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Reading the Latina Soul: Affect and Hegemony in the Hermeneutics of (Trans)National Latina Narratives

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Chicana and Chicano Studies

by

Natalia Villanueva-Nieves

Committee in charge:

Professor María Herrera-Sobek, Co-Chair

Professor Ellie D. Hernández, Co-Chair

Professor Carl Gutiérrez-Jones

Professor Francisco Lomelí

December 2019

The dissertation of Natalia Villanueva-Nieves is approved.

____
Carl Gutiérrez-Jones

____
Francisco Lomelí

____
Ellie D. Hernández, Committee Co-Chair

____
María Herrera-Sobek, Committee Co-Chair

December 2019

Reading the Latina Soul: Affect and Hegemony in the Hermeneutics of (Trans)National Latina Narratives

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by

Natalia Villanueva-Nieves

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VITA OF NATALIA VILLANUEVA-NIEVES

December 2019

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Arts in Literature, Universidad del Claustro de Sor Juana, Jul 2007 (summa cum laude)
Master of Arts in Literary Studies, Utrecht University, Jul 2010
Master of Arts in Chicana and Chicano Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara, Jun 2015
Doctor of Philosophy in Chicana and Chicano Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara, Dec 2019 (expected)

PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYMENT

2012-2013: Spanish and Literature Teacher, Instituto Tecnológico de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey
2014-2019: Teaching Assistant, Department of Chicana and Chicano Studies University of California, Santa Barbara
2015-2019: Teaching Associate (Instructor of Record), Department of Chicana and Chicano Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara

PUBLICATIONS

"Discursive Crimes: Chicana Affect and Hegemonic Power in *Eulogy for a Brown Angel* by Lucha Corpi." *Ex-Centric Narratives: Journal of Anglophone Literature, Culture and Media* Vol. 3, 2019. (Forthcoming)

"A Day of Self Recognition: Gender Stereotypes under a Modern Ontology in *The Miraculous Day of Amalia Gómez". Geographies of Identity: Mapping, Crossing, and Transgressing Urban and Human Boundaries.* Edited by Esther Álvarez López. Universidad de Alcalá de Henares/Instituto Franklin, 2016, pp. 27-35

"Un Rebozo Tecnicolor: La Memoria Transcultural en *Caramelo* de Sandra Cisneros". *Nepantla: liminalidad y transición. Escritura chicana de mujeres.* Edited by Claire Joysmith. UNAM/CISAN, 2015, pp. 123-136

AWARDS

UC Mexus-Conacyt Fellowship, Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología and the University of California 2013-2018

CSI Dissertation Award, Chicano Institute, University of California, Santa Barbara, 2017

Department of Chicana and Chicano Studies Block Grant, University of California, Santa Barbara, 2013, 2016 and 2017

Huygens Scholarship Program, Ministry of Culture and Education of the Netherlands, 2008-2010

FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Chicana/o/x Studies

Latina/o/x Literary and Cultural Studies

Chicana/Latina Feminisms

Latina/o/x Affect Theory

ABSTRACT

Reading the Latina Soul: Affect and Hegemony in the Hermeneutics of (Trans)National Latina Narratives

by

Natalia Villanueva-Nieves

With an interdisciplinary frame that includes methods and theories from Latina/o/x literary and cultural studies, Latina and transnational feminisms, queer theory, border studies and affect theory, this dissertation argues that Latina affect struggles with a variety of hegemonic formations that privilege patriarchal authority, heterosexuality and whiteness. It focuses on fictional narratives by contemporary writers from three different Latina communities (Chicana, Dominican and Cuban), which explore two crucial dynamics shaping Latina affect: 1) nationalistic projects in the U.S., Latin America and the Caribbean that favor eurocentrism; and 2) the geopolitical relationships between Latin American countries and the United States, which consist in historical processes of colonialism, neocolonialism and immigration. Throughout my analysis, I refer to these transnational dynamics as "hegemonic affect".

This dissertation has a twofold objective. First, to propose a cultural and literary criticism that recognizes how contemporary Latina writing practices refashion U.S. literature by establishing it as a site to negotiate both their affects as gender and racial others in the United States, as well as the affective vestiges of Latin American nationalisms that still

haunt their ethnic identities. And second, to highlight the theoretical contributions of Latina feminist and writers, and Queer scholars to the affective turn.

It is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 serves as an introductory chapter, clarifying the core theoretical concepts and methods employed in the interpretations developed in the rest of the chapters. Chapter 2 points out how the project engages and contributes to current discussions in Latina/o/x Studies about racial and gender omissions within Latino ethnic nationalisms as well as about the limits of *Latinidad* as an umbrella term. Chapter 3 discusses the novel, *Desert Blood* (2005) by Chicana writer, Alicia Gaspar de Alba. My analysis explores how the social, economic and political system that prevails in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands (defined in this chapter as necrocapitalism) privileges affects that sexualize, racialize and label as disposable cheap labor the bodies of Chicanas and Mexican women, mobilizing new modes of citizenship. Chapter 4 discusses the novel, *In the Name of Salomé* (2000) by Dominican author, Julia Álvarez. This chapter points out how ideologies that deny blackness and establish an Indo-Hispanic identity as Dominican national identity have historically censored emotional systems associated with blackness, causing psychological damages in Afro-Dominican women. Chapter 5 discusses the novel *Dreaming in Cuban* (1992) by Cuban American author, Cristina García. This chapter explores the relationship between Cold War politics and Cuban American affect, which I call traumatic Cold War affect. This chapter argues that a dominant diasporic Cuban identity, based on the exile experiences of a single Cuban community, constrains the affective systems of women of Cuban origin in the U.S. My dissertation concludes outlining how the analyzed authors and narratives introduce a hemispheric and transnational perspective based on bodily focused affect that opens a new critical path for future research on Latina literature and art in relation to resistance, citizenship and national belonging in the 21st century.

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Introduction

A significant body of work in the area of Latina/o literary and cultural studies has defined literary expressions not as mere representations of material or historical contexts, but also as critical sites where power relationships and ideologies are negotiated.[1] As part of this work, Chicana feminists[2] established the experiences of the racialized and sexualized body as a point of departure for the analysis of the relationship between power and culture. Despite these contributions, critical approaches still overlook the relevance of bodily focused affect in understanding how literary expressions discuss the connection between Latina/os' disadvantaged circumstances and hegemonic power. This void leaves us with an incomplete snapshot of how Latina/os utilize literary fiction to resist and negotiate power.

My dissertation addresses this gap by examining Latina narratives that place affect as a crucial factor in understanding how power impacts Latinas' sense of self and belonging. In this process, this work argues that these Latina fictions advance a hemispheric perspective that points out how Latina affective systems simultaneously struggle with hegemonies from Latin America, the Spanish Caribbean and the United States, which use whiteness, patriarchy and heterosexuality as principles to determine national belonging and authority. This dissertation focuses on works by three writers, each of whom has made signature contributions to this affective turn. They are: Alicia Gaspar de Alba's *Desert Blood* (2005), Julia Álvarez's *In the Name of Salomé* (2000) and Cristina García's *Dreaming in Cuban* (1992).

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[1] Some works within this body of scholarship are: Calderón (2004), Calderón and J.D. Saldívar (1991), Gutiérrez-Jones (1995), J.D. Saldívar (1991) and R. Saldívar (1990).

[2] Such as Alarcón (1990), Anzaldúa (1987; 1990), Anzaldúa and Moraga (1981), Moraga (1983), Pérez (1999), Saldívar-Hull (2000), and Sandoval (2000).

Selected Latina Writers

Alicia Gaspar de Alba is a native of the El Paso/Juárez borderlands. Since 1992, she lives in Los Angeles, California. She is the author of three novels, *Sor Juana's Second Dream* (1999), *Desert Blood* (2005), and *Calligraphy of the Witch* (2007); two collections of poetry and one collection of short stories. She is professor of Chicana/o Studies at UCLA.[3] Julia Álvarez was born in New York City from Dominican parents. She grew up in the Dominican Republic until she was ten years old and her parents decided to return to the United States. She is a creative writing professor at Middlebury College. Her first novel, *How The García Girls Lost Their Accents* (1991) was an instant success.[4] Cristina García is a Cuban-born American. She immigrated with her family into the United States when she was two years old and settled in New York City. She is author of seven novels, including: *Dreaming in Cuban* (1992), *The Agüero Sisters* (1997), *Monkey Hunting* (2003), among others.[5]

Important Critical Precedents

My work commences where previous Latino/o critiques of the relationship between affective states (such as melancholia) and drives (such as desire) in master narratives and counter-narratives end. In particular, substantial precedents of this dissertation are Emma Pérez's and Carl Gutiérrez-Jones's works. In *The Decolonial Imaginary: Writing Chicanas into History* (1999), Pérez argues that those in positions of power impose, as objective historical accounts, stories composed from a dominant

[3] See https://www.aliciagaspardealba.net/index.html

[4] See https://www.juliaalvarez.com/

[5] See https://www.cristinagarcianovelist.com/

perspective that she identifies as a colonial imaginary. According to Pérez, this colonial imaginary is not a social or ideological structure that functions independently from the body, but a construction "inscribed upon the body" (108). For this reason, the colonial imaginary is a perspective that expresses and privileges the fantasies, pleasures and desires of those in power. Its function is not only to determine which events are considered true and which false, but also to organize which bodies, desires and pleasures are recognized as socially legitimate; and which are marginalized and silenced. According to Pérez, this understanding of master narratives as structures of desire, pleasure and fantasy discloses counter-imaginaries (which she identifies as a decolonial imaginary) which effectively resist master narratives by expressing and fantasizing about the pleasures and desires condemned, marginalized or omitted in master narratives. A major contribution of Pérez's work that informs my analysis is her understanding of hegemonic discourses about nation and belonging as psychosocial structures, crucially connected to the affective systems in charge of regulating lust and desire. This dissertation adds to Perez's insights exploring the relationship between hegemonic formations of nation and citizenship and other effective systems, besides lust and desire.

In *Rethinking the Borderlands: between Chicano Culture and Legal Discourse* (1995), Gutiérrez-Jones argues that Chicana writers in their fictions mobilize mourning as a force that ignites activism. He identifies this kind of activism as "Chicana activist mourning" (8) and points out that it is a response to the pathological melancholia that Chicano authors express in their fictions. According to Gutiérrez-Jones, this pathological melancholia is a male structure that consists in a "perpetual reservoir of unsatisfied mourning" (146), conditioned by a U.S. legal and justice system that prevents Chicana/os from receiving reparations for their historical material losses. An insight from *Rethinking*

the Borderlands that influences my work is that Chicana/o literature represents a site to express and resist not only Chicana/os' material dispossessions, but also the psycho-emotional repercussions of these material dispossessions. Moreover, in his work, Gutiérrez-Jones points out that Chicana fictions elucidate, first, how structures of marginalization trigger the affective system of grief, causing pathological emotional states such as melancholia and incomplete mourning; and second, how these emotional pathologies can be healed by redirecting mourning towards solidarity and activism. This dissertation draws on these insights examining how Latina fictions point out how racists and misogynist hegemonic formations asymmetrically trigger different affective systems, as well as how Latina mobilize affective modes to resist and heal the influence of hegemony over their psycho-emotional systems.

Methodology

With an interdisciplinary frame that includes methods and theories from Latina/o literary and cultural studies[6], Latina, Latin American and transnational feminisms[7], Latinx Queer theory[8] and affect theory[9], this dissertation focuses on two crucial dynamics shaping affect in Latina narratives. These are: 1) nationalistic projects in the U.S., Latin America and the Caribbean that favor eurocentrism; and 2) the geopolitical relationships between Latin American countries and the United States, which consist in historical processes of colonialism, neocolonialism and immigration. This interdisciplinary

[6] E.g., Castillo (1992), Heredia (2009) and J.D Saldívar (2012).

[7] Regarding Latin American and transnational feminisms some of the works that inform the methodology of this dissertation are: Segato (2016), Grewal and Kaplan (1994), Kaplan, et al. (1999).

[8] Here, I refer in specific to Muñoz (2006).

methodology has a twofold objective. First, to propose a cultural and literary criticism that recognizes how contemporary Latina writing practices refashion U.S. literature by establishing it as a site to negotiate both their affects as gender and racial others in the United States, as well as the affective vestiges of Latin American nationalisms that still haunt their ethnic identities. And second, to highlight the theoretical contributions of Latina feminist and writers, and queer scholars to the affective turn.

The literary fictions analyzed in this dissertation were selected from an initial sample of 12 narratives, based on the following criteria: a) they were composed at the verge of the new millennium (1990s-2000s) by Latina writers who consolidated their literary careers in this period of time. b) They focus on the relationship between body and power paying special attention to psychobiological systems that regulate emotions. c) They develop a transnational or hemispheric perspective that recognizes that U.S. and Latin American hegemonies simultaneously and asymmetrically impact Latina bodies, psyches, and their sense of self and belonging. d) They question dominant constructs of nation and citizenship; and e) they mobilize alternative affective modes to resist the influence that power has over Latina affective systems.

The three narratives studied in this dissertation remind us the social value of literary fiction to Latina/o communities, which lies in their function as channels to express, examine and preserve the soul of Latina/o identities. Here, soul is defined as the connection between structures of feeling[10] (that is to say, meanings and values as they are lived in the everyday of Latina/o communities and felt in the body) and affective systems (psychobiological systems that booster emotional reactions that indicate to the body and the mind how to interact with their environment). This definition is inspired by Gloria

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[9] E.g., Berlant (2011), Brennan (2004), Panksepp (2005), Grossberg (1992), and Ahmed (2015).

Anzaldúa's conceptualization of "total person". In *Making Face, Making Soul Haciendo Caras: Creative and Critical Perspectives by Women of Color* (1990), Anzaldúa argues that the self-determination of women of color –which involves multiple steps, including the revision and redefinition of their personal and social identities– requires the engagement of their total person, which she describes as the intersectionality between "body, soul, mind and spirit" (xxiv). Simply put, this intersectionality is comprised of 1) the physical racialized and sexualized body; 2) the "heart" that guides the actions of the body (xvi); 3) the psyche, as one's deepest thoughts and beliefs; and 4) spirituality. The selected narratives provide clarification on the idea of soul, which is central in Anzaldúa's theory of identity formation but remains obscure in her writings. They do so by disclosing how the soul in Latina identities consists in affective systems that indicate Latinas how to navigate different social environments.

Moreover, the selected narratives recognize the connection between soul (affective systems) and writing practices. In this regard, they follow Anzaldúa when she affirms that "inherent in the creative act is a spiritual psychic component –one of spiritual excavation of (ad)venturing into the inner void, extrapolating meaning from it and sending it out into the world" (xxiv). They, then, represent the evolution of a Latina critical and literary tradition that defines literary fictions as political tools. Anzaldúa explains this perspective on the function of literature in the following way,

> For many of us the acts of writing, painting, performing and filming are acts of deliberated and desperate determination to subvert the status quo. Creative acts are forms of political activism employing definite aesthetic strategies for resisting

[10] See Williams and Orron (1954).

dominant cultural norms and are not merely aesthetic exercises. We build culture as we inscribe in these various forms (xxiv).

The selected fictional narratives shed light on how the Latina soul understood as affectivity is passed down from generation to generation and, therefore, tightly linked with family and heritage. They also point out how despite some affective modes are excluded from dominant nationalisms in Latin America and the U.S., these excluded modes have survived in Latinas' bodies, families and communities.

In terms of theories on affect, the selected three artists in their works correct understandings that distance affective systems from the materiality of history and the body (a perspective frequently developed in studies on affect that lack an intersectional lens that includes race, gender, and sexuality), by placing affects and feelings in the histories and familial practices of their communities, as well as in their racialized and sexualized bodies.

It is important to notice that the time of publication of the selected narratives (at the verge of the new millennium) is relevant for an accurate understanding of the evolution of Latina literary practices in the United States, from the 1980s –decade that is identified as the beginning of an overwhelming interest in Latina literatures[11]– to the twenty first century. The selected narratives represent an anchor point between the boom of Latina literature and contemporary writing practices. In this sense, they portray a shift in the focus on the racialized and sexualized body, as well as on the formation of self-determined identities in Latina literary tradition. This shift consists in the revision of central categories in Latina feminist and literary practices, such as woman, brownness or *mestizaje*. Also, it involves questioning misogynist, racist and homophobic nationalistic

[11] See Madsen (2000).

formations, but also denouncing token multiculturalism, which overshadows the segregation, inequality and exploitation that prevail under global neoliberalism.

Aware of the centrality of the last aspect in the selected narratives, I refer to them in this dissertation as "(trans)national-Latina narratives". I opted for writing between brackets the suffix "trans" in "transnational" to signify that the narratives develop a hemispheric critique of nationalistic formation, which simultaneously disrupts celebratory forms globalism or transnationalism dictated by global neoliberalism. The parentheses in (trans)national, then, represent this disruption.

Chapters Overview

This project is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 serves as supplement to the introduction. It further clarifies the theoretical framework that guides the analyses developed in the next chapters. This chapter, then, indicates the different critical traditions and approaches that converge on defining central notions in this dissertation, such as affect, hegemony, nation and (trans)national.

Chapter 2 offers clarification on how the selected narratives interrogate dominant systems such as nation, citizenship and capitalism. The chapter focuses on three overlapping aspects in which the selected narratives question these dominant systems identified as one-dimensional notions of *Latinidad*, misogynist, racist and homophobic Latino ethnic nationalism; and neoliberal capitalism.

Chapter 3 discusses the novel, *Desert Blood* (2005) by Chicana writer, Alicia Gaspar de Alba. My analysis explores how the social, economic and political system that prevails in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands (defined in this chapter as necrocapitalism[12])

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[12] This notion is informed by Mbembe (2008) and Segato (2016).

privileges affects that sexualize, racialize and label as disposable cheap labor the bodies of Chicanas and Mexican women. Furthermore, this chapter argues that under a necrocapitalism driven by necrophiliac impulses and a snuff-porn taste, new forms of citizenship (besides national citizenships) emerge. These new citizenships arise not only as a consequence of the racial and gender distribution of labor that operates across the Americas, but also as a consequence of how necrocapitalism organizes and regulates affective systems.

Chapter 4 discusses the novel, *In the Name of Salomé* (2000) by Dominican author, Julia Álvarez. This chapter points out how ideologies that deny blackness and establish an Indo-Hispanic identity[13] as Dominican national identity have historically censored emotional systems associated with blackness, causing psychological damages in Afro-Dominican women.

Chapter 5 discusses the novel *Dreaming in Cuban* (1992) by Cuban American author, Cristina García. This chapter explores the relationship between Cold War politics and Cuban American affect, which I call traumatic Cold War affect.[14] This chapter argues that a dominant diasporic Cuban identity, based on the exile and traumatic experiences of a single Cuban community, constrains the affective systems of women of Cuban origin in the U.S.

Both Chapters 4 and 5 point out that recovering affective modes from a Black Atlantic heritage represents a crucial step towards the healing of the transgenerational traumatic affect caused by hetero-patriarchal nationalisms and their racialized and eroticized politics.

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[13] See Candelario (2000).

[14] This notion is informed by Atkinson, Meera (2015).

This dissertation culminates with a concluding chapter that outlines the main contributions of this study. Additionally, it indicates how the analyses of the selected authors and narratives introduce a hemispheric and transnational perspective based on bodily focused affect that opens new critical paths for future research on Latina literature and art in relation to resistance, citizenship and national belonging in the 21st century.

Chapter 1: (Trans)national-Latinas: Hegemony through Affect

Chapter 1 clarifies the theoretical framework that guides the analyses developed in subsequent chapters. It points out the different critical traditions and approaches that converge on defining central concepts in this work, such as affect, hegemony, nation and (trans)national. The reader is invited to return to this chapter as often as necessary for clarification of how central concepts are understood in subsequent chapters.

1.1 The Nature of Affect in (Trans) National Latina Texts

I defined affects as psychobiological systems that regulate emotional reactions and attachments. These systems are crucially determined by the specific factors (such as geographical location, citizenship status, gender, race, class and sexuality) that individuals recognize as identity markers and that power structures utilize to distribute power and authority in a society. As mentioned in the introduction, one of the main goals of this study is to highlight the contributions of Latina writers and feminists, and queer scholars to the affective turn. For this reason, my understanding of affect is the result of establishing a conversation between central works on affect theory and a tradition of Latina/o critical thought.

1.1.1 Perspectives from Affect Theory

The notion of affect used in this study is informed by scholarship from the two dominant theoretical frameworks in affect theory: the socio-cultural approach and the

neuro-psychological approach.[15] From the latter, it is inspired by studies from neuroscience that examine the primary systems that regulate emotions in our brains and bodies, in particular by Jaak Panksepp's (2005; 2010) work. In "Affetive Neuroscience of the Emotional BrainMind: Evolutionary Perspectives and Implications for Understanding Depression" (2010), Panksepp points out the existence of an affective infrastructure in the mammalian brain. This infrastructure consists of a series of primary processes that regulate emotional responses, located in the "primitive subcortical regions of the brain" (533). These processes involve neurochemical and electrical networks that indicate to humans and animals "how they are faring in the quest to survive" (533). According to Panksepp, "brain research supports the existence of at least seven primary-process (basic) emotional systems" (537). These are: seeking, rage, fear, lust, care, grief, and play. In the analysis on affects developed in this work, I use these basic emotional or affective systems as frame of reference to trace the relationship between hegemony and affect in the novels examined. The utilization of these neurological systems as tools of analysis is not arbitrary. As demonstrated in the subsequent analytical chapters, the novels focus on many of these affective systems in their exploration of the repercussions that power has on the female body. Nor do these basic affective systems represent a reductionist approach that exclusively centers in biological understandings of affect. In this regard, it is worthy to notice that Panksepp's work belongs to a branch of neuroscience that

[15] My understanding of affect theory divided into these two main categories is informed by Melissa Gregg's and Gregory Seigworth's work. In *The Affect Theory Reader* (2010), they explain that there are two parallel trajectories on the study of affect. The socio-cultural approach is linked to a philosophical tradition that initiated with Baruch de Spinoza (1994) who in his *Ethics* defines "affect" as "affections of the body by which the body's power of acting is increased or diminished, aided or restrained, and at the same time, the ideas of these affections" (154). Spinoza's conceptualization is recovered by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1987), and from their insights, incorporated to the socio-cultural studies on affect that have emerged since the mid 1990s. According to Gregg and Sigworth, the neuro-psychological approach starts with the theories of the psychologist Silvan Tomkins, who detected centers in the human mind that regulate emotional gratification. For more on Tomkins's theories on affect, see Tomkins and Demos (1995).

recognizes how neurological processes are crucially connected to human sociability. The last is demonstrated by the manner effective systems are involved in "the construction of higher social brain functions, including empathy" (539), and that they are impacted by external (social) circumstances. Below, I briefly summarize the main characteristics of each of these basic affective systems:

1) Seeking: According to Panksepp, this affective system "is a general-purpose appetitive motivational system that is essential for animals to acquire all resource needs for survival, and it probably helps most other emotional systems to operate effectively" (537). He continues, "In pure form, it provokes intense and enthusiastic exploration and appetitive anticipatory excitement/learning" (537). It "fills the mind with interest and motivates organisms to effortlessly search for the things they need, crave, and desire. In humans, this system generates and sustains curiosity from the mundane to our highest intellectual pursuits. This system becomes underactive during addictive drug withdrawal, chronic stress, and sickness, and with accompanying feelings of depression. Overactivity of this system can promote excessive and impulsive behaviors, along with psychotic delusions and manic thoughts" (538).
2) Rage: This affective system is activated when freedom of action is curtailed. It "invigorates aggressive behaviors" and also consists in a defensive mechanism by arousing fear in opponents (538). As later discussed in Chapter 3, in social contexts permeated by violence, rage is overstimulated and mobilized as a way of proving control and authority.
3) Fear: It has the function of protecting animals and humans from pain and destruction, leading them to flee (538). However, as also demonstrated in Chapter

3, when overstimulated by a constant exposition to violence and insecurity, fear induces "a freezing response" (538) and anxiety.

4) Lust: According to Panksepp, this system creates "gender-specific sexual tendencies" (538). It is "mediated by specific brain circuits and chemistries" (538) and connected to the seeking system, when the latter participates "in the search for sexual rewards" (538). As discussed in Chapter 4, this system may be restrained by racist and heteronormative social constructs that police sexual attraction and desire.
5) Care: This system mediates nurturance and social bonding. It is intrinsically related to "maternity nurturance", because it assures "that parents (usually the mother) take care of offspring" (539). As noticed in Chapter 3, care in the form of social care becomes a resistance mechanism against the social paralysis and sensation of fear that prevails in violent and authoritarian socio-political contexts.
6) Grief: It is "a powerful emotional systems to solicit nurturance" that "socially dependent animals have" (539). Therefore, this system consists in "the major social-attachment, social bonding chemistries of the mammalian brain. These neurochemicals are foundational for the secure attachments that are so essential for future mental health and happiness" (539). Grief is the affective system that is mainly damaged when individuals are exposed to the "loss of feelings of security" (539). According to Panksepp, the circuits involved in the grief systems are responsible of panic attacks.
7) Play: This system is responsible of stimulating "social joy" or social play in young animals and humans. As Panksepp argues, "one key function of social play is to learn social rules and refine social interactions" (539). Thus, this system "may

promote the epigenetic construction of higher social brain functions, including empathy" (539).

From the socio-cultural approach in affect theory, my understanding of affect draws on analyses stressing that emotions circulate in a society attached to cultural and artistic expressions, and on studies that argue that individuals and communities regulate their affective systems in relation to socio-historical processes. For instance, In *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (2015), Sara Ahmed argues that emotions attach to the cultural texts that circulate in a society. That is, emotions are not necessarily transmitted directly from one individual to another, but emotions circulate in society and are passed among individuals attached to cultural texts, such as entertainment and journalism media, literature, and art. Ahmed's insights into the importance of cultural texts in the social circulation of emotions is informed by a key concept in affect theory, which is: "The transmission of affect".

In *The Transmission of Affect* (2004), Teresa Brennan argues that social contexts and events have the capability of altering individuals' "biochemistry and neurology" (1). That is, social and familial contexts can considerably influence individual's affective systems. Thus, contrary to psychological perspectives that affirm that emotions are exclusively generated by the individual's psyche, Brennan sustains that some emotional reactions are social, "in that these affects do not only arise within a particular person but also come from without. They come via an interaction with other people and an environment" (3). Therefore, Brennan's and Ahmed's insights into the social and cultural circulation of affect inspire my own understanding of the relationship between affect and hegemony as a circuit that involves Latina bodies, socio-historical contexts and Latina literary expressions.

This understanding is also informed by studies in affect theory that explore the political dimension of emotional reactions. For instance, in *Ugly Feelings* (2005), Sianne Ngai observes that emotions are “charged with political meaning” (3) and may be symptoms of the systems that regulate social and economic relationships in the context in which they emergence.[16] In *Ordinary Affects* (2007), Kathleen Steward argues that affects are degrees or intensities of attention, interest and attachment, which are regulated by politics and power structures. In this regard, she states,

> There’s a politics to being/feeling connected (or not), to impacts that are shared (or not), to energies spent worrying or scheming (or not), to affective contagion, and to all the forms of attunement and attachment. There’s a politics to ways of watching and waiting for something to happen and to forms of agency –to how the mirage of a straightforward exercise of will is a flag waved in one situation and a vicious, self-defeating deflation in another (as when someone of no means has a get-rich-quick daydream –a daydream to be free at last –that ends them up in jail). There’s a politics to difference in itself– the difference of danger, the difference of habit and dull routine, the difference of everything that matters (16)

Finally, in *We Gotta Get Out of This Place. Popular Conservatism and Postmodern Culture* (1992) and in *Dancing in Spite of My Self. Essays on Popular Culture* (1997), Lawrence Grossberg, a pioneer in the analysis of affect in cultural studies, observes how in order to achieve consensus, hegemonic formations not only appeal to ideology but also to affect and emotions, as suggested in this study.

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[16] Informed by the work of Paolo Virno, Ngai (2005) notices that “sentiments of disenchantment that once marked positions of radical alienation from the system of wage labor –anxiety, distraction, and cynicism– are now perversely integrated, from the factory to the office, into contemporary capitalist production itself” (4). She then points out how under contemporary capitalism, affective systems such as fear are transformed into “operational requirements” and/or “professional ideals” (4).

1.1.2 Affect from a Latina/o Critical Perspective

As mentioned, my understanding of affect is mainly in conversation with Latina/o theorists, such as José Esteban Muñoz, Gloria Anzaldúa and Cherríe Moraga. In "Feeling Brown, Feeling Down: Latina Affect, Performativity of Race, and the Depressive Position" (2006) Muñoz, a pioneer in examining Latina/o affect and an unquestionable referent to any study on this subject, argues that Latina/o affect is specific to their historical and material circumstances and different to the affect of hegemonic groups. Muñoz coins the term, "brown affect", to name the specificity of Latina/os' affective regimes. He, also, identifies whiteness[17] as the cultural construction that supports power and authority in the United States, pointing out how it also "prescribes and regulates national feelings and comportment," constituting the standpoint from which people "understand some modes of emotional countenance and comportment as good or bad" (680). Therefore, the feelings and emotional reactions of those who embody and/or perform whiteness at the top of the social hierarchy are naturalized as the norm. As Muñoz observes, the establishment of "white" emotional reactions as the norm is problematic because it categorizes as non-existent or pathological the feelings from different "historical and material contingencies that include race, gender, and sex" (675).

[17] For Muñoz, whiteness not only constitutes a series of visible physical characteristics, but a cultural construction that comprises a worldview and a set of cultural practices and values that reaffirm the authority of those in power. Whiteness not only ascribes meaning to bodily features, but also represents embodiment and performance. Whiteness differs from other racialized categories because it is not explicitly pointed out as white but categorized instead as normal and natural. Whiteness thus constitutes the "norm from which all other racialized categories are perceived and understood" (Peake 2009, 247). It "operates as a position of structural advantage and privilege and as an epistemological 'standpoint' or place from which to look at oneself, others, and society" (247). Whiteness is also a social, economic and political system that unequally distributes wealth, prestige and opportunity. As George Lipsitz argues in *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics* (2006), Anglo European Americans "are encouraged to invest" and "to remain true to an identity that provides them with resources, power and opportunity" (vii). Whiteness, therefore, signifies both an identity and a social system, which guarantee that Anglo European Americans maintain their privileged position (in cultural and material terms) in relation to other U.S. communities.

Muñoz's work not only informs my analysis in avoiding approaches to affects that distance these systems from the materiality of history and the body (a perspective frequently developed in studies on affect that lack the lenses of race, gender and sexuality), but also in paying attention to how hegemonic structures impact and regulate Latina/o affect.

In Muñoz's theory on affect, it is possible to trace the principles of Chicana feminist thought, in particular, a connection with one of Anzaldúa's and Moraga's main theoretical models: "Theory in the flesh." In *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (1981), Anzaldúa and Moraga coin the term, "theory in the flesh", to name a methodology intended to understand socio-political systems from the perspective of subaltern subjects. This methodology uses the bodily experiences (which include not only living experiences during historical and social events, but also emotions, ideas and cultural values) of racialized and sexualized people as the point of entry to the analysis of how the unequal distribution of power and resources in U.S. society impacts communities of color. The major contribution of "theory in the flesh" lies not only in turning the perspective from which hegemony is studied upside down, but also in stressing how racism, misogyny and homophobia asymmetrically impact individuals in subaltern positions, according to the specifics of their intersectional identities. Another main contribution of "theory in the flesh" is that this methodology recognizes the emotional value of art and literature as a tool to explore and understand how the body reacts to hegemonic processes of racialization, sexualization and gendering.

By focusing on this theoretical legacy, I attempt to advance an understanding of affect that respects the particularities of Chicana and Latina experiences and embodiments, but also highlights the contributions of Latina/o theorists, such as Muñoz,

Anzaldúa and Moraga, to the affective turn. For this reason, in the subsequent analytical chapters, I establish a conversation between affect theory and a well-established tradition of Latina/o critical thought. In this conversation, key concepts in affect theory are translated into a vocabulary developed by Latina/o critics and artists. For instance, "the transmission of affect" is translated into one of Anzaldúa's main theories, "making faces/haciendo caras" (see Chapter 4); or "intuition" is not only understood based on Lauren Berlant's notion of "intuitionist"[18], but in relation to Anzaldúa's "*La Facultad*"[19] and as an affective disposition that is part of Caribbean Latinas' Black Atlantic heritage (see Chapter 5). These translations demonstrate that Latinas have developed their own vocabulary and theories to explore their affectivity in relation to their particular material circumstances. They also prove that Latinas advanced similar theoretical approaches to key perspectives in affect theory before or alongside the affective turn.

1.2 Hegemonic Affect: Understanding the Relationship Between Hegemony and Latina Affect from a Hemispheric Perspective

The novels examined in this study portray hegemony[20] as multidimensional formations that asymmetrically impact Latinas according to their specific translocations.[21]

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[18] See Berlant (2011).

[19] See Anzaldúa (1987).

[20] Here hegemony denotes the relationships between culture, society and power, and corresponds to what Antonio Gramsci in *The Prison Notebooks* (1971) calls, "cultural hegemony." In "The Concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and Possibilities" (1985), Jackson Lears affirms that Gramsci understands society not as a one-dimensional relationship in which the superstructure (power) imposes its worldview to the base (subordinates), but as "a complex interaction of relatively autonomous spheres (public and private; political, cultural, and economic) within a totality of attitudes and practices" (571). The interaction amongst spheres creates blocs, "which, depending on their success in forming alliances and disseminating a coherent ideology, may or may not come to exert hegemonic influence" (571). Thus, to operate, hegemony requires consensus. Consensus depends on two factors, first, the ruling group must develop a worldview that appeals to other social groups; and secondly, those in subordinate positions must cultivate forms of consciousness that accept the domination of the ideological forms of those in power. For Gramsci, therefore, within these

That is, the novels represent how Latinas' bodies, identities and affective systems are impacted by multiple hegemonic formations that delimit citizenship and national belonging, and come from different geographical locations.[22] The narratives describe these formations as constructs that privilege patriarchy, heterosexuality and whiteness as signs of authority and belonging. According to the texts, some of these formations operate in the United States, defining Latinas as gender and racial others, while others are a legacy from Latin American and Spanish Caribbean nationalisms that still haunts Latinas' identities. In their examination of this multidimensional model of hegemony, the narratives disclose how power is consolidated not only by disseminating an appealing

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dynamics, the working class has developed not a false consciousness as Marx affirms, but a double consciousness that embraces the materiality of their social and economic conditions, as well as the values and ideologies of the ruling classes. The contradictory nature of this double consciousness explains why sometimes the working class meekly accepts the verdicts of the ruling classes, even against their own interests.

[21] I borrow this term from a feminist approach that draws on the internationalist perspective developed by Third World feminisms and U.S. feminisms of color. As Sonia E. Álvarez points out in "Enacting a Translocal Feminist Politics of Translation" (2014), this term involves, "the multiple mediations (gender, class, race, etc.) that constitute the self to diverse modes of domination (capitalism, patriarchy, racism, imperialism) and to distinct yet intertwined social struggles and movements" (2). However, "the notion of translocation takes us a step further, linking geographies of power at various scales (local, national, regional, global) with subject positions (gender/sexual, ethnoracial, class, etc.) that constitute the self" (2). As Álvarez continues, besides a hemispheric positionality, the term also involves, "politics of translation by unabashedly trafficking in feminist theories and practices across geopolitical, disciplinary and other borders, bringing insights from Latina/women of color/postcolonial feminisms in the North of the Americas to bear on our analyses of theories, practices, cultures and politics in the South and vice versa" (1). Finally, the term addresses that "Latina/o-americanidades" are the result of transcultural and translocation flows.

[22] My understanding of hegemony as multiple and transnational hegemonies is informed by the work of transnational feminists such as Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan. In *Scattered Hegemonies: Postmodernity and Transnational Feminist Practices* (1994), Grewal and Kaplan use the term, "scattered hegemonies", to propose an analytical model that addresses, "the concerns of women around the world in the historicized particularity of their relationship to multiple patriarchies as well as to international hegemonies", articulating "the relationship of gender to scattered hegemonies such as global economic structures, patriarchal nationalisms, "authentic" forms of tradition, local structures of domination, and legal-juridical oppression on multiple levels" (17). This analytical model focuses on how women from particular historical, social, economic, racial, and educational contexts respond to "multiple, overlapping, and discrete oppressions" (18). This analytical model points out, then, that oppressions are not only executed from the so-called, "global north", against women in the so-called, "global south" (as mistakenly assumed by simplistic understanding of power dynamics under global neoliberalism); but women in the global south, depending on their intersectional identities, negotiate, accept and/or reject international and local hegemonies.

ideology that regulates social experiences and behaviors, but also by regulating subalterns' affective systems and establishing as the norm emotional reactions and attachments that better serve the interests of those in power. That is, by establishing emotional or affective regimes. They also reveal how the regulation of affective systems is crucially involved in historical processes of colonialism and immigration.

I refer to the complex, multidimensional and historical relationship between Latina affect and hegemonic formations as "hegemonic affect". As I have argued[23], hegemonic affect encompasses not only the emotional reactions that power triggers as mechanisms of control, but also the socio-historical transnational processes that have participated in the imposition of some emotional reactions as methods of control. This term, therefore, implies a hemispheric perspective that facilitates the identification not only of different elements within the complex relationship between hegemony and Latina affect, but also of how individuals resist the influence that power has in their affective systems. It is important to notice that "hegemonic affect" must not be confused with the close notion of "normative affect". The latter term is developed by Jose Esteban Muñoz (2006), who observes that in the U.S. power is defined in terms of maleness, heterosexuality and whiteness, and consequently, the emotional experiences of those who better embody this definition are established as the norm to delimit emotional reactions considered universal. For instance, Muñoz points out how depression in medical, social and cultural discourses is commonly defined from a white-centered perspective, which makes invisible the specific characteristics and socio-political causes of depression in peoples of color.

[23] Villanueva-Nieves (forthcoming)

It is relevant to notice that Muñoz defines the white-centered perspective that demarcates normative affect exclusively in relation to U.S. whiteness, as defined by whiteness studies.[24] However, as demonstrated in the next analytical chapters, the hemispheric lens that guides my definition of hegemonic affect reveals that whiteness is differently understood by U.S. communities of color[25], as well as by Latin American and Caribbean populations. Some of these different understandings of whiteness support hegemonic formations outside the United States that influence Latinas' affective systems.

As Ginetta Candelario argues in *Black Behind the Ears* (2007), understandings of whiteness in Latin America and the Spanish Caribbean are significantly different to dominant ideas about whiteness in the United States. Drawing on Harry Hoentik's (1967) studies on race in the Caribbean, Candelario affirms that in the Spanish Caribbean, whiteness corresponds to a variant called, "Iberian whiteness". This variant is "darker" than U.S. Anglo-Saxon or Nordic whiteness, resembling the racial mixture of Spanish people, which encompasses Visigoths, Moors and Jews. Then, Iberian whiteness is less based on pure blood and more on social, political and economic status. This particular conceptualization of whiteness explains why people that the U.S. one-drop racial system classifies as "of color" pass as "white" in Latin American contexts. Moreover, Iberian

[24] Although the examinations of whiteness in the United States were initiated by Black scholars and artists, such as W.E.B du Bois (1920; 1996), James Baldwin (1963; 2010), and Toni Morrison (1992), white scholars institutionalize the study of whiteness as an academic field, starting in the 1980s.

[25] As bell hooks argues in "Representing Whiteness in the Black Imagination" (1997), U.S. whiteness as an unmarked category only exists in the imagination of white people, she states, "in white supremacist society, white people can "safely" imagine that they are invisible to black people […] they can live as though black people are invisible and can imagine that they are also invisible to blacks. Some white people may even imagine there is no representation of whiteness in the black imagination, especially one that is based on concrete observation or mythic conjecture; they think they are seen by black folks only as they want to appear (168-169). However, Blacks and other communities of color in the United States anthropologically construct whiteness, creating specific terms to categorize Anglo European phenotypes as well as Anglo European behaviors, attitudes and values. An example of this categorization is the term, gringo/a, as employed by Mexican and Chicana/o communities.

whiteness allows an upward racial mobility that is not possible within a U.S. racial stratification. In Latin America and the Spanish Caribbean, people can whiten themselves through social practices, which include: miscegenation, the accumulation of social, cultural and/or economic capital; and the performance of Eurocentric beauty practices, social behaviors, attitudes and values. These practices are known as *blanqueamiento.* As Candelario observes, *blanqueamiento* is key in the formation of dominant national identities in Latin America. Therefore, as argued in the next analytical chapters, *blanqueamiento,* along with U.S. white privilege, determines how Latinas' affective systems operates.

Before closing this section, it is pertinent to highlight that my understanding of hegemonic affect takes also into consideration that Latinas are asymmetrically impacted by multidimensional hegemonies, depending on their intersectional identities (race, sexual orientation, gender, citizenship status, language proficiency, etc.) and the socio-historical contingencies of their communities. For instance, in a specific geographical location, a mestiza Latina and an Afro-Latina may be oppressed and regulated by U.S. whiteness and Latin American *blanqueamiento*. However, how these hegemonic formations oppress them and how they resist these hegemonies vary according to their racial identities. While both may recognize U.S. whiteness as an oppressor and actively resist U.S. white supremacy, their perceptions of *blanqueamiento* may differ. The mestiza Latina may not recognize Latin American *blanqueamineto* as an oppressive system because it symbolically celebrates and privileges *mestizaje*. In contrast, the Afro-Latina may identify *blanqueamiento* as an oppressive system that actively denies her blackness as a legitimate identity within *Latinidad*. This is further discussed in Chapter 2 and fully illustrated in relation to other variants in the analytical chapters.

1.3 What is Nation?

In the narratives examined in this study, nation is comprised of a gendered and racialized system of cultural representations that includes a paradoxical temporality and overlapping elements such as ideologies, fantasies, and emotions. This system organizes the hierarchical distribution of the resources of the nation-state[26], which not only crucially impacts people's access to citizenship, but also their identities, bodies, affective systems and everyday practices. The narratives point out how nation is an abstract construct, which originates in fantasies about a racial, gender, territorial and historical bond that ideologically and emotionally ties a group of people together. The texts, especially the novels by Caribbean Latinas, emphasize the idea of nation as a fantasy. They do so to denounce the artificiality of nationalisms, but also to validate the value of art and fictional literature as legitimate sites to interrogate nationalistic formations in both the United States and Latin America. The works on nation and nationalism of Benedict Anderson (2006), Homi Bhabha (1991), Etienne Balibar (1991), Lauren Berlant (1991) and Anne McClintock (1996) inform the analysis of this notion in the narratives.

In *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (2006), Benedict Anderson develops one of the most influential conceptualizations of nation for later analyses on the topic. In his work, Anderson questions, "how nationalisms have come into historical being, in what ways their meanings have changed over time, and why, today, they command such a profound emotional legitimacy" (4). He asserts

[26] As Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias affirm in *Woman, Nation, State* (1989), nation and state are not the same nor interchangeable terms. While nation refers to a complex system of representations, state "refers to a particular 'machinery' for the exercise of 'government' over a given population" (5). Usually, state is territoriality and governmentally defined, although the delimiting of state boundaries would shift depending on changes in government or in the redistribution of power. The beginning of a state can be defined in relation to a body of institutions, which enforce ideological and coercive apparatuses of control. In this study, the term nation-state is employed respecting this difference and when both government and the imaginary are involved in the social and cultural processes as represented in the narratives.

that nationalisms are intellectually and emotionally powerful because they consist of imagined communities. That is, ideas –in the literal meaning of the word as mental impressions and beliefs–, build up and maintain the singularities of a national community. For Anderson, the ideas that support the nation as imagined community are spread through technologies such as language.[27] Anderson also points out that nationalisms contain a paradoxical temporality. Although nations are relatively new community formations with defined historical origins, their temporality is mythical and towards a utopic future. Dominican nationalism exemplifies this paradoxical time. As further discussed later in Chapter 4, the Dominican Republic as political entity was established in the nineteenth century. However, dominant nationalistic formations have established the origin of Dominican national identity in a mythical past inhabited by heroic Taínos and benevolent Spaniards. This mythical past represents an ambiguous temporality, which is prior to the official establishment of the Dominican state.

Scholars such as Homi Bhabha, Etienne Balibar and Lauren Berlant have drawn from Anderson's imagined communities, refining some of the core elements in his understanding. In "DissemiNation: Time, Narrative and the Margins of the Modern Nation" (1999), Homi Bhabha proposes an understanding of national communities that refines the paradoxical temporality that Anderson identifies in national formations. For Bhabha, nations are, "a complex rhetorical strategy of social reference" (213) that avers a complex and paradoxical temporality. This temporality is a paradox because in it, "the nation's people must be thought in double-time" (213). That is, on the one hand, "the people are the historical 'objects' of a nationalistic pedagogy" that utilizes a "pre-given or

[27] For this reason, Anderson points out that the development of print as a commodity is a crucial factor in the formation of national communities. Since the fifteenth century, the mechanical reproduction of texts has communicated and spread the nationalistic consciousness that constituted the ontological and epistemological basis of the nationalistic movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

constituted historical origin in the past" (213) to indoctrinate the people on ideal nationalistic embodiments and performances. On the other hand, "the people are also the 'subjects' of a process of signification that erase any prior or original presence of the nation-people to demonstrate the prodigious, living principles of the people as contemporaneity: as that sign of the present through which national life is redeemed and iterated as a reproductive process" (214). Nations are, then, discursive formations in which the people split between the mythical past that provides the pedagogy that teaches them who is and who is not part of the nation, and a performative present in which the people continually repeat practices that construct and reinforce their identification (ideologically and emotionally) with the national narrative.

For his part, in "About Nation" (1991), Ettienne Balibar defines national formations as ideological formations in which elements such as capitalism and race are crucial. Balibar argues that nations are presented to the people as narrations that tell a "retrospective illusion". As Anderson and Bhabha do, Balibar describes this illusion as twofold. However, for Balibar, the twofold illusion consists not only in the paradox, myth and utopia, but also in believing that the nation is a one-dimensional, "stable" and "invariant" project that commenced in a mythical past, and that the current national community is the climax of this process, representing the ultimate destiny of the nation. Thus, for Balibar, "project and destiny are the two symmetrical figures of the illusion of national identity" (86).

Balibar also points out how national formations are not purely abstract, but the result of "constraining institutional realities" (86).[28] According to Balibar, national

[28] The relationship between the abstract and institutions as pointed out here by Balibar explains the intrinsic relationship between the duo, nation-state, and why sometimes it is complicated to separate the institutional from the ideological, as well as to distinguish them as different although correlated entities.

formations originated in a multiplicity of institutions. These institutions advanced nationalism as "an effective ideological form in which the imaginary singularity of national formations is constructed daily by moving back from the present into the past" (87). Before the fervor of nationalistic movements and ideologies that took place in the nineteenth century, these institutions work separately advancing different and sometimes overlapping political projects. Nonetheless, once they were organized and unified under a capitalist system that emerged hand in hand with colonialism, these institutions were able to launch the formation of national communities. It is important to notice that, for Balibar, this capitalist system is not "the abstraction of the capitalist market" (89), nor the mechanical reproduction and commercialization of texts and other goods underscored by Anderson, but a "concrete historical form" that consists of a global hierarchical order "organized into a 'core' and a 'periphery', each of which have different methods of accumulation and exploitation of labour power, and between which relations of unequal exchange and domination are established" (89). Balibar's insights into the primal role that colonial capitalism plays in the organization of the ideologies and narrations that support nation-states enable him to establish the paradoxical time of nations not only as a consequence of modernity, but also of coloniality.[29] Moreover, his insights facilitate the ability to picture how the organization of the global economic system into core and periphery influenced the legal and social organization of nation-states according to the establishment of external and internal frontiers, and the distinction between the national

[29] In *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options* (2011), Walter Mignolo argues that western modernity, as an epistemological and ontological system, is essentially tied to the historical materiality of colonialism. As a consequence, the twofold paradoxical time of modernity was in part a result of the geopolitical reorganization of the globe established by European colonial enterprises in the Americas, Africa and Asia. To justify its viability, the system Coloniality/Modernity re-signified the spatial differences between center (capital of the empire) and periphery (colonies) in the temporal distinction between primitive and progress, tradition and modernity. According to Mignolo, this colonial or imperial time was later translated into "the time of a given nation" (161).

and the foreign. According to Balibar, this peculiar social organization based on the dichotomy Us vs. the Other(s) mobilizes the creation of racialized and/or ethnicized fictions to unite national communities. Balibar calls these racialized fictions "fictive ethnicities" and describes them in the following manner,

> This is an intentionally complex expression in which the term fiction […] should not be taken in the sense of a pure and simple illusion without historical effects, but must, on the contrary, be understood by analogy with the *persona ficta* of the juridical tradition in the sense of an institutional effect, a 'fabrication.' No nation possesses an ethnic base naturally, but as social formations are nationalized, the population included within them, divided up among them or dominated by them are ethnicized –that is, represented in the past and in the future *as if* they formed a natural community, possessing of itself an identity of origins, culture and interests which transcends individuals and social conditions (96).

Fictive ethnicities not only determine who belongs and who does not belong to the nation, and who has power and who does not in the nation-state, but also mobilize love and hatred. These ethnicities translate into unconditional love for those who follow the pedagogy of the nation and perform according to the national ethnicity. In contrast, fictive ethnicities mobilize rejection, suspicion and hate towards those who consciously reject or question the pedagogy of the nation and those whose racial, sexual and/or gender embodiments make evident the fictional character of national ethnicity. This emotional dimension of nationalisms is crucial in the analyses of the novels, which demonstrate how the convergence of nationalistic formations regulates rejection, repulsion, attraction and empathy within Latina/os' socio-political contexts. For instance, Chapter 3 discusses how racist and misogynist formations, along with national affiliation and citizenship, organize

and hierarchize affective reactions in the U.S-Mexico border. Chapter 4 points out how Dominican nationalism is supported by a fictive ethnicity that mobilizes love towards embodiments of *blanqueaminento* and rejection towards blackness. And Chapter 5 argues that a national identity based on a Cold-War logic mobilizes love and hatred between islander Cubans and Cubans in the diaspora.

The work of scholars such as Lauren Berlant and Anne McClintock also enlighten how the emotional dimension of nationalisms operates, especially in relation to the female body. Berlant and McClintock advance an understanding of nation and nationalism that focuses on the gender implications of nationalisms and on how emotions and desires contribute to the formation and maintenance of national communities. *In The Anatomy of National Fantasy: Hawthorne, Utopia, and Everyday Life* (1991), Lauren Berlant scrutinizes how the imagery of the nation enters into the lives and collective practices of the people. For Berlant, a nation is "an assumed relation" (4), in which the people are bound together because they "inhabit the political space of the nation" (5). However, this space "is not merely juridical, territorial (jus soli), genetic (jus sanguinis), linguistic or experimental, but some tangled cluster of these" (5). Berlant calls this space of overlapping elements, "the national symbolic". She emphasizes that the national symbolic not only utilizes laws and ideologies to tie and constrain the people to a national community, but also "aims to link regulation to desire, harnessing affect to political life through the production of "national fantasy" (5). Thus, the nation constitutes not only a mythical past that defines the fictive ethnicity of a national community or current laws that determine citizenship, but also an object of collective fantasy.

Besides pointing out the relevance that affect and desire have in national collectivities, a major contribution of Berlant's work is that she underscores how the

national fantasy and, therefore, affects and desires are regulated in gender lines. Often, she states, “the body of the woman is employed symbolically to regulate or represent the field of national fantasy” (28). She also highlights that this feminization of the nation as object of desire brings important limitations in women’s participation in the nation-state, constraining women’s agency within the nation to their “availability to be narrativized” (28). This is clearly represented in the case discussed in Chapter 4. Which portrays how the female Dominican body is shaped and transformed in relation to Dominican national fantasy.

For her part, in “No Longer in a Future Heaven: Nationalism, Gender and Race” (1996), Anne McClintock argues that nations and nationalisms “are contested systems of cultural representation that limit and legitimize people’s access to the resources of the nation-state” (260). These systems “are not simply phantasmagoria of the mind”, but “historical practices through which social difference is both invented and performed” (260). Similarly to Berlant, McClintock insists in the gender dimension of nationalism. She avers that nationalisms “are frequently violent and **always gendered**” (260, emphasis added). This means that male frustrations and aspirations govern nations; also that within the nation, “the representation of male power depends on the prior construction of gender difference”, and that the “gender difference between women and men serves to define symbolically the limits of national difference and power between men” (261).

The gender difference between male and female is also employed to make sense of the paradoxical temporality of nationalisms. The contradiction between nostalgia for a mythical past and the urgency to overcome the past, achieving the ultimate promises of progress is fixed by representing the abnormal temporality of the nation as a “natural” division of gender. In this gendered representation of national time,

> Women are represented as the atavistic and authentic body of national tradition (inert, backward-looking and natural), embodying nationalism's conservative principle of continuity. Men, by contrast, represent the progressive agent of national modernity (forward, thrusting, potent and historic), embodying nationalism's progressive, or revolutionary, principle of discontinuity (263).

McClintock also emphasizes that the asymmetrical distribution of power within and between nations is naturalized representing nations as gendered and racialized domestic genealogies. In the nineteenth century, social evolutionists merged the racial evolutionary tree and the gendered family into the Family Tree of Man, providing a gendered and racial image that, on the one hand, justified imperialistic enterprises and the global hegemony of Europe, and on the other, naturalized a linear and unequal national progress (264).

However, despite nationalism utilizes race and gender to stabilize and normalize a one-dimensional image of the nation, "there is no single narrative of the nation. Different groups (gender, social class, ethnicities, generations and so on) do not experience the myriad national formations in the same way. Nationalisms are invented, performed and consumed in ways that do not follow a universal blueprint" (264). In the specific case of women, the fact that nations justify their asymmetrical distribution of power and their paradoxical temporality in gender and racial terms places women in a symbolic or metaphoric role within the nation, excluding them "from direct action as national citizens" (264) or limiting their actions only to those that serve the interests of the patriarchal nation.[30] In the next analytical chapters, the specific role that Latinas play

[30] Here, McClintock agrees with the list of the five principal ways in which nationalisms integrate women as proposed by Nira Yuval-Davis and Floyd Anthias (1989). These principal ways are: 1) as biological reproducers of national collectivities, 2) as reproducers of the boundaries of national groups (through restrictions on sexual and marital relations, 3) as active transmitters and producers of national

within the affective nationalisms that circulate in their socio-political contexts is elucidated with the help of the insights of Latina/o and Latin American theorists, such as Martha I. Cruz-Janzen (2010), Rita Segato (2016a; 2016b), Ruth Behar (2000), and Damian Fernández (2000), among others.

1.4 The Hemispheric Imaginary of (Trans)national-Latina Narratives

As mentioned, one of the main arguments of this work is that the novels analyzed develop a hemispheric perspective, which denounces the contradictions within nationalistic formations (for this reason they are named, "(Trans)national"), and which establishes a conversation amongst stories, socio-political and historical processes, embodied experiences, hegemonic formations and resistance practices from different locales across the Americas. This perspective focuses on tracing the connections between these processes, practices and experiences as well as their repercussions on Latinas' personal and community identities in the United States at the verge of the new millennium. An important aspect of this perspective is that it recognizes the value that art and fiction have as sites to interrogate dominant ideologies that establish arbitrary geographical borders to delimit the confluence of social, political and cultural flows. I discuss further this aspect in the following section of this chapter. My conceptualization of this transnational aspect in Latina narratives is informed by the idea of a hemispheric or Pan-American imaginary that centers in how cultures, artistic expressions and socio-political formations and movements from every corner of the Americas (north, central, south and the Caribbean) have historically influenced each other. This hemispheric

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culture, 4) as symbolic signifiers of national difference, and 5) as active participants in national struggles. These major general roles should be employed avoiding reproducing a one-dimensional notion of womanhood; and instead considering the specific intersectionality or translocality of the particular relationship between women and national formation(s) that is being analyzed.

imaginary has been advanced by Latin American scholars, such as Nestor García Canclini (1995) and Walter Mignolo (2005), Latino scholars in the field of American studies, e.g., José David Saldívar (1991; 2012) and Anthony Macias (2019), and Latina feminist literary critics, such as Sonia Saldívar-Hull (1999; 2000), Ana Marie Sandoval (2008), Juanita Heredia (2009) and Debra Castillo (1992).

In *Trans-Americanity: Subaltern Modernities, Global Coloniality and the Cultures of Greater Mexico* (2012), José David Saldívar proposes the term "Trans-Americanity" to call an analytical approach focused on how the global economic, social and cultural systems that operate across national borders in the Americas influence U.S. culture and art. Saldívar's approach draws on Latin American decolonial scholarship, in particular on the work of Anibal Quijano. Saldívar borrows the term "Americanity" from Quijano's and Immanuel Wallerstein's essay, "Americanity as a Concept or the Americas in the Modern World-System" (1992). According to Quijano and Wallerstein, during the sixteenth century, the Americas were not simply incorporated to European modern capitalist model which already existed, but the Americas were the space where the principles of modern capitalism were designed and put into practice as a world-economy. Regarding this, they affirm,

> The modern world-system was born in the long sixteenth century. The Americas as a geosocial construct were born in the long sixteenth century. The creation of this geosocial entity, the Americas, was the constitutive act of the modern world-system. The Americas were not incorporated into an already exiting capitalist world-economy. There could not have been a capitalist world-economy without the Americas (549).

Americanity, thus, refers to the foundational role of the Americas in the establishment of a capitalist world-economy. For Quijano and Wallerstein, this foundational role did not stop with the end of colonialism but continued during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As noticed by José Martí in *Nuestra América* (1909), the gradual positioning of the United States as world potency that initiated in the nineteenth century divided the Americas into Anglo-Saxon America and Latin America. Later, according to Quijano and Wallerstein, when the United States consolidated itself as leader of global neo-colonialism after World War II, the hemispheric division of the Americas between north and south worked as model for the dichotomy, first world vs third world, that organized western world-economy for most of the twentieth century. This dichotomy precedes the division between "global south" and "global north" that prevails in conceptualizations of global neoliberalism in the late twentieth and twenty first centuries.

With "trans-Americanity", therefore, Saldívar proposes a remapping that transcends understandings of the global as two separated spheres (north and south) that only come into contact with each other, when economic and cultural flows from the north exert their influence on social and cultural structures in the south. This remapping, then, traces how flows of influence travel in a multidirectional fashion, blurring national and hemispheric borders. This remapping has important implications for definitions of U.S. culture and art, given that it disrupts narrow approaches that define U.S. expressive cultures (literature, music, film, visual art) only in relation to the cultural flows that circulate within an "isolated" global north. It makes visible how influences from Latin America and the Caribbean nourish U.S. culture and art as well.

As mentioned, Latina literary scholars also offer important insights into a hemispheric or Pan-American imaginary. Their contributions are especially relevant for

how transnationality is understood in this work because they focus on how a hemispheric imaginary operates specifically in Latina writing practices, linking these practices with feminisms traditions that urge the consolidation of global alliances among women of color. Below, I briefly review some of the studies by Latina literary critics that inform the hemispheric perspective that guides my work.

In *Feminism on the Border: Chicana Gender Politics and Literature* (2000), Saldívar-Hull argues that Chicana writing practices represent alternative archives[31] in which Chicana authors not only reflect on their circumstances as racial and gender others, but also question their otherness mobilizing feminist traditions from both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border. She demonstrates the last in her analysis of Sandra Cisneros' fictions. In this analysis, Saldívar-Hull argues that Cisneros fictionalizes a kind of feminism, which she calls, "transfronteriza feminism", that emerges from the movements of Mexican women and Chicanas across the physical and imaginary borders that separate the United States from Mexico and the rest of the Americas. According to Saldívar-Hull, these movements have originated feminist practices in which Chicana and *Mexicana* feminisms, such as third world feminism[32] and *feminismo popular[33],* converge. Saldívar-Hull concludes arguing that the convergence of U.S. and Latin American feminisms that transfronteriza feminism is developed thanks to a hemispheric and intersectional

[31] Saldívar-Hill observes that women's historically restricted access to masculine sites of knowledge such as academia, law, politics, science etc. force them to create alternative cultural spaces to discuss issues regarding their female experiences and concerns, e.g., gossip, stories and recipes.

[32]As Saldívar-Hull (1999) points out, Chicana Third World feminism emerged when Chicana lesbian theorist and artists, such as Cherríe Moraga, "proposed a global feminism that linked racialized, sexualized women in the US to women engaged in struggles throughout the Americas." Thus, "What Moraga termed 'third world feminism' was a bold effort to forge political linkages between mujeres, lesbian and heterosexual; this was a feminism that destabilized heterosexuality in a traditionally homophobic community; a feminism that was working-class inspired and working-class identified" (252).

[33]By Feminismo Popular, Saldívar-Hull (1999) refers "to that brand of Mexican feminismo popular that emerged from working-class women's labour struggles" (259).

positionality in which feminist theory and art move "beyond abstractions to practices, that engages Chicana feminist theories with social and cultural productions in multiple Chicana and Mexicana locations and that also breaks with Euro-American feminisms' geopolitical racist and elitist mappings" (Saldívar-Hull 1999, 252).

In *Toward a Latina Feminism of the Americas: Repression and Resistance in Chicana and Mexicana Literature* (2008), Anna Marie Sandoval develops a comparative analysis that reevaluate the hemispheric exchanges between Chicanas and *Mexicanas* in both literary traditions. In contrast to Saldívar-Hull, Sandoval does not focus on the exchanging of feminist movements and theories, but in patriarchal formations and cultural symbols that both literary traditions share and resist. Her main contribution lies in pointing out that these symbols and formations are not exactly the same in both traditions. She asserts, "by formulating cultural symbols and offering nontraditional constructions of culturally relevant themes, Chicanas and Mexicanas are responding to systems of patriarchy" (4). In their responses to patriarchy, "Chicanas and Mexicanas criticize similar issues" (4). However, how they interrogate and represent these issues vary "because of their respective communities, their different experiences with U.S. colonization, and other unique aspects of their lives" (4). Sandoval, then, warns us against oversimplifying the social and political meanings of the cultural symbols that transnationally travel across the United States and Latin America. She also reminds us that the study of hemispheric and transnational flows requires always taking into consideration the specifics of the locale.

In *Transnational Latina Narratives in the Twenty-First Century: The Politics of Gender, Race and Migrations* (2009), Juanita Heredia explores multiple binational and

hemispheric relationships. She examines the relationships between various Latin American heritages and their corresponding Latina/o communities in the United States as represented in Latina narratives. In particular, Heredia focuses on how the narratives construct a sense of history and family from the intersection of gender, race and migrations (which she understands not only as the physical movement of people, but also as the movement of familial and personal memories). Heredia contribution lies in demonstrating how this sense of history and family is not attached to a national context but consists in the physical and imaginary movements that Latinas and their families do between the United States and their Latin American countries of origin. For Heredia, the writing practices in which Latinas build up their identities "in movement" are the material representation of a transnational perspective, which Latinas acquire from their own personal experiences, and which allows Latina authors to think about themselves beyond national borders.

To sum up, the mentioned works by Latina literary critics advance an analytical hemispheric lens that a) focuses on how the convergence of feminist practices from different geopolitical contexts disrupts artificial dichotomies –e.g., global north vs global south– that obscure how in reality social, political and cultural flows operate under globalization. The focus on this convergence also demonstrates how an effective and hemispheric collaboration between feminists of color is viable; b) recognizes the importance of incorporating the specifics of the localities, identities and communities that are being studied in relation to transnational flows; and c) points out that this hemispheric perspective has its origin in Latinas' personal and family experiences as immigrants and/or racial and gender others in the United States. However, there is another aspect of the hemispheric lens advanced by Latina literary criticism that informs my critical

approach, which I would like to underscore. This is how this hemispheric perspective represents a type of epistemology or a manner of establishing a critical framework. To explain this last aspect, I use Debra A. Castillo's work.

In *Talking Back: Toward a Latin American Feminist Literary Criticism* (1992), Castillo argues that a common misleading in studies on Latin American literatures by female authors is the uncritical use of Anglo-Saxon or French feminist theories in the analysis of these literatures. Castillo affirms that this common practice obscures the fact that, in Latin America, multiple feminisms "are developing in multiple directions, not always compatible with the directions taken by Anglo-European feminism and frequently in discord with one another" (xxii). Castillo, also, sustains that this theoretical misleading reproduces a colonial and patriarchal perspective, by establishing Europe and the United States as dominant centers in the production of theory, and Latin America as a periphery where political and artistic praxis prevails. To solve this misleading, Castillo proposes an analytical model that addresses the particular ways in which Latin American women create theory. According to Castillo, in Latin America, there is not a "rigid distinction between fictional and critical writing [...] the relationship between the writer and the critic tends to come unstuck, and so many of the best writers are also the best critics and theoreticians" (xxii). Thus, she analyzes Latin American female writers not only as fictional authors but also as feminist theorists. With this analytical approach, Castillo twists U.S. and European centered epistemological principles, positioning Latin American writers as producers of more accurate theories than U.S. and European theories to analyze Latin American political, social, cultural and artistic contexts.

Informed by Castillo's observations, I incorporate Latin American critical female voices to the analyses developed in the next chapters. Especially, when the discussion

centers in issues that impact Latin American women. I close this section, illustrating this last point. Chapter 3 analyzes a novel, *Desert Blood* by Alicia Gaspar de Alba, which theorizes about the murders of women in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico. The critical framework that I use in this chapter to examine the relationship between hegemony, affect and the female body encompasses not only a U.S. Latina feminist framework, but also the insights of Latin American feminist who, for decades, have studied systemic violence in Latin America. Moreover, my analysis in this chapter transcends previous critiques of the novel that discuss how it overlooks important aspects of the circumstances of women in Juárez given its U.S. bias;[34] focusing instead on the elements in the novel that allow to understand the asymmetrical positionalities of U.S. Latinas, Mexican and Latin American women in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands.

1.5 Why Fictional Narratives for Studying Latina Affect?

The narratives analyzed in this study teach us how fictional prose is not an aesthetic and isolated exercise, with the sole purpose of expressing the author's psychology and unique literary style. Rather, fictional narratives actively participate in the formation and negotiation of cultural hegemony. Fictional narratives do so disseminating and interrogating ideologies and emotional regimes that circulate in a community during a specific historical period. This particular understanding of the social, cultural and political value of fiction comes from Latina/o literary practices that date back to the nineteenth century, as observed by different schools of Latina/o literary and cultural criticism. It is also the continuation of a Latina feminist practice that has established literature and art as sites where displaced and peripheral female identities are able to build

[34] See Butcher (2015).

a body of knowledge that explains the realities of their racialized and sexualized embodiments and experiences.

As Mathias Nilges affirms in "Marxist Literary Criticism" (2013), a common approach in Latina/o cultural and literary criticism analyzes Latina/o literature as involved in the dialectical relationship between culture and materiality. This approach defines culture not as "merely reflective of its material and historical context" but "as occupying a much more functional, active, and ultimately important role in facilitating this reality in the first place" (143). Thus, according to this approach, "culture and material reality stand in a dialectical relationship, that is, that material reality shapes culture as much as it is in turn shaped by it" (143). This critical approach was first developed in foundational works of Mexican American scholarship, e.g., *With His Pistol in His Hand: A Border Ballad and its Hero* (1958) by Américo Paredes. In which, broadly speaking, Paredes argues that border ballads emerge from the political, social and economic conflict between Anglos and Texans of Mexican origin that initiated with the Mexican American War (1846-1848). Years later, this critical approach was further developed by the literary criticism that arose from the Chicana/o Renaissance.[35] For instance, in "Critical Approaches to Chicano Literature" (1977), Joseph Sommers offers a meta-analysis in which he identifies the three principal approaches in early Chicana/o

[35] Chicana/o Renaissance refers to a period in the 1960s and 1970s in which Chicana/o artistic and literary expression and political activism flourished. As Cordelia Chávez Candelaria (2019) affirms, "The Chicano Renaissance was noteworthy for the emergence of bilingual English/Spanish publications like the landmark periodicals *Aztlán: International Journal of Chicano Studies Research* (Los Angeles, 1967–present), *El Grito: A Journal of Contemporary Mexican American Thought* (Berkeley, 1967–1974), and many other alternative presses throughout the country. As well, the era was marked by gatherings of committed activists at local and regional meetings, demonstrations, national conferences, literary festivals, the painting of murals and installation of art exhibitions, and college and community organizing projects" (np). For more on the Chicana/o Renaissance, see Macial, Ortiz and Herrera-Sobek (2000); and Martínez and Lomelí (1985).

literary criticism.[36] Within these approaches, Sommers points out the existence of a historical-dialectical critical model in which,

> The critic assumes that to consume literary texts, even in their most fantastic and abstract variants, is a form of cognition, for the text comments upon, refers to and interprets human experience. Seeing this experience across time, the critic incorporates reference to the dynamics of the historical process into the content and the context of the work (95).

That is, the historical-dialectical critical model recognizes that literary texts explore how Chicana/o experiences are shaped by specific material and historical conditions, offering an interpretation on the social, political and historical factors that determine the circumstances of Chicana/os. According to Sommers, this model encompasses three assumptions, which are,

> One stems from the understanding that Chicano literary expression is bound up with the historic pattern of economic and social oppression prevailing since 1848 […] A Second assumption incorporates ideology into literary evaluation. The defining of literary history can be seen as part of the struggle for cultural expression in the face of oppression […] The third assumption is that Literature, rather than merely reflecting historical experience, in its very form and structures interprets this experience, and is capable of impact upon the reader's consciousness. By this logic the writer is […] a creative interpreter, one who is

[36] The three critical approaches identified by Sommers are "the cultural model", "the formal model" and "the historical-dialectical model". The cultural model encompasses analyses that understand the literary text as a representation of ethnicity. Analyses under this model mainly describe how the literary text contains distinctive Chicano cultural features, such as indigenous symbols or folk beliefs. The formal model studies the literary text in isolation and only in comparison to similar discourses that could have influenced its structural elements. Under this model, Chicano/a literature is evaluated in relation to Latin American and Anglo-American literary traditions.

> part of a group and must assume the contradictions of this social condition and struggle to resolve them (96).

These assumptions correspond to the paradigms that have guided Latina/o literary criticism, since the second half of the twentieth century. They can be summarized as: a) Latina/o literature emerges from the margins as a consequence of the historical oppression and marginalization that Latina/os have endured in the United States; b) Latina/o literature is a counter-discourse against hegemonic ideology; c) it represents an effort to build voices for subjectivities that have been denied and silenced by power structures as an act of resistance; and d) Latina/o literature is a dialectical exercise in which the convergence between ideological formations and materiality is theorized.

The meta-critiques of scholars such as Angie Chabram (1987), Héctor Calderón and José D. Saldívar (1991) and Charles M. Tatum (2006) exemplify how Latina/o literary criticism has reinterpreted these paradigms. In "Chicano Critical Discourse: An Emerging Cultural Practice" (1987), Angie Chabram identifies four dominant groups in Chicana/o literary criticism: the Yale circle, the Austin circle, the Santa Barbara circle, and the La Jolla circle. Chabram differentiates these four groups according to the theoretical schools that influence their analytical approaches and according to the academic institutions where their members were trained or are affiliated. According to Chabram, the literary critics of the Austin circle are highly influenced by the work of Américo Paredes. These critics advance a cultural studies approach that principally focuses on how Mexican American folklore interrogates and refines hegemonic ideological formations. The Santa Barbara circle, under the mentorship of Luis Leal, develops a historicist approach; La Jolla circle advances a Marxist analysis of Latina/o literary texts; and the Yale proposes a critique that combines post-structuralist notions –

such as subjectivity as an ideological formation shaped and limited by power– with Marxist principles that place the subject always in relation to their historical and material context.[37] The Yale circle, then, defines ideology as a double system of representation that supports a social order but at the same time has a crucial role in the formation of one's subjectivity.[38]

In *Criticism in the Borderlands: Studies in Chicano Literature, Culture and Ideology* (1991), Hector Calderón and José David Saldívar offer a collection of literary critiques which demonstrate how Chicana/o fictions consist in counter-narratives that disrupt dominant ideological systems of representation. And in *Chicano and Chicana Literature Otra Voz del Pueblo* (2006), Charles M. Tatum enumerates some of the most recognized Chicana/o literary critics and theoretical approaches in Chicana/o literary tradition. In his analysis, Tatum emphasizes how Chicana/o literary scholars have been successful in adapting foreign theoretical approaches to study the relationship between Chicana/o literary texts and socio-political systems.

As mentioned, the importance that fictional narratives have as theoretical sites for the Latina writers studied in this work is part of the legacy of Latina feminist practices. With "theory in the flesh", Anzaldúa and Moraga refined the socio-political function of literary fictions in Latina/o culture. They point out how this function involves not only interrogating dominant ideologies that regulate cultural and political macrosystems, but also exploring the most intimate aspects of individual life (such as corporeal experiences and sensations) as point of entrance for understanding how power operates in society.

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[37] As Mathias Nilges (2013) argues, the critique that emerges from the Yale circle is highly influenced by neo-Marxist critics, such as Fredric Jameson (1981), and by the Birmingham school of cultural studies, in particular by the work of Stuart Hall (1996).

[38] For an example of a critique that traces this double operationality of ideology in Latina/o literary narratives, see Ramón Saldívar (1990).

Thus, as Patricia Trujillo affirms in “Feminism” (2013), in theory in the flesh, literature is conditioned by “the exigency of the body” (57). That is, for Anzaldúa and Moraga, political awareness is first acquired through bodily experiences. The literary text is the site where one makes sense of bodily experiences and learn about their connection with power and ideological systems. In *Loving in the War Years: Lo que Nunca Pasó por sus Labios* (1983), Moraga explains this process as follows, “my lesbianism first brought me into writing. My first poems were love poems. That’s the source –el amor, el deseo– that brought me into politics. That was when I learned my first major lesson about writing: it is the measure of my life” (iv). In this passage, Moraga describes how the drives of her lesbian body boosted her to write, given that she sensed the urgency of looking for a space where her silenced and censored homosexuality could be expressed. Thanks to a writing practice that broke up her silence, Moraga developed an awareness of the power dynamics that oppressed her as a bi-racial lesbian and started to understand the oppression endured by other women of color. As she claims in the previous quote, the awareness that she obtained through writing initiated her politization.

It is important to notice that although Moraga does not refer to her love and desire as affects, she implicitly mentions how the affective systems that evoke those emotions in her mind and body are crucially involved in her understanding of power and oppression; also in her involvement in feminist movements and practices. The connection between affect, power and literature that Moraga advances and which serves as precedent of the theoretical perspective developed in this study is better explained in the following quote through the metaphor of “starvation”,

> Silence is like starvation. Don’t be fooled. It’s nothing short of that, and felt most sharply when one has had a full belly most of her life. When we are not physically

> starving, we have the luxury to realize psychic and emotional starvation. It is from this starvation that other starvations can be recognized –if one is willing to take the risk of making the connection– if one is willing to be responsible to the result of the connection. For me the connection is an inevitable one (52).

As the previous quote shows, Moraga uses "starvation" to describe the psychic and bodily sensation that forces her to recognize the external constructs that constrain her intersectional identity as a half white and half Mexican lesbian. Given the importance that this sensation of starvation –which I argue is a physical manifestation of how power impacts Moraga's affective systems– has in Moraga's political awakening, she argues that it is impossible to fight effectively against oppression without an emotional or affective basis. In this regard, she affirms,

> The danger lies in attempting to deal with oppression purely from a theoretical base. Without an emotional, heartfelt grappling with the source of your own oppression, without naming the enemy within ourselves and outside of us, no authentic, non-hierarchical connection among groups can take place (54-53).

In the introduction to *Making Face, Making Soul. Haciendo Caras* (1990), Anzaldúa, as Moraga does, emphasizes the relevance that emotions and affects have in the political and social function of literary texts. She claims,

> I do not believe that "distance" and "objectivity" alone help us to come in terms with our issues. Distancing cannot be a major strategy –only a temporary breather. Total feeling and emotional immersion, the shocking drench of guilt or anger or frustration, wakes us up to some of our realities […] The intellect needs the guts and adrenaline that horrific suffering and anger, evoked by some of the pieces, catapult us into. Only when all the charged feelings are unearthed can we get

> down to “the work,” *la tarea, nuestro trabajo*–changing culture and all its oppressive interlocking machinations (xviii).

Thus, Anzaldúa and Moraga place literary fictions as sites where not only the ideological formations that support socio-political macrosystems acquire sense, but also the individual realizes how hegemonic constructs are internalized, and how these constructs regulate their biological and psychological reactions. For Anzaldúa and Moraga, power is tangible not only in social and historical processes but also in both the physical and psychological dimensions of the racialized and sexualized body. Through writing practices, then, individuals are able to realize how their affective systems relate to power and how they may be mobilized to foster resistance.

Chapter 2: Who Are (Trans)national-Latina Writers in Relation to *Latinidad* and Latino Ethnic Nationalisms?

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the (trans)national-Latina literatures examined in this dissertation develop a hemispheric critical perspective of ruling concepts and systems related to nation, citizenship and capitalism. Chapter 2 offers further clarification on how these literatures interrogate these dominant systems. The chapter focuses on three different fronts in which Latina writers develop their critique. They are the following: first, Latina writers disrupt one-dimensional notions of *Latinidad*; second, they challenge Latino nationalistic formations that exclude some groups or individuals because of their racial, gender and/or sexual identities; and third, they criticize neoliberal capitalism. In the following pages, these fronts are separately discussed. However, as the attentive reader will notice, the discussion of each individual front constantly overlaps to the others. This is because in (Trans)national-Latina literatures these fronts operate not as independent or unrelated systems, but as interconnected systems that simultaneously impact Latina/os' identities, affects and experiences in the United States.

2.1 (Trans)national-Latinas Rewrite *Latinidad*

(Trans)national-Latina writers challenge notions of *Latinidad* that gathers Latina/o groups in a one-dimensional ethnicity or race in order to regulate their participation in capitalism, politics and the imaginary of the nation. This oversimplification comes from the concept of "Latin America", created in the nineteenth century to bring together most of the countries located south of the United States. As Walter Mignolo observes in *The Idea of Latin America* (2005), the term was coined as *L'Amerique Latine* by Michel

Chavelier, who postulated in his writings that most of the Americas were inhabited by people of the "Latin race" who could easily ally with European Latin cultures and nations in their struggles with other European empires and the United States. In the 1860s, the empire of Napoleon the Third used the term to legitimize French imperialism in the Americas, in particular the French invasion of Mexico. As Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo argues in *Latin America the Allure and Power of an Idea* (2017), Latin America as a concept has its foundations in nineteenth century imperialism and obsolete racial and cultural constructs. However, despite its obsolescence and problematic origins, Latin America is still the most recurrent term to talk about the region and its inhabitants in the media and academic circles.

As mentioned, the limitations and oversimplifications implied in Latin America as a concept were transferred to the idea of *Latinidad*. As Arlene Dávila notices in *Latinos, Inc.: The Marketing and Making of a People* (2001), the public representation of Latina/os as a generic and homogenous group in the United States is intended not only to reaffirm their otherness in opposition to Anglo-Europeans through processes of exotification and invisibility, but also to incorporate Latina/os as consumers in an expanding capitalist market. Therefore, despite *Latinidad* is based on obsolete and inaccurate racial and cultural constructs, it is a very alive paradigm, given that it facilitates the unequal distribution of capital and markets across racial and ethnic lines in the twenty first century.

To disrupt *Latinidad* as a simplistic paradigm that facilitates the operations of racial capitalism in the United States, (trans)national-Latina narratives reevaluate the

particular racial formations[39] that asymmetrically impact Latina/o communities. This means that these narratives focus on how Latina/o communities are differently racialized, emphasizing that the commonality among different Latina/o communities lies in the fact that they are asymmetrically racialized groups in the United States.

In *Latino Racial Formations in the United States* (2003), Nicholas de Genova and Ana Y. Ramos-Zayas advance a similar understanding of *Latinidad.* It is pertinent to notice that they suggest that this revision of racial formations requires a transnational perspective that discloses the hemispheric connections between the U.S. and Latin America. They describe their conceptualization of *Latinidad* in the following way,

> [It] has the advantage of situating Latino commonalities within a broader transnational perspective that connects U.S. Latinidad to Latin American history and, more specifically, to the historical specificity of the U.S. nation-state's imperial projects in Latin America that have so commonly produced Latino migrations to the United States (10).

Moreover, according to Genova and Ramos-Zayas, their redefinition of *Latinidad* discloses "how the homogenizing racialized discourses of U.S. imperialism with respect to Latin America have been implicated in the organizing conceptual frameworks for the incorporation of U.S. Latinos as a generic and unitary "minority" group" (10). That is, their definition clarifies the connection between Latin America and *Latinidad* as intellectual constructs that represent the continuation and evolution of imperialistic projects across the Americas.

[39] In *Racial Formation in the United States* (1990), Michael Omi and Howard Winant define "racial formation" in the following terms: "The sociohistorical process by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed, and destroyed […] Racial formation is a process of historically situated projects in which human bodies and social structures are represented and organized" (56).

In their interrogation of *Latinidad,* (trans)national-Latina literatures take into consideration the relationship between U.S. racial discourses about Latin America and the racialization of Latina/os in the United States, as suggested by Genova and Ramos-Zayas. However, the transnational perspective developed in these literatures also advances a relational approach to racialization processes intended for non-Latina/o groups. Natalia Molina's analysis on the racialization of Mexican immigrants is helpful to understand this relational approach. In *How Race Is Made in America: Immigration, Citizenship, and the Historical Power of Racial Scripts* (2013), Molina suggests understanding racialization processes as "racial scripts", which, according to her, are always arranged in relation to other racialization processes. That is, racial categories, such as Mexican, are "socially constructed in relational ways […] in correspondence to other groups" (3), even when the racialization of the groups involved occur in different temporalities. Molina illustrates the last arguing that the racial category "Mexican" was built in the nineteenth and early twentieth century upon racialization processes previously intended for other racial groups such as Chinese immigrants and Native Americans.

The narratives analyzed in this dissertation develop a relational perspective, when they represent how overlapping racial scripts impact Latinas' affective systems. The narratives focus on how multiple Latin American and U.S. racial formations from the past and the present constrain Latinas' embodiments and emotional reactions. The last is especially developed in the narratives that portray Afro-Latina characters. For instance, Chapter 4 discusses how the Afro-Latina protagonists of Julia Álvarez's *In the Name of Salomé* are constrained by multiple and hemispheric racial scripts, which are: U.S. blackness, *Latinidad,* Dominican Indo-Hispanic Identity, Iberian whiteness, *hispanismo* and *haitianismo*. This transnational relational perspective, then, discloses the artificiality

of notions of *Latinidad* supported by a generic and homogenous brownness. Moreover, it establishes a conversation between the narratives and other critical perspectives that also interrogate *Latinidad*, such as Afro-*Latinidad*.

2.1.1 Afro-Latinidad

Although the narratives analyzed in this dissertation do not fully participate in Afro-*Latinidad*, they, in particular the narratives by Latinas of Caribbean origin such as Julia Álvarez and Cristina García, recognize the importance that the recovering of blackness in Latina/o ethnic identities has for healing Latina affective systems. As further discussed in the conclusions of this study, these narratives point out Afro-*Latinidad* as the path to reevaluate *Latinidad* in the twenty first century. For this reason, below I offer a review that clarifies the notion of Afro-*Latinidad* with which Álvarez and García establish a dialogue.

Afro-*Latinidad* is a critical approach that challenges perspectives that circumscribe *Latinidad* to national ethnicities or generalize about brownness in relation to Latina/os. Afro-Latinidad, then, questions perspectives that exclusively describe Latina/os as *mestiza/os,* who are the offspring of Europeans and Indigenous peoples. This includes Latino ethnic nationalisms supported by the generalization of *mestizaje.* People of African descent, who come from communities historically excluded from Latin American nationalisms and *Latinidad* in the United States because they do not fit dominant embodiments of *mestizaje,* call themselves Afro-Latina/os.[40]

[40] Afro-Latina/os also utilize other terms to call themselves, such as "Negra/o", "afrodescendiente", "afrolatinoamericano" (Jiménez Roman and Flores 2010) or "Latinegra" (Cruz-Janzen 2010).

Afro-Latina/os point out the Negrophobia of Latin American racial formations, which Latino ethnic nationalisms inherited. They also challenge the U.S. one-drop racial system that defines blackness only in relation to U.S. African American culture.[41] Afro-Latina/os, thus, endure a double exclusion. On the one hand, Latin American and Latino nationalisms describe Latina/os as hybrid brown skinned people who are not Black. On the other hand, U.S. whiteness and African American culture favor one-dimensional conceptions of blackness that make invisible the existence of people who identify as Black but also with other racial or ethnic identities. Because of their problematic positionality in relation to *Latinidad* and U.S. blackness, Afro-Latina/os focus on making visible their everyday practices, intersectional identities, beliefs and structures of feeling. They do so in order to advance movable identities that express their experiences and historical legacies as individuals with two or more racial, cultural, ethnic, and/or national affiliations.

This understanding of Afro-*Latinidad* is informed by Claudia Milian's (2013) and Miriam Jiménez Román's and Juan Flores's (2010) works. In the "Introduction" to *The Afro-Latin@ Reader* (2010), Jiménez Román and Flores offer insights into Afro-Latinidad as a transnational process. Their perspective is relevant in this study because the analyses in Chapters 4 and 5 point out how the contemporary relationship between

[41] I borrow this term from Claudia Milian (2013) to name the mainstream and one-dimensional definition of blackness that prevails in the U.S. As Ira Berlin argues in "The Changing Definition of African American" (2010), this definition –portrayed in mass media and commemorated in national celebrations– "has long been articulated through a common history, indeed a particular history: centuries of enslavement, freedom in the course of the Civil War, a great promise made amid the political turmoil of Reconstruction and a great promise broken, followed by disfranchisement, segregation and, finally, the long struggle for equality" (np). However, this history is not the history of the thousands of Blacks immigrants from Africa and the Caribbean who have come to the U.S. since 1965. As Berlin continues, "to many of these men and women, Juneteenth celebrations—the commemoration of the end of slavery in the United States—are at best an afterthought […] Some have struggled over the very appellation "African-American," either shunning it—declaring themselves, for instance, Jamaican-Americans or Nigerian-Americans—or denying native black Americans' claim to it on the ground that most of them had never been to Africa. At the same time, some old-time black residents refuse to recognize the new arrivals as true African Americans" (np).

Latinidad and blackness is transnational, transtemporal and hemispheric. Jiménez Román and Flores argue that Afro-Latinidad "can be viewed as an expression of long-term transnational relations" (1) among Black communities across the Americas. These transnational relations dated back from the beginnings of the transatlantic slave route and were politicized in the nineteenth century, through the development of social movements and schools of political thought, such as Pan-Africanism and Negritude. Therefore, Afro-Latinidad consists in part of "the many vibrant anti-racist movements and causes that have been gaining momentum throughout the hemisphere for over a generation" (2). However, Afro-Latinidad as transnationalism also comprises hemispheric exchanges of expressive cultures, and spiritual and other everyday practices among Black communities across the continent.

As mentioned, Afro-Latina/os by claiming their belonging to both *Latinidad* and Blackness simultaneously disrupt *mestizaje,* as the basis of Latino ethnic nationalisms. They also destabilize racial categories within the U.S. one-drop system, which organizes race in oppositional dichotomies (e.g., white vs Black, Black vs Brown, and Brown vs white) that do not overlap. In this regard, Jiménez Román and Flores observes that Afro-Latina/os challenge these dichotomies claiming both their Latin American national origin and U.S. blackness,

> No stage in Afro-Latin@ history in the United States is without some reference to home countries, whether it be personal or group memories, familial ties, or current political or social situations […] In some cases, […] those ties are especially explicit and vital. Histories and events in Panama, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Nicaragua and other homelands are ever present in the lives of Afro-

> Latin@s in the United States, as are the ongoing effects of racial ideologies and experiences that prevail in those places of personal or family origin (12).

By doing so, Afro-Latina/os re-color the racial imaginary of both racial formations, blackening *Latinidad* and Latinizing U.S. blackness.

It is worthy to mention that, according to Jiménez Román and Flores, another fundamental aspect of Afro-*Latinidad* is that it is a "unique phenomenological experience lived at a personal level by people who are both Black and Latin@ in all aspects of their social life" (14). The last is because "Afro-Latin@s [unlike non-Black Latina/os and non-Latina/o Blacks] navigate their social identities as they intersect with other Latin@s and with other Blacks" (14), which makes that their bodily and everyday social experiences are what mainly inform their awareness of their peripheral positionality within one-dimensional racial formations. This is demonstrated in the analyses of Álvarez's and García's novels, given that Afro-Latina characters in both texts realize how their blackness is peripheral to their identities as Latinas through their bodily and affective experiences as well as thorough their dairy social interactions.

In *Latining America: Black-Brown Passages and the Coloring of Latino/a Studies* (2013), Claudia Milian proposes the concept of "Latinaness" which includes "new possibilities beyond national identities and brown symbology" (8). She argues that Latinaness comprises multiple "Latinities", which do not adhere to a generic or one-dimensional notion of brownness "as designative of U.S. Latino and Latina identities"; nor define themselves in opposition to "blackness as appropriate only to a U.S. African American context" (5). Latinities, then, according to Milian, are,

> A "re-articulable" panethnic space where the subject is constituted in relation to blackness, brownness and dark brownness but also in terms of language, ethnicity,

> nation, class, gender, sexuality, and race, depending on the context. Latinity is the action of the "thing" that "becomes" re-cognized in locations outside its own ethnoracial and cultural particularities. Latinities are re-articulatable because they become a different discursive element and provide a necessary distance from how normative U.S African American and U.S Latino and Latina projects have been bounded and represented (16).

That is, Latinities are processes in which Black, Brown and dark Brown bodies "move into, and interfere with one another's color lines" (5), as well as with other identity markers, such as language, nation, gender, class and sexuality. With this concept, Milian complicates even more the racial ambiguity that Latina/os represent within U.S. racial formations as mestiza/os, who do not match any of the two poles of the dichotomy white vs Black of the one-drop racial system; and who bring with them Latin American racial formations that come from the Spanish colonial racial hierarchization into castes. In "Latinegras: Desire Women-Undesirable Mothers, Daughters, Sisters, and Wives" (2010), Marta I. Cruz-Janzen explains one of the main differences between Latin American and U.S. racial systems, which, as mentioned in the previous chapter, lies in how differently both systems define whiteness, blackness and indigeneity,

> Regardless of skin color and physical appearance, in the United States one drop of non-white blood makes the person 100 percent non-white, while in Latin-America one drop of white blood makes the person whiter, or at least no longer Black or Indian. In Latin America "racial impurity" can be "cleansed" and "expunged" in ascending stages; in the United States racial "impurity" designates the person and his or her future generations as unfit and undesirable (286).

Thus, in Latin America, race is understood as gradation of color, privileging white as the most desirable racial complexion and denigrating Black as the less desirable. Milian borrows U.S. African American term, colorism, to explain how gradation of skin color operate in Latin American countries.[42] She in particular points out how colorism intrinsically connects with the color-blindness that prevails in Latin American societies, hiding the blatant racism that regulates Latin American racial formations. For instance, in countries such as Mexico, colorism erases blackness by classifying it as a dark degree of brownness or a lower stage of *mestizaje*. By doing so, colorism describes the systemic discrimination that limits Afro-Mexicans' access to housing, education and health as an issue exclusively related to classism and unrelated to racism.[43] An important contribution of Milian's work is that it points out how the colorism and color-blind racism of Latin American racial formations are present in dominant definitions of U.S. *Latinidad*. For this reason, Milian suggests replacing *Latinidad* with Latinities, given that the latter represent a movement against colorism and color-blindness. This is because Latinities instead of denying the existence of blackness and internalized racism within *Latinidad*, focuses on

[42] It is important to notice that colorism differently manifests among Latin American countries. For instance, in Puerto Rico, colorism manifests in a complete glossary with terms of common usage that refer to different gradations of skin color and features. As Angela Jorge in "The Black Puerto Rican Woman in contemporary American Society" (2010) affirms, "Puerto Ricans express racial differences according to gradations of color, each classification representing a gradation of color among black Puerto Rican women will be accompanied by different attitudes and perceptions about color. The terms *mulata*, *jabá*, *trigueña, grifa, negra* and *prieta* are all defined according to color gradations and traits" (269).

[43] Milian uses the term, "Indigent Latinities", to explain how colorism covers up racism making it pass as classism. Broadly speaking, indigent Latinities are the association of blackness and Brown-blackness with poverty, marginalization, and backwards. In the article "Papás ricos y niños bonitos: así se discrimina en algunas escuelas privadas de México" (2017), Oscar Balderas tells a story that exemplifies how indigent Latinities operate in the Mexican racial imaginary. In this article, a teacher, who works in one of the most exclusive private schools in Mexico City, narrates how the children of dark-skinned parents with indigenous features are denied admission to the school despite being intellectually able and having the money to afford the high fees. This is, because according to the school's admissions committee, these children and their parents have "*tez humilde*" (a humble complexion or a humble skin color), which means that their dark complexion and indigenous features automatically define them as lacking the necessary economic and intellectual capital to be part of the school's community.

analyzing how different passages of color amongst black, dark brown, brown, and light brownness relate to other identity markers and differently endure discrimination.

Milian's notion of Latinities is useful to this study because one of its main arguments is that the narratives that explore Afro-Latina affect denounce the racism that prevails within Latin American and Latino racial formations, when these formations define Latina/o identities as a hybridity mainly comprised by Indigenous peoples and Spaniards. These narratives, then, represent how Latinas' racial and ethnic identities are much more complex, consisting in intersections that necessarily converge with blackness. It is important to point out that, in their revision of the meaning of hybridity within Latino nationalisms and *Latinidad*, these narratives directly or indirectly interrogate the idea of *mestizaje* as epitome of Latina/o identities.

To facilitate the understanding of the last, below, I review how *mestizaje* operates as dominant racial formation in Latin America as well as an oppositional (yet problematic) racial ideology in the United States. This review does not suggest that *mestizaje* or racial hybridity means the same across the Americas. As demonstrated in the next chapters, although dominant notions of racial hybridity in countries across the Americas share the fact that they advance *blanqueamiento*, colorism and pigmentocracy, they vary according to the specific histories of racial relationships in each country. For instance, the analyses in the next chapters point out how Dominican Indo-Hispanic identity is a hybrid racial formation that emerges from the specific history of racial relationships in the Hispaniola and is different to the meanings of *mestizaje* in the U.S.-Mexico border and within *cubanidad*. The review below then mainly clarifies the relationship between racial hybridity, ethnic identity and power, which is at the core of the critique offer by (trans)national-Latina narratives.

2.1.2 Mestizaje in Latin America

Broadly speaking, *mestizaje* is defined as a biological and cultural phenomenon that began in Latin America and the Spanish Caribbean during colonial times as a consequence of the social interactions between colonizers and colonized populations. According to dominant definitions of the term, Latin Americans are the offspring of the miscegenation and cultural hybridization between Europeans and the main colonized group in each country. For example, in countries like Mexico and Peru where most of the colonized peoples were indigenous communities, *mestizaje* is defined as the mix between European and Indigenous peoples. In constrast, in places like Brazil where Black slaves were the main colonized group, *mestizaje* is described as the mixture between Europeans and Blacks. However, as Miriam Jiménez Román argues in "Looking at the Middle Ground: Racial Mixing as Panacea" (2007), *mestizaje* is not only a label that names Latin American racial and cultural identities, but an ideological formation supported by sanitized or romanticized versions of Latin American colonial past. According to Jiménez Román, these "sanitized" accounts tell how Spanish colonizers practiced a "benign" form of slavery, given that they were less racist than their Anglo-Saxon counterparts as demonstrated by their willingness to engage in sexual intercourse with Indigenous and Blacks. These accounts also claim that very few African slaves arrived to the Spanish colonies, despite there are records that indicate that Spanish colonies (as Portuguese, French and British domains) where very active within the transatlantic slave route.[44] And, as Ginetta Candelario affirms in "Color Matters: Latina/o Racial Identities and Life Chances" (2007), "the vast majority of Africans in America were settled in Spanish and Portuguese colonies" (340).

[44] See *The Slave Route Project.*

As Jiménez Román and Candelario points out, the sanitization of history that accompanies dominant notions of *mestizaje* justifies the displacement of specific communities from Latin American national imaginaries. E.g., Mexican *mestizaje* denies Afro-Mexicans as part of the nation-state and Brazilian *mestiçagem* ignores Indigenous Brazilians. This selective displacement discloses how rather than historical fact, *mestizaje* is a hegemonic ideology that Latin American elites have utilized to consolidate their power since the establishment of Latin American nation-sates in the nineteenth century.

The history of mestizaje as racial ideology goes as follows: When Latin American nations achieved their independence, creoles (Europeans' descendants born in the Americas) confronted the challenge of maintaining the hegemonic position that the colonial caste system granted them.[45] In response to this challenge, they spread racial ideologies that, on the one hand, distanced creoles from European colonizers, but on the other, consolidated them as the new ruling class because of their cultural and racial capital. These ideologies include: racial hybridity as a path to whiteness, colorism and *blanqueamiento*. They established creoles as embodiments of the ideal of Latin American citizenship. That is, an individual who is not European nor Indian nor Black but embodies "the potential rewards of *blanqueamiento* (whitening)" (Jiménez Román 2007, 328).

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[45] As Ginetta Candelario points out in "Color Matters: Latina/o Racial Identities and Life Chances" (2007), the caste system in Latin America consisted in a social hierarchy in which "each group occupied a specific socioeconomic niche defined largely by race. At the top of the hierarchy were the Spanish Peninsulars (those born on the Iberian Peninsula), closely followed by Spanish Creoles born in the Americas. At the bottom were the various indigenous populations and at the very bottom were the Africans. In between the top and the very bottom were arrayed all the mixed heritage groups (castas), ranked according to the proportion of Spanish heritage they could claim or to the proximity to phenotypical whiteness. Because the Casta system allowed for the formulation of intermediate statuses between white and non-white, inter- and intragenerational shifts in caste status for individuals were possible. Thus color (together with hair and phenotype) mattered materially and symbolically. In other words, through reproductive and cultural strategies –mating/marrying lighter; assimilating Hispanic language, dress, religion, and food way; becoming literate and educated– one and one's lineage could become upwardly mobile in the social-racial order" (341).

As Cristina A. Sue argues in *Land of the Cosmic Race: Race Mixture, Racism, and Blackness in Mexico* (2013), racial ideologies cannot be simply imposed by elites to subalterns, but, in order to be effective, subalterns have to accept and embrace these ideologies, incorporating them to society's "common sense".[46] Latin American elites soon enough learned that they were in high risk if they attempted to impose their racial ideologies by force.[47] Therefore, they instead advance theories of miscegenation intended to whitening the population.

In "Mestizaje and the Discourse of National/Cultural Identity in Latin America, 1845-1959" (1998), Lourdes Martinez-Echazabal offers a chronology of the formation of these theories. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, two approaches to miscegenation prevailed in Latin America. The first approach was informed by Herbert Spencer's view of society as a social organism and advanced by intellectuals such as the Argentinian Domingo F. Sarmiento. Sarmiento argued that the miscegenation between Europeans and peoples of color was unacceptable, an obstacle to the progress of Latin American nations, and a disease that would condemn emergent Latin American nations to degeneration and barbarism. In order to avoid the "maladies" associated to miscegenation, this approach urges the implementation of extreme measures to avoid at all cost miscegenation, such as the expulsion and genocide of Blacks and indigenous

[46] Sue (2013) offers a precise definition of common sense, which reads, "Ideology and common sense are complex social forces, steeped in contradiction. Not only are contradictions present within national ideology itself, but also individuals' lived experiences are oftentimes inconsistent with elite ideologies. Additional contradictions arise during the process through which elite ideology is disseminated, received, and interpreted by the populace –or otherwise transformed into common sense. Thus, common sense ends up representing an amalgam of ideas derived from elite ideology and those borne out of lived experience, producing a system wrought with disorganization and contradiction. Non-elites are thus tasked with making sense of their identities, attitudes, and lived experiences amid this chaos" (9).

[47] This lesson was learnt through the salve rebellions that took place in Brazil and Haiti in the nineteenth century. The latter ended with the foundation of the first Black nation in the western hemisphere, the Republic of Haiti.

communities (24-25). The second approach was developed by intellectuals such as the Cuban José Antonio Caso and the Brazilian Silvio Romero, who considered that the miscegenation between Europeans, Blacks and Indigenous was the best way of whitening Latin America (27). As Martinez- Echazabal suggests, although this second approached was considered humanitarian and progressive in its time, indeed, both approaches share the same racist principles that safeguard "Western racial and cultural supremacy" (30).

As Martinez-Echazabal continues, during the late nineteenth century, this second approach was refined and mobilized as political tool in Latin American struggles for self-determination. For instance, José Martí in "My Race" (1893)[48] defined Latin American identity as the harmonious coexistence of various races (European, Black and Native), and as holder of a superior ethic, in contrast to the blatant racism of European and U.S. imperialisms. Martí in his writings inspired the romanticized figures of the mestizo and mulatto that emerged in the twentieth century as embodiments of Latin American nationalisms. In that century, politicians and intellectuals, such as the Mexican José Vasconcelos in *The Cosmic Race* (1925)[49], felt the need "to rehabilitate (Latin) America in the eyes of Europe" and the U.S., establishing "once and for all its distinctive identity and to create forms of artistic expression capable of articulating the uniqueness of its culture" (33). In many Latin American countries, the mestizo or the mulatto became the trope and image of the nation. Also, a new rhetoric emerged, which stopped emphasizing the Eurocentric discourse of "inferior" and "superior" races, "but emphasized an inevitable and "natural" synthesis of cultures based on the positive outcome of the contact and cooperation between civilizations" (33).

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[48] See Loughridge (1945).

[49] See Vasconcelos and Didier Tisdel (1979).

Martinez-Echazabal points out that during the 1920s and 1930s, *mestizaje* ceased to be uniquely understood as a biological phenomenon and started to be defined in terms of transculturation and aesthetics. Scholars, such as the Brazilian Gilberto Freyre and the Cuban Fernando Ortiz, and artists, such as the Mexican Diego Rivera, the Cubans Wilfredo Lam and Nicolás Guillén and the Puerto Rican Pales Matos, advanced this new understanding (35). By disassociating *mestizaje* from its racial boundaries and redefining it as the transcultural ethos of Latin American nation-states (36), these artists and intellectuals establishes some of the bases that are still current in dominant ideas about Latin American *mestizaje*. These dominant ideas naturalize *mestizaje* as the biological and cultural outcome of Latin American history, fallaciously portraying Latin American nations as "racial democracies", freed of racial prejudices, where citizens are not discriminated against because of their race or phenotype. Moreover, these ideas overshadow how *mestizaje* as other racial ideologies in the Americas is "guided by the dictates of power" (37). In this regard, Martinez-Echazabal affirms,

> *Mulataje* or *mestizaje*, particularly in its culturalist rendition, was central to the politicized assimilationist, monoculturalist rhetoric that surfaced in Latin America during the 1920s and thereafter as a means to neutralize the cultural (and racial) pluralism typical of virtually all Latin American countries a pluralism considered by many politically counterproductive in the face of Latin America's move toward refurbishing the nation-state (38).

Thus, as Cristina A. Sue (2013) argues, although *mestizaje* "appears to challenge notions of white superiority" (18), celebrating the mixed-race, brown-skinned individual as the "official" image of Latin American nations, it is still part of an ideological apparatus that supports pigmentocracy, which is enforced "through contemporary practices of

discrimination" (6), as it is evident in the fact that in Latin American societies, "light-skinned individuals with European features dominate the top positions of society and dark-skinned individuals of indigenous or African descent are overrepresented at the bottom rungs of society" (6).

To conclude this section, it is important to notice that as Martinez-Echazabal (1998) observes, *mestizaje* in Latin America is interconnected with gender ideologies that define Latin American pigmentocracies as hierarchies that establish heterosexuality and patriarchy as authority. This intersectionality between *mestizaje* and gender ideologies constrain the social and political participation not only of racial others, but also of gender and sexual others. This intersectionality is further explored in the next chapters.

2.1.3 *Challenging Mestizaje in the Americas*

As mentioned, the narratives analyzed in this study interrogate dominant understanding of *mestizaje* in both Latin America and the United States. For this reason, it is pertinent to indicate how they establish a conversation with other critical perspectives on this racial formation inside and outside the U.S. As Helen Safa argues in "Challenging Mestizaje: A Gender Perspective on Indigenous and Afrodescendant Movements in Latin America" (2005), despite the dominance of *mestizaje*, indigenous and Afrodescendants in the Americas are challenging this concept "as a framework for nation-building" (308), by fighting against the Eurocentric paradigms that have worked in the region to condition citizenship. Indigenous and Afrodescendants are creating civil movements to demand that their cultures and phenotypes are recognized as active participants in the construction of Latin American nations. I refer to these movements as "civil" because they focus on obtaining full citizenship for communities that historically and politically have been made

invisible. Josefina Saldaña-Portillo's insights into the Zapatista movement in Mexico inform my understanding of these movements as projects of citizenship. In "Who's the Indian in Aztlán? Re-Writing Mestizaje, Indianism, and Chicanismo from the Lacandón" (2001), Saldaña-Portillo argues that the Zapatista movement does not focus on restituting traditional practices,[50] but on guaranteeing indigenous peoples full Mexican citizenship. According to Saldaña-Portillo, "what the Zapatistas are doing that is radically new to Mexican hegemonic consciousness is reconceptualizing the Mexican constituency as a constituency that includes Indians as political agents in the nation-state" (410). That is, Zapatistas in their struggle disrupt *mestizaje* and propose a new national identity in which real Indigenous people are recognized as legitimate citizens. They introduce their real bodies and experiences into the national public arena to displace the fetish indigenous[51] used in the equation European plus Indigenous of Mexican *mestizaje* and, by doing so, they destabilize the hegemonic apparatus that denies dark Mexicans political, economic and social rights.

Helen Safa (2005) and Marisol de la Cadena (2000) argue that indigenous and Afrodescendants demand full citizenship not only through their active participation in civil movements and organizations, but also in their everyday practices. In these practices, they distance *mestizaje* from its racial, ethnic and cultural connotations, redefining it in terms of social inclusion and participation. In "Challenging Mestizaje: A

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[50] According to Saldaña-Portillo, this is evident in the Movement of Zapatista women who reject the machista practices within their communities and demand that their indigenous female bodies and experiences be considered in the construction of equal rights for Mexican women.

[51] Saldaña-Portillo identifies this fetish indigenous not only in the figures of the glorious Indians of the past who succumbed to Spanish conquerors; but also in the figures of the cacique (a leader who under the patronage of the state controls extensive areas of land and its population, and who best well known literary representation is Juan Rulfo's *Pedro Paramo*) and the decorative indigenous people of touristic spectacles, such as the sound-and-light shows in *Xcaret* and *Xel Ha* or the *Voladore*s *de Papantla* (flying men from Papantla).

Gender Perspective on Indigenous and Afrodescendant Movements in Latin America" (2005), Safa illustrates this argument. She argue that, in Cuzco Peru, rural Indigenous women "despise mestizas as immoral and degenerate" (321), considering Indigenous women who have acculturated, betrayers of their culture and ancestral traditions. In contrast, urban indigenous women perceive,

> Mestizas not as traitors but as the road to progress. The urban market women, or 'indigenous mestizas', as they call themselves, replaced the code of *decencia* or decency with the code of *respeto* or respect, which repudiated sexual propriety in favor of a work ethic that released women from dependency and the protection of men (321).

According to Safa, this understanding of *mestizaje* decolonizes the term because urban indigenous women do not assume *mestizaje* as racially constructed. As Marisol De la Cadena affirms in *Indigenous Mestizos: The Politics of Race and Culture in Cuzco, 1919-1991* (2000). For these indigenous women, being mestiza does not mean, "disappearing into a homogenous mestizo culture" (172) but benefiting from education and economic independence to achieve self-determination. With this, they advance "a new form of mestiza" (170), which is socially constructed and does not displace their indigenous culture.

In this study, I argue that from their specific positionalities, (trans)national-Latina writers participate in this project of citizenship. Their participation makes evident how this project is a hemispheric movement that advances new citizenships that include female identities that hegemonic racial and gender ideologies have omitted from national imaginaries across the Americas. What is specific of their participation in this project is that (trans)national-Latina writers simultaneously challenge multiple national imaginaries.

That is, they challenge U.S. and Latin American racial formations as well as *Latinidad* and Latino nationalisms. They disrupt these national formations questioning not only common notions of whiteness and blackness, but also notions of *mestizaje* (brownness) in different national contexts. This means that (trans)national-Latina writers criticize *mestizaje* not only as a problematic hegemonic racial formation in Latin America but also in relation to definitions of Latina/o identities in the U.S. As discussed in the following section, in the United States, *mestizaje* has represented an effective tool to destabilize U.S. racial formations that make invisible or deny Latina/os belonging to the nation. However, some Latina/o critics have denounced that despite its political value, *mestizaje* is problematic because it omits, within Latino nationalisms and *Latinidad,* individuals who do not fit within the generic brownness associated with the binary Indigenous-Spaniards.

2.1.4 Mestizaje in the United States

In *Mestizaje: Critical Issues of Race in Chicano Culture* (2006), Rafael Pérez-Torres offers a comprehensive analysis of *mestizaje* within Chicana/o culture.[52] According to Pérez-Torres, *mestizaje* "is a dominant trope in Chicano critical discourse" (xi). This trope has consisted in a crucial political tool in the assertion of Chicana/os as legitimate citizens of the United States. Chicana/os have utilized *mestizaje* to disrupt the one-drop U.S. racial formation that simplistically divides people into whites and non-

[52] To situate the discussion around *mestizaje* on the U.S., I focus on how Chicana/os have employed the term because this is the case that the scholarship on the topic principally discusses. Nonetheless, this does not mean that Chicana/os are the only Latina/o group that uses *mestizaje* as political or social tool to disrupt the U.S. racial dichotomy white-Black. As José Itzigsohn and Carlos Dore-Cabral (2000) demonstrate in their sociological study on ethnic self-identification among Dominicans in the U.S., Dominicans employ panethnic terms, such as Latina/o and Hispanic, to emphasize how their mixed racial constitution does not fit into the white and Black U.S. racial paradigm.

whites. It also disrupts mainstream representations that only portray whites and U.S. African Americans as embodiments of U.S. citizenship. As Martha Menchaca argues in "Latinas/os and the Mestizo Racial Heritage of Mexican Americans" (2007), since the annexation of the Southwest to the United States in 1848, Mexicans' condition as "racially mixed" individuals has troubled the U.S. legal system. During the first years after the annexation, government officials battled classifying South Westerners as Mexican, Native or Black. This classification was crucial because it determined who would lose or keep the right to confirm their Mexican land grants. The classification process was hard for the officials because many times they were unable to determine with the naked eye who was Mexican (mestizo), and who was Native or Black. Therefore, they were obliged to incorporate to the process of classification the individuals' cultural practices and family genealogies as parameters of categorization (316-317). In the subsequent years and specifically after Plessy vs. Ferguson[53], being a Mexican mestizo stopped to signify a legal protection against segregation. Nonetheless, Mexicans' racial mixing continued to trouble U.S. courts, especially in enforcing anti-miscegenation laws (319).

Thus, since the nineteenth century, Chicana/os' *mestizaje* has positioned them in an ambiguous racial and political position. In some occasions, this ambiguity has been utilized to disenfranchise them. Nonetheless, Chicana/os have also taken advantage of their racial ambiguity to destabilize the U.S. racial-state and endorse themselves as legitimate U.S. citizens. As Pérez-Torres argues, since the Chicano Movement in the

[53] This legal case that occurred in 1896 is considered the beginning of the one-drop racial system in the U.S. In the resolution of the case, "the U.S. supreme court stipulated that each state had the right to select the groups to be segregated and to determine who was White and non-White for purposes of segregation" (Menchaca 2007, 317).

1970s, Chicana/os have consciously embraced *mestizaje* (alongside Aztlán)[54] as the biological and cultural basis of a cultural nationalism that states Chicana/os as the legitimate and "original" inhabitants of the U.S. Southwest. Although Chicana/os' *mestizaje* claims the same biological, transcultural and aesthetic motifs of Mexican *mestizaje*, Pérez-Torres argues that Chicana/o *mestizaje* is different to the Mexican version because,

> If, then, *mestizaje* in Mexico represents a flight from the Indian, we might think of Chicana *mestizaje* as a race toward the Indian. At the very least, this race needs to be understood as a strategic assertion of racial difference in struggle against disenfranchisement. Although this does not necessarily make Indian subjectivity any more present within the cultural discourses of Chicana *mestizaje*, it does enable the deployment of strategic coalitions on a political level (Pérez-Torres 2007, 16).

As the previous quote states, according to Pérez-Torres, in the 1980s and 1990s, Chicana feminist and queer scholars, such as Gloria Anzaldúa in *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987), developed a "critical *mestizaje*" that challenged the homophobic and misogynist principles that the Chicano nationalist movement adopted from Mexican nationalism without calling them into question. I agree with Pérez-Torres that the works of Chicana-lesbian feminists, such as Anzaldúa (1987), Cherrie Moraga (1983) and Emma Pérez (1999), created a more inclusive critical paradigm, pointing out how certain bodies and identities were excluded from Chicano and Mexican nationalisms. They also

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[54] In Chicana/o mythology, Aztlán was the original Aztecs' settlement located in the Southwest. The Aztecs travelled from Aztlán to nowadays Mexico City and founded their empire's capital, Tenochtitlan. Chicana/os, as Aztecs' cultural and/or biological descendants, hold legitimate rights over the Southwestern territories. For more on Aztlán, see Anaya, Lomelí and Lamadrid (2017).

underscore the urgency of creating communal imaginaries that embrace the realities of those excluded, establishing Latina and Queer bodies as legitimate sites of knowledge.

However, we must also listen to the detractors of this "critical *mestizaje*", who question *mestizaje* because of the racism it conveys. For instance, in "Who's the Indian in Aztlán? Re-Writing Mestizaje, Indianism, and Chicanismo from the Lacandón" (2001), Josefina Saldaña-Portillo categorically discredits *mestizaje* as a notion capable "of suturing together the heterogeneous positionalities of Mexican, Indian, and Chicana/o that coexist in the United States, or, more importantly, of offering effective political subjectivity to these positionalities" (413). According to her, when Chicana/os appropriate the trope of *mestizaje*, inevitably they also appropriate its logic of representation; which recuperates the ancestral Indian of the past "rather that recognizing contemporary Indians as cohabitants not only of this continent abstractly conceived, but of the neighborhoods and streets of hundreds of U.S. cities and towns" (413). Thus, contrary to what Pérez-Torres affirms, Saldaña-Portillo argues that this embracement of the ancestral Indigenous cannot create effective political alliances with actual Natives because, in principle, it ignores the denunciations against the ideologies of whitening that *mestizaje* comprises as pointed out by Indigenous civil movements, such as Zapatismo. Saldaña-Portillo also observes that discourses of "critical *mestizaje*" –such as Anzaldúa's "new *mestiza*" and "*mestiza* consciousness"– reproduce,

> Liberal models of choice that privilege her position as a U.S. Chicana: she goes through her backpack and decides what to keep and what to throw out, and she chooses to keep signs of indigenous identity as ornamentation and spiritual revival. But what of the living Indian who refuses mestizaje as an avenue to

> political and literary representation; what of the indígena that demands new representational models that include her among the living" (420).

Afro-Latina scholars have also pointed out how the liberal model that represents *mestizaje* does not represent a viable opposition against the U.S racial-state. In "Looking at the Middle Ground: Racial Mixing as Panacea" (2007), Jiménez-Román argues that celebratory descriptions of the Latin American racial model as exempt of racism and as an example of equal relationships amongst diverse racial groups not only are erroneous, but also reinforce the liberal multiculturalism that supports color blindness in the United States. According to her, these descriptions that envision Latin American racial ideologies as prototypes of potential solutions to U.S. racism are based on misconceptions. They overlook the fact that notions of racial mixing in Latin America are hegemonic formations, which pretend to be stances against white supremacy, but indeed are "accommodations" to Western racial hierarchies. In this regard, Jiménez-Román argues,

> It should be emphasized that the refusal to take race into account is not born of a humanitarian inclination to treat all people as equal; rather, it is a refusal to acknowledge the existence of racially constructed systems that produce and rationalized material inequality, and to then assume responsibility for correcting it (331).

Therefore, for Jiménez Román, celebratory notions of *mestizaje* obscure the fact that the very much admired Latin American racial mixture occurs in a context of racial, social and gender inequality (330). Moreover, it obscures how "among Latin Americans and Latina/os, *mestizaje* […] is responsible for the assiduous attention paid to the phenotypical details that 'expose' African 'genes' and for the elaborate vocabulary that at once confers privilege and derides the subject under scrutiny" (330). Jiménez Román

concludes warning us about against overlooking that *mestizaje* supports stereotypical Latina/o looks that deny, "the righteous claims for equality of those who haven't managed to attain the proper skin tone, those who don't look "authentically" Latina/o" (333). These looks automatically exclude "Black, Indian, Asian or any other negatively racialized peoples who comprise the Americas" (333) from *Latinidad*.

To close this section, I would like to mention a concept that some Latina/o scholars of Caribbean origin have proposed as an alternative to *mestizaje*. This concept is "creolization". Coined by Edouard Glissant in response to the notion of Negritude proposed by Emile Cesaire, creolization refers to the racial and cultural mixing that occur in the Caribbean as a consequence of the transatlantic slave route. In a similar manner to *mestizaje*, creolization recognizes that the hybridity that happened in the Caribbean is unique to the history and socio-cultural process of the region. However, in contrast to *mestizaje*, creolization does not deny the centrality of Black Atlantic culture in this hybridity. Indeed, creolization places Black Atlantic culture at the core of this hybridity. Latina/o scholars, such as Juan Flores in *The Diaspora Strikes Back: Caribeño Tales of Learning and Turning* (2009) and Danny Méndez in *Narratives of Migration and Displacement in Dominican Literature* (2012), argue that a twenty-first-century version of creolization is occurring in the United States within and among Latina/o communities. Creolization in relation to the affective systems of U.S. Latina/os is further discussed in Chapter 4.

2.2 (Trans)national-Latinas challenge hetero-patriarchal structures in Latino nationalisms

As mentioned, (trans)national-Latina narratives question Latino ethnic nationalisms, which privilege heterosexuality, patriarchy, *mestizaje* and *blanqueamiento*. My understanding of how these narratives conduct this critique draws from the works of Frances R. Aparicio (1997, 1999, 2007 and 2009), Angie Chabram (1994 and 2009), Juanita Heredia (2007) and Agustín Laó-Montes (2001). These works establish a conversation with the field of transnational studies, in particular with its branch of migrant transnationalism[55], to propose critical alternatives to notions of *Latinidad* that define it as a series of hetero-patriarchal Latino nationalisms.

In "Voyages South and North: The Politics of Transnational Gender Identity in *Caramelo* and *American Chica*" (2007), Juanita Heredia uses the term "transnational Latina narratives" to name a corpus of literary texts that, as mentioned in Chapter 1, advances a hemispheric critical perspective. The writers who create this corpus are defined by Heredia as transmigrants,[56] who,

> By traveling back and forth between Latin America and the United States in their childhoods and as adults [gain] a comparative cultural understanding of crossing classes and of intergenerational relationships, a microcosm for Latin American–US culture and politics at large […] which informs their Latina identity in the United States (340).

[55] For more on the multiple approaches that the social sciences have developed to transnationalism and on migrant transnationalism, see Vertovec (2009). For more on migrant transnationalism in relation to U.S. Latina/os, see Smith and Guarnizo (1998), Vélez-Ibañez and Zampado (2002) and Portes (2007).

[56] Heredia (2009) defines transmigrants as "people who migrate from a country of origin to a host one and maintain cultural, emotional, or physical connections to the residence of origin in the host country.

According to Heredia, Latina writers' hemispheric perspective focuses on "matters of genealogy and gender relationships that transcend national borders" (340). She observes how these genealogies are located beyond national borders because they do not necessarily depend on physical contact or movement, but they are supported by memories and stories which are detached from specific national contexts. Heredia's arguments are informed by transnational[57] and transfronteriza[58] feminisms. My study borrows Heredia's term to name the narratives in it analyzed. This is because, in a similar manner to Heredia's, this work demonstrates how Latina writers disrupt Latino nationalisms, developing a hemispheric perspective that denounces the misogynist structures that prevail in these nationalisms. However, as further discussed in Chapter 5 in relation to Cuban American female writers, this disruption has been extensively studied in relation to the trope of memory overlooking other bodily and psychological structures. This study fills this gap by addressing how this disruption also takes place in (trans)national-Latina narratives in relation to Latina affective systems.

In Mambo Montage: The Latinization of New York (2001), Laó-Montes discusses the main arguments against *Latinidad* in the field of Latina/o studies. According to him, scholars in this field are suspicious of terms, such as *Latinidad*, Latina/o, *Latinismo*, Hispanic, *Hispanismo*, because of their colonial or imperialistic origin, also because U.S.

[57] As mentioned in Chapter 1, transnational feminism constitutes a counter-response to global feminism. The latter uncritically utilizes white, liberal, first world feminist notions and critical perspectives to analyze and describe the realities of women of color and women in the third world. In contrast, transnational feminism recognizes the asymmetrical relationship between first and third world feminisms and attempts to advance a politics of collaboration that addresses this asymmetry as well as third world feminisms as the most accurate critical tool to analyze not only the circumstances of women in the third world, but also the contradictions and limitations of white, liberal first-world feminism. See Kaplan, Alarcón and Moallen (1999).

[58] As mentioned in Chapter 1, transfronteriza feminism refers to the transnational relationships and collaborations between Chicana feminisms and Mexican feminisms (Saldivar-Hull 1999).

government agencies and consumer markets employ these terms to homogenize and control Latina/os political and economic agency.[59] Laó-Montes recognizes the relevance of these critiques. Nonetheless, he points out that they overlook that some of these terms were employed by Latin Americans in their struggles against colonial domination (e.g. "Our America" by José Martí). Also that years before the U.S. government employed the terms "Hispanic" or "Spanish speaking", communities of Latin American origin in the United States gather together under similar umbrella terms to fight against racism and discrimination.[60]

Laó-Montes, also, points out that Latino/a studies scholars contest *Latinidad*, because often it is associated with fixed categories such as ethnicity, nationality or generic racial identities. For Laó-Montes, this is the main factor that complicates *Latinidad* as an effective Pan-Latina/o alliances, because of the following reasons: a) *Latinidad* as fixed nationalities or ethnicities accentuates cultural and racial differences among Latina/o communities; b) proposes artificial cultural commonalities such as the Spanish language, Catholicism and *mestizaje;* c) reduces *Latinidad* to strategic political alliances[61] which are not always the case between groups with opposed political ideologies; and d) defines *Latinidad* as a multi-nationalism that although addresses

[59] Laó-Montes specifically refers to the U.S census of 1980 that incorporated the term "Hispanic" as the only category available for peoples of Latin American origin and to the spread of the term "Latino" in publicity campaigns in the 1990s. These two examples are recurrently mentioned in analyses that problematize *Latinidad*.

[60] For examples of Latina/o civil organizations that during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, used umbrella terms such as "Hispanic" and "Spanish speaking" to advance their political platforms, see Flores (2000).

[61] E.g., Padilla (1985).

cultural, material and historical differences,[62] does not problematize the exclusions of hetero-patriarchal ethnic nationalisms.[63]

To overcome these problems, Laó-Montes suggests advancing a notion of Pan-*Latinidad* that implies “a multiplicity of intersecting discourses enabling different types of subjects and identities and deploying specific kinds of knowledge and power relations” (4). He names this approach, *Latinization*, and describes it as a process in which it is easier “to distinguish between governmental, corporate, and academic discourses of *latinidad* [*latinization* from above] but also to analyze how *latinidad* is produced through the work of Latino community institutions and by means of aesthetic practices and social movements [*latinization* from below]” (4). Latinization also involves a hemispheric perspective, which addresses that,

> U.S. Latino populations are the product of world historical hemispheric processes of economic colonialism, imperial political domination, and cultural imperialism that are constitutive of the U.S. territorial nation and empire and productive of mass migrations and political exiles to el *norte* as well as persistent inequalities within the imperial field (12).

That is, this hemispheric perspective situates Pan-*Latinidad* “in the context of the imperial contact zone of colonial encounters between the United States and Latin America/the Caribbean” (12), defining it as a “zone of transculturation in which a diversity of imperial and colonial locations (races, genders, nationalities, cultures, etc.) engage in unequal exchanges and power struggles” (13). This perspective, then,

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[62] See Flores (2000).

[63] See Chabram-Dernersesian (2009).

establishes Pan-*Latinidad* as a "vast array of transnational flows and translocal linkages" (13).

It is relevant to notice that informed by the work of U.S. Latina and Latin American feminists, Laó-Montes adopts the term, "translocality", to name the transnational and transcultural flows involved in Latinization,

> The notion of translocality refers at once to historical/structural locations, geographic scales and subject positions. In contrast to the more common term transnationality it is not centered in nation-sates and nationalities but articulates geographic units of space (place, nation, region, world) with historical locations and subject positions (classes, genders, sexualities, races, ethnicities, nationalities, etc.) (13)

Thus, Laó-Montes' approach is similar to the approach that guides this study. This is not only because U.S. Latina and Latin American feminisms also inform my approach, but also because it advances a perspective of Pan-*Latinidad* that is not organized into Latino nationalisms. Rather, this approach addresses other contingencies such as race, gender, sexuality, citizenship and so on from which (trans)national-Latina narrative question nationalistic constructs, finding commonality in this intersectional critique.

Frances R. Aparicio (1997, 1999, 2007 and 2009) also suggests a model of Pan-*Latinidad* that disrupts the understanding of it as fixed ethnic and national identities. In *Tropicalizations: Transcultural Representations of Latinidad* (1997), Aparicio and Susana Chávez-Silverman define *Latinidad* as discursive formations that are necessarily structured by "the system of ideological fictions with which the dominant (Anglo and European) cultures trope Latin American and U.S. Latino/a identities and cultures" (1). Aparicio calls this system "hegemonic tropicalization" and situates it as part of the

asymmetrical acculturation that takes place in the contact zones of colonial encounters between U.S. hegemonic cultures and Latina/o cultures (1). In "Reading the 'Latino' in Latino Studies: Toward Re-Imagining Our Academic Location" (1999), Aparicio points out that *Latinidad* not only engages in an asymmetrical relationship with hegemonic discursive tropicalizations, but also comprises the competing relationships between different Latina/o groups that take place in everyday interactions. That is, *Latinidad* involves the negotiations between Latina/o cultural nationalisms and the performances of inter-Latino subjectivities. In "(Re)constructing Latinidad: The Challenge of Latina/o Studies" (2007), Aparicio clarifies what these inter-Latino subjectivities are. She argues that these subjectivities take place in hybrid social spaces where Latina/os share everyday practices. Interlatino subjectivities, then, take place in different levels, which are: a) transculturations that occur between Latina/o groups (e.g. Mexican-Caribbean food); b) the conflicts between different Latina/o groups that result from the class and racial stratification that occur within and between Latina/os; and c) the hybrid Latina/o individuals who are the offspring of Latina/os of two different national groups. With the incorporation of these negotiation processes to *Latinidad*, Aparicio disrupts conceptualizations of *Latinidad* as "a label or construction imposed from outside" (44), establishing it instead as "a real thing, an emerging social and cultural experience and experiment" (44). As Aparicio observes, her understanding corresponds to what Angie Chabram (1994 and 2009) identifies as "domestic transnationalism", which names the transcultural and asymmetrical everyday interactions among Latina/os in different locales in the U.S. Though, this study does not focus on inter-Latino subjectivities, it is in conversation with "domestic transnationalism". This is because domestic transnationalism

involves not only discursive practices but also embodiment and performance.[64] That is, domestic transnationalism advances an approach that makes visible how different types of transnational flows asymmetrically impact Latinas' bodies and psyches in their specific domesticity. This approach when applied to the analysis of Latina fictions discloses how (trans)national-Latina writers imagine their domesticities not as a nationalistic segmentation, but in terms of experiences, identities and affects that are shared in a hemispherical way.

Therefore, similarly to how the theoretical approaches discussed in this section interrogate nationalistic formations in relation to *Latinidad*, (Trans)national-Latina fictions make visible the exclusions and limitations within Latino and Latin American nationalisms.

2.3 (Trans)national-Latinas Question Neoliberal Capitalism

To conclude this chapter, I briefly explain how (trans)national-Latina narratives offer an incisive critique of contemporary forms of capitalism. This last section works as preamble of Chapter 3, which clearly exemplifies this critique by analyzing the relationship between the neoliberalism that rules in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands (necrocapitalism) and the bodies and affective systems of Mexican and Latin American women and Chicanas, as portrayed in Chicana fictional prose. The works of María Josefina Saldaña-Portillo (2007) and Ellie D. Hernández (2009) serve as models for my understanding of this critique. In "From the Borderlands to the Transnational? Critiquing Empire in the

[64] Regarding this point, it is necessary to clarify that besides Aparicio and Chabram, other Latina/o studies scholars define *Latinidad* as everyday practices and performance. Among these critics stand out Angharad N. Valdivia and Matt Garcia (2012), Karen Christian (1997), Alicia Arrizón (1999) and Arturo J. Aldama, Chela Sandoval, and Peter J. García (2012). The works of Christian and Arrizón are especially relevant for the analysis of literary and cultural artifacts.

Twenty-First Century" (2007), Saldaña-Portillo argues that Latina/o Studies must focus on "past and present process of racial and economic peripheralization of minority populations as it unfolds within -but always exceeds – the boundaries of the United States" (505). She recognizes that border theory has contributed to the development of a hemispheric perspective in the field. Nonetheless, she points out that border theory reproduces a theoretical model that describes Latina/o groups as separated sub-nations. Moreover, according to Saldaña-Portillo, border theory over focuses on some "cultural contact zones", such as the U.S.-Mexico border (505), proposing as hemispheric a perspective that in many instances correspond more to a type of binational internationalism.[65] For this reason, she suggests an analytical model that moves beyond binational cultural and social dynamics, focusing instead in the complex and multinational dynamics of U.S. cultural and economic imperialism in the Americas. Dynamics that involve how U.S. power structures racialize foreigners and local communities of color and which nowadays follow the dictates of global neoliberalism. Saldaña-Portillo describes this analytical model as follows,

> To place the slavery, genocide, and racial violence experienced inside US national boundaries within the larger context of US colonialism in the Americas, so that slavery and segregation are properly seen as the antecedents of the contemporary extra-economic forms of coercion depend upon a racial economy of visibility and invisibility, or more accurately stated, the (in)visibility of racial labor (507).

As stated in the previous quote, for Saldaña-Portillo, an accurate hemispheric perspective must necessarily pay attention to how the economic model that operates across the

[65] For instance, in "Social Aesthetics and the Transnational Imaginary" (2007), Ramón Saldívar offers an example of how border studies attempt to advance a transnational perspective of *Latinidad*, focusing on the U.S-Mexico borderlands as "a real contact zone" inhabited by "transnational persons", transcultural phenomena and a "transnational imaginary" (412).

Americas consists in a racial hierarchization, in which some aspects of this hierarchization are visible, meanwhile others are obscured. It is important to notice that she emphasizes that communities of color across the continent resist this hierarchization and that these resistances may serve as basis of a continental commonality. This study agrees with Saldaña-Portillo's position regarding the transnational racialization of labor that is currently taking place across the Americas. This idea is further discussed in Chapter 3 in connection to gender, affect and citizenship.

In *Postnationalism in Chicana Literature and Culture* (2009), Ellie D. Hernández analyzes the specifics of the unique position that Chicana/os (and their literary and cultural expresions) occupy under global neoliberalism. For Hernández, "Chicanas/os are caught between the shifting terms of globalization and the identification of a cultural nationalism that seemed politically necessary as well as important to the evolution of the Chicana/o social movement as a progressive ideology and discourse" (26). In other words, Chicanas/os' cultural and literary works express, on the one hand, "a desire for a way out of nationalism", but on the other, how Chicana/os' "material conditions are not sufficient to warrant" (28) a complete separation from cultural nationalism. That is, Chicana/os, especially Chicanas and Chicanx, understand the problematic homophobic and misogynist constructs that prevail in Chicano nationalism. However, the disadvantaged material circumstances that prevail in Chicana/o communities warn Chicana/os against engaging to global or transnational celebratory models as proposed by contemporary neoliberalism. For this reason, Hernández opts against using the term transnationalism to talk about how Chicana/os interrogate their ethnic nationalism. Instead she employs the term, "postnationalism". According to Hernández, postnationalism, "questions the interests of colonizing conditions within the United States

proper and questions the transnationalism that commerce imposes on people, such as the impact of immigration on people's lives and material needs as well as the displacement of ideas, beliefs and traditional systems "(20).

(Trans)national-Latina narratives describe a movement similar to the one identified by Hernández in Chicana artistic expressions. (Trans)national- Latina writers in their pieces move away from cultural nationalisms that deny and oppress multiple aspects of their female bodies and identities; nonetheless they are well aware that their bodies and identies are not welcome in global and transnational models of neoliberal capitalism either. Hernández argues that Chicanas achieve the formation of a postnational space displaying alternative modes of gender and sexuality, as well as alternative regimes of desire. In this study, I argue that (trans)national-Latina writers create a space beyond cultural and racial nationalisms that also differs from the global landscape of neoliberal capitalism, advancing affects that destabilize the hegemonic formations that safeguard the nationalistic and globalist structures of neoliberalism.

As mentioned in the introduction to this dissertation, this study is well aware that the criticism against Latino nationalism expressed by (trans)national-Latina writers must under no circumstances be misrepresented in terms of globalism or transnationalism as defined by neoliberalism. For this reason, I opted for writing the suffix "trans" in "transnational" between brackets to represent how the narratives and writers analyzed in this study interrogate, through a hemispheric perspective, how both nationalistic formations and global neoliberal flows impact their affective systems.

Chapter 3: Affect and Necrocapitalism: a Chicana Theory on Hegemony in the U.S-Mexico Borderlands

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 argues that affects play a crucial role in how capitalism consolidates its hegemony and defines power and authority in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. This assertion is the result of the meticulous close reading of the mystery novel, *Desert Blood: The Juárez Murders* (2005) by Chicana author, Alicia Gaspar de Alba. This novel tells the story of Ivon Villa, a native from El Paso, Texas, who returns to her hometown to adopt the baby of Cecilia, a 15-year-old maquiladora worker from Ciudad Juárez, Mexico. When the bodies of Cecilia and her unborn baby are found disemboweled and abandoned on the outskirts of Juárez, Ivon gets involved in solving their murders, facing a complex bi-national network of impunity, corruption, fear and indifference. The story becomes even more complicated when Ivon's younger sister, Irene, is kidnapped in Juárez. In a desperate attempt to rescue her sister, Ivon uncovers that a snuff-films production company is behind many of the femicides and disappearances of women in Juarez, as well as the fact that this company operates as part of an economic system that benefits state and private institutions in both sides of the border.

Desert Blood constitutes an ideal case for exploring how economic, social, and political ruling systems that simultaneously operate in the U.S. and Latin America impact the affects of Chicanas and Mexican women. This is because the novel centers in the relationship between hegemonic formations and the Latina body, portraying the hegemonic system that inflicts violence upon female bodies of color in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands as patriarchal and transversal. The last refers to how this hegemonic system

simultaneously involves and benefits –although not always in a relational manner– foreign and local, public and private, national and international sectors. The way in which the novel describes ruling systems in the border region ascribes it to a group of works by U.S. Latina and Latin American female scholars, who propose similar understandings of these systems, such as Lourdes Portillo (2002), Julia Estela Monarrez (2006 and 2000), Rosa Linda Fregoso (2003) and Rita Segato (2016a). In *Mexicana Encounters: The Making of Social Identities on the Borderlands* (2003), Fregoso argues that the violence that prevails in Juárez is not only a consequence of the global neoliberalism that operates in the zone, but also is endemic to an authoritarian and patriarchal Mexican state that embraces neoliberal polices, naturalizing "the violence against women as a method of social control" (2). For her part, in "La escritura en el cuerpo de las mujeres asesinadas en Ciudad Juárez" (2016a), Rita Segato[66] suggests that the ruling system in Juárez is a clear example of what she calls "second state", which consists in the pacts between the criminal organizations that operate illegal transnational business in the region and the Mexican state. These pacts redefine how power and sovereignty are established in the zone. The language of violence that was signature of criminal organizations and that mafias have systemically used to protect their operational territory and punish detractors becomes a common practice. Under the rule of the second state, therefore, power consolidates by spreading fear and terror, and by spectacularly displaying how the rulers exert their power with impunity. In this context, the femicides and other forms of violence upon female bodies are public displays of virile power and impunity. These displays do

[66] All the quotes from Segato (2016a) and Segato (2016b) are my translation.

not only have as objective controlling or eradicating women but are principally addressed to other men in the region, constituting virile rituals that grant and reaffirm masculinity.[67]

My examination departs from these previous analyses, defining the hegemonic formations that rule in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands as transversal formations, in which power equals virility and authority is granted by the spectacular displaying of the sovereign control over death and life. My contribution lies in pointing out how these formations in order to gain their hegemonic status not only must control the execution of extreme violence against female bodies and establish the dominant ideologies in the region[68], but also must control primary psychic structures that regulate moods and facilitate or prevent socialization. In addition, this chapter accentuates how the influence of hegemonic formations over the affects of women of color in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands is not a one-dimensional phenomenon. Rather, hegemonies in the border asymmetrically impacts the affective systems of women of color depending on their race, citizenship, class, age, gender, and sexuality.

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[67] Based on her studies on sexual crimes and male perpetrators in other regions of Latin America, Segato (2016a) affirms that in sexual aggressions, "the perpetrator addresses his peers in many ways: he requests a membership to their society […] he competes with them, demonstrating that because of his aggressiveness and control over death, he deserves a place in their brotherhood" (40). This communication amongst men by inflicting violence upon the female body occurs because, historically and socially, while femininity is considered naturally attached to bodies with female genitals, masculinity consists in an attribute that must be obtained, conquered, and regularly re-validated. Thus, men throughout their lives are continuously involved in virile rituals that grant and reaffirm their masculinity. In these rituals, women constitute tributes that may voluntarily surrender to masculinity or may be forcedly and violently taken as preys or trophies that symbolically display virility (40).

[68] Rosa Linda Fregoso (2003) examines how the hegemonic system in Juárez controls dominant ideologies in the region. After developing an exhaustive analysis of the mainstream discourses around the femicides, Fregoso concludes that they overlook the responsibility of the Mexican state in the crimes. Some discourses do so by describing the crimes as isolated cases perpetrated by psychopathic individuals, others by blaming global neoliberalism and the changes on social structures that it brought as exclusive causes of the escalation of violence in the region.

Throughout my analysis, I refer to the hegemonic system in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands as “necrocapitalism”[69] and to the everyday practices it launches as “necropractices.” These terms are intended not only to emphasize how violence and death are intrinsic elements of the system, but also to account how the system manipulates affects with the intention of canceling emotional responses and attachments that facilitate solidarity and communal survival. My use of the prefix “necro” draws from the work of the Cameroonian scholar, Achille Mbembe (2008), who coined the term “necropolitics” to name the principles that rule in places where extreme forms of violence such as murder, rape, and the mutilation of bodies are common practices. Mbembe holds a similar position to Segato’s and Fregoso’s, by arguing that the hyper-violent practices that take place in locations such as Somalia and Gaza are not a consequence of the failure of the social and political systems in those locations, but intrinsic to a form of politics in which authority emerges from the violent control of who dies and who lives. The prefix “necro”, then, underlines the transnational dimension of the hegemonic system of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands, placing the region in a geopolitical map integrated by locations where the control of death and the distribution of violence sustain the system in power.

Throughout the chapter, necrocapitalism is recurrently connected to neoliberalism. Informed by the work on neoliberal labor structures and ideologies in manufacturing cities of researchers, such as Melissa Wright (2006 and 2011), Rachel C. Riedner (2015) and Alicia Schmidt Camacho (2005), I argue that necrocapitalism is an extreme form of neoliberalism. Therefore, drawing from how Rachel C. Riedner in *Writing Neoliberal Values: Rhetorical Connectivities and Globalized Capitalism* (2015) breaks down the

[69] It is important to clarify that I am not the first in using the term “necrocapitalism” to refer to capitalist modes that use deadly practices to produce and distribute wealth. E.g. Banerjee’s (2008) work develops a similar definition of necrocapitalism but in a different socio-political context.

concept of neoliberalism, I identify in necrocapitalism the following interconnected levels: a) Neoliberalism is an economic theory that “values strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade as a means by which to assure individual and social freedom” (xii); b) it is an economic and political practice that encourages “the global expansion of markets and service economies, the upward distribution of wealth, and the withdrawal of state services” (xii). And c) it is a series of transformations in everyday life. These transformations significantly reformulate “subjectivities to produce specific kinds of workers for neoliberal economies” (xii).

The rest of the chapter is organized in three sections. The first section, “Necrocapitalism and Necropractices in Juárez,” provides a detailed analysis of the hegemonic system that *Desert Blood* denounces. This section, then, points out the principal characteristics of the hegemonic formation that impacts the affects of the inhabitants of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. The second section, “Necrocapitalism, Hegemony and Affect,” discusses the main argument of the chapter. This section argues that, in the necrocapitalism of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands, affects are crucially involved in the consolidation of authority and control, constituting a type of capital (affective capital) that circulates in a gendered and racialized order, contributing in the establishment not only of labor relationships, but also of degrees of vulnerability to violence, death and sexual exploitation. The last section, “Affect and Resistance in Necrocapitalism,” closes the chapter, offering an examination of how Latin American women and Chicanas claim back the control of their affective systems to resist the gendering, racialization, exploitation and sadistic treatment that those in power impose in their female bodies.

3.2 Necrocapitalism and Necropractices in Juárez

As mentioned in the opening paragraphs of this chapter, Gaspar de Alba's narrative portrays the murders of women in Juárez as part of a set of macabre everyday practices inherent to the form of capitalism that rules in the Mexican border city. The individuals and organizations that benefit from this form of capitalism normalize violence and extreme violence to keep their privilege and fulfill the demands of global markets. I refer to these recurrent macabre practices as necropractices to emphasize, first, how they instill the fear of death as a mechanism of social control in a daily basis; and secondly, how they regulate which living human beings are destined to become corpses.

In *Desert Blood*, an important aspect of necropractices is that they consist in processes of gendering and racialization. That is, these practices establish a racial and gender order that organizes labor and the distribution of resources in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. The narrative also distinguishes how necropractices consist in different degrees of violence, which are distributed according to gender, race, citizenship and class. For instance, very early in the story, Ivon notices how the social dynamics of Juárez significantly revolve around a hostility towards women. During her first visit to the city, Ivon is verbally harassed by male *Juarenses,* acquiring a first-hand knowledge about a frequent experience for women in the area. However, the narrative makes a clear difference between the verbal harassment suffered by Ivon and the harassment experienced by other women in the city. Meanwhile the insults towards Ivon underscore her citizenship –the fact that she is a Mexican born in the U.S.– and how she performs a butch womanhood that disrupts a heterosexual normative femininity[70], maquiladora

[70] According to Gaspar de Alba in "Coyolxauqui and Las 'Maqui-Locas'" (2014), normative womanhood in Ciudad Juárez can be explained through the "Tres Marías Syndrome." This syndrome constrains femininity to three types of womanhood, which correspond to the Catholic female figures of the

workers are called “Maqui-Locas” –term that explicitly categorize them as available cheap workers for labor and sexual exploitation. Thanks to her close connections to activists in the area, Ivon learns how verbal harassment is just a low stage of a series of violent everyday practices that includes violations of labor and reproductive rights, rape and murder. Also, she finds out how brown poor migrant women and children are more vulnerable to extreme forms of violence.

In the novel, the daily asymmetrical distribution of violence is inherent to the economic system that rules in the borderlands. In the text’s “disclaimer”, Gaspar de Alba affirms that the story includes symbols that suggest the connection between violence and capitalism. The author claims that she intentionally portrayed the mutilated bodies of the murdered women with American pennies in their mouths, “to signify the value of the victims in the corporate machine; the poor brown women who are the main target of these murders, are, in other words, as expendable as pennies in the border economy” (Gaspar de Alba 2005, V). Within this symbolic dimension of the story, the disemboweled bodies of the female victims are also described as “worn-out machine parts” (4), easily replaceable by other female workers. This overlapping between female workers and machines indicates how the economic structure of the U.S.-Mexico border consists in an inverted assembly line that takes the bodies of brown female workers apart. I describe this structure as an inverted assembly line because, in a regular assembly line, separated parts are fitted together to form a single object; however, in the economy of the border, strong female-machine workers end exhausted, shabby, sick, and, in the most extreme cases, mutilated and death.

Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalene: Mary the virgin, Mary the mother and Mary the whore. Any kind of womanhood outside virginity and motherhood is considered deviant and condemned.

The narrative continuously offers images of this inverted assembly line. In one of these images, Ivon and her cousin Ximena observe the dynamics outside the Philips maquila. They notice yellow buses that move in and out the gated lot of the factory. Female workers descend from the buses. The women "looked like clones. Same lipstick. Same blue smocks. Same long dark hair" (21). They line up and enter to the maquila, performing as indistinguishable pieces of the machinery of the factory. The workers' anonymous and indistinguishable bodies visually represent the inverted assembly line that produces the profits of the maquila. The uniformity of their genotype reveals the gendering and racialization processes that categorize brown women as manufacturing workers. Their uniformity also discloses how the economic system of the borderlands classifies them as interchangeable and disposable pieces. The yellow buses emphasize even more how these women are disposable, because in the story, these buses transport not only maquiladora workers to their factories, but also the kidnapped brown women who are exploited by sexual industries as well as their corpses once they are not anymore useful to make profits.

This understanding of the economic structure of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands as an inverted assembly line draws from Melissa Wright's (2006 and 2011) work on how global neoliberalism organizes labor and dominant ideologies in manufacturing cities, such as Juárez. In *Disposable Women and Other Myths of Global Capitalism* (2006), Wright argues that neoliberalism launches certain discourses to justify labor practices that neglect workers' well-being and treat them as disposable tools. Many of these discourses revolve around what she calls "the myth of the disposable third world woman." In this myth, the central protagonist is, "a young woman from a third world locale who, through the passage of time comes to personify the meaning of human disposability […] a form of

industrial waste, at which point she is discarded and replaced" (2). In the myth, the unlucky destiny of the female worker is "a factual outcome of natural and cultural processes" (2), such as the underdevelopment and the absence of fair labor laws in her locality, which unfortunately are "immune to external tampering" (2). Wright correctly indicates that although the myth does not deny the horrendous working conditions endured by thousands of female workers around the globe, by blaming local and cultural factors as the principal causes of workers' misfortune, the myth achieves covering up the direct responsibility of global neoliberalism in favoring conditions that sick and kill workers. In order to expose the fallacies of this myth, Wright contrasts its claims with the results of her ethnographic research in manufacturing cities, concluding that the labor conditions that sick and kill workers around the globe are the result of the macabre principles that govern global neoliberalism. For Wright, neoliberalism's main goal is to generate as much wealth as possible at a low cost. This goal is above any law or ethical principle. Therefore, in order to achieve it, neoliberalism, without reserves, classifies specific groups of human beings as disposable labor, establishing social and labor conditions that cause the annihilation of these groups.

Therefore, by overtly denouncing the macabre principles and practices of neoliberalism through different narrative strategies, *Desert Blood* positions itself as a counter-discourse that challenges the dissemination of ideologies that cover up the intrinsic connection between neoliberalism and necropractices. As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, the work of Achille Mbembe (2008) is useful to elaborate on the focus of the novel on necropractices. His term "necropolitics" applies to systems in which authority is inherently linked to the control of death. In necropolitics, sovereignty does not represent the individual's struggle for autonomy as a liberal philosophical

tradition asserts, but "*the generalised instrumentalization of human existence and the material destruction of human bodies and populations*" (154). This kind of authority operates in a state of exception, where the sovereign is immune to any law or punishment, and their subjects not only lack of any kind of legal, spiritual or ethical protection, but are also at the mercy of the sovereign's will. Mbembe underlines how contemporary forms of necropolitics vary from necropolitics of the past. The evolution of previous models of capital to neoliberalism changed who has the control over necropolitics. In the past, national states were almost exclusively in charge of necropolitics. However, in the present, "the exercise of the right to kill [is] no longer the sole monopoly of states […] Coercion itself has become a market commodity" (169). That is, coercion and the control of death are forms of capital that private sectors can own, exchange, buy and sale to circumscribe their own sovereignty or the authority of their partners and clients.

The novel centers in the relationship between capital, necropractices, and international and local private and state sectors. This relationship consists in a system that I identify as necrocapitalism. In my understanding of necrocapitalism, Mbembe's insights are in conversation with Rita Segato's (2016b) notions of "apocalyptic capitalism" and "lordship". That is because Segato provides a theory on how necropolitics operate in the specific case of Latin America, under contemporary capitalism. In "Patriarcado: del borde al centro. Disciplinamiento, territorialidad y crueldad en la fase apocalíptica del capital" (2016b), Segato argues that "in a world where, in 2015, the 1% of the population concentrate more wealth in their hands than the remaining 99%" (98), it is not possible to talk anymore about inequality, but we should discuss "lordship". With "lordship", Segato refers to a contemporary social and economic hierarchy, in which a very small group of proprietors own most of the capital of the planet. These proprietors' wealth is so

unmeasurable –sometimes larger than the capital of some nation-states– and so disproportional to the income of the rest of the globe's population that they are immune to any attempt of institutional control. According to Segato, this immunity "inaugurates an apocalyptic and anomalous stage of capitalism that resembles the final, decayed and transitional stage of capital during the Middle Ages" (99). In Latin America, lordship manifests in a gangsterish mode of administrating business, politics and justice. This mode is not foreign to the global economy and its geopolitical order, but "criminality and the expansion of capital through illegal means ceased to be exceptional and became the structural mode of politics and economy" (99). Segato refers to this stage of capitalism as apocalyptic because, "looting, displacing, eradicating, slavering and maximum exploitation are the path to capital expansion" and "the objective that guides the historical project of capitalism" (99). My definition of "necrocapitalism" embraces Segato's insights, by referring not only to how the economic and social order that governs in Juárez consolidates sovereignty through necropractices, but also to how it essentially is a predatory mode of capital accumulation that utilizes impunity, cruelty and extreme forms of exemplary violence as organizational structures.

As mentioned earlier, in *Desert Blood*, a principal characteristic of necrocapitalism is that it asymmetrically distributes death. In the text, poor people of color endure exploitation, violence and death; meanwhile, the light-skinned and white elite of Juárez –thanks to the protection that money and political influences provide– enjoys a comfortable and more secure life. The text underlines how this asymmetrical distribution of death and violence depends on the intersectionality of gender, race, class, and national affiliation, by contrasting the dissimilar realities of female characters in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. For instance, despite she denounces the impunity and

corruption around the femicides, the journalist, Rubí Reyna –a green-eyed blonde beauty, daughter of one of the richest men in Juárez– is able to escape unharmed from Juárez. Also, despite being of a darker complexion than her mother and in a city extremely dangerous for teenage girls, Rubí's teenage daughter, Amber, is able to live an average teenage life, shopping, dating, planning vacations and hanging around with friends. In contrast, teenage maquiladora workers endure labor exploitation, sexual abuse and the constant fear of being murder.

This imbalance in the distribution of death and violence in the text, also depends on national affiliation. Brown female bodies with U.S. citizenship have a layer of protection against necropractices and a social mobility that Mexican and Central American poor female citizens lack. Although the members of the Juárez elite pejoratively calls Irene, *Pocha*, she is invited to hang around with them, gaining access to the safe spaces of Juárez elite. When she is kidnapped, her captors state that her kidnapping was a mistake because they do not kidnap "gringas" to avoid dealing with U.S. justice system. Irene is only in real risk once she finds herself in a situation in which her brown body can easily be mistaken for a commodified brown woman. This is when she wanders around one of the shantytowns of Juárez, a place rarely visited by Juárez elite or U.S. tourists. Irene, therefore, is certainly vulnerable to violence, because her brown body does not match dominant embodiments of U.S. citizenship and she can easily be taken for a commodified body; however, as a U.S. citizenship, Irene has access to safe spaces and enjoys a legal protection that those conducting transnational illegal business recognize and feel anxious about.

This understanding on how citizenship is determinant in the asymmetrical distribution of violence under necrocapitalism is informed by Alicia Schmidt Camacho's

(2005) work on how global neoliberalism "fosters the conversion of marginalized people into "disposable non-citizens" whose value to the international system derives from their lack of access to rights" (258). According to Schmidt Camacho in "Ciudadana X: Gender Violence and the Denationalization of Women's Rights in Ciudad Juárez, México" (2005), "the feminization of labor—devalued and detached from any concept of labor power—is just one expression of a project of governance that generated new modes and spaces for income generation through the commodification of poor women's bodies and delimited citizenship" (266). That is, neoliberalism in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands intentionally commodifies brown-poor migrant women in order to guarantee a feminized labor force that local jurisdictions can easily categorize as foreign and, therefore, as non-citizens outside any legal protection. The system disciplines these "foreign" or "non-citizen" feminized workers through extreme sexual violence, on the one hand, to reaffirm their lack of any kind of rights (in other words to reaffirm their non-citizenship condition), and on the other, to secure a disposable and docile labor force "readily appropriated for work and service in both legal and illicit labor markets" (279). Schmidt Camacho argues that how workers are deprived of their citizenship through sexual violence, "sets a price on women's labors in the United States, rendering migrant women available as a flexible source of service. Informal—even friendly—transactions over the domestic tasks that other women and men cannot do for themselves are inextricably tied to the impunity of rapists in the desert" (279). Thus, the deprivation of rights as well as the sexualization and racialization endured by workers in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands is crucial for the effective operation of the capitalist project in the entire North American region. It sets a cost-effective labor and how capital and authority is distributed in the area depending on class, gender, race, and national affiliation.

To sum up, *Desert Blood* makes a clear distinction between individuals who, because of their nationality race, gender and social stratus, are recognized as citizens with rights or privileges (although in many cases this citizenship does not guarantee their actual safety), and individuals who are classified as disposable and cheap beings, without any kind of rights. This distinction points out how the necrocapitalism of the border region, through the instrumentation of violence and death, advances modes of citizenship that do not necessarily correspond to nation-sate citizenships. Instead, these other citizenships operate in transnational capitalist circuits, delimiting the disproportional distribution of authority and wealth.

3.3 Necrocapitalism, Hegemony and Affect

As previously mentioned, one of the main arguments of this chapter is that necrocapitalism significantly impacts social and individual affects. As a consequence, necropractices not only distribute labor, profits and power in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands, but also stimulate primal affective systems such as leisure and lust. This connection between necropractices and affect is also briefly mentioned by Mbembe (2008), who affirms that in states of exception "more intimate, lurid and leisurely forms of cruelty appear", fostering "a new cultural sensibility" "in which killing […] is an extension of play" (158). By focusing on the connection between affect and necropractices in *Desert Blood*, I argue that the affects that necropractices stimulate are involved in the circumscription of authority in the U.S.-Mexico border region, forming a type of immaterial capital that circulates granting or taking away power, which I identify as "affective capital."

3.3.1 Affective Capital

The logic of affective capital in necrocapitalism is simple. Hegemonic groups reaffirm their position in power controlling the circulation and production of affects. These groups utilize the feminized labor that serves other sectors of the border economy as the raw materials that generate affects. By pointing out the snuff-film production company, Lone Ranger Productions, as responsible of the femicides and kidnappings that Ivon investigates, *Desert Blood* offers a precise representation of how affective capital takes part in the operations of necrocapitalism. The organization chart of this company mirrors the hierarchical order that controls affective capital in the borderlands.

At the top of Lone Ranger Productions is the Chief Detention Enforcement Officer of the Border Patrol, Capt. J Wilcox. Known as *el güero* (the blond guy), Wilcox is the person who keeps most of the profits of the company and controls the distribution of the rest of the earnings. The second in command is Junior, a young wealthy Mexican, who joins the company not so much because of economic need, but because he really loves directing the snuff films. Below Junior, the members of the Dracula's gang are located. These men perform the kidnappings, sexual assaults, and murders of women outside and on camera. Although they are who carry out most of the work, they are who earn least in the company. Something that jumps out about the company is that most of those involved in it do not obtain great economic benefits. This is because the men of Lone Ranger Productions obtain most of their earnings in the form of affective capital. These men's gratification, then, revolves around participating in an economic activity that allows them to display how others are involuntarily subjugated to their will, satisfying or stimulating their affective systems of lust, anger and leisure. As one of the characters of the story, the

forensic officer, Laura Godoy, claims during a *rastreo*[71], the men of Lone Ranger Productions,

> Cut off the breast or immolate the face, as we've seen in some cases, or insert sticks and bottles and other foreign objects into the bodies. Because they can. Ellos tienen el poder. And, because they hate women. They want everyone to know they can do whatever they want with a woman's body. They're in control (Gaspar de Alba 2005, 248).

Thus, the affective capital that these men earn endorses them as lords and masters of the borderlands. The organization chart of Lone Ranger Productions also mirrors how affective capital is asymmetrically distributed and consumed in relation to gender, race, class and citizenship. The hegemonic order of the borderlands in the text grants the greatest control of affective capital to a masculinity that is U.S., white and heterosexual. This masculinity represents the standpoint from which the rest of the stratification is determined. The top masculinity has as business partner a Mexican, wealthy and light-skinned masculinity. These two types of masculinities are which control and own most of the monetary and affective capital. Brown poor men may gain a limited access to affective capital as loyal workers of the men at the top. It is notorious how this stratification omits women as subjects able to earn the power and authority attached to affective capital. In the circulation of affective capital, the bodies of brown, poor, Latin American women only participate as raw materials that men use at their will in the production of affective capital. These bodies, therefore, are limited to perform a kind of

[71] *Rastreos* are thorough searches organized by NGOs and groups of civilians to look for the human remains of the victims of extreme necropractices, such as femicides or other types of state crimes. They are performed throughout all Latin America.

affective labor.[72] As Patricia Ticineto Clough affirms in *The Affective Turn* (2007), in the circulation of affective capital, "some bodies and bodily capacities are derogated, making their affectivity super exploitable or exhaustible unto death, while other bodies or body capacities collect the value through this derogation and exploitation" (Ticineto Clough 2007, 25).

3.3.2 Snuff-Pornography: The Hegemonic Affect in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands

In the U.S.-Mexico borderlands, pornography[73] is the measure of affective capital. In the novel, men like Wilcox and Junior –as embodiments of the attributes that in the region represent authority (Anglo-Saxon whiteness, masculinity and heterosexuality in a commercial partnership with a Mexican, wealthy and mafia-like maleness)– impose their ideological bias (their blatant racism, misogyny and homophobia) and their taste for sadistic and pornographic practices, as the norm that determines the value of affects in the border. In other words, men like Wilcox and Junior impose how they experience and manipulate certain affective systems such as anger, lust, play and fear as the dominant way of increasing affective capital and circumscribing authority in the border region.

This connection between hegemony, affective capital and pornography in the text also indicates that the necrocapitalism of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands is the most recent

[72] Michael Hardt (2007) employs this term to name "strongly gendered activities that, to a large degree, produce affect" (III). According to Hardt (1999), the transition from a previous form of capitalism to "the current paradigm, in which providing services and manipulating information are at the heart of economic production" (90) has caused that non-manufacturing forms of labor assume "a dominant position with respect to other forms of labor in the global capitalist economy" (90). Hard describes this non-manufacturing labor as immaterial because "even if it is corporeal and affective, […] its products are intangible: a feeling of ease, well-being, satisfaction, excitement, passion" (96).

[73] Here I understand "pornographic" as Diana Russell defines it "material that combines sex and/or the exposure of genitals with abuse or degradation in a manner that appears to endorse, condone, or encourage such behavior" (Russell 1993, 2-3).

facet of a series of colonial projects that have ruled the North American region and determined the U.S.-Mexico relationship since the formation of both nation-states. An exhaustive analysis of the connection between colonialism and pornography is beyond the scope of this study. However, I briefly clarify this connection by pointing out that the extreme sexual practices that subjugate brown women in Juárez resemble the pornographic treatment that other women of color received in the past, in the North American continent. [74] Like in previous violent forms of capitalism, such as slavery, in the necrocapitalism of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands, a white, male heterosexual pleasure equals power; meanwhile the pornographic degradation of the female body of color consists in the normative way of getting affective gratification and produce monetary profits. Therefore, the pornographic ways that provide power and affective gratification in the border region are related to how female workers of color have been historically threated in North America. This treatment is not the exclusive legacy of an Anglo-Saxon model of labor that inherited the social and economic structures of British colonialism; but it is the result of the commercial partnership between this Anglo-Saxon model and a Latin American model of labor that has as foundational principle the labor stratification of the caste system of Hispanic colonialism.

But in the current context of necrocapitalism in the borderlands, which affects in specific does this taste for pornography impact? Under this pornographic taste, which affects are associated with authority and power and which with labor and exploitation?

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[74] My understanding of the connection between pornographic treatment and colonialism draws from Patricia Hill Collins' (1993) analysis on the pornographic treatment of black women during slavery. Collins argues that the explicit connection between economy and extreme sexuality has historically been recurrent in the most violent forms of capitalism, such as slavery and colonialism. From the moment black women entered slavery, they were subjected to a "pornographic treatment" (Alice Walker cited in Collins 1993, 98), which comprises a repertoire of extreme sexual practices. According to Collins, slaveholders employed this pornographic treatment to consolidate the hegemony of a white and male class and the super exploitation of black female bodies.

How does this stratification of affects asymmetrically impact the bodies of the inhabitants of the borderlands and in specific the bodies of Latin American women and U.S. Latinas?

3.3.3 Cynicism: The preferred Attitude in Necrocapitalism

The pornographic taste that hegemonic formations impose as the norm for the stratification of affects in the border region promotes the cancelation of the affect of care (the affective system that, according to Jaak Panksepp (2010), mediates nurturance and social bonding). Utilizing examples from *Desert Blood,* I argue that cynicism and indifference are attitudes that acquire value in the dynamics of affective capital under necrocapitalism because they cancel care; and therefore represent valuable mechanisms of survival in a society conditioned by the fear of death.

This argument is similar to Rita Segato's (2016b) argument on the modal personality of apocalyptic capitalism. According to Segato, apocalyptic capitalism cherishes people who "endure their existence without displaying any sensibility related to the suffering of others, without empathy, without compassion" (101), people who break community-based relationships and immerse themselves in consumerism, competition and productivity. This preference for detached and indifferent people discloses the modal personality of apocalyptic capitalism, which consists in a psychopathic personality characterized by,

> Their incapability of transforming hormonal responses into emotions, the need of constantly amplifying stimuli in order to feel their effects, a non-communitarian social structure, insensibility to their own suffering and the suffering of others; alienation, self-absorption, dislocation from family and community bonds, instrumental and objectified relationships with others (102).

For Segato, therefore, the spectacular displaying of acts of extreme violent is not only a disciplinary strategy but also a "pedagogy of cruelty", designed to teach by example the psychopathic modal personality of apocalyptic capitalism.

In the novel, the character of Ariel (a nurse who works in a maquiladora and for Lone Ranger Productions) portrays how cynicism and indifference operate in the psyche of a woman of color, who in order to survive adopts the modal personality of necrocapitalism. Throughout the story, Ariel lacks empathy with the victimized women and their families. For instance, when Ivon faces her and asks her about Irene's whereabouts, Ariel calmly and defiantly lies to her. She coolly feeds and cleans the kidnapped women and, in an act of cruelty, sings to them a macabre version of a Mexican lullaby originally intended to support children in their healing, "*sana, sana, colita de rana, si no muere hoy, que se muera mañana.* Heal, little frog's tail, heal; if you don't die today, may you die tomorrow"[75] (Gaspar de Alba 2005, 2). How Ariel changes the lullaby's lyrics is just a symbol of how she embraces a culture of death, replacing care – an affect that is expected in her as a nurse in charge of helping other people and especially other women to heal– with cynicism and indifference.

As mentioned, Ariel's cynic attitude responds to her desire of surviving at all costs. Her desire of survival corresponds to what Mbembe (2008) identifies as the "logic of survival" that permeates in the minds of those ruled by necropolitics. In this logic, the survivors psychologically secure themselves witnessing the death of others; thus, their initial "horror at the sight of death turns into satisfaction that it is someone else who is dead. It is the death of the other, his or her physical presence as a corpse" what ratifies the

[75] The traditional lullaby goes: *sana, sana, colita de rana, si no sana hoy, sanará mañana* (heal, heal little frog tail, if you are not well today, you will be well tomorrow).

survivors as such (173). Even if she is not totally aware of it, this logic dictates to Ariel that in order to survive she has to distance herself from the tortured women. She successfully achieves this separation disconnecting some of her affects and performing cynicism and indifference instead. Ariel finds gratification in the death of other women, because their deaths provide her with the delusion that she is not an exploitable brown woman but a survivor. Ariel's gratification consists in a contradictory emotional state. Even though she has learnt to play convincingly the role of the cynic and to stop caring about other people –especially about other brown women like herself–, her cynicism is a response to fear. Ariel is aware of her vulnerability. She knows that as a poor brown woman in Juárez she is a potential victim; therefore, she embraces cynicism and indifference to control her fear, attempting to escape from a commodification that marks her as potential victim of extreme violence. Thus, every time Ariel knows about the death of a brown woman, she fears for herself, but at the same time, she rejoices because others are occupying her place as potential victim.

It is important to emphasize that Ariel's cynicism is somewhat different to the kind of cynicism discussed by critical theorists such as Sloterdijk (1987), Zizek (1996), Jameson (1994), and Grossberg (1997),[76] who, very broadly speaking, define cynicism as a toxic form of anti-political paralysis that emerges from unmasking the fallacies of

[76] In *Dancing in Spite of My Self. Essays on Popular Culture* (1997), Grossberg explains the relationship between cynicism and ideology in the following terms, "There is instead a cynical irony operating in the realm of ideology. People know what they are doing, but they continue doing it anyway. They are aware of ideological mystification but enter into it anyway. Thus, ideological contemporary practice already assumes the distance toward the dominant ideology that had defined the possibility of critically responding to it. Thus, the very need, if not the possibility, of a critical relation to the dominant ideology is apparently undermined. This cynicism, the collapse of distance, is also ironic: it operates by refusing to take its own ideological positions –or anything, for that matter– too seriously. In fact, within this cynical reason, the real evil is taking any ideological belief too seriously, regardless of whether it is dominant or oppositional" (154).

capitalist ideologies in the twentieth century.[77] In *Desert Blood*, some characters operate under this ideological mode of cynicism (e.g. Wilcox and Junior). However, in the text, this ideological mode of cynicism is performed from a position of privilege. Characters such as Wilcox and Junior, because of their hegemonic position, can afford the luxury of disbelief in ideologies and openly mocking the state and the law. In contrast, Ariel's cynicism mainly originates from a desire of survival and is boosted by fear. With this, neither I imply that the indifference and cynicism of people with different positionalities to Ariel's are not impacted by the general climate of fear that prevails in necrocapitalism, nor I attempt to justify Ariel's cynical attitude, depriving her of her agency and active participation in imitating the attitude of those in power. But I do argue for an understanding of cynicism that addresses that fear and ideology trigger cynicism in different degrees depending on racial, gender, social, and national positionalities.

3.3.4. Affective Citizenship: Fear, Horror and Necrocapitalism

In different degrees, cynicism and indifference are symptoms of the climate of fear that prevails in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. This climate is an affective atmosphere[78] that favors the continuance of necrocapitalism, preventing the organization of an effective

[77] Here I draw from Sharon Stanley, who, in "Retreat from Politics: The Cynic in Modern Times" (2007), argues that Sloterdijk, Zizek and Jameson understand cynicism as an attitude of the western liberal consciousness. They coincide in the idea that cynicism is "a toxic form of anti-political paralysis" that renders "critique impotent" (386). For them, cynicism emerges from the disillusion of a corrupt world where it seems impossible "to craft a more just world" (386). "Cynics presumably resign themselves to getting by as best they can in a necessarily corrupt world. They can only scoff at the naiveté of those persistent idealists who refuse to play the only game in town" (386). According to Stanley, while some of these critics recognize cynicism as part of enlightenment ideals –that is, an attitude that directly emerges from the modern consciousness of enlightenment–; others link cynicism with a postmodern consciousness that betrays modern ideals. However, all point out cynicism as a toxic attitude that thrives in contemporary times and emerges from unmasking the fallacies of ideology.

[78] Affective atmosphere should be understood as social spaces that "are shared, not solitary, and [where] bodies are continuously busy judging their environments and responding to the atmospheres in which they find themselves" (Berlant 2011,16).

resistance against necropractices. Fear also crucially determines how the inhabitants of states of exception, such as Juárez, understand and construct their subjectivities. As Susana Rotker argues in “Ciudades escritas por la violencia” (2000)[79], the violence and impunity that prevail in many Latin American cities have created an atmosphere of insecurity and fear that “has changed how people interact with urban spaces, their fellow citizens, the state, and the idea of citizenship itself” (14). This atmosphere not only comprises a sensation of constant fear but also a set of everyday practices that emerge from the persistent feeling of insecurity. These “practices of insecurity redefine power relations” (15) and create new subjectivities and citizenships. In *Desert Blood*, fear unifies the inhabitants of Juarez. They share not only a national citizenship or a non-citizenship –unable to provide any kind of protection against violence and labor exploitation– but also an affective citizenship rooted in fear. Rotker calls this affective citizenship, “fear citizenship”, and argues that it relates to a subjectivity that finds its explanation “neither in the fear incubated by the army, torturers or dictators, nor at all in Althusser’s interpellant model; but in the knowledge of the body and its instinct of survival” (18). Thus, citizenships and subjectivities in Juárez, significantly respond to affective systems.

In the text, those in power arranged the corpses of their female subjects in ways that not only intend to display the sovereignty of their sadism and pornographic taste, but also to produce affective reactions in the rest of their subjects. As the following scene in the novel shows, the macabre manners how female bodies are disposed after fulfilling their affective labor is intended to inflict horror in the population, a horror that is the basis of *Juarenses*’ fear citizenship,

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[79] All the quotes from this text are my translation.

> "What we found in February, I was there for that *rastreo*," Ximena continued, shaking her head. "They weren't even bodies, just bones and clothing scattered across a radius of like 300 yards in Lomas de Poleo. **People were really freaked out**, let me tell you. Someone in the group found a plastic Mervyn's bag that had a trachea and a bra inside it. Someone else spotted a spinal column in some weeds, and then a skull turned up with a silver tooth in it engraved with the letter "R." We found a pelvis, another skull, another bra, a red sweatshirt that had four holes in it… **I mean it was horrible**. I myself dug up a pair of size 5 women's jeans and a black tennis shoe that still had a part of a food inside it" (Gaspar de Alba 2005, 25, emphasis added).

Fear citizenship manifests in detached, cynic and indifferent personalities, such as Ariel's, or in personalities that present symptoms similar to those of profound depression or panic disorder. What these two types of personalities have in common is a paralysis that discontinues sociability. Thus, the dismembered brown female bodies, that are the focal point in scenes as the previous one, enact an emblematic function, symbolizing how border communities have been taken apart by a depredatory capitalist system.

This system inflicts horror in their subjects to prevent a community organization that may result in acts of resistance that disrupt the status quo. Therefore, in the necrocapitalism of the border region, the repetition of these horror scenes is clue to prevent a break from the personality modes (cynicism, depression, panic) that better serve the system. These scenes not only desacralize the female body denying it an honorable burial, but also prevent border communities from completing processes of mourning that allow them to heal from the injuries that necropractices cause in their bodies and minds. Border communities are obligated to face numerous scattered and unidentifiable body

parts. They cannot have the certainty of what really happened to their daughters, wives, mothers and sisters. This uncertainty condemns them to exist in a perpetual state of grief, a constant state of disorientation that hinders social organization.

3.4 Affect and Resistance in Necrocapitalism

As mentioned in Chapter 1, hegemony is not a one-dimensional process exclusively dictated from the rulers at the top to their subjects at the bottom. Rather, hegemony is a complex process of negotiation between the top and the bottom, which, in many cases, implies that those at the bottom embrace and imitate the values of their rulers, but also, in many other circumstances, those at the bottom actively resist the values of the top. To close the discussion in this chapter, I show how those at the bottom of the hegemonic order in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands claim their affects and affective citizenships back in their struggle against necrocapitalism. I especially pay attention to how Latin American women and Chicanas mobilize the affects of care and anger, and embrace hope to fight againts the gendering, racialization, exploitation and pornographic treatment that those in power impose in their female bodies. An important aspect of the manner in which these women use affect as resistance is that they do so in community; that is, forming activist groups and networks.

Desert Blood portrays a model of how these women use care, anger and hope to claim their right to live with dignity in a system that limits their existence to a cruel fate of labor exploitation, sexual violence and death. In the novel, female characters, such as Ivon, Ximena and Rubí Reyna, and their allies, such as Father Francis, take advantage of their positionalities to resist fear and safeguard care. They –motivated by their indignation and preoccupation for others– organize communities of care and hope with people

harmed by necropractices. For instance, Rubí Reyna, concerned for the violence in her hometown, takes advantage of her privileged social position to produce a TV show that provides accurate information about the femicides, challenging discourses on mainstream media that deny the responsibility that private and state sectors have in the crimes. For their part, Ximena and Father Francis use their privileges (Father Francis takes advantage of his white-male privilege and his relative immunity as a religious man; meanwhile Ximena takes advantage of her U.S. citizenship and of her contacts and knowledge as a social worker) to establish *Contra el Silencio*, an NGO committed to help female workers and the families of the disappeared women in Juárez. This organization not only provides free legal advice to workers whose rights have been violated or to the families of the murdered women, but also coordinates activities that build solidarity between the victims and help them coping with the pain inflicted by necropractices. An example of these activities are *rastreos,* which in the novel are described in detail, as the following quote shows,

> "God have mercy." Father Francis made the sign of the cross over himself. He took a plastic flask out of his knapsack and walked over to the body, waiting for Rubí to finish interviewing Laura Godoy before he said anything. "We found her identification," he announced to the group. "We know her name. Everybody, please gather around."
>
> He sprinkled the body with water from the flask. "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We beseech you, oh Lord, to bless the ravaged remains of your daughter, Mireya Beltrán, may she rest in the garden of your love now and forever" (Gaspar de Alba 2005, 249)

As the previous scene points out, *rastreos* offer the possibility of finding and identifying the disappeared women. In this sense, they provide hope because they represent a real possibility of stopping the perpetual grief of the families of the victims. *Rastreos* also represent spaces of solidarity in which the participants come together by sharing the pain of not knowing the whereabouts of their beloved ones and supporting each other in their sorrow. By doing so, the participants transform the horror, that the system inflicts in them with the intention of isolating and paralyzing them, into community and action. *Rastreos,* therefore, constitute spaces of healing, which by returning to the victims their humanity and their right of an honorable burial, reestablish the mourning rituals that not only the families of the victims need, but that Juárez society as a whole need to heal their bodies and psyches.

In the novel, the characters also resist necrocapitalism channeling anger and anxiety into action. Ivon is the character in the story that better embodies the last. She uses her anger and anxiety as an adrenaline that fuels her with the necessary energy to look for her disappeared sister, as she asserts in the following quote,

> "I can't wait any more. Authorities on both sides are washing their hands of this situation. So now it's up to me to find Irene on my own. I know she's alive, I can feel it. I don't know why, but I have this faith that Irene knows what to do, that she won't panic, that she'll do what it takes to stay alive" (168)

Anger and anxiety provide Ivon the necessary force to overcome exhaustion, fight back for her life against Wilcox and rescue Irene. It is pertinent to clarify that although Ivon's rage relates to the same primal affective system that boosts Wilcox's sadisms and pornographic taste, her rage is of a different nature. Wilcox's anger comes from hatred. He is openly racist, misogynist and homophobic. His hate for people of color, women and

queer people supports his feeling of superiority. The act of killing and controlling the deaths of the objects of his hatred nourishes his greed for power and momentarily mollifies his anger. In contrast, Ivon embodies a type of anger that provides her with the necessary courage to overcome fear and sadness. Ivon's rage is energy towards life that breaks down the paralysis that hegemonic structures impose in the victims of necropractices. Ivon's rage is not motivated by selfish ambitions or hatred, but by a profound and authentic interest in the well-being of another human being.

The last is better explained using Audre Lorde's notion of anger. In "The Uses of Anger: Women Responding to Racisms" (2007a), Lorde argues that women of color have "a well-stocked arsenal of anger potentially useful against" racism and oppression. This anger "focused with precision […] can become a powerful source of energy serving progress and change" (127). She also points out that the anger of women of color is very different to the hatred of their oppressors. The anger of women of color is a mechanism of survival focused on fueling social change, meanwhile the hatred of their oppressors has as object "death and destruction" (129). Despite anger has a crucial importance as the energy that fuels an active opposition against racism, Lorde insists, in "Eye to Eye: Black Women, Hatred and Anger" (2007b), that anger is not enough to dismantle racist apparatuses,

> And true, sometimes it seems that anger alone keeps me alive; it burns with a bright and undiminished flame. **Yet anger, like guilt, is an incomplete form of human knowledge. More useful than hatred, but still limited. Anger is useful to help clarify our differences, but in the long run, strength that is bred by anger alone is a blind force which cannot create the future. It can only demolish the past. Such strength does not focus upon what lies ahead, but**

> **upon what lies behind, upon what created it –hatred.** And hatred is a deathwish for the hated, not a life whish for anything else (152, added).

Thus, for Lorde, to be an effective tool of change, anger requires a vision towards the future. In *Desert Blood* this vision is provided by hope. While waiting in the police station with the families of other disappeared women, Ivon notices that the attitude that helps these families to endure their sorrow and not break down is hope,

> Every single woman I spoke with knows that God will help her family, God will make things right for them. God will bring back the missing girl in their lives. I want to ask them if they have ever wondered why God did this to them in the first place, but that would be rude and mean. **Who am I to trample on their hope? Like me, none of them will allow themselves to think the girl they are looking for has been killed, although we all fear and don't say that her life is in danger. You can't function if you think like that** (Gaspar de Alba 2005, 167, emphasis added).

Ivon criticizes the families of the victims for depositing their hope in religion, however, at the same time, she recognizes that hope is necessary to appease fear and sadness. Ivon's criticisms discloses the kind of hope that she, Ximena, Father Francis, and the families of the disappeared and murdered women try to ignite to continue in their pursue for justice. Their hope does not correspond to a Judeo-Christian passive mode of hope in which the individual passively resigns themselves to their fatal fate and expects god's will, but it is a hope towards action, fueled by anger and care. This hope is a constant transition between the conviction that the disappeared women are still alive and the awareness that is highly probable that they are death, as the following quote points out,

> Tomorrow morning I'll go out on the *rastreo* with Ximena and Father Francis and the rest of the Contra el Silencio group. I'm not saying Irene is dead, but I'm not going to pretend it isn't possible, after everything I've seen and heard. I'm not going to leave any stone unturned, even if it means –God, my hands are shaking as I write this– even if it means finding Irene's body underneath (169)

However, because it is a collective effort, this kind of hope appeases individual uncertainty, by helping the individual to visualize their demand of justice as connected to others who have endured similar experiences. This hope also mobilizes mechanisms to heal the psyches and bodies of the individuals subjugated by necropractices.

Thus, hope towards action is one of the attitudes that brown women in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands and their allies use to channel efficiently primal affective systems, such as anger and care. These women collectively mobilize hope, anger and care to resist the horror, panic and cynicism that necrocapitalism boosts to circumscribe authority and a gendered and racialized order that unequally distributes labor exploitation and profits.

3.5 Conclusion

As a manner of conclusion, I briefly point out the implications that the analysis developed in this chapter has for future research on the areas of Chicana and Latina literary and cultural studies, and border studies. This analysis adds to the emergent interest in revising the paradigm of the borderlands in relation to 21st century socio-political contexts, identities and embodiments.[80] The case presented in *Desert Blood* is crucial in this revision because the feminicides in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, represent the beginning of a mode of capitalism that is been currently advanced by scapegoating politics, which lead

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[80] See Cuevas (2018)

the way for the establishment of new "markets" for generating profits from necropractices. In recent years, "businesses", such as immigration detention centers, and a complex transnational system of deportations and human smuggling have been added to the maquiladora and illegal markets that flourished in the U.S.-Mexico border region during the 1980s and 1990s. The most notorious change in the evolution of necrocapitalism into its 21st century phase is that the system is operating not only focalized on specific locales across the U.S.-Mexico borderlands, but displayed as a Pan-American machinery that begins its operations far south from the U.S.-Mexico border. The system is, therefore, extending the non-citizenship status discussed in this chapter to populations across the Americas and rearranging the distribution of vulnerability to necropractices in the whole continent. As discussed further below in the conclusions of Chapter 5, the latter implies that populations that were immune to necropractices under 20th century policies, in recent years, have passed to a non-citizenship category that exposes them to necropractices.

Because of its transnational and Pan-American range of operation, studies on the social and cultural repercussions of contemporary forms of capitalism in the Americas require a hemispheric analytical lens similar to the transnational feminist approach proposed in this chapter. That is to say, an analytical approach that fosters a conversation between critical insights from all corners of the Americas. This chapter initiates this conversation putting together the critical perspectives of U.S. and Latin American feminists. Finally, the analysis in this chapter points out the importance that bodily systems have in the operation of contemporary forms of capital. Thus, as this chapter have demonstrated, affect must be taking into consideration to achieve an accurate

understanding of the complex relationship amongst capital, racialized and sexualized bodies, hegemony, resistance and artistic and cultural expressions.

Chapter 4: Affect in the Black Skin: *Dominicanidad* and the Negation of the Afro-Female Body

4.1 Introduction

Chapter 4 argues that Dominican nationalism impacts the psyches of Afro-Dominican women by denying their blackness and forcing them into *blanqueamiento* (whitening). The chapter uses as case study the novel, *In the Name of Salomé* (2000) by Julia Álvarez. This novel tells the story of two historical Dominican women: The poet and educator, Salomé Ureña, and her daughter, Camila Salomé Henriquez Ureña, intertwining their fictional biographies with the history of the formation of the Dominican Republic as a nation-state. The novel poses the question "what is a nation?"[81], interrogating Dominican historical accounts that erase the contributions of Black communities and women from the national constituency[82]. The analysis in this chapter examines the mechanisms in the novel by which the female Black body is erased from Dominican history and *dominicanidad* (Dominican ethnic identity). In particular, it focuses on how the national affective regime[83] represses female and Black emotional perspectives, and on how the Black female body is replaced by female prototypes that better represent the Dominican Republic as a racially and culturally Indo-Hispanic nation-state.

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[81] This question is explicitly put forward in the epigraph that precedes the story, which reads as follows, "¿Qué es Patria? ¿Sabes acaso/ lo que preguntas, mi amor?" (Álvarez 2000), which into English translates as "What is homeland? Do you know,/ my love, what are you asking".

[82] In this regard, Álvarez affirms, "this book is an effort to understand the great silence from which these two women emerged and into which they have disappeared, leaving us to dream up their stories and take up the burden of their songs" (Álvarez 2000, 357).

[83] An affective regime is "the set of conditions that govern with varying degrees of hegemonic status the ways in which particular kinds of affect can be appropriately materialized" (Wee 2016, 109).

With Indo-Hispanic, I refer to an ethnic and racial formation that ascribes whiteness to Dominicans, erasing their Black Atlantic[84] heritage. My understanding of this formation is informed by a growing body of scholarship in the field of Dominican Studies, which revises racial formations in the island and in the diaspora[85]. In "Hair Race-Ing: Dominican Beauty Culture and Identity Production" (2000), Ginetta Candelario argues that Dominicans circumscribe "their racial ancestry to European and Taino "Indians"" (130), because they equate whiteness with the decimated Taino population of Hispaniola and a Hispanic colonial heritage (129). As mentioned in Chapter 1, understandings of whiteness in Latin America and the Spanish Caribbean are significantly different to dominant ideas about whiteness in the United States. In former Spanish colonies, "whiteness" is established from an "Iberian variant"[86] that is less based on pure blood and more on social, political and economic status. The Dominican Republic's geographical location neighboring Haiti and its specific history of colonialism and neocolonialism twist this Iberian variant, making possible that non-white racial categories and phenotypes associated with blackness in other contexts enjoy honorary whiteness[87] in the Caribbean nation. As Candelario notices, Indo-Hispanic identity also involves specific ways of defining blackness. Dominicans do not necessarily attribute blackness to people

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[84] The Black Atlantic refers to the transnational and intercultural identities and cultures that emerged in locations such as the Caribbean as a consequence of social, economic, political and geographical changes that initiated during modernity. One of these changes is the globalization of a racist imperialism economically supported by slavery. For more on the Black Atlantic see (Gilroy 1993).

[85] Within this body of scholarship, Silvio Torres-Saillant's and Frank Moya Pons's works are indisputable benchmarks. See (Torres-Saillant 2006 and 2000) and (Moya Pons 2000).

[86] See (Hoelink 1967).

[87] As Adrianna Valdez Young (2009) argues, honorary whiteness is a construct intertwined with a fantasy of exception, in which non-white individuals "repress or magnify parts of their identities in exchange for increased access to political and economic privilege" (177).

with dark complexion, but they classify people as Black according to their national affiliation (e.g., Haitians and West Indians), social and economic status, and communal practices (such as religion and language).

The revision of Dominican racial formations leaded by scholars such as Candelario has mainly focused on how Dominicans' ideologies of blackness and whiteness result in the systemic erasure of histories and practices associated with a Black Atlantic heritage from *dominicanidad*. However, less attention has been given to the role that affective systems and structures of feeling –that is "meanings and values as they are lived and felt" (Méndez 2012, 5)– play in the development and consolidation of Dominican racial formations. One of the few studies which focuses on the relationship between structures of feeling and the formation of a Dominican ethnic identity is Danny Méndez's *Narratives of Migration and Displacement in Dominican Literature* (2012). In this study, Méndez argues that "emotional creolization is the affective structure accompanying the mechanisms of diasporic identity construction" (7) of U.S. Dominican authors. With emotional creolization[88], Méndez refers to the set of feelings that emerged from the hybridity that happened in the Caribbean as a consequence of the transatlantic slave route. According to Méndez, despite "the 'official' version of Dominican history is built on a massive denial and repression of the African presence," the "creolization process has gone forward, in the Dominican Republic, through staged and constantly reinforced contradictions between the demographically real and the ideologically asserted" (10). For Méndez, the uprooting experienced by Dominican immigrants in the

[88] Méndez's understanding of "creolization" comes from a tradition of French Caribbean thinking that argues that the Caribbean presents a very specific process of hybridity given that the region is a "site of history characterized by ruptures that began with brutal dislocation, the slave trade" (Glissant cited in Méndez 2012, 7). For more on the French Caribbean perspective, see (Glissant 1989).

United States[89] along with their immersion in a different racial stratification produce that they experience feelings of adaptation similar to the feelings experienced by the peoples involved in creolization processes in the Caribbean in the past.

The analysis in this chapter shares some central ideas with Méndez's work. For instance, the conception that their diasporic positionality forces U.S. Dominican authors to rethink their racial and ethnic hybridity, which in some cases results in the reincorporation of feelings from a Black transatlantic denied heritage. However, in contrast to Méndez's, this analysis does not focus on the most common emotions associated with immigration in literary practices –nostalgia and melancholia–. Instead it argues that contemporary U.S. Dominican writing practices engage in a complex revision of the affective structures involved in the construction of their ethnic and racial identities. This revision transcends a focus on nostalgia, exploring historical processes of racialization, sexualization and nationalism that establish an emotional regime[90] based on an Indo-Hispanic national identity. Moreover, this revision is developed from a hemispheric imaginary, which, as argued in Chapter 1, consists in a perspective that uses fiction and imagination to examine how socio-political processes from the United States, Latin America and the Caribbean simultaneously impact Latina/os' affective systems. From this hemispheric perspective, Dominican female authors recover with the

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[89] Nowadays, it is widely accepted in U.S. Dominican Studies that Dominican racial ideologies change in the United States, because Dominicans confront a racial system that classifies many of them as Black, as Kimberly Simmons affirms in regards to Dominicans' understanding of blackness, "but this meaning shifts in the United States because of the situated meaning of blackness. Blackness, one understood within the context of Hispaniola, is called into question as many Dominicans are considered to be black in the context of the United States" (Simmons 2009, 4). While some U.S. Dominicans opt for continuing describing their racial identity as mixed, others, especially U.S Afro-Dominicans, choose to identify as Black, negotiating a sense of identity that allows them to identify as both Black and Latina/o.

[90] Emotional regimes are "dominant modes for acceptable emotional thought and expression as created an enforced by governments or societies" (Reddy 2001, 124).

imagination the history of the Black affective systems that dominant *dominicanidad* represses.

Throughout the chapter the terms “Black affective systems” and “Black affect” refer to emotional reactions and intensities, which because of their association with Black bodies are classified as “excessive”, “irrational” and “inappropriate” by Dominican society. The terms, therefore, name the emotional responses that are erased from an Indo-Hispanic Dominican national identity[91].

4.2 The Ideologies of Anti-Blackness in *Dominicanidad*: *Hispanidad* and *Antihaitianismo*:[92]

Some Dominican writers, such as Junot Diaz (2007) and Loida Martínez Pérez (2000) just to mention a couple, trace in their novels how the *Trujillato*[93] advanced a racist and misogynist nationalistic project that still has repercussions on the affective systems of Dominican women in the island and in the diaspora. However, Julia Álvarez’s *In the Name of Salomé* (2000) portrays the anti-blackness that prevails at the core of *dominicanidad* not as an ideology that spontaneously emerged during the *Trujillato,* but as a set of beliefs that has its seeds in pre-*Trujillato* nationalistic projects. To facilitate the understanding of the historical perspective that Álvarez develops in her novel, this section

[91] This conceptualization of Black affect is crucially inspired by works in African American Studies that explore how racist emotional regimes in the United States classify African Americans’ emotional reactions as excessive and illegible. See (Palmer 2017) and (Kretsedemas 2010).

[92] This is not an exhaustive historical account of Dominican hegemonic racial formations. An account of that nature is beyond the scope of the present analysis. For more on Dominican racial history see Sagás and Inoa (2013), Daive (2013) and Franco (2015).

[93] *Trujillato* is a common way of referring to Rafael Leonidas Trujillo’ dictatorship (1930-1961).

briefly reviews the ideologies that support anti-blackness in *dominicanidad*, tracing their historical formation back to the nineteenth century.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, in Latin America, ideologies that deny blackness and indigeneity, favoring a racially mixed embodiment as representative of national identity are common. The Dominican Republic is no exception to these ideologies. As Kimberly Simmons observes in *Reconstructing Racial Identity and the African Past in the Dominican Republic* (2009), legal documents and governmental discourses describe Dominicans and *dominicanidad* as racially mixed. However, in contrast to other Latin American countries, Dominicans do not use the term "mestizo/a" to talk about their racially mixed identities, but the term "Indio/a" –this despite the fact that in the rest of Latin America "Indio/a" is employed to name indigenous or Native people. As Simmons points out, this term and its variants which indicate color gradation –*Indio claro* (light-skinned Indio), *Indio* (medium-skinned Indio) and *Indio oscuro* (dark-skinned Indio)– were first included as "official" racial categories in Dominican governmental documents (e.g., the *Cédula de Identidad* (Identity card), birth certificates and passports), during Rafael Leonidas Trujillo' dictatorship (1930-1961). The term, therefore, has its origin in the violent racism that characterized the dictatorship[94]. Trujillo imposed "Indio/a" as single term to talk about Dominicans' racial identities in an attempt to whiten Dominican

[94] As Simmons observes, Trujillo's regime persecuted Black communities of Dominicans and Haitians. A clear example of this persecution is the Massacre of Haitians of 1937 (commonly known as the Parsley Massacre because "Haitians and Dominicans pronounce the Spanish word *perejil* differently and, according to a popular though unconfirmed story, this was used as a litmus test of their origins" (Bishop and Fernandez 2017)). The massacre started on October the 2nd. 1937 and lasted approximately eight days. It initiated when "the Dominican military, under Trujillo's orders, began to execute Haitian families as well as Dominicans of Haitian descent. The killings, many of which took place in the border region, were mostly carried out by machete to help sell the regime's official account that the massacre was a spontaneous uprising of patriotic Dominican farmers against Haitian cattle thieves" (ibid). Trujillo's government never admitted its participation in the massacre. The real number of deaths still remains unknown and varies from less than 1000 to 30,000.

national identity. In this sense, the term established Dominicans' racial and cultural roots in the mixing between Spaniards and Taínos, erasing their African heritage.

As Simmons notices, despite its racist connotations and origin, "Indio/a" is still the most common term to talk about racial identity in the Dominican Republic. However, "Indio/a" is not the only racist legacy from *Trujillato* that prevails in the Dominican Republic, but also a profound Negrophobia that makes that Dominicans continue denying and feeling embarrassed of their African heritage. As Simmons points out in the following quotation, this Negrophobia have created tensions between Dominicans and Haitians, given that Dominicans support their racially mixed identity, ascribing blackness to Haitians and contrasting Dominicans' mixed race with Haitians' blackness,

> Dominican's historical construction of blackness used Haiti and Haitians as a point of reference of not only what it meant to be black but also of African descent. Dominicans defined themselves as mixed in relation to Haitians, who they defined as black. Unpacking the term black in the Dominican Republic evokes an African past, dark skin color, poverty and other negative associations. In a relational sense, Dominican mixedness is constructed vis-à-vis Haitian blackness (4)

Therefore, two ideologies support anti-blackness in *dominicanidad*: *hispanidad* and *antihaitianismo.* The latter is defined by Ernesto Sagás in *Race and Politics in the Dominican Republic* (2010) in the following way,

> A set of socially reproduced anti-Haitian prejudices, myths and stereotypes prevalent in the cultural makeup of the Dominican Republic. These are based on presumed racial, social, economic, and national-cultural differences between two peoples; differences stressed by generations of Dominicans ideologues (4).

According to Sagás, *antihaitianismo* not only serves the purpose of establishing what Dominicans think they are not, but also "is an authoritarian, dominant ideology, with the objective of defending a narrow status quo" (4). Regarding this last idea, Sagás affirms that *antihaitianismo* distributes power and the access to resources across racial groups. That is, it justifies the low socioeconomic status of Black Dominicans and Haitians migrants, and the hegemonic position of the Dominican elite, mainly integrated by white or light-skinned people. Sagás also observes that *antihaitianismo* has been imposed as dominant ideology not only through violent cohesive methods, but also as part of a project of cultural hegemony that successes because the Dominican population accepts "cultural and personal affinity with elite ideas" (4).

As April J. Mayes argues in *The Mulatto Republic: Class, Race, and Dominican National Identity* (2014), *antihaitianismo* goes hand in hand with *hispanidad.* Mayes defines *hispanidad* as an ideology that privileges cultural norms and values associated with Spain as markings of Dominican national identity. This ideology is also supported by a fallacious historical account that intellectuals under the patronage of Trujillo's regime deliberately created[95]. However, Mayes notices that this pro-Hispanic sentiment, so prevalent during Trujillo's era, has some of its ideological precedents in nationalistic projects that were developed in the Dominican Republic as early as in the nineteenth century. Mayes proposes the term "*hispanismo*" to name these pre-*Trujillato* nationalistic projects.

During the nineteenth century, multiple branches or versions of *hispanismo* were developed in the Dominican Republic. Some of them resonate with the *antihaitianismo* of

[95] According to Mayes (2014), *Trujillato* intellectuals such as Manuel Arturo Peña Battle and Joaquín Balaguer promoted a version of Dominican history that claimed that Dominican national identity was firmly rooted in Hispanic cultural values since the seventeenth century. And, since then, this Dominican Hispanic national identity has been threatened by Haitian military invasions.

Trujillo's era, such as the nationalism promoted by Manuel de Jesús Galván (1834-1910). Galván argued against the independence of the Dominican Republic from Spain, touting that an independent Dominican Republic would succumb to an invasion of Black Haitian forces (23). He was part of a group of intellectuals and politicians who supported the annexation of the Dominican Republic to Spain in 1861. In addition, in his literary work[96], Galván advances a national ethnic identity that, according to Mayes, is the origin of "the Indo-Hispano as an archetype of *Dominicanidad*" (Mayes 2014, 23). That is, Dominicans as "ethnically Taíno" but "acculturated to the Hispanic cultural norms" (23).

However, the Spanish occupation of the Dominican Republic (1863-1865) also ignited the emergence of nationalisms that despite elevating Dominicans' Hispanic heritage, claimed the independence of the Caribbean nation, rejecting racial eurocentrism as the basis of Dominican national identity. An example of this other branch of *hispanismo* is Pedro Francisco Bono's (1828-1906), who argued that "Dominicans were not Indo-Hispanos but a new Raza[97] comprising blacks, whites and mulattos who shared a bond through Hispanic cultural norms" (27). Bono envisioned the Dominican Republic as an example of racial inclusivity. His nationalistic project did not reject blackness, nor foreign investment in the island. Nonetheless, it involved a criticism of Haitian politics because, for Bono, policies that did not allow that foreigners own property in Haiti were detrimental to the economic development of the Caribbean region.

It is important to mention that as Mayes notices, during the nineteenth century in addition to the mentioned branches of *hispanismo*, anti-imperialism and pan-Caribbean

[96] Mayes specifically refers to Galván's novel, *Enriquillo: leyenda histórica dominicana* (1879). The novel tells the story of Enriquillo, a nobel Taíno evangelized by Franciscans friars, who fights against evil Spaniards but paradoxically embraces the noblest values of Catholicism and Hispanic culture.

nationalistic projects emerged in the Dominican Republic. For instance, intellectuals and politicians such as Antenor Fermín, Gregorio Luperón, and Eugenio María de Hostos advanced an openly anti-imperialism, anti-Spanish and anti-U.S. interventionism agenda, promoting the creation of a Pan-Antillean alliance between the Greater Antilles (Puerto Rico, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Jamaica) that supported the independence movements of each of these countries. Moreover, immigrants from the West Indies who arrived in the Dominican Republic to work in the sugar industry brought with them their social and political organizations. These organizations, such as Marcus Garvey's UNIA (Universal Negro Improvement Association), promoted Pan-Africanism as the only viable way of political organization that would achieve the political independence and socioeconomic development of Black peoples across the Caribbean and the rest of the Americas.

Mayes observes that despite the variety of nationalistic projects that competed in the Dominican Republic during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, certain economic changes and political events paved the path for the racist and misogynist nationalism of Trujillo's era. She affirms, Trujillo's "racist, patriarchal and authoritarian state emerged in the 1940s as a result of exclusionary governing practices that disenfranchised rural Dominicans, reactions to Black labor and U.S military intervention" (6). According to Mayes, in the period between 1870 and 1940, the Dominican Republic experienced a drastic socioeconomic transformation as a result of the development of the modern sugar industry in the island. The Dominican economy become dependent to the United States. An elite class –integrated by white and light-skinned immigrants from

[97] Mayes makes a distinction between the terms, "race" and "*raza*". While race refers to physical features such as skin color and hair, Latina/o and Latin American intellectuals have employed the Spanish term, *raza*, to name the ethnic and cultural characteristics of Latin American nations.

Puerto Rico, Cuba, Spain and the U.S. who owned sugar mills– was consolidated. The social stratification of this period also established a Black labor force mainly integrated by immigrants from Haiti and the West Indies. This change in the distribution of labor caused that Dominican peasants perceived Haitian and West Indies immigrants as an unfair labor competition, cultivating resentment against them. Moreover, the emergent light-skinned elite consolidated its hegemonic status propagating values that favored *blanqueamiento* (whitening) and Eurocentric ideals. In addition to these socioeconomic changes, the U.S. occupation (1916-1924) deeply restructured racial and gender formations in the Dominican Republic. As Mayes affirms,

> Among the lessons Trujillo and many others probably learned during the U.S occupation, perceptions of Dominicans' race mattered greatly in foreign affairs, and the closer Dominicans were to whiteness, the most positively they would be received in the international arena. This was the case because, according to Lloyd E. Ambrosius, antiblack racism motivated Woodrow Wilson's liberal internationalism explicitly; the United States' mission in the world was ostensibly to bring liberal democracy to all, but what it actually meant was protecting white supremacy at home and abroad (112).

Regarding gender, the U.S. occupation caused a crisis in Dominican masculine authority. As Mayes explains, U.S. invaders carried with them their racial prejudices. They emasculated male Dominicans threating them as racially inferior people incapable of self-governance. The humiliation that Dominicans experienced during this time generated an emotional scar in Dominican nationalism that years later Trujillo would use in his favor. He would embody a though masculinity that "appealed to the majority of Dominican men because he embodied the dangerous masculinity of the streetwise male" (11), which

symbolically restored Dominican masculinity as ruler of the Caribbean nation in the eyes of the international community.

With the historical timeline of the novel established, we can continue with the close reading of Álvarez's text.

4.3 The Body and Its Socio-Historical context: The Dark Female Body and Dominican Emotional Regimes

In the Name of Salomé brings together two storylines. The first consists of Salomé's dairy and her handwritten poems. The second is Camila's story, which revolves around recovering the real life-story of her absent mother in order to make sense of her own life. The storylines intersperse from chapter to chapter, connecting Salomé's struggles in the Dominican Republic with Camila's life in exile (first in Cuba and later in the United States). The storylines, therefore, constitute a female genealogy that shows, first, how blackness and women's contributions have been erased from *dominicanidad;* and secondly, how these omissions have impacted in a transgenerational way the affective systems of Dominican women in the island and in the diaspora. In Salomé's storyline is where the novel more specifically explores how these omissions damage the female Afro-Dominican body.

Salomé starts her dairy establishing a connection between her life-story and the unstable history of the Dominican Republic. She states, "the story of my life starts with the story of my country, as I was born six years after independence, a sickly child, not expected to live. But by the time I was six, I was in better health than my country, for la patria had already suffered eleven changes of government" (Álvarez 2000, 13). As the last quotation shows, this connection between history and personal recollection is not a

series of events experienced as external to the body, because Salomé “feels” her socio-historical context in relation to her body. For this reason, she establishes a parallelism between her fragile health and the volatile politics of the Dominican Republic; and continues her account pointing out how her affective systems were damaged by a turbulent and violent political climate.

In her diary, Salomé focuses on melancholia because this feeling has been constantly present throughout her life. While remembering her childhood, Salomé realizes that her melancholia is the outcome of growing up in a country at war. She also notices that her profound sadness is closely linked to her chronic asthma. Thus, as the following quotation indicates, in her account, Salomé describes a cycle, in which an environment permeated by violence, fear and mistrust produces life-long psychological and physical damages, “What is patria in whose name people can do such things, murder the woman who sewed up your national flag? Make your father disappear? Take away one man’s leg and another man’s arm? And so, I cry and cannot stop, and soon I am having a hard time breathing” (27). This cycle can be described as “transmission of affect”. As mentioned in Chapter 1, “transmission of affect” refers to a cycle in which individual emotional systems and reactions are influenced by external factors, such as political and social climates, and racial, gender and economic stratifications. It is important to mention that within this cycle, individual emotions have the potentiality of having an effect in external environments (Brennan 2004). The transmission of affect that Salomé depicts consists in a social and political environment that alters the affective systems of grief and fear (which regulate emotions associated with loss and anxiety[98]), in the sense that an atmosphere of violence and mistrust produces a sense of loss of security that alerts the anxiety affective

[98] For more on these affective systems refer to Chapter 1. Also see (Panksepp 2010).

system (fear). In Salomé's account, the alteration of these affective systems manifests in melancholia and asthma.

In the novel, Salomé is not the only character whose affective systems are represented as in relation to their socio-historical context. The emotional reactions of other female characters are subjected to public scrutiny. For instance, Salomé's mother, Gregoria, is severely criticized when she decides to separate from her unfaithful husband, breaking up social expectations about wife's duties, such as self-sacrifice, forgiveness and a moderate character. It is important to notice that Dominican *gente bien*[99] judges Gregoria's inability of performing her wife's duties as a problem caused by her African heritage. They especially express concern about Gregoria's temper, which they read as excessive, irrational and Black. As the following quotation illustrates, the members of the Ureña family (Gregoria's family in law) are who voice this perspective about her as a problematic wife because of her blackness, "the Ureñas might have had a long talk with their son Nicolás in which they might have pointed out that though Gregoria herself was pale enough, and though she spoke of her grandpapá from the Canary Islands, all you had to do was look over her shoulder at her grandmother and draw your own conclusions" (Álvarez 2000, 19).[100]

A question that rises from how Dominican society judges Gregoria is: which is then the standard of femininity that Dominican society utilizes to racialize Gregoria's behavior and emotional reactions? As previously mentioned, the Dominican Republic has

[99] *Gente Bien* is a common way of naming elites in Latin America. The name not necessarily implies wealth, but refers to families that for generations have occupied government and intellectual positions and, therefore, over the years have accumulated cultural and intellectual capital.

[100] This reference to Gregoria's Black grandmother is a direct allusion to a common saying in the Spanish Caribbean, "¿y tu abuela dónde está? (tell me, where is your grandmother?) Which utilizes the image of a Black grandmother hidden from the public eye as a metaphor of how some Caribbean people denies their Africa heritage.

historically favored a Hispanic cultural heritage to define Dominican national identity. The novel portrays how this preference impacts the education of the female characters. For instance, Salome and her sister, Ramona, are educated under a model of female instruction that Latin American countries inherited from Spain during the colonial period[101]. In the novel, this model is instructed in the sisters Bobadilla's school[102] and through manuals of appropriate female behavior, such as *Doña Bernardita's Manual of Instruction for Young Ladies*. The model exclusively focuses on preparing girls for their future roles of wives and mothers, teaching them Catholic moral principles, the values of modesty and self-sacrifice, and domestic skills[103]. In the rest of this chapter, I refer to the kind of femininity that this educational model shapes as "Hispanic", in order to emphasize its Eurocentric perspective and connection with the ideology of *hispanidad*.

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[101] As Eva Guerrero (2012) points out, the model of female education that prevailed in Latin American countries in the years right after their independence is the traditional educational model for women developed in Spain during the enlightenment. As Margarita López Ortega (1988) underscores, during the eighteenth century a debate on the most adequate model of instruction for women took place in Spain. This debate responded to the social, political and economic reorganization that Spain experienced in those years as a result of the succession of monarchical power between the house of Habsburg and the house of Bourbon. The Bourbons brought with them not only the most recent French modern pedagogical theories but also a modern pragmatic vision that intended to put to work all of their subjects (even the most marginalized such as women) at the service of the monarchical patriarchal state. Although during the debate theories that defended women's intellectual capabilities to perform functions beyond their traditional roles as mothers and wives emerged, the state ended favoring a pedagogical model that centered women's education exclusively in an education for marriage. As López Ortega argues, in this educational model, "for women it was not relevant to know grammar or math, but to gain expertise in "the values of the heart" which make possible a pleasant domestic life" (308, the translation is mine). These "values of the heart" consisted in principles such as love, sensitivity, and patience. The educational model was complemented by lessons in domestic duties such as cooking and sewing, indoctrination in the Catholic faith and basic lessons in reading.

[102] In the narrative, the female education that the school of the sisters Bobadilla provides is mocked through the sisters' last name, which is a variation of the Spanish word "*boba*" which means "silly girl or silly woman".

[103] It is relevant to underscore that this ideal femininity is an ideological formation that belongs to the Dominican elite, which educates its female members under this ideal and imposes it as the norm for the stratification of Dominican women.

Throughout the narrative the genealogy of women –encompassed by Gregoria, *tía* Ana, Salomé, Ramona and Camila– challenges traditional models of women's education, advocating for a female instruction that includes the same subjects and topics taught in boys' schools. For instance, Gregoria provides her daughters with an education that includes reading and writing lessons,

> Of course, I am growing up with my tía Ana and my mother, Gregoria, who has left her husband, and these are not women to hold back orthography from a little girl whose first question on noticing the crucifix was not "Who is that man?" but "What are those letters written above his head, I, N, R, I?" And so, long before Ramona and I go a block away to attend the school of the sisters Bobadilla, my mother and aunt have taught us how to write as well as how to read (16 and17).

And several years later, following Eugenio María de Hostos' pedagogical theories[104], Salomé develops curricula that include lessons not only in writing and reading, but also in sciences and philosophy for her *Instituto para Señoritas.*

Given that the historical Salomé and Camila largely contribute to advance women's education in the Spanish Caribbean, it is not surprising that the novel spends time enumerating their contributions in this area. However, the novel also stresses that their forefront ideas in women's education were possible thanks to the combative spirit of their female ancestors, Gregoria and Ana. These women overcome racialization and social disapproval, gaining their independence from male authority in social and

[104] As Gabriela Mora (2014) argues, Hostos developed an educational model for women that has as foundational principles the following: first, the idea that "reason does not have sex"; secondly, that women's understanding is equal to men's and that there is no scientific evidence to limit women participation within society to the functions of wives and mothers; and thirdly, that limiting women to procreation is detrimental for their well-being as human beings and for the progress of Latin American nations.

economic terms. In the quotation below, Salomé expresses how she remembers her mother's and aunt's financial independence,

> We were living, my mother, my sister, Ramona, my tía Ana –the second mother of the household– and myself, in a small, wooden house with a bright zinc roof, far enough from the central square to escape bombing and looting. "**Whoever heard of women owning a house!" my father was said to have exclaimed when he heard the news that his wife had bought a house with her sister** (14, emphasis mine).

The previous quotation also indicates that Gregoria and Ana choose to live in a very modest house, far away from the central square where Dominican *gente bien* lives. Their voluntary alienation from the center implies that they accept their position as "the other", dislocating themselves from the "Hispanic" ideologies of Dominican elite. The last is emphasized by Salomé in the following way,

> We were proud of our house, and most especially we were proud of our zinc roof. **If you have a fine, old house from when the Spaniards first settled in the island, you no doubt had a Spanish-tile roof, which was all very fine and pure-blooded of your family to have**, except for the fact that if you had that kind of house, **you would be living in the old Spanish section of the city** along with the government house and the prison house and the cathedral, and in time of war, that would be the area where the opposing side would aim its cannons and blast your fine, old family roof to hell (14 emphasis mine)

As Salomé notices, the center of Santo Domingo –where power institutions, such as the government, the Church and the Police are located– is culturally Hispanic. Therefore, in the center where the ideologies about femininity of Dominican *gente bien* are the norm,

Gregoria's and Ana's "inappropriate" behaviors and emotional reactions do not have a place. Aware of their otherness, Gregoria and Ana abandon the center of Santo Domingo looking for a geographical location where they are not call out because of their dark complexion, temper or desire of keeping their independence and dignity.

Before closing this section, it is pertinent to recapitulate briefly that in the novel the connection between socio-historical context and female affective systems occurs in two manners: The first consists in the transmission of affect between the socio-historical environment and the affective systems that regulate emotions and moods in the female body. The second involves an emotional regime according to which society interprets, accepts and censor female behavior and emotional reactions. *In the name of Salomé* points out how this emotional regime in nineteenth-century Dominican society is established in relation to a culturally Hispanic femininity favored by Dominican elites. Also, the novel highlights how this emotional regime involves processes of racialization in which the behaviors and emotions of Black women are perceived as excessive and inappropriate.

4.4 Salomé's Self-Split: Her Formation as the Ideal Female Poet of the Nation

This section answers the following question: How did a woman such as Salomé – raised by two strong and independent women of color who resisted public scrutiny– end up being whitewashed and erased from Dominican history?

In the novel, Salomé starts writing anonymously, under the pseudonym of Herminia. Only then, she is able to develop freely her political poetry, "secretly, in the dark cover of the night, Herminia worked at setting la patria free. And with every link she cracked open for la patria, she was also setting me free" (14). As the previous quotation

notes, during this time, Salomé writes poetry that accomplishes an important social function and also satisfies her personal aspirations and concerns. The latter is because with her poetry, Salomé is challenging a misogynist status quo that affirms that women are incapable of generating sophisticated thoughts or artistic expressions. However, Salomé loses the freedom she enjoys composing her poems, when she discloses her authorship of Herminia's poems; and as a consequence, Dominican society claims her poetry as part of the patriarchal and Indo-Hispanic structure of the Dominican nation-state.

Salome's public disclosing causes that her body and subjectivity start to be directly impacted and constrained by public opinion and social expectations. Also, she starts to experience herself divided into Salomé (the dark woman with thoughts, desires and feelings) and Salomé, the poet of the nation. In her dairy, Salomé expresses her discomfort under the public scrutiny. She claims how she feels that she is wearing a disguise which prevents people to see her real character,

> I studied my face in the mirror: the same eyes, mouth, big ears (oh, how I hated them!), the nose I wished were a little less broad, the springy hair I couldn't tamp down –in short, I was the very same Salomé Ureña, but now everyone seemed to point […] **It's as if I had on a disguise, a famous face, behind which I watched people.** (87, emphasis added)

The disguise that Salomé feels over her body symbolizes Dominican society's expectations regarding her role as national poet. Dominican society demands that Salomé renounces to her affective drives, neglecting her dark female body; also, that she exclusively serves the interests of the Dominican nation-state. In the narrative, Ramona is the character who is more aware of society's pressure on Salomé. For instance, Ramona

observes how Dominican public expects that Salomé enacts an incorporeal and purely patriotic femininity, composing poetry that does not express in any way Salomé's effective drives and bodily needs. In this regard, Ramona states, "That's all well and good, Salomé. But you can't publish this. You're la musa de la patria, for heaven's sake," she reminded me waving her hand above her head. "**Nobody thinks you have a real body**" (144 emphasis added).

In *Making Face, Making Soul/Haciendo Caras* (1990), Gloria Anzaldúa offers a theory that provides insights into the relationship between "disguise" and "social role" that Álvarez's novel portrays. According to Anzaldúa, women of color's subjectivities and identities are determined not only by discursive formations, but also by enactments or performances that are considered adequate or inadequate in specific social scenarios. In order to survive, women of color have learnt to wear masks that symbolize the identities that social expectations impose on them. They have also gained knowledge about how, adjusting themselves to social scenarios. These enactments are part of a process that Anzaldúa calls, "making faces". This process may inflict serious emotional and psychological damages, and encourage the internalization of oppression and self-hatred. The damage occurs because "the total body"[105] is involved in the social performances of identity and, as part of these social performances, individuals are forced to enact identities that neglect the needs and affective desires of their real total bodies.

However, Anzaldúa emphasizes that there is a space between the multiple masks that women of color are forced to wear and their actual faces. From this space that she calls, "interface," women of color can crack their masks and build self-determined

[105] Anzaldúa describes the total body as a matrix composed by body, soul, mind and spirit; in other words, a matrix integrated by flesh, intellect, and emotional systems. All the elements of the matrix are activated in the social performance of identity and can be damaged as a consequence of social interactions.

identities. For Anzaldúa, there are multiple ways of dismantling the masks that oppress women of color. Nonetheless, she privileges creative and artistic activities –such as literature and visual and performance arts– as tools to achieve women of color's self-determination as well as the transformation of political and social structures.

The importance of art as political tool of self-determination lies in the fact that, according to Anzaldúa, creative acts contain an inherent "spiritual, psychic component – one of spiritual excavation, of (ad)venturing into the inner void, extrapolating meaning from it and sending it out into the world [that] requires the total person –body, soul, mind and spirit" (xxiv). Thus, art allows to connect the total body with its social, political, and historical circumstances. It also facilitates the understanding of how the total body is affected by its circumstances and makes possible imagining an alternative total body that resists the social and political structures that damage it.

The split that Salomé experiences represents the negative aspects of Anzaldúa's process of "making faces". Salomé embodies the injuries that this process inflicts in Caribbean women's psyches. Moreover, although Salomé is aware that poetry contains the power of transforming social realities and healing individuals' psyches and bodies (for instance, during her time as an anonymous poet, she first hand experienced how her asthma and melancholia improved thanks to her poetry); she is unable to continue writing poetry that truly communicates her total body, because Dominican society vehemently censors all her literary attempts of expressing affective drives that challenge Hispanic ideologies of femininity.

The split of Salomé's self not only constitute the first phase of a process that reverses the self-determination that Salomé inherited from Gregoria and Ana, but also the first phase of a process that slowly annihilates the real Salomé, displacing her actual total

body and forcing her into an abstract femininity that better fits Dominican *hispanismo*. The split of Salomé's self is an inevitable phase in her transformation into the ideal Indo-Hispanic femininity of the Dominican nation.

4.5 Shaping the Ideal Dominican National Femininity through the Male Gaze

In the novel, male characters' judgmental gaze imposes on Salomé a patriarchal perspective that transforms her into an ideal Hispanic femininity. I intentionally choose the word "gaze" to denote how men visually perceive Salomé because, as Ann Kaplan points out in *Looking for the Other: Feminism, Film and the Imperial Gaze* (1997), there are different manners of seeing the other. While "looking" establishes a relation with the other and connotes an intention of knowing the other that emerges from authentic curiosity, "gazing" refers to a one-way vision in which "the subject bearing the gaze is not interested in the object per se, but consumed with his own anxieties, which are inevitably intermixed with desires" (xviii). That is, the other becomes an object, a repository for the anxieties and fantasies of who is actively gazing. Thus, who bears the gaze is not interested in knowing the other; rather, they are actively denying and erasing the other. The asymmetrical power between who gazes and who is the object of the gaze responds to the fact that seeing has historically been utilized as a technology of control and dominance that regulates social hierarchies. As a consequence, seeing relations "are determined by history, tradition, power hierarchies, politics, economics. Mythic imaginary ideas about nation, national identity and race all structure how one looks… [and] the possibilities for looking are carefully controlled" (4). Within seeing relations, gendered and racialized processes of looking and gazing establish power hierarchies. Subaltern groups, such as gender and racial others, are situated as objects of the dominant

gaze, which usually comes from white, heterosexual and male positionalities. Subaltern groups are also excluded as subjects able to see, look and observe.

The objectification of the subaltern in seeing relations significantly impacts subalterns' psyches. W.E.B. Du Bois (1964) in his definition of Black double-consciousness clearly underlines the psychological consequences of being reduced to an object of the dominant gaze,

> It is a particular sensation this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels this twoness –an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings, two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. (Du Bois cited in Kaplan 1997, 8)

It is important to notice that according to Du Bois, his double-consciousness is crucially determined by how the dominant gaze limits Blacks' participation within the nation-state. In this sense, the dominant gaze determines Du Bois as a man who, because of his blackness, is destined to a passive and symbolic Americanness. This imposed passivity collides with Du Bois' desire of achieving full citizenship.

Similarly to Du Bois' experience, the dominant male gaze in the novel explicitly conducts the split that Salomé experiences in her total body by overtly objectifying her as a repository of male fantasies. These fantasies include an ideal national femininity that adjust her participation in the Dominican nation-state, according to men's command. They also include imagining this ideal femininity as the embodiment of an Iberian whiteness that erases blackness from *dominicanidad*. Guided by these fantasies, the male gaze in the novel insists on only seeing Salomé's enactment as national poet, making

invisible her dark complexion and affective drives. The last is noticed by Salomé in the following quote, “but the look I saw there was the glazed one of an admirer. He was seeing the famous poetisa […] He was not seeing me, Salomé, of the funny nose and big ears with hunger in her eyes and Africa in her skin and hair” (Álvarez 2000, 94). The male gaze, thus, forces Salomé into *blanqueamiento*, by overlooking her Black features and her sexual urgency expressed in the “hunger in her eyes”. The male gaze is selective opting for seeing in Salomé only the qualities that better fit its fantasies about Dominican femininity. There is a scene in the novel, in which Salomé fully realizes how Dominican society is not interested in “looking” at her. In this scene, Salomé has an accidental encounter with a homeless woman in the periphery of Santo Domingo, where the asylum for mentally distressed people is located. The homeless woman looks at Salomé with real curiosity, with an authentic desire of knowing who she is. Salomé remembers the incident in the following way, “she was looking at me in a way no one had looked at me in a while. She was seeing me, with a wild, probing desire to know who I was. I tried looking away but her eyes held me” (97). Salomé also remembers how the woman, unaware of her role as patriotic poet, is able to see her for what she is. The scene, therefore, explicitly points out how Salomé could only be truly seen by a gaze without the social, moral and political filters that guide social interactions in the Dominican Republic. The woman’s gaze is free of these filters because she, a homeless and mentally stressed person, is someone who does not participate in the economic, political and social system of the Dominican nation-state.

In the novel, the homeless woman’s gaze is contrasted with the gazes of Salomé’s father, Nicolás, and her husband, Francisco Henríquez (Pancho). These men are main patriarchal authorities in Salomé’s life. They embody the dominant male gaze in

Dominican society that forces Salomé into an ideal femininity. The story emphasizes the last, focusing on how Salomé recognizes their eyes as symbols of the same kind of authority, a patriarchal authority that first Salomé ties to her father eyes and latter to Pancho's eyes, as she states in the following quote, "I tried looking away, but his eyes were like Papá's eyes" (105). As mentioned, Salomé is well aware of how Dominican men are not interested in "looking" at her. Nevertheless, she accepts to be objectified by Pancho's gaze. This decision that appears illogical for the daughter of a woman who without hesitation abandoned her unfaithful husband has its explanation in two reasons. As the following quote shows, Salomé naively invites Pancho into her life with the hope of building with him a complicity similar to the one she had with her dead father (the only person who shares her love for poetry and who understands her chronic sadness), "Papá has been coming back into my life […] and now in the probing eyes of this young man whom I had encountered before and who had been sent back into my life as my father's ghost" (103). The second reason is that Salomé abruptly feels the urgency of recovering her body, which has been erased by Dominican society, as an emotional reaction that is part of the profound depression that Salomé experiences after her father's death. In the carnal pleasure that the relationship with Pancho promises, Salomé finds the possibility of reclaiming the body that Dominican society insists on erasing. Moreover, as the following quote shows, in this relationship, she finds a literary motif that redirects her poetry to a tone that expresses her affective drives, more specifically, her sexual desire regulated by the affective system of lust,

> I have to say that I surprised myself when I wrote "Quejas." It was if by lifting my pen, I had released the woman inside me and let her free on paper. But even as I wrote, I knew such frank passion in a woman were not permissible. In fact, if poor

papá had not already been dead, he would have died all over again upon reading my poem to Pancho (143).

As Salomé states in her memories, this literary motif is very effective in helping her to explore her sexual desires, "Perhaps by writing my poem, I had discovered that I had a body" (146). Nonetheless, the deep passion that Pancho awakens in Salomé is insufficient to heal the split that Salomé experiences in her sense of self. Pancho is so self-absorbed in transforming Salomé into a national symbol (despite this implies the annihilation of the actual Salomé) that he is unable to create an intellectual connection with his wife. Although Salomé finds this connection with José María de Hostos –whom Salomé recognizes as her soul mate and with whom she creates the first institute for the instruction of young ladies in the Dominican Republic[106]–, Hostos is also unable to embrace Salomé's total body. He not only openly manifests a lack of sexual desire for her, but also disapproves her labor as a poet. This is because in the novel Hostos promotes a liberal and benevolent positivist project that values science and reason over art and the expression of emotional states. Thus, the male gaze (that is, men's desires, projects, perceptions and fantasies) exacerbates the split that Salomé experiences in herself, making it deeper and irreversible.

[106] Indeed, Salomé's connection with Hostos indicates how Dominican women during the nineteenth century actively participated in national projects that opposed *hispanismo* and *antihaitianismo*, and championing a national identity that embraced anti-imperialism and Pan-Caribbeanism.

4.6 Annihilating the Dark Female Body: Technologies of Erasure and Replacement in the Young Dominican Nation

As previously mentioned, in order to participate in public life and be accepted as national poet, Salomé has to endure a process that splits herself and denies her body. But why is Salomé forced into this process to be allowed to represent the Dominican nation-state? The work of the Afro-Puerto Rican scholar, Marta I Cruz-Janzen, offers an answer to this question. In "Latinegras: Desire Women- Undesirable Mothers, Daughters, Sisters and Wives" (2010), Cruz-Janzen argues that although the Spanish word for nation, *patria*, implies the patriarchal foundations of Latin American nations (*patria* comes from the Latin *pater,* meaning father, and from *patrium,* in relation to the father), nations are commonly imagined and portrayed as a very specific kind of motherhood. This symbolic motherhood apparently recognizes the participation of women in the construction of the nation "as bearers and nurturers of powerful men and nations" (289). However, it indeed reinforces patriarchal hegemony, limiting the participation of women in the formation of the nation-state to a passive motherhood with the exclusive function of nurturing the men destined to build Latin American nations.

This symbolic motherhood constitutes an abstraction that erases real women and their contributions to the nation. This symbolic motherhood also erases women's sexual and racial bodies. This is because the symbolic mother of the nation represents a model of female passive behavior that depends of the constraining of female sexuality. Moreover, she embodies the racial epitome of Latin American nation-states, which, as mentioned in chapters 1 and 2, is established by ideologies around *blanqueamiento* and *mestizaje. Blanqueamiento* and *mestizaje* are intersectional formations that not only privilege whiteness over blackness, but also male over female, and heterosexuality over

homosexuality (Martínez-Echazabal 1998). These formations shape the image of the symbolic mother of the nation as a racially mixed, heterosexual woman, who privileges Eurocentric and patriarchal values and sacrifices her female and Black instincts for the benefit of the nation. Then, *blanqueamiento* and *mestizaje* regulate the symbolic mother's role of self-sacrifice and self-annihilation that the hetero-patriarchal state imposes on its female subjects. Thereby, in Latin American and the Spanish Caribbean, the symbolic mother of the nation "cannot be the Black or African woman" (Janzen Cruz 2010, 289), since she embodies an ancestry of African slavery that Latin American countries are ashamed of recognizing, given that it conveys an abject femininity[107] in the Western colonial imaginary that undermines their westernization.

Salomé, then, is forced into *blanqueamiento*, in order to be worthy of performing as the official poet of a nationalistic project that aspires for the independence of the Dominican Republic, but still desires to achieve the respect of Western powers. Pancho is the figure in the novel in charge of shaping Salomé according to an ideal patriotic femininity. He also principally conducts the annihilation of the real Salomé. He does so by censoring and editing her poems, neglecting her sick body, ignoring her feelings and through actions that directly damage Salomé's physical and psychological health. For instance, he insists on studying in Europe despite the precarious economic situation of the family and knowing that his decision demands that his wife overworks and puts in risk

[107] Jennifer Morgan (2004) has enlisted the elements that principally comprised abject Black femininity in the Western colonial imaginary in the Americas. These are: monstrosity, a deviant and voracious sexuality, and a deviant motherhood characterized by indifference and emotional detachment. According to Morgan, this abject Black femininity was created to establish Europeans' moral superiority over peoples of color. This moral superiority was symbolized by European white femininity as incarnation of chastity, abstinence and a loving motherhood. However, Morgan argues that colonizers and slave-owners also formulated the image of the abject Black woman "to ultimately inscribe enslaved women as racially and culturally different while creating an economic and moral environment in which the appropriation of a woman's children as well as her childbearing potential became rational and, indeed, natural" (7). Thus, the abject Black woman serves as an ideological formation that justified the overexploitation of Black female labor.

her poor health. Also, he has an affair that emotionally destroys Salomé and undermines her already poor health, "I was utterly changed. Everyone told me so. I was so thin that even Max could put his little hands around my wrist. I could barely catch my breath. My hair had turned gray. The lines on my face were deep, almost as if all the writing I had not done on paper, I had done on my skin" (Álvarez 2000, 253). Here, it is relevant to point out how Pancho's actions undermine his wife's health by directly impacting her affective sytems. That is, the *tristeza* (sadness), *angustia* (anguish) and *desamor* (heartbreaking) that Salomé suffers as a consequence of her husband's negligence results in the collapse of her weak lungs and her premature death. Thus, Pancho subconsciously utilizes the psychosomatic relationship between Salomé affective systems and her breathing problems to erase the emotional and Black Salomé. He is being left with an empty canvas to create his female envision of the poet of the Dominican nation.

The last is emphasized in the portrait that Pancho commissions after Salomé's death, and which Camila Henriquez remembers in the following way, "in the posthumous portrait her father commissioned, Salomé is **pale**, **pretty**, with a black neck band and a full rosebud mouth, **a beautifying and whitening of the Great Salomé, another one of her father's campaigns**" (205 emphasis added). In the novel, this portrait that for many years Camila believed was an accurate image of her mother, indeed represents her father's desires. In this regard Camila states, "he wanted my mother to look like the legend he was creating," she adds, "He wanted her to be prettier, whiter" (44). Thus, the portrait is the ultimate phase in Salome's annihilation. With the portrait, she is totally replaced by Pancho's desires as a statesman[108], who visualizes the Dominican Republic as a modern, progressive and Western nation; and who accordingly with his fantasies

reshapes the Dominican national *poetisa* as the embodiment of the whitening and westernization that the Dominican Republic is capable of achieving.

Hence, Pancho –who ridiculously insists in wearing European suits under the Caribbean tropical weather and in speaking Spanish with a French accent– symbolizes how Dominican upper-class men's desire of being recognized as Western subjects urges the annihilation of "abject" womanhood according to Eurocentric perspectives. He portrays a masculinity that not only endeavors to embrace Western attitudes and values, but also to shape a female counterpart that embodies these same values. Pancho's Western ideals prevent him of seeing the real psychological and physical damages in Salome's dark body, because her body is incompatible with his Eurocentric perspective.

4.7 Dominican National Affect: The Desire for Whiteness and the Discomfort with Blackness

Desire is the affective disposition that drives male characters to erase Salomé's actual body and replace it with a female image that represents their aspirations. This desire consists in Dominican elite men's aspirations of controlling power structures in the island. Because of its geopolitical location, the Dominican Republic has been a target of colonial and neo-colonial enterprises. The continuous interventions and occupations of European countries and the U.S. generated in Dominican elite the urgency of political self-determination. Although some members of the Dominican elite categorically rejected western imperialism, encouraging Pan-American or Pan-Caribbean alliances, others opted for an independence conditioned by western powers' recognition and respect. For this reason, the latter group concentrated its efforts not only into achieving the independence

[108] Throughout the story, Pancho is actively involved in Dominican politics. He even is president of

of the Dominican nation, but also into cultivating in Dominican society values and behaviors that emulate those of European societies. This group heavily invested in *blanqueamiento*. The novel represents how this group carries out Salomé's annihilation and replacement, driven by its desire for power and recognition.

This desire consists in an affective investment or, in other words, in a particular manner how affect is focused. Lawrence Grossberg's work informs how affective investment is defined in this analysis. In *We Gotta Get Out of This Place: Conservatism and Postmodern Culture* (1992), Grossberg argues that affects can be focused on two different ways: in the first, "affect is always focused on an object", seeking satisfaction or gratification. Grossberg calls this kind of affective investment, "libidinal affect", and explains that it corresponds to what psychoanalysis identifies as desire. The second type of affective investment "is dispersed into the entire context of daily life" (81). It consists in the affective energies that are part of the mood, atmosphere or tone in a specific context. Grossberg names this second type of affective investment, "non-libidinal affect". According to Grossberg, affective investments are organized in what he calls, "mattering maps". These maps are the models or criteria that "tell people where, how and with what intensities they can become absorbed –into the world and their lives." They indicate "the places and events which are or can become significant […] the places at which people can anchor themselves into the world, the locations of the things that matter" (82). Moreover, mattering maps, "tell people how to use and how to generate energy, how to navigate their way into and through various moods and passions, and how to live within emotional and ideological histories" (Ibid).

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the Caribbean country for a short period of time.

In *In the Name of Salomé*, the desire for owning the power that whiteness represents determines how characters (especially male characters) navigate ideological constructions and imaginaries. This desire is what bonds ideologies of *blanqueamiento* with Dominican nationalistic identities. At the same time, this desire empowers ideologies of *blanqueamiento* to serve as the mattering map that controls Dominican society's affective investments. This model arrays how Dominicans attach their affects to European phenotypes and values, and how they reject bodies and behaviors that do not fit into ideologies of *hispanismo*.

The novel clearly portrays how a mattering map based on a pathological desire for whiteness impacts individuals' psyches and social interactions. As exemplified by Salomé's self-split, in a psychological level, this mattering map demands that individuals adjust their behavior and emotions according to hetero-patriarchal European prototypes, dismissing bodily expressions and attitudes that endanger or contradict these prototypes. In a social level, this map regulates how society must pressure individuals to behave according to Eurocentric ideologies. Moreover, this mattering map determines how groups and individuals feel sexual attraction for European phenotypes, which are closer to European embodiments, and repulsion for Black and Indigenous complexions. This map explains why Salomé's admirers are unable to be sexually attracted to her Black body and only admire her intellect, making invisible her Black features. It also guides Pancho in his decision of replacing Salomé's dark body, first, with a portrait capable of engaging his his desire for seeing the Dominican Republic transformed into a powerful western nation; and then, choosing a second wife (Tivisita), who embodies all the positive attributes of the ideal Hispanic femininity: Iberian whiteness, fragility, servitude, docility, and emotional control.

4.8 Inherited Pathologies: Transgenerational Affective Transference

Salomé's annihilation and transformation into an abstract femininity, easy to manipulate according to male desires, crucially impacts the body and sense of self of the other female member of the Henríquez Ureña family, Camila. The story tells how her father and brothers constrain her to an existence in the margins. For instance, while the Henríquez Ureña men regularly contribute to Dominican politics and the intellectual life of Latin America, Camila is expected to put aside her own projects and initiatives, so she can assist her father and brothers in their endeavors. Also, Camila is asked to contain her emotions, as the following quote points out, "sometimes she wonders if she is incapable of offending […] She knows it is supposed to be one of her womanly accomplishments: her anger does not show" (210). The passive role that the Henríquez Ureña men assign to Camila makes her feel that she lives in an abstract state, in which she is forced to deny her own flesh, renouncing to her desires and needs to satisfy her family's demands, "sometimes she had to smile at herself. Here she was –enslaved to her family's smallest demands and fighting for these larger freedoms. But it sort of made sense. **Hadn't it always been easier for her to live abstractly rather than in the flesh?**" (151, emphasis added).

It is worthy to notice that her family's repression causes in Camila psychological issues similar to the ones experienced by her mother when she was alive. These issues manifest in Camila's depression and suicidal tendencies, as well as in an intense urgency of lessen the pain caused by her mother's premature death. Camila's psychological distress creates a parallelism between her and Salomé. While Salomé looked for recovering her dead father in the gaze of the men around her, Camila fervently looks for her mother's gaze of approval in the eyes of the people close to her. For instance, Camila

finds her mother's lovely gaze in the eyes of her brother Pedro. However, when Pedro discovers Camila's lesbianism, his eyes transform into the male gaze that judges and disapproves her sexual drives. Similarly to Salomé, Camila is, then, forced to recognize that the male members of her family are unable to accept the impulses of her affective systems of lust and seeking, because these impulses contradict their hetero-patriarchal values, desires and political projects. She also realizes that the Henríquez Ureña men cannot help her to recover her absent mother. Camila understands that she has to solve her internal conflict and recover her absent mother by herself. However, despite this realization, for most of her life, she remains divided between her sexual and intellectual unrest and her family expectations; and between her unsuccessful attempts to come to terms with her lesbianism and her unsuccessful attempts to adjust to heterosexuality, as the following quote shows, "what do I do about Domingo? Isn't he proof that her feelings for Marion were an anomaly? She feels a sense of release thinking that this might be so. Life will be so much easier. There will be the chance of children, a family, all the things that come to the happy heroines of love stories" (161). In is pertinent to point out that the way in which Camila endures a sense of divided self as a consequence of a social context that does not accept her real body also connects her with her mother. As highlighted in the following passage, the last is symbolically emphasized in the narrative by describing how both women cohabit the same body, "It is odd to think that her body conforms exactly to her mother's body, as if she were somehow resurrecting her mother in her own flesh" (121).

Thus, how Salomé's annihilation and subordination is passed down to Camila represents not only the fact that affective regimes have a transgenerational influence, but also the historical trajectory of Dominican racist and misogynist affective regimes

throughout the nineteenth and early twenty centuries. Trajectory that involves the repercussions of these regimes in the Dominican diaspora (Camila endures her psychological stress outside the Dominica Republic). Moreover, the annihilation and repression of these two women discloses how Dominican nationalism involves not only the repression of bodies and behaviors that resist or question *blanqueamiento*, but also the imposition of nationalistic mattering maps that make that people reject bodies that do not fit into *blanqueamiento*, condemning their behaviors and attitudes.

However, Salomé and Camila as objects of *blanqueamiento* also disclose how Dominicans who have been historically denied from Dominican nationalism may claim a place within *dominicanidad* by accepting that their affective discomfort comes from the denial of their blackness or other forms of otherness (e.g., Camila's lesbianism) and by embracing these abject identities.

4.9 Recovering the Dominican Black Female Body

Individuals and communities, constrained and erased by nationalistic formations, continuously experience a feeling of discomfort. In the novel, this unpleasant sensation is represented by Salomé's anguish of knowing that those around her are unable to acknowledge her psychological needs and the desires of her flesh; also by Camila's distress caused by her inability to reconcile her family's expectations with her intellectual and sexual desires. This discomfort is a symptom of Salomé's and Camila's incapacity of fitting into the normative femininity that Dominican society imposes on them. However, this discomfort that at first "is about feeling apart, feeling separate" (Muñoz 2007, 441), connects mother and daughter, and helps Camila in her process of recognizing herself and creating a sense of belonging.

In “Chico, What Does It Feel Like to Be a Problem? The Transmission of Brownness” (2007), José Esteban Muñoz offers a theoretical model useful to understand how the feeling of discomfort, caused by the inability of fitting into normative identities, can be transformed into “a mode of belonging” (441). According to Muñoz, individuals who “feel like a problem” (442), because their race, gender, sexual preferences and/or citizenship status locate them outside the norm, are able to empathize and establish affective connections with individuals who experience similar feelings. This makes possible to feel like a problem “in commonality” (443). When feeling like a problem connects individuals, it transforms into what Muñoz calls “feeling brown”, which “is an apartness together through sharing the status of being a problem” (444). Feeling brown, then, consists in, “a way of being in the world” (444), which should not be confused with superficial visual recognition. Feeling brown, “is not the same as being seen or perceived as brown […] The visual and the affective are different identificatory routes. One can feel very brown and perhaps not register as brown as the dark-skinned person standing next to one who is involved in the endeavor of trying to feel white” (444). Instead, feeling brown means “a communal investment in Brownness” (445). This is, first, to embrace individual and community selves as the negation of the norm and as “a problem in relation to a dominant other” (445); and second, to reroute affective investments, through mattering maps that favor “problematical” subjects’ desires and direct positive affects to their bodies.

Ramona gives Camila the key to recover Salomé from Pancho’s mystifications and to initiate the process of embracing her own problematic self. Ramona achieves this by insisting that Camila keeps a psychical connection with her mother’s courage and discomfort and by emphasizing that Salomé’s state of mind was the result of how her

Black femininity, which disrupted Dominican normative femininity in multiple levels. As the following quote points out, Ramona, whom Camila remembers as a strong and wise dark woman, teaches Camila how to look for Salomé's protection and guidance, "Dear old Mon, round and brown with a knot of black hair of top of her head, a Dominican Buddha but with none of the bodhisattva's calm" (Álvarez 2000, 4). When she is very young, Ramona instructs her in how make the sign of the cross invoking her mother's spirit, "*In the name of the Father and of the Son and of my mother, Salomé*" (4). Ramona is conscious of how her sister's body was erased by Pancho's mystification and is determined to keep what remains of the real Salomé in Camila's mind and heart, "When her mother died, Mon thought up this way for her to ask for Salomé's blessing. To summon strength from a fading memory that every year became less and less real until all that was left of her mother was the story of her mother" (5). For this same reason, Ramona insists in reminding Camila that Salomé was not like the woman in Pancho's portrait, but "a plain mulatto woman" (205). Ramona constantly emphasizes Salomé's race because despite Pancho's whitewashing efforts, Salomé's blackness was inherited by her kids and is traceable in them. Although, Salomé was subjugated to *blanqueamiento* – which prevented that she inherited Black everyday practices to her descendants–; *blanqueamiento* could not prevent that her Black features were inherited by her kids. Ramona thus encourages Camila to look for her mother in her "soft brown color" skin and in Max's and Pedro's complexions, because, as the novel emphasizes, her brothers "have turned out to be the sons who look most like Salomé's side of the family, darker-skinned, a kink in their hair, all the telling features" (201).

Camila certainly listens to her aunt. However, her experiences in the U.S. are also decisive in the recognition of her blackness. In the U.S., Camila is in multiple times

forced to recognize herself and her family as Black. The first time Camila spends the summer with her lover's (Marion) family in North Dakota, the Klan burns a cross outside Marion's house because of their guest. Camila also witnesses how Max and Pedro are discriminated because of their complexion. In many occasions, they are refused rentals as well as access to clubs and restaurants. Camila's experiences in the U.S. convince her that the first step to embrace completely her flesh and her death mother is accepting her blackness and the fact that she belongs to a Black Dominican genealogy that she can trace since her grandmother, Gregoria.

In this process, Camila accepts that her womanhood is the opposite of Dominican normative femininity and that she is simply unable to emulate the norm. Camila is able to endure the painful and long process that conveys accomplishing this acceptance, because in the process she discovers that before her, her mother Salomé, aunt Ramona, grandmother Gregoria, and grandaunt Ana encountered that their Black bodies were unfitting according to social expectations and were forced to navigate their social contexts carrying their problematic selves. Also, she realizes that these women experienced the same existential discomfort and craved their entire lives for an intense and positive affective attachment that truly embraces their bodies. They yearned that people would invest their positive affects in their Blackness. Camila expresses this same desire, in the following passage, where she affirms,

> It is so good to be able to talk about these things! Even her outspoken friend Marion has always avoided the subject of Camila's race. As it to mention it were to bring up the unmentionable. **"I don't care what you are," Marion has often said to her. But she wants Marion to care about who she is. She wants to be apprehended fully**, rather than be seen only through the narrow lens of a few

adjectives the other person finds acceptable. **And having been fully apprehended, she wants to be loved**. Perhaps it is too much to ask of anyone? (160, emphasis added)

Thus, Camila's embracing of her body and self, with implies rejecting the femininity that her family and nation imposes on her, starts in the recognition and acceptance of her Black heritage. This acceptance goes hand in hand with recovering Salomé's blackness and story, and therefore, a legacy of strong Black women that resist the whitewashed and abstract femininity created by Dominican statesmen. This acceptance also goes hand in hand with recognizing how hetero-patriarchal and nationalistic affective drives create an artificial femininity that erases actual female bodies and identities, causing psychological issues in the women whose bodies are denied.

4.10 Conclusion

The analysis in this chapter demonstrates how *In the Name of Salome* explores how the formation of a dominant ethnic nationalism in the Dominican Republic involved privileging the gender, sexual and racial ideologies of elite groups, as well as their fantasies and desires in relation to Dominican national constituency. The novel also points out how the formation of dominant *dominicanidad* encompasses the omission of individual and group intersectional identities, which do not match elite ideologies and fantasies. The last has major repercussions on the affective systems of those who because of their gender, racial, and sexual identities do not fit ideal national embodiments, such Afro-Dominican women. These repercussions, which the narrative represents as psychological distress and a constant sensation of inadequacy, is inherited in a transgenerational manner among different generations of Dominican woman.

A major contribution of the examination of affect developed in the novel is that it points out Afro-*dominicanidad*, first, as the path to reevaluate Dominican nationalisms in the twenty first century; and second, as the way to heal the individual and social pathologies caused by racist and misogynist structures in dominant Dominican ethnic identity. This may inform future research on how Latina expressive cultures disrupt the psychological damages caused by Latin American and Latino nationalisms by advancing Afro-*Latinidad* as a critical lens that allows the formation of healthier and inclusive communal identities.

Chapter 5: Traumatic Cold War Affect: Dominant U.S. *Cubanidad* and Female Affective Systems

5.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 examines the novel, *Dreaming in Cuban* (1992) by Cristina García, arguing that an analysis focused on female affect provides a fresh perspective on the paradigms of exile, trauma, and nostalgia, central in Cuban American criticism. This chapter is connected to a critical turn in Cuban American studies in recent years, which questions approaches that define Cuban American identity and cultural production exclusively in relation to the ideological position of a dominant group of Cubans in the United States. As further discussed hereafter, this critical turn denounces this dominant approach as inaccurate, given that it advances a unified notion of Cuban American identity that erases the experiences of the many and diverse Cuban communities, residing in the United States. That is, in addition to the common image of Cuban Americans as exceptional Latina/os (white, upper-class, heterosexual, anti-socialist and pro-American capitalist) mainly living in Miami (Miami-centered), there are Afro Cubans, Queer Cubans, poor Cubans, and Cubans living in New York, Chicago, and the West Coast (among many other cities), who do not share the same ideological and emotional positions, and immigration experiences of Miami-centered Cuban Americans.

My analysis agrees with this critical turn by interpreting García's novel as an attempt to give voice to a dislocated Cuban American femininity, which is denied as part of Cuban Americanness because of both its location outside Miami and its critical position towards Miami-centered perspectives. However, my analysis adds to the critical turn in Cuban American criticism by pointing out how the dominant position on Cuban

American identity results from a hyper-masculine nationalism that not only ideologically splits Cubans, but also asymmetrically damages the psyches and emotional systems of Cuban Americans. In this sense, this chapter revises the nostalgia, caused by the trauma of losing property and privilege as a consequence of exile, which is generalized as the ruling emotion of Cuban American identity, arguing that it mainly corresponds to a Miami-centered *cubanidad*. This chapter, therefore, argues that the trauma of exile is emotionally expressed in variants as diverse as the multiple gendered, racialized and sexualized experiences of Cubans residing in the United States. Informed by Meera Atkinson's and Michael's Richardson's (2013) and Lauren Berlant's (2011) works on the relationship between trauma and affect, I use the term "traumatic Cold War affect" to name the critique of the ideological split between capitalism and socialism of the Cold War Era in female Cuban narratives. This term also names how a hyper-masculine Cuban national identity asymmetrically impacts the affective systems and the literary production of women of Cuban origin in the U.S.

5.2 The Critical Turn in Cuban American Criticism and the Cold War Logic of Dominant Approaches to *Cubanidad*

As Ricardo Ortíz observes in *Cultural Erotics in Cuban America* (2007), a recurrent approach to Cuban American literature is to understand this literary tradition as intrinsically tied to exile.[109] This perspective is a legacy from Cuban exiled writers who

[109] To support this argument, Ortiz offers as example the perspective of an iconic exiled Cuban writer from the second half of the twentieth century, Guillermo Cabrera Infante, who in his book *Mea Cuba* (1992) affirms that "Cuban literature was born in exile" (Cabrera Infante cited in Ortiz 2007, viii). As Ortiz points out, Cabrera Infante assigns a date to the birth of Cuban literature with the literary production of the father of the Cuban nation, José Martí, who composed most of his literary and political writings outside Cuba.

affirm that Cuban national identity and literature were born simultaneously in exile.[110] As Ortíz points out, this perspective advances a definition of Cuban literature that allows exiled writers to claim their legitimate belonging to Cuban literary tradition, despite being defectors of the socialist regime and located outside the geographical limits of the island. Also, it encompasses a definition of Cuban national identity (*cubanidad*) that subtracts this identity from any attempt to limit it to geographical boundaries or political affiliations. This understanding of *cubanidad*, encompassing de-territorialization and depoliticization, has been particularly productive in Cuban American literary criticism. This is due to the fact that Cuban American literature is a consequence of diasporic experiences and because this understanding legitimizes Cuban American fictions as a continuous of the Cuban nation.

Ortiz pays especial attention to the Cold War logic that for most of the twentieth century determined Cuban politics, having a profound impact on the formation of the exiled *cubanidad* of Cuban Americans. Ortiz notices how Cuban politics share aspects with countries, such as Germany, Vietnam, and Korea, which underwent "simultaneous geographic and ideological splitting in the course of the Cold War" (5). Despite Cuba's territory was not divided in two different countries, as it was the case of the other mentioned countries, Cuba as an imagined nation was ideologically divided into the two poles determined by the logic of Cold War politics. Broadly speaking, this Cold War logic entails a dichotomy that splits Cubans between those who endorse the Revolution of

[110] Many critics agree with Ortiz about how exile crucially defines Cuban American cultural production. Just to mention a few, Carolina Hospital (1987) argues that different generations of Cuban artists in the diaspora have developed an "exile consciousness". According to Hospital, this consciousness emerges from the physical exile experienced by the first waves of Cuban immigrants to the U.S. and is inherited to their children, as an emotional state that involves nostalgia, feelings of alienation, and dislocation. Andrea O'Reilly Herrera (2001) and Isabel Álvarez Borland (1998) focus on examining how this "exile consciousness" or "trauma of displacement" (as Álvarez Borland calls it) varies depending on the different positionalities of Cuban American artists.

1959 and those who reject it. Ortiz also observes how despite being representative of the ideological split that many nations experience during the Cold War, the Cuban case has a peculiarity that makes it different to the experiences of other nations. Cubans, regardless their geographical location and ideological affiliation, claim loyalty to the same nationalistic symbols,

> [Cubans] claim loyalty to the same flag that still represents the Cuban nation and the Cuban state […] off-island Cubans claim the same source of national patrimony in the figure of Jose Marti, whom they see as a champion of a liberal, democratic free enterprise, whereas on-island Cubans hail him as the model of anti-capitalist, anticolonial resistance (5).

For most of the twentieth century, critics studied Cuban American literature as a branch of Cuban national identity engaged in the dynamics of the Cold War logic. This means that Cuban American literature was mainly analyzed as an expression of that side of *cubanidad* that fervently rejects and resents the Revolution of 1959. However, in the 1990s a turn in Cuban American literary criticism took place. A new generation of writers and critics[111] question in their works the accuracy of the Cold War model as representative of Cuban American literary practices. On the one hand, these critics and writers point out how actually within *cubanidad* "exile occupies many alternative places and meanings", which forces to reconceptualize the "entire approach to the relationship between exile, history, nostalgia, and the imagination" (O'Reilly Herrera 2001, xxi). On the other hand, they call attention to the fact that the Cold War perspective resembles the exile experiences, desires and anxieties of a single group of Cubans in the U.S., integrated

[111] Critics such as Ortiz (2007), Andrea O'Reilly (2001), Ruth Behar (2000) and Antonio López (2012), and writers such as Cristina García (1992), Achy Obejas (1996) and Ana Menéndez (2003) are part of this critical turn in Cuban American Studies.

by upper-class-white Cubans who immigrated to the United States few years after the triumph of the Revolution[112] and who mainly settled in Miami. The turn in Cuban American criticism on the edge of the new millennium also points out two other major problems concerning the Cold War perspective: The first relates to how this perspective erases the experiences of Cubans[113] (such as Black, Queer, poor and outside-Miami Cubans), whose intersectional identities do not match the Cuban American identity (upper-class, white, Miami-located and anti-socialist) that best embodies Cuban exceptionalism.[114] The second relates to how the Cold War perspective does not

[112] Many of these first Cuban immigrants arrived at the United States thanks to the "Freedom Flights program". In 1965, Fidel Castro's government issued a decree that authorized Cubans to immigrate to the U.S. by boat through the port of Camarioca. Thousands of Cubans who were disappointed with the revolution attempted the dangerous trip from this port to the coast of Miami, overwarming the U.S. Coast Guard and causing an immigration crisis for U.S. authorities. In response, Johnson's administration created a program of cooperation between Cuba and the U.S. that guaranteed the safe and organized immigration of Cubans to U.S. soil. The program was named "the Freedom Flights program" and consisted in a series of flights that transported Cubans from the island to the U.S. twice diary, five times per week. Cubans who immigrated to the U.S. under this program were granted the status of refugees. The Cubans who enrolled in the program were considered dissidents by Castro's regime. Castro publicly labeled them with the derogatory term, "*gusanos*".

[113] An example of the other *cubanidades* rejected by a dominant Cuban Americanness based on Cuban exceptionalism is the wave of Cuban immigrants known as the *Marielitos*. The Mariel boatlift initiated when hundreds of Cubans who were discontent with Castro's regime tried to gain asylum and took refuge at the Peruvian embassy in La Habana. The government in response announced that Cubans who wanted to leave the island could do so through Mariel Harbor. As the historian, María Cristina García points out, "the Mariel exodus is one of the most fascinating cases of migration because of the controversy it engendered. According to Garcia, public opinion turned against the so-called *Marielitos* when the press revealed that Castro had used the boatlift to rid the island of undesirables. In Miami, the *Marielitos* faced many obstacles, jobs were scarce because the country was in an economic recession; since many of the Mariel immigrants were black, they faced racial discrimination in addition to political discrimination from their fellow Cubans. Because of these factors, the *Marielitos* have had much more in adapting than the immigrants of the first two waves" (Álvarez Borland 1998, 5). It is important to clarify that the *Marielitos*, reported by Miami press as "undesireables" and labeled as criminals and mentally ill people, in many cases belonged to communities that faced discrimination, harassment, and violence in the island because of their sexual, gender or political identities. Many of these *Marielitos* spent time in Cuban jails and mental institutions and did not have access to jobs or housing because of the homophobic policies of Castro's regime.

[114] Cuban exceptionalism can be defined in two ways. The first is in relation to how Cuba remains a "socialist" state despite the end of the Cold War. The second and the one of interest for the purposes of this chapter refers to how Cuban Americans have distanced themselves from the struggles of other Latina/o/ communities, and are perceived in the U.S. imaginary as different to other Latina/os. Ricardo Ortíz (2007) underscores that Cuban exceptionalism encompasses an assimilationist position rather than an oppositional relation (36).

resemble anymore the current historical and political circumstances, impacting Cuban American identity.[115]

The critics who are part of this turn propose to amend the one-dimensional perspective that domains in Cuban American criticism by diversifying the idea of exile, central in Cuban American literature. For instance, Ricardo Ortiz (2007) suggests shifting the concept of exile to a notion of diaspora[116], which allows to approach Cuban American literature as part of a complex network integrated by different experiences and embodiments of *cubanidad*, advancing a notion of Cuban American identity determined less by the ideological boundaries of Cuba as a nation-state and more by "a complex fiction of dispersal, dissemination and desire" (viii). Ortiz also suggests discontinuing the common idea of Cuban American literature as the extension of a Cuban national literature, exclusively cemented in a Latin American and Spanish literary canon. Instead he formulates Cuban American writers as consciously situated in the United States,

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[115] The fall of the Berlin wall in 1989 and the end of the Cold War disrupted the categorical division pro-socialisms vs anti-socialism that supported the Cold War logic of *cubanidad*. This disruption had an important influence in the literary works of Cuban American authors of the mid 1990s, who started to portray *cubanidad* as an ambiguous formation that in the particular case of Cuba Americans was not anymore exclusively linked to anti-socialism, but consisted in a paradox that included oppositional perspectives on Cuba and Cuban American identity. A good example of these literary works is Archy Obeja's novel, *Memory Mambo* (1996). Another change that impacted Cuban American identity during the 1990s was the revision in 1995 of the Cuban Adjustment Act of 1966, which allowed all Cubans who reached U.S. territorial waters to remain in the U.S. After the 1995 revision, the "wet foot, dry foot" policy was implemented. This policy established that only Cubans who made it to a U.S. shore would be allowed to remain in the U.S. In 2017, the Obama administration ended the wet foot, dry foot policy, opening a new chapter in Cuban immigration to the U.S. Since 2017, Cuban immigrants no longer enjoy of the legal exceptions that during years made their immigration experiences radically different to the experiences of other Latinx communities. Although it is too soon to measure the impact that this recent change is having in Cuban American identity, it is not arbitrary to predict that this change will significantly disrupt Cuban American identities supported by "Cuban American exceptionalism". For more on how Cuban immigration to the U.S. has changed in recent years see Trelles and Arrieta (2017) and Trelles (2017).

[116] Ortiz's understanding of diaspora is closely related to Paul Gilroy's perspective of this notion. For Gilroy (1994), "diaspora identifies a relational network, characteristically produced by forced dispersal and reluctant scattering" (207). This relational network is different to other forms of cultural identity that also emerge from experiences of forced movement, because diaspora identities focus less on the territorial or ideological boundaries of nation-states "and more on memory, or, more accurately, on the social dynamics of remembrance and commemoration" (207).

negotiating “the vestiges of the national and the vestiges of the cultural (specially the literary) as they haunt what remains of a “Cuban” nation in (North) America” (39).

The last resonates with the main objectives of this project in the sense that by comparatively analyzing Cubana, Dominicana and Chicana writers, it attempts to demonstrate how these writers and their works share commonalities that group them as part of a Latina literary tradition that opens the U.S. literary canon, negotiating in affective terms both U.S. and Latin American nationalistic formations. As already mentioned in the introduction of this study, these Latina writers and their works refashion U.S. literature by establishing it as a site to negotiate not only their affects as ethnic and gender others in the United States, but also the affective vestiges of Latin American nationalisms that still haunt their ethnic identities. Coming back to the objectives of the present chapter, one of its main contributions lies in pointing out how the Cold War logic that has limited the understanding of Cuban American identity and literary production, also has caused an emotional polarization that has obscured an accurate understanding of the affective and emotional responses of Cubans who do not fit into dominant Cuban Americanness.

Dreaming in Cuban (1992) tells the story of three generations of women of the Del Pino family who were separated after the Revolution. The novel constitutes and ideal case study to prove the last argument not only because the novel temporally coincides with the critical turn in Cuban American Studies, but also because it thematically focuses on how Cuban women has been impacted by the political polarization that after the Revolution constrained *cubanidad*. As García herself affirms in an interview with Scott Shibuya Brown, her novel is an effort to explore other possibilities of *cubanidad* beyond a dominant Cuban American identity, supported by political polarization, “personally,

I'm more interested in the gap and shades of gray between these two extremes. That's what I was trying to explore. There are many ways to be Cuban and I resist the notion that to be Cuban is to hold particular political views or act in certain circumscribed ways" (250). This critical position of *Dreaming*[117] towards a dominant perspective of Cuban Americanness caused a bittersweet reception of the novel within the Cuban American community, especially in Miami. Some members of this community accused García of being Americanized and of lacking an authentic knowledge of Cuban American identity, given that she was raised in New York City (Ween 2003 and Dalleo and Machado Sáez 2007). However, despite the disapproval that the novel receives from some Cuban Americans, *Dreaming* constitutes a perfect case to prove the main arguments in this chapter because it pays special attention to the emotions that emerge from the political polarization that characterizes Cuban nationalism, as well as to the affective and psychological damages that this polarization has caused in Cuban women.

5.3 Affect and the Cold War Logic

In *Dreaming*, Pilar, a one-and-a-half[118] Cuban American, explores the two so similar but at the same time so contradictory emotional poles of the Cold War logic. For Pilar,

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[117] Hereinafter I refer to *Dreaming in Cuban* only as *Dreaming*.

[118] A generational approach is the most common way of organizing the different Cuban experiences in the U.S. Isabel Álvarez Borland (1998) develops this approach arguing that Cuban American literature offers different perspectives about social and political events depending on when Cuban American authors or their families immigrated to the United States. Álvarez Borland identifies four waves of Cuban immigration to the United States. The first wave, from 1959 to 1962, comprises Cubans who arrived in the United States just after the Revolution; the second wave encompasses Cubans who immigrated to the United States from 1965 to 1973, under the "Freedom Flights Program"; the third comprises Cubans who arrived in the United States in 1980 during the Mariel boatlift; the last and fourth wave consists in the *balseros* who fled Cuba on rafts, during the 1990s, as a consequence of the economic crisis (known as *el periodo especial*) that Cuba suffered as consequence of the fall of the Berlin wall and socialism in Europe. Within these four waves of immigration, Álvarez Borland pinpoints three different immigration generations of writers of Cuban origin in the U.S. The first generation is comprised by Cubans who immigrated to the United States as adults. The literary texts of authors from this generation display "indignation and anger

understanding these polarized emotions is part of her coming-of-age process. That is because her two principal female role models (Pilar's mother, Lourdes, and her grandmother, Celia) embody the two opposite sides of the Cold War logic. Celia who lives in Cuba, embodies the politics of the Cuban state. With blind devotion to *El Líder*, Celia works as a night watcher guarding the Cuban north coast from a possible U.S. invasion; she is also an active member of her neighborhood committee, and volunteers to harvest sugar cane crops. In contrast, Lourdes, who emigrated to the United States just after the end of the Revolution, embodies the dominant political position of Cuban Americans. Pilar has great empathy with Celia and a distant relationship with her mother, as she explicitly admits in the following quotation, "I feel more connected to Abuela Celia than to Mom, even though I haven't seen my grandmother in seventeen years" (García 1992, 176). Pilar's closeness to Celia and distant relationship with Lourdes do not necessarily represent García's political and ideological allegiances as some critics of the novel have suggested.[119] Rather Pilar's preference for her grandmother is related to how Celia and Lourdes emotionally react to their social, political and personal circumstances. As the following quotation illustrates, Pilar is well aware that everything related to the Cuban state triggers anger and resentment in her mother,

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toward the traumatic events or individuals causing the exile", offering "a bitter and nostalgic perspective of exile" (7). The one-and-a-half generation consists in Cubans who immigrated in their early adolescence. Therefore, they "had Cuban childhoods and U.S. adulthoods" (7). The authors from the one and a half generation in their texts focus on the in-betweenness of being Cuban and American at the same time. According to Ortiz (2007) and López (2012) individuals from these two generations settled in Miami are who have advanced the dominant perspective about U.S. *cubanidad*. The last immigrant generation that Álvarez Borland (1998) points out is the 2nd generation, which she calls Cuban-American ethnic writers. These writers immigrated to the U.S. as infants or were born in the U.S. from parents of the first generation. Regarding the writers from this last generation, Álvarez Borland insists how they develop a distinct perspective from the "exile" and "hybrid" perspectives of the previous generations. Álvarez Borland places Cristina García within the second generation (See Álvarez Borland 1994, 2001 and 2013).

[119] Some analyses of the novel consider the character of Lourdes as an unrealistic cartoon of the ideologies that many Cuban Americans endorse. These analyses argue that this cartoon is a consequence of García's naïve and uncritical position regarding social circumstances in Cuba, her Americanization and lack

> Mom says "Communist" the way some people says "cancer," low and fierce. She reads the newspapers page by page for leftist conspiracies, jams her finger against imagined evidence and says, "See. What did I tell you?" Last year when El Líder jailed a famous Cuba poet, she sneered at "those leftist intellectual hypocrites" for trying to free him. "they created those prisons, so now they should rot in them!" she shouted, not making much sense at all. "They're dangerous subversives, red to the bone!" (26)

Pilar also knows that Lourdes transfers her anger towards the Cuban state to other aspects of her life, such as her intrafamily relationships. As Pilar observes, despite she is aware that Lourdes's anger is caused by factors external to their mother-and-daughter relationship, she cannot avoid being afraid of Lourdes's violent reactions,

> I might be afraid of her if it weren't for those talks I have with Abuela Celia late at night. She tells me that my mother is sad inside and that her anger is more frustration at what she can't change. I guess I'm one of those things she can't change. Still mom can get pretty violent. In her hands, bedroom slippers are lethal weapons (63)

Neither Pilar can avoid that Lourdes's anger prevents her from establishing a close relationship with her mother. In contrast, Pilar, despite being physically far from her grandmother, feels a strong affective connection with Celia. This is not only because Pilar can talk calmly with Celia about her problems or just because they share tastes and interests, such as "a love for the sea and the smoothness of pearls, an appreciation of music and words, sympathy for the underdog, and a disregard for boundaries" (176), but also because Celia and Pilar share similar affective dispositions. They are extremely

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of knowledge of "authentic" Cuban American communities such as the Miami enclave. For a critique on

sensitive, they have a sharp intuition and uncanny skills, such as the capability of telepathically speak with each other every night,

> Abuela Celia and I write to each other sometimes, but mostly I hear her speaking to me at night just before I fall asleep. She tells me stories about her life and what the sea was like that day. She seems to know everything that's happened to me and tells me not to mind my mother too much. Abuela Celia says she wants to see me again. She tells me she loves me (29)

In the last section, "Intuition: Dealing in the Dark with Transgenerational Trauma", I further discuss Pilar's intuition and uncanny skills as affective dispositions with important implications for healing "Cuban Traumatic Cold War affect". For now, it is important to point out that the polar difference between the emotional dispositions of the anti-socialist Lourdes and the ultra-socialist Celia makes that Pilar starts digging into the reason behind their emotional polarization. She asserts, "I wonder how Mom could be Abuela Celia's daughter. And what I'm doing as my mother's daughter. Something got horribly scrambled along the way" (178). Although throughout the story, Pilar ignores the exact traumatic and violent events behind her mother's and grandmother's emotional discrepancy, she clearly sees how the politics of the Cold War era crucially determine the personal lives and relationships of her family members. She affirms,

> I resent the hell out of the politicians and the generals who force events on us that structure our lives, that dictate the memories we'll have when we're old. Every day Cuba fades a little more inside me, my grandmother fades a little more inside me. And there's only my imagination where our history should be (138).

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these analyses see Ween (2003), Dalleo and Machado (2007) and McCraken (1999).

Though the last quote explicitly refers to how politics impact the personal and psychological relationship that exiled Cubans have with Cuba as an imagined nation[120], this quote also explicitly expresses how *Dreaming* recognizes how politics have intervened in the most intimate aspects of Cuban Americans' psyches. That is, in the novel, politics determine how Cuban Americans think, dream and feel. As I further discussed later, the novel, then, explores the relationship between Cold War politics and Cuban affect, and the consequences that this relationship has in the mental and social health of women of Cuban origin. Before focusing on the specifics of such relationship in Garcia's novel, it is necessary to point out the theoretical precedent that supports the connection between Cuban politics and emotional regimes in my own analysis.

5.4 Cuban Politics of Passion

Damian Fernández's *Cuba and the Politics of Passion* (2000) is one of the main theoretical precedents that informs the analysis on affect in this chapter. In his work, Fernández argues that since its origins Cuban politics have involved strong emotional responses[121]; however, the Revolution of 1959 polarized and exacerbated the "emotional infrastructure" inherent to the way of doing politics in Cuba, as a strategy to gain the support of the Cuban people and guarantee its consolidation as a form of government.

Fernández calls "politics of passion" to the particular orientation that the post-revolutionary government gave to the emotional infrastructure of Cuban politics.

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[120] Indeed, some critical interpretations of *Dreaming* have paid attention to how the text refines Cuban ethnic identity and Cuban consciousness of exile by portraying them as the negotiation of memory, history and imagination. For an example of these critical interpretations, see O'Reilly Herrera (1998).

[121] In the first chapters of his book, Fernández points out how the exacerbated emotional reactions that politics evoke in Cubans have their origin in the nineteenth century with the first attempts of independence from Spain. He also underlines how exacerbated emotions guided pre-revolution politics in the twentieth century, especially towards U.S. intervention and against dictatorial regimes, such as Fulgencio Batista's.

According to him, the politics of passion emerged from the emotional catharsis that the triumph of the revolution evoked in the Cuban people, which was promptly incorporated by the post-revolutionary government into its way of conducting politics. Such catharsis was the emotional residue of oppression and inequality that the Cuban people endured under previous undemocratic governments. Also, it was an expression of the emotional bond that the revolutionaries established with the Cuban people during the armed conflict. The revolutionaries consolidated this bond, claiming themselves as champions of "the moral imperative of a New Cuba" (62), and as who would put an end to the corruption, repression, inequality, racial segregation and economic dependency to the United States that characterized previous models of government. Consequently, Fernández argues that the principal characteristics of the relationship between emotionality and post-revolutionary government affairs (politics of passion) evolved from the emotional engagement-strategies of the revolution. He notices, for instance, not only how Cuban public affairs are charged with a high emotional intensity, but also how the state portrays these affairs as a moral imperative, demanding that Cubans engage with them as part of their individual morality (19).

In his work, Fernández also pays attention to the specific propagandistic strategies that the Cuban state employs to consolidate the politics of passion. For instance, he observes how the different symbols that frame the public image of the Cuban regime and its leaders parallels a religious iconography that appeals to the syncretism of Cuban spirituality.[122] This parallelism, on the one hand, consolidates the Cuban state as a

[122] Fernández (2000) notices how the symbols utilized by the Cuban post-revolutionary state in its politics of passion not only call out Christian or Catholic Cubans, but also those who practice Afro-Cuban religions. For instance, from the perspective of Afro-Cuban spiritual practices, the colors of the July 26th movement, red and black, correspond to the colors of Changó; and the medallions of Santa Barbara (Cuba's Catholic saint patron) that the rebels wore during the revolution symbolize the protection of Yemayá (Changó and Yemayá are Orishas or deities in Yoruba religion).

collective moral and spiritual endeavor that demands blind devotion. On the other hand, it proclaims the male heads of the state as mystical leaders, who inherited the spirit of the Cuban nation from other paternal figures such as José Martí (father of the Cuban nation) and Ernesto Che Guevara (one of the fathers of Latin American revolutionary sprit). Although Fernández does not elaborate upon the gender dimension of the emotional infrastructure that supports Cuban politics, with this observation, he clearly indicates the central position that maleness and patriarchy occupy in the emotional infrastructure of Cuban politics. Therefore, Fernández's work provides a departing point for the further investigation of the patriarchal aspects within such infrastructure and of how the centrality of patriarchy rules the emotions that orientate Cuban politics. I fully examine these later in the chapter.

Another argument in Fernández's work that informs the present analysis is his insights into the polar emotions that control Cuban politics of passion, which corresponds to my understanding of the Cold War logic in Cuban politics, polarizing Cuban affectivity in both the geographic limits of the Cuban state and Cuban diasporas. For Fernández, Cuban politics of passion demand that Cubans feel extreme dichotomous emotions. Cubans in the island are expected to express an intense devotion towards the Cuban state and its leaders, and at the same time open hatred against the detractors of the government (hatred that, as Fernández documents, has motivated and justified reprehensible acts against critics of the regime (76)). Here it is important to clarify that although Fernández pinpoints Cuba and the Revolution as the geographic and ideological origin of the politics of passion, he accurately contends that the way that the Cuban diaspora conducts politics mirrors the politics of passion in the island. He affirms, "for many of those who were forced to leave or who opted to leave, the homeland constitutes a moral end for which

they continue to struggle. The opposition to Fidel Castro's government has been construed as a crusade against evil" (142). That is, for many Cuban exiles (especially in the United States) overthrowing the government in the island is a moral and patriotic duty that they undertake with intense devotion and strong feelings. These intense feelings are the inverted version of the emotional polarization that prevails in the island. They consist of earnest love for the homeland and irrational hatred towards the Cuban government, its members, communism and Castrismo. Resembling the politics of passion in the island, the emotional structure that supports Cuban exile politics incites "violence, embargo, isolation, condemnation, and even censorship and physical attacks against those outside Cuba who do not toe the same line", echoing "the instrumental and absolute moral imperative of Cuban politics that states that the ends justify the means" (145).

The scope of the politics of passion as indicated by Fernández sheds light upon how the emotional reactions inherent in Cuban politics not only regulate Cubans' ideological orientation, but also Cubans' sense of national or ethnic identity. In other words, how Cubans emotionally bond with *cubanidad*. The last is apparent in Cuban Americans' affective investments, more specifically in the way they reinforce their ethnic authenticity, hating the Cuban government. As mentioned in chapter 4, an affective investment consists in how people focus affect. That is, how they navigate and negotiate moods and emotional attachments in their everyday lives. Affective investments are organized in "mattering maps", which broadly speaking are social conventions molded by dominant ideologies. The main function of these conventions is to regulate which affects people should prioritize as well as their intensity, and to which objects affects must be attached. The bipolar nature or Cold War logic of the politics of passion molds Cuban Americans' mattering maps, resulting in the establishing of hatred towards the Cuban

state and socialism as the main emotional bond between Cuban Americans and their sense of ethnic belonging.

The relevance that the emotionality of Cuban politics has in Cuban Americans' collective and individual ethnic nationalisms straightens out the actual scope of the politics of passion. This scope comprehends not only how Cubans and Cuban Americans get emotionally involved in public affairs but also the emotions that they mobilize to build up their individual identities as Cubans. This individual or personal dimension of the politics of passion[123] is precisely the departing point of my interpretation of García's novel. As mentioned in the previous section, *Dreaming* explores how these politics of passion, conducted by a Cold War logic, impact the psyches, bodies and interpersonal relationships of Cubans in the island and in the U.S., paying special attention to women who do not fit dominant definitions of *cubanidad* and Cuban Americanness. It is important to note that interpersonal relationships are portrayed in the novel as local but also as transnational or diasporic. That is, as affective, emotional and memory circuits that find channels of communication, despite the strict boundaries established by the policies of the Cuban state and the U.S. government. In the following section, I discuss the specific factors that determine some of the female characters of *Dreaming* as unfitting within the framework of dominant definitions of *cubanidad*, emphasizing how their

[123] It is relevant to acknowledge that Fernández also offers insights on how the politics of passion are experience in everyday personal interactions between Cubans outside and inside the island. He calls these emotional personal interactions, "politics of affection," and observes how in many instances they contradict the politics of passion dictated by both the Cuban state and Cuban American politics. To illustrate how sometimes the politics of affection contradict the politics of passion, Fernández presents the case of the cooperation networks that were established during the special period between Cubans in the island and in the diaspora. He states, "while the politics of passion did not die, the politics of affection at grassroots became politically and socially energized. Affection for family members, friends, and the Cuban people in general (whose living standard plummeted as a result of the post-1986 economic crisis) motivated thousands of Cuban-Americans to send remittances to their relatives and friends in Cuba. Tens of thousands visited the island carrying medicine and dollars for food. Their remittances (estimated between $700 million and $800 million annually) became a partial substitute for the tattered socialist safety net and for lost Soviet assistance" (145).

unfitting status is the result of their inability to embrace hyper-masculinity as authority, through the affective engagement of their sexual drives. Also, I argue that this inability causes significant psychological damages in these unfitting women, which simultaneously impact their local and transnational interpersonal relationships.

5.5 Hyper-Masculinity, Erotized Politics and Affect

Dreaming connects dysfunctional family relationships with politics that demand that women of Cuban origin activate very specific affective systems. This section in particular examines how in order to consolidate power, Cuban politics stimulate the affective system of lust. As mentioned in chapter 1, lust comprehends brain circuits and chemistries that regulate sexual disposition and readiness. Lust is strongly connected with the affective system of seeking – "a general-purposed appetitive motivational system" that "provokes enthusiastic exploration and appetitive anticipatory excitement/learning" (Panksepp 2010, 537)–, given that seeking participates in the search of sexual rewards.

Cuban politics stimulate lust by eroticizing the hyper-masculine symbols and figures that represent authority and nationalism in a Cold War ideological context. In the particular case of women, the erotization of male authority entails that they reaffirm their *cubanidad*, through their wiliness to tie their sexual drives to Cuban hyper-masculine symbols. As Ruth Behar agues in "Post-Utopia: the Erotics of Power and Cuba's Revolutionary Children" (2000), the hyper-masculinization that rules Cubans' sense of national belonging emerged in the early stages of the revolution. She observes that for the revolutionary project,

> Only the heterosexual male revolutionary could confront the emasculating power of U.S. imperialism. Revolution called for an ultra-virile sense of national identity,

which required constant military mobilization, the transmission of power along male lines, and severe punishment for those men, especially homosexuals, deviated from the ideal of "the new man" (138).

Behar points out that this "ultra-virile sense of national identity" conveys a patriarchal and heterosexual eroticism that controls the manner in which Cubans bond with the Cuban nation. It is worth to notice that this eroticism adds a sexual drive to the moral duty that both islander and exiled Cubans feel about Cuba. As previously discussed, an iconography that appeals to religion and spirituality supports Cubans' nationalistic moral duty. This same iconography stimulates the sexual drives that regulate national belonging. Thus, the affective attachment that Cuban politics stress consists in a kind of erotic religious fervor that echoes catholic mysticism. In this fervor, Cubans respond to the call of patriotic duty, allowing themselves to be seduced by the ultra-virile figures that represent the Cuban nation, such as Fidel Castro and Che Guevara.

Behar also underscores the negative consequences of the hyper-masculinization of Cuban nationalism and politics. She argues that such hyper-masculinization mainly regulates who is excluded from the national project. This exclusionary scheme impacts in profound and adverse ways the lives of those who do not embody or enact the ultra-virility of Cuban politics and those who refuse to be seduced by the patriarchal and heterosexual erotica of Cuban nationalism[124]. Drawing on Behar's insights, my close reading of *Dreaming* discloses how Cuban hyper-masculine politics, which call out

[124] Behar specifically explores the negative implications that the ultra-virile and heterosexual national imaginary of the Cuban nation have for homosexuals and women, focusing on a) artistic practices that denounce Cuban state's violence against bodies which do not conform to the heterosexual and virile image of the Cuban nation, and b) pieces that reimagine the erotic image of the nation from an homosexual lens. Sources besides Behar's that documents the repression of homosexuality in Cuba are Reynaldo Arenas's autobiography, *Antes que anochezca* (1992), and the essay, "The Sandwich Generation" (2001), by Sara Rosell. In this essay, Rosell, a lesbian writer from the Mariel boatlift generation, remembers how the Cuban

Cubans on their sexual drives, impact women's psyches, bodies and interpersonal relationships, according to their inclination or no inclination to take part in the eroticism of Cuban politics and nationalism.

Dreaming opens with Celia daydreaming about a sexual encounter with Fidel Castro, who makes love to her as a reward for her service as a night watchwoman, "From her porch, Celia could spot another Bay of Pigs invasion before it happened. She would be feted at the palace, serenaded by a brass orchestra, seduced by El Líder himself on a red velvet divan" (García 1992, 3). This scene not only explicitly portrays the relationship between male authority, eroticism and national attachment that we have been discussing, but also shows how Celia's willingness to participate in the eroticism of the Cuban nation places her as the perfect fit of *cubanidad* under a Cold War logic. In this sense, Celia represents a type of Cuban womanhood that overlooks the contradictions of Cuban revolutionary ideology in terms of gender and sexuality. Behar explains these contradictions in the following paragraph,

> The revolutionary state sought to undo the evils of patriarchy by providing all women with free education, health care, birth control, access to abortion, nutritional support for pregnant mothers and young children, day care, the freedom to divorce, and the unequivocal defense of women's sexuality in its own right. Indeed, Fidel Castro took such as strong interest in "the woman question" that he himself called the feminist revolution in Cuba "a revolution within the Revolution." And yet patriarchy could be dismantled only as long as the figure of the patriarch –namely, Fidel– was never touched (Behar 2000, 140 and 141)

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post-revolutionary state defined homosexuals as mentally ill and anti-revolutionary. She also recalls how the Cuban state organized raids in the 1970s, confining homosexuals in jails and psychiatric hospitals.

Celia then embodies the contradictions above mentioned, adjusting her beliefs, affects and actions in accordance to the directives of the male leaders of the Cuban state. Celia adopts an active role building up the utopia promised by the revolution. She accepts the conditioned agency that the patriarchal state grants her. She enrolls in activities and professions that before the revolution were exclusively for men, but under the condition that she avoids questioning the patriarchal authority of the state and accepts attaching her desires to the eroticism of Cuban politics and nationalism. Here, it is important to point out that Celia accepts this agreement not only because of her political convictions, but also because it offers a scape for her psychological distress. Celia is well aware that Cuban polar politics are the cause of her family's misfortunes. As the quote below shows, Celia privately resents that El Líder happened to change the course of Cuban history, given that this historical accident broke up the Del Pino family,

> Celia cannot decide which is worse, separation or death. Separation is familiar, too familiar, but Celia is uncertain she can reconcile it with permanence. Who could have predicted her life? What unknown covenants led her ultimately to this beach and this hour and this solitude?
>
> She considers the vagaries of sports, the happenstance of El Líder, a star pitcher in his youth, narrowly missing a baseball career in America […] Frustrated, El Líder went home, rested her pitching arm, and started a revolution in the mountains. Because of this, Celia thinks, her husband will be buried in stiff, foreign earth. Because of this, their children and their grandchildren are nomads (García 1992, 7).

Celia, moreover, recognizes the negative effects that "solitude" and "separation" have had in her and her family. She, thus, gets involved in the ideological and erotic dynamics of

Cuban politics to keep her mind busy and endure her loneliness and the stress of separation from her family. The last challenges the simplistic assumption that Cubans in the island remain loyal to the hyper-masculine politics of the Cuban state mainly for ideological convictions. It suggests in contrast that such loyalty is also a mechanism to protect the psyche from the negative emotions caused by the breakup of Cuban families that the Revolution forced.

While Celia embodies a revolutionary womanhood that willingly participates in the erotism of Cuban nationalism as promoted by the Cuban state, her daughters Lourdes and Felicia represent women who reject the seduction of Cuban nationalism. Lourdes is the polar opposite of the revolutionary woman. As mentioned, she abhors everything related to the Cuban revolution, the socialist regime and Fidel Castro. Her hatred towards the Cuban government drives many of her actions and perspectives. For instance, Lourdes gets involved with a group of Cuban exiles who every afternoon gather in her bakery to scheme radical plans to overthrow the Cuban government; she obsessively looks in the newspapers for conspirations organized by socialist forces; and she embraces American capitalism and patriotism as a way of reaffirming her anti-socialism. Because of her position on Cuban politics and her actions, Lourdes seems to represent a type of Cuban-American womanhood that embraces the dominant perspective of Miami-centric exile politics. However, as I demonstrate below, she rejects the Cuban government for reasons other than those which support the Miami-centric perspective. Reasons that emerged from Lourdes's unfortunate clash with the hyper-masculinity of the Cuban post-revolutionary state.

Here, it is pertinent to make a parenthesis to clarify further what exactly is this Miami-centric[125] (or Miami-centered[126]) perspective that Lourdes does not match at all. As previously mentioned, the Cuban exiles who first immigrated after the revolution and settled in Miami have determined mainstream ideas of Cuban American identity as well as the direction of exiled politics. Most of these first post-revolution immigrants belonged to a white-Cuban upper class. From their privilege intersectional identities, they experienced the Cuban revolution as a catastrophe that caused the loss of property and privilege. Their loss not only impacted their material conditions but also their effectivity. That is, as a consequence of their debasement, first post-revolution immigrants experienced emotional states that fluctuate between a fierce (sometimes irrational) hatred towards the post-revolutionary regime and nostalgia. This nostalgia manifests in a dreaminess or lethargic state, from which exiles yearn for their lost property and crave for returning to the homeland.

Besides building a sense of *cubanidad* in the U.S. based on their negative perspectives and feelings about the revolution, these first post-revolution exiles supported their ethnic identity in the idea of "Cuban American exceptionalism". Thanks to their "whiteness" and class status, Miami-centered exiles obtained access to social and economic venues which were closed to other Latina/o communities. This access was justified with the myth of "Cuban American exceptionalism". Myth that describes Cuban exiles as anomalous Latina/os, who in contrast to other immigrants from Latin America

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[125] I borrow this term from Ricardo Ortiz (2007), who calls "Miami-centric" to the dominant perspective in Cuban American studies supported by the Cold War logic. He does so to emphasize how writers and critics who belong to the Cuban-Miami enclave are who principally develop this perspective.

[126] Throughout the chapter, I use both terms interchangeably.

easily Americanize, willingly adopting U.S. pro-capitalist agenda[127]. However, this myth that appears to demonstrate that if they want to, Latina/os can be part of the American dream, it is actually covering up that Cuban exiles were able to adapt better to the American way of life, because their white-upper-class identities and their anti-socialism locate them in a higher status within the U.S. racial stratification.

Thus, as Antonio López argues in *Unbecoming Blackness: The Diaspora Cultures of Afro-Cuban America* (2012), Miami-centric Cuban Americanness encompasses processes of racialization, gendering and classism. Some of these processes have their origin in Cuba's slavery past while others respond to U.S. social and political practices of segregation. According to López, Cuban American exceptionalism as pillar of Miami-centric perspectives depends on Cuban Americans' efforts of passing as white[128]. These efforts include making invisible Afro-Cubans' contributions to U.S. *cubanidad* as well as keeping a strict distance from poor Afro-Cuban immigrants. Moreover, they respond to the psychological fear of "blackening in the Anglo-U.S. gaze" (12) that white Cuban Americans share with other white and light-skinned Spanish Caribbean people. Fear that

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[127] The myth of Cuban American exceptionalism explains why in their works some Cuban American writers, who arrived to the U.S. at a very young age as part of the first waves of immigration or who are the children of exiles from these first waves, describe the Cuban American experience as an harmonious in-betweenness that is "exceptional" in comparison to the conflictive experiences of other U.S. Latina/o communities. An example of these works is *Life on the Hyphen* (1994) by Gustavo Pérez Firmat, which explores the particularities of this "exceptional in-betweenness". In it, Pérez Firmat describes how the identities of the Cuban Americans from the one-and-a-half generation are located in the interstice between Cuban and U.S. cultures. Pérez Firmat utilizes the image of the hyphen (which simultaneously unites and separates the words "Cuban" and "American" in the term "Cuban-American") as a metaphor of how the one-and-a-half generation negotiates their acculturation, bilingualism and biculturalism. He moreover celebrates how Cuban Americans maintain an "appositional rather than oppositional relation to mainstream U.S. culture, […] defined more by contiguity than conflict and therefore more accurately representative of the Cuban experience in this country, lives lived in collusion rather than collision" (Pérez-Firmat cited in Ortiz 2007, 36).

[128] As López explains white Cubans have to reaffirm continuously their whiteness in the U.S. because their condition of "*blanco criollo*" (based on the Spanish colonial caste system and Cuban nationalistic projects of mestizaje) within ideologies of whiteness in the U.S. is considered as "off white".

has amplified in the last decades due to the increasing numbers of Black Cuban immigrants in the U.S.

Given the specific intersectionality of race, class, and gender that distinguishes Miami-centric *cubanidad*, López uses the term "*cosas de blancos*" [129] (white people's stuff) to name the set of cultural, social and political practices that white-upper-class Cuban Americans share and establish as the epitome of Cuban American identity. Concerning literary practices, López points out that literary works that reproduce a Miami-centered perspective have in common tropes that express the anxieties of white-upper-class Cuban Americans, regarding race, gender and class. For instance, López observes that a common theme in Cuban American narratives of the 1990s is the story of a return trip to Cuba. In many of these narratives such imaginary trip involves a visit to exiles' former houses which in the present of the stories are occupied by islander Afro-Cubans. López names this common trope as "the Afro-Cuban-occupied house" and argues that it represents, on the one hand, the anxiety that Miami-Cuban exiles experience as a consequence of how a racial and economic hierarchy that remained immobile during centuries turned over after the Revolution; on the other, how Miami-centered texts use representations of Afro-Cubans to mediate white-upper-class Cuban Americans' own anxieties.

Getting back to Lourdes, as mentioned, her character can be interpreted as a female version of Miami-centered *cubanidad* by the fact that she performs many *cosas de blancos* practices. Just to name a couple of examples, Lourdes is a proud proprietor and entrepreneur who feels superior to other Latina/os (and to people of color in general)

[129] *Cosa de blancos* is a direct response to the common phrase, *cosas de negros*, which "typically ascribes inferiority to, and thus dismisses all manner of Afro-Cuban life, from affective concerns and cultural practices to social institutions. The phrase, in short, would effect oppression through embarrassment. Its intention is to belittle, and hence hamper, Afro-Cubans" (López 2012, 189).

because of her higher economic position. In addition, Pilar believes that her mother's rage is caused by the fact that Lourdes lost her privileged position after the Revolution, "Back in Cuba, everybody used to treat mom with respect. Their backs would straighten and they'd put on attentive faces like their lives depend on the bolt of fabric she chose. These days, all the neighborhood merchants hate her" (García 1992, 63). However, in the story Lourdes explicitly despises Miami-centered *cubanidad*. In Cuba, Lourdes couldn't stand the manias and behavior of her husband's (Rufino) family, which was one of the most effluent families before the Revolution, owning ranches and casinos, and which in the novel mainly represents the Miami-centered perspective. Once in the United States, she demands that Rufino takes her as far as possible from Miami, in a large extent, because she is not able to bear her in-laws yearning for their lost wealth and idyllic live in Batista's Cuba, "Lourdes couldn't stand Rufino's family, the endless brooding over their lost wealth, the competition for dishwasher jobs" (69).[130]

The discrepancy between Lourdes and her family in law arises out of class and gender-perspective differences. Lourdes comes from a lower-middle class context and firmly believes that women's role in their family should not be limited to housekeeping and motherhood. For this reason, she despises the frivolous life style of most of the members of the Puente family, especially of the women in the family who are trophy wives. Therefore, after marrying Rufino, she opted for a country life in the Puente family ranch, where she and Rufino shared the responsibility of the administration of the ranch. Nonetheless, after the Revolution, the divergence between Lourdes and her in-laws becomes more pronounced as a consequence of their dissimilar experiences with the

[130] In her essay, "On Being an American-Born Cuban from Miami" (2001), Gisele M. Requena describes how to being a Cuban American raise in the Miami enclave means "grow with a Cuban sensibility" in which "el exilio pushes its ideology onto you; and whether you believe it or not, you accept it" (282).

hyper-masculinity and eroticism of the Cuban post-revolutionary state. For Lourdes, the encounter with such hyper-masculinity did not bring as main consequence social debasement and dispossession, but the trauma of sexual violence.

5.6 Hyper-Masculine Violence, Trauma and Cuban Female Affects

Lourdes's rape, perpetrated by a pair of revolutionary soldiers who showed up in the Puente family ranch to expropriate it, symbolizes how the eroticism of Cuban nationalism and politics can rapidly transform into sexual and gender-specific violence. Drawing on Behar (2000), who affirms that within the eroticism of power in Cuba, "domination has to be confronted not so much on the level of conventional politics but on the level of gender and sexual identity" (142), I interpret Lourdes's rape as a representation of how erotized Cuban politics mobilize lust not only to guarantee that the ideological apparatus functions, but also as the affect that drives state repressive mechanisms, especially against individuals with gender and sexual identities that challenge the ultra-virile authority of Cuban politics.

The rape scene supports this interpretation, first, focusing on how the soldiers' anger and impatience grow because Lourdes does not give in to their virile authority,

> "You're not going to start again, are you, *compañera?*" the tall one said.
> Lourdes heard the accent of Oriente province and turned to look at him. His hair, tamed with brilliantine, grew dense and low on his forehead.
> "Get out of my house!" Lourdes yelled at the men, more fiercely than she had the week before.
> But instead of leaving, the tall one increased the pressure on her arm just above the elbow […]

> "So the woman of the house is a fighter?" the tall soldier taunted. He pressed his face close to Lourdes's, pinning her arms behind her back" (Garcia 1992, 70 and 71).

The scene, then, focuses on how the soldiers select rape as cohesive mechanism to discipline and punish Lourdes's defiant femininity,

> Lourdes did not close her eyes but looked directly into his […] His lips were too full for a man. As he tried to press them to Lourdes's mouth she snapped her head back and spat in his face […] The other soldier held Lourdes down as his partner took a knife from his holster. Carefully, he sliced Lourdes's riding pants off to her knees and tied them over her mouth (71).

Thus, the trauma that Lourdes carries with her to her exile in the United States is not the Miami-centered nostalgia that idealizes Cuba, evoking both a fervent love for the homeland and hatred towards the Cuban state. Rather, Lourdes's trauma is the result of her violent encounter with a hyper-masculine Cuban authority, which employs sexual violence in order to break her resistance to its command. Her exacerbated hatred and anger, therefore, are affective responses to her sexual assault. As Inger Patterson argues in "Telling it to the Dead: Borderless Communication and Scars of Trauma in Cristina García's *Dreaming in Cuban*" (2013), the illegible scar that the tall soldier carved with his knife in Lourdes's belly after raping her symbolizes the trauma of sexual violence. The scar is the physical evidence of the trauma that haunts Lourdes's body and psyche and that accompanies her in her exile. The scar's illegibility represents how Lourdes is unable to cope with this trauma as well as how Lourdes's traumatic experience is indecipherable for other members of her family, such as Pilar.

Lourdes's case represents how the novel focuses on the relationship between affect and trauma from a female perspective that calls into question previous approaches to this relationship in Cuban American scholarship. This female perspective points out that even amongst the white Cubans who first immigrated to the United States after the Revolution, the trauma of exile is neither exclusively tied to debasement and dispossession, nor only affectively expressed through pathological nostalgia. Moreover, this perspective discloses how dominant understandings of the relationship between affect and trauma come from a male-heterosexual perspective that overlooks how different is this relationship from the perspective of other gender identities. The last is emphasized in the story, first, representing how female characters experience the relationship between trauma and affect differently to male characters, and secondly, through a variant in the trope of the "occupied house". An example of the first device is the juxtaposition of Lourdes's trauma-related disorders and Rufino's emotional response to exile. Lourdes's reactions are hyperbolic: she swings from starving herself to compulsively eating, from despising sex to developing sex addiction; she is a workaholic and has a violent and explosive temper. In contrast, Rufino is passive. He is unable to adapt to his new life in the U.S. And therefore, he spends his time in his workshop coming up with inventions that he would never patent or commercialize, yearning for his old life in Cuba. Regarding the trope of the "occupied house", when Lourdes goes back to Cuba and visits the former Puente family ranch, she does not find new occupants who represent how the revolution disrupted and turned social and racial hierarchies, but an asylum where patients with bodies and minds broken wander.

My analysis of the relationship between trauma and affect from the positionality of Cuban and Cuban American femininities in *Dreaming* draws on Meera Atkinson's and

Michael Richardson's (2013) notion of "traumatic affect". Notion that they define as, "the mode, substance and dynamics of relation through which trauma is experienced, transmitted, conveyed, and represented. Traumatic affect crosses boundaries between personal and political, text and body, screen and audience, philosophy and culture" (12). Thus, according to Atkinson and Richardson, traumatic affect refers to how collective and individual trauma is affectively embodied and emotionally expressed and represented. Also, the notion conveys the different ways in which affective responses to trauma circulate between individuals and social groups. In "Channeling the Specter and Translating Phantoms: Hauntology and the Spooked" (2013), Atkinson argues that traumatic affect is shared by individuals who experienced the same historical and social crises. However, traumatic affect can also be transmitted trans-generationally. Atkinson observes that it is common that a past-generation trauma impacts the present of subsequent generations, even when the past generation keeps this trauma as a secret and subsequent generations are not aware of its existence. For this reason, Atkinson suggests stopping defining trauma as the failure of processing the past and instead understand it as the past operating in the present (249). Also, she proposes to describe the prevalence of past trauma in the present with the motifs of "ghost", "phantom" and "haunting", because although subsequent generations can feel (be haunted by) the affects of past trauma, for them the cause behind those affects is elusive as a ghost.

In *Dreaming,* transgenerational traumatic affect is central in the Del Pino women's genealogy. Later on, I discuss how the novel matches Atkinson's ideas by representing transgenerational trauma as a ghost that haunts different generations of the Del Pino family women. But first, I focus on how such trauma consists in a genealogy of motherhoods and mother-and-daughter relationships broken by hyper-masculine violence.

5.7 Cuban Transgenerational Traumatic Affect: A Genealogy of Broken Motherhoods

Although Lourdes's suffered the miscarriage of her second child as a consequence of an accident that occurs days before her rape, she intertwines the loss of her child and her subsequent infertility with her trauma of sexual violence. For Lourdes, her miscarriage, which happens the first time that revolutionary soldiers appeared in her ranch, is an omen of her sexual assault and of the evil that the Revolution has brought to Cuba. Lourdes's scar as symbol of her trauma of sexual violence supports this connection. Lourdes's rapist selects her womb to leaves his mark. The location of the scar over a body part associated with motherhood and female fertility not only justifies the fact that Lourdes experiences two traumatic events as a complex trauma because of their temporal proximity, but also how Cuban hyper-masculine power breaks the bodies, psyches and spirit of rebellious womanhood and motherhoods. In addition, the story underscores the connection between trauma, broken motherhoods and hyper-masculine violence in the trope of the "occupied house". When Lourdes returns to the place where her ranch used to be finding instead an asylum, she confronts her greatest fear, "what she fears most is this: that her rape, her baby's death were absorbed quietly by the earth, that they are ultimately no more meaningful than falling leaves on an autumn day. She hungers for a violence of nature, terrible and permanent, to record the evil. Nothing less would satisfy her" (Garcia 1992, 227). As the previous quote shows, Lourdes's greatest fear is that her rapist and the system that gives him authority over her body were never accountable for the crimes they committed against her.

As mentioned, the trauma that hyper-masculine violence imposes upon Lourdes significantly damages her relationship with Pilar. Lourdes's pathological behaviors and

volatile emotional reactions prevent her from understanding Pilar's rebellious character and from establishing an effective communication with her. However, Lourdes is not the only character in the novel who personifies how eroticized hyper-masculine forms of authority impact Cuban womanhood and motherhoods. Her sister, Felicia Del Pino, represents a variant on how femininity and motherhoods are broken by hyper-masculine Cuban politics.

Celia describes Felicia as "spirited and unpredictable". Because of Felicia's impulsivity and desire of living her sexuality in her own terms, free of both her mother's and the Cuban state's behavior standards, she marries an abusive man at a very young age. Felicia escapes domestic violence trying to burn alive her husband. Nonetheless, the abuse causes a permanent damage to her sensitive psyche. Felicia becomes delusional. She experiences a hyper sensibility that amplifies every sound, color and smell around her. To avoid the violence that permeates her reality, she starts inhabiting a dreaming state, which the story depicts in the following way, "She [Felicia] grieves in her dreams for lost children, for the prostitutes in India, for the women raped in Havana last night. Their faces stare at hair, plaintive, uncomplaining. What do they want with her? Felicia is afraid to sleep" (82). Because of her psychological distress, Felicia converts into a negligent mother, who not only does not take care of her children providing food, attention and protection, but also attempts to commit suicide almost killing one of her children with her. Felicia's mental distress inflicts an irreparable damage to her relationship with her children, especially with her oldest daughters, who call her "not-Mamá" (121). In addition, Felicia's incapability of performing a "healthy" motherhood also places her as a problematic subject according to the Cuban State. The last occurs when "the doctors deemed Felicia and 'unfit mother'" (107) and the state prescribes that

Felicia was sent to a "special" guerilla unit for "social misfits" (106) to reeducate her as a "New Socialist Woman" (107).

Although in Felicia's case Cuban hyper-masculine politics does not directly inflict the violence that traumatizes her in the first place, these politics aggravate her psychological condition by forcing her to behave according to a revolutionary womanhood, employing their coercive and eroticized-ideological apparatuses. As the following quote shows, Felicia tries to surrender to the state's command, accepting its proposed cure. Nevertheless, she cannot overlook that the state is driven by a violent masculine force,

> Felicia tries to shake off her doubts, but all she sees is a country living on slogans and agitation, a people always on the brink of war. She scorns the military words blaring on billboards everywhere. WE SHALL OVERCOME… AS IN VIETNAM… CHANGE DEFEAT INTO VICTORY… Even the lowly weed pullers had boasted a belligerent name: The Mechanized Offensive Brigade. Young teachers are Fighters for Learning. Students working in the fields are the Juvenile Column of the Centenary. Literacy volunteers are The Fatherland or Death Brigade (107 and 108)

As the quote continues, this violence leaves Felicia without any hope that her trauma (caused in first place by violence) can be cured with more violence, "It goes on and on, numbing her, undermining her willingness to fight for the future, hers or anybody else's" (108). Moreover, despite her "insanity", Felicia is the character that more lucidly understands how the Cuban state eroticizes its hyper-masculine figures to guarantee the loyalty of its female citizens. As Felicia claims in the following quote, she is well aware that her mother, Celia, participates in such eroticism. Also, Felicia knows well that

although she is curious about the mechanisms of seduction that support this eroticism and even fantasizes with a sexual encounter with *El Líder*, in real terms, she is unable to surrender to his sexual attraction,

> Felicia can't help feeling that there is something unnatural in her mother's attraction to him, something sexual. She has heard of women offering themselves to *El Líder*, drawn by his power, by his unfathomable eyes, and it is said he has fathered many children in the island. But there is a coldness to El Líder, a bitterness she doesn't trust […] Still, Felicia muses, what would he be like in bed? Would he remove his cap and boots? Leave his pistol on the table? Would guards wait outside the door, listening for the sharp pleasure that signaled his departure? What would his hands be like? His mouth, the hardness between his thighs? Would he churn inside her slowly as she liked? Trail his tongue along her belly and lick her there? Felicia slips her hand down the front of her army fatigue pants. She feels his tongue moving faster, his beard against her thighs. "We need you, Compañera del Pino," she hears him murmur sternly as she comes (111).

Thus, through the cases of Lourdes and Felicia, *Dreaming* explores the role that hyper-masculine violence and eroticism play in inflicting damage on Cuban motherhoods. Also, the story points out the consequences of such damage: broken intrafamily relationships, a trauma of sexual violence that Cuban female immigrants carry with them to the U.S., and sadness, loneliness and abandonment that, in some instances, culminate in death, as in Felicia's case.

Before closing the discussion in this section, it is important to point out that the novel portrays Cuban broken motherhoods as a consequence of a historical process that

dates back before the Revolution of 1959.[131] That is, in the story, the hyper-masculine violence that traumatizes women of Cuban origin does not initiate with post-revolutionary politics and nationalism. Rather, hyper-masculine violence is represented as a phenomenon deeply rooted in the history of Cuba as a nation; as a constant in different historical expressions of Cuban nationalism. The last is symbolized in Celia's narrative line, specifically in the violence that her husband, Jorge, inflicts upon her.

Jorge embodies an ideal nationalistic Cuban masculinity during Batista's regime. This pre-revolutionary ideal masculinity is described in the following quote from the novel,

> For many years before the revolution, Jorge had traveled five weeks out of six, selling electric brooms and portable fans for an American firm. He'd wanted to be a model Cuban, to prove to his gringo boss that they were cut from the same cloth. Jorge wore his suit on the hottest days of the year, even in remote villages where the people thought he was crazy. He put on his boater with its wide black band before a mirror, to keep the angle shy of jaunty (6).

The description above clearly states that before the revolution, a "model Cuban" was a man who adapted his behavior in order to obtain the respect of his white-Western counterparts. A man who was driven by the desire of demonstrating that he was worthy of the same privilege and authority that white men own. For this reason, he strongly embraced western values, even if doing this verged on the ridiculous. Here, it is pertinent

[131] As Behar (2000) argues, this understanding of hyper-virile structures as part of a historical process that precedes the Revolution is one of the main characteristics of the female perspective that writers such as García advance. This understanding implies to question the "key images of Cuban masculinity" in both extremes of Cuban political spectrum, That is, "The twin icons of Ricky Ricardo, the 1950s' Cuban mambo king, indifferent to politics and unphased by his colonized position as a Latino in the United States, and Fidel Castro, whose warrior manhood and constant need to combat the emasculating power of U.S. imperialism is symbolized by the army fatigues he wears morning, noon, night" (145). Because of this, Behar identifies these female writers as "Post-Utopian", given that they break with both the utopias of the

to observe that Jorge's embodiment of pre-revolutionary model masculinity reminds us of the Hispanic-Caribbean masculinity discussed in Chapter 4. Like the Dominican masculinity analyzed in that chapter, the pre-revolutionary Cuban masculinity portrayed in *Dreaming* represents a paradox, which involves a deeply love for the independence of the fatherland but conditioned by obtaining the respect and same status of white-western men. Moreover, like its Dominican counterpart, pre-revolutionary Cuban masculinity tended to commit violence against unfitting identities for its nationalistic project. In *Dreaming*, the violence that this pre-revolutionary masculinity is able to commit against female subjects is symbolized by the fact that Jorge, blinded by rage and jealousy, tries to kill Celia, causing her a mental breakdown. Although this breakdown does not kill Celia, it irreparably damages her relationship with Lourdes.

The problematic relationship between Celia and Lourdes, therefore, is not only a result of their opposite ideological positions, but also of how pre-revolutionary masculine violence broke their mother-and-daughter relationship. This broken relationship also has important implications for the manner in which both women deal with the subsequent traumas caused by hyper-masculine post-revolutionary structures. For instance, Lourdes feels the urgency of being as far as possible of her homeland partly because of her trauma of sexual assault, but also because Cuba reminds her of Celia,

> Lourdes could smell the air before she breathed it, the air of her mother's ocean nearby. She imagined herself alone and shriveled in her mother's womb, envisioned the first days in her mother's unyielding arms. Her mother's fingers were still a splayed as spoons, her milk a tasteless gray. Her mother stared at her with eyes collapsed of expectation. If it's true that babies learn love from their

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revolutionary Cuba and the utopias, paradigms and ideologies commonly associated with the Cuban

mother's voices, then this is what Lourdes heard: "I will not remember her name" (74).

As the previous quote shows, when Lourdes thinks about Cuba, imagining the island surrounded by an intense blue ocean, she visualizes herself as a little baby neglected and rejected by her mentally ill mother. It is important to note that the connection between Celia, Cuba and the ocean is a recurrent image in the novel as well as a central symbol in it –the story begins with Celia contemplating the ocean and ends with her swimming deeply into the dark sea. Given its connotation of motherhood, this image symbolizes not only a series of pathological motherhoods in the Del Pino family, but also the Cuban nation as an affectively ill mother. A mother who loves her children but is unable to maintain healthy affective relationships with them, because has been historically buffeted by patriarchal violence.

5.8 Transgenerational Trauma: The Ghost Haunting Cuban Female Affects

The transgenerational traumatic affect that different generations of Del Pino women share, therefore, does not begin with post-revolutionary erotic and hyper-masculine politics or with the Cold War logic of these politics. Rather, this transgenerational traumatic affect begins with the patriarchal violence of a time previous to the revolution. Coinciding with Atkinson's motifs to describe transgenerational trauma, the novel employs the motif of "haunting" and the image of the ghost to represent Del Pino women's transgenerational trauma.

In *Dreaming*, the blue ghost of Jorge del Pino personifies transgenerational trauma. The ghost of Jorge appears to Celia as a blue light which increases its intensity.

American community.

He says something that Celia is unable to understand. This same ghost haunts Lourdes during months in New York City. Lourdes enjoys his company, appreciates his advice, however, she does not understand why the ghost of her father remains in the world of the living. Jorge's ghost's undecipherable presence represents the elusive, secretive character of transgenerational trauma. In the specific case of the Del Pino family, the ghost is the personification of the secret (Jorge's secret) that obscures the real reason behind the pathological motherhoods that traumatize different generations of the Del Pino women.

Jorge's ghost, with its ability to cross the ocean between Cuba and New York, also represents how, in the case of Cubans and Cuban Americans, transgenerational trauma travels with exiles, is shared by exiles and islanders, and is passed down to subsequent generations inside and outside the island. The last is portrayed by Pilar who does not have any clue of the traumatic experiences of her mother, grandmother and aunt. Nevertheless, she experiences feelings of discomfort and detachment and is haunted by the past memories of the women of her family. These past memories erupt into her present in the form of dreams. As Suzanne Leonard argues in "Dreaming as a Cultural Work in *Donald Duck* and *Dreaming in Cuban*" (2004), Pilar's engagement with the past memories of her family through the motif of "dreaming" represents how the novel proposes a revision of history that attempts to include the accounts erased by dominant definitions of *cubanidad* in the U.S. For this reason, according to Leonard, the novel focuses on herstories and on the memories of those who remained in Cuba, without necessarily favoring any political affiliation. Leonard also observes that the motif of "dreaming" supports a perspective, which "recognizes the pitfalls which attend the project of historical reconstruction using imagination" (199), but also accepts that is impossible to fully know the history of Cuban Americans' cultural heritage. Leonard's work is an example of the attention that critics

have paid to García's novel as historiography. However, I propose to change the focus in the interpretation of the motifs of "haunting" and "dreaming" in relation to Pilar. My interpretation argues that these motifs express an affective disposition that, on the one hand, disrupts the Cold War logic that has ruled Cuban Americans' identities and relationships. On the other, it represents a different mode of affective attachment to Cuban transgenerational trauma.

Before passing to the analysis of this affective disposition, it is worthy of mentioning that this particular mode of affective attachment, also, represents an alternative way of coping with trauma. That is, in *Dreaming*, healing does not occur with knowing the origin of trauma. Jorge's ghost discloses his secret. He confesses to Lourdes that he intentionally caused Celia's mental breakdown. He even asks Lourdes to return to Cuba, to share the secret with Celia and repair their relationship. However, despite knowing the truth, Lourdes is unable to pass the message to Celia. She remains trapped in the anger, sadness and shame of this and her trauma of sexual violence, restoring silence and secrecy at the core of the Del Pino family transgenerational trauma. With this, the novel rather than developing a pessimistic perspective on the impossibility of both healing past trauma and avoiding that it was passed down to future generations, points out that coping with transgenerational trauma implies accepting this impossibility and the fact that subsequent generations must deal with the trauma of past generations without never really knowing what this trauma is about.

5.9 Intuition: Dealing in the Dark with Transgenerational Trauma

Intuition is the affective mode or disposition that allows Pilar to deal with transgenerational trauma differently than her mother and grandmother. My analysis of

intuition in *Dreaming* draws on Lauren Berlant's and Gloria Anzaldúa's works. Nonetheless, it adds to previous studies by addressing that intuition for Latinas of Caribbean origin, such as Cuban Americans, implies, first, a revision of racist omissions in their ethnic nationalism, and secondly, embracing their African heritage and spirituality.

As Lauren Berlant argues in *Cruel Optimism* (2011), "intuition is where affect meets history" (52). According to Berlant, intuition is an alternative response to personal, social and/or historical crises. Crises are accompanied by an "atmosphere of dehabituation and forced improvisation" (57), which activates sensory and psychological systems that work together as mechanisms of survival. Berlant names "intuitonism" to this mode that traces survival maps and which "enable us to think about being in history as a densely corporeal, experientially felt thing" (66). It is important to point out that Berlant underlines that intuition it is different from other, more common responses to crises, such as trauma. This idea is relevant to explain how intuition operates in the case of Pilar. When Pilar enters to the dreaming state that allows her to sense the events that her mother and grandmother experienced as crisis, she attaches to them using intuition. Pilar's intuition consists in registering all the events that are part of the story of her family, ignoring the rules of the Cold War logic and deactivating the affects of sadness and anger, with which her mother and grandmother respond to these same events as traumas.

Several years before the publication of *Cruel Optimism*, Gloria Anzaldúa in *Borderlands. La Frontera. The New Mestiza* (1987), explored and affective mode similar to Berlant's intuition but from the perspective of women of color. Anzaldúa names this affective mode, "*la facultad*", and defines it in the following way,

> An instant "sensing," a quick perception arrived at without conscious reasoning. It is an acute awareness mediated by the part of the psyche that does not speak, that communicates in images and symbols which are the faces of feelings, that is, behind which feelings reside/hide (60).

As the previous quote states, without naming it "affect", Anzaldúa places *la facultad* as part of the psychobiological systems that regulate feelings and survival instincts. She, also, underlines that this affective mode communicates not with words, but with images and symbols, which is particularly true in how intuition operates in the novel. When Pilar's intuition (or *facultad*) activates, she receives the memories of her ancestors in the form of dreams and images. In contrast to Berlant's understanding, Anzaldúa does not link *la facultad* to extraordinary events or crises that force the psyche into improvisation and survival mode. Instead, she argues that some individuals and communities have developed this sense as a consequence of systemic marginalization and transgenerational oppression,

> Those who do not feel psychologically or physically safe in the world are more apt to develop this sense. Those who are pounced on the most have it the strongest – the females, the homosexuals of all races, the darkskinned, the outcast, the persecuted, the marginalized, the foreign" (60).

Despite Berlant's and Anzaldúa's dissimilar definitions of crisis, both understand intuition as an affect that is historically and socially trained and passed down from one generation to the next. In this regard Berlant affirms, "the training of intuition is the story of individual and collective biography" (Berlant 2011, 53). This understanding of intuition as an affect shared and developed in a transgenerational manner is relevant in the analysis of Pilar's intuition. Pilar's intuition does not emerge of her directly facing a crisis

but is an affective predisposition that she shares with and inherits from other women of her family. All women in the Del Pino family have a special sensitivity and extraordinary skills. For instance, Pilar and Celia are able to communicate telepathically, Celia can sense events before they happen, Lourdes can talk with the ghost of her father and Felicia inhabits an alternative, ultra-sensitive reality. However, as mentioned, the intuition and powers that the Del Pino women share are not only part of their family ties but also a clear marker of their cultural and ethnic heritage.

Pilar is the only member of the Del Pino family who does not resist the connection between her ethnic identity and her supernatural skills. With her exceptional memory, "I was only two years old when I left Cuba but I remember everything that's happened to me since I was a baby" (García 1992, 26), Pilar remembers how her Afro-Cuban nannies used to call her "Brujita" (little witch) and rubbed her "with blood and leaves" (28); she is recognized as a daughter of Changó (the Orisha or deity that rules over the thunder and fire in the Yoruba pantheon) by Yoruba practitioners in New York City; and she dreams about her as a Yoruba priestess,

> It's midnight and there are people around me praying on the beach. I'm wearing a white dress and turban and I can hear the ocean nearby, only I can't see it. I'm sitting on a chair, a kind throne with antlers fastened to the back. The people lift me up high and walk with me in a slow precession toward the sea. They're chanting in a language I don't understand. I don't feel scared, though. I can see the stars and the moon and the black sky revolving overhead. I can see my grandmother's face (34).

As the previous quote shows, Pilar's attitude towards the fact that her skills are connected to Afro-Cuban spiritual practices is one of acceptance. Her attitude is significantly

different to the position of other women in the family on the same connection. For instance, although Celia uses her skills and premonitions in many situations, she emphatically rejects Afro-Cuban spiritual practices and openly condemns these practices as witchcraft.

It is important to notice that thanks to her nonjudgmental attitude towards Afro-Cuban spiritual practices, Pilar is able to accept the guidance of Yoruba practitioners, who teach her how to use her intuition and supernatural skills to heal the transgenerational trauma that permeates in her family. How naturally Pilar embraces Afro-Cuban spirituality certainly responds to the fact that she is building her sense of *cubanidad* from the advantaged position of a second-generation Cuban Americanness peripheral to Miami-centric perspectives. However, rather than to underline the contrast between these two perspectives, the novel portrays intuition as an Afro-Cuban affective disposition to accentuate how the nationalistic and political structures that make Cuban women psychologically sick are not only misogynist but also racist.

The last becomes evident not only in the internalized racism of the members of the Del Pino family, but also through the voice of Herminia Delgado, an Afro-Cuban woman, daughter of a Babalawo (high priest in Yoruba religion), Felicia's best friend and the only character outside of the Del Pino family who has her own narrative line. Herminia provides an alternative historical line to the "official" history that supports Miami-centric and revolutionary *cubanidades*. She tells Cuba's history of segregation, remembering important historical events for Afro-Cubans, such as the Little war of 1912[132], which

[132] The Little War of 1912 was a rebellion of Afro-Cubans against the Cuban government. The rebellion was led by Evaristo Estenoz and Pedro Ivonnet who were massacred along thousands of Afro-Cubans by the Cuban Army. After the massacre, the rebellion was put down by U.S. military forces. The main objective of the rebellion was to demand the end of the conditions of exploitation and segregation that Afro-Cubans had endured since colonial times and which did not improve after the independence from Spain (Pérez 2006, 168).

remain in the margins of official Cuban history. She also explains how the revolution meant a social and economic improvement for many Afro-Cubans. In addition, Herminia is the only character besides Pilar who understands the special affective modes of the Del Pino women as expressions of Afro-Cuban spirituality. For Herminia, Felicia's obsession with shells and coconuts (meaningful objects in Yoruba rituals) is not a symptom of madness but evidence of her kindness and of the fact that she has a spiritual gift. Likewise, for Herminia, Felicia's delusions indicate her high moral character, as she asserts in the following quote, "Felicia stayed on the fringe of life because it was free of everyday malice. It was more dignified there" (184).

Although the incorporation of Herminia into the story may be interpreted as another case of *cosas de blancos* in Cuban American literary practices – this because to some extent García is using Herminia to revise Cuban American identity from her positionality as white Cuban–, in *Dreaming* Herminia is more than just a trope that expresses the anxieties of a privileged group. As Susan C. Méndez affirms in "Like a Dialect Freaked by Thunder: Spiritual Articulations of Survival and Identity in Cristina García's "Dreaming in Cuban" and "Monkey Hunting" (2011), the participation of some characters of the novel in Yoruba spiritual practices, permits "incisive evaluations of the nation-state" (124). My interpretation of Herminia's role in the novel agrees with Méndez's. Herminia's Afro-Cuban identity questions dominant Cuban nationalistic formations –both in the island and in the diaspora– that arbitrarily omit Blackness from the constituency of the nation. However, as the analysis throughout this chapters demonstrates, my interpretation adds to previous understandings of García's work as an evaluation of the nation-state by focusing on affect. It proves, first, how dominant *cubanidades* attach and consolidate by controlling the affective systems of individuals

and communities of Cuban origin. This control over affects involves a misogynist and racist perspective that distributes power and privilege along the lines of class, gender, race and sexuality. Secondly, it determines how García's novel proposes to heal the damages (at both collective and individual levels) that misogynist and racist Cuban nationalistic formations cause by embracing alternative affective modes. Despite they are peripheral to the Cold War logic that controls Cuban affectivity, these alternative affects are not alien to Cuban culture. As *Dreaming* points out, despite internalized racism and the attempts of state forces to eradicate them, these affects –which were brought to the island by African slaves and which have supported the resistance practices of Afro-Cuban communities for centuries– are profoundly rooted in Cubans' psyches, bodies and everyday practices. In the novel, acknowledging and embracing the origin and history of these affects not only disrupt the processes that make Cubans affectively and psychologically sick, but also open the possibility if not of repairing the past, of building up a non-pathological sense of commonality.

5.10 Conclusion

As a manner of conclusion, I briefly comment on the implications of this analysis for future research in the areas of Latina/o and Cuban American Literary and Cultural Studies. The analysis in this chapter opens new research venues for studying the complexity of *cubanidad* as ethnic identity in the U.S. By focusing on affect, it discloses a layer in the relationship between emotional politics and *cubanidad*, which not only refines our understanding of the mechanisms of omission within dominant *cubanidades*, but also sheds light on the transformative potential that addressing and repairing these omissions have for people who identify as Cuban. The last is especially relevant for

subareas which focus on marginalize groups within dominant *cubanidad*, such as Afro-Cuban Studies.

The study in this chapter also represents a viable analytical model for understanding a Cuban American identity that nowadays is moving further away from the Cold War logic and the notion of “exceptionalism” that supported it for decades, due to recent political and social changes. With recent changes, I specifically refer to the end of the “wet feet, dry feet” policy in 2017, which means that Cuban immigrants no longer enjoy the legal exemptions that during decades made their immigration experiences different to the experiences of other Latina/os. Now Cuban immigrants travel to the U.S. through the dangerous transcontinental immigration route that other Latina/o communities are used for, at least, the last 30 years, joining a community of non-citizens, who, as discussed in Chapter 3, are employed as raw materials by the necrocapitalist system that controls this route. Although it is too soon to measure the impact that these recent changes would have in Cuban American identity, it is not arbitrary to predict that they will significantly refashion this U.S. ethnic identity; and that the analysis of this reshaping will require not only an ideological and political approach but also a perspective that takes into consideration affectivity.

Conclusion

Recent scholarship in Chicana/o and Latina/o literary studies emphasizes the urgency of revising central theoretical paradigms in the study of Latina/o literature in the twenty first century. This emergent body of scholarship includes the works of a group of scholars who were deeply influenced by Gloria Anzaldúa's and Cherrie Moraga's theories during their formative years. As Jackie Cuevas affirms in *Post-Borderlandia: Chicana Literature and Gender Variant Critique* (2018), these scholars recognize themselves as members of a post-Anzaldúan generation with the weightily task of continuing Moraga's and Anzaldúa's theoretical legacy of challenging normative constructions of Latino identity. For this reason, in their academic endeavors, they take very seriously the "ongoing commitment of the feminism of women of color to demand attention to the intersectional relationality among multiple analytic categories such as gender, sexuality, race, and class and their material effects on embodied identities and practices" (5). However, they are also aware that their commitment to Latina/o Queer and feminist critical thought implies refining some of its main theoretical paradigms. As Jackie Cuevas argues in relation to her work on gender variant in Chicana literature[133], post-Anzaldúan critics develop projects that make "borderlands theory an explicit object

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[133] Cuevas names her project "post-borderlands" and points out that her approach is informed by critics who previously pointed out the limitations of Latina feminist theory. She in particular mentions José Esteban Muñoz's and Linda Martín Alcoff's works. In *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics* (1999), Muñoz recognizes the legacy of *This Bridge Called My Back* in his work, but identifies it as "post-Bridge" (22), because he questions some of Anzaldúa's and Moraga's main theoretical concepts such as the "new mestiza", because it, according to Muñoz, "contains the potential for being too celebratory of queer diversity, and in doing so elides the recalcitrant racism and phobias that are still present throughout queer culture" (138). For her part, in "The Unassimilated Theorist" (2006), Alcoff affirms that "Anzaldúa's iconic status in feminism resulted in the contradiction of an iconoclast becoming the new standard. The status she attained in the nineties as the authentic voice of the multiply oppressed was often paradoxically used to provide an epistemological foundation for antifoundationalist, postmodern theories. In other words, her work was used to bolster some of the exclusionary and elitist theoretical fashions of the very institution that made her marginal. I worried not only about the effects of this on her personally but also about the effects on the reputation of her work" (255-256).

of study, testing and pushing the limits of how borderlands theory has become so infused in Chicana studies as to become a default way of seeing, deployed as a nearly automatic lens. It looks for the places where borderlands theory does not quite fit or hold, where it may be helpful yet not enough" (12).

In conversation with this emergent body of scholarship, this dissertation advances a model of literary criticism that incorporates the metacritique of main theoretical paradigms in the study of Latina literatures. This model refines the focus of feminist and dialectical-ideological analytical approaches by centering in an aspect commonly overlooked in examinations of the relationship between power, the Latina body and literary fictions. This overlooked aspect is bodily focused affect. As demonstrated in the previous chapters, a focus on affect discloses that Latinas' underrepresentation and oppression within dominant constructs of *Latinidad* and Americanness do not depend on generic or fixed categorizations of gender, race and sexuality. Rather Latina's marginalization comprises a complex intersectionality of multiple contingencies that include racial formations, affective regimes, racial and gender hierarchizations of labor, nationalistic fantasies and constructs of citizenship; which operate locally and internationally.

It is relevant to notice that as part of its methodology this dissertation develops a vocabulary to discuss the specifics of the complex relationship between hegemony and Latina affect in literary fictions. For instance, I suggest the term "hegemonic affect" to name both the emotional reactions that power triggers to restrain Latinas' individual and political agency, as well as the socio-historical transnational processes behind the effective regimes that restrain Latinas' affective systems. Moreover, this study adapts some core concepts from Queer and Latina feminist theory to discuss Latina affect. By

doing so, this dissertation demonstrates that Latina/os have developed their own vocabulary and theories to explore their affectivity in relation to their particular material circumstances. Also, it proves that Latina feminists advanced similar theoretical approaches to key perspectives in affect theory before or alongside the affective turn.

The metacritique advanced in this study also revises the hemispheric or transnational lens that has prevailed in Latina/o literary and cultural criticism in the last decades. Although there is an extensive body of scholarship that recognizes the urgency of creating hemispheric (across the Americas) and transcontinental (from the U.S. southwest to the east coast) academic conversations, strong epistemic boundaries still prevail between Latin American and U.S. based academies, as well as among schools of Latina/o studies across the U.S.[134] These boundaries create a theoretical myopia that prevents an efficient exchange of knowledge. Addressing this issue, this study proposes a comparative and hemispheric trans-Latina literary analysis, which not only traces the multiple transnational hegemonic formations that impact the affective systems of different Latina embodiments, but also builds a complex theoretical framework comprised of the perspectives and contributions of multiple schools of thought across the Americas.

This theoretical framework provides an advantage perspective that makes possible a deep examination of the multiple factors involved in each of the three cases of hegemonic affects discussed in the previous chapters. For instance, as demonstrated in Chapter 3, this framework discloses fundamental aspects of the asymmetrical power dynamics that Latina fictions point out as physically and psychologically impacting

[134] These local boundaries are mainly established between the dominant schools within the field, which are Latina/o and Puerto Rican Studies in the East Coast, and Chicana/o and Mexican American Studies in the Southwest. It is pertinent to notice that the dominance of these schools makes invisible the contributions from scholars and artists from other regions in the U.S., such as the Midwest and South, and from marginalized groups within *Latinidad* such as Central Americans.

Latinas, Mexican and Latin American women under global neoliberalism. Specifically, it unveils how contemporary forms of necrophiliac neoliberalism (necrocapitalism) –which during the 1990s were mainly focalized in specific locales, such as Ciudad Júarez, Mexico, and which have evolved into an ongoing process of expansion in the new millennium– are driven by necrophiliac impulses and a snuff-porn taste, which regulate the affective systems of rage, fear, lust and seeking, organizing them in gender, racial and citizenship lines. Furthermore, this theoretical framework facilitates understanding how, under necrocapitalism, new forms of citizenship (besides national citizenships) emerge. These new citizenships arise not only as a consequence of the racial and gender distribution of labor that operates globally, but also as a consequence of how necrocapitalism organizes and regulates affective systems. As discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, this framework also facilitates identifying how the racist, misogynist and nationalistic formations that still constrain Latinas' access to Latino ethnic nationalisms by regulating lust, desire, and rage, consist in hemispheric and historical processes that evolve and change over time.

It is worthy to mention that the theoretical framework advanced in this dissertation also unveils important aspects of the socio-political value of Latina literary practices. As pointed out at the end of each analytical chapter, the novels examined explore how Latinas claim back the control of their affective systems as a way of resistance. For instance, Gaspar de Alba's novel teaches us how women in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands mobilize care, rage and hope as forms of social activism to fight against gender-specific violence. With this, the analysis of Gaspar de Alba's novel contributes to previous

analyses on the representation of female activism in Chicana fictions[135], by pointing out the affective connections that support female activism in the twenty first century. As for Álvarez's and García's novels, they teach us that recovering affective modes from a Black Atlantic heritage represents a crucial step towards the healing of the transgenerational traumatic affect caused by hetero-patriarchal nationalisms and their racialized and eroticized politics.

As mentioned in the opening pages of this dissertation, the time of publication of the analyzed novels (at the verge of the new millennium) is relevant to understand the evolution of central issues in twenty-first-century Latina fiction. These issues arise from the current context of governmentally sanctioned scapegoating and include mental health, transgenerational trauma, bi-racial identities, Afro-*Latinidad,* forms of necrocapitalism that foster immigration, and the revival of xenophobic and white-supremacist nationalisms. The novels examined in this dissertation serve as literary precedents that explore some of these central issues. For this reason, the approach proposed to their study represents a useful analytical model to examine these or similar issues in contemporary Latina fictions. All the more because this model focuses on the relationship between affect, hegemony and resistance, which is fundamental to understand current socio-political contexts characterized by highly-emotionally-charged politics.

For instance, the kind of criticism developed in this dissertation provides an analytical lens to study Latina immigration narratives that discuss the affective scars caused by traumatic experiences of immigration into the United States in different periods

[135] In *Rethinking the Borderlands: between Chicano Culture and Legal Discourse* (1995), Carl Gutiérrez-Jones argues that Chicana writers represent mourning as a force that ignites activism. He calls this kind of activism "Chicana activist mourning" (8) and observes that it responds to the pathological melancholia that Chicano authors portray in their literature. Gutiérrez-Jones describes this pathological melancholia as a "perpetual reservoir of unsatisfied mourning" (146), boosted by a U.S. legal system that prevents Chicanos of receiving reparations for their material losses.

of time. I have in mind Latina fictions, such as Reyna Grande's *The Distance Between Us: a Memoir* (2012) and *A Dream Called Home: a Memoir* (2018), or Angie Cruz's *Dominicana* (2019), which tell pre-ICE immigration stories; as well as the chronicle *Los niños perdidos* (2016) by national-Mexican Valeria Luiselli, which give voice to unaccompanied minors from Central American who arrive to the United States few years before Trump administration's zero tolerance immigration policy. The analytical lens developed in this work also represent a useful tool to elucidate how twenty-first century Latina fictions deal with transgenerational immigration trauma. In this regard, Erika Sanchez's *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter* (2017) comes to mind.

However, as already mentioned, an important contribution of this analytical lens is unveiling the connection between affect and resilience in Latina fictions. The analysis of Cristina García's *Dreaming in Cuban* (1992) argues that the protagonist of the novel, Pilar, mobilizes intuition as an affective mode to deal with transgenerational trauma. In the novel, intuition is an uncanny skill that allows Pilar to register the story of her family but cancelling the affective scars that the Cuban revolution and exile caused in her mother and grandmother. Intuition is passed on from one generation of Del Pino women to the next. Therefore, it is part of Pilar's family heritage but also of her cultural ethnic heritage, which is explicitly tied to Black spiritual practices in the Caribbean. With this movement towards blackness, *Dreaming in Cuban* not only denounces the antiblackness that prevails within normative *cubanidades*, but also points out towards Afro-*Latinidad* as the path to heal the affective scars caused by racist and misogynist nationalistic formations.

The analytical lens developed in this work, then, clearly indicates that future research on the connection between resilience, affect and Latina fiction in the twenty first century must consider Latinas' Black Atlantic heritage. Taking into consideration this

outcome, I conclude this dissertation proposing as future research direction the analysis of artistic pieces by Afro-Latina writers such as Angie Cruz's *Soledad* (2001), Dahlma Llanos-Figueroa, *Daughters of a Stone* (2009), and spoken word poetry by Arianna Brown, *Let Us Be Enough* (2019). These artistic pieces shed light on how affective dispositions are passed down from generation to generation and, therefore, tightly linked with family, heritage and memory. They also point out how despite some affective systems are excluded from dominant nationalisms in Latin America, the Spanish Caribbean and the United States when associated with a Black Atlantic heritage, excluded affective systems have survived in Afro-Latinas' bodies, families and communities, making possible to connect them with hemispheric histories of resilience and activism against colonialism, racism and misogyny. These histories represent lessons that may nourish contemporary resistance practices.

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