emphasizes the ways that authenticity gets commodified in exile. Simultaneously, the lineage of Afro-diasporic rhythms that affirm Cruz's international appeal made her life in Cuba that of an Other. On U.S. soil Cruz came to represent Cuba and the roots of salsa and also earned her star status in part because of her national identity. In her collaborations with Tito Puente, Willie Colón, Johnny Pacheco, and other important Latin Jazz and Salsa musicians, Cruz not only expanded her audience but also reaffirmed her Cuban nationality. U.S Senator Bob Menendez said of Cruz at her public funeral in New York:

> [She] was a bridge over many generations and over many different people, racially, ethnically, and economically, her music brought us together and it is one of the great accomplishments of [her] life that, having fled from tyranny to come to a democracy, that she's used her music here at home and across the world to bring people together, she was about bringing people together; it is one of her great legacies and it will be remembered in this city for the rest of her life.[36]

She is not only claimed by Menendez as a critical part of U.S. culture but her ability to unite, to border cross, is what earns her a place in both the Cuban and the national U.S. imaginaries. And, unlike some of the waves of migrants that followed her, she became part of an anti-Castro contigent that focused on the (exotic) cultural productions of the island while simultaneously condemning the socialist government, thus further endearing her to U.S. politicians.

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[36] Cited in the documentary film *Celia the Queen* (2009).

In her song "Quimbara," notes Latin American and Performance Studies scholar Frances Aparicio, Cruz “enacts the ritualistic task of creating a translocal, mulatto and black working-class community through the Afrocuban vernacular poetics and rhythms that inform many of her songs” (227, 1999). She not only draws upon her ability to connect with other Cuban exiles but she relies on an aesthetic and vocabulary that draws larger connections within the African diaspora. "La rumba me está llamando bombo dile que ya voy/Que me espere un momentico así, mientras canto un guaguancó/Dile que no es un desprecio, pues vive en mi corazón/Mi vida es tan solo eso, rumba buena y guaguancó" (1978). She emphasizes her connection to the Afro-Cuban *guaguancó* version of rumba music and dance that locate her in the heart of genealogies of the black community in Cuba. At the same time, her onomatopoeic and repetitive lyrics make this song accessible to a larger audience that sees Cruz as an emblem for Afro-Latinos. Finally, this particular song more concretely links Cruz to the important role of Santería rhythms and rituals on the island and forefronts her ongoing relationship to her exiled identity. She therefore sustains a relationship to Cuban traditions that, had she remained on the island, might have been censored or manipulated by government officials.

At the intersection of state regulated identity and individual identity are sites of power struggles and reconfigurations of citizenship. As we conceive of communities of people uprooted from one national context and established within another, our dependency on definitions and conceptualizations of "home" becomes acutely apparent. Gayatri Gopinath (2005) complicates reproductive conceptualizations of a "diaspora" that is responsible for reproducing its "home" nation. According to Gopinath, queer bodies in the diaspora, "mobilize questions of the past, memory, and nostalgia for radically different purposes. Rather than evoking history, what is remembered through queer diasporic desire and the queer diasporic body is a past time and place rife with contradictions and the violences of multiple uprootings, displacements, and exiles" (4). The performers in Las Krudas, then, could be considered doubly-diasporic, as they strongly identify as part of the larger African diaspora within the Caribbean and, more recently, as part of the Cuban diaspora and queer kinship community in the U.S.[37] Globalized Hip Hop offers an example of how "connective marginalities" (Osumare) can provide insight into twenty-first century community formations through globalized media. Mass technology now facilitates the establishment of non-rooted communities of doubly-diasporic identities and thus offers citizenship to those who see themselves more fully reflected within mobile borders.

In heteronormative constructions of nation, the state imagines itself growing through the unions of valued citizens—those who represent the racial, ethnic, and economic spectrum essential to the national project.[38] Celiany Rivera-Velázquez discusses the ways that Las Krudas use their art for both capital and political gains.

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[37] At the diaspora studies conference "Diasporic Hegemonies IV: Artists, Activists and Academics on the Uses of Diaspora" (June 2009, University of Minnesota) a diverse group of diaspora scholars, activists, and artists came together to discuss the concept of diaspora as it changes across histories, ethnicities, genders, sexualities, and politics. Fatima El-Tayeb and Augustín Lao-Montes, for example, both commented on the effects of increased re-location as an important factor in current conceptions of diasporic identities.

[38] See Jigna Desai's discussion of "home" in her chapter entitled "Embodied"(2004), where she theorizes nostalgia in relation to constructions of gender and sexuality in the diaspora.

"Notions of family, heterosexuality, and reproduction are said to keep nations afloat," she explains, "Krudas Cubensi execute women-centered cultural productions that problematize heterosexism, setting themselves apart from normative, reproduction-oriented, displays of femininity" (100). This distinction also has repercussions for the referent "home" nation, Cuba: Who are its citizens? Who has access to space? Which are the bodies that are emblematic of the nation? In their song "Eres Bella" ("You are Beautiful") the trio speaks to the gendered and racialized valorization of citizens on the island. "Eres bella siendo tú, ébano en flor, negra luz/ Eres bella siendo tú, cuerpo no es, tu única virtud" ("You are beautiful as you are, ebony flower, black light/You are beautiful as you are, your body is not, your only virtue"), they conclude the song calling for a recognition of intellect over demeaning representations of the body. Referencing the hyper sexualization of female bodies Las Krudas remind audience members that women have virtues beyond their bodies. Their lyrics and the valorization of womanhood speak to the ways that female voices are largely absent in the Cuban imaginary and encourage a global queer of color community to reproduce a strong identity in opposition to exclusionist heteronormative formulations of citizenship. Through both their performances and their lyrical content Las Krudas embody the tension between globalization and translocal community formation.

Since their arrival in the U.S. Las Krudas' audience has greatly changed. Now identifying as "queer" and "women of color" their English-inflected vocabulary speaks to audience "taste" in the U.S. and available identity-based networks. While in Cuba, the trio was primarily concerned with asserting their voices as some of the very few women in the Hip Hop community; they used their art as activism for organizing women and educating youth. They abandoned their livelihood as stilt-walking street performers and their homeland of Cuba and have continued their career as Hip Hop feminists in the U.S. where they have found growing support. Tired of suffering from gender and sexuality oppression and hoping to find a larger audience for their performative artistry, the three women found themselves making their way through across the borders in Spain and Mexico before finally earning asylum in the U.S. In addition to the spontaneous local community of queers of color that met them, Las Krudas recognize their extended Cuban family and the role models that have come before them. The initial homage that they pay to Celia Cruz is followed by the mention of Merceditas Valdés, an Afro-Cuban folk singer from the early 20th century associated with Yoruba culture.[39] The transition from Celia Cruz's salsa steps and glorifying lyrics to the typical rhythms of Santería ceremonies and movements reaffirms the trio's African ancestry and their relationship with the protecting Orishas of the syncretic Afro-Cuban religion. Wanda's arms, mostly still during the salsa steps of La Prima's performance, gain momentum once the rhythms of Merceditas Valdés begin. Her shoulders rock like waves; her elbows begin to show life and force propelling and leading her forearms and wrists in controlled swings in front of her body. This forward and back movement accompanies her changing foot patterns. Moving from the weight shifting, hip-swiveling, forward and back steps of salsa, her feet become more planted to incorporate small side to side and box steps which propel gliding steps during Santería gatherings. Their blended performances make their music accessible and appealing to multiple audiences.

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[39] See Graciela Chao Carbonero's discussion in "Africanness of Dance in Cuba," (2010).

Experimenting with cultural and social roles

> "The human body is not just a physical phenomenon in the natural world. It is one of the most heavily burdened bearers of meaning in culture, and one of its richest courses of meaning derives from the gendered character of the body. The meaning of the body-gendered-female is tied to an ideological structure of heterosexuality" (Kaminsky, in *Lesbian Cartographies*, 235)

For many exiled artists, the first moments of performance in the new national context offer both an empowering and challenging stage for experimenting with social and cultural roles. The distance from the home nation allows a simultaneous evaluation of the socially constructed identities based on the national context and an engagement with stereotypes and social roles imposed by the limits of the nation of exile. For Celia Cruz this meant discovering what it meant for her to be Afro-Cuban and for Las Krudas this meant joining part of a queer collective. "Travel involves boundary crossing on many levels. Boundary crossing is not only physical but it also inspires shifts in identity, the creation of new identities, or the familiarity and reconnections of old identities" argues Judith Byfield in *Gendering the African Diaspora* (2010). The literal relocation of the featured artists serves as an easy analogy for thinking of shifting identities; however, rather than focus only on the shifts and reformation of identity in exile, it is important now to also look at the ways that collective identities are reconstructed and established from within the place of exile. Because, as Kaminsky states in the epigraph, human bodies are so heavily burdened with cultural (gendered) meaning, the exiled performer faces the task of negotiating new terrain and determining unfamiliar conditions of the new land. Both Celia Cruz and Las Krudas found a greater audience and more personal and expressive freedom upon arrival in the U.S. but not without facing a variety of challenges to their identities; the artists had many choices to make regarding how they would fit into their new locations and what aspects of their identities they wanted to highlight and manipulate in this new context.

The transition to the U.S. allowed Cruz the opportunity to reflect on and craft her Cuban identity. In her analysis of Cruz's performances, Frances Aparicio argues that Cruz's use of Spanish and the staging of her performances assert her Cubanness. Aparicio highlights the ways that the transnational, or exiled, space facilitates the expression of local identities. For her, "the symbolic reiteration of the word 'azúcar' reaffirms the role of Celia Cruz's voice and body as an icon of Cuba's African-based heritage and *mestizaje*. Yet it also serves as a vestigial reminder of the US-dominated and capitalist economy that was transformed by socialism, a nostalgic signifier given Celia Cruz's subject position as a Cuban exile" (226). Cruz, again, is able to/forced to shape shift as a result of her boundary crossing. The negotiation of identity and simultaneous markers of Afro-Cubania and U.S. capitalism bestow her body with multiple layers of cultural capital. Within this space Cruz, as an early representative of the exiled Cuban condition, had the artistic freedom to craft her performance of national, gender, and racial identities. With distance from her homeland, and from the restraints on creative expression and access to space she experienced there, Cruz experimented musically and stylistically to establish what Cuban exiles and Usonians alike would come to associate with an authentic Cubanía.[40]

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[40] Following architect and intellectual Frank Lloyd Wright, I use the term "Usonian" to signify those citizens of the United States rather than the problematic "American."

Her position as the Reina de la Salsa means that she at once embodies a legacy of Afro-Cuban rhythms and histories and also connotes her locatedness as she experiences the expressive freedoms of U.S. cultural production. Though she claims not to promote specific political agendas, in her song “Azúcar Negra” (“Black Sugar,” 2000) Cruz introduces the theme of the powerful black woman and inserts the song’s protagonist in a line of enslaved women from the 19th century. The themes of the “black sugar” and the black woman with “tumbao” (discussed below) exemplify the ways that Celia Cruz incorporates the legacies of slavery and racism in Cuba into her lyrics. She speaks to the principal exports—sugar cane and coffee—on the island and her capacity as the representative Afro-Cuban to bring the *rumba*, the *fiesta*, to life. She is not only in the rain and the earth because Cuba is her homeland, but also because of the bloodshed throughout slavery; she and her ancestors are literally recycled into the atmosphere and absorbed by the earth. “Hija de una isla rica/Esclava de una sonrisa/Soy de ayer soy carnaval/Pongo corazón y tierra/Mi sangre es de azúcar negra/ Es amor y es música” (“Daughter of a rich island/Slave of a smile/I am from yesterday I am carnaval/I contribute heart and land/My blood is made of black sugar/It is love and it is music”). Her performances and abilities as a show person bring life to songs that reference sadness, oppressive legacies, and longing for the homeland; simultaneously, she focuses on the power of the black woman—herself exemplifying the capacity to not only overcome racism but also to dominate.

In one of her most popular videos, “La Negra Tiene Tumbao” (2002), Celia Cruz sings of a powerful and sensual black woman who rules the streets and knows how to lead a life of joy. In juxtaposition to the protagonist, the video features clips of Cruz singing, wearing a variety of colorful and jeweled wigs, brightly framed glasses, and shimmery gowns. These costumes contrast that of the video's protagonist, a long-legged, scantily clad black woman that parades down the streets of New York grinning and strutting as taxis, pedestrians, and salespeople admire her with both shock and awe. Crafting her own identity as different from the sexy and sensual Latina, Cruz made conscious choices with regards to her racialized performances of femininity. These two agents read in tandem further elucidate the dangerousness of Cruz as a powerful protagonist in popular culture, different from the protagonist in the video whose straightened and blonde highlighted hair adopt a whitened aesthetic in order to claim the streets. Playing with the stereotyped image of the hypersexual black woman, Cruz's music video intersects with the expectations of multiple audiences. For her large Latino following "La Negra Tiene Tumbao" fulfills the rhythmic *clave* and culminating *rumba*, and the pop reference to rap culture speaks to her location in New York—birthplace of Hip Hop.

Different from simplistic associations of the Latina body and hyper-sensuality, Cruz crafted a persona that drew upon her internal *clave* and emphasized her vocal talent. The video for "La Negra Tiene Tumbao" follows a similar trajectory to that of Cruz's collaboration with Wyclef Jean on "Guantanamera" (2001)—more typical Cuban rhythms and signifiers are mingled with Hip Hop lyricism and break beats.[41] The rap interlude for "La Negra Tiene Tumbao" begins as the protagonist enters an unmarked car and is then dropped off in another part of town. The protagonist exits the vehicle naked, her breasts and vagina only covered by rectangular censor strips, as the rap lyrics describe her: “tiene tumbao/anda derechito no camina de lao/diosa de la noche, dulce como el melao/otra como ella yo nunca he encontrao/ven aqui para poder compartir/porque eres tu la negra linda que me hace feliz/otra no quiero/sin ti me muero” (“she has *tumbao*/she walks straight not side to side/goddess of the night, sweet like a melon/I have never encountered another like her/come over here to share/because you are the beautiful black woman that makes me happy/I don’t want another/without you I will die,” 2001). This visual and auditory combination extends the common association of rap music to the hypersexualization of women. What happens after she struts naked down the street and sidewalk, grinning, and acquiring a following (of both men and women), reflects the blending that Cruz perpetuated throughout her career. The sexual appeal of the protagonist throughout the majority of the video is contrasted with the final scene where she is portrayed wearing a summer dress (in contrast to the previous scene where she is shown both naked and wearing only a trench coat) and dancing a rumba with a male dancer who appears for the first time and is dressed in a summer suit. Closing with this image of the rumba freestyle brings viewers back to Cruz as the Cuban referent and further invests agency in the performance of the protagonist.

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[41] In her collaboration with Wyclef Jean, Cruz is featured singing the refrain "guajira, guantanamera…yo soy una mujer sincera, de donde crece la palma." This collaboration switches the lyrics to reflect a female protagonist—mujer sincera—and emphasize Cruz's connection to the Cuban countryside. It is on her carnaval float where the protagonists of the music video, Wyclef Jean and the woman Guantanamera, take refuge. Jean thus references the parade scene from *Orfeu Negro* (1959) where the protagonists escape their violent pursuers and adds authenticity to his Cuban reference by including the Cuban star, Celia Cruz.

Like the popular song “La Vida es un Carnaval” (“Life is a Carnaval”), the lyrics in “La Negra Tiene Tumbao” emphasize the good things in life and encourage listeners to follow a path not burdened with rules and restrictive patterns. The video projects the protagonist as the model for how to live life well, a path, though well articulated in the song, which would be hard for most viewers to follow. If you want to have a good life, Cruz sings, then you should take things slowly and enjoy it along the way: “si quieres llegar primero/mejor se corre despacio/disfruta bien de la vida/aunque tomando medidas” (“if you want to arrive first/it is better to go slowly/enjoy all of life/even while being precautious”). For the protagonist in the video it seems that she need take no precautions. She arrives at the laundromat in a large white fur coat only to strip out of both coat and mini skirt to walk through the rest of the video with her tiny orange shorts and bikini-top. She thus casts off the working-class bound space of the laundromat along with the excessive riches of the coat and reclaims her space in public, on the street. Because of her “tumbao,” it seems, the *negra* commands her space; because she walks “derechito” and no “de lao” she is able to rule the streets. The seeming facility with which she possesses the space around her presents a degree of wishful thinking as racial and gender discrimination persist and exclude in both the U.S. and Cuban contexts. Cruz’s commitment to projecting an image of joy and appreciation is filtered through the dominating stride and rumba steps of the dancing protagonist of the video. The close-ups of Cruz singing reinforce the presence of powerful and successful Afro-Latinas illustrated by women who rule the streets and video screen.

Las Krudas do Celia Cruz

It is precisely for the themes and negotiations Cruz confronted upon her arrival in the United States and later in her career that the newly exiled Las Krudas see her as a powerful example. Exiled because of the gender and sexuality oppression that persists on the island, Las Krudas saw in Cruz the ability to negotiate her exiled identity and capacity to hold the contradictions of U.S. capitalist society and a recently established socialist nation. Though the artists project their (possibly opposing) political views in much different tones, the overarching persona that Cruz projected was a symbol of powerful Afro-Cubanness and femininity. Las Krudas were confronted with both legacies of racial discrimination in Cuba and constructions of blackness and Latinidad in the U.S. In addition to racial and national identity markers, however, the trio found a growing "nation" in the global Queer community. First it was with Austin's queer of color and artistic community and, over the last six years, they have gained a growing audience in Mexico and have been featured at many conference plenary events and human rights festivals. While in Cuba, their political commitments were to women's voices and in the U.S., after contending with immigration battles in Spain, then Mexico, and the U.S., they have also moved to include immigrant struggles.

Las Krudas use explicit lyrics to emphasize women loving women and women loving themselves thus bluntly stating their political stance. With the support of their newfound kinship community they have expanded their audience to emphasize the identities that lead to their self-imposed exile from Cuba.

> Ya no seguimos, siendo objeto de valorización que nos queda
> prostitución, seducción esto es solo una costumbre de dar pa'
> ayudar a nuestra gente económicamente
> en este mundo tan matieral
> no somos nalgas y pechos solamente, tenemos cerebros
> mujeres siente, siente.
> We will no longer continue to be objects to be devalued
> What does that leave us, prostitution, seduction

> This is just a custom to give, in order to
> help our people economically
> in this world [that is] so material
> We are not simply butts and breasts, we have minds
> Women feel, feel. (Las Krudas, 2004)

Their lyrics reflect on the socio-economic situation of Cuba and the way that Afro-Cuban women, in particular, are positioned within this context. After the initial "opening band," Wanda disappears to change into her Krudas costume and Pasita and Pelusa remain on stage to get things warmed up for the Hip Hop show. The instruments stowed away, the two women are left in their propagandistic shirts and with microphones in their hands. As they await DJ-Leidis' beats, Pelusa and Pasita begin to transform their movements from the light steps on the balls of their feet of the rumba orchestra, or rotating shoulders accompanying drumming hands of Santería, to downward stomping and upwards arm pumping movements. The transition is not seamless. The music doesn't start right away and in this pause the two women move closer together. They begin improvisational chanting and beat boxing, leaning their torsos forward and alternately throwing their arms wide open. After establishing their Cuban roots, performing as Afro-Cuban musicians and summoning the presence of Celia Cruz and then Merceditas Valdés, Las Krudas introduce their personal bodily politics. The lyrical content changes to include the population of people in their audience—predominantly women of color—and encourages solidarity as they assert that "ahora las mujeres vamos a gobernar" ("now we women will rule").

Their movements include bodily enactments of the lyrics to help non-Spanish-speaking audience members follow their messages—their lifted shirts show off their *gordura*—fatness—for example, as they sing about being proud of their bodies. These movement choices, while serving as a way of transcending possible language barriers, also change traditional Hip Hop vocabulary to emphasize the female and fat bodies. The two sisters touch stomachs, "heavy pride!" they shout, at once placing female intimacy on display and asserting this form of community through bodily consciousness. Odaymara steps away, "a mi que me digan gorda y fea, llegó la gorda, la gorda soy yo!" ("they can call me fat and ugly, the fat woman has arrived, she is me!"), and then steps forward and does a quick squat towards the ground "a mi que me digan gorda, no resisto" ("they can call me fat, I'm not denying it").[42] While her squat could signify an act of submission, it is from this control over her body and immediate impulse to rise back up with swinging arms that illustrate that no matter how her body is perceived she will, and all women can, come back to the space that they have created for themselves. Reminiscent of Cruz's colorful costumes and smiling face displayed alongside the protagonist of "La Negra Tiene Tumbao," the full body of Cruz is upheld as the original site of *tumbao*. Unlike the acrobatic breakdancing of many contemporary youth, the trio relies upon subtle movements to accompany their political lyrics and cite Cruz and agential Afro-Cubans as sources of pride. Reading their emphasis on expressions of female sexuality and fat bodies illustrates their manipulations of both gravity *and* oppressive forces.

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[42] In the space of their live concerts they have access to only their bodily displays; however, in the official music video recorded for the song the trio also combine the multilingual and written signification "phat" with their bodily perfomances. They not only emphasize the message of heavy-pride but also play on the Hip Hop terminology that signifies "cool" or "hot."

"We are here in gringo-landia, resisting…Resistiendo" cries Olivia. The crowd erupts in laughter, recognizing that for Las Krudas, Women of Color Conference or not, the U.S. is "gringo-landia." They incorporate the Spanglish "-landia" suffix to mark the mixing of Anglo and Hispanic vocabularies and filters for self-identification as well as to draw attention to the U.S. capitalist culture that, like in Mexico-derived parody of Disneyland, "Disney-landia," turns everything into a capitalist venture, a "-landia" to be conquered and marketed. Through this blending they establish themselves as both separate from and interpreters of U.S. and Latino culture. Unlike Celia Cruz who arrived in the U.S. looking for greater opportunities for her music and alongside a cohort of upper-class Cubans, Las Krudas form part of a disgruntled revolutionary core that differentiate themselves from the first-generation Cuban migrants that arrived with financial capital and U.S. government support.

"Resistance" is one of the themes that permeates globalized Hip Hop and finds lyrical and bodily expression in their performances. In their song of that title, they invite the crowd to participate in the resistance that they are committed to: "llegaron las Krudas pa' cambiarte la vida….when I say 'Kru' you say 'Das,' when I say 'black', you say 'beautiful', when I say 'heavy' you say 'more beautiful', when I say 'imigrante' you say 'pa'lante.'" The trio, now all dressed in their Las Krudas t-shirts and jeans, mics in hand, raise their fists and swivel their hips; look into one another's eyes and beckon to the audience to respond to their cries. Their words clearly reflect some of issues they are most concerned with. They verbally confirm racial and body identities, black and heavy, that audience-members might confer upon them. Then, they position themselves within the diaspora identifying their status as immigrants. The trio asserts that they are here to "cambiarte la vida" ("change your life"). The politics of this life change are related to re-envisioning beauty and imagining a world of immigrant rights. Their bodies mimic the political and rhetorical transformations of their performance.

Hip Hop continues to connect communities around the world but for Las Krudas these bonds are filled with contradictions. Their songs, sung predominantly in Spanish, are accompanied by gestures and movements that often mimic the stories being told in the songs or, at other times, include a blending of globalized Hip Hop movements with Cuban rumba and salsa. Within the U.S. context they contend with the fascination with labels of "exotic" and "unknown," as many things "Cuban" have become within the context of the *bloqueo*.[43] Las Krudas assert that they are part of a legacy of powerful female performers who come from similar backgrounds and yet have experienced different levels of success and acceptance within their local communities and internationally. Performing as a group means that they represent as a collective. The two sisters Odaymara and Odalys Prendes form part of a larger Afro-diasporic community while Olivia Cuesta performs and cites the Africanist legacy of Cuba, though herself not part of the ethnic Afro-diaspora. As they present their music internationally they stand together as a collective and represent a new generation of exiles.

Different from the individual, yet collaborative, career of Celia Cruz, this performance group illustrates their commitment to collectivity starting with the formation of their trio. Both Cruz and Las Krudas fashioned their performances in negotiation with U.S. conceptions of *cubanía* and sensual Latina bodies. Though celebrating their bodies through different techniques—Cruz through donning tight-fitting, shimmery gowns that drew attention to her larger body and Las Krudas through more masculine and Hip Hop attire—each of the artists is made to reflect on the possible spectacle of ethicnity that the U.S. context inspires. Roni Armstead comments on the ways that Las Krudas continue to struggle against the history of racism in Cuba even as they contend with new racisms in their adoptive homeland: "Black Cubans active in the hip-hop movement personify the fissure between the real, lived experience of race and the official ideology promoting the notion that racial harmony has been achieved on the island" (109). While the socialist rhetoric of equality was successful in invisibilizing racism for a short period, Hip Hop in Cuba has been a powerful place for Afro-Cuban artists and activists to create a space for their voices. Las Krudas are aware that their queer and female identities both invisibilize and spectacularize their bodies and they use their lyrics and performances to construct this reality.

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[43] Many Cubans on the island refer to the U.S. embargo as "el bloqueo," the blockade, to emphasize the inhumane nature of this policy.

Conclusions

Dressing as Cuban pop icon Celia Cruz, or her cousin, is significant in that Cruz represents a strong Afro-Cuban woman who was successful in making a living off of her art and simultaneously maintaining cultural specificity. Cruz, famous for her incredible smile, booming voice, and important role in bridging the Cuban and New York musical scenes in the 1970s, is a well-known figure throughout the U.S., Caribbean, and Latin America. While certainly her voice and charismatic presence drew crowds, it was her physical response to the music, her rumba, and early salsa steps that signaled her *cubanía*. Cruz's music and dance exhibited incredible energy, optimism, and dedication, and Cubans who remained on the island never forgot the significance of having an Afro-Cuban and female representative sharing their rhythms and movements with the world.

Las Krudas' encore encourages the audience to sing along "happy, happy, happy" as the trio again breaks out the instruments used in La Prima's opening performance and references Cruz's commitment to spreading joy through her music. The maraca, *tambor*, and Wanda's singing accompanies the syncopated steps and undulating hips. "Down, down, down," the trio and the audience go, touching the floor only to shoot back up with raised arms. The ground is the starting point of the rumba and the rock-step; it is the "tierra" that symbolizes "nation," and a starting point. Las Krudas bring their bodies all the way down to this starting point and call for collective participation. They begin and end with rumba rhythms and emphasize the black, queer, fat, and female bodies that are immediately read by the audience. Las Krudas are transparent in their lyrics regarding their immigration experience from Cuba to Spain and then to the U.S. and they flaunt their bodies as *cubana* to claim that they will now resist in their new "home."

Celia Cruz' song "La Vida es un Carnaval" is practically an anthem in Cuba and for Las Krudas to use it as one of their opening songs immediately reaffirms their Cuban identity and multifaceted relationship to nationalism. The trio's evocation of Cruz is a display of their continuing engagement with U.S-Cuban relations and the roots of Afro-Cuban music and dance. Swiveling rumba hips and beating drums recollect the evolution of Cuban national dance and rhythms as disseminated globally by Cruz's performance. Las Krudas sing for community; they manipulate their performances to include new notions of family and national identity while sustaining their strong sense of *cubanía*. As George Lipsitz notes in his "Diasporic Noise," "even under circumstances of global integration, local identities and affiliations do not disappear. On the contrary, the transnational economy often makes itself felt most powerfully through the reorganization of spaces and the transformation of local experience" (5, 1994). Las Krudas use Hip Hop culture as a place to establish a diasporic local community. These artists exemplify the ways that Cuban national identity is constructed and deconstructed in the diaspora and the ways that diasporic space is the border-less site of multiply-intersecting identities.

CHAPTER THREE:
Brasileiras no Palco: Brazilian Women on Stage

This chapter looks at the ways that a series of films and film stars highlight the interaction between popular culture and social change in the second half of the 20th century in Brazil. In particular, I look to film stars as sites where gendered and racialized performances highlight some of the key issues at stake for Brazilian nationhood. I engage female protagonists and actors that negotiated the (un)mapping of hypercollectivity based on gender, race, class, and nationality. My close reading of film star Carmen Miranda (1909-1955), Carlos Diegues's *Xica da Silva* (1976), and Tata Amaral's *Antônia* (2006) emphasizes the complex negotiations and strong tie to "routes," both transnational and transhistorical, rather than "roots" that produce a national and gendered citizen. Diverging from the discussion of performance in exile seen in Chapter Two, here I focus on nationally circulating images and the formation of a stable Brazilian national identity.

At the intersection of these film texts arises a critical engagement with diaspora formation. Frank Andre Guridy's discussion of the African diaspora distinguishes the conceptually rooted location of Africa as an imagined homeland and the multiple routes that African descended peoples have traveled—through force, exile, choice, privilege. In his *Forging Diaspora* (2010) he notes that, "as a concept that illuminates the creation of cross-border communities, diaspora is a useful way to interpret cross-national, Afro-descended interaction that is not reducible to politicized forms of 'black internationalism' or 'racial solidarity'" (4-5). This chapter is particularly interested in the ways that the film texts, contexts, and stages spotlighted here interact with one another to establish or breakdown identity-based collectives. The transnational and cross-border component of diaspora articulated by Guridy and theorized through Hip Hop can be traced throughout the series of chapters in this project; for this chapter I am looking at the interactions between an array of texts produced from within the same national context but that reflect larger constructions of diasporic and feminist collectives.

By including Carmen Miranda in my discussion of Afro-diasporic communities (in addition to the directors of the two feature films), I am signaling the relationship of representation and popular culture to racial solidarity. To extend this idea, I argue that Hip Hop is a way of interpreting an aesthetic that illuminates cross-border communities and cross-national dialogue. As an Afro-diasporic art form, Hip Hop encompasses a rooted sense of origins and also necessarily traverses multiple routes in the process of ciphering creative and collective energies. Simultaneously a global force and an Afro-diasporic aesthetic, Hip Hop offers useful theoretical tools for understanding the evolution of national identity formation in Brazil and, specifically, the development of the *brasileira*. Emblematic of diaspora's movement and (re)formation of community, Hip Hop's elements offer a complex theoretical approach to the representations of the nation expressed by Carmen Miranda, *Xica da Silva*, and *Antônia*.

My analysis will engage three dominant themes that are relevant to studies of contemporary Brazilian popular culture as well as to Gender and Diaspora Studies. First, I will trace the ways that these protagonists and film stars both form part of a local community based on their minoritarian identities and also complicate identity-based theories of collectivity through their connection to a larger transnational diaspora. Second, I will analyze the choreographed performances of race and gender featured within the films to address the relationship of *brasilidade* to hypersexualization of female bodies and national discourses on citizenship. Third, I will show how these protagonists and film stars developed their own "tag" or, ability to mark space, and establish a simultaneously individual and collective space for other female performers.

These fictional and real historical figures represent important markers along Brazil's history timeline—from the abolition of slavery in 1888 to the 2003 initiation of racial quotas and 2010 election of a female president. The emancipated slave, Xica da Silva, a Portuguese-born film star, Carmen Miranda, and the members of a fictional Hip Hop quartet, Antônia, are all women who respond to colonial, patriarchal, and societal power struggles and are fashioned by both the film directors' impulses and self direction. In a society both praised and critiqued for its sensual *carnaval* and beach culture aesthetics, these historical figures, actors, and protagonists draw attention to moments of female agency and the interplay of Brazilian national identity as it influences expressions of race and gender.

A constant flow and exchange of ideas and artistic creativity is prominent in the gendered performances highlighted in this study. By deriving my theoretical approach from an Afro-diasporic creative form, I am privileging this way of knowing and directly linking knowledge production to manipulations of identity—as seen through *Xica da Silva*, Carmen Miranda, and Antônia's performances. Black Studies scholar Michelle Wright (2004) theorizes antiquated notions of black *hypercollectivity* as one of the tendencies previously recognized for organizing the Black community. Through claiming a unified collective, some scholars theorized, the Black community would have a stronger voice. This claim was refuted by others who argued the other extreme, *hyperindividuality*, or the individualistic tendency that advocates for revising the over-simplification of Black identities. The polarized terms that Wright describes as frames for Black politicization in the United States do not apply in the highly mixed Brazilian context; instead, the protagonists studied together here seem to embody precisely the middle area that Wright theorizes that is neither hypercollective nor hyperindividual. Because of the ways that people and groups were racialized in Brazil, the dominant rhetoric on racial categories throughout the early modern period and throughout the twentieth-century emphasized *mestiçagem*—racial mixing. The differences in colonial period practices in addition to its modernizing tactics make Brazil, in the early twentieth century and today, a unique site of analysis for scholars of race.[44]

The Brazilian Context

Filmmaking in Brazil must be understood within the context of the dramatic political transitions that the nation underwent throughout the twentieth century following the 1888 abolition of slavery. While early cinematic representations under Gétulio Vargas (1930-1945) were primarily comprised of film adaptations of novels or regional documentaries, the mid-century Cinema Novo movement saw filmmaking as political praxis and "a contribution to the struggle against neocolonialism and class injustice" (Stam, 180). Robert Stam addresses the development of a national voice within the field of film studies in Brazil and the inconsistent relationship that Brazilian filmmakers had with “foreign” influence. In his “The Shape of Brazilian Film History” (1995) Stam discusses the development of musical films and the important role of Carmen Miranda for drawing a larger Brazilian national audience. While the Estado Novo of Vargas imposed political and artistic censorship on the Brazilian population, his regime also sought to portray a unified Brazil that transcended class and race and bound the masses to the state in order to promote national development; Carmen Miranda as a singer and film star was perfectly poised to step in as emblematic of the Brazilian state. Growing industrialization and dependence on U.S. aid underscored the importance of the Good Neighbor Policy and the formation of liaisons between the nations. This context facilitated Miranda’s rise to stardom and encouraged the unification of the Brazilian populace around a set of cultural symbols, including samba.[45]

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[44] There are many books and articles that discuss the evolution of race in Brazil to point to either the problematic oversimplification of race relations or to highlight the nation as unique among other post-colonial nations in the Americas, including the U.S. See, for example Mala Htun's "From Racial Democracy to Affirmative Action: Changing State Policy on Race in Brazil" (2004), Anthony Marx's *Making Race and Nation* (1998) or David Cleary's "Race, Nationalism, and Social Theory in Brazil: Rethinking Gilberto Freyre" (1999).

The period between Vargas’s Estado Novo (1930-1945) and the years of military dictatorships (1964-1985) was experienced as relatively stable. For the arts this meant increased transnational dialogue and greater freedom of expression. Under the mostly stable presidency of Juscelino Kubitschek (1956-1961), Cinema Novo directors produced films that highlighted Brazil’s social contradictions and initiated the beginnings of a symbolically “black cinema” (180). Carlos Diegues is one such director who sought to expand the limits of film production and emphasize the political capacities of cinema. Whereas Bossa Nova musicians from this period had greater financial success in distributing their sounds abroad, film producers were more deeply hurt by the limitations caused by the overdependence on foreign investment and social polarization resulting from Kubitschek’s presidency. Taking advantage of their new expressive freedom, films made during the 1960s Cinema Novo period clearly sought to highlight an "authentic," marginalized Brazilian condition and engage a "garbage aesthetics" to contribute to the "struggle against neocolonialism and class injustice…they sought out the dark corners of Brazilian life—the *favelas* and the *sertão*—places where Brazil's social contradictions appeared most dramatically, and places, not coincidentally, where blacks, mulattoes, and *mestiços* were disproportionately present" (180, Stam). Carlos Diegues's 1976 rendition of *Xica da Silva* reflects the mixing of this regionalism and focus on the "dark corners" while also clearly reflecting the moment of pre-*abertura* political climate and military dictatorship that again confined directors to productions with nationalist agendas.[46]

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[45] See Bryan McCann’s *Hello, Hello Brazil* (2004) for further discussion of the role of radio and samba as unifying forces in the 1930s.

During the latter half of the transition from the *Estado Novo* under Gétulio Vargas (1937-1945**)** and subsequent military rule beginning in the 1960s, assertions of the Brazilian nation returned to discussions that shaped the Old Republic (1889-1930). The turn of the century emphasis on *branqueamento*—whitening of the population—evolved throughout the modernist period but some of the critical debates were sustained throughout the Vargas regime. Intellectuals like Oliveira Vianna influenced Vargas's policy on immigration and argued that in order for Brazil to flourish and become unified it needed to establish a notion of the Brazilian citizen. Implicit within this argument was the fact that some of the nation's population would reside outside of the status of full citizen; these divisions, not surprisingly, were formed along race and gender lines. Since early colonial Brazil was comprised of a predominately male Portuguese population, during times of slavery and colonial expansion the available female bodies were those of black slaves and indigenous populations. To increase population growth unions between slave masters and female slaves (in particular) were seen as necessary. Later, as the nation sought to separate itself from Portuguese rule, it was precisely these mixings that provided a source of individuality and pride within the nation.

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[46] The *abertura* is the period which led to and followed the end of the military dictatorships of the 1970s and 80s. João Figueiredo, the last military president, initiated the process of re-democratization.

Post independence and, more importantly, post abolition intellectual debates on who would count as a citizen varied between emphases on articulating a prototypical *brasileiro* within the state's borders and projecting a unique character to the international community. The institutionalization of political science and sociology in the 1920s as fields of advanced study in the São Paulo School impacted the consolidation of national debates and turned the focus to articulating either a national unity or plurality. The *nacionalismo forte* (1920-1940) of intellectuals like Plínio Salgado and Oliveira Vianna, for example, encouraged defining the nation from within and at the necessary exclusion of some people. Simultaneously, thinkers like Sérgio Buarque and Gilberto Freyre argued that everyone be counted as Brazilian and that more emphasis be placed on the image that the nation projected internationally. Framed by fascist rhetoric, Salgado founded and led the Brazilian Integralist Action (1930), a political movement that drew largely on the Italian and Portuguese populations and was primarily concerned with combating communism and purifying Brazil. The *intelecutais de resistência*, like Buarque and Freyre, argued for the inclusion of a plural Brazilian citizen and for focusing narratives of national unity on the shared history of nation-formation. Implicit within these debates was the important role of the Brazilian woman as the reproductive mother of the nation and yet not a full citizen. Movements like communism and the *Semana de Arte Moderna* (which began in 1922) in São Paulo facilitated the organization of women's rights movements and attention to gender equality; however, the legacy of the

1891 constitution ensuring that "todos os cidadãos maiores de 21 anos" have the right to vote, and the implication that *cidadão* meant only male citizens, carried into the classification of women as only partial citizens.[47]

After decades of political and economic change, Brazilian society continues to be concerned with race relations and social inequalities along gender lines. It is only in the 1980s that Afro-Brazilians and Amerindians enter more frequently into cinematic representations and/or in director positions. Robert Stam asserts that "white Brazilian directors often make black and Indian characters and situations bear the burden of the national allegory; they become 'carriers' of signs meant to point to something other than themselves. Quilombos, for example, at times become the sign for national liberation. Early Indianist allegories had the Indian represent Brazil as a whole; later allegories have black people stand in for 'people'" (343, 1997). Clearly following the intellectual impetus of the *intelectuais de resistência*, artists in the mid to late twentieth century used their creative energies to continue the nation's reconciliation with a collective history of segregation and simultaneous pride of plurality.[48] While the evolution of representations of a multiethnic Brazil has increased, the dearth of female directors persists. The representative figures described by Stam are not unlike the female protagonists discussed in this chapter that have come to stand in for both Brazil and Afro-diasporic collectivity.

Brazil has been characterized in various historical moments as an alternative model to the state sanctioned racial segregation prevalent in other post-abolition colonial nations.[49] While theorists have lauded the racially mixed society and conducted historical inquiry into how Brazil was able to achieve its supposed unique harmony, racial divisions and social struggles persist. The evolution of race theory in Brazil has been the topic of sociological, political, and cultural studies since the early modernist movement (1920s-30s).[50] In addition to the thinkers previously mentioned, literary scholars like Mário de Andrade and Oswald de Andrade initiated the *Semana de Arte Moderna* as a forum for reconciling internal national concerns regarding identity with important influences from Europe. Both the experimentalism in language and enhanced social consciousness, characteristic of this period, clearly impact the performances and critical inquiries that shaped elite popular culture, including cinematic renditions of the nation. The primary focus of this study is not to point to the areas in which racial harmony is not a reality but, rather, to proceed with the assumption that in fact these divisions are present and must be read in tandem with gendered hierarchies of power and (de)constructions of identity.

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[47] It was only in 1933 that the vote was extended to all women.

[48] In a lecture given by Jaime Ginzburg at the University of Minnesota, March 2009, he described the evolution of thinkers using the category of *intelectuais de resistência* to refer to Buarque and Freyre.

Another key critical concern for directors and film stars throughout Brazil's entrance into the global artistic market was the tension of expressing a unique *brasilidade* and incorporating the "foreign" aesthetic. As a society often characterized by ethnic diversity, artists attempting to negotiate larger global influences and assert a distinctive "Brazilian" identity relied on *mestiçagem* as a rallying point for the nation's uniqueness.[51] From the beginning of the twentieth century, scholars and artists found themselves both devouring foreign aesthetics, like the modernist focus on discontinuity and rejection of realism, and also fighting to assimilate them without compromising national integrity. There have been several phases of and attitudes towards what Oswald de Andrade called *antropofagia*—"cultural cannibalism"—or, the practice of taking on foreign aesthetics and making them into parts of one's own (1928).[52] One of the principal founders of the Modernist Movement of the early 1920s, Oswald de Andrade claimed that the incorporation of foreign artifacts was one way that Brazilians could assert their unique aesthetic within the global market.[53]

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[49] See Anthony Marx's excellent discussion of national identity development in three comparative cases (U.S., Brazil, South Africa). In his *Making Race and Nation* (1998) he explains how state control systematically included and excluded specific citizens in order to establish an order of domination. The performance texts discussed in this chapter are examples of artists who alter the decades old legacy of state imposed exclusion of marginalized raced and gendered subjectivities. Also, see Marcos Chor Maio's chapter "The UNESCO Project: Social Sciences and Race Studies in Brazil in the 1950s" in *Brazil 2001: A Revisionary History of Brazilian Literature and Culture*, João Cezar de Castro Rocha (2001).

[50] See Fernando Arenas' discussion of Brazil's cultural and political transitions from the late 19th to early 20th centuries (2003). He asserts, "Brazil's multicultural character has been a source of tremendous cultural vitality, even as it has been a source of tension given the nation's history of slavery and racism" (24). This coexisting vitality and tension inspired my interest in examining Brazil within the scope of this project.

The complex and debated subject of national identity often starts with a discussion of Gilberto Freyre's famous *Casa Grande e Senzala* (1933), known for describing Brazilian colonial culture and the importance of the interaction between the *casa grande*—master's house—and the *senzala*—slave quarters. From his sociological study, intellectuals of that time derived the notion of Brazilian "racial democracy" justified by the profound miscegenation present within the nation.[54] Scholars and artists have discussed the essence of *brasilidade* and attempted to perpetuate positive images of the nation that represent the unique *mestiçagem*—racial mixing—and racial harmony. The cinematic representations highlighted in this study directly interact with the legacies of these earlier theories; the directors' engagement with *mestiçagem* has prompted exaggerated, parodied, and direct critiques of social struggles in Brazil. Embodied knowledge and rigorous training exemplified by deejays, emcees, b-girls/boys, and graffiti artists reflect centuries-old struggles in response to racial hierarchies and access to space.

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[51] Like the success of Brazilian music in the "world music" forum, specifically Afro-Brazilian music has also found a greater world audience than has Afro-Brazilian film and, notes Stam, the stark absence of the Afro-Brazilian woman is certainly of note. Stam's impetus to point out the racial inequalities—lack of representation—illustrates the simplistic view of adding representative bodies. In this case, the monolithic Afro-Brazilian woman who is underrepresented indicates the tendency to view race and essentialized notions of gender that persist in cultural critique.

[52] In his famous *Manifesto Antropófago* (Cannibal Manifesto, 1928), de Andrade argues that "cannibalizing" other cultures is a strength and in fact is a way that Brazil can make itself stronger against the domination of Europe and the U.S.

[53] In her *Argentina* (2008) Amy Kaminsky discusses the relationship of Argentina to Europe and comparatively cites the "auto-exotification" of Brazil. While Argentina saw itself as an extension of Europe, throughout Brazil's process of modernization it "seems content to reincorporate itself as Europe's exotic other, becoming exotic to itself" (28). Unlike other newly independent nations in the mid to late 19th century, Brazil's focus remained inward and weary of excessive outside influence.

[54] At the same moment that Freyre was researching and developing his theories of racial harmony, *negrista* writers were reaffirming and articulating the place of Afro-Brazilians within the literary canon. After the establishment of the República Velha (1889-1930), notions of *brasilidade* were interrogated and underwent critical revisions. Because of this increased interest in Brazilian national identity, more artists and citizens

The Deejay's *Antropofagia*

The cultural cannibalism theorized by Oswald de Andrade is reminiscent of the way that Hip Hop deejays blend beats and remix samples from various sound tracks from throughout the world. Deeply concerned with establishing a collective space where similarly positioned marginalized identities might find common ground, this transnational consumption and assimilation characterizes the principal elements of Hip Hop. The role of the emcee (MC), Master of Ceremonies, is to bring voice and harmony and to articulate the stories and experiences of the community; s/he might be known for her/his controversial lyrics, story-telling abilities, or improvisational capabilities. As important as the emcee's voice, however, is the inverse lack—silencing; while s/he is creating rhymes, "defecating on the microphone" the community around her/him might be feeling

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began to question Brazilian "culture" and "customs" and the development of the Brazilian Modernist Movement (approximately 1920-1940**)** provided the artistic outlet for just this questioning. Through incorporating other international aesthetic, modernist artists were inspired to deeply self-reflect and evaluate the roots and definition of *brasilidade*.

silenced. [55] Artists who learn to negotiate the dichotomous social reality silence/voice develop a way of being reflected in their performances. The performers discussed in this chapter represent a range of standpoints and dedication to a collective struggle. Carmen Miranda, for instance, after her appearances in Fox musicals, became a stand-in for the Latina voice in the United States, while Xica was the only manumitted slave from her town and evolved as the reigning Afro-Brazilian voice in the film. While Miranda, Xica, and the protagonists of *Antônia* sought to transcend the systems of oppression—gender, racial, class—they separated themselves from some of the very members that were assumed to make up their collectives. In the following sections I will address the formation of collectives focused on gender and race oppression and the ways that these (sometimes) stereotyped configurations do not reflect the embodied realities of the protagonists that make them up.

Hip Hop foregrounds postcolonial relationships of power through musical hybridity and by extension points to the gendered hierarchy of bodily mixing.[56] The film stars and protagonists discussed in this analysis mix genres in their performances and also make salient the ways that the female body has been constructed and interpellated in nationalist discourse. Critical theories of hybridity, as articulated by scholars like Joshua Lund (2006), caution against facile theorizing of racial mixing in order to explain ethnic fusions.[57] Lund warns that, "the concept of 'hybridity', including its long association with the (re)production of bodies, forces us to confront identity, discourse, and representation in the context of the tenacious naturalization of colonial structures of power and social (re)production" (xv). Underlying hybrid formations, he points out, are always relationships of power. He critiques theories of hybridity in the Brazilian context; his precautionary warning applies as well to Hip Hop musical mixings that refer to power and place. While the dominant base beat may signal U.S. origins, for example, a melodic *berimbau* signals the Afro-Brazilian martial art *capoeira*. The mixing of genres illustrates the layered characteristic of deejay music and also points to neocolonial relations and the globalization of pop culture.

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[55] See The Fugee's song "Ready or Not" (1996) where they use this image to represent the aggressive and anger-filled lyrics that many rap artists sing in response to a hostile and exclusionary society. This image has become popular in the Hip Hop community as a symbol for the ways that emcee's can respond to centuries of voicelessness.

[56] An interesting in depth analysis of the current texts in question would focus exclusively on the musical scores and the use of music in conveying a message. Carmen Miranda is known for her roles as a performer and singer in the musical films of the 1950s; the repeated Jorge Ben Jor song "Xica da Silva" (1970s) establishes the intertextual and transhistorical nature of the film's content; and, finally, *Antônia* integrates music as a key element of the text incorporating hip hop, pop, and classic songs.

Deejay mixing helps reveal theories of racial formation in Brazil precisely because of the nation's complex discourse on race and the inherent tie to sexuality and reproduction. Conceiving of racial theory through the mixed musical beats of Hip Hop reminds us of both Oswald de Andrade's *antropofagia* and of constructions of hybridity. The starting point, however, for this approach comes from within the African diaspora and is motivated by the desire to form a collective based on a socio-political struggle for minority rights. The ability to mix in euphemism and code allows deejays to establish an "in" and knowing community also invested in taking back space where they have been invisibilized and written out. The tensions related to debates on racial hybridity can be found in the close analysis of *Antônia*'s treatment of the interactions between the four protagonists and their individual struggles. The film is framed by the protagonists' desire to form a Hip Hop group, an instant gesturing to a larger Hip Hop and Afro-diasporic community. Hip Hop as a genre and Brazil as a nation constantly find themselves negotiating notions of "origins" and "authenticity." The deejay urges listeners to question their knowledge and notions of "roots" and lay claim to a particular "beat." Hip Hop inspires both artists and audience members to question what bodies are the proper objects of the genre; by extension, this lens helps to theorize the ways that different people are classified into identity-based collectives. Turn-of-the-century discourses of race in Brazil would have the lighter-skinned population claimed as the "true" Brazil.[58] The art of a deejay sampling beats illustrates the many layers of the African diaspora and postcolonial racial formation through a blending of tracks. In this chapter, the "beats" of race and sexuality are featured prominently and are blended together into one cinematographic track. Deejays learn to reconcile or productively grapple with a diverse collection of music carrying extensive history; theorists of national identity in Brazil must also negotiate intersecting tracks and read through the lens of blended histories.

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[57] See Roberto Schwartz (1992) for discussions of racial democracy in Brazil and Joshua Lund and Néstor Canclini for discussions of racial hybridity.

Carmen Miranda

Carmen Miranda's rise to stardom was a slow process that coincided with the proliferation of radio programs and increased inclusion of marginalized voices in the Brazilian public media.[59] Carmen Miranda honed her singing skills at an early age through church choirs and established her own unique fashion trends through her adept sewing skills. She began her career in Brazil as a singer and quickly became a star on the radio singing samba songs. Miranda was initially admired in Brazil for charismatic performances and commitment to singing exclusively in Portuguese when she moved to the United States. Her transition to the U.S. Fox musical network in the 1940s initiated her highly gendered and racialized performance. Once in the U.S. she brought her Brazilian band with her and her *baiana* costume introduced an "authentic" Brazil to the international market. It was precisely because of her ability to take on foreign aesthetics and pander to the stereotyped Latina persona that she was both successful and critiqued; however, even today, despite her decline in popularity in Brazil towards the end of her life, she is considered one of the nation's biggest stars.[60]

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[58] See Alfredo Bosi's *História Concisa da Literatura Brasileira* (1984) and Thomas Skidmore's *Black into White* (1993) for further discussion of the modernist period and constructions of race in the early twentieth-century.

[59] Specifically, musicians from the Plains and Northeastern regions often stereotyped as Black and underdeveloped, moved to the cities of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo and found an audience for their samba and *forró* music.

As she transformed into a Hollywood film star, Miranda was read as an object of mass culture to be consumed. To her Brazilian admirers she had lost her *brasilidade*, "nesse processo de travestimento identitário—a baiana torna-se americanizada—a opinião pública brasileira se posiciona de forma redutora e nacionalista, exigendo-se a volta da atriz às raízes do samba e à autenticidade de sua imagem nativa" ("in this process of identity transvestism—the *baiana* turned American—the Brazilian public opinion becomes reductive and nationalistic, demanding the actress to return to her roots in samba and to the authenticity of her image as a native [*brasileira*]" 83, de Souza). In her "Carmen Miranda: do *kitsch* ao *cult*" (2004), Eneida Maria de Souza emphasizes the costuming that transforms Miranda from her *baiana-brasileira* figure to an Americanized object of Hollywood. Her exaggerated hats, early in her career reflecting her creative abilities to design, later became emblematic of the exotified tropical South. In addition, her consistent hair-covering headdresses ensured that her dark hair would not exclude her from playing alongside blonde American stars, but also did not pose a threat to their status as leads.[61] The simplistic interpretation of her transition inspired Brazilian critics to reductively position her as the epitome of Brazilianness. The preoccupation with roots and the necessary naming of both Bahia and samba in the list of what would prove Miranda's nationality emphasize the precarious and mobile space that she occupied throughout her career. In trying to work her way to stardom, she found it beneficial to charm U.S. production companies with her "authentic" Otherness—including accented language, playful vocabulary, and colorful costuming. Primarily interested in becoming an artist, Miranda's negotiations mimic the attentiveness to audience and auto-exotification that sometimes accompany the commercial costuming of ethnic identities today.

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[60] It should be noted that Miranda, born in Portugal and light skinned, has been theorized in many contexts as an imitation of Brazilianness as she herself was not born in Brazil nor was she a *baiana*. Rather than representing an identity that she herself was born embodying, she appropriated those qualities that were, at the time, seen as authentically "Brazilian." For further studies of Miranda see Helena Solberg's biographical film *Bananas Is My business* (1994) or the article by Shari Roberts, "'The Lady in the Tutti-Frutti Hat'"(1993) discussed in this chapter.

The series of musical films that Miranda starred in during the 1950s-60s in the United States were sponsored by Hollywood agents eager to fulfill their role in the promotion of the Good Neighbor Policy (1933-1945, under Franklin Roosevelt). Different from the *chanchadas*—comedic Brazilian musical films from the 1930s-1950s—Miranda's productions formed a link between Brazil and the United States.[62] These lively pieces featured sailors and romantic liaisons and always the playful and silly Latina (Miranda) who spoke with an exaggerated accent and flashed her wide eyes at viewers as if they were co-conspirators in her parodied performance. Both voyeurs and accomplices in her Hollywood performances, U.S audiences aligned her with the image of the dancing and sensual Latina. “Latin American cooperation during World War II was not the only racial or ethnic issue addressed in Fox musicals. They also helped the government by whipping up African American support for the war” (34, Griffin). Miranda’s representation of any Latina “South of the U.S. border” made her stand in for the universal Other; however, despite Fox musical’s efforts to maintain a segregated space within the films—Miranda as the entertainment for Anglo audiences—her knowing glances and exaggerations clearly illustrate her capacity to manipulate the very genre that sought to confine her.[63] Though it is arguable how much autonomy Miranda maintained in the choreographies of her film productions, that she was carrying the weight of her nationality and progressively being transformed to represent a generic Latina clearly impacted her success as a performer. It was her simultaneous difference, reflected in the U.S. audience fascination with the Other, and Latina generality that makes her a particularly interesting figure for interpreting identity collectives.

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[61] For Priscilla Peña Ovalle it was Miranda's turbans that prevented her from modifying her hair, dying it blonde, and thus gaining increased access to cosmetic markers of whiteness and mainstream representation in Hollywood (2011).

[62] For further discussion of the genre and artistic evolutions in Brazilian film see Stam and Randal Johnson's *Brazilian Cinema* (1995).

As a figure, her body was mapped and appropriated by Fox Studios and Hollywood culture to stand in for the Pan-Latina at once establishing a false collective of “Latinas” throughout the Americas and inspiring important questions about the racialization of both individuals and collectives of Americans—broadly speaking. Her role in promoting the Good Neighbor Policy between the United States and Latin America cast her as a Pan-Latina and led to her estrangement from her nationally specific context. In her *Dance and the Hollywood Latina* (2011) Priscilla Peña Ovalle theorizes

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[63] In an interview with Christopher Dunn, Caetano Veloso speaks about the ways that Miranda’s fame rose and fell within the Brazilian imaginary (1996). Veloso says that during the Tropicalist movement he and other artists rediscovered her: “She was no longer a grotesque thing, unpleasant, but was something that had began to fascinate me, something I wanted to play with: it had already become loveable for me in many respects. She had been recovered: a kind of salvation” (132).

Miranda's choreographies and mediating role between cultures alongside those of Dolores Del Rio, Rita Hayworth, and Jennifer Lopez: "Miranda embodied an in-betweenness; her body image and persona existed between the representational poles of blackness and whiteness…In Brazil, Miranda bridged the gaps of race and class and united the nation through samba" (49). While Peña Ovalle imbues Miranda with extraordinary, perhaps excessive, cultural and individual capital, it is precisely her persona-in-motion that makes her a pawn for Fox film producers in the U.S and also an important example of collectivites negotiating membership. For the U.S. audience, Miranda was the pan-Latina performer who was loud, silly, and knew how to move her hips; for this, she is often considered a pawn of Hollywood and managerial interests. Her *baiana*—Afro-Brazilian—performance is completely performative. Her midriff-showing costumes, eyelash batting, hip twisting, and shoulder shimmying dance moves played into colonial narratives of female availability and, in particular, the desirability of the black slave. While sometimes read as an example of liberated female sexuality, her performances read in opposition to the portrayal of white female leads who upheld narratives of chastity, contributed to growing body of images of sexualized Latinas in U.S. media. She crafted herself as a racialized representative of Brazilian national identity, an image that was appropriated and manipulated for many Fox musicals. The parodic nature of her performances and concurrent commercial success remind us of the underlying struggles that marginalized artists confront with each performative iteration. Hip Hop underground fights against the commercializing impetus that, many times, privileges the aesthetic of "cool" and exaggerated representations of "authentically" racialized bodies in order to gain audiences in a particular collective.

Miranda was confronted with reconciling femininity and virtue in her role as a performer, and cultivating her aesthetic as Brazilian. Her performances of the Afro-Brazilian aesthetic not only reflect the historical moment that bore her but also introduce an important set of questions in relation to *brasilidade* and authenticity, the manipulation of racial/gender/ethnic identities, and the complex relationship of “foreign” to “national” aesthetics. As one of the earliest and most successful female film stars from and in Brazil, Miranda’s unique ability to shape shift and border cross made her an important early example for the performers that came after. Commenting on Carmen Miranda’s initial trip to Salvador, Bahia local painter and writer Caribé remarks on the role that the Northeastern region plays in the Brazilian imaginary and anticipates Miranda’s capacity as a performer: “Here all the elements interpenetrate; melt into one; disguise and reshape themselves into varied configurations, often becoming two or more things at the same time, often having another meaning, another cloak, even another face” (41, Gil-Montero). Clearly a reference to the Afro-Brazilian syncretic religion Candomblé, Caribé’s terminology is also reminiscent of vocabulary used to describe black dance during the colonial period. His comments establish the intersection of Miranda as a performer and the capacity of the *orixás* to determine life roles and destinies. This reflection addresses the wariness that many felt in seeing Miranda, a light-skinned Portuguese-born performer, taking on and reinventing the traditional *baiana* dress. This wariness not only reveals the problematic appropriation of a light-skinned performer of an Afro-Brazilian aesthetic, but also draws attention to the protective, and sometimes confrontational, impetus behind community organization.

What does it mean for a white performer to reshape herself into an emblem of Afro-Brazilianness? In the U.S. context such disguises were literally expressed through blackface minstrels or, as Paul Gilroy and Brenda Dixon-Gottschild have pointed out, integrated into a white aesthetic with no deliberate reference to the site of borrowing. Miranda's crafted interaction with the *orixás* makes her performance less like minstrelsy and more like the inevitable melting and interpenetration familiar in the Brazilian imaginary. "O que mais importava era a criação de identidades colectivas, expressas nos conceitos de hispano-americanismo ou de latino-americanismo" ("What was most important was the formation of collective identities, expressed through the concepts of Hispanic-americanism or Latino-americanism"; 80, de Souza). Her allegiance to Brazilian ideology of racial miscegenation impacts her concept of collectivity. She imagines herself in dialogue with Afro-Brazilian culture that, according to nationalist rhetoric, was an important component of national identity.

Miranda's denomination as "Brazil's Ambassadress of Samba" imbued her with the power to represent Brazil and the responsibility of opening a space for herself and other *brasileiras*. Her first show in Salvador, with a failing sound system, was characterized as a test from the *orixás*: "They probably wanted to make sure Carmen would be up to such a transformation because they foresaw that the 'Carmen-turned-Bahiana' would one day symbolize the naughty, radiant, carefree soul of Bahia and the tropics" (43) explained Caribé. The language that Caribé uses to link Miranda's evolving identity to Afro-Brazilian and carefree tropical identities foreshadowed her rise to stardom and ascent to pan-Latinidad in the United States. The national character embodied within Miranda's ethnic identity signals the problematic ways that early thinkers defined the nation along racial and gendered lines. While the language of Luso-tropicalism promoted a positive image of a racially harmonious Brazil, such a frame also ensured that the racialized social stratification remained largely unquestioned. [64]

The continuous and productive tension held within Miranda as a representative, both emblematic of the racially mixed Brazilian and also the pan-Latina, imbues her with the power to represent not only these contrasts but also the more than century-long debate on Brazil's racial harmony. Not so unlike Gabriela Mistral's role in representing the Chilean nation-state, as Licia Fiol-Matta claims in her *A Queer Mother for the Nation* (2002), Miranda also "addressed topics ranging from the classification and hierarchical ordering of racial 'mixings' to the status of black Latin Americans in nationalist discourse, from desirable *mestizaje* in the Latin American territory to dangerous *mestizaje* beyond the watchful purview of the state" (3). Though neither penning her ideology nor presenting herself as an official political ambassador, the dissemination of Miranda's films in the U.S. had the effect of reproducing an idea of race in Latin America through the crafting of her hybrid identity. Miranda found herself constantly straddling the inside/outside divide in terms of her race and nationality. We can better comprehend the image of a racialized Latin America that Miranda reproduced through imagining her reproductive capacities as queer. Fiol-Matta continues, "Latin American ideologies of racial democracy rested on a conceptualization of Latin American slavery that held it as more benign because it was supposedly more affective and erotic. Queers are not exempted from this legacy. Queer desire is not immune to racialized constructions of eroticism or to the lure of achieving national belonging through a collective exercise of racial fetishization" (19). Primarily concerned with her own stardom, Miranda engaged this production of Brazil's racial democracy and crafted a fetishistic racialized representation of pan-Latinidad. Her type-casting as the naïve performer who functions outside of dominant culture or the accomplice to the protagonist in her/his search for a (white) lover meant that she was both static and mobile, both inside reproductive time and necessarily outside of it. Her physical mobility and ability to take up space across the screen with her dancing body is juxtaposed with the seeming fixed range of her possible character roles. Miranda, as the Latina "other," was never cast as the love interest of the male lead but rather often functioned as the matchmaker who facilitated the unions of white protagonists and thus helped reproduce a particular national citizen (of the U.S.): one tolerant of and dependent on "others" but not open to racial mixing. Her racialized performance thus places her both inside the discourse of Brazil's racial harmony and outside a collective of Afro-Brazilians.

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[64] First discussed by Gilberto Freyre, *lusotropicalismo* refers to the unique capacity of Portuguese colonizers to establish themselves in their colonial territories in such a way as to facilitate a more democratic society. It was thought that Portugal's long history of relations with Africa and the Portuguese's capacity to thrive in warmer climates that the new settlers were more adaptable and more humane in their treatment of the inhabitants of the new land.

In her role in the U.S. as pan-Latina, Miranda manipulates the audience through her intonation and reveals her cunning use of body and voice; she signals a "Latina-aesthetic" that is simultaneously recognizable to other diasporic Latinos in the U.S. and also ostracizes her from Brazilians who were disappointed by her generic performances. In *Weekend in Havana* (1941) Miranda portrays a Cuban cabaret dancer, though dressed in her *baiana* garb and portraying a universal "Latina" figure. Coinciding with the proliferation of mambo music and dance in the United States, the hip-swiveling dance and prominent Afro-Cuban drum-beats were not unfamiliar to the U.S. audience. The increase of Latin music in the U.S, in conjunction with increased immigration from the

Hispanic Caribbean and Mexico meant greater exposure to what was quickly conflated as Latino culture. In this film, where Miranda stands in for the native *cubana,* the choreography of her body solidifies the conflation of multiple Latino identities in the U.S. imaginary.

One of the most salient images is precisely the unique and "un-American" way that Miranda moves her body. As Rosita, Miranda plays a cabaret performer who becomes a mediator between her manager and a vacationing New Yorker, Nan Spencer. In the opening scene she and her band are performers who come alive in a tourism window display, where they claim that after a weekend in Havana "we'll have you back to your office by Monday, but you wont be the same any more." During the musical interlude the Cuban *clave* stops and Miranda produces a be-bop style "r" rolling jam to which she twists her hips side to side and accentuates her exposed midriff by lightly touching her skin with one hand and raising her other arm up allowing the curves of her hips and torso to be fully seen. Blending both English and Spanish lyrics, Miranda's dance performances highlight the mixing of movement styles that form a cultural bridge. Singing about a special Cuban dance, "The Ñango," Miranda sings: "if my lips say 'no' to you they're only telling lies. All you need to do is look at me and you will see a 'sí, sí' in my eyes." The flirtatious side to side glances that accompany these lyrics are trademark Miranda and play into stereotypes of the sensuous and promiscuous Latina who, although she might say 'no'—the English and Spanish negation—expresses something different through her body movements. Miranda's choreography reinforces the power of the body to express what words at times cannot.

The choreographed “Ñango” performance features a couple’s swing dance where the performing dancers invite audience members to partake in this (supposedly) authentic Cuban dance form, loosening their shoulders and hips in ways that only being in Cuba would allow. Miranda as liaison between the conservative traveler or businessperson, and Latino culture is a common theme in her films. As a sensual nightclub dancer in *The Gang’s All Here* (1943) she is able to teach un-suspecting businessmen how to dance the “Uncle Samba.” Clearly a play on the Brazilian and United States national emblems, it is Miranda who mediates between these two cultures through her playful lyrics, swiveling hips, and twisting wrists. Like in other films, *The Gang’s All Here* features a swing club and an Americanized dance culture. To this familiar form Miranda adds her Latina style—exposed midriff, shimmying shoulders, and expressive facial movements. In her *Resistance in Motion* (1995) Barbara Browning discusses the role that samba plays in articulating Brazilian political and social history. In this film, the only one based in Brazil, the impact of samba on Miranda’s choreography is more salient. Browing reflects on the power of samba’s movements:

> The dance is a complex dialogue in which various parts of the body talk at the same time, and in seemingly different languages. The feet keep up a rapid patter, while the hips beat out a heavy staccato and the shoulders roll a slow drawl. It is all funky with message. To articulate means, of course, to flex at the joints, and samba may seem fluid and jointless, and at the same time entirely disjointed. (2)

The disjointed messages present in Miranda's performances express the simultaneous exotification of the Latina body (racialized *baiana* in this case) and the exaggeration of feminine sexuality that undermines Miranda being read as a threatening *femme fatale*.

Miranda's process and struggle to stardom as a white (Portuguese) woman draws attention to the further absence of Afro-Brazilian female performers. That Miranda performed not only the Afro-Brazilian aesthetic through her costuming but also came to stand in for Latinas in general clearly marks the time period she inhabited and the social boundaries confining access to space. The mid-twentieth century, not unlike today, was a time when light-skinned actors dominated and played the parts of their darker-skinned compatriots. In addition, while early modernists reflected on the nation's past, the artistic focus turned to the indigenous population rather than representations of the past and present reality of slavery.[65] In this context, the "Latin-American Bombshell becomes a highly politicized object serving as a point of contact initially between cultures, but also between and among classes, races, and, most significantly, genders and sexualities, all of which are implicated in the persona she purveyed" (27, Mandrell). Miranda, of course, was not the initial "point of contact" but rather an extension of the neocolonial relationship growing between the United States and Latin America. Beyond her function as an intermediary furthering Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy, she also became an emblem for the United Fruit Company as Chiquita Banana and the burgeoning economic interdependence within the Americas.[66] The following Miranda acquired both in the U.S. in the 1940s and 50s and after her death in the form of camp, signals the interaction between global and local community formation and the symbolic power of Miranda as a figure.

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[65] See literature from that period like Mario de Andrade's *Macunaíma* (1928), the 1941 film *Vidas Secas*, or "Slavery, Citizenship, and National Identity in Brazil and the U.S. South" by Barbara Weinstein in *Nationalism in the New World* (2006). These are themes that directors like Carlos Diegues in the 1960s and 70s began to explore with more vigor. Glaubert Rocha's famous *Terra em Transe* (1967) inspired a tendency of self-reflection in the newly forming Tropicalismo movement.

The representations of Brazilian society, as fashioned by Miranda in the mid-twentieth century and Tata Amaral in her early twenty-first century films, give viewers insight into the principal concerns of the decades in question. Miranda's performance of *baiana* points to the tension between representation and lived reality. In her *White Negritude* (2008) Alexandra Isfahani-Hammond discusses some of the ways that white *negrista* poets and cultural theorists of the modernist period imagined themselves as representatives of the Afro-Brazilian experience and actually entered into the Brazilian imaginary as *the* voice of the *povo afro-brasileiro*. In her discussion of critic Jorge de Souza Araújo and poet Jorge de Lima (1895-1953) she points out the ways that this famous white writer in Brazil came to be considered one of the foremost *negrista* poets. Like Gilberto Freyre's claims to his authentic experience growing up in close proximity to the *senzala*—slave quarters—Souza Araújo, as a critic, lauded de Lima for his capacity, as a gifted white poet, to capture the Afro-Brazilian experience: "Free of the interference of 'black identity'—and the concomitant drive to transcend oppression—Lima is able to mediate black sentiments fluidly: he transforms the latent poetic spirit embedded in 'black-slave' suffering and joy into written verse" (71). Like Freyre and de Lima, who theorized racial harmony and mediated romanticized "black-slave motifs," Miranda fashioned her own representation of Brazilian *mestiçagem*. The trope of protection/confrontation in formations of identity-based collectives is held within Isfahani-Hammond's concerns with authenticity and representation. Miranda's performances replicate the internal and projected markers of identity that artists of Hip Hop underground channel through their art and community engagement. Like a graffiti artist who must shift shapes and read environmental cues to protect her/his safety, Miranda was conscious of the moments when it was prudent to emphasize her conservative aspects and then when she would be better served to express her art in a more exaggerated format. Simultaneously marking space—inserting her body/name/voice—and also altering space through forming alliances with others performing exaggerated femininity, etc.

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[66] See Cynthia Enloe's discussion of the rise of neocolonial relations in the form of tourism and "soft" economic practices as described in her *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases* (2000).

XICA

Theories of transculturation, multiculturalism, and hybridity employed over the past century to understand the formation of national identity in 20th century Brazil tend to emphasize a political agenda aimed at (re)producing an image of nation as proudly heterogeneous and unique for its diversity; however, reading *Xica* in tandem with other powerful performers aligns her with a transnational counterpublic that spans oceans and generations and can be interpellated through Hip Hop's elements.[67]

The 1976 Carlos Diegues film *Xica da Silva* is a retelling of the true story of Chica da Silva, the 18th century African slave in the state of Minas Gerais, who attracts the attention of João Fernandes de Oliveira, a Portuguese contractor sent by the Crown to mine diamonds, and eventually becomes Xica's lover.[68] Francisca da Silva de Oliveira (1732-1796) has inspired many television, theater, and literary works and is known as "the slave who became a queen." Cacá Diegues's film rendition, starring Zezé Motta as Xica, centers on her unique ability to do things in bed that "só ela sabe fazer"—only she knows how to do—and her success in earning her freedom from the Portuguese *contratador.* Xica's cunning and manipulative ways aid in her ascent to power and eventual freedom. This film not only blatantly reflects the sexualization and reduction of female and enslaved bodies, but also illustrates the gendering of agency in Brazil's development as a nation.

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[67] Following Jurgen Habermas' theories of the public sphere, which emphasized the importance of space and the role of social site for the formation of meaning, Nancy Fraser introduces the "subaltern counterpublic" as the space for minoritarian identity meaning making. Michael Warner later extended these ideas to establish the "homosexual counterpublic."

In the film, Xica repeats, exaggerates, and intensifies her performances of slave and woman rendering absurd the divisions between herself and her lover. Because of the seductive power that Xica has over João Fernandes she is able to make extravagant demands beginning with requesting "roupa da gente"—clothing of the (rich) people—then a trip to the ocean. Since they are many hundreds of miles from the Atlantic, João Fernandes demands that his workers build a ship and then sends Xica and her entourage out onto a lake in the *Barco de Amor e Sensualidade*. Finally, after learning of João Fernandes' audit from Portugal, she uses her wiliness to trick the auditor and prepares a grand African feast where she enchants him through channeling animal—chicken, goat, sheep—behaviors and sounds and increasingly intensifying her bodily undulations. The silencing of (slave) women is coterminous with colonial history and requires little explanation; however, Cacá Diegues' rendition of Xica makes a mockery of this silencing and the protagonist's ability to foster a persona more powerful than any other in the film makes her performance like that of the commanding emcee. Xica makes absurd the fancy clothing and ritualized customs of transplanted Portuguese settlers in 18th century Tijuco. Her demands to be treated and clothed the same as her former masters draw attention to the arbitrary nature of power lines. And, understood through the dichotomous tension of presence and absence, highlights which bodies have access to space and what methods are necessary for gaining recognition. Unlike Miranda's crafting of the Tropical Latina, Xica turns the mirror onto the Portuguese settlers to reflect the posturing revealed by their costumes.

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[68] Based on the novel by J. Felicio dos Santos (1956).

Xica, as a reference to the historical figure, and her spectacle of performance read through Hip Hop feminism allows for an alternative reading of female agency. The embodied legacies of racial and gender oppression expressed and recorded in Hip Hop artistry offer a useful theoretical approach for reading Xica's performance as a dialogue with the oppressive military dictatorship (1964-1985) and with legacies of colonialism and slavery. The multiple layers of Xica's integrated corporeal and intellectual knowledge speak to historical and contemporary issues regarding Afro-Brazilian women's agency. In some ways crafted as a parody, Carlos Diegues inserts *Xica* in a series of historical and Afrocentric films in dialogue with a shifting political backdrop in Brazil during the military dictatorship. My discussion features Xica as an agent and figure and also reflects on Diegues' perspective as that of as a privileged white male.[69]

Imagining alternative forms of resistance and rewriting history characterize both Cinema Novo directors and Hip Hop underground. The tensions embodied in Xica's performance, at once sexualizing herself and manipulating her audience, as well as the reflections on Brazil's past read through break encourage a rethinking of the productive space of these tensions. One important characteristic of Hip Hop movement is its capacity to combine institutionalized and socialized disciplining. Carla Stalling Huntington (2007) explains this concept through an analysis of the Runnin Man:

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[69] Other Cacá Diegues films from this time include: *Ganga Zumba* (1963), *Bye Bye Brasil* (1979) and *Quilombo* (1984). These films feature prominently strong Afro-Brazilian protagonists and reflect on Brazil's changing society.

> What this dance signifies is running in place—working for centuries—and anger: muscle memory of anger in the body from past experiences and remembrance of them on the cellular level. This memory results in clenched fists and strained expression. Running in place makes you feel like you are doing something, but in reality one generates a lot of sweat and increases the heart rate, but one never moves, never progresses. Nothing appears to be changing outside the body, not the scene, not the circumstance. Feet are connecting with the past, being bodily mindful of it. The hands are reaching forward with clenched fists expect more of the same in the future."(45.

Xica's performance reminds us precisely of this past struggle, the place where progress seems slow and where feet seem trapped in one place. The physical effort that Xica exudes in her sexual and parodied performances remind viewers how closely tied social change is to individual bodies; the scene around her changes only slightly even while her physical exertions crescendo. Xica, in the final feast scene, creates a multi-sensory experience that draws on tasting the fruits of the Amazon, undulating to African drums, and sustaining her gaze on the auditor, her sole audience member. She has choreographed a meal—a feast that stimulates the inner heat of the body through spices and visual stimulation through her bodily display. Her utter confidence and performance of attitude distinguish her from other women working in the master's house. She has disciplined her body and honed her special sexual talents to earn her freedom. Xica is not only a seductress capable of skilled manipulation, but she is also extremely playful. She embodies the tension between extreme oppression and shame, lightness and joy. Her character clearly exemplifies the attitude necessary to make movement within the given social context.

The commanding emcee voice is one that has learned to speak for a collective, one that often aspires to represent an imagined community of similarly identified or oppressed peoples. However, Xica's individualistic and self-serving demands seem to distance her from the slave population. Her intention is not to use her voice and earned power to then free the slaves around her; yet, she serves as a mediator between the escaped slaves living in the mountains and the Portuguese miners in Tijuco. Through asserting her voice she proves herself capable of circulating among the company of the Portuguese while also maintaining her "inherent" knowledge of Afro-Brazilian and slave populations. Richard Gordon's article "Allegories of Resistance and Reception in *Xica da Silva*" (2005) weaves together analyses of Xica's character and interviews with the director to draw attention to the oppression felt during colonial times and under the military dictatorships (1964-1985). He notes that, "the film shows the protagonist's path to freedom to be in many respects flawed, yet it never completely condemns that path. The film would seem to endorse, under certain circumstances, any means of resistance" (46). Using her sexuality as a means to attain this freedom can be interpreted as a powerful reclaiming of the body or a weakness. In her analysis of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz's *Respuesta a Sor Filotea* (1691), Josefina Ludmer (1985) indicates the rhetorical devices and subtle manipulations of power Sor Juana employed in her powerful retort.[70] Speaking from her profound understanding of the gendered and class hierarchies of her time, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz brilliantly crafted a text that had the capacity to both maintain social norms and invert them from within. [71] Ludmer points out her poetic ability and the force of her rhetorical devices:

> [y] allí es donde ella erige su cadena de negaciones: no decir, decir que no sabe, no publicar, no dedicarse a lo sagrado. En este doble gesto se combinan la aceptación de su lugar subalterno (cerrar el pico las mujeres), y su treta: no decir pero saber, o decir que no sabe y saber, o decir lo contrario de lo que sabe. Esta treta del débil, que aquí separa el campo del decir (la ley del otro) del campo del saber (mi ley) combina, como todas las tácticas de resistencia, sumisión y aceptación del lugar asignado por el otro, con antagonismo y enfrentamiento, retiro de colaboración.
>
> [and] there is where she builds her chain of negations: to not say, to say that she does not know, to not publish, to not dedicate herself to the convent. In this double gesture, the resolve of the subaltern position (shutting women up), and her ruse are combined: to not say but to know, to say that she doesn't know, but actually know, or to say the opposite of what she knows. This ruse of the weak, that here separates the realm of the sayers (the law of the other) from the realm of knowers combines, like all tactics of resistance, acceptance and submission to the position assigned

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[70] The "Reply to Sor Filotea" was written as a response to the Bishop of Puebla and expressed Sor Juana's right to devote herself to secular and artistic endeavors and intellectual pursuits.

[71] Published in *La Sartén por el Mango: Encuentro de Escritoras Latinoamericanas* (1985), Eds. Patricia E. González and Eliana Ortega.

> by the other, with antagonism and confrontation, withdrawl of collaboration. (23)

The multitude of “tactics of resistance” expressed in Sor Juana’s writings and enacted in Xica’s performances emphasize the constant socio-political evaluations that the *debiles* (weak ones, women) must negotiate. Manipulating the power of her body, simultaneously the property of her owner and under her own control, Xica emphasizes the hypersexualization and emancipatory capacity of slave bodies.

On multiple occasions throughout the film Xica assesses her situation in order to manipulate her forms of resistance. Through either drawing on the observed hypersexualization of female slaves’ bodies or exaggerating her African ancestry, she performs resistance through vocal and physical utterances. When she determines that she can seduce João through showing him her body she concocts a way to enter into his office and claims to have an abusive master. She exaggerates her situation and manipulates him, though, in actuality in her current situation she benefitted from some relative freedoms precisely because of her unique sexual capacities. Using these very same skills she gains entrance into João Fernandes’ house and bed. In this first encounter she illustrates all of the various places on her body where her supposedly abusive master’s have beaten her, seductively stripping off her thin white gown and standing fully exposed to the transfixed *contratador.* After she has established herself as his primary lover she emphasizes her African—and almost witch-like—rituals to enchant the auditor. With each new confrontation—be it exclusion from the local church or scorns from the auditor’s wife—it is through constant evaluation of her context that Xica is able to occupy more space and gain more individual power. She is more concerned with her own place in the hierarchy of power than with joining the collective of slave women around her and forming a revolt. Her ascent to power thus requires great individual vulnerability.

Diegues stages multiple scenes that guide viewers both on a voyeuristic tour of Xica's body and also inspire a rethinking of gendered hierarchies of power. "Xica inverts a sexual paradigm that José begins to embody through his aggressive overture, and which Roberto Reis aptly describes: 'de acordo com os valores patriarcais e masculinos ainda vigentes no imaginário brasileiro, a mulher deve ser 'comida', mas o homem não: o homen que é 'comido' é visto como efeminado, contradizendo a imagem máscula que deve realizar" ("in accordance with patriarchal and masculinist values still enforced within the Brazilian imaginary, the woman should be 'eaten' and not the man: the man who is 'eaten' is seen as effeminized, contradicting the masculinist image that he should fulfill," 53, qtd. in Gordon). This important inversion illuminates Xica's ascent to power through her corporeal knowledge and psychosomatic training. "Xica portrays exerting power from a place of weakness; she appears to devour in the sexual act, yet she still works from within the social context that views her primarily in sexual terms. She does not subvert that system or modify it, but rather capitalizes on it" (47). She consciously includes and excludes her fellow (ex)slaves from her place of power, both condescending to the servants at dinner and inviting only black slaves onto her *Barco de Amor e Sensualidade*—whites aboard were the servants and musicians.

Both Carmen Miranda and Xica da Silva inspired blatant questioning of racial categories in their performances. Xica's reference to slave life in the 18the century is clearly one that replicates a highly racialized social stratification. Scorned by João Fernandes' neighbors for inappropriately partaking in what was not meant for her at the household dinner, Xica excuses herself from the room to reappear in whiteface and a fancy gown. Xica impersonates the white slaveholders by appearing at dinner in whiteface, enacting Diegues's parody of colonial Brazil. She blends what are supposedly her innate (African) qualities with those that Portuguese colonizers brought to the Brazilian territory. Her performance is a mockery of these customs and ritualized performances of class. The film's ending, with João Fernandes being sent back to Portugal and Xica's seeming fall from power, reinforces two important threads within Brazilian culture: first, in order for there to be progress Xica, the slave, must unite with José, the white slave masters' son; and, second, in addition to reinforcing the power of *mestiçagem* in Brazil, it suggests that "if (colonial or dictatorial) oppression is to be effectively resisted, it must be through the union of intelligentsia with popular power, or at least through some sort of collaborative resistance" (56, Gordon). This reading gives Diegues himself a purpose as a filmmaker trying to speak out against artistic censorship under a repressive regime and to form artistic collectives across the nation and transnationally. Simultaneously, it encourages viewers to rethink the nation's history of racial mixing and hybridity.

Antônia

Antônia (2006) portrays a group of women who attempt to form a collective based on racialized gender and economic oppression/hardship. Throughout the film their friendships represent the fragmentation of said collective and the difficulty in sustaining such unions. Director Tata Amaral's third full-length feature film, *Antônia* tells the story of four female friends living in a *favela* in São Paulo sharing a dream of becoming famous Hip Hop artists and, through this art, making a place for themselves as artists and women in Brazilian society.[72] The film opens with a voice-over narration of one of the women, Barbarah, and a panoramic view of the *favela*. This opening scene with its sunshine and blue skies, nostalgic storytelling voice, and playful introduction to the four protagonists eases viewers into what later are complex and conflicted lives. The four protagonists—Barbarah, Preta, Lena and Mayah[73] —have formed a collective to combat machismo and have developed their talent as singers and performers in order to reach their goal. Made over fifty years after Miranda's death, and thirty years after Diegues' film and Brazil's transition towards a democratic government, Amaral has many freedoms that these earlier stars and cinematographers did not. Still, there persists a tension between the gaze of the director, Amaral, an upper-class light skinned woman, and the protagonists of her film.

Like the *favela* of Rio de Janeiro in *Black Orpheus* (1959), the neighborhood where the four protagonists of *Antônia* live is another protagonist in the film. More than a setting and backdrop, the visual impact of this muralistic image denotes the words, designs, and marks left on city walls. Like graffiti that one views on a street corner, the *favela* is the repeating mural that appears each time the protagonists return from the city center; it is the standpoint from which they speak and an extension of their artistic expression; it informs their bodies and becomes weathered and worn through time. The film opens with a panoramic of the *favela* that houses the four women; it is a sunny day and all of the oranges, reds, and greens of the barrier walls show brightly like tiny specks in an impressionist painting. The four protagonists emerge from the underside of a steep road. First their heads appear and then with each step their full bodies come into view. The voice of Barbarah and the expansive *favela* introduce both the artist and the art, voice and canvas, in one instant. As the protagonists make their way through the streets throughout the film the audience glimpses men working reconstructing pieces of houses; we see the Brazilian flag's pronounced green and yellow and the words "Ordem e Progesso" painted onto the neighborhood walls; the colors interact with the characters. The *favela* as graffiti emphasizes the way that the space itself is political; not just the setting for the film or a life circumstance, it is part of a daily politics that forms the identities and art of the protagonists. The *favelas* function as the graffiti in the city of São Paulo. These shantytowns are constructed and crafted by folks looking to create space for themselves and survive in alternative communities. Architecture is their art, the landscape their canvas. Instead of the walls of a city street, the shacks are spray painted densely onto the hills, valleys, and outskirts of downtown.

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[72] Tata Amaral is not related to Brazilian director Suzana Amaral (1932--). In addition to documentary and film shorts, she directed *Através da Janela* (2000) and *Um Céu de Estrelas* (1996).

[73] The actresses for the film were: Negra Li, Leilah Moreno, Quelynah, and Cindy Medes.

In the song "Nada pode me parar," Barbarah, as emcee in the group Antônia, presents herself and her mingled identities thus drawing attention to Brazil's controversial discussions around race. She sings: "Peraí, deixa Eu chegar olha pra cá, vou me apresentar. O meu nome já me mostrou: tenha medo pois sou Barbarah! Forte, corajosa, curiosa, envergonhada/India, africana, européia, miscigenada/Mas não confunda pois eu não sou leviana. Te mostro minha adaga de Iansã. Essa é minha fama" ("Wait up, let me arrive, look here, I'll tell you who I am. My name already speaks for me, fear me, I am Barbarah! Strong, courageous, curious, ashamed/Native, African, European, miscegenated/But don't be confused, I'm not superficial. I'll show you my dagger of

Iansã. This is my fame").[74] She draws attention to her mixed identities and ethnicities and proudly asserts her simultaneous courage, curiosity, and shame. Her words, like her fellow-group members' assertions, announce her identity and reaffirm the song title "Nada pode me parar"—Nothing can stop me. These affirming and fighting lyrics are characteristic of rap music and oftentimes assert violent and explicit content. The words that the quartet Antônia choose to introduce themselves focus on individual struggles that can be translated onto the Brazilian public and reflect the legacy of women who came before them. In her introduction, Mayah asserts, "determinada, não desisto de nada/ Teimosa e abusada, sinta a pegada/Sou destemida, espiritualizada/Deus e orixás comigo na caminhada" ("Determined, I don't give in to anything/ stubborn abused, feel the punch/I am fearless, spiritualized. God and Orishas by my side"). Her words speak to the women in the crowd who also might suffer abuse and feel downtrodden and, like her fellow group members, she emphasizes both her femininity and her spirituality. Aware of the added restrictions they face as female performers, the protagonists emphasize their femininity and assume a collectivity based on their gender.

Antônia, with the name of a single woman, hints at a collectivity that the protagonists and director hope to portray in fiction and achieve in reality. Amaral and her protagonists accentuate the fifty years time-span from the making of Miranda's films and the evolution of gender and race politics in Brazil; yet, the gendered and racialized tensions persist. From the outset, the artists in the film must struggle to get a space on stage to showcase the composition they have been rehearsing and Amaral foregrounds hate crimes based on sexuality and the continued silencing of minority voices to stress the persistence of social inequality. In order to combat such oppression, Amaral suggests gendered collectivities and implies a relationship between community, Hip Hop, and race.

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[74] Iansã is the Orixás warrior goddess.

Though not explicit within the film's narrative, the four friends in *Antônia* represent markers of the racialized color spectrum and Amaral mixes blunt acknowledgement and subtle ignorance to highlight the contradictions of racialization in Brazil. As the quartet rehearses for their debut performance, Mayah, the lightest of the group, jokingly suggests that they line up from lightest to darkest in their staged choreography. Consistently the character with the tiniest clothing and, as we see towards the end of the film, with the nicest living arrangements, Mayah jokes about race in a way that suggests that though it is clearly a marker of difference between them, it is a topic open for discussion. By contrast Lena, the darkest of the four, is shown declaring her pregnancy to her light-skinned boyfriend curled up in a child-like ball awaiting his (dis)approval. At first he asserts that she must get an abortion and that he is not ready to be a father, but upon seeing her sad and vulnerable, affirms that he will take care of his "neginha"—Brazilian term of endearment, *little black woman*. Discussions of race and markers of color are blatant and open among all the characters as discussion points or housed within terms of endearment. That race is part of an open dialogue does not mean, however, that the film necessarily reinforces discourses of racial harmony in Brazil. Amaral's romanticized formulation of female collectivity projects the notion that women form part of a gender-based community that rises above race and class differences. Crafting a common code or emphasizing a shared history/reality draws these artists together, not the simple markers of gender, class, or race that inform outsider judgement.

The embodiment of “attitude” is central to the performance of women overcoming hyper-sexualized images and standing on their own. Attitude, like all other performative expressions of self, is gendered and racialized. As part of the Hip Hop aesthetic, having *attitude* means that one projects confidence and grounding that signals strength and determination. While attitude can be expressed through song lyrics, it is the enacted posturing that ultimately signals this attribute. The ways that the four protagonists in *Antônia* assert their bodies on stage indicate the impact that the disciplining and repetitive rehearsals of day-to-day life and organized training have had. At their debut solo stage performance, Preta and Lena walk onto the stage with confidence; their heads are held high, their feet lead the way. The initial audience response to Lena as she sings is a young man asking her for her phone number. The camera shows a look of defeat on her face and a look of disgust and anger on her boyfriend’s face. She raises her head and sings again, as Preta sustains a look in her direction. The four women’s bodies first face slightly towards one another until they get their flow at which time each one sings her solo and raises her arms up to pump towards the sky or open out towards the audience. Their bodies recollect the protective and creative circle of support they form as they face one another and the outward looking dialogue with society as they confront the audience. This physical formation mimics the social configuration of minoritarian groups simultaneously looking in for community and out with caution.

Quick reflexes, fast thinking and stuttered movements facilitate the ways that women and other populations targeted for violent crimes maneuver in cities and in the *favelas*. These movements, like the popping and locking that characterize the Los

Angeles area contributions to early *break* in the U.S, are focused on style, rhythm and control. Xica, for instance, is characterized by her cleverness and trickery. As the four protagonists of *Antônia* must circulate through the streets of the *favela* and on the male dominated stage, they rely on maintaining strict control over their movements as they meditate on the next movement. When Preta goes out to eat with their acquired musical agent Marcelo Diamante and he starts to make a move on her, she follows his lead at first. She watches his style and she feels out the rhythm of the context. The movements of her life must be completed one step at a time, each one deliberate and precise. Poppers and lockers are acutely aware of every beat and every isolated body part. Instead of fluidly turning the head to look sideways, a popper might first swivel the foot, then turn the knee and leg to be followed by the hips and stomach, and only last by the torso and head. The practice of intentionality is not a precaution or incidental; these movements highlight awareness of the larger rhythm and the fact that there will be another beat, another moment to continue the movement. Preta's personal story shows the way that she moves forward in her life to this popping, stuttered beat. The steps she takes to move out of her boyfriend's house and in with Barbarah and the way she interacts with her mother and father are like the stuttered and intentional steps of a popper. She is familiar with her battle and with each isolated movement she maneuvers her body through a challenging variety of spaces and expectations. It is she, throughout the film, who is not side-tracked but rather maintains a steady pulse.

Antônia's ending is hopeful and inspirational and, though romanticized in some regards, carries with it the weight of the individual protagonists' stories. After Preta apologizes to Mayah for misjudging her and after the four are reunited in their visit to

Barbarah, who was imprisoned for manslaughter after avenging her brother's death, they perform their new material in the prison complex. Singing to Barbarah's old prison-mates they sing: "Antônia sou eu, Antônia é você/ qualquer uma Antônia pode ser" ("Antônia is me, Antônia can be any one of us"). Any woman can follow her dream and find her voice and become part of the feminist collective. They encourage the imprisoned women and then other female audience members in their final concert appearance to fight in order to establish their place, "se quiser ganhar, não dá sem lutar/quem quer conquistar, seu lugar tem que buscar" ("If you want to win, you will have to fight/whoever wants to overcome, will have to find their place"). These powerful ending lines speak to the legacies of Carmen and Xica, powerful female performers and figures who not only "found their place" but bravely sought to reinterpret and reshape themselves in order to initiate the change they wanted to see in their society. The clear juxtaposition of the imprisoned women to the singing voices of Antônia illustrates what type of "fighting" is necessary to earn this respected place in society. They emphasize the power of words to conquer more than violence of physical brutality; this is the fundamental inspiration for the emcee.

Finally, Tata Amaral, whose two earlier films also focused on women's issues, chose a musical genre that at once relies on legacies of cultural capital and also suggests a certain level of political engagement. In some ways, her reliance on Hip Hop as a genre to carry her social critique is problematic; she simultaneously engages the cultural form as an important location of social change and also romanticizes the globalized aesthetic of collectivity. These directors and artists recognized that in order to engage with the complex legacy of Brazilian *mestiçagem* both the Brazilian and larger viewing audience would benefit from the metaphors and impact available through strategic musical hybridity.

Conclusions

In a culture that prominently features images of women seen on the daily *telenovelas*, in the *carnaval* samba schools, or in music videos such as those of È o Tchan, the urgency for producing new images is unmistakable.[75] Contemporary scholarship on Hip Hop feminism produced in the U.S (Rose, 1994, Pough, 2004 and Durham, 2006), as well as that dealing with Brazil (Pardue, 2008), recognizes the lack of female Hip Hop artists. In his recent study of Hip Hop in São Paulo, Derek Pardue admits that his research is conspicuously male dominated. He found that "virtually all Brazilian Hip Hoppers are invested in retelling periphery 'reality' through narratives of marginality, with the aim of both legitimating the *periferia* as a potentially empowering space of identity, and revealing problems of mainstream Brazilian views of social difference, mostly around the markers of class and race (to a much lesser extent, gender and sexuality)" (6). It is precisely because Hip Hop has been male dominated that gender and sexuality have not, in past decades, been the principal problems Hip Hop artists confronted; women have remained at the margins. However, it is clear from the increase in both pop culture representations like Amaral's film, and in on-the-ground cultural movements like Hip Hop Mulher, that female and queer Hip Hop artists are making space to insert their bodies and concerns into the Hip Hop agenda.

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[75] This samba-pop duo È o Tchan exploded onto the music scene in 1995 and quickly became famous for their explicitly sexist lyrics and highly sexualized dancing. The original two female dancers each went on to pose for *Playboy* and were replaced by equally light-skinned and scantily clad dancers throughout the group's transitions.

The top-rock step in break dance characterizes the tension of bodily representation and the long-time feminist concern regarding female objectification. An opening and a retracting of the body characterize this dance step; the body at first displays itself and then retreats. First, one foot steps forward and then retracts back to center. It extends forward at an angle, accompanied by arms open out to the sides. As the feet alternate stepping forward the arms swing to open, hovering near the body. This same tension characterizes the performances of many female artists as they negotiate a sexist and heteronormative society and their desire to embrace their own sexuality. To some degree the stage performances of Carmen Miranda and the four protagonists in *Antônia* can be read as self-deprecatory; the women are scantily clad and many times seem to emphasize their breasts and bodily curves. Yet, through reading top-rock into their movements we can see the ways that the choreographies of everyday life can also alter sexist representations of the female body and highlight the contradictory choices faced by female performers. The protagonists perform what they have learned: to both open their bodies up and invite audience spectatorship and to close off and protect themselves from groping and aggressive *machista* society. In addition to the protective function of this bodily control, the repeated contractions of the body impact the relationship between the spectating gaze and the agential performer.[76]

There are a growing number of female artists around the world who have identified with Hip Hop culture and who have established a community space where their concerns can be voiced and their bodies can claim space. The Hip Hop Mulher movement, organized by Tiely Queen in São Paulo, is just one of many movements in

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[76] Feminist film critics Laura Mulvey and Teresa DeLauretis discuss the ways that film as a form has replicated and challenged dominant active/passive tropes regarding spectator (male) and spectacle (female).

Brazil that seeks to bring together women and other artists concerned with gender inequalities within Hip Hop culture and society at large.[77] Though there has been a noted increase in female participation over the last decade, the lack of audience, space, and respect for female artists within Hip Hop culture continues to challenge organizers and performers. With the objective of organizing a space for dialogue, performance, and evolution of the Hip Hop movement, Hip Hop Mulher held its first *encontro*—gathering—in July 2009. Through round-tables and workshops this event brought together female artists from around the São Paulo state and culminated in an evening performance open to the public. Tiely Queen, in a blog forum following the event, remarked:

> Não tenho vergonha de ser feliz e desenvolver meus projetos, de dançar de "Nega Du Samba" numa balada de mulheres pra suprir minhas necessidades, de até vender meu corpo, de fazer novela, de fazer teatro, de cantar, de tudo!!! Ele é meu!!! Faço com o meu corpo o que bem entender…O estado capitalista não tem nada há ver com isso. Isso é feminismo, é atitude, é ação, todas têm a liberdade de fazer suas correrias!!! É pra isso que eu existo enquanto pessoa e depois enquanto instituição dar a idéia e apoio no que for possível. E só chegar.
>
> I'm not ashamed to be happy and to develop my projects, to dance to "Nega du Samba" in a ballad of women to satiate my needs, to even sell my body, to perform, to act, to sing, anything!!! It is mine!!! I will do with my body what I think it is for…The capitalist state has nothing to do with

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[77] For example the *Encontro de Gênero e Hip Hop da Bahia*, 3rd encounter March 2005.

> this. This is feminism, it is attitude, it is action, we all have the freedom to do our thing!! This is why I exist as a person and secondly institutions can have input and give support with whatever possible. It's only a matter of arriving. (2009, original transcript)

This public announcement reflects her commitment to claiming her body as her own and to confronting the contradictions of being a female performer in a male-dominated culture. One of the key components of the discussions that took place at the *encontro* was finding a way to understand the diversity of experiences among women. Race, gender, sexuality, class, and ability differences were topics of debate with the end goal of strengthening collective feminism within the movement. Queen stated that it was imperative for women to understand one another in order to comprehend one another's art. By emphasizing the individual within the collective, this tactic contrasts with the homogenizing tendencies of a repressive society.

Reading through the lens of Hip Hop, this chapter introduced the dialogic nature of the African diaspora and racialized gendered theories in Brazil. Using the elements of Hip Hop as a lens shows social movements and individual activism that combine the "hypercollective" and "hyperindividual" conceptualizations of Black identities. Beyond the aesthetic of cool and the commercial appeal of Hip Hop culture, the protagonists and characters discussed here present excellent examples of the ways that gendered and racial contradictions are expressed through performance. Rather than writing a manifesto or seeking out elitist higher education, the multimedia performances of feminist politics expressed through Hip Hop reach larger local and global audiences and ask questions with the popular voice of those who establish its vocabulary. Reading through the tropes developed in Hip Hop culture, the genealogy of prominent female performers/performances in Brazil can be linked to both a larger community seeking to open up a space for equal citizenship and a transnational diasporic community inhabited by individual bodies.

CHAPTER FOUR:
Breaking Time: *Sirena Selena vestida de pena* and *Fe en disfraz*

> "Los ancestros son la duplicidad y la contradicción. Los ancestros (y el acopio de sus saberes) son lo que nos fija en el tiempo. Esas largas genealogias de muertos intentan trazar una línea que, atravesando una masa informe de cuerpos, se desplaza por el espacio infinito. Eso es la Historia, una tenue línea que va uniendo en el aire a los ancestros—a esos pobres animals sacrificados en la pira del tiempo—"
> (*Fe en disfraz*, 92).
> [Ancestors are duplicity (reproduction) and contradiction. Ancestors (and all of their accumulated knowledges) are what locate us in our time. These long genealogies of the dead attempt to trace a line that, traversing an amorphous mass of corpses, gets lost in infinite space. This is History, a tenuous line that unites the ancestors in mid air—those poor sacrificed salvages in the pyre of time—][78]

Dichotomous relationships of power—colonial and colonized, slave master and slave, first world and global south—commonly characterize historical and socio-cultural accounts of nation formation in Puerto Rico and its neighbors in the Caribbean. A space of negotiation, contradictory identifications, and in-betweeness, the Caribbean is an ocean of connected islands linked to the American and African imaginaries. These relationships make the Caribbean a particularly rich site for investigations into postcolonial identity formation.[79]

Rather than imagining a historical trajectory that seems to function based on a narrative of progress, Afro-Puerto Rican fiction-writer, poet, and activist Mayra Santos-Febres's texts are venues for re-imagining the ways that History is created, embodied, and circulated. In her article "A Queer Way of Family Life: Narratives of Time and Space in Mayra Santos-Febres's *Sirena Selena vestida de pena*," Irune del Río Gabiola asserts that *Sirena Selena* "operates as a venue for cultural transformation through a questioning of identity categories, social practices and the effectiveness of institutions in a global world" (78). This literary text, she suggests, is an enunciation of the present; a reflection of a moment in time that can operate as a space of interrogation. This moment of enunciation, I argue, connects the past and the future and exposes identity categories as they are reified and broken down in the "present."[80] The complex space of the Caribbean has been theorized as an "island bridge" (Benítez Rojo), as simultaneously linked histories (Glissant), and as that which both holds together and separates the two Americas (Dash). All of these perspectives evoke a sense of layering, an ever-reflective space of multiple histories. I locate some of these theoretical constructs in the daily reproductions and negotiations of self—racialized gender, national, social class—as illustrated by the protagonists and contexts within the novels discussed in this chapter.

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[78] All translations throughout are mine.

[79] The recent collection *Hispanic Caribbean Literature of Migration* (2010) highlights several essays that treat the writings of exiled Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and Dominicans who challenge the national discourses from their countries of origin while simultaneously critiquing U.S. imperial power in the region.

Mayra Santos-Febres's novels *Sirena Selena vestida de pena* (2000) and *Fe en disfraz* (2009) highlight the fragmented ways that history is pieced together to alter identity formation by highlighting the role of embodied history. These two novels link Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Brazil, and the United States and traverse colonial and postcolonial constructions of citizenship to show the ways that Caribbean identities are non-linear and part of multiple locations that bodily analyses can illuminate. This final genre and location analysis links the analyses from chapters Two and Three to literary representations of perfomers in exile and negotiations of racial harmony.

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[80] Omise'eke Tinsley argues that it is impossible to engage current scholarship on the Global South "without taking stock of the erased stories of where heterogenous sexual formations came from" (4). Santos-Febres' texts narrate some of the erased histories of the past and forground the capacity of contemporary capitalist and globalization forces to erase select cultural productions upon their inception.

For this discussion, I would like to introduce the notion of "breaking time" to illuminate the Caribbean as a layered space and to draw reader's attention to instances of performative enunciation.[81] I introduce this concept to literally *break* down narratives of progress by privileging a narrative space that emphasizes the non-linear relationship of past to present and, in another way, to imagine the expressive break-dancing body as an articulation of layered histories. "Breaking time" speaks to the ways that linear narratives of progress and essentialized cultural identity are broken in the individual bodies that are responsible for carrying them. I am interested in the ways that bodies exemplify this broken time and how is it that bodily expressions, performances, and utterances, express multiple historical moments and identities simultaneously. In particular, I examine how these embodied expressions of broken time narratives suggest an alternative approach to questions of identity and culture in the postcolonial context.

The ways that b-girls and b-boys express cumulative and evolving histories can be likened to Walter Benjamin's concept of crystallized constellations—our era formed around a definite earlier one. In Benjamin's analysis he argues that history isn't a story to be narrated but rather an object of critical deconstruction (1940). Similarly, a close reading into the genealogy of movements articulated by break-dancers does not simply narrate the development of a hybrid dance form but also, when the form is dismantled, expresses multiple locations and histories. Our own present, says Benjamin, is constantly in progress and therefore the constellations—and the concept of history—are always shifting. His emphasis is on the constant mobile and intersecting nature of our conjoined past and present. In order to understand History, we can infer from Benjamin's analysis of Paul Klee's painting *Angelus Novus*, we as viewers must look at ourselves. We are the past, the "catastrophe" that the Angel observes in front of itself, we are the cumulative past colliding with the present. The viewer embodies this collision of past and present, just as break dance from its conception has interacted with social perils and inequalities from the colonial past to the segregated present. The iterations of past catastrophes are found in dancers' circular formations, drawing up community and exchanges of energy; they are also found in regionally specific moves that seek to locate bodies in space and time where they have been ignored or denied access.

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[81] Here I extend Homi Bhabha's notion of "enunciation" to the realm of performance. "All cultural statements and systems are constructed in the contradictory and ambivalent space of the enunciation," he argues. (55). Thus, it is essential to reflect on both subtle changes of iterations of self within discrete moments and also to imagine an evolution of self that is articulated through a performative enunciation, a moment of bodily pronouncement.

I privilege the bodily knowledge of break-dancers—break epistemology—who come to know their own bodies and their interactions with public space through rigorous training and through reconciling minoritarian status with globalizing potential, which Hip Hop culture embodies. To dance the stuttered and exaggerated movements that these dancers perform requires not only an investment in the politics of Hip Hop Culture but also a commitment to community formation through underground culture that honors the power of collective struggle. Ironically, this street dance has successfully traveled around the globe and has reached minoritarian youth cultures worldwide, thus, exemplifying Homi Bhabha's emphasis on local and global interdependence.[82] Halifu Osumare signals how this global trend travels through the physical experience of dance.

> Hip-hop culture's marketability actually lies in its impact at a visceral level. Despite global diversity, it is hip-hop's visceral

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[82] Homi Bhabha *The Location of Culture* (1994).

> *bodily* appeal that is responsible for its international ubiquity among today's youth. Its rhythmic power and its *embodied* philosophy are lodged in African aesthetics, that, at the basis of hip-hop culture, has been kneaded, cajoled and reformed throughout the Americas. (22, emphasis in original)

Osumare relies on the notion of connective marginalities, whereby youth cultures worldwide are able to make connections based on similar social experiences and to express themselves through Hip Hop Culture. Further, she engages the idea of the "intercultural body" to emphasize how "breakdance brings the global and the local closer than we usually imagine" (15) and to explain how "the dancing body is not simply a reflection of social and cultural dynamics, but, in fact, shapes social reality" (16). Since the primary purpose of this chapter is to illustrate the interaction between expressions of Caribbean identity and the embodiment of history, "Breaking" theory is particularly relevant for looking at Santos-Febres's fictional texts.

Santos-Febres's novels rely on performance and disguise as principal themes for engaging the documentation and repetition of history. The particular knowledges of b-girls/b-boys form a valuable lens for analyzing globalized intra-American dialogues. Osumare explains, "Hip-hop culture's Africanist aesthetics rest on self-expressive improvisation—freestyling rap orality and improvised b-boy dance—that mandates an automatic engagement of the self within hip-hop skills" (63). The intertextuality expressed through this cultural-artistic form thus lends itself to a theorization that relies on individual creative bodily expressions rather than on dichotomous—then-now, colonizer-colonized—definitions of power hierarchies and ancestries. In addition, Santos-

Febres draws attention to the moment of enunciation or bodily articulation, which is layered and betrays the impact of colliding contexts, histories, and individualities as articulated in Benjamin's "constellation." In the two novels discussed here, Santos-Febres's treatment of mobility and disguise (*disfraz*) reveals the intersection of globalization and postcolonial identity formation in the Caribbean and Caribbean diaspora.

Sirena Selena vestida de pena tells the story of a young mulatto *travestí*, Selena, who dreams of becoming a star and traveling to New York to perform and leave Puerto Rico behind. With the support of hir mentor and parental figure, Martha Divine, zhe travels to the Dominican Republic to escape the Puerto Rican laws against child labor and to present hir talents to a tourist audience at the upscale Hotel Colón.[83] In addition to the physical oceanic crossing within the Caribbean and the imagined crossing to the diasporic New York community, Santos-Febres explores racial, economic, gender, and sexuality crossings. She shows the ways that identities are part of continuous performances and fully contingent upon the context, thus, undermining the importance of location and historical moment. [84] By featuring transgender and transsexual protagonists, this novel foregrounds the constant negotiation between body, social context, and history.

In *Fe en disfraz*, Santos-Febres again leads readers through the Caribbean archipelago and its extended diaspora. Told principally through the voice of Martín Tirado, a historian hired from Puerto Rico to work in Chicago, this narrative illustrates the internalized histories and costuming that shape performances of identity. The novel weaves the stories of an antique dress from Brazil, principal object of study for Fe Verdejo, the primary investigator at the institution, with the evolution of the sexual relationship between the two protagonists and their parallel journeys to reconcile their ancestries with their present realities. A researcher of 17th and 18th century Latin America, Fe and readers become acquainted with Xica da Silva through Fe's investigations. The novel traverses the narrator's homeland of Puerto Rico, the United States, international academic conferences, and archival stories of emancipated Brazilian female slaves.

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[83] The original text in Spanish alternates between gender pronouns throughout. I have translated the gendered pronouns as neutral ("hir" and "zhe") throughout my analysis to capture the ambiguity expressed in the original. See Kate Bornstein's *My gender workbook* (1998) who proposes alternative pronouns.

[84] My use of the term "performance" here carries with it the weight of both theatrical performance as well as Judith Butler's theorization of gender and identity performitivity.

The two texts navigate the space of the Caribbean and feature characters that encourage readers to question the formation of embodied diasporic and gender identities. Throughout my analysis I maintain the original Spanish "disfraz" to not only sustain the multiple meanings held within that one text's title, but also to emphasize the productive interaction of meanings held within this term. Not only a simple physical costuming, *disfraz* signals both a disguise and a covering of layers of racialized gender and sexuality that permeate both texts.

***Mobilidad*: Mobility**

Dancers play with exaggerated bodily control to emphasize the ways that bodies are both oppressed and agential. The dancer's physical body can at once be allowed or denied physical entrance into a space and then can exercise agency over individual bodily responses. Santos-Febres's texts emphasize bodily responses and allow readers intimate insight into the processes that her protagonists undergo while making decisions regarding their performances of self. The moment of performative enunciation is where the body expresses the colliding constellations of pasts and presents; a hip-swiveling *salsa*-inflected turn draws upon the artistic exchanges throughout the Caribbean and U.S. while the moment of enactment makes salient the instability of the present. Osumare's research engages the recent trend in academia to include "the body" in cultural studies and the centrality of dance to the Africanist aesthetic. "Dance has been historically important in enabling African descendants actually to make visible, through the body, processes of political, cultural, and historical arenas that are obviously drawn from the dancer's (and choreographer's) own place within these fields of social enactment…The individual texts embedded within these moment-by-moment improvisatory dances become crucial to hip-hop's mapped discourse across the globe" (52). Throughout history, individual and collective bodies have learned to comply with social standards, to reinforce dominant cultures, and to be conscious of their body's formations or to face the consequences of their rebellion.

The disguises worn and altered by the protagonists reflect the embedded "texts" of social roles, discrimination, empowerment, and future potential. Bodily expression, as a politicized method for establishing visibility within social contexts that tend to look past minority or deviant identities, is an important point of theorization for rethinking globalization in the Caribbean. The ever-present tension of visibility-invisibility makes expressions of self and, by extension, expressions of nation multifaceted in their moment of enunciation. At times wishing to go unseen by the critical and threatening eye of those around her, Martha, for example, reflects on her femininity with a critical voice that reminds readers of the social standards that inform her ability to move throughout society as a transsexual woman. The bodily vocabulary of break-dancers illustrates a bodily self-consciousness useful for understanding layered identities.

The both blatant and subtle theme of context-based costuming that persists in both novels gives insight into the complexities of identity formation and the shifting capacities of the body. Whereas Fe maintains a strict professional costume, closed demeanor, and private persona at work and in Chicago, when she is doing research in Brazil she is more open and embraces her role as an apprentice as she learns the story of Xica da Silva and her dress. Beyond the simple notion of taking off her work suit and donning the antique dress to alter her outside costume, Fe's body recollects the clashing past and present of mulatta women in the Americas. These additions and removals of costumes mimic the transitions from the basic top-rock default break-dance step to headspins and freezes. Layered upon the bodies are both linens and socialization processes. The travel of Xica da Silva's dress from Brazil to Chicago can be read as an extension of the evolution of Brazil's *capoeira* to expressions of break. Putting the body into a centuries-old costume is reflected by b-girls/b-boys who put their bodies into centuries-old contortions. Juana Rodriguez comments that "in a world obsessed with travel and migration, some people are denied mobility altogether." *Sirena Selena* emphasizes these bodily crossings through artistic and gender performances as well as through the physical and fantastical travels made by Sirena and Martha, while *Fe en disfraz* traces the movement of slavery's impact through the travels of a dress, Fe's *disfraz.* The two texts draw upon various crossings and fantasies of migration to illustrate the evolution of mobility of bodies and histories.

The particular disciplining that break-dance requires illustrates the tension between self-discipline and socially-imposed-discipline: if one requires dancers to rehearse movements and play with their bodies to achieve mastery of a variety of moments, the other prohibits certain bodily freedoms, access to space, or adequate representation. The bodily control exhibited by b-girls and b-boys offers a physical reminder of this disciplining. A dancer who drops to the ground and holds her/himself afloat, hovering above the ground not only displays extreme strength and balance but also embodies the dichotomy of presence/absence: in one instant this same dancer can be throwing his/her arms open and inviting confrontation and in another hovering so near to the ground that s/he reminds spectators of the invisibilizing effect of social constructions. As these dancing bodies learn to adapt to different spaces they form networks and communities, they rely on audiences and become adept in responding to evolving locales.

The Caribbean is a site of multiple histories, oceanic crossings, and perpetual negotiations with globalizing forces. It is a space where bodies travel by slave ship, raft, airplane, and, now, through digitized images and multimedia texts.[85] It can be conceived of as a space of crosscurrents where rhythms, tides, and intellectual traditions come into contact with one another. Gabiola argues that, "given the movement of the subject out of the island, migration, exile, and diaspora, …the traditional conceptualization of the nation and of the *gran familia puertorriqueña* that has been traditionally acclaimed as a central symbol of national identity" (78) has been disrupted. The separate island entities and diasporic communities form part of a collective archipelago that must constantly reconcile border crossing with nationalism, and colonialism with narratives of nation-formation. Similarly, break-bodies must contend with access to space and learn to manipulate their bodies to increase mobility.

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[85] Paul Gilroy discusses the importance of the ship as a conduit of Pan-African communication and suggests that the Atlantic Ocean be conceived of as "one single, complex unit of analysis" (15, 1996).

Different because of her queerness, Martha, in *Sirena Selena*, constantly evaluates her performances of self as they differ based on her locale. She exemplifies the process of traveling from one island to another as she and Selena travel from Puerto Rico to the Dominican Republic. Stuart Hall theorizes the construction of "difference" in the colonial context to engage modernity and productions of Culture. "'Difference'" he explains, "has been marked, how it is then interpreted is a constant and recurring preoccupation in the representation of people who are racially and ethnically different from the majority population. Difference signifies. It 'speaks'" (230). Like the claims to space that b-boys/b-girls must negotiate on different street corners, Martha knows that she must alter her performance based on her location. It is precisely because she is traveling, first, to what she deems a subordinate island, and, second, out of her familiar commercial neighborhood, that readers begin to see the concrete correlation between embodiment and context. At El Danubio Azul, her drag bar in Puerto Rico, Martha feels a certain level of comfort in her community; however, once she and Selena board the airplane she becomes acutely aware of her difference and dreads being identified as an impostor. "Oh sí, su cuerpo, el disfraz que era su cuerpo. Temblaba de tan solo pensar que alguien, en pleno take-off, la señalara con el dedo y gritara: 'Miren eso. Eso no es una mujer'. Y que viraran el avión para bajarla a empujones por la puerta de abordaje, tirándole las maletas al piso" ("Oh, yes, her body, the disguise that was her body. She trembled at the mere thought that someone, in the middle of take-off, would point her out and shout: 'Look at that. That is not a woman.' And they would turn the airplane around to shove her out the cabin door, throwing her luggage onto the floor," 18). She goes on to list all of the wigs and make-up that, if her suitcase were searched, would give her performance away and lead to her humiliation. Also, she must maintain her superior position as a Puerto Rican as she makes her way around the neighboring Dominican Republic; one way this superiority can be expressed through her flawless performance as an elegant woman. However, the transitory space of the airplane frightens her as she is forced to maneuver in a new context and carry the embodied knowledge of her Otherness as it changes in each moment of enunciation.

In theorizing liminal spaces, Bhabha writes that:

> [I]n-between the designations of identity, becomes the process of symbolic interaction, the connective tissues that construct the difference between upper and lower, black and white. The hither and thither of the stairwell, the temporal movement and passage that it allows, prevents identities at either end of it from settling into primordial polarities. This interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed identity. (5)

The stairwell or, in this instance, the airplane, are places where one moves through time and space and is made to recognize the multiple identities negotiated within one's self. These identities are then performed as expressions written on the body.[86] Bhabha's emphasis on "the connective tissues" that assemble the differences between varying identities highlights the possibility of imagining a cellular or *tissual* change. If it is the body that is impacted by temporal and physical movement, then examinations of iterations of self in multiple instances of enunciation can help bring mass, or physical weight, into studies of cultural hybridity.

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[86] In *Gender Trouble* (1990) Judith Butler theorizes the notion of "performitivity". I base my discussion in her important ideas about repeated acts reifying gender and identity categories. And, it is a play on Jeanette Winterson's *Written on the Body* (1994) a novel whose narrator is nameless and genderless and causes discomfort in readers accustomed to fixed identity categories.

Martha is in constant negotiation with her assumed, evolving, and layered identities. She is highly aware that her national and gender identities are shaped by the historical moment and social contexts she finds herself in and she must reconcile the colliding constellations simultaneously. In an internal monologue she reflects on her transition from one location to another and her path to success. “Así como tú ahora, niña, que estás en la punta de tu cenit. Yo era su decente mujercita cuando venía a Puerto Rico desde Honduras” (“Just like you now, child, on the brink of your meridian. I was his well-behaved young wife when I came to Puerto Rico from Honduras,” 8). Martha recalls her husband and the ways that she developed her business skills to leave Honduras and become what she is at present: a woman and a businessperson. In multiple instances the novel emphasizes the relationship of global capitalism to the experience and expression of identities. Further, Martha remarks that it was only through the Venezuelan market that she was able to initiate her surgical sex-change process. “Por allá me hice mi nariz. Aproveché para inyectarme silicon en los labios de tan barata que me salió” (“Over there is where I had my nose done. I took advantage and had silicon implanted in my lips, it was so cheap,” 73). She acknowledges the beauty market and her own role in promoting such industries and her privileged ability to cross into a new space in order to alter her body, her identity. It is through increased financial resources that Martha dreams of completing her sex-change surgery and it is only as a rich performer that Selena can fulfill hir dream of leaving the islands. The economics involved in access to mobility are laid bare through the (in)ability of Martha and Selena to express their gender identities.[87]

The competitive and sometimes contentious relationships between the Caribbean islands are expressed through the protagonists' struggles to reconcile their national and gender identities. Martha arranges an audition in the Dominican Republic because of the association it has with (sex) tourism and more lenient regulations of underage workers. While pleased with her business connections at an expensive hotel, her disdain for the island is also a reflection of her own insecurity within the global context of Puerto Rico's continued colonial status. When reproducing a stable national image requires standing behind a politics of whitening and upholding strict gender dichotomies those who cannot follow the rules find ways to make space for themselves. Sometimes this space is reclaimed through small performative enunciations of self and in other instances it is taken through oceanic crossings. Selena's story and aspirations to be a famous star in New York clearly link hir notions of self to the power of hir body and economic independence. The repeated iterations of the relationship of Caribbean bodies to sexuality form a clear association between global sex tourism and identity formation impacted by mobile bodies.

Selena as a naïve *ahijada*—adopted daughter—of Martha does not question the ingrained notion of the neighboring Dominican Republic as inferior. Part of hir socialization has been precisely that which formed her concept of success—the New York star—and *puertoricanness*, including femininity:

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[87] The tensions confronted through the negotiations within commercialized and underground Hip Hop highlight racialized body's access to economic and cultural capital. One of the principal debates between these two iterations of Hip Hop as a cultural form revolves around the ways that racialized bodies have confronted discriminatory practices by either imitating an exaggerated aesthetic of economic power or embodying a space of underground counterculture. The space at the intersection of these two tendencies and the productive debate borne out of this tension provides a productive point of theorization for the research questions explored throughout this project.

> A Selena el glamour siempre le sentía bien. No sabía ella que había millonarios así en la República Dominicana. En las noticias solo hablaba de dominicanos fugados en yola, carcomidos por la sal, o despezcuezados por los tiburones, flotando panza arriba por el estrecho de la Mona. No sabía ella de los acres y acres de azúcar que habían pagado por la humilde estancia de su anfitrón. No sabía de los haitianos tirados a las calderas para lograr la consistencia perfecta del melão de caña.
>
> Glamour always felt good to Selena. She didn't know that there were millionaires in the Dominican Republic. In the news they only spoke of Dominicans fleeing in *yolas*, rotting in the sea salt, devoured by sharks, floating belly-up in the Mona Straight. She didn't know that the acres and acres of sugar cane had paid for her host's countryhome. She didn't know of the Haitians slaving over the sugar cauldrons in order to achieve the perfect consistency of melted sugar. 109

While Selena is very familiar with the ways that orphaned youth and *travestís* are treated in Puerto Rico, and dreams of the glamorous lifestyles of New Yorkers, zhe is unaware of the complex history of hir new potential Dominican employer. What links these three locations is Selena's body—a body valued for its sexuality and performative capacities.

Santos-Febres's fiction takes readers through a queer chronology and across fluid borders. This text aggressively asserts that we must develop a new way of knowing and of acknowledging histories; I propose that b-girls' and b-boys' evolving repertoire of movements embody what Santos-Febres's protagonists convey. Selena's body on display, tanning at the hotel pool and auditioning at the (ironically named) Hotel Colón, links bodies to globalization. As a gender-queer person, Selena struggles to both be seen as the elegant and sexy young female that zhe is, and also to cover hir body with these same costumes that might allow hir to pass unnoticed as a young female. Santos-Febres's texts take as a principal concern the illustration of the different ways that gender, sexuality, and racial minorities take up or are denied space. She highlights the performative nature of gender and the physical betrayal of bodies. Martha often remarks on her perfect "tetitas" and her delicate manners and is eager to make the full transition to womanhood through surgery. Selena, however, refuses dichotomous sex categories. Zhe has had no operations but rather enhances hir femininity through dress, make-up, and manners. The detailed descriptions of the various characters' bodies emphasize the spectrum of gender.[88] "Los bucles perfumados, la cara perfectamente hecha en tonos malva-coral, el cuerpito menudo, la tez bronceada y cremosa, el pechito, los hombritos, las caderitas y, en medio de aquella menudencia, una verga suculenta, ancha como un reptil de agua, ancha y espesa, en el mismo medio de toda aquella fragilidad" ("Hir lightly scented curls, hir face perfectly done-up in corral tones, hir little body, hir skin tanned and creamy, hir chest, hir narrow shoulders, hir small hips and, in the middle of all that tiny-ness, a succulent joust, thick like a water reptile, thick and heavy, in the middle of all of that fragility," 220). The seeming fragility of femininity, described in the diminutive "-ito", is contrasted with Selena's thick reptile-like penis, which disrupts the "*fragilidad*" of the rest of hir body. This juxtaposition draws attention to racialized gender and sex boundaries and the ability of individuals to produce iterations of identity that are seemingly contradictory. It is within the space of this contradiction that b-girls and b-boys incite reflection and disrupt borders. Their performances constantly engage public space and rely on movements that both display and diminish their bodies. Their movements are rehearsed and informed by decades-old practices of self-defense and signals of community. Their bodies form part of an overlooked minority; the knowledge that informed early dancers came from a place of contradiction.

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[88] See Kate Bornstein's *My gender workbook* which talks about gender as a spectrum.

Being accepted or being denied mobility and visibility seems to depend on what one holds in one's body and how one fashions performances of these knowledges. In a space like the Caribbean, characterized by its historical layers, the emphasis on these bodily choices is particularly poignant. Santos-Febres's protagonists highlight the multiple tensions present in negotiating the archipelago, its place in historical narratives, and embodied accounts of identity. The novel plays with globalized notions of power and wealth as they are contrasted with Selena's life on the streets and "natural" singing talents. The metaphor of the voice, of a speaking and singing voice to be heard across oceans, is powerful in exposing the negative impact of globalization with its accompanying selective silencing and invisibilization. While language is often theorized as the privileged place for connecting or excluding identities, language does not exist except as a presence within a body and located in a social context. A speaking or singing voice without the context of its body is only sound; the vessel which produces and expresses these sounds is equally responsible for conveying meaning. In the case of Selena, hir powerful singing voice gains additional impact precisely because of the fragile and studied performance of racialized femininity.

Although zhe had many sexual experiences prior to the trip to the Dominican Republic, it was not through these experiences that Selena realizes the power of hir combined voice, body, and identity. Dixon-Gottschild and Osumare, along with many Hip-Hop scholars, articulate the legacy of transmitting energy through creative expression as central to the Africanist aesthetic. Racialized sexuality forms a principal component of Santos-Febres's texts, which she uses as messy, sensual, emotive, and bodily expressions to connect her protagonists's stories and to make historical connections. With their bodies constantly on display, b-boys and b-girls risk falling under a sexualizing gaze. Dance scholars have debated the hyper-sexualization of moving bodies as they force audience members to confront their own (dis)comforts with isolations, undulations, and exaggerated bodily control.[89] As a visually rich form of artistic expression, Hip Hop culture draws the eye to space both through graffiti and moving bodies. The clothing of b-boys and b-girls often hides the contours of dancer's bodies, while the movements themselves include popping and locking that emphasize isolated body parts and draw attention to subtleties. These dancers are highly aware of the power of their bodies as forces moving through gravity as well as racialized objects which impact the space around them.

It is through explicit sexuality that Hugo, the owner of Hotel Colón, begins to express his own repressed ingrained histories. After Selena's audition in the Hotel, he invites hir to be his special guest performer at a private house party. It is in this context, the wealthy Dominican's home, that Santos-Febres links translocal queer sexualities. Martha's explicit targeting of the Hotel Colón reflects the growing queer sex-tourism present in the Caribbean and other locations in the Global South. In *Feminist and Queer Performance* (2009), Sue-Ellen Case discusses the evolution of feminism and performance on the global stage. She recognizes gay tourism as a platform for queer travelers to create a space for themselves; however, she critiques this practice that, in some ways, resembles early colonial exotification of "foreign" spaces. She emphasizes the importance of gendering studies of globalization arguing that "[g]ay sex tourism both creates a queer global space but also produces an exotification of Other territories where (predominantly) gay travelers can take advantage of the location to 'transgress'" (87). In this expression of neocolonialism, the queer traveler 'invades' the space of the racialized 'other' and feels free to express him/herself freely because of the economic freedom s/he exercises. The complex relationship between the Caribbean islands, as in Martha and Selena's crossing to the Dominican Republic, and globalization, as in the U.S-centric global economy, is articulated through the queer and transgressive desires within the local contexts highlighted in the novel.[90] Though Santos-Febres also includes narratives of European sex-tourists, it is through the intimate relationships established among the protagonists that she expresses translocal globalization.

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[89] See Jane Desmond "Embodying Difference: Issues in Dance and Cultural Studies" (1994), Susan Leigh Foster *Choreographing Gender* (1996), and Judith Lynne Hanna "Dance and Sexuality: Many Moves" (2010).

The sado-masochistic sexual relationship that Fe and Martín develop moves readers to imagine a multiplicity of bodily experiences and expressions. *Fe en disfraz*, Santos-Febres's exploration of erotica, is a continuation of her engagement with sexual exploration through literature. The language that Martín uses to describe his desire for Fe and his carnal response to her again reminds us of the power of vocabulary to reaffirm misogyny and female objectification and to express embodiment. In his obsessive and possessed odes to her, the narrator expresses his embodied historical legacy. "Vivo callado, embebido en los mudos designios de la Historia. Y ahora lo confirmo: a Fe le gustamos así, pálidos, abstraídos, con el hambre escondida del macho que no es Alfa entre los machos. Esa maldita hambre de cazador frustrado y esa curiosidad" ("I live in silence, embedded in muted designs of History. And now I confirm it: Fe likes us like this, pale, withdrawn, with the hunger hidden of he who is not Alpha among the men. That damned hunger of a frustrated hunter and a curiosity," 17). As a "*cazador frustrado*" the narrator reaffirms his position as the "hunter," the man who should be tracking and possessing the prey, in this instance Fe. Santos-Febres highlights the hunter/hunted dichotomy and inverts the roles of dominance in Fe and Martín's romantic affair. It is Fe who likes Martín withdrawn, pale, and silenced. Within this new social context of the present, Martín sees himself within the matrix of coloniality in which he negotiates his masculinity, race, and nationality. He brings his own *palidez* and Puerto Rican identity to his approximation of Fe who, in turn, brings her deep personal connection to the slave women of her narratives. Their sexual encounters are moments of discovery, reenactment, and negotiation of translocal identity formations.

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[90] See Jacqui Alexander's *Pedagogies of Crossing* (2005) for further discussion of the impact of globalization on Caribbean feminism.

The novel underscores another aspect to (im)mobility and the formation of cultural identities through the travels of Fe's object of study, the dress of Xica da Silva. Fe's principal research project is to reconstruct the narratives of freed slave-women; this investigation leads her to many texts and to the transformative costume of Xica. Throughout the novel Fe yearns to escape. She wants to be taken from her body, to leave the place that she is in. Martín wants to take Fe away, he wants to "set her free," so to speak. What he doesn't realize is that she carries a historical legacy within her; the

Benjaminian “catastrophe” of the past is always present in each crystallized constellation, each body. Thus, what she wants to escape from is actually a part of her body. The seeming contradiction of pleasure and escape, of seduction and manipulation, does not form an inherent opposition within Fe, rather, it is her constant state of being; it is her complex identity informed by centuries of ancestors across the Americas and Africa. “Hasta que olvidemos juntos quiénes hemos sido. Abandonarse es, a veces, la única manera de comenzar” (Until we collectively forget who we have been. Letting one’s self go is, at times, the only way to begin,” 115). A tale of beginnings and endings and of circular embodied histories, the novel ends with this advice for others who are attempting to reconcile their embodied histories with their present moments.

The idea that one must let go, *abandonarse*, in order to truly begin collectively forgetting is mirrored in the circular “cipher” of ideas and knowledges that inspires Hip Hop culture.[91] Breaking with a collective past characterized by slavery and colonialism, “*abandonarse”* here is bodily—allowing inversions, vulnerabilities, and strengths to construct a narrative of the present. The tension between gravity and bodily force is embodied as dancers hover over the floor balanced on their arms, with legs balancing in the air. Being pulled down to the ground and yet throwing one’s legs, movement provides a powerful embodied metaphor for the ways bodies modify historical and environmental contexts. It takes great strength to sustain one’s self hovering above the ground and it requires great vulnerability to expose one’s legs to the air. Strength and vulnerability, taking space and going unseen, the dancing body highlights these perpetual negotiations.

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[91] As discussed in Chapter One, the cipher is the fifth element of Hip Hop and is described as the circular exchange of ideas and creativity that keeps the Culture alive and engaged.

Abandonarse in break-dance is an over-saturation of clashing constellations where one becomes aware of the mobility and instantaneity of past and present; letting go of all that each movement represents, and all that each body feels responsible for, creates an opportunity for change and for collective forgetting.

The novel traces Fe's process of letting go and relies on her strengths and vulnerabilities to break free from a fixed past and to embody a possible collective reworking. It is Fe who firsts enunciates the explicit relationship between her and the emancipated slave women of the archival documents she researches. Martín proposes including images of the slave women to enhance Fe's academic presentation and is surprised to hear from Fe that there are no actual images of these women. While she insists that it will not be too difficult for the audience members to imagine what women from that time might look like, Martín naively inquires after them. "A quiénes se habrían parecido esas mujeres?" he asks, "¿No es obvio, Martín?" She responds, "Se parecen a mí" ("What would these women have looked like? . . . Isn't it obvious, Martin? . . They look like me," 53). Fe makes explicit what readers could have long before imagined. Martín's desire for her and abundant sexual expressions throughout the novel make the racialized colonial-period roles of aggressor and objectified easy to map onto their bodies. Thus, Santos-Febres reveals the evolutionary process Martín and Fe undergo to discover their personal connections to this history. Through their sexual encounters and archival research they come to understand the ways that they each embody their distinct histories.

Colonial legacies of racialized power hierarchies and physical bodily exchanges illustrate the ways that History travels: through repetitions of social roles and through exchanges of bodily fluids. Martín narrates Fe's research trip to the diamond territory of Brazil and the archival riches she found there, including Xica da Silva's dress. In the next phrase he comments on Fe herself, "la sangre de Fe sabía a minerales derretidos. Acabábamos de hacer el amor" ("Fe's blood tasted of melted minerals. We had just made love," 24). Similar to the minerals that were excavated from the mines and rivers in Xica da Silva's home territory of Northwestern Brazil, Fe's blood is like a molten mix of precious gems. Like the explorers and miners who sifted through rivers and exploited hillsides, Martín consumes Fe's blood as a conqueror.

Beyond seeing her as only an exotified sex object, Martín identifies both Fe and himself as slaves. "Todas, Fe, y yo, esclavo de sus esclavas y de mi deseo," ("All, Fe and I, slave to her slaves and to my desire" 45). He is a slave to his desire for her and she is a slave carrying the history in her body of the slave-women before her. Because of the association of Fe to the *disfraz* of Xica da Silva, the novel inspires readers to question the rigidity of national boundaries. Xica da Silva, the manipulative, hypersexual, and brilliant slave-woman is mapped onto Fe's body as she seduces Martín through her silence, confidence, and markers of racialized sexuality. Linking Fe's body to the narratives of African slave women of the 18th century emphasizes the ways that national and postcolonial status are *read* onto bodies. Rather than work with this historical connection as an assumption, Santos-Febres makes explicit the direct relationship of Fe the researcher to Xica da Silva the ex-slave. These corporeal readings rely on gender, class, and racial markers and, when contradictory to dominant national narratives, problematize the construction of homogenous national citizens and rigid borders. Fe, unattached to any particular nation but clearly linked to the ancestry of Xica da Silva, problematizes the construction of national boundaries and distinct racial lineages. Like the dress, fabricated in Portugal and imported to Brazil in the 18th century, Fe's identity is a partial fabrication and one that has been exported across the Americas.

It is through the body and movement that break-dancers interact with their present and engage with a genealogy of movement that reflects the trans-Atlantic African slave trade and diaspora within the Americas throughout history. Performing movements borrowed from mid twentieth-century blackface minstrelsy and impacted by late twentieth-century Cuban mambo these dancers hold within their bodies an evolution of movement and history. After his first sexual encounter with Fe, Martín begins to understand the hidden history through his own bodily experience. "Sentí miedo y vergüenza. Había sido yo el penetrado, el desnudo" ("I felt fear and shame. I had been the penetrated one, the naked one," 59).[92] He emphasizes the shame he feels in being the penetrated one, the one who was completely naked in front of his "penetrator." In addition to this reversal of power, his bodily experiences include domination, pain, and excitement simultaneously. As the starting point for understanding one's self and the limitations of the world around, the dancing body simultaneously sustains the reality of the present body and the learned and inherited legacies of the past.

Fe's relationship to the lineage of powerful emancipated slaves ceases to be exclusively connected to her *disfraz*; the genealogy of her ancestry is expressed through her body. After reading the archival narratives of her study and becoming infatuated with Fe, Martín makes a concrete connection between the emancipated slaves and his boss: "La estudié entera, sin tocarla. Ese era el rito al que me convocaba su presencia. Después, escondido e imperceptible, como solo sabemos serlo los historiadores, la leía, desdoblada bajo los nombres de sus ancestros femeninos escogidos—Xica, Petrona, Mariana" ("I studied her entire body, without touching her. This was the ritual that her presence provoked. After, hidden and imperceptible, as only we historians know how, I read her, folded within the names of her chosen feminine ancestors—Xica, Petrona, Mariana," 45). He reflects on his specialized training as a historian to be able to "read" her body, to see the marks of her past and her ancestral foremothers. He adds her name to a list of freed slave-women and is proud of his ability to comprehend her place within this lineage. The explicit reference to his training as a historian, and thus his ability to read her, reaffirms the powerful role of dominant narratives as they shape our "readings" and the incredible potential and impact of one individual body. He has been trained in his discipline and socialized to read Fe through a racialized and gendered lens. By putting into dialogue the academic and disciplinary training of Martín as a historian and the physical and artistic training of break-dancers we create an alternative tool for approaching what it means to "study" bodies. Like deejays who blend together beats from across the globe and from multiple historical moments, b-girls and b-boys use their bodies to reflect and respond to contemporary and historical racial, gender, and social hierarchies.

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[92] Martín's preoccupation with being penetrated can be likened to de Souza's comments on Xica da Silva as the penetrator in the context of the film text. See discussion in Chapter Three.

"Break" gives us insight into broken histories, scarred bodies, and improvisational identities and shows the negotiations of identity in moments of enunciation in multiple contexts. The protagonists attempt to piece together a comprehensive history that they find is most fully accessible through engaging with their physical bodies. Break-dancers teach us the challenges of negotiating ability and racialized access to space, and articulate intra-generational histories as they embody movements learned in public spaces and through transnational conversations.

The "translocal" problematic present in these two texts allows readers to engage with cultural identity beyond theorizations of race, gender, and location. Citing Santos-Febres's dissertation, Juana Rodríguez engages the concept of "translocality" as a tool for reflecting "upon conditions of circular migration. It differs from hybridity or oppositional consciousness in that it focuses on the problems of location and displacement within multinational contexts. Translocality applies to texts that respond to multiple discursive fields of racial, class, national, gender and sexual identities" (216). It is through the real and imaginary travels of the protagonists that we see the problematic of location and displacement within multinational contexts. Through Martha's encounter with the passage to the Dominican Republic and Martín's encounter with the 18th century slave-narratives, the protagonists are forced to recognize the parts of themselves where the internalized colonial past and patriarchal relations of power reside. As readers, we understand these moments of discovery upon the instance of enunciation. These hierarchies of power are written throughout history and made plain in political and economic exchanges; however, it is only when they are expressed and experienced through the protagonists's bodies that they are able to understand the function of (hi)story telling and the embodiment of colonization.

Identidad Disfrazada: Identity in Disguise

The aesthetic of "cool," one of the key elements of break and Hip Hop culture, requires the display of control over a variety of difficult and complicated movements. To maintain one's composure even when doing a drop—a fall to the floor that can appear unintentional—means that one has sustained the appearance of coolness. Thinking through the Africanist aesthetic of break-epistemology means privileging knowledges that are expressed through broken and remixed rhythms and embodiments of the colonial legacy of slavery. Brenda Dixon-Gottschild (1996) investigates the "Africanist aesthetic" as an interdisciplinary researcher on the legacy of the African diaspora in the U.S. Her definition is located within individual expressions of self and privileges bodily epistemologies. Borrowing from her theorization, Osumare defines the Africanist aesthetic as "a processual mode of expressivity that privileges the negotiation of the self in the moment through a complex use of rhythmic timing, verbal or nonverbal rhetorical strategies, and multiple layers of meaning that draw from its socio-cultural context and its audience" (12). Santos-Febres's narratives and rhetorical devices weave together just such intersectional identities without forfeiting the complex multi-layered context of the Caribbean illuminated by the Africanist aesthetic.

The emphasis on multitextuality and negotiations of self are important concepts for the key elements of this analysis of disguised identities. Osumare explains that "connection to the self does not happen in a vacuum; rather it occurs in the context of inherited traditions, values, and specific ancestors. 'Representing' is the process of taking on the mantle from the past in the present moment. It also connotes responsibility to one's present context—crew, family, and community" (27). The following section engages these notions of self-representation and contextual and processual expressivity.

Selena's body is not only a canvas on which to paint hir gender with the creams and rouges of feminizing make-up, but is also a racialized "object" that simultaneously expresses hir multiply layered identities. In hir performances of racialized femininity, Selena is ever conscious of the borders zhe is crossing along the gender spectrum. Hir capacity to discipline hir body into this performance means that even when zhe stumbles, zhe is able to pull it off as if it were all controlled and studied. Martha carefully helps Selena prepare for the audition in Santo Domingo, applying every layer of make-up artfully, the perfumes subtely, and the decorative jewelry meticulously:

> Cuando Sirena salió por la puerta de su habitación, a las seis menos cuarto exactamente, era la viva imagen de una diosa. Cada paso, cuidadosamente estudiado, emanaba famas de bolerista consumada. Iba seductora, tranquila, con la cabeza coronada por un moño de bucles negros, perfectos, y el rostro enmarcado por dos buscanovios que caían hasta la mitad de las mejillas.
>
> When Selena exited through the door of hir room, at five-forty-five exactly, zhe was the living image of a goddess. Each step, carefully studied, emanated famous bolero-singers. Zhe was seductive, calm, with hir head decorated by a crown of black curls, perfect, and hir face framed by two earrings that fell half-way down hir cheecks. 49

The strict training of hir body to excel in this performance of femininity reflects not only hir gender identity but also the socialization of identity norms. The over-studied movements and gestures not only earn hir access to a heterocentric logic, but indicate the highly oppressive environment zhe struggles to be a part of.

Sirena Selena transitions from emphases on performances of gender to focusing on iterations of national identity and global marginalities. Just as b-girls and b-boys improvise and manipulate their bodies depending on their location and context, the exaggeration or subtlety of Selena's performances illustrate hir evolution as a Caribbean citizen. Carla Freeman argues that a feminist re-conception of the global would understand local practices not merely as the effects of the global, or as a contradiction to it, but as constitutive of it. This means that gender would be a constituent of the global, rather than one part of its racialized 'other' (cited in Case, 87). In this way, Selena's complex performance of gender forces readers to also question their notions of *puertorricanness*. Hir performances are part of a global complex that informs and is informed by hir local context.

The narration of Selena's self-formation is recounted in a fragmented, non-linear narrative where manifestations of hir childhood are intertwined with hir reflections on the present moment. Hir blended narratives lead readers on a broken evolution of disguises and identity struggles. Selena recalls hir childhood and the bond that zhe had with hir grandmother. Zhe learned all of the old *boleros* from her and came to understand their social context as *puertorriqueños*. Hir grandmother tells hir of an old performer who would dress in black face and wonders if the television station were unable to find any actual black artists to perform. The two find this an unlikely possibility and a strange reality. "Claro, abuela," Selena comments, "si lo más que hay en este país son negros; músicos, bailarines" ("Of course, grandma, if what we most have here in this country are blacks; musicians, dancers," 149). After musing on Selena's observation, hir grandmother acknowledges hir insight, "Oye, pensándolo bien, yo creo que tú tienes razón. Quizás pintaban a Diplo porque no querían contratar a un negro actor. Las cosas en que tú te fijas, muchachito" ("Hey, now that I think of it, I think you are right. Maybe they painted

Diplo because they didn't want to hire a black actor. The things that you notice, my son," 149). As a young boy, Selena was attentive to the social status of hir family and to the values associated with hir country. The stories hir grandmother tells and the images zhe grows up consuming are expressed later through hir artistic performances.

Just as we can follow along as zhe describes the ritual of performinig femininity, hir conversation with hir grandmother establishes a direct link between the United States and Puerto Rico with this reference to blackface television. During the first half of the twentieth-century (post 1898 Spanish-American War) it would have been common for many of the cultural references through radio, newspaper, and television media in Puerto Rico to be filtered through the United States. Selena's observation that there is an abundance of black musicians and dancers in Puerto Rico points to hir attention to racial divisions and costuming of identity. Furthermore, this reference again connects hir embodied history to the larger cultural-historical context wherein zhe, as a racialized Puerto Rican, inherits the history of mixed Spanish and U.S. colonialisms and plantation slavery. It is precisely the complex iterations of self that Selena performs that illustrate the ways the local and the global are mutually constitutive and the ways that identity disguise, *disfraz*, is a prominent tactic for access to citizenship. Connecting these histories to the present day, Hip Hop culture is known for its referencing of multiple global localities. A dancing body that incorporates a front-back Charleston step and then transitions to a floor spin brings spectators on a journey through U.S. history and references not only African slavery and "black dance" from the first half of the century but also the influence of martial arts incorporated through the multiple diasporic communities present within the U.S.

In some ways Martín is *disfrazado*—disguised—as a colonizer in his new Midwestern U.S. context. Not only does he make constant references to Fe's blackness but also he is also conscious of his own racial and ethnic markers in his new context. Unlike Fe who, in some ways, is *disfrazada* as a professional, a black woman making a name for herself in a white male dominated society, Martín passes for white in the U.S. These iterations of self that the protagonists express emphasize incongruent access to mobility given their locale. "The Africanist aesthetic carries the potent methodology that challenges the superficiality of product over process, and thus provides the foundation for counter narratives to global commercial capital and localized oppression alike" (Osumare, 55). Santos-Febres makes visible the processual nature of identity development, negotiation, and performitivity. *Fe en disfraz* mixes explicit colonial and globalized relationships of power yet subtly encourages readers to question their dependence on strict identity categories. Santos-Febres's emphasis, in line with Benjamin's notion of history, focuses on deconstructing stories and determining how they came about rather than the end product or a seemingly fixed reality.

Martín explicitly comments on his personal relationship to his place of origin and the markers of his nationality. He associates his whiteness with vulnerability, in contrast to the emancipated slave women of Fe's study who are strong enough to endure slavery and cunning enough to alter their lives. "Me observo pálido, más pálido que nunca. De mi piel ha desparecido todo indicio de color. Distante sol del Caribe. Me encuentro de una blancura vulnerable, como de animal a punto de ser degollado. No me queda más que esa blancura que es mi herida" ("I am pale, more pale than ever. Any indication of color has disappeared from my skin. The distant sun of the Caribbean. I find myself a vulnerable white, like an animal about to be devoured. Nothing remains but this whiteness that is my wound," 20). Similar to the wounds of slavery that form the history of colonial nation building, Fe shows Martín "la herida que habita en [su] piel" ("The wound that lives in her skin," 20). They come to understand their individual embodied histories and relationships to race, nation, and colonialism through their sexual encounters. With the Chicago winter erasing all color from his skin, Martín feels an even greater distance from his Caribbean home where the sun bronzes his skin and where his ideas of racial identity are different than how he costumes himself in the U.S. While for Martín his mixed race, "mulatez," is something lost in the forgotten past, the details of Fe's blackness are constantly reaffirmed throughout the text and a principal point of attraction for Martín.

Santos-Febres's constant referencing and attention to racial distinctions in Puerto Rico, the United States, and the Dominican Republic make the relationship of performances of national identity to globalizing and colonial pasts ever present. Homi Bhabha theorizes the problematic relationship between recorded histories, access to space, and contentious narratives. He explains that, "when historical visibility has faded, when the present tense of testimony loses its power to arrest, then the displacements of memory and the indirections of art offer us the image of our psychic survival" (26). Art, through bodily expressions and literature is a way to recollect the past and make visible embodied histories. When theorizations and historical revisions fail, imagining a *broken* time where enunciations of the present are necessarily informed by a living past help us sustain our connection to contemporary negotiations of identity. And within this inverted space the constructions of identity and the evolution of disguise become transparent.

Pergamino de Piel: Skin Parchment

In these two novels the skin and the body are important places where memory and history are stored. Santos-Febres shows that, like the parchment used in pre-medieval times for recording (hi)stories, the skin of human bodies has its own potential for storing these tales. Just as Martín reads himself as differently racialized within the U.S. context from when he is in Puerto Rico, Selena and Martha are aware of the impact of the *polvos* they use to whiten their skin. Beyond the markers of race that skin often carries, it is stained, blemished, breathing, and in constant interaction with its environment. In addition to the powerful movements that b-girls and b-boys discipline their bodies to perform, the impact of their presence is augmented by their physical appearance and the stories their breathing skin tells.

The ways that Selena imagines hir own life trajectory and explores hir sexuality with Hugo shows the connections between hir socialization process and the ways that zhe interprets hir own body. The protagonists of the text are incessantly evaluating their physical development and their relationship to their social contexts. Written underneath the layers of make-up, the silky evening gowns, and the studied movements is the body of Selena. Hir layered identity highlights to readers the power of locality and performative enunciation, individual iterations of a complex constellation of histories and intra-American relationships.

Fe's body is literally scarred and drips with the sweat and blood of multiple histories, expressing the past in her present moment. Like the cracking whip of the slave-master's leather, the harness of the antique dress "bebió el líquido rojo, gota a gota, y se tensó, como si recobrara una esencia primigenia que hacía tiempo echaba de menos"

("He drank the red liquid, drop by drop, and he became tense, as if accessing a primeval essence that he had long missed," 25). Fe's palm is scratched open to expose her flesh and let spill her blood as she runs her hand across the intricacies of the dress during her first encounter with it. The interaction between the dress and her skin is one of permanent scarring, and reveals tensions between exposure and concealment. The dress cuts open her skin and exposes her flowing blood, the same blood that links Fe to her foremothers from Africa. Simultaneously, the enchanting dress hides her skin and covers her body. The *disfraz* highlights the complex interaction between an exterior to be read and a fleshy interior of embodied histories.

Mayra Santos-Febres's novels call into question the linear histories constructed over the past two centuries to tell the story of Afro-Caribbean and, specifically, Puerto Rican identities. Her texts assume the inherently intersectional nature of identity and perpetual movement that shapes their evolution. She emphasizes hybrid racial identities, transgressive sexualities, and the flow of bodily exchanges that impact formations of colonial and modern Caribbean citizens. These two novels guide readers on journies that provoke introspection regarding each reader's own historical formations and the catastrophe of her/his past. As readers, we surpass and reaffirm linguistic barriers, become aware of economic boundaries, and are struck by the ceaseless affects of colonial and, now, global encounters.

"Los ancestros son la duplicidad y la contradicción" ("ancestors are duplicity and contradiction," 25), Santos-Febres asserts in the epigraph. It is through our ancestors that we are tied to a historical time-line and it is our ancestries that make us part of the genealogy of historical constellations. The ways that we are connected to these ancestries and the ways that we are trained to express and interpret these histories are sometimes contradictory and always multifaceted. *Sirena Selena* and *Fe en disfraz* are examples of two artistic expressions that help us break chronological notions of time and question the interaction of History, globalization, and reconciling the Caribbean as a space of layered identities. Privileging knowledges of bodily mobility and costuming links theorizations of identity back to individual enunciations and reminds readers to recognize the body as site of incorporated knowledge.

CONCLUSIONS:
Re-Freaking

> To transgress I must move past boundaries, I must push against to go forward. Nothing changes in the world if no one is willing to make this movement. Everyone I know talks about border crossing these days, as though it were a simple matter not to stay in one's place, not to stand still. All this talk does nothing to change the reality that there are so many barriers blocking the paths that would lead us to any space of fulfillment that it is impossible to go forward if one lacks the will to transgress. And yet most of us seem to carry this will. It comes to us early in life, when we are really little beings and just learning a relationship to space. And we are taught over and over again that the only way to remain safe is to stay within fixed boundaries. Most often it's the boundary of family, community, nation. Before we face even these boundaries, it is the body that is the first site of limitation. The body is the boundary most of us are unable to move against to recover the dimensions of self lost in the process by which we are made to behold to fixed locations, by which we are bound to conformity against our will in many facets of our daily lives. The fact that the word *transgress* appears most often in discussions of the sexual is an indication that the body is the fundamental boundary of self. To transgress we must return to the body. (bell hooks, *Art on My Mind*, 133)

Theoretical inquiries into boundary formations and the forging of alternative collectives necessarily begin with individual subjectivity and, thus, the body. Thus, bell hook's insightful call for a return to the body merits quotation at length. She calls attention to the relationship between social change and physical and psychological movement. Her reflections acknowledge the impetus to incite change and yet the disciplining practices that limit the human imaginary early on. Fixing us into our safe barriered spaces are inherited oppressive ideologies and learned fear. Throughout this project I have shown the ways that the knowledges formed within Hip Hop offer a composite lens for reading performance texts that specifically seek to alter space and push boundaries of nation and self—attributed from the outside and from within the body. As an art form Hip Hop does not look to resolve the tensions of inside and outside nor does it desire to establish limiting characteristics that would produce a singular space for select "citizens." Rather, as an underground art form reaching new glocal (globalized-local) communities it thrives off of the genre transgressions and individual contributions that facilitate a collective movement. The texts discussed in the previous chapters exemplify a multiplicity of artists with the will to transgress. Rather than remaining within the strict boundaries of family, community, and nation to feel safe, these artists question the formation of such social groups and, at times, transgress those barriers to offer alternative formations.

The creative cipher that facilitates the exchange of intellectual and creative energies and knowledges links the texts highlighted within this study (and all of those that have touched them). There are many ways that this project could have been organized and, seemingly in opposition to the argument I have been making throughout, I have chosen to confine the texts to their national contexts. This decision made it so the distinct national contexts were simultaneously reified by my organization and broken down within the argument itself. Similarly, the texts highlighted within the chapters both referenced constructions of the nation and also made salient the artists' connections to a larger diasporic, historical, or global community. Not only has my organization maintained national boundaries but I have also upheld genre-based limitations. By limiting the focus within each country to a single genre I was able to attribute specific historical and socio-political moments to distinct nations; it also aided in making textual comparisons that relied on the form itself—be it live performance, film, or literature. In this concluding section, I would like to *re-freak* the texts and national boundaries discussed throughout the chapters to further highlight not only intertextuality but to reiterate the important ways that reading the African diaspora in the Americas necessitates a mash-up.

In this space I will first suggest an alternative organization of the texts previously analyzed that will help illuminate some of the principal themes discussed throughout this project. And, second, I will suggest the implications for this study at the intersection of the fields of Latin American, Gender, Queer, Performance, and Diaspora Studies.

Queer Artistry: Performing Family

As contemporary pop stars, Las Krudas, Antônia, and the protagonist Selena represent a spectrum of gendered performances of femininity and collectively, and offer insight into the formation of alternative kinship communities that form beyond national borders. More than sharing a collective dream of inciting social change through their art/music these protagonists/performers all embody the negotiations held within the tension of underground/commercial Hip Hop. Their performances show the ways that enunciating an "authentic" self in the eyes of the audience can both enhance their careers and also complicate the boundaries of nation. While commercial Hip Hop artists often rely heavily on posturing and the aesthetic of "cool" to craft a marketable persona, underground artists fight against the cooptation of their art/productions for globalized commercial production. The artists/protagonists discussed in these chapters negotiated the shape of their performances within multiple social and national circumstances.

The narrative trajectories of Las Krudas' performance in Santa Cruz, CA read alongside Mayra Santos-Febres' *Sirena Selena* illustrate not only the common threads of queer identities in the Hispanic Caribbean but also point to different ways of conceiving of self in the national imaginary but from mobile ground. For Selena, hir trip to the Dominican Republic made her acutely aware of hir own privilege as a Puerto Rican and also allowed hir firsthand to experience the impact of tourism and global capital in the Caribbean. Zhe is not only mobile in hir travels and dreams of becoming a star in New York, but also in the ways that zhe conceives of hir own identity. Las Krudas, in their path to arriving in the U.S. became increasingly aware of the global queer community and also were made to reflect on the important impact that Cuban-U.S relations have on their music's reception. For both performers the role of definition from without facilitates the evolution of their individual and collective identities. For Antônia the struggle they fought was simultaneously on the streets of the *favela* and also against dominant commercialized Hip Hop that continues to exclude female voices. The commercial Hip Hop nation is one that, for these protagonists, reluctantly accepted them as citizens and repeatedly questioned their authenticity based on their gender.

Selena and Las Krudas must contend with heteronormative constructions of nation; Antônia must contend with a masculinist construction of the Hip Hop nation. Not gendered as ideal reproducers of the nation these figures reclaim their (national) identity not through heterosexual unions and participating in heteronormative constructions of time. Rather Selena, Las Krudas, and Antônia construct queer kinship communities that seek to reproduce themselves through performances they see mirrored around them. Not fully recognized as citizens in their national contexts because of their gender or racial identity or sexuality within the formation of their own alternative collective. These figures must confront the ways that the exotification of their homelands and their connections to a global community inform their art. The ways that these artists are in dialogue with a larger global community not only contributes the powerful place from which they can speak and perform but also reconfigures the boundaries of nation. Forming part of a transnational queer/Hip Hop community makes their performances move beyond the confinements of nation. The musical blending and remixing held within the art of deejays derives much of its power from its capacity to traverse multiple national contexts and holds the experiences of many centuries of marginalized peoples.

Xica in *Disfraz*

Clearly inspired by the legacy of Chica da Silva as a powerful slave woman, Mayra Santos-Febres establishes a direct link between these two stories—Fe Verdejo the historian and Chica da Silva the freed slavewoman. Read alongside one another the parallel stories and engagement with contemporary discourse are easy to locate. Martín and João are each fascinated with the Other, the powerful black woman who seems to have some knowledge that he does not. While it is through their sexual relationships that Xica initiates her ascent to power and where Fe reconciles her past, thus gaining power over her present, it is actually the intellectual capacity that most fascinates these two male figures. Rather than purely exotifying or crafting erotic tales of sexual encounters, these two renditions of Chica's legacy highlight the essential role of the bodily intellect. Both protagonists are keenly aware of the impact of their bodies and have channeled this knowledge in order to establish a space for themselves and to invert the gender and racial hierarchies of their respective time periods—nearly four hundred years apart.

The movements repeated throughout the history of slavery and transformed and travelled throughout the Americas to be found in U.S. break-dance hold the weight of centuries of history. To read the relationship of Fe to Xica's dress is to read the relationship of the runnin' man to marginalized youth today. Legacies of oppression are held both within the fabric of the dress and the weight of the movement. If, at the end of Diegues' *Xica da Silva* we are meant to infer that Brazilian society will reproduce through the union on José the slave-owners' son and Xica and thus contribute to the miscegenated society that brings Brazil so much pride, then the ignorance expressed by Martín when he asks who the manumitted slave women might resemble only underscores the myopic view on race relations embodied in the white male. While for Fe it is obvious that she carries the legacy of Xica within her, for Martín each discovery that he makes with Fe-dressed-as-Xica is an epiphany. The consistent historical and theoretical emphasis on racial mixing is embodied in Martín, the historian, as he betrays his ideological bias and illustrates the effect such (hi)story-telling has on present day society. Similarly, the discipline, pain, discovery that breakers endure to fully express their movements comes from a bodily knowing, a place of understanding held within.

The explicit images of bodily pleasure and pain in both texts overtly represent the violent and gendered impact and legacy of slavery. Cacá Diegues' parodic rendition of Brazilian slavery criticizes theories of racial democracy that would romanticize slave relations to look like those between Xica and her masters, consenting and playful and thus productive of a society that was prone to racial mixing and racial democracy.

Santos-Febres' reference to this same historical figure embodied by a 21st century Puerto Rican researcher in the U.S. plainly presents the violent legacies of slavery that persist in the bodies of those who form part of that economy—and, in the Americas every body was impacted somehow. Far from attempting to establish a "pure" narrative or represent a single unified track relating past moments to present embodiments, Santos-Febres herself re-freaks historical narrative to create a layered track that incorporates voices and beats from many locales and subject positions.

Does Carmen Miranda Have *Tumbao*?

Two markers of Pan-Latinidad from two distinct regions and decades apart, Celia Cruz and Carmen Miranda are two fascinating cases for analyses of identity markers. How did they each maintain their national referent? How were their identities mediated in the U.S. and how did the large Latino population in the U.S assert its dominance through performance even at a time of rampant exotification of the Other? Both artists arrived in the United States with promises and hopes for achieving star status. Fulfilling the dream of Mayra Santos-Febres' protagonist Selena, these powerful vocalists and stage performers honed the spectacle of gender and ethnicity to demarcate national and community borders. While Miranda was recruited under F.D. Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy she first had to fashion herself as an authentic Brazilian in her second home (Brazil) and then as a Latina in the U.S. Though she spent the years of her early childhood in Brazil, her birth in Portugal and her Portuguese parents made her a suspicious emblem for a nation that prided itself on racial mixing and a shared colonial legacy. Unlike contemporary race theory that accounts for the mixed-race character of the

Iberian Peninsula, in the early twentieth-century Portuguese stood in for European, which stood in for white. Miranda used her vocal capacity and creative costuming skills to fashion an image of *brasileira* that accompanied the growing emphasis on samba (Afro-Brazilian roots) as the national music and dance of Brazil. She both artistically made reference to the African legacy present in her choreographies and costuming and appropriated this aesthetic for her own commercial success. It remains to be debated whether this appropriation imbues her with the *tumbao* articulated and embodied by Cruz or further contributes to an exotification of the Other even from within her own national standpoint.

The *tumbao* that inflects both Cruz's lyrics and performances directly links her to the African legacy in Cuba, and in the U.S. marked her Latinidad. The power behind the *tumbao* as a movement and as a way of being is like the attitude embodied and displayed by Hip Hop artists who must establish and protect their spaces constantly. Arriving off of an island where the oppressive Batista dictatorship shaped social life to the U.S. where consumer culture structured life meant that Cruz was catapulted from one set of identity constraints to another upon her relocation. The already thriving Latino culture in New York quickly acknowledged her talent and in very little time she found herself performing with Tito Puente and other established Latin percussionists and vocalists. Meanwhile those back on the island continued to remember her as the young woman with the powerful voice who sung with the local Sonora Matancera. These shifting significations—from national (Cuban or Brazilian) identity markers to a pan-Latina aesthetic—reflect a profound theoretical question held within Diaspora Studies. Reading these artists' performances and subject positions through a diasporic and mobile form facilitates a deeper understanding of the complexities of formations of diaspora and delimitations of borders. If theories of identity formation and collectivity in the Americas now center around tracing hybridity and border crossings then understanding the dualisms of home/exile, authentic/false within the context of diaspora is particularly poignant.

Finally, it is important to explicitly name what has clearly been a thread throughout: female performers and artists continue to be underrepresented in discussions of national development in the Americas. Through strategically putting in conversation both lesser known and well recognized artists I do not intend to imply a transnational collective of female artists/performers; however, I remain committed to the second-wave feminist notion that, *écriture feminine* or not, female writing/creating merits a space of its own; not a space separate from a binary other, male, but rather a space to exist.

Queer Diasporas

On multiple occasions I have alluded to “collective marginalities” (Osumare) and to rethinking the formation of identity-based communities. At the intersection of Queer and Diaspora Studies I see a growing interest in alternative kinship communities and unconventional routes to identity articulation. These routes, at times, rely on breaking down linear notions of progress and piecing together a collage of pulsatting bodies. Diaspora Studies within the last decade has not only emerged as a field of inquiry spanning beyond South Asia and the Atlantic circuit but has begun to form an important part of Postcolonial Studies. Because of the dramatic increase in movement of populations, due to displacement, exile, neocolonialism, etc., it is now necessary to further interrogate diaspora, as a productive point of inquiry, and as a unifying marker of identity. Hip Hop's mass globalization, simultaneously projecting a commercialized aesthetic of cool and capacity for social rebellion, offers one such entry point for rethinking transnational identity formation. To that end, my future investigations will look at the ways that queer identities are being globalized and commodified through the promise of a growing collective marginality of queers.

Throughout these chapters I have pointed out many instances where heteronormative markers of progress and reproduction have been broken down and re-written. The artists featured in the previous chapters are in dialogue with dominant constructions of nation and accentuate the ways that identity is constantly being rewritten and performed in different contexts. Reading through Hip Hop's artistry facilitates a constant re-historization and reminder of the layering of bodily knowledges. Bringing this lens to diasporic communities and investigations of collective formations emphasizes the legacy of the African diaspora throughout the Americas and the ways that present productions are filtered through that past.

Ciphering in the Discipline

Just as French feminists in the 1980s found it highly problematic to define woman as that which is *not* man, in today's globalized space it is dangerously inaccurate to define any minority as that which is not dominant. Often, the minority subject within majoritarian analyses represents the exotic "other" as an unknown, yet knowable, intellectual puzzle. The fascination with "others," so deeply criticized within postcolonial critique, continues today in academic discourse. Humanities and Social Science researchers too often claim to unravel histories of oppression and persistent divisions in access to space and rights while simultaneously reifying the categories they seek to implode. My historical and popular culture approach to minority studies attempts to bring to the fore a variety of expressive modes and to emphasize the undeniable corporeal legacy present in each enunciation in order to locate subjectivity in individual performing bodies.

As a scholar whose work intersects with multiple points of inquiry my work has the privilege of benefiting from a variety of research problematics and modalities. I am eager to continue refining Hip Hop as a lens and to further exploring the productive capacities of corporeal epistemology as they further help to illuminate questions regarding identity formation and evolution within the Americas. While my initial node of interest narrowly focused on national dances and bodily epistemologies, expanding my lens to incorporate the multifaceted knowledges of Hip Hop's elements stresses the importance of engaging multiple lenses and privileging postcolonial legacies. My work not only bridges multiple fields of inquiry but contributes to scholarship that questions the limitations of identity markers and is critical of the impact of such boundaries. Finally, this research stresses the importance of approaching constructions of distinct nations and borders and collective identities through a transnational dialogue. For the purpose of this project I confined my study to three distinct locations in dialogue with a globalized cultural form; however, in future research and implied within the theoretical approach of this project, I will link performances and embodied histories from a wide range of seemingly confined locations.

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