MARIANA ORTEGA

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THE ART OF LIVING IN LATINIDAD

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Cover art: Mariana Ortega, *Volando al otro lado de la memoria / Flying to the Other Side of Memory*. Acrylic and mixed media, 36 × 36 in. Courtesy of the artist.

Para Roberto (1937–2023),

Nohelia (1964–2021),

Martha Patricia (1962–2019), y

Kokoro (2006–2024)

Me los imagino
cruzando otros mundos.

Respirando
un aire tierno,
profunda y hondamente,
con un ritmo suave.

Si encuentran nuevos colores,
abrácenlos con cariño,
agárrenlos de las manos,
alúmbrense con ellos.

Que aquí hay menos brillo
desde que se fueron.

To practice the body differently.
LAURA E. PÉREZ, *Eros Ideologies*

I say mujer mágica, empty yourself. Shock yourself into new ways of perceiving the world.
GLORIA ANZALDÚA, "Speaking in Tongues"

I continue to think about beauty and its knowledges.
CHRISTINA SHARPE, "Beauty Is a Method"

The photograph of the missing being, as Sontag says, will touch me like the delayed rays of a star. A sort of umbilical cord links the body of the photographed thing to my gaze: light, though impalpable, is here a carnal medium, a skin I share with anyone who has been photographed.
ROLAND BARTHES, *Camera Lucida*

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0.1 Ana Mendieta, *Untitled (Glass on Face)*, 1972. Suite of six color photographs, 17¼ × 24 in. Copyright the Institute of Contemporary Art Miami.

PREFACE

Skin of Light

Porous border, living wall,
awakened scars,
as if a graffiti god
created the perfect canvas.

Let there be skin.

Wounded surface,
written with light,
blood touching invisible sand.
Exile as micro-version of death.

Carnal rays dispersing,
bouncing off eyes,
entering the here, there,
the all and nowhere of me.

An instant screaming of limits,
time that yellows and cracks.
She attempts to cross,
an early skin Silueta[1] interrupted,
touching exilic me.

This photo is carnal.

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I lost my father, Roberto Ortega; my prima hermana Nohelia Garcia; and my prima Martha Patricia Oviedo while writing this work—I dedicate it to them. *Carnalities* is partly about mourning and carrying our dead with us; this book is my way of carrying them with me.

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I.1 Ana Mendieta, *Body Tracks (Rastros Corporales)*, 1982. Performance piece; blood and tempera on paper. Copyright the Estate of Ana Mendieta Collection, LLC, and Galerie Lelong, New York.

INTRODUCTION

> This is the sacrifice that the act of creation requires,
> a blood sacrifice.
> **GLORIA ANZALDÚA**, *Borderlands / La Frontera*

I am obsessed with art, perhaps because I think that it has saved me—or, rather, that art has made me more alive. I often find myself noticing the convergences of line, texture, color, tone, light, and sound inside museums, but also in city streets, people's dwellings, and even in those spaces that have been abandoned by beauty. Joined in acts of creativity, these elements fascinate me in their capacity for relation, in their openness to intimacy—with each other and with us who perceive and mold them prompted by our fear, sorrow, and anguished joy. Ana Mendieta's *Body Tracks* (fig. I.1) captures this radiant capacity for relation. To create the work, Mendieta places her bloody hands on a wall and lowers her body, leaving the traces of her movement, of her*self*. What inspires her as she imprints her trace on the wall? The pain of exile, her refusal to ignore violence against women,[1] or her need to create? I think of Mendieta's arms as they yield to the wall, as they touch the surface, her very being connecting to a wall-turned-canvas and blood-turned-paint. This artistic performance forges multiple connections—between Mendieta and the various material elements involved in the performance, with a vexed history of Cuba-US relations, with those who witness the performance, and with the intuitions and forces that inspire her creative process. Her trace is fixed on the wall and paper and written with light in a photograph. More relations become possible, now between Mendieta and those who view the wall, paper, and the photograph, with you as you encounter the work in this book.

Mendieta's trace captured by light pierces me. I wonder how it is possible for this photograph to take me to her trace in such a way that it *affects* me, establishing a relation with me, but also with Mendieta and with that now-wounded wall. Worlds are opened, taking me to the receptivity of a wall, to the force of ritual, to the body's liquid being, to an exilic condition—all bringing forth different feelings, apertures of intimacy,

with the photograph itself and with Mendieta's art practice, with all that is entangled in these multiple aesthetic movements. These intimacies, at times inscrutable, can take me to places of joy but also of pain. I think that this is what Roland Barthes means when he says that light is a *carnal* medium, that it touches affectively, that it is registered with the entire body as transmitter and receiver of the emanations of what the image discloses.[2] The photograph is a thing of affect.[3] Barthes, quoting Susan Sontag, says that the photograph of the missing being "will touch me like the delayed rays of a star."[4] While for Barthes the carnal aspect of photography is like a skin shared between the one who sees the photograph and the person captured by the light (recall that his *Camera Lucida* is a work of mourning for his mother), I am interested in exploring how photographs in general have the capacity to affectively touch those who experience them.[5] I am also interested in the aesthetic process itself as a carnal process, whether in writing with ink, light, or any other medium.

In this book I thus write about *carnalities*, creative practices informed by the self's attunement to the material but also to the cultural, historical, communal, and the spiritual—attunement to the interlacing of the self with all these elements for the purposes of gathering possibilities for self-care, survival, and world-making, and for being and sensing anew—for movements of the otherwise. I disclose carnalities Latinxs use for opening possibilities of naming and transforming Latinx life in the face of abjection and violence, for mourning and remembering those who have perished and those who remain in perilous conditions. I do not write about the carnal that is usually juxtaposed to the spiritual but, to use Gloria Anzaldúa's terms, about the "bodymindsoul" touching and being touched by the "Earth's-body."[6] I seek creative processes, practices of art-making, modes of memory-making, and ways of mourning that make it possible for Latinxs to survive, name, construct, transform, and even find joy and love ourselves—despite a life punctured by being-in-sorrow, as so many bodies of color are. By carnalities I mean these creative processes and their results, what is forged by them, whether a sense of well-being, care, protection, inspiration, or even despair that arises through them, or an art object itself, here understood beyond the view that a work of art must be produced by a professional artist or be accepted by the institutions of the art world.

This book is also about *cross*ings—difficult, painful, sometimes impossible crossings—transformations of self within regimes of abjection,

as well as literal crossings of borders where a ferocious desert sun or an angry river stop dreams in their tracks, as they so many times do on the Mexico-US border. As we will see, in the crossings of the Mexico-US border, lines of desire for futurity and the interruption of such desire by policies, vigilantes, capitalist greed, and imperial forces intersect, *cross*, in the very body of migrants. I wish to honor those who survive and those who are lost—migrants, refugees, dreamers, risking life and limb for a different present and the possibility of a future, their painful past tethered to those limbs. The carnalities that I describe in this book are practices of the flesh in processes of being and becoming. As Anzaldúa says, "For only through the body, through the pulling of flesh, can the human soul be transformed. And for images, words, stories to have this transformative power, they must arise from the human body—flesh and bone—and from the Earth's body—stone, sky, liquid, soil."[7] I read her as calling for flesh, bone, and blood in their always already entwinement with worlds, with what they perceive. The ardent wish behind these pages is thus to discuss carnalities as connected to Latinx life in its condition of liminal flesh. I want to make visible the perilous yet luminous art of living in Latinidad.

Flesh is expansive in its meaning. In the common phrase *flesh and blood*, the term is connected to blood running in rhythmic cycles binding us to life itself. As such, it becomes an archive of experience and a site of possibilities. In a Christian context, flesh takes on different guises. In the Gospel of John, the Word is said to become flesh, which itself turns into spirit, intertwining the material and the spiritual, while in the epistles of Paul, flesh becomes synonymous with the body and its association with sinfulness. In the writings of Tertullian, flesh is understood as distinct from the body but as "earthy."[8] Flesh also denotes the mere matter of the body, its thingness. In the context of the perverse transatlantic slave trade, it is what the "captive body" turns into, onto which bloody "hieroglyphics of the flesh" are written, as Hortense Spillers so achingly writes.[9] Having become thingness, Black flesh also enters the vicious zone of nonbeing and nonrelationality, although it may still transform into a "vestibule for alternative ways of being."[10] "Flesh," then, paradoxically denotes being, nonbeing, and becoming.

In *Carnalities*, flesh is not equivalent to the material body, to spirit, or to experience as such; rather, it points to the intimacy between all of these in our everyday being-in-worlds. I am particularly interested in carnalities informed by Latina/x writers who understand themselves as pro-

ducing theories "in the flesh."[11] For Cherríe Moraga, "A theory in the flesh means one where the physical realities of our lives—our skin color, the land or concrete we grew up on, our sexual longings—all fuse to create a politic born out of necessity."[12] We can think of these offerings by Latinas/xs as *carnal theories*, theoretical engagements that go hand in hand with embodied lived experience within complex webs of relations informed by multiple social identities, communities, histories, the earthly and the spiritual. With her writing in black ink, *tlilli*, and red paint or blood, *tlapalli*, symbolic of ancient Aztec codices, Anzaldúa produces stories that she considers "blood sacrifices," that need to be tended as if they were people: "The work manifests the same needs as a person, it needs to be 'fed,' la tengo que bañar y vestir."[13] I wonder, then, about *art in the flesh*, when the "soul makes itself through the creative act," as Anzaldúa makes herself, carves her own bones, face, and heart through writing with the blood that flows from the wounds of the many cuts of her life in the in-between.[14] For her, making art is "making soul," a process that is as personal as it is communal and relational, insofar as it is fused to earthly and spiritual realms as well as to the histories that inform her cultures—a connection symbolized by one of her favorite figures, el árbol de la vida (the tree of life), in which branches, trunk, and roots symbolizing different realms intertwine.[15] Her creative practices, then, are informed by the sensuous attunement to the entanglement between bodymindsoul, earth-body, and what, inspired by her vision, we can call the spirit-body. Soul-making as entanglement-with other worlds becomes blood-writing. Anzaldúa states, "Escribo con la tinta de mi sangre" (I write with the ink that is my blood).[16]

I imagine the redness of blood, its deep, dark but vibrant red spilt over the pages of Anzaldúa's work. I follow the flash of red of her blood, this red, this beautiful color that flows, inspires, overwhelms, and sustains—as blood scares when it gushes out from a cut or when it nourishes when it travels within us. I am reminded of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, the paradigmatic thinker of the intertwining. Of the color red, he says, "This red is what it is only by connecting up from its place with other reds about it, with which it forms a constellation, or with other colors it dominates or that dominate it, that it attracts or that attract it, that it repels or that repel it."[17] What attracts or repels Anzaldúa? What surrounds her—in the midst of other bodies, human and nonhuman, earthly and beyond—such that she cannot be who she is without it? Black ink and red paint write her story—self-writing as carnality. Can soul-making be prompted by light, a

light that is heard, touched, a disclosure of the sensibilities and intimacies of the visible and the invisible?

In his later work, Merleau-Ponty famously states, "Between the alleged colors and visibles, we would find anew the tissue that lines them, sustains them, nourishes them, and which for its part is not a thing, but a possibility, a latency, and a *flesh* of things."[18] I am seduced by this "possibility" and "latency" that is flesh. In his view, *I* am flesh and things are enveloped by flesh. When I see things around me, when I see the red of the warning sign, the red of my blood, the red of your lips, I do so because of this flesh: "It is as though our vision were formed in the heart of the visible, or as though there were between it and us an *intimacy* as close as between the sea and the strand" (my emphasis).[19] This flesh is *incarnate possibility*.[20] It is not my skin, my organs, the sum of it all, but what allows for the interlacing of this body with this and that thing, with everything around it. Here Merleau-Ponty discloses a *chiasmic* relation linking my perception with objects around me, connecting objects themselves—interlacing the visible and the invisible, allowing for their reversibility. My body is an example of a chiasmic relation: I touch my hand and my hand becomes subject while the touched hand becomes object, revealing reversibility and possibility of communication.

I wish to follow these intimacies in connection to creative and artistic processes attuned to them, where to see is to touch, where "the vision and the body are tangled up in one another."[21] Yet I find in Anzaldúa's writings more expansive, living intimacies, between perceiver and perceived, between selves, worlds, relationships, histories, cultures, Indigenous myths, meanings, intuitions, images, nature, nonhuman animals, the unconscious, and the spiritual. I read her account as one of flesh*and*blood, as in the blood that carries oxygen to the lungs, heart, and all body tissues, readying them to take that precious breath that ultimately lets the self intermingle with all that is, that makes it possible for the self to exist, readying it for affect, intimacy, and a spirituality that has memory. As Laura Pérez notes, Anzaldúa offers a politics of the spiritual that is also a politics of memory, what Pérez describes as "a politics of the will to remember: To maintain in one's consciousness, to recall, and to (re)integrate a spiritual worldview about the interconnectedness of life, even if it is fragmented, circulating, as its pieces have through colonial and neocolonial relations."[22]

Crucially, Anzaldúa recognizes the irreversibilities of these colonial and neocolonial relations. Writing from the "wound" of the Mexico-US

border, she cannot ignore the cracks, the ruptures, the unlacing of perceptions and relations. She must attend to moments in which the perceiver and perceived are not reversible or on equal footing. In her view of a relational, entangled in-between, irreversibility is a constant for those who are othered within dominant regimes of intelligibility and sensibility.[23] In the notion of flesh*and*blood, blood is a reminder of woundedness. In the chiasmic borderlands, Anzaldúa, wearing her flesh as if it were a skin that touches the whole world and beyond—land, culture, myths, histories, community, earthly elements, spirit—becomes a creative, shamanic being: "theory in the flesh" becoming flesh*and*blood art. I thus read her creative practice as a *carnal aesthetics*, an aesthetics guided by flesh*and*blood, an interlacing of self and worlds in which a self becomes attuned to deep perception. It is an aesthetics that follows the mouth that, in Anzaldúa's writings, I interpret as multisensory perception, a carnal bridge between self and worlds.[24] As Anzaldúa states, "Todo pasaba por esa boca, el viento, el fuego, los mares y la Tierra" (Everything passed through that mouth, wind, fire, the seas, and the earth).[25]

Carnal aesthetics is connected to a particular understanding of "aesthetics." The term is derived from the Greek *aisthesis*, which means "perception" or "sensation." I am interested in precisely the sensuous, perceptual moments of creative practices denoted by the notion of *aisthesis*. While some scholars use *aestheSics* or *aesthesics* instead of the term *aesthetics* in order to delink the term from European conceptions of art, I opt to continue to use *aesthetics* but add *carnal* in order to highlight the sensuous, perceptual aspect of artistic practices as well as the entwinement between the body and earthly and spiritual realms.[26] I am very much interested in the decolonial and anticolonial turn in matters of art—as we will see, *Carnalities* encompasses de- and anticolonial movements and processes—but I wish to hold on to the connection to art-making entailed by the term *aesthetic*, to multiperceptual processes specifically linked to creative practices.[27] My interest, then, rests on the sensuous, multiperceptual, affective dimensions of Latinx creative practices.

Anzaldúa's carnal aesthetics inspires me to theorize a specific carnality that I name *autoarte*, an intimate, personal, yet relational creative process in which the self is *affected* by different elements in movements of self-care, self-naming, and transformation. Autoarte captures what Anzaldúa calls the "inner work" that we must do in our crossings, even when acknowledging the interconnectedness between self and others, the natural and spiritual worlds. As noted above, Anzaldúa states, "Todo

pasaba por esa boca" (Everything passed through that mouth). There is no escaping all the sea, wind, earth, and fires that come through one's mouth, and that consequently affect the self in a personal, intimate way. Our very bodies and selves are affected. While our bodies are porous and thus entangled with other bodies, human and nonhuman, as well as with the material and beyond, there is still the closeness, vividness of one's experience. As Anzaldúa writes in the preface of her *Borderlands / La Frontera*, a book that has a heartbeat, that needs bathing and dressing,[28] "This book, then, speaks of my existence. My preoccupations with the inner life of the Self, and with the struggle of that Self amidst adversity and violation; with the confluence of primordial images; with the unique positioning consciousness takes at these confluent streams; and with my almost instinctive urge to communicate, to speak, to write about life on the borders, life in the shadows."[29] Autoarte grasps the moments of this intimacy, the inner work but without a metaphysical commitment to a detached, self-sufficient subjectivity.

As a key praxis of carnal aesthetics, autoarte intimately affects, afflicts, and quietly stirs the self that intertwines with worlds. It is in the quiet, says Tina M. Campt, that we may find "quiet frequencies of possibility" as well as of refusal.[30] While she centers the quiet in photographic images, we can regard the quiet within carnal aesthetics in general, which direct us inward while never losing existing, past, and future complex webs of relations. Crucially, a question that arises for Campt is how to think of these movements of quiet in relation to futurity for Black life given a past and present of brutality and sorrow. I am also moved by this question; I wish to ask it in the context of Latinx lives. Campt helps us consider answers to this urgent question when she suggests that a future is not only to be had in terms of actions and political resistance but also in listening for it in "other, less likely places."[31] She finds futural possibilities through *listening* to photographs, a method of "recalibrating vernacular photographs as quiet, quotidian practices that give us access to the affective registers through which these images enunciate alternate accounts of their subjects."[32] Through this careful listening to images, we can find worthy subjects and a present that makes futures while also tarrying with the past, without it stopping us in our tracks. As Kevin Quashie also reminds us, "The inner life is not apolitical or without social value, but neither is it determined entirely by publicness. In fact, the interior—dynamic and ravishing—is a stay against the dominance of the social world; it has its own sovereignty."[33]

Quashie underscores the vibrancy and importance of Black interiority. He does so in order to show that, contrary to public discourses that render Blackness as always in the mode of political struggle and resistance, there is a full range of interiority, of quiet, in Black life. This is a mode that he considers "expansive, voluptuous, creative, impulsive, and dangerous."[34] Inspired by Hortense Spillers's worry that public discourse covers up Black social and human differentiation, Quashie wishes to bring forth the texturedness and multiplicity of Black experience that is found in an aesthetics of quiet.[35] Importantly, his aim is not to undermine political resistance or the multiple relationalities informing Black life: "The quiet subject is a subject who surrenders, a subject whose consciousness is not only shaped by struggle but also by revelry, possibility, the wildness of inner life. . . . The outer world cannot be avoided or ignored, but one does not only have to yield to its vagaries. One can be quiet."[36] A theorization of autoarte is in part an attempt to draw attention to some of the quiet moments of Anzaldúa's aesthetics and of carnal aesthetics in general. Nevertheless, in what follows we will find quiet as well as resonant, sonorous moments in which Latinx carnal aesthetics becomes explicitly resistant.[37]

Carnalities discloses creative practices that avoid acquiescing to the embalming practices of normative, colonial, and neocolonial subjects, imaginaries, and structures. Through sensual attunement to worlds, elements, histories, and cultures, selves of color paradoxically halt time in order to move forward. They destabilize and even negate the temporal and ontological fixity assigned to them that turns them into always already a type and an essence. In so doing, they become futural as it were, opening possibilities for creating themselves and for living otherwise. While destabilizing the rapacious colonial eye within and without is difficult—and sometimes impossible—carnalities do not constitute mere theoretical desires. Through conocimiento (Anzaldúa), and erotics (Anzaldúa, Audre Lorde, Chela Sandoval), bodies of color that are also bodies of sorrow tend to themselves in quiet and sonorous ways, opening new possibilities: incredible feats of survival, self-construction, self-transformation, and joy- and love-seeking. Here I wish to highlight the moments when they do it through carnal creative practices. While the early chapters of the book center Anzaldúa's creative writing practice, most of the chapters pay attention to "light-writing" by Latinx themselves or by those interested in disclosing Latinx experience in difficult crossings. I thus seek flesh*and*-blood art written with light, encounters with carnal photography through

which Latinxs nurture our inner lives, transform ourselves, honor our living, and mourn and remember our dead. In so doing, we stand in the face of woundedness: not forgetting it or making a spectacle out of it—the continuation of the spectacle of race that both saddens and entertains the eye trained by coloniality—but remembering that scarred bodies exceed their wounds.[38]

In times in which to be a body of color is to be a body of sorrow, utterly exposed to the whims and the cruelties of racist imaginaries and racist selves who are bolder in their enactment of hate, I move toward an analysis that goes beyond discursive engagements with theories of racialization, oppression, and resistance. In the photograph we find what is beyond the sayable or even the visible. While the photographic image has been primarily understood by its indexicality and by its connection to the regimes of representation and ocularity, here I wish to tell another story of the photograph: its connection to affectivity, its story as an "archive of feeling" that has the possibility of disclosing what exceeds understanding, especially in moments of rupture.[39] Photographic images become enunciations, articulations, presentations, and affirmations, what Rolando Vázquez calls a move from the logic of representation to the relationality of reception.[40] Photographs turn into expressions of who we are and who we want to become-with. In *Carnalities* I explore the nexus of the photographic image, the experience of Latinxs, and carnalities in a critical phenomenological and anticolonial register in order to tell stories with light that capture how creative practices open possibilities for a different present and future, as fragile or precarious that future may be for those whose lives are punctuated by practices of degradation and deadly othering. Writings with light can write many a story. What stories can light write when its radiations touch the lives of Latinxs whose experience is, as late Latinx queer critic José Esteban Muñoz describes, one of *feeling brown*?[41] As we will see, chapter 5 takes up Muñoz's views of feeling brown and brown commons in the context of the flowing of brownness in *cross*-ings of the Mexico-US border.

With this work I wish to honor those who lost their breath in their perilous journeys to this land in the North believed to overflow with golden opportunity. I also want to remember those who crossed, not to the land of opportunity but to the land of icy infernal cages in detention facilities, brutal working conditions, and constant denigration. I did a crossing of my own in hellish circumstances, but it cannot compare to

the ghastly and ghostly crossing of an angry river, of a hellish desert with its deadly heat and animals cravenly roaming, waiting for fallen dreamers. With this flesh*and*blood theory, I want to hold all those Latinxs who made it through their crossings yet find themselves being-in-sorrow, facing the constant shame and humiliations of a life in which your skin or your accent or your ways of being are a problem. I am not deluded about the political and moral efficacy of academic production, especially as it concerns the aesthetic that was so long marked by disinterestedness. I know the limits of books and articles, especially in a society that moves farther away from intellectual discourse and in which education itself becomes commodified. Yet I think of Anzaldúa's blood-writing, Audre Lorde's poetry clothed in *eros*, and, more recently, of Natalie Diaz's postcolonial poem of love and water:

> I am fluent in water. Water is fluent in my body—
> It spoke my body into existence.[42]

I seek to understand the power of art and creative practices moved by a (our) fluency to take in worlds—to let wind, fire, the seas, and the earth through our mouths—in order not only to survive but also to perceive anew, to change our lives, even to find love and joy.

METHODOLOGIES FOR A CARNAL AESTHETICS

In this project I take a multifaceted methodological approach in which Latina/x feminisms, critical phenomenology, aesthetics, and visual studies intertwine to disclose Latinx carnalities, different flesh*and*blood, creative practices of self-care, survival, resistance, transformation, and renewal that register the intertwining of perceiver and perceived, selves and worlds. Since my love and joy affair with photography started long ago, waiting silently for me to feel-with my love of Latina/x feminisms and phenomenology, I highlight photography, the writing with light. In his luminous work *Camera Lucida*, Barthes writes, "As Spectator I was interested in Photography only for 'sentimental' reasons; I wanted to explore it not as a question (a theme) but as a wound: I see, I feel, hence I notice, I observe, and I think."[43] I have been pierced by this comment since

the first time I read it many years ago. It has helped me understand my love for photography, why I *feel* photographs—it has led me to these pages.

Carnal Light

Despite the photograph's historically revered function as indexical, as pointing out that "the thing has been there," for me the most salient feature of the photograph is that it stings—that it affectively touches, brings about joy, sorrow, fear, anger, lust, mourning, beautiful and frightful feelings.[44] In her damning criticisms of photography in her now-classic *On Photography*, Susan Sontag also recalls how a photograph "cut" her deeply and sharply as nothing else she had seen before.[45] It is precisely this aspect and ability of the photograph to affectively wound that guides my discussion in *Carnalities*. Here I understand the photograph as carnal, in its flesh*and*bloodness. Taking photographs is itself a carnal process. In his important discussion on art in "Eye and Mind," Merleau-Ponty privileges painting and briefly criticizes photography by recalling Rodin's views on the importance of movement. He states, "instantaneous glimpses, unstable attitudes petrify movement, as is shown by so many photographs in which an athlete-in-motion is forever frozen."[46] While Merleau-Ponty himself privileges painting and does not appreciate the photograph due to its supposed inability to capture movement, in this book I wish to open the space for the photograph's carnality, to find its umbilical cord, its vital connection to those who see it.

A certain kind of alchemy happens with photographs—light turns to affect, transforming pieces of matter into what matters to us, touching us as if they had hands, having the power to caress us lovingly, or to rip us apart, a slow flaying of our skin. My first reading of the meaning of photography as "writing with light"[47] was itself a touching moment—imagining rays of light first calmly, then feverishly writing on metal or paper covered with magic crystals . . . and worlds, people, objects, nature appearing, to be held by us, embalmed for us, as André Bazin would say.[48] According to Bazin, photography's arrival frees painting to be whatever it wants to be, no longer having to represent the world objectively. Painting acquires wings to experiment and move away from the quest of perfect resemblance and realistic representation, moving toward the "aesthetic," and what, according to Bazin, satisfies our need for illusion. Photography, in turn, becomes tied to the object it represents—it itself becomes embalmed as it were.[49]

Almost as quickly as it emerges, the story of photography turns vicious. Due to its evidentiary status, photography becomes the technology that goes hand in hand with the "science" of classifying beings. Photography begins to embalm people in ways beyond freezing them in a slice of time, as it is enlisted in the creation of types of beings whose "essence" becomes marked by inferiority, criminality, childishness, bestiality, abnormality, madness, immorality, and all other manner of inhumanity. The operations of photography become one with colonialist ventures in which the eye of the photographer and of the camera yield an imaginary that includes many variations of othered beings[50] such as "savages" in the corridors of our imagination.[51] This further serves as an "ontological catalyst," *producing* particular kinds of othered beings[52] and becoming indispensable for the new "sciences."[53] As such, photographic practices bolster the reign of ocularity that regards the eye as arbiter of knowledge and becomes the murderous colonizing gaze. They consequently produce aesthetic ignorance and aesthetic violence, the violence and ignorance resulting from aesthetic practices that create imaginaries reinforcing false visions of already othered beings. As a catalyst for material violence against othered bodies, the photographic image, like the word or the knife, cuts through the layers of our skin and exposes our vulnerability, our woundability.

Whether in its ability to connect affectively to a being for whom we feel tenderness or in its ability to create disgust through practices of othering, the photograph becomes a *carnal medium*: "A sort of umbilical cord links the body of the photographed thing to my gaze: light, though impalpable, is here a carnal medium, a skin I share with anyone who has been photographed."[54] In *Carnalities*, I interpret this carnal aspect of the photograph as connected to the photograph's ability to pierce us at both a personal and structural level. The piercing of a photograph is at times tender, loving but it can also be jagged, painful. It can instigate violence, especially when operating in the context of oppressive imaginaries hard at work in the creation of "otherness" in need to be debased, abjected, or eliminated. This "otherness" is not merely an abstract idea or a constructed image of fantastic beings. It pertains living, breathing bodies of color who are shamed, persecuted, harmed, maimed, or killed. Yet this light practice that is used for violence, that cuts deeply and fatally as if with a sharp knife, may also prompt reconfigurations of self and alternative senses of relationality, of being-with and being-in-worlds. This understanding of the photograph as carnal rests partly on a notion of vision in

which the eye is not the principal actor, and in which vision, as Anzaldúa and Merleau-Ponty understand, is connected to multiple senses. Together with mouthly perception, the carnal in photography opens the writing with light to practices of self-nurture, affirmation of difference, self-naming, self-transformation, relationality, community, and to practices of counter-visuality that may destabilize the coloniality of the eye that persists in classifying, typing, and essentializing. *Carnalities* seeks the moments in which the carnality of the photography allows for selves of the in-between to move from being objects of monstrosity, criminality, inhumanity, and curiosity fixed by light, to fluid subjects touched by and writing themselves with light in skin-like surfaces.

Latinx, Latinidad, Latinities, and Feeling Brown

Carnalities aims at disclosing the way that aesthetic production, particularly through the medium of photography, expands our understanding of the lived experience of Latinidad at various junctures—in bodily, earthly, and watery crossings, in memorializing those lost in these perilous crossings and those who crossed and yet continue to remain in peril and being-in-sorrow. But I cannot assume that *Latinidad* and *Latinx* are uncontroversial identity categories, because of the tremendous heterogeneity of the group that these terms are supposed to capture—for example, immigrants from Latin America and the Caribbean; those born in the United States but with ties to Latin America and the Caribbean; mixed-race individuals of European, African, and Asian origins; as well as those embodying a multiplicity of intersections of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion, and nationality with ties to North, Central, and South America and the Caribbean.

Various terms such as *Hispanic*, *Latino*, *Latino/a*, *Latina/o*, *Latin@*, *Latinx*, and *Latine* are used to designate individuals of Latin American and Caribbean descent in the United States. The latter two labels have been recently introduced to destabilize the binary that informs traditional understandings of gender, a binary that María Lugones connects to a colonial imposition of gender.[55] *Latinx* is also used to counter the dichotomous gendering of the Spanish language itself. Yet it is a term that has been highly criticized due to what some regard as an imposition of an American academic perspective on discourses regarding identity. *Latine* has thus become the preferred choice for those who wish to avoid this imposition and who consider it an easier term to pronounce for those who

speak Spanish. Importantly, the *x* in *Latinx*, a label that first appeared on the internet in the early 2000s, derives its strength from its inclusivity of various genders and sexualities. Nonetheless, Alan Pelaez Lopez reads the *x* as a scar that points to anti-Blackness, settler colonialism, feminicide, and the inarticulation of the Latin American experience.[56] Claudia Milian, however, takes *"LatinX"* as an "expounding concept" and understands the *X* as placeholder for different ways of being and different trajectories and movements of Latinx life.[57] This is the sense in which I interpret *Latinx*, while also understanding that in a different context—for example, a Spanish-speaking context—the term *latine* is preferable. Given that I am writing in a US academic context and value the term's undermining of binaristic gender and sexual categories and its potential for expansiveness, here I use *Latinx*.

Another term used to capture the groups of people that *Carnalities* is concerned about is the umbrella term *Latinidad*. This widely used pan-ethnic term is problematic if deployed to forge a unity out of the tremendous heterogeneity of US people hailing from or having ties with Mexico, Central and South America, and the Caribbean as it is understood by some as not expansive enough to include Indigeneity and Blackness. Moreover, some scholars regard *Latinidad* as a construction that caters to neoliberalism and capitalism.[58] In short, *Latinidad* is riddled with several problems, including unacceptable "internal exclusions."[59] In the following I take a brief excursion into how some theorists have taken up the crucial task of reconfiguring the notion of Latinidad to expand its capaciousness and complexity.

Cristina Beltrán interprets *Latinidad* as a heterogeneous process that must always "remain a question."[60] This understanding of the term is influenced by her critical reception to the idea that there is "Latino" unity in the political sphere, leading her to reject the familiar metaphor of the "sleeping giant" standing for the now largest minority of the United States. Beltrán points out that there is indeed an internal logic to the appeal to the unity of Latinos under the pan-ethnic umbrella term *Latinidad* as this appeal can be strategically deployed by activists to secure federal rights. She also understands that there is also an important emotional and experiential appeal to the use of the term, especially in response to the highly xenophobic and racist US environment. Yet she wants to let the sleeping giant lie—or rather, her view is that there is no sleeping giant. She suggests that we give up trying to make unity out of diversity and that we regard Latinidad as "a site of permanent political contest," "something we *do* rather than something we *are*,"[61] and thus avoid the traps of what

she terms "unitary inclusiveness" that has been characteristic of Latino politics in the United States.

While taking a similar route as Beltrán insofar as she is interested in the *process* of "Latining" rather than *categories* of identity, Claudia Milian wishes to find an even more "copious" understanding of "Latin" that is able to go beyond the problems engendered by the notion of Latinidad and other terms used to describe what she calls "Latin" experiences that are prevalent in Latina/o studies.[62] In her view, the term *Latinidad* is still committed to an "ontological grammar" informed by the white/brown binary that does not allow for the possibility of including, following Ed Morales, the "Latin surplus": that is, other ways of being "Latin" that intersect with brownness, dark brownness as well as Blackness, that are not captured by the existing terms.[63] "Morales's overview of Latin surplus," Milian writes, "cannot be wiped off the Latinidad map. It rightfully lacks the social scripting of one Latino, Latina or Latin-American subject as well as a single unit of cultural and geopolitical articulation."[64] Her interest thus lies not so much in "who" Latinxs are but on how they are Latined. Most importantly, she wishes to bring to the fore discussions of groups that have been heretofore ignored, not sufficiently discussed or not captured by the current theoretical understandings offered in Latina/o studies, for example Central Americans, dark brown and Black individuals who are not from the Caribbean, and other "unstable Latined lives."[65] She thus urges us to think about "Latinities."

This development of a trend away from more traditional understandings of categories of identity is philosophically important precisely because of the difficulties associated with firmly rooted theoretical commitments to notions of belonging and unity, whether in individual or panethnic categories. Crucially, what follows from these strategies in which Latinidad is turned into a verb or a process, a Latining, is that the affective dimensions of being Latined are now of a piece with other processes, whether aesthetic, cultural, economic, or historical. One of the principal points of the carnalities that I propose in this work is precisely to show how creative practices disclose affective links and interweavings of Latinx peoples and various worlds. Through these affective links we can understand and name ourselves as well as forge connections with those similar and different from us, not merely in flights of imagination but through specific aesthetic practices.

This affective link in the doing of Latinidad/Latinities is particularly important for Muñoz. His writings on "feeling brown" point to his

deep attunement to the affective dimension of Latinidad. Finding the term *Hispanic* "repellent," he refuses to use it and, instead, opts for *Latinidad*, although his thinking about feeling brown is already a movement away from the notion of identity categories. As he states, "Feeling brown, the idea of feeling brown, is my attempt to begin to conceptualize this mode of belonging that I conveniently index elsewhere as the concept of Latinidad."[66] Like Beltrán and Milian, Muñoz engages in the arduous task of finding a way to capture the heterogeneity and complexity of US Latinx experience. In *The Sense of Brown*, I see him struggling to capture something that connects those who are put under the umbrella of Latinidad. He searches for something that differently racialized people have in common without resorting to homogenization and easily prescribed politics. He is affectively pierced by plays and performances by artists such as Ricardo Bracho, Nilo Cruz, Luis Alfaro, Nao Bustamante, and Carmelita Tropicana. In the pages of *The Sense of Brown*, the aesthetic becomes thoroughly carnal insofar as these artistic performances touch him affectively, like Barthes says the *punctum* of a photograph may puncture us.[67]

Through his experience and theorization of the performances, Muñoz captures a shared *feeling brown*. This is a "structure of feeling" that, according to him, is "born out of a shared sense of harm."[68] It captures "different modes of affective struggle," "a certain vulnerability to the violence of property, finance, and to capital's overarching mechanisms of domination," "an 'apartness together' through sharing the status of being a problem," and a "manera de ser, a way of being in the world."[69] There is a Heideggerian tint in Muñoz's characterization of feeling brown as a "being-with."[70] I thus read his account of feeling brown as pointing to a *being-in-sorrow*, an existential characteristic of those who are brown. As an existential characteristic, it captures a way of being in the world, not an essential feature of those under the umbrella of Latinidad. This way of being in the world is attuned to a condition and relationality marked by sorrow, anxiety, not being-at-ease, and the violence felt by bodies of color.[71] What Muñoz captures is the affectivity and vulnerability of what it means to be brown, the way of being in the world captured by those plays and performances that, in turn, touch him and alert him to what he shares with others who feel brown. It is in this sense that the aesthetic becomes carnal for him. Artworks—in his case, performances—reveal not mere sensation or a recording of the experiences of the senses, but the perception-affect nexus in which eye, hand, mouth, ear, skin work in unison to reveal feeling brown.

Despite differences in the rethinking of Latinidad offered by Beltrán, Milian, and Muñoz, these thinkers are motivated by problems associated by the appeal to categories of identity or pan-identity. As we have seen, such problems—flattening of heterogeneity, internal exclusions, unfounded appeals to political unity, and others—do not do justice to the multiplicity of the Latinx community and the variegated ways of being Latinx. As we have seen, for most of these thinkers, the right conceptual move is precisely to step away from identity as a category with essentialist presuppositions, hence their appeal to process and to a Deleuzian rhizomatic approach. My own position shares the same concerns that these theorists have regarding the pitfalls of identity claims, except that I do not regard the notion of identity itself as necessarily tied to essentialist claims, as those who appeal to a Deleuzian approach often do. That is, to appeal to identity does not confine one to an essentialist position or to a sharp dichotomy between views that appeal to identity and those that must jettison such claims. I find appeals to identity to continue to be extremely important for existential and political reasons, especially for members of marginalized communities. As I have previously argued, it is necessary to rethink notions of identity and identity politics precisely in ways that reject essentialist, narrow understanding of these terms.[72] For me, Latinidad constitutes an appeal to identity, but one in which such identity is understood in its complexity, including its process of formation, thus my interest in recent reconfigurations of the term. We can thus think of *Latinidad* as both a capacious noun picking up an incredibly diverse group of individuals as well as a verb that points to historical and cultural processes, and, as Muñoz teaches us, affective components. In *Carnalities*, I follow Muñoz in this momentum leading to a sense of who we are—those of us who are and feel brown—while also considering Latinidad as process, in Milian's sense of Latining. Latinidad/Latinities is something that we are as members of our incredibly diverse community and something we do in the context of how historical, cultural, economic, and affective registers influence our lives.

In *Carnalities* I discuss *our* feeling brown and the skin of the photograph. I am interested in how the photograph touches my own skin and tells me about me and others like and unlike me, who are nevertheless part of a brown commons, those whom Muñoz sees as capable of constructing new worlds and as dreamers of "other planets."[73] The feeling brown as a being-in-sorrow that is shared by people of color points to affective dimensions of Latining that, as Milian seeks, are inclusive of

differently racialized bodies of color. That is, the brown commons that is made through feeling brown is not dominated by an account of *mestizaje* that has traditionally informed discussions of Latinidad and is inclusive of Indigeneity, Blackness, and different shades of brownness. In *Carnalities*, the crossings of Mexicans, Central Americans, Caribbeans, and South Americans create a photographic archive of feeling brown. This archive discloses the intimacies among bodies of color with the earth- and spirit-bodies. It also uncovers the very carnalities or creative practices that these bodies of color enact in movements of self-naming and transformation. *Carnalities* is punctuated by a being-in-sorrow that, nevertheless, also points to the resilience, aliveness, and joy of those who feel brown.

A Differential Hermeneutics of Love

Informed by views of Latinidad allowing for multiplicity, heterogeneity, and the processes of being Latined as well as the gestures, enactments, and theorizations of Latinx affective life, *Carnalities* has a certain desire (if books have desires as images have wants),[74] to capture the affective life of Latinidad in the context of our creative endeavors, a desire that I also very much find in the works of Anzaldúa and in the methodology of Chela Sandoval. While the work of Anzaldúa takes center stage in part I of *Carnalities*, Sandoval's theorization of a decolonial erotics as elaborated in her key work, *The Methodology of the Oppressed*, explicitly informs the discussion in chapter 3 and is implicit throughout *Carnalities*. In the following, I provide a brief discussion of her sense of differential consciousness and of erotics that moves my own thinking on aesthetics.

Sandoval envisions love as a technology of social transformation informing her methodology for emancipation from what she takes are neocolonizing forces of postmodernism.[75] At the heart of this methodology is the development of a notion of consciousness inspired by Anzaldúa's mestiza consciousness, a *differential consciousness* that allows subjects to shift technologies of liberation depending on their positions in different maps of power. Sandoval describes differential consciousness as mobile, tactical, kaleidoscopic, and as making possible for the subject to break with dominant ideologies even from within such ideologies: "The differential represents the variant; its presence emerges out of correlations, intensities, junctures, crises" and it has the capacity to "de- and recenter, given the forms of power to be moved."[76] In this book, I enhance the no-

tion of differential consciousness by engaging it in the context of carnalities of Latinidad that are mobilized at different junctures and crossings of Latinx experience. More specifically, I envision carnalities as tactical aesthetic movements of differential consciousness in response to the dominant, hegemonic eye informed by coloniality, the ongoing, present forms of subjugation that are the result of acts of colonialism.[77]

While Sandoval's methodology recognizes that differential consciousness is inextricably connected to aesthetic practices, she nevertheless does not center works of art in her discussion. Yet she states that "differential consciousness is linked to whatever is not expressible through words. It is accessed through poetic modes of expression: gestures, music, images, sounds, words, that plummet or rise through signification to find some void—some no-place—to claim their due."[78] Like Anzaldúa, Sandoval is deeply aware of the generative power of art that yields not merely opportunities for survival but also possibilities for self-creation, transformation, and perceiving anew. She grasps the way differential consciousness senses, reacts, and learns from modes of disorientation in worlds where being brown means being a problem. She understands how such consciousness is affectively tied to social reality, thus capable of reading and sensing maps of power and tactically engaging in different practices to traverse them.

One of the most important and interesting moves that Sandoval makes in her methodology of the oppressed and that informs *Carnalities* is her joining differential consciousness to a hermeneutics of love. In her view, love becomes a *punctum*, a piercing of the self that calls our attention, wounds, or inspires us, a point that, as discussed above, Barthes finds in the photograph. Love also leads the self to a Coatlicue state or a state of confusion, fear, and paralysis that, according to Anzaldúa, precedes transformation and crossing to other ways of being and knowing. Love as *punctum* and the Coatlicue state take the self to an "abyss," opening the possibility of being freed from dominant knowledges and ways of being and sensing. Following both Barthes and Anzaldúa, Sandoval describes love as a "gentle hemorrhage of being" and a painful crossing that opens the possibility for "a passage from language to process, a passage from narrative to an erotics of being."[79]

No longer confined to discourse and to established meanings, this erotics of being becomes a sensory realm in which the self affectively maps herself, becomes attuned to her environments and all the relations

within them—textures not previously felt stand out suggesting new movements and relations of things; sounds lose their monotony, calling for new rhythms; eyes, nose, ears, hands, all working together in disclosures of possibilities of being and sensing beyond the colonial norm. Audre Lorde, one of the most important and inspiring theorists of the erotic, connects the erotic to a lifeforce of women that calls for a reclamation of joy in all endeavors—an intensity of feeling and doing.[80] Sandoval, however, takes erotics as a "drifting" of the self toward "that place of life that survives outside and between narrative forms, where meanings live in some free, yet marked and wounded space, a site of shifting."[81] Shifting here has to do with inner work and with changing established, hegemonic, linguistic signifiers as well as ways of being-in, sensing, and reconstructing the world, hence Sandoval's vision of these erotics as embodying a "decolonial love." For her, the methodology of the oppressed becomes a decolonizing theory and method of renewal, social reconstruction, and emancipation. In *Carnalities* I read her decolonial erotics, the sensuous and affective aspect of emancipation, as connected to flesh*and*blood intimacies, to the intertwining of the self and all that is, an in-between realm where there is a multiplicity of touchings between selves and other selves with their various histories and desires, and between self and worlds—a carnal aesthetics turned carnal erotics in order to name and love ourselves, to carry our dead, and to honor those of us who remain in precarious conditions after treacherous crossings.

A Latina/x, Critical Feminist Phenomenological Aesthetics

The remaining methodological approach that informs *Carnalities* is critical phenomenology. In both its transcendental and existential modes, phenomenology is characterized by a description and investigation of first-person experience that has a critical dimension. The meaning of "critical" in a critical approach to phenomenology varies. I am interested in critical approaches to phenomenology that explicitly take up questions related to social identities such as race, class, sex, gender, ability, and nationality.[82] In its transcendental mode as theorized predominantly by Edmund Husserl, phenomenology is a rigorous method that aims for certainty about the structures of consciousness. In its existential mode as theorized most famously by Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Edith Stein, Frantz Fanon, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, phenomenology

moves away from the quest for apodictic certainty about structures of consciousness and moves toward an explanation of the various existential structures of subjectivity praxically embedded in the world as well as a description of key existential notions such as anxiety, fear, death, and authenticity.

Phenomenologists also study everyday perceptual practices—for example, the contradictory movement of presence and absence that characterizes operations of vision insofar as eyes are supposed to see what is really there while, at the same time, they can only capture objects from certain perspectives. Dyads of presence/absence and visibility/invisibility are thus at work in visual perception. What is perceived as given is never completely captured; it never appears in its totality. As we intentionally direct ourselves, for example to a table, what appears is one side of the table or whatever side, depending on the perceiver's location. What allows us to understand that object toward which we are directing our gaze is a background of intelligibility, and, as we will see in this work, of sensibility that makes it possible for us to engage with the perceived in specific ways in the first place.

These perplexing possibilities of presence/absence and visibility/invisibility have been explained by way of the famous figure/ground organization according to which psychologists and various phenomenologists tackle difficulties of perception. What is striking is how these relationships of being/not being, visibility/invisibility, figure/ground can be engaged by phenomenologists to explain not only perceptions of daily objects such as tables, but also of human beings themselves, especially in a context of *othering*—for example, in the fabrication of othered beings that must be abjected, undermined, or eradicated, as well as in the construction of whiteness as the dominant "orientation."[83] That is, the very daily processes of perception, in particular perception of visible differences, are part and parcel of this othering characterized by the objectifying and naturalizing of difference. They play a central role in processes of othering as explained by contemporary phenomenologists. Explaining perceptual practices to show how human beings themselves are perceived in objectifying and naturalizing ways due to their visible differences is, in my view, one of the most important projects of a phenomenology that we now understand as *critical* phenomenology. According to Lisa Guenther, one of the first explicit proponents of a critical phenomenology, this critical approach to phenomenology offers a method that, while rooted in first-person experience, does not privilege transcendental subjectivity,

a type of subjectivity that is not relational. Yet she criticizes Husserlian phenomenology for not being critical enough and calls for a critical phenomenological analysis of contingent historical and social structures that shape experience in a "quasi-transcendental way"—structures such as white supremacy, patriarchy, and heteronormativity.[84] Gayle Salamon also calls for a critical approach to phenomenology but takes the critical aspect of critical phenomenology as entailing a reflection of the structural conditions from which it emerges and a description of "what it sees in order to see it anew."[85]

I take seriously Guenther's and Salamon's critical approach to phenomenology. I am also moved by Salamon's urgent call for describing what we see in order to see it anew. It leads me to search how those living under conditions of precarity and oppression find ways to grasp the world and themselves differently, with many eyes, mouths, and ears. In my previous work, *In-Between: Latina Feminist Phenomenology, Multiplicity, and the Self*, my approach entails analyses of existential structures as well as descriptions of the very experience of marginalization *from the point of view* of those who occupy that location. In *Carnalities*, I continue to follow a critical phenomenological approach, in this case in relation to perceptual processes, especially those of racialization, as well as in connection to artistic practices in order to offer a critical phenomenological aesthetics that centers Latinidad.[86]

Informed by Guenther's and Salamon's concerns about the critical aspect of a phenomenological investigation as well as by my previous work on Latina feminist phenomenology where I develop criteria for Latina feminist phenomenology,[87] I take a method of critical phenomenology as involving (1) reflexivity about phenomenology's own operations and aims; (2) a critical examination and critique of major notions or structures as they operate in classical phenomenological texts; (3) a description of lived experience from the point of view of marginalized selves; (4) an engagement with pressing societal issues connected to the entwinement of different social identities such as race, class, gender, and ability; (5) attention to ruptures of everydayness that may lead to new understandings of how social identities affect first-person lived experience; (6) emphasis on concrete, embodied everyday experience; (7) attunement as to how the experience selves from particular social identities are covered up in classical phenomenological analyses; (8) recognition of the multiplicity and heterogeneity of the experience of those embodying specific social identities; (9) critical deployment of experiential knowledge in order to

contest or reimagine established notions of the particular social identities being described; (10) attunement to perceptual registers that open possibilities of sensing otherwise; and (11) analysis of possibilities of self-transformation and self-refashioning within the specific context or social identities being described. *Carnalities* expands this vision of critical phenomenology by centering the aesthetic practices of Latinidad/Latinities and by being guided by Latina/x critical feminist phenomenology.

I take one of the central aims of critical phenomenologies as engaged description,[88] not pure description—that is, as attempts to describe everyday experience for the purpose of using such explanations to understand and alleviate pressing societal problems such as racism, sexism, homophobia, and ableism. While I am mindful that description does not constitute explanation,[89] the discussions of Latinx experience I provide in *Carnalities* include descriptions of specific instances of Latinx experience that provide important clues as to how Latinx selves engage in creative practices. I am particularly interested in critical phenomenological discussions of perceptual practices of othering, and in the possibility of countering them in creative acts of self-naming and transformation of communal imaginaries with the purpose of acknowledging, paying respect, and honoring those Latinx selves that have become invisible, have been demonized in the current US American context, or have perished in the *cross*ing of the Mexico-US border.

THE CHAPTERS

Carnalities is divided in two parts, "Carnal Crossings: Eye and Mouth" and "Border Crossings: Sorrow and Memory." Part I, "Carnal Crossings: Eye and Mouth," first centers the visual and progresses to multisensory perception symbolized by the figure of the mouth. In chapter 1 a critical phenomenological analysis of perception of visual difference reveals that seeing race is informed by tacit, embodied habits as well as an intimate connection between perception and affect; that is, seeing race amounts to being affected in particular ways. The colonial eye thus learns to see in such a way that it "cannot" see or feel about bodies of color differently from hegemonic, racist views. Yet an interval of hesitation as explained by Alia Al-Saji is shown as opening possibilities for reconfiguring habits and thus for shifting racist views and for countering the internalized hegemonic, colonial gaze of racialized selves. The movement to mouthly

perception or multisensory perception that captures the entwinement between the perceiver and perceived becomes explicit in chapter 2 in a discussion of Anzaldúa's account of conocimiento as affective mapping that translates into a *carnal aesthetics*. While the first two chapters center the transition from eye to mouth, leading to a discussion of the processes informing Anzaldúa's aesthetics, chapter 3 elaborates on the Anzaldúan notion of border arte and introduces an analysis specifically connected to carnal photography, introducing the notion of autoarte as a key carnality of carnal aesthetics. *Autoarte* is shown as a deeply intimate, personal creative process in which the self becomes perceptually and thus affectively attuned to the earthly and the spiritual for the purposes of self-care, self-naming, and self-transformation. The photographic practice and mobile decolonial erotics of Chicana photographer Laura Aguilar are discussed as an example of autoarte through which Aguilar names and transforms herself as well as lovingly intertwines with earth- and spirit-bodies, her body thus becoming a carnal crossing.

Moving from considerations of the body as carnal crossing (as shown by Aguilar's carnal photography) to other earth-water crossings, part II, "Border Crossings: Sorrow and Memory," centers photographic projects on the *cross*ings of the Mexico-US border. In this part of *Carnalities*, photographs show their constructive possibilities in terms of enacting *aesthetic unsettlement*, *aesthetic memories*, and *carnalities of mourning and remembrance*. Chapter 4 introduces the notion of carnalities in the context of *listening* to photographs from the Pima County Office of the Medical Examiner as well as by registering aesthetic unsettlement as *sonic rupture* in the photographs and aural compositions of *Border Cantos* by Richard Misrach and Guillermo Galindo. Bodies of color are shown as bodies of sorrow who become carnal archives in which histories of violence are recorded. Chapter 5 introduces migrant caravans in terms of the notion of flowing brownness. Bodies of color are discussed as sites in which lines of movement prompted by desire and futurity and lines of blockage of such desire *cross* or intersect. The photographs of Verónica Gabriela Cárdenas become an archive of *feeling brown*, a structure of feeling that, according to Muñoz, describes the shared sense of harm that characterizes Latinidad. They also forge a multiracial *brown commons* composed of migrants from Mexico, Central and South America, and the Caribbean. While the first two chapters in this section underscore crossings to the Mexico-US border, chapter 6 is informed by my own crossing to the United States from Nicaragua due to the 1979 revolution.

While not giving up on the constructive possibilities of carnal aesthetics, this chapter highlights the power of carnal photography, specifically the photograph *Cuesta del Plomo* by Susan Meiselas, as having the possibility to undo the self—*my* self. It also reveals why I am distraught by Barthes's readings of some photographs, even though *Camera Lucida* is a key inspiration for this work.

Carnalities presents the photograph as carnal, as a relational surface in which we find and are affected by the lives and *cross*ings of those in Latinidad/Latinities understood as a process of being Latined and a shared sense of feeling brown. Latina/x feminisms, in particular the work of Anzaldúa, point to carnalities, creative practices that register the intertwining of selves and worlds and that open possibilities for self-naming, nurturing, and transformation as well as for art-making as self-and-world-making. These intimacies turned creative acts touch the deepest part of ourselves as well as our relations with the earth- and spirit-bodies, with those with whom we share lives, joys, and sorrow—in moments of quiet and of resonant defiance of the hegemonic eye. In a critical phenomenological approach mindful of first-person liminal experience, of the art of living in Latinidad, *Carnalities* unfolds the vital role of the aesthetic, of writing with light, in its capacity to *affect* us, inspire us, and to illuminate our lives so that we can care for and love ourselves. Echoing Anzaldúa, *Carnalities* is another way of finding luz en lo oscuro, light in the dark.

NOTES

PREFACE

1 From 1973 to 1978 the Cuban artist Ana Mendieta made the *Silueta* series by leaving her silhouette on water, land, wildflowers, and fire, thus creating ephemeral traces of her exilic self and then photographing them. See Viso, *Ana Mendieta*. For an analysis of the exilic spatiality of the siluetas, see Ortega, "Exiled Space, In-Between Space."

INTRODUCTION

1 This refusal becomes even more poignant given the investigation of the role of her husband Carl Andre in her tragic death.

2 Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 81.

3 Elizabeth Edwards calls the photograph an "object of affect," arguing that an understanding of the photograph "cannot be contained in the relation between the visual and its material support but rather through an expanded sensory realm of the social in which photographs are put to work." Edwards, "Objects of Affect," 228. An early theorization of this affective, sensuous, embodied dimension of the visual in the context of the phenomenology of film is Vivian Sobchack's *Address of the Eye*. See also her *Carnal Thoughts*, in which she elaborates on the relationship of bodily sense and meaning.

4 Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 81. Despite her incisive criticisms of photography, Susan Sontag recognized the capacity of the photograph to take us to the realm of feeling. As Sarah Parsons notes, "*On Photography* is a passionate and brave effort to think through photography as an affective and effective medium, to understand how and why it impacts us so deeply." Parsons, "Sontag's Lament," 290.

5 I take "affect" as denoting the sense of immediately being affected by, being moved or touched by something. I do not follow a strict division between affect and emotion in terms of a connection to a cognitive state, as theorized by Brian Massumi in "The Autonomy of Affect," 88. I understand both as having various levels of intensity as they are felt. Moreover, I take

emotions as not necessarily confined within the subject as if the subject were a cabinet of affect. While I may feel affect and emotions as mine, they "emerge," as Edward S. Casey argues, "at the outer edges of our experience." Casey, *Turning Emotion Inside Out*, 9. Yet I am still interested in how affect is registered as deeply intimate and personal.

6 For "bodysoulmind," see Anzaldúa, *Light in the Dark*, 133; for "Earth's-body," see Anzaldúa, *Borderlands / La Frontera*, 75.

7 Anzaldúa, *Borderlands / La Frontera*, 75.

8 M. Rivera, *Poetics of the Flesh*. Rivera explains the Christian notion of flesh as "notoriously susceptible to metamorphosis" (54). She analyzes religious views aiming to liberate themselves from the notion of flesh. She also analyzes understandings of flesh as having opacity, weight, and connection to human communities, earth, water, and bread.

9 Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe," 67.

10 Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus*, 44.

11 Moraga and Anzaldúa, *This Bridge Called My Back*, 23. I consider Latina/x theories "in the flesh" as offering theories of affect. It is unfortunate that those working on affect theory have not engaged these writings. Like the work of recognized affect theory scholars such as Sara Ahmed, Lauren Berlant, and Brian Massumi, Latina/x theories in the flesh disclose how an embodied dimension of existence attuned to affectivity informs not only our very sense of belonging or not belonging but also the various types of relationalities, whether political, communal, personal, intimate, that are part of daily existence. For discussions on queer women of color and theorizations of affect, see Carrillo Rowe, "Loving Transgressions."

12 Moraga and Anzaldúa, *This Bridge Called My Back*, 23.

13 Anzaldúa, *Borderlands / La Frontera*, 67.

14 Anzaldúa, *Borderlands / La Frontera*, 73.

15 Anzaldúa, *Light in the Dark*, 67. Anzaldúa takes this image from Nahua mythology. The tree of life represents the tripartite intertwining of the underworld (world of spirits), the physical plane, and the world of non-corporeal energies. Anzaldúa, *Light in the Dark*, 232.

16 My translation. Anzaldúa, *Borderlands / La Frontera*, 71.

17 Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, 132. As Rawb Leon-Carlyle notes, for Merleau-Ponty color is not to be translated into a reductionistic scientific account of qualia or into "being as Object." Rather, for Merleau-Ponty color is "wild," announcing a host of relationships as well as other sensory sensations beyond the visual and disclosing the intertwining between the visible and the invisible. See Leon-Carlyle, "Wild Red." I am inspired by Merleau-Ponty's example of perceiving red as disclosing the intertwining between perceiver and perceived, and in "Perceiving in Red" I connect this perception with Lugones's notion of resistant trespassing and with Anzaldúa's view of conocimiento.

18 Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, 132.

19 Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, 130.

20 A sustained discussion of "flesh" appears in Merleau-Ponty's last unfinished work *The Visible and the Invisible*. Lawrence Hass explains that "flesh" is one of Merleau-Ponty's most difficult concepts. He finds three meanings of the term: (1) carnality in connection primarily with corporality; (2) reversibility or the ability of being both a subject and an object; and (3) general principle. Hass, *Merleau-Ponty's Philosophy*, 201–3. I understand flesh in terms of *incarnate possibility*, which encompasses Hass's meanings: flesh is not a mere logical possibility but embodied; it allows for reversibility; and it sees the possibility that incarnate possibility is elemental in the sense that it is what allows for multiple possibilities of interaction or communication between all that there is. Yet this communication by way of reversibility is, in my view, not necessarily equal.

21 Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, 152.

22 L. E. Pérez, *Chicana Art*, 23. In a recent work, Pérez theorizes the interconnectedness between humans and other life-forms based on "healing practices of loving awareness and respect for self" as "eros ideologies." See L. E. Pérez, *Eros Ideologies*, 15–16.

23 Merleau-Ponty's ontology of the flesh with its chiasmatic interlacing and reversibility of the perceiver and the perceived has raised difficult questions about its ability to give an account of difference in its many forms. Luce Irigaray, in *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, faults the philosopher for forgetting the maternal-feminine. Gail Weiss makes clear in her analysis of "urban flesh" that there is deep differentiation and violence that happens when flesh stylizes being (*Refiguring the Ordinary*, 128). Beata Stawarska, in "From the Body Proper to Flesh," faults Merleau-Ponty for understanding the experience of one's own body as the basis for intersubjectivity. Shannon Sullivan, in "Domination and Dialogue in Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology of Perception," critiques his account as positing an anonymous subject not capable of handling any type of difference. For responses to critiques, see Stoller, "Reflections on Feminist Merleau-Ponty Skepticism"; and Weiss, "The Anonymous Intentions of Transactional Bodies." More recently, disability scholars offer important criticisms of Merleau-Ponty's ableism and of his assumption of normalcy as connected to the white male body. See Reynolds, "Merleau-Ponty, World-Creating Blindness"; and Wieseler, "Challenging Conceptions of the 'Normal' Subject in Phenomenology." When discussing the issue of race in the context of Merleau-Ponty's ontology of chiasm, Andrea Warmack argues that given Merleau-Ponty's account, Black people can be considered *Homo sapiens* but excluded from subjectivity. Warmack, "We Flesh."

24 I am aware of the importance of the figure of the lips in Continental feminism given Luce Irigaray's influential text "When Our Lips Speak Together." Yet my appeal to the figure of the mouth is not a call to female-centered signification. I aim to capture the perceptual multiplicity and relationality in Anzaldúa's creative practice as mouthly and thus carnal. For an anthology inspired in part by the work of important media and film critics Vivian Sobchack and Laura U. Marks, who highlight embodied perception and a new kind of spectatorship, especially in film, see Papenburg and Zarzycka, *Carnal Aesthetics*. Papenburg and Zarzycka recognize the importance of the affective dimension between perceivers and perceived in the context of (anti-)aesthetics and cultural politics.

25 My translation. Anzaldúa, *Borderlands / La Frontera*, 74.

26 According to Michael Kelly, "In its original usage, the word [*aisthesis*] was related to perceptual or sensory knowledge, usually in contrast to conceptual or rational knowledge, but had little or no specific relevance to art." It was not until the eighteenth century that "aesthetics" became connected to art. Kelly, *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*, ix. In their attempt to provide a decolonial account of artistic practices, Walter Mignolo and Rolando Vázquez have introduced the term *aestheSis*. It is meant to supplant *aesthetics* and to undermine the connection that this latter term has to Kantian philosophy and to Eurocentrism. See Mignolo and Vázquez, "Decolonial AestheSis."

27 In previous writings, I have used *aesthesis* to highlight the decolonial possibilities of the term. See Ortega, "Queer Autoarte" and "Spectral Perception and Ghostly Subjectivity." After much thought, in this work I keep the term *aesthetics*, as in everyday use it points to artistic practices or art in general. Paradoxically, while using *aesthesis* or *aestheSis* is meant to capture a decolonial shift in philosophical aesthetics, it is not a familiar term, thus undermining the possibility of making the work accessible beyond philosophical circles.

28 Anzaldúa, *Borderlands / La Frontera*, 67.

29 Anzaldúa, *Borderlands / La Frontera*, n.p.

30 Campt, *Listening to Images*, 45.

31 Campt, *Listening to Images*, 17.

32 Campt, *Listening to Images*, 5.

33 Quashie, *The Sovereignty of Quiet*, 6.

34 Quashie, *The Sovereignty of Quiet*, 21.

35 Quashie, *The Sovereignty of Quiet*, 23.

36 Quashie, *The Sovereignty of Quiet*, 45.

37 That which is quiet or silent is not always to be thought of as necessarily nonresistant. I thus do not wish to propose a strong dichotomy between the quiet and the resonant in the context of resistance. As we will see,

Anzaldúa's creative practice of border arte has quiet and more resonant elements. For a theorization of "deep silence" that challenges standard conceptions of voice as emancipatory, see Ferrari, "Questions of Silence."

38 As I write from and about the wound, I recognize the dangers of reifying pain and victimhood, especially as it concerns bodies of color. As Amber Jamilla Musser notes, "The spectacle of the black body in pain mobilizes empathy and sympathy, but also passivity." Musser, *Sensual Excess*, 98. It is certainly not my aim here to cater to empty, useless empathy or sympathy or to add to the other side of the spectacle of race, the one in which bodies of color are not to be paraded as angry, savage, dangerous but as damaged, bruised, and victimized and in need of white saviors. *Carnalities* discloses the pain and sorrow of Latinidad as well as the manner in which Latinx life persists, finding moments of self-care, nurture, love, joy, refusal, transformation, and resistance. For an important account of "benevolent violence" as an affective disposition to the perceived vulnerability of marginalized individuals that is part of neoliberal, ornamental multiculturalism, specifically in the context of trans* justice, see DiPietro, "Beyond Benevolent Violence."

39 Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings*, 7.

40 Vázquez, *Vistas of Modernity*, 14.

41 Muñoz, *The Sense of Brown*, 39.

42 Diaz, *Postcolonial Love Poem*, 6.

43 Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 21.

44 Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 76. While Barthes theorizes the essence of photography in terms of indexicality, for me the key to his account is his recognition of the photograph's ability to affect or touch the perceiver, hence they invite embodied or "haptic visuality." For an account of "haptic visuality" specifically in film, see Marks, *The Skin of the Film*, chap. 3.

45 Sontag, *On Photography*, 20.

46 Johnson, *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader*, 144.

47 Etymologically, *photography* means "writing or drawing with light": from the Greek *photos*, meaning "light," and *graphos*, meaning "writing, delineation, or painting." The term is supposed to have been coined by Charles Wheatstone and Sir John Herschel independently. Hershel's usage of the term in 1839 became the catalyst for its general adoption. Lenman and Nicholson, *The Oxford Companion to the Photograph*.

48 According to André Bazin, photography embalms time. Interestingly, Bazin thought that all the plastic arts suffered from a "mummy complex," the fundamental need to embalm the dead and counter the flow of time. Bazin, "The Ontology of the Photography Image," 4–8.

49 As we will see throughout this book, the "embalming" of time that takes place in photography, which as I have noted was of concern for

Merleau-Ponty as well as photographic theorists such as Barthes and Sontag, need not take away what I am calling the carnal possibilities of the photograph.

50 I now opt to use *othered beings*, *other*, or *othering* rather than *the other*, *Other*, or *the Other*, which are surprisingly still very common in philosophical analyses. While the term is used in various texts concerned with showing how one subject can reach another subject (regardless of social identities) or with bringing to light the importance of selves that have been othered due to their social identities, it is time to retire the term. In its capitalized form and in its standing for any other person or for persons who are marked by race or any other social identity considered marginal, it dangerously performs both an abstraction and a reification of these selves. Moreover, it revitalizes a dichotomy of self/other in which self is understood as the white European subject that is to serve as the point of reference, the point from which all perspectives must be explained.

51 For a fascinating account of the formation of new types of beings such as the "savage" in connection with medieval and Renaissance images of the "wild man" and "monstrous races," see Velazco y Trianosky, "Savages, Wild Men, Monstrous Races." For classical phenomenological discussion on the imaginary, see Sartre, *The Imaginary*. For the influential psychoanalytic account of the formation of the imaginary order by way of the ego in the mirror stage, see Lacan, "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I." For a key analysis of the role of the social imaginary, see Castoriadis, *The Imaginary Institution of Society*. For recent analysis of the distinction between the imaginary and the imaginal and the political possibilities of the imaginal, see Bottici, *Imaginal Politics*. Moreover, we must not forget that Latina/x theorists have also provided key discussions on the notion of the imaginary. For example, in the 1999 text *The Decolonial Imaginary: Writing Chicanas into History*, Emma Pérez offers an important problematization of the colonial imaginary in historiography that leaves out the history of Chicanas. Moreover, Anzaldúa provides a key theory of the imaginary that highlights images and the unconscious in *Light in the Dark*, esp. chap. 2, "Flights of the Imagination."

52 When discussing the role of photography in the production of new sexual subjects in the nineteenth century, Paul Preciado states, "The truth of sex takes on the nature of a visual disclosure, a process in which photography participates like an ontological catalyst, making explicit a reality that wouldn't be able to emerge any other way." Preciado, *Testo Junkie*, 112. This understanding of photography as "ontological catalyst" is key to photographic projects in the nineteenth century that create different types of beings.

53 Photographic techniques accompanying early alleged "sciences" such as physiognomy aimed at identifying difference and deviancy. From early on, photography became enlisted for practices of othering. See Sekula, "The Body and the Archive"; Kemp and Wallace, *Spectacular Bodies*; Hight and Sampson, *Colonialist Photography*; Maxwell, *Picture Imperfect*; Morris-Reich, *Race and Photography*; Pinney and Peterson, *Photography's Other Histories*; and Morris Hambourg et al., *The Waking Dream*. For an account of "photographic subjection" and modern seeing inspired by Michel Foucault, see Armour, *Signs and Wonders*.

54 Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 80–81. While Barthes is clearly referring to print photographs here, we can think of digital photographs as also affectively touching those who experience them. Whether taken by a Kodak Brownie or our cell phones, photographs continue to pull at our heart strings. There are important distinctions between the affective impact of analog and digital photographs, yet a comparison of analog versus digital photography is beyond the scope of this discussion. For an interesting discussion that engages the resistant power of digital images, see Armour, *Seeing and Believing*.

55 See Lugones, "Heterosexualism and the Colonial/Modern Gender System" and "Toward a Decolonial Feminism." In these important texts, Lugones introduces the notion of the "coloniality of gender," a view that analyzes gender as a colonial imposition and introduces the "light" and "dark" sides of the coloniality of gender.

56 See Pelaez Lopez, "The X in Latinx Is a Wound Not a Trend."

57 Claudia Milian offers a rich discussion of the problems as well as tremendous possibilities entailed by the *X*. She states, "If we thought we knew all too well the o/a of the familiar Latino/a, LatinX tells us that things are no longer the same, that there is no secure footing, that the X—an expounding concept—is bound to new bodies and new schools of thought." Milian, *LatinX*, 6.

58 See Aparicio and Chávez-Silverman, *Tropicalizations*; Dávila, *Latinos, Inc.*; Laó-Montes and Dávila, *Mambo Montage*; R. Rivera-Servera, *Performing Queer Latinidad*; and Salazar, "The Problem with Latinidad."

59 One of the most difficult aspects of the experience of those at the margins is the exclusion that takes place within their communities due to a perceived lack of sameness or solidarity in the group. I call this experience of marginalization within one's own group "internal exclusions." Such exclusions have been an important topic of discussions for scholars of color. Chicana thinkers such as Mirta Vidal, Bernice Rincón, Enriqueta Longeaux Vasquez, and others provided an early critique of the exclusion of Chicanas in the movement of *La Raza*. See Alma García, *Chicana Feminist Thought*. For an important discussion of exclusions in

the context of nineteenth-century Black women thinkers, see Bell, "Black Feminism and Intersectional Analyses."

60 Beltrán, *The Trouble with Unity*, 162.

61 Beltrán, *The Trouble with Unity*, 18, 19. In a similar vein, Juana María Rodriguez ties Latinidad to Deleuze's nonlinear notion of the rhizome that allows for multiple directions; hence she claims that Latinidad is "about the 'dimensions' or 'the directions in motion' of history and culture and geography and language and self-named identities." Rodriguez, *Queer Latinidad*, 22.

62 Milian, *Latining America*, 4.

63 Milian quotes Morales as foreseeing the coming of this Latinity when he states that "there may be more styles and variations of being Latino than there are different Latin America countries." Milian, *Latining America*, 3.

64 Milian, *Latining America*, 4.

65 Milian, *Latining America*, 4.

66 Muñoz, *The Sense of Brown*, 39.

67 When describing the *punctum*, Barthes states that it "is this element which rises from the scene, shoots out of it like an arrow, and pierces me." Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 26.

68 Muñoz, *The Sense of Brown*, 121.

69 Muñoz, *The Sense of Brown*, 10, 3, 39.

70 In *Being and Time* Heidegger famously offers an analysis of the existential or ontological characteristics of being human. One of these characteristics is "being-with," or *Mitsein*, what makes it possible for the self to connect or be with others. See Heidegger, *Being and Time*, sec. 26.

71 Ortega, *In-Between*, 61. Following Lugones, I define "being-at-ease" as a function of one's ability to be nonreflective about everyday norms and linguistic practices as well as a sense of sharing a history with people.

72 My view of multiplicitous subjectivity in *In-Between* is part of this attempt. I also offer a coalitional politics that takes into consideration the importance of naming oneself as part of a community while, at the same time, honoring relationality and coalitions across differences. See Ortega, *In-Between*, 159–69.

73 Muñoz, *The Sense of Brown*, 15. Here Muñoz is quoting Cherríe Moraga.

74 See Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want?*

75 Sandoval, *The Methodology of the Oppressed*, 2.

76 Sandoval, *The Methodology of the Oppressed*, 57–58.

77 Following Anibal Quijano and other decolonial theorists, I see a distinction between coloniality and colonialism. While colonialism refers to past violent processes of the European colonization of the Americas that emerged in 1492, coloniality, specifically "the coloniality of power" points to ongoing structures of power and hegemony that are the result of colonialism. See Quijano, "Coloniality of Power."

78 Sandoval, *The Methodology of the Oppressed*, 140.

79 Sandoval, *The Methodology of the Oppressed*, 141, 147.

80 As Audre Lorde states, "For the erotic is not a question only of what we do; it is a question of how acutely and fully we can feel in the doing." Lorde, *Sister Outsider*, 54.

81 Sandoval, *The Methodology of the Oppressed*, 142–43. An interesting issue here is the extent to which Sandoval's notion of the erotic compares to Lorde's famous account of it. While Sandoval would not disagree about the erotic's potential for intensity of feeling, or the erotic's potential for joy, she also follows Barthes in the theorization of love as the condition of a no place, or third space, where that which is not possible becomes possible, where meanings shift, where selves disintegrate and become otherwise, and where they "pick, graze, convert, cruise, low-ride through meanings." Sandoval, *The Methodology of the Oppressed*, 145.

82 For elaborations of "critical" phenomenological approaches before an explicitly named "critical phenomenology," see Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*; Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*; J. M. Martinez, *Phenomenology of Chicana Experience and Identity*; L. R. Gordon, *Bad Faith and Anti-Black Racism*; Yancy, *Black Bodies, White Gazes*; Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology*; and my own work *In-Between*. For analysis of an explicit elaboration of critical phenomenology, see Salamon, "What's Critical about Critical Phenomenology?"; Ferrari et al., "Editor's Introduction"; and Guenther, "Critical Phenomenology" and "Six Senses of Critique for Critical Phenomenology." For a sustained analysis of the notion of critique as central to phenomenology, see Marder, *Phenomena—Critique—Logos*. For a recent anthology dedicated to the importance of Husserlian phenomenology for critical phenomenology, see Heinämaa, Carr, and Aldea, *Phenomenology as Critique*. As I finish this manuscript, a new work on phenomenology and race that constitutes a critical phenomenology has been published, Lee's *A Phenomenology for Women of Color*.

83 See Ahmed, "A Phenomenology of Whiteness," 152–56. Importantly, in this piece Ahmed does not assume whiteness as an ontological given but as the inheritance of certain orientations that put some things within reach of certain subjects and not others.

84 Guenther, "Critical Phenomenology," 12. While transcendental structures are understood to be structures that make experience possible and are understood to be a priori (before experience) and operative in the same manner in all contexts, Guenther's quasi-transcendental structures are not a priori but "they play a constitutive role in shaping the meaning and manner of our experience" (12).

85 Salamon, "What's Critical about Critical Phenomenology?," 15.

86 While there are various phenomenological analyses of the aesthetic, most notably by Heidegger, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty and scholars of these

thinkers, they center artistic works by European artists such as Vincent Van Gogh, Alberto Giacometti, and Paul Cézanne. There is surprisingly little work on critical phenomenological aesthetics that also engages work by artists beyond Europe and that takes into consideration the photograph. For a recent important critical, feminist, phenomenological aesthetics that develops the notion of "embodied perceptual cognition" and provides powerful interpretations of a range of different artworks, see Fielding, *Cultivating Perception through Artworks*. For a key phenomenological analysis of racialization through artworks, see Al-Saji, "Glued to the Image."

87 Ortega, *In-Between*, 10.

88 The plural form, *phenomenologies*, seems apt here, as there may be room for different critical phenomenological approaches.

89 According to Dan Zahavi, the most worrisome understanding of phenomenology is one that equivocates phenomenology with phenomenality. Zahavi writes, "My claim, however, is not that phenomenologists are not interested in the phenomenality of experience, my claim is that phenomenology cannot be reduced to a concern with that topic." See Zahavi, "Getting It Quite Wrong," 902.

1. AFFECTED BY THE EYE

1 The mythology of the "evil eye" spans various centuries across varied cultures and epochs. The evil eye is supposed to ward off the curse initiated by a malevolent stare. Campos-Pons has various versions of this image, including one where brown eyes have been drawn on her back, as well as a triptych called "Sagrada Familia (Holy Family)" of photos of her back, her son's back, and her husband's back, all with eyes drawn on them. In a 2013 conversation with Terrence Dempsey, SJ, and Dr. Olubukola Gbadegesin introducing her work for an exhibit at the Museum of Contemporary Religious Art (MOCRA), Campos-Pons explains that when she was very young, her father told her that she had eyes on her back, that she could perceive things even when they were not in front of her. She adds that she thought her father's comment was a beautiful way to describe other sensorial capacities of the body and spirituality, noting that drawing these eyes is about the capacity of compassion, perceiving ahead of time, and perceiving deeply, which the body expresses in a "quiet manner." For her, the eyes point to alertness, to the fact that the body is full of energy and in tune with oneself, the world, and one's art. The conversation can be found on the MOCRA podcast website *MOCRA Voices* (see Campos-Pons, interview). As we will see, given the workings of coloniality, another interpretation of "Untitled" becomes possible, one in which