



PROJECT MUSE®

---

## Latining America

Claudia Milian

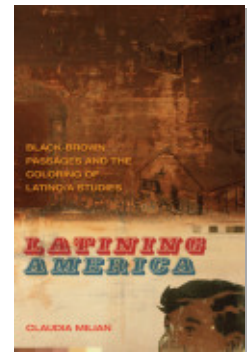
Published by University of Georgia Press

Milian, Claudia.

Latining America: Black-Brown Passages and the Coloring of Latino/a Studies.

Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2013.

Project MUSE., <https://muse.jhu.edu/>.



➔ For additional information about this book

<https://muse.jhu.edu/book/26836>

## CHAPTER ONE

---

# SOUTHERN LATINITIES

People live — I mean, really live —

in spaces that aren't on a map.

— CRISTINA HENRÍQUEZ (2009: 129)

This chapter delves into the challenges and contradictions that emanate from U.S. African American, Latino, and Latina boundaries in discourses of the U.S. South and its place across an untrammelled Global South. I trace the articulation of these identifications and differences in a twofold manner: (1) seemingly intact ethnoracial bodies tied to specific landscapes and (2) the distinct means and extensive array through which southernness and Latinness run out of their “naturalized,” confined spaces. The exigencies that arise as these proliferating bodies open up to Latinities and encounter the limits of the fields that examine the southern, the black, the American, and the Latino and Latina are a cornerstone for remapping how certain disciplines have been anchored.

Such regional analysis and its convergence with overlapping blackness-and-brownness focus on the increasing approaches to the Global South as an area of academic investigation pushing for broader geographies, flows, circulations, and epistemologies that reconsider U.S. southern studies, American studies, African American studies, Latino/a studies, and Latin American studies. In disentangling the fixity of peoples and geographies, a pair of questions animates this work. First, if U.S. southern/southeastern identity has been rooted in black-and-white dynamics — and the U.S. Southwest has been understood as brown and white — can we afford to reproduce these spaces as the main purveyors of blackness and Latinness? Second, how does the

social reality of living in shifting geographies and color lines, as subjects pass through and relive the weight of difference, radically reshape how U.S. African American, Latino, and Latina political identities in the “Nuevo South” come to be understood?<sup>1</sup> These lines of interrogation disrupt “legible” Latinness, Latinness, and blackness and retrace the passages and routes accounting for the different types of southern Latinities that are being brought into due relation and conversation.<sup>2</sup>

I assess, from there, the racial and regional nomenclature in the South’s production of a black-and-white conjunction. I argue that these deeply ingrained characteristics need to be reconstituted through projects that refocus on Latino and Latina peripheries and their relation to other minoritized spaces. This contention does not propose that these lives are eternally doomed to the ideological fringes of this “binary region,” to use Helen B. Marrow’s language (2009: 1038). Rather, my objective questions the logic governing Latino/a and black boundaries in U.S. intellectual practices, disciplines, and methods.<sup>3</sup> I struggle to burgeon forth new theories and knowledges that think through blackness-cum-brownness not as polarizing antagonists, but as cohabiting forces. I also literarily inquire how Latinos and Latinas have navigated ethnoracial, cultural, and class conflicts along the U.S. North/U.S. South divide and the white-black-Latin color line. I gesture toward open double consciousness as a theoretical content that embraces the unpredictable movements of southernness and Latinness, ineluctably stepping outside the requirements of blackness and brownness.

More concretely, I take up Evelio Grillo’s memoir, *Black Cuban, Black American* as an emblematic example of divergences in the categories, moments, and ambits that sustain the rationalization of the separateness adhered to Latinness, blackness, and the U.S. southeastern landscape. Editing the tenor of oppositional blackness and Latinness, this octogenarian’s retrospective study ushers us into instances that can be regarded as a Latined course of events along the U.S. color line, slightly more than a decade after W. E. B. Du Bois’s introduction of the term. Despite Grillo’s lived black and Latin instability, Arte Público Press attenuates a Hispanic past and veers him to the U.S. Hispanic (“non-African American”) archive.<sup>4</sup> At stake are not just the development and systematizing of a U.S. Hispanic literary canon but also the tarrying of possibilities for reading, thinking, and framing new questions on Latined black-brown-dark brown discourses. I conclude by canvassing the

discursive continuity of black-white problems through the vectors of Latino and Latina being, mulling over what may make a Latined open double consciousness feasible. This move is allowed after my rendering of Grillo's publication to give prominence to other formulations of the U.S. African American experience opening up in multiple and different directions. Building on the great inheritance of double consciousness, open double consciousness is devised not to rival Du Bois's framework but to work with it, particularly through the notion of bringing about a moving knowledge in the twenty-first century.

The measure of my argument thus established, I would like to briefly set up my analytic direction by recounting a passing but edifying anecdote about the perceived recentness of Latinos and Latinas in the U.S. South.<sup>5</sup> Their late occurrence coincides with the regional denomination of the Nuevo South, a phrase that I frequently hear since my arrival to Durham, North Carolina, in 2006. The episode touches on the founding yet rupturing assumptions of the U.S. South as a coherent "tight place," to extend Houston A. Baker Jr.'s insight, that parochially preserves its black-and-white composition and non-fluid racial categories (2001: 15).<sup>6</sup> I intentionally retell this experience in an investigation that is knotted to the dismantling of self-contained ideas about geographies, bodies, and cultures and that may as well function as an ethical call for the reception of the openness of being. This bid applies multidirectionally to U.S. African Americans as much as to U.S. Latinos and Latinas and mainly to spaces that have entered and participate in a "new borderland urbanism" caught between the forces of economic globalization and traditional black-white mainstays of the plantation South (Herzog, 2003: 120).<sup>7</sup>

Aboard a return flight to North Carolina fairly recently, I sat next to a Durham-born African American woman. I learned from our conversation that she had relocated to Texas, where she is a nurse. She told me that she seldom returns to the "City of Medicine" since her mother's death. "Each time I come back," she said, "I find a different city. It's all Hispanic now, and I ask myself, 'Where are the African Americans?'"<sup>8</sup> My flight partner expressed urgency about the deracination of U.S. African Americans in her urban space's new ecology, which she quipped, used to be prominently black.<sup>9</sup> She revealed apprehension for how unrecognizable Durham had become. Through her Southwest-Southeast migrations, I wondered if, for her, "Hispanics" were more acclimated and physically bounded to Texas than North Carolina.<sup>10</sup> Yet

this dislocation of southeastern culture could be attributed to a hyper-Latin visibility juxtaposing the South's nuevo status with a new physiognomic regional alienness, or a new Latinness set in an unfamiliar ("southerly") time. This alien South racializes Latinos and Latinas, even though what is being described, for the most part and yet again, is the South's socioeconomic transformation vis-à-vis an unfamiliar mixing of local and regional actors.<sup>11</sup> Weighed against this historicopolitical national frame, Latinos and Latinas are stamped as rarefied bodies in a host city.<sup>12</sup> But this encounter also marks the limits of the South's operative logic. It pushes us toward a new turning point for this geography as well as for the supplementary fields and modes of thought touching on James L. Peacock's deliberations. He asserts that if "the old question for the South and for southerners was, 'How do I relate to the nation,' [t]he new question is, 'How do I relate to the world?'" (2007: x). Likewise, in which spaces do southerners from the U.S. South and numerous dispositions of southern life establish an association with seemingly just formed Latino and Latina beginnings?<sup>13</sup>

Some historians and anthropologists trace this South to the late 1980s and early 1990s. It has been documented that between 1977 and 1992, the South's economy surpassed other regions in the nation, steering a strong economic boom, or in Raymond A. Mohl's description, "Dixie's dramatic demographic, economic, and cultural transformation" (2005: 67). Meanwhile, the United States, as a whole, faced an exigency to admit refugees from Southeast Asia, the former Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and Africa. The State Department selected the South "as a target area in which to settle refugees who were not being sponsored by family members in other parts of the country." Mexican and Central American migration is also attributed to a thriving economy "dependent on abundant, inexpensive labor and a population willing to fill such positions" (Duchon and Murphy, 2001: 1). These developments lead to "a growing conviction that there is more value in studying the South as a part of the world than as a world apart" (Cobb and Stueck, 2005: xi).

The type of twenty-first-century urban South-transforming cities such as Durham refers to a Latino and Latina resident alienness thought by the popular media to be displacing U.S. African Americans.<sup>14</sup> The rather recent history of this new South obscures the present economic moment that also impacts Latinos and Latinas. This Latino and Latina now, adhered to a nuevo genealogy, is perceived to be without a history. Leon Fink underlines this

temporariness in his work about Guatemalan and Mexican migrants' employment in the poultry plants of Morganton, North Carolina. "A lot of people" in that industrial town, he writes, first looked at the "Hispanics as a 'temporary thing'" (2003: 21).<sup>15</sup> Despite these volatile markers, the circulating bodies of Latinos and Latinas direct our attention to how different ethnoracial and U.S. identities are emerging at different points in time. Our task, then, is to adjust our lenses and see the ethnoracial and cultural history of the South beyond the U.S. black-and-white binary from an approximal point of view that inquires: How have Africana, Latino, and Latina groups arrived at, found, and formed their "North" not so much in this Nuevo South, but in what Marshall C. Eakin appreciatively calls this "Newest South" (2003: 21)?<sup>16</sup> What types of relationships and knowledges do those that remain "unnativized" in the U.S. South and America activate in this Newest South?

As I sketch out and ask about Latin bodies through customary understandings of U.S. Latinoness and Latinaness, just as I probe into generic characterizations of the U.S. South and African Americans, I want to pause momentarily and elucidate on my claims. My examination of this terrain and its "new" peoples and journeys — referred to by journalist Paul Cuadros as a "silent migration" — corresponds with how "the" Latin and Latinness are being opened up to Latinities (2006: 10).<sup>17</sup> Certainly Latinities include Latinos and Latinas, a U.S. panethnic group and category that tends to fall into specific nationalities. But Latinities also appear and are put into use beyond this assemblage of individuals and the Latino or Latina classification. Let me be clear. I do not deny the sociocultural histories and manifestations of blackness, Latinoness, and Latinaness. I am, more readily, talking about Latinities, which include these groups and categories but are not reducible to them. In simple terms, Latinities move. And as this study moves to explore the fluid Latinities of the U.S. South and African Americanness, I am interested in Latinities as remnants that play out through what Brent Hayes Edwards has termed as *décalage* for Africana diasporas. *Décalage* is "the kernel of precisely that which cannot be transferred or exchanged, the received biases that refuse to pass over when one crosses the water" (2003: 14).<sup>18</sup> The lingering remnants of Latinities, however, are not always lived by, located through, and laden with an intrinsic Latin American diasporic population.

The migratory meanings of Latinness spread out to Latinities through bodies as well as geohistorical and disciplinary crossings. Beyond the scope

of one panethnic and cultural identity and one particular diaspora, Latinities' porousness is exposed. It denaturalizes the restrictions ascribed to blackness, Latinoness, and Latinaness. Latinities may be mapped through "passing lines," to echo but distinctly build from Brad Epps's notion. Passing lines cross the boundaries of national and cultural differences. They are

the stories, moves, and gestures that may be deployed in border crossings, borders that include what Gloria Anzaldúa calls a "1,950 mile-long open wound" between Mexico and the United States, but that also include the waters of the Caribbean, the naval base at Guantánamo, Coast Guard boats, "international" airports, INS offices; borders that are even, maybe even specially, streets and parks and schools and stores, banks and clinics, courtrooms and emergency rooms, borders that are our minds and bodies, our words and our deeds, our thoughts and our thinking. Borders that are "our" own and that provoke these lines, here and now. (2001: 117)

I summon passing lines as more than a means to subvert national ideologies and daily normative/unnormative transactions. The act of crossing over is not necessarily unidirectional, and passing lines do not travel punctiliously one way. They have the potential to rearticulate moving Latinities and the delayed signifiers that upset the fictive nature and operating truisms ascribed to ethnoracialized groups. Continuously in flux, these passing lines reconfigure what has been unveiled from the dispersals of archetypical and time-honored borders. They form a knowledge through what is otherwise unmanageable in conventional black or brown identity registers.

Passing has generally signified crossings from subaltern blackness to normative whiteness within black-and-white identity discourses. As parallel routes, passing lines can become a strategy that passes through frameworks (e.g., border theory and the Global South) and bodies with different markers and ranges of Latinities.<sup>19</sup> The distance between these theoretical accounts and subjects is thus minimized and bears in mind Linda Schlossberg's point that "passing is not simply about erasure or denial, as it is often castigated, but rather, about the creation and establishment of an alternative set of narratives" (2001: 4).<sup>20</sup> The promise of these narratives outline Thomas Bender's heed to revise the nature of nation formation through "alternative solidarities and social connections," since they could also move in the direction of political kinships (2002: 1).

The U.S. South's social identity can be assessed along these passing lines of thought, as an extended south—a Global South—tracing and recording “adopted political relatives” from a global stage. These figurative in-law family relations are known, in Spanish, as “familias políticas” (Sommer, 1999: 84).<sup>21</sup> Through political kindred, U.S. ambiguities come to the fore as they coevally establish a recognizable American nation and a paradoxical disconnect between domestic subjects and alien intruders. This set of hypothetical in-laws could unsettle the dividing lines between domesticity and alienated foreignness, dissolving the determinant factors that reproduce national distinctions about those who are (alienated) “at home” because of the (alien) presence from “abroad” (Kaplan, 2002: 1). But this study is not due because Latinos and Latinas are now part of a sociocultural totality localized in the black-and-white historical circumstances of the U.S. South. Questions of legality, citizenship, and racial categories and distinctions commonly noted in southern “colonial statutes referring to ‘negroes, indians, mulattoes, and mestizoes’” have touched upon reference points outside the rigidity of U.S. blackness and whiteness, alongside linguistic and classificatory equivalencies for what become U.S. Latino and Latina identities (D. Gibson, 1993: x).<sup>22</sup>

Southern Latinities are linked to this Latin permeability and accumulation of signifiers, to bring in Henríquez's quote from the epigraph. While these types of Latinities surface and can be charted, they do not forever function and dwell in “spaces that aren't on a map.” They foreground being off and on the map, and they are “really live[d]” and relived differently. Read this way, my analysis of the U.S. South and Latin ways of living are a generative source for acknowledging and veering toward a Global South where migratory movement—up, down, across, and vice versa—does not occlude new subjectivities and new narratives of migration.<sup>23</sup> Southern Latinities invite a reconceptualization of the U.S. South's normative construction that hallmarks “the centrality of the antebellum South in the narrative of Southern history” and issues a temporariness to Latinos and Latinas (Eakin, 2003: 10). The continuous, systematic narrative of the past and “the politics of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries” have “long distorted our notions” about the U.S. South's exceptionalism and its innate detachment from Latinos, Latinas, and Latin America (18). Such blind spots have impaired “our ability to see [the] multi-centered, multi-ethnic, multi-cultural emergence of the U.S. South” and its resonances with Latin America, not to



mention the manifold and divergent Latinings that propel this monograph (10). Southern Latinities propose the rethinking of the U.S. South, the United States, and Latin America to highlight the changing relationships among the diverse subjects and cultures moving to and passing through these locales. These Latinities inflect us with conceptions of Latin genealogies, as they try to cobble through the idea of when particular groups become southerly as well as to theorize how a pool of ever-growing southern resources might be studied, a point to which I now turn.

### Transamerica: Southern Theories and American Studies

Marshall C. Eakin provides a fitting historical detail for these southern concerns, laying a path for what can be conjectured as malleable Latined regions and subjects. Eakin imbricates thematic turns that form a nexus with the U.S. South and Latin America. His exegesis on hemispherist isolation — what has been included and excluded in U.S. southern and Latin American historiography — serves as a starting point for a discursive contiguity with the parameters demarcating southernness. Eakin's appraisal and undoing of each of this field's narrative choices in the production of what becomes a bounded geohistory reads,

Narrowly defined, the Old South is eleven states, if one sticks to membership in the Confederacy as the ultimate measuring stick. Missouri, Kentucky, and Maryland get left out (as does the anti-secessionist West Virginia). Those who emphasize the heritage of slavery as the essential feature bring those three states (and Delaware and West Virginia) back into the region (because all were still slave states in 1860). If one places greater emphasis on certain cultural and social patterns such as language, religion, and sense of identification, some sections outside these states qualify as Southern. Some places that are clearly within even the most traditional political boundaries do not (such as southern Florida or northern Virginia, or even sections of Appalachia). As in the case of Latin America, political boundaries often trump cultural patterns when one defines the region.

Latin American specialists face the same problems, sometimes the mirror image of the dilemma in Southern Studies. Texas and Florida, for example, are on everyone's list of Southern states, yet they were parts of the Spanish

Empire in the Americas for three centuries. Despite their long histories under Spanish colonial rule, scholars of American Studies count them as part of the U.S. South. In spite of their long histories under Spanish colonial rule, many scholars of Latin America do not include them in standard treatments of Latin America. These regions do not suddenly become Southern and leave Latin America in the 1820s and 1830s. (2003: 17–18)

This comparative take alludes to a resurgence of these areas of interest and their respective disciplines, southern studies and Latin American studies. From a literary and historical standpoint, Deborah N. Cohn has gauged the two regions she patches together as the South and Spanish America as “neighboring spaces” due to their “similar ‘personalities’ deriving from shared histories” (1999: 2). In broadening the mental map of the U.S. South not only to Latin America but also to the Global South, a remappable terrain is drafted. This approach partakes in the furthering of transnational research projects and the excavation of multidisciplinary and multilingual topics and histories. In U.S. domains, the Global South theorizes how Latino and Latina figurative alienness functions and is transported in African American studies programs and, conversely, how blackness figures in Latino/a studies.

Global is inserted into both fields’ equations not because U.S. Latinos, Latinas, or African Americans lack either a globalness or globalization, which can be conceived as “the tendency toward a world-wide market economy (facilitated by the institutional frameworks of the World Trade Organization) and dominated by transnational corporations and transnational criminal organizations” (Dear and Leclerc, 2003: 6–7). The history and memory of the two Souths, to trope on Cohn’s book title, is premised on the parallels between the South and Latin America. Cohn delineates these regions’ differences. But her study gives more pronounced attention to their shared history “of dispossession, of socioeconomic hardship, of political and cultural conflict, and of the export of resources to support the development of a ‘North’” (1999: 5). The outcome has shown “a semi-colonial dependency on the North” as well as “subordination to foreign governments and, increasingly, to transnational corporations” (6). U.S. Latinoness, Latinaness, and African Americanness are placed in a Latined Global South framework to denaturalize and dislocate the visual grounds and backgrounds that instantiate where they “authentically” belong. In this way, a renarrativization of southern platforms is promoted

through the comparability of black-and-brown Latin analogies. Building on a more generous mapping of the U.S. South, a Global South can speak to the negotiation of political identities — and the passages of political families — across borders.

The scope of these concerns, suffice to say, has a genealogy. Some of the working premises of the Global South can be traced not only to the 1950s “but to the early modern period of the 1890s through the 1920s, when ‘American Studies’ was being first constituted as a field in the academy in the midst of a surge in immigration, new forms of racial segregation and industrial labor, a more varied mix of students attending universities, and the closing of the western ‘frontier’ coupled with newly global ambitions for U.S. power” (Singh and Schmidt, 2000: 4). The 1992 quincentenary also marked a propitious turn, fueling a spate of “interest in a hemispheric approach to the literatures of the Americas,” the growth of New World studies as a field, and the establishing of programs like Florida International University’s African–New World studies.<sup>24</sup> But as Rachel Adams and Sarah Phillips Casteel have propositioned, “the hemisphere’s northernmost member, Canada” has been omitted, in many cases, from comparative orientations that have “more typically focused on relationships between the U.S.A. and Latin America” (2005: 6).<sup>25</sup>

The Global South’s insights lie in equivalent approaches that, as Jon Smith and Deborah N. Cohn claim, “look away from the North in constructing narratives of southern identity” and exercise the function of America in a continental perspective. They outline “the experience of defeat, occupation, and reconstruction” as qualities that “the South shares with *every* other part of America” (2004: 2). While the Global South is evoked in this present undertaking, the reference is not meant as a totalizing international identity. It goes without saying that the term could not operate as all-embracing, given the situatedness of a U.S. Americanist discourse within the circumstances and historical factors that advance U.S. Latino, Latina, or African American subjectivities. But it is incongruously at this fragmentary juncture — in light of family and cultural remittances, massive deportations, return migrations, and technological shifts — where we can scrutinize what forms of overlapping and distinctive Americanizations and un-Americanizations may mean beyond the U.S. map. The Global South’s unboundedness acts as an instructive point of orientation.<sup>26</sup> And, as José David Saldívar incisively puts forth

in *Trans-Americanity*, there is “something speculative and risky in reading through the critical and theoretical approaches of scholars, activists, and social theorists” from the Global South. An exigent Global South, as Saldívar brings to mind, “is the intellectual property of no specific national field-imaginary yet” (2012: xvi).

The Global South, as a framework of great analytic import, acquiesces to an integrated locus of citizenships, memberships, and neighboring spaces examining the multiple Souths within the United States and outside of it too. This type of South within the U.S. North deviates from New England as largely designative of “the North,” as Nilo Cruz suggests (2003: 35). It may look like the Dominican New York/New Jersey borderlands Junot Díaz chronicles in *Drown* (1996) and *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007).<sup>27</sup> It bolsters Ana Castillo’s consideration of “what the history of the United States would read like, in fact, what shape the country would have taken if it had developed in the Southwest with the Spanish” (2005a).<sup>28</sup> This South elevates silences as well. Recall the South articulated through the perspective of female absence, an epistemic void that Patricia Hill Collins gives rise to with the question, “Why are African-American women and our ideas not known and not believed in?” (1990: 5).<sup>29</sup> The Global South also addresses, as David Palumbo-Liu sets forth, a racial frontier hinged on the modernizing project of America and its expansion of the East and Southeast Asian regions, otherwise configured as the Pacific Frontier, Pacific Rim, and Asia Pacific (1999: 6).<sup>30</sup>

As Latino and Latina identities become invariably tied to U.S. Souths, they are paradoxically “southernized” — or resouthernized — but in the Latin American sense of regularly characterizing an alienated Latin “abroadness.” And yet this overlay of Souths helps in facilitating new conceptual spaces. That is why superimposed southern imaginaries are summoned here: the U.S. Southwest, the U.S. South/Southeast, the Global South in a Global North, and Latin America’s Souths. These Souths are placed in dialogue with one another to survey methodological moments of “pedagogical encounter” and to reroute the epistemic orbits of these “marginal” worlds (Gallop, 2002: 4). I am aware, as Matthew Pratt Guterl has written, that the “‘South’ is an imagined location, an inherently unstable unit of space.” Despite this fleeting geography, “most people in the United States feel they know exactly where it is: just below the Mason-Dixon line and just above the Gulf of Mexico. But

the phrase ‘South’ defies such directional certainty; it has multiple meanings, competing positions, and personalities” (2007: 230).

Wherever and whenever these multiple Souths are invoked, they point to institutional ideas, political statements, and terms that may proceed “as frustratingly mobile, sometimes overlapping spots on a map” (Guterl, 2007: 230). Such Souths communicate a North/South demarcation, a meaningful dualism for U.S. Latinos and Latinas, a group that should be positioned within a new category of the “split state” since “more than half of the Latin American nations now have in the United States permanent diasporas.” This North/South fissure “seems particularly important to situate U.S. Latinos within the historical blueprints of American imaginaries, given that their unsuspected gaze upon America often cuts through the North/South divide” (de la Campa, 2001: 376). But this North/South motif is applicable within the United States, and markedly so for African Americans. Amy Kaplan grounds this North/South American fulcrum as one that denotes the mapping of U.S. imperialism “not through a West/East axis of frontier symbols and politics, but instead through a North/South axis around issues of slavery, Reconstruction, and Jim Crow segregation” (2002: 18).<sup>31</sup> To disrupt the structure of white-and-black lines, the Global South is visited with a keen eye to theorize the complex ways that individuals respond to the said crises that heighten the sociopolitical identities and hierarchies that organize their being.

North and South continue to spread out and coexist within these geographic demarcations. But North and South can project South-South locations also. A South-South dialogue advances the Global South and its permeability.<sup>32</sup> Chicano/a border studies and African American studies are two approaches that constitute approximate genealogies passing one another in their interrogation of notions of rootedness and unrootedness as well as the historical legacies of conquest, expansion, slave trade, and plantation and postplantation economies.<sup>33</sup> From their respective geographic points of entry—the U.S. West and Southwest for Chicano/a studies and the U.S. Southeast for black American cultural productions and intellectual thought—these discourses move to theorize regional identity formations through the tense encounters and uneven divisions between North and South.<sup>34</sup> The mapping and conceptual constructs of the South and the North have operated within the realm of Latino, Latina, and African American subjectivities. In these configurations, the North is, perhaps, discernible in its

North American connotation of the United States, while the South has generally symbolized the U.S. Southeast, the U.S. Southwest, and as Chicano and Chicana thought has theorized, Mexico.

Our levels of engagement, then, shift to generating knowledges that account for social bodies in practice: bodies that do not seamlessly assimilate into normative Americanness, widespread ideas of U.S. southernness, or academic discourses wedded to strict blackness and brownness. How, I ask, do Latinos and Latinas fit the scholarly bill of U.S. African American studies, and what are the modes of belonging for African Americans in U.S. Latino/a studies? Culling through the correlational spheres of contention for blacks and browns, I weigh in on these concerns through a number of questions driven by what María Lugones has adverted as a “double perception and double praxis” that necessitate “one eye [that] sees the oppressed reality, [while] the other sees the resistant one” (2006: 78). Is it not possible for African Americans, in their navigation — and passages into a horizon — of color lines and Latinities, to have a consciousness of borders, passing lines that have historically pointed to differences (and promises of economic prosperity), much like the United States and Latin America, akin to the U.S. North and South?<sup>35</sup> Why should there be a “purist” theoretical model, geography, and approach to how itinerant groups have rethought deracination and marginality?<sup>36</sup>

The variegated carvings of a continental, southernized American studies go beyond the limits of a standard America and open intersecting windows of genealogical interrogation. Yet these approaches do not adequately reference fluid associations among moving bodies in mercurial American worlds. “Transamerica,” the descriptor used for this section, is a play on the 2005 film bearing the same title.<sup>37</sup> It is also a nod to the field-imaginary of trans-American studies, where “diasporic and border writers and thinkers” provide a new narration of the world (J. D. Saldívar, 2012: xx). The “trans-American imaginary” challenges the normative literary pedigree of a U.S.-centered America through hemispherist scrutiny — vide, as illustrations, J. D. Saldívar (1997, 2012); Brickhouse (2004); Moya and Saldívar (2003); and Gruesz (2002). Far more than a play on words, this part of the discussion was framed as such to emphasize not only that a “trans” theoretical language has come to the fore. An unrestrained thematic subject has also surfaced, one premised on the regrounding of continuous cultural transactions and self-relocations in the Global South.

In the film *Transamerica*, for example, Felicity Huffman portrays the life of Bree, a preoperative male-to-female transsexual. The movie centers on Bree's gender-reassignment surgery and her inconvenient discovery that she had fathered a son several years earlier. The offspring turns out to be a New York City teenager and hustler named Toby, whose mother has committed suicide and consequently needs Bree's help. Plot twists soon demand that Bree pass for a female and a Christian missionary, not disclose her identity as Toby's father, and take the proverbial all-American road trip. Her cross-country foray evokes other geographies and citizens from the American landscape, provocatively bringing about Bree's immersion in a Latin life. *New York Times* movie critic A. O. Scott has inadvertently keyed into this Latin optic, first noting that the voice of Huffman's character "is soft and breathy." Bree's female representation, as he sees it, "avoids cursing and peppers her conversation with Latinate words and foreign phrases" (Scott, 2005). The *Oxford English Dictionary* illuminates that Latinate consists "of, pertaining to, or derived from Latin; having a Latin character. Also, occas., resembling an inhabitant of a Latin country." Bree's Latinities are evinced through her living environment. She resides in a Los Angeles Latino neighborhood, earning her dollars and cents as a server in a Mexican restaurant.

Cinematically speaking, however, Bree's Latinities are seemingly peripheral, nearly "soft and breathy" secondary exchanges. Yet these parenthetical moments cannot be readily dismissed. U.S. Latinoness, Latinaness, and Latin-Americanness are blurred and coeval signifiers. *Transamerica's* Latinate character walks, passes into, and ruptures the normative constituents of Latinness. In two telling moments, Bree arouses desire not from the admiring gaze of white American masculinity, but from the marginal yet appreciative stares of Latino and Native American males. In this navigation of a moving America, the film's Latined beginnings reframe the native, the migrant, the transgender, and the transnational into a linked territory of complex relations and accumulated knowledge whose geopolitical subject matter is not immutably structured through heterosexual mobility alone. *Transamerica's* "trans-ness" goes across and through the United States. It curves around a vexed America and drifts against laws, regulations, and customs, as this transamerican imaginary is staged by prohibitive beings from the shifting Americas. The film transmits a counter-reading through the different ways in which this new space is desired, in-

habited, and narrated — reassembling the ensuing stage of America’s Latined body politics.

The Southern Latinities undertaken herein may appear to have no epistemological material to work with. But if seen as a process and a practice that results from institutional schisms, new states of knowing emerge, which Walter Mignolo champions as “geo- and body-politics of knowledge.” These forms of awareness are brought through “geo-historical and bio-graphical configurations in processes of knowing and understanding [that allow] for a radical re-framing (e.g., decolonization) of the original formal apparatus of enunciation” (2009: 4).<sup>38</sup> Kathryn McKee and Annette Trefzer advocate, to that end, a southern studies and American studies that resituate “the histories and literary interpretations of a regional culture such as the U.S. South” through “a two-way process [where] the dimensions of the global refer simultaneously to the importation of the world into the South and the exportation of the South” (2006: 679–80). This interruption of southern studies and American studies echoes the divergence between American studies and Latin American studies. Such disciplinary separations lend themselves to “new metaphors and unexpected narratives” that in de la Campa’s view “can still claim these territories,” mostly from the sphere of American studies. But the question remains “on whether new constructs and unexpected subjects will aid in the blurring of these lines” at the level of the Americas (2001: 374). McKee and Trefzer claim that “a new Southern studies [is] based on the notion of an intellectual and practical Global South, a term that embeds the U.S. South in a larger transnational context” (2006: 678). The Global South is suitable because it aims to be more expansive — and dissonantly spacious — to the extent that it reconfigures “the legendary South of two isolated and homogeneous races” (Peacock, Watson, and Matthews, 2005: 1).

In this sense, the Global South’s content operates as a complementary point of encounter supplementing the Chicano and Chicana borderlands, U.S.-situated models of American studies, and approaches to inter-American studies.<sup>39</sup> One of the most compelling facets of Chicano/a border thought, as Héctor Calderón and José David Saldívar (1998) have demonstrated, is its ability to centrally ground Chicano and Chicana cultural productions in frameworks that figure the U.S. West and Southwest — or as José Limón (1998) has further shown, “Greater Mexico” — in relation to U.S. and Latin American literary traditions. This landscape is fundamental to Chicano and



Chicana writing and cultural imaginings. Its articulations must be understood in a broader mapping that charts “the borderlands of theories and theorists,” since the perspectives that Chicanos and Chicanas have designed need to be admitted and legitimized in literary canons and the U.S. academy (Calderón and Saldívar, 1998: 7).

But such efforts fall noticeably short in corresponding and interacting with other Latino and Latina groups who lack a specific U.S. sociopolitical and cultural identity term like Chicano and Chicana. Such a comparison would also prioritize the interactional dynamics among Chicanos, Chicanas, Latinos, Latinas, and African Americans in a globalized United States. Calderón and Saldívar’s attempts are vital, nonetheless, in their detailing of a “global borderlands” that generates “allegiances outside the sphere of Chicano studies [. . .] because ideology itself involves networks of meaning and borders through which society is knitted together” (1998: 6). The globalness of the borderlands, they attest, “must be reinterpreted against the influx of Third World immigrants and the rapid re-Hispanicization of important regional sectors of our Mexican America and the wider United States” (7).

My motive is to dissect how blackness, brownness, and dark brownness operate in multiple Souths. By doing so, I am not looking at the “globalness” of the borderlands but at the global dimensions of Latino, Latina, and African American and how we come to know them as such. “Speak of the South as you will,” forewarns Carol Stack, “but you will have to speak of it” (1996: 18). Motioning to not just speak of it but with it, we accordingly progress to what social scientist Raewyn Connell judiciously names “Southern theory.” This premise takes up unmappable global peripheries, “where the majority of the world does produce *theory*” (2007: ix). The “south” in “southern” is tied to the political dilemmas of “relations—authority, exclusion and inclusion, hegemony, partnership, sponsorship, appropriation—between intellectuals and institutions in the metropole and those in the world periphery” (viii–ix).

Adopting Connell’s insights to the Global South’s general theories demands that the concept-metaphor found “everywhere,” as Matthew Sparke puts it, be graphed “somewhere, located at the intersection of entangled political geographies of dispossession and repossession.” This is why I move in the direction of southern ways of thinking, where open double consciousness, to cite one source, refocuses on the ways in which one keeps finding geographies and reconfiguring the modalities and theories from which

social actors operate. As Sparke observes, the Global South “has to be mapped with persistent geographic responsibility,” which occasions “a call to track critically and persistently the open-ended graphing of the geo” (2007: 117). Sparke’s distinctive inclination requires that this “critical capsizing of colonial cartographic conventions” apply a Du Boisian double consciousness in “the over-mapping of the Global South: acknowledging the power of the over-mapping by dominant imaginative geographies while also disclosing the critical possibilities of the other geographies that are covered up” (119–20).<sup>40</sup>

Installed in the Global South, Sparke’s summoning of double consciousness is attentive to dominant and nondominant geohistorical and political territorial relations. Du Bois himself was heedful to such models of double consciousness, since his “colored” geography had global implications.<sup>41</sup> Du Boisian double consciousness and its manifold associations, however, are not always a given. Its relationality to an ilk of double consciousness, as it were, needs to be localized and intensively engaged in each state. I underscore, for this reason, the urgency to forge an open double consciousness that maneuvers Sparke’s “open-ended graphing of the geo.” Open double consciousness resonates with double consciousness, but it is a double consciousness with othered differences and entries. It might be argued that as an avowed Pan-Africanist Du Bois was a global citizen whose double consciousness was antecedently enhanced with a plurality of critical visions. I do not dissent from such contentions.<sup>42</sup>

It is useful to clarify that my aim is not to unearth, tally, and fully register the number of consciousnesses already imparted in Du Boisian double consciousness. My call for open double consciousness concentrates on how such awareness can be teased out and opened in light of the absences of certain populations who have had no place within prevailing U.S. black-white articulations of double consciousness.<sup>43</sup> This erasure has not been of Du Bois’s own making, of course, but a projection of how such a binary has been structured and the ways in which it operates. As such, how do groups like Latinos and Latinas, who are black, white, and with varying shades between these designations, pass through the very black-white dyad that has determinedly omitted them from double consciousness? The abstract Americanness of U.S. Latinos and Latinas demands hermeneutical openings — however small, modest, or great in scale — in the black-white, U.S.-situated North/South order that has orbited around double consciousness. Open double conscious-

ness, as an ever-rising tide of information and critical self-formation, creates orifices in the domains that trap how Latin subjects walk into and move, sometimes incompletely, between the traversing black-brown–dark brown color lines. As an ongoing process, open double consciousness is an unfinished intellectual incorporation of the contemporary flow of subjects whose personal journeys also draft a map of changing consciousnesses, contingent on their U.S. circumstances, world events, and political developments and crises. In this light, we might also investigate the circuitous paths double consciousness has taken and the pressing necessity of its return for “new” populations.

Spanning spatially and at the subjective level, open double consciousness captures extended sites of *sabidurías populares*, as Ramón Saldívar designates them (2007: 406). Saldívar’s “popular knowledges,” in connection to other selves and places, form a part of “vernacular wisdoms” (or “dialogized collective wisdoms”). They are central in the countering of what Connell dubs as “the idea of global difference.” Global dissimilarity conveys the “difference between the civilization of the metropole and other cultures whose main feature [has been] their primitiveness” (2007: 7). What does it mean to live in the Global South — or, in Connell’s words, through a general theory that tries to theorize and formulate “a broad vision of the social, and offers concepts that apply beyond a particular society, place, or time” (28) — as a U.S. African American, Latino, or Latina individual?<sup>44</sup> What kinds of southern epistemologies can account for relational black, Latino, and Latina identities? While sifting through this number of questions, I am not saying that the U.S. South becomes global by virtue of the perceived contemporary Latino and Latina browning of the region and the rest of the United States. I take my cue from a highly applicable — and productive — question posed in *The American South in a Global World*. In it, the editors inquire, “what does this world mean for arts and culture?” (Peacock, Watson, and Matthews, 2005: 3). Indeed, what would this world mean for the location, relocation, and cognitive mapping of global Latined imaginations?<sup>45</sup>

### Latin Is, Latin Isn’t: The Autobiography of an Extra-Colored Man

Despite these scholarly moves toward the open sea of a conceptual Global South, the indexing and cognitive mapping of Latino and Latina life is

saliently marked and memorialized through U.S. Americanness. The tracking of a U.S. Hispanic literary heritage, as Arte Público Press has it, ironically exposes how the conflicting impulses toward Latinoness and Latinaness demand a re-cognition of the terms and experiences that are sanctioned to revise, archive, and secure preeminent bits of the Hispanic American narrative space and body politic.<sup>46</sup> But Evelio Grillo's *Black Cuban, Black American* stands outside the purview of U.S. Americanness, blackness, and Cubanness. There is no guarantee that his most intimate and public rendition of black Americanness infinitely stays or ends in that titular space and place. Grillo's passages merit a review of the irregularities of the brown-white and black-white ensemble, for he heralds the vertiginous detours of Latinness. His passing lines are not unbroken admittances into black Americanness. They demonstrate another timbre that does not follow the traditionally anticipated forms and norms of adhering to one ethnoracial identity. Grillo (1919–2008) accentuates Latinities that are not inseparable from other forms of Latinoness, Latinaness, or blackness. Nor are they isolated, above all, when they move toward U.S. Americanness.

Just as we are trying to understand the makings of a U.S. South devoid of the Latinities that inform it, we also endeavor to evaluate how Latinoness and Latinaness garner national meaning. At first glance Grillo's memoir about an Ybor City, Florida-born man striving to "join black American society" to gain "American roots" at a time when his black and white options were limited, reads rather straightforwardly (2000: 12). But Grillo's ostensibly unassuming plot admits an opportunity to go over and open the possibilities that are imported within the linear narrative of black assimilation attached to this story. Grillo's fragmentations emphatically allow for the undoing of fixed ideas about the Latino subject's place and placement in the U.S. ethnoracial and literary landscape as entirely inanimate. By pushing a disentanglement of the fractured categories that inform the book's title, *Black Cuban, Black American* brings about a forceful question. Can we unerringly map U.S. African American, Latino, and Latina subjects when these errant bodies, like Latinities, are incessantly and at any time mobile? Grillo furnishes illuminating glimpses of a black Latin/black American record that is represented, in the introduction, as "the story of one Afro-Cuban's adventures in identity reconstruction." This self-alteration is ultimately situated as a "triumph over racial and ethnic ambiguity," even as the narrator comments on the chasm

that existed for black Cubans and black Americans (Dworkin y Méndez, 2000: viii).<sup>47</sup>

Grillo speaks of a region that is not generally hypothesized as part of the U.S. South. Much of Ybor City's economic expansion was, as Kenya Dworkin y Méndez has observed, "directly attributable to 'Latin' immigrants, who in 1886, brought with them the cigar-making industry. This revolutionized the local economy and turned Tampa into the 'clear Havana' cigar capital of the world, a dynamic new city in the New South" (2000: viii).<sup>48</sup> The history of Cuban working-class migrations prior to the 1959 Cuban Revolution localizes Cuban Americanness within U.S. racial economies and politics. Overlapping with U.S. blackness, Cuban Americanness, mainly one grounded in Florida, cannot be reductively thought of and dismissed through anti-Castro viewpoints that have been attributed as "too passionate, over the top, [and] even a little crazy" (Fontova, 2007: xi). Grillo's version of Cubanness advances an exploration of how Latinness comes to be known. The twenty-first-century Nuevo South of recent origins becomes a Global South that has had a previous Latin knowledge but whose regional Southeastern existence is now being recovered. Grillo's account can be read as an activation of Latined cultural signs performed by a black subject that is conjectured, many times, through "un-Latinized" blackness.

Narratively speaking, Grillo's life motions toward the memorialization of U.S. African Americanness, while the text contradictorily moves toward Hispanization. Institutionally restored by Arte Público Press, *Black Cuban*, *Black American* is not merely about diasporic blackness in its Cuban American and U.S. African American affirmations. Archival practices on Hispanization emerge through the press's publication and distribution of stories that are, under its editorial rubric, Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Literary Heritage (RUSHLH) and contributing to its Hispanic Civil Rights Series. This literary emendation unquestionably has great value. Nicolás Kanellos, RUSHLH's director, submits that this program's goal is to "make accessible an archive of cultural productions by Hispanic or Latino peoples who have existed since the sixteenth century in the areas that eventually became the United States." He suitably reminds us that RUSHLH has "found, accessioned, and made accessible tens of thousands of books and documents that were heretofore unknown." Kanellos also calls attention to an important characteristic of the program: that it is "not creating an 'ethnic' archive, per se, in order to

build an ethnic, minority, or subcultural identity” (2012: 371). RUSHLH’s re-constituted archive “aspires to recover all written culture, not just literature, and it intends to restore to local and national institutions what was lost or suppressed during the ethnocentric and racial construction of the nation through such ideologies and practices as manifest destiny, slavery, segregation, and capitalist construction of the government and economy” (372). These are persuasive and cogent reasons, and I share Kanellos’s ideas on and commitment to this subject.<sup>49</sup> Yet the archival resources also point us to a literary struggle: to that of the constitution of a cumbersome Hispanization in which a person speaks from a particular ethnoracial location that seems historically inert.<sup>50</sup> How, one must urgently ask, would Grillo be restored in the African American archive as well?

We know that this is true: Grillo is a black Cuban whose roots end at black Americanness, because he tells us so in a book published by “the nation’s largest and most established publisher of contemporary and recovery literature by U.S. Hispanic authors” (Latinoteca.com). But Grillo’s Hispanization does not end there or at black Americanness. Priscilla Wald’s study on processes that constitute both America and Americans — the manners and viewpoints that fashion a recognizable American nation and subject — assists us in reformulating narrations of the self that suggest ethnoracial linearity (1995: 3–5). Wald focuses on the official stories that create “We the People” and that impel the telling and retelling of untold stories by those who have been deemed socially unacceptable and have faced political censorship, personal prohibitions, and cultural conventions (1). For Wald, the authority exercised in official stories gives form to Americans.<sup>51</sup> Might the ethnoracial authority exerted in *Black Cuban*, *Black American* come from the Hispanic publishing house that is also constituting a collectivity of U.S. Hispanics? Is the authorial “I” and its official, archival direction shared — or split — between Grillo, the contemporaneous black American, and the (Hispanic) American publishing house?

I raise these considerations not to minimize either the significance of Grillo’s account or of the press. My reflections stem from the dissonances posited in Grillo’s “deep archives of memory,” as Michael Dear and Gustavo Leclerc (2003: 4) might say and in Arte Público Press’s Hispanic Americanization. If Grillo and the publishing house constitute a dissimilar “I,” what relational models are at work, and for which relational ethnora-

cial and literary constituencies? Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Nellie Y. McKay's question on African American literature equally fits here. "What relation," they ask, "does the canon of African American literature bear to that of the American tradition" (1997: xxxvi)? The textual politics and the expansive ethos of Grillo's "Hispanic" book with the U.S. Hispanic literary corpus and the African American literary tradition need to be unfolded. Nancy K. Miller notes that autobiographies present a "model of relation that organize[s] the experience of reading." Miller's schema attends to "the kinds of bonds and desires that connect readers to the contemporary memoir" and occasions "identifications (which include disidentifications and cross-identifications), conscious or unconscious, across a broad spectrum of so-called personal experience" (2000: 423). The experience of reading *Black Cuban, Black American* is broader than Arte Público Press's categories and Grillo's own absorption into blackness. The double investment of these two "I's" — the published "me" of both the press and the author — are constricted by their "important form of collective memorialization, providing building blocks to a more fully shared national narrative" (424). But Grillo's story unwittingly departs toward the commemoration of the struggles of the constitution of a *Latined American* "We the People," going against the interpretive grain envisioned in his title.

Readers enter Grillo's domestic world through the eyes of a boy who, once upon a time, was affectionately nicknamed "Chuchi." Irresoluteness is at work: the elder Grillo, as author, appears to remind Chuchi, the authenticating child witness, of a sensorial life that establishes accuracy and validity around his Cubanness. "It had to be a Saturday afternoon," the memoir initiates, "because of the way the house smelled, the way that it felt, and the way that it sounded" (2000: 3). Yet the content, smells, and sound of the Grillo household lend themselves to familial lacunae. As the narrator speculates on his family's menu for that day, "*biftec a la palomilla*," Grillo's beginning is set through a gastronomic atmosphere: "thin slices of sirloin seared rapidly in olive oil and smothered with onions, rice, cold boiled string beans, and a simply magnificent salad of lettuce, vine-ripened tomatoes [. . .] and large avocado slices." The appetizing Cuban meal is never consumed, and the visual representation of inanimate edibles lingers like an epicurean still life. Just as quickly, the smells of dead human flesh in Cuba bring Grillo's domestic

vignette to a sensorial end. He describes the refrigerated casket carrying his tuberculosis-stricken dead father, with water dripping “into a bucket placed under it, to catch the melting ice” (4). Being recollected is Grillo’s awkward steps to remake a familiar domestic sphere in the United States that has been unmade. He gives life to the Spanish-speaking household that indulges him with comfort food and draws a bodily still life of his father.

This beginning does not lead one to believe that Grillo has annulled his Cubanness and that he has wholly and incontestably assimilated into U.S. African Americanness. What comes out of Grillo’s Cuban, black, and American triangulation is a Latined *décalage* that operates in all of these ethnoracial liaisons. At stake is the vocabulary that informs not so much Hispanicness and Latinness, but Latinities’ intermittent and elastic Latinness. This Latined grammar is noted as “the past” in the text. Its cultural and ethnoracial dispersals, however, account for the “un-passed” lingering moment that affixes to, opens up, and forms through Latinities. Grillo’s Latin equivalencies are crucial for the theorizing of mutually dependent Latinities sliding through blackness as much as through brownness. His passing line from Afro-Cubanness to U.S. African Americanness is not a closure. It is an open-ended temporality that provides glimpses of, as Jane Gallop has it, the “uncanny detail[s] of lived experience” (2002: 2). Grillo’s narrative reformulates his Hispanization and gives prominence to a black Latined Americanness.<sup>52</sup> By black (or brown/dark brown) Latined Americanness, I do not mean that the alterable black subject moves toward U.S. Latinness, Latinness, or whiteness only or does so in a tidy manner. Nor do I mean to say that the black body is eliminated through dispersed Latinings. I refer, instead, to how each Latinity falls from one spectrum to another. Moving back and forth, there is no determinacy in this association of blackness-cum-brownness and its multiple dwellings.

Grillo’s southern Latinities show that his altering black Cubanness, and/or black Americanness, clings to each Cuban or U.S. African American Latinity that pauses through the comma evoked in his title. The joint states of being black do not end at black Americanness. The comma that connects, pauses on, or splinters black Cubanness from black Americanness is a measuring point that quantifies the limits of each black Cuban or black American side and adjusts the emergence and enactment of Latinities. On the one hand,



the comma's arrangement, under Grillo's representation, has stretched and morphed into a U.S.-situated blackness. But then again this comma is a clause with a stipulation beyond the narrative's set function of identity.<sup>53</sup> It marks the ever-shifting ambits of Latinities that exceed Grillo's black Cuban and black American specificity.<sup>54</sup>

Take note of how black Americans "Latinize" Grillo, thereby suggesting that U.S. African Americans are un-Latinized. Grillo draws on the ambivalence of un-Latinized blackness to allow for different forms of U.S. Americanness to emerge precisely through his Latined blackness. Grillo's model of Latinized/un-Latinized African Americanness was exposed to him when his black American classmates would refer to black Cuban students as "tally wops." This phrase, Grillo explains, is "a combination of two slang terms applied to Italians."<sup>55</sup> The term

rang out in the schoolyard whenever black Cuban children were being addressed derisively. Our [black] schoolmates found it difficult to distinguish between the Spanish and the Italian languages, so since we sounded Italian to their ears, they attached a misnomer to us. [. . .] [T]he mean and combative black American students called us *tally wop* in loud and jeering voices and with great delight. They never physically abused us, but they did substantial hurt to our feelings. (2000: 39)

The focal point of this Latinness convoking a Latin "sign community" is linguistic (Carby, 1987: 17). It is more connected to Italy than to the Spanish-speaking Americas and takes us, to borrow from Mignolo, "beyond the question of bi- or pluri-lingualism or multiculturalism." Mignolo insists, "It is more, much more. Language, epistemic, and subjective borders are the foundations of new ways of thinking, of an-other thinking, an-other logic, an-other language" (2005: 107).

Since Grillo sounds Italian, he moves from a "paradigm of newness to the decolonial model of co-existence" (Mignolo, 2005: 107). Such decolonial paradigm alludes to a shared Latin signifier by a set of presumably discontinuous, socially Latinized communities. This Latin language with different Latin actors, to summon Hazel V. Carby's comments about Afro-American women novelists, is not "divorced from the shared context in which different groups that share a language express their differing group interests." To be sure, each Latin actor and Latinity at work is "accented differently." The sign

becomes “an arena of struggle and a construct between socially organized persons in the process of their interaction; the forms that the sign takes are conditioned by the social organization of the participants involved and also by the immediate conditions of their interactions” (1987: 16–17). How these Latin sign communities expand into Latinities is central to this discussion. This analytic bent, however, does not aim to consolidate people. It vies to speak of a renewed circulation of meaning and an ensemble of individuals who, as different narrators of dynamic sign communities, dehabitualize and destabilize the “true” selfhoods housed under U.S. African Americanness, Latinoness, Latinaness, and Americanness.

Grillo’s pejorative (black) Latinness, signaled in a public school climate, demands local and national allegiances that un-Latinize him. But his questionable Latin allegiances publicly shift later on, when he enrolls at a Catholic school for blacks and at Xavier University in Louisiana, one of the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU). Grillo accesses a distinct black Americanness. And perhaps to verify his political membership, the words to James Weldon Johnson’s “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” commonly identified as the Negro national anthem, are duplicated in his volume. The “melodious, passionate song,” Grillo notes, “stirs deep feelings among black Americans.” It guided students “to develop comfort with our identity as black Americans” (2000: 45–46). Through his education and familiarization, readers can concur with Grillo’s own appraisal: that he was “fully integrated with our black American schoolmates. We were blacks, subsumed for all purposes within a monolithic group” (40).<sup>56</sup> Grillo offhandedly presents his black Cuban incorporation as one allowed into the narrow confines of monolithic black Americanness. An argument could be made that Grillo’s story remains truthful to that period’s black-and-white racial identity and legal and social segregation. Yet the prevalence of the one-drop rule also encompassed a blackness that “included people whose physical appearance was other than black” (Lewis and Ardizzone, 2001: 27).<sup>57</sup> Surely, then, such a group cannot remain so homogeneous and unbroken within its own parameters if it is also permissive of other digressions. And what of Grillo’s own undergirding Latin knowledge and Latined vacillations between black Cubanness and black Americanness?

He writes that his generation’s choices “became clear,” to either “swim in black American society or drown in the Latin ghettos of New York City,

never to be an integral part of American life" (2000: 12).<sup>58</sup> Grillo draws on black cultural and literary producers to account for his black socialization and U.S. intellectual formation. He concedes, "Our identity as black Americans developed strongly," adding an encyclopedic list of cultural figures that are key to his identity construction. To prove an unequivocal loyalty to black Americanness, he also acknowledges, "I remember but one black Cuban hero, Antonio Maceo, the general who had led the fight for Cuba's independence from Spain. There were no photographs in my home of historically significant Cuban blacks. My heart and mind belonged to Nat Turner, Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Paul Laurence Dunbar, John Brown, Paul Robeson, Langston Hughes, W. E. B. Du Bois, Allison Davis, Alain Locke, and the two brothers, James Weldon Johnson and James Rosamond Johnson, who wrote the song very dear to my heart, 'Lift Every Voice and Sing'" (16–17). Grillo's references demonstrate a knowledge that has comprehensively incorporated into U.S. blackness—publicly and institutionally, that is, for the absence of "historically significant Cuban blacks" in the privacy of his domestic world invites other admittances. The range of vision "very dear" to Grillo's heart encourages one to think about the significance of notable black Cuban erasures, as these have not been completely effaced. Like Grillo's transient Latined Americanness, historically notable people have yet to be named, and not fully as black Cuban or Cuban American either but through broader key figures and moments that are Latinizing America.

Grillo's transitions modify the passing lines of black and brown. Passing into blackness does not lead into a renunciation of Cubanness, black Cubanness, or Hispanicness. It is a deviation of Du Bois's color line that goes through Latinities' various crossings. Passing into blackness means accessing and enacting "that" black Latined being that is unimaginable and unmappable within some U.S. Latino and Latina relations as well as within the markers of U.S. African Americanness. Such a process is also about what returning entails. This does not express a return to the same former space or group. It is a different type of comeback that draws on this rejected subject matter so as to reinterpret and shape new constellations of Latinoness and Latinaness. They are resignified through the subject's open articulation and consciousness of what Latinities effectuate outside Latino- or Latina-specific domains. Passing is not an end point, but a slightly pausing, nonalphabetical symbol—the comma between black Cuban(,) and black American—that

carries great promise for further inquiry into the self and all encountered there. Such passing lines within the “divided borders” (to use Juan Flores’s [1993] phraseology) between blackness and Latinness expose the proximity these boundaries have with one another and the ways in which these voids speak in U.S. Latino/a and African American literary productions. The multiple apertures also push for the “living borders” (to return to Flores) that interrogate and reshape identifications outside arranged binaries (see Flores and Yúdice, 1990).

Formwise, Grillo’s text, at 134 pages, is a rather slim and staccato depiction. It traces a nascent self that can be “privileged as the definitive achievement of a mode of life narrative.” Grillo’s autobiography “celebrates the autonomous individual and the universalizing life story” through efforts that serve as entryways for acceptable forms of U.S. Americanness (Smith and Watson, 2001: 3). His is a recollection of an accomplished life whose achievements bounce from binary to binary, ranging from the assumed nonblack forms of Cuban whiteness to American blackness; from U.S. citizen to migrant “other”; from U.S. South to U.S. North (and their global and South-South locations); from a Latin South (Cuba) to a Latined black South (Florida); and from a lingering Latinity of supposed unassimilability into U.S. African American assimilation. As a life that strives to be fashioned after black American success, Grillo’s career path ought to be conceived as one of a race man whose uplift depends on the distinguished mobility of both Latined blackness and brownness. His educational and institutional movements attest to epistemic migrations into black-white-Latin spaces of socialization, knowledge, activism, and policy.

These successes, though, are construed as a body of facts at Grillo’s point of conclusion. His noteworthy passages are commemorated in an epilogue that reads like narrative curriculum vita. Grillo separately recounts black American and Hispanic success. His college education at Xavier came about because of “what ‘a colored southern boy [could] do’” (2000: 90).<sup>59</sup> Migrating to the North, Grillo earned a graduate degree in Latin American history from Columbia University, arguably Latining his education by expanding on his areas of expertise. He served his country by joining the military in World War II, where he fought “the opening battle in the primary war for black U.S. troops [. . .]: the war against segregation within the United States Army!” (93). His American civic service also extended to his work as an executive

assistant for the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) during the Carter administration. His brushes with the executive branch of the U.S. government are illustrated too. The book's last image includes a 1978 official White House photograph of Grillo shaking hands with former president Jimmy Carter (1977–81). Grillo mindfully returns to Arte Público Press's readerly constituency when writing, "with respect to Hispanic-Americans, I had a major role developing the Community Service Organization," a California-based Latino civil rights group. Boosting his Latino career contributions, Grillo adds that his professional experience also includes "the Spanish-speaking Unity Council, which became the most outstanding development flowing from my work with Mexican Americans" (133).<sup>60</sup>

The memoir's insights lie in Grillo's interdependent black-brown Latinities. These Latinities cannot be easily omitted, nor do they pass unnoticed. Even Grillo's portrayal of his mother and his subsequent motherless state offer some clues bearing the inadequacies of his constructed adaptation/transformation and delayed Latin unassimilation at the literary level. His Cuban/Latin mother, Amparo (the name translates as "I protect" in English), becomes less and less detailed. But she does not fully leave Grillo's stage. Amparo operates as the transitional presence into black Americanness. She is described as "beautiful, very agile, and very smart." Yet Amparo is "seldom graced by a smile, her face reflected resignation to a difficult, somewhat onerous obligation" (2000: 18). Her toilsome appearance is masculinized: she is "tall, thin, erect" (19) and "strong-willed," and because of this "humor had no place among her techniques for handling her brood" (23).<sup>61</sup> Grillo casts light on Amparo's proclivity for strict rules of conduct by addressing her in a formal fashion. She is "mother," not mom, or *mami*. He recalls that she rarely treats her son "with tenderness." Ultimately, the stern Cuban matriarch, who as a tobacco worker, habitually reeked of her means of employment, is substituted for the nurturing black American mother figure, Mrs. Byna, "a stout woman of about sixty." She gave Grillo "kind and caring love," allowing him to feel "very safe and secure" (19). Amparo's son is kindly, caringly, and lovingly looked after — protected — elsewhere. As Grillo's Cuban family life becomes more and more blurry, what takes precedent is his just formed political family. His mother's textual exit takes the orphaned Cuban character into another biographical way of being that does not manifestly and unaffectedly lead to black Americanness.

This biographical mode is a break in one's geographic and biographic temporalities. It is aligned with what sociologist Lynn Davidman has proposed, in the context of the loss of a maternal figure, as "biographical disruption." Davidman's approach allows for "continuous movement back and forth between [one's] own memories, feelings, and responses," as one's life is rebuilt "after experiencing a major, unanticipated" bereavement (2000: 6–7). This fracturing creates a need to flesh out and "refashion [one's] biography, thereby aligning [one's] sense of self with [one's] social world" (26). The biographical disruption I build on concerns the interruption of what is constitutive of peoples' lives and selfhoods in terms of geography, nation, family, memory, and cultural conventions. For my stringent focus is the discontinuity in touchstone narratives by biographical ethnoracial groups whose accounts produce further inquiry about their excess, deletions, and transitions. Grillo's irreconcilable selfhoods transport him to other literary and national processes of becoming — to other ways of being constituted as a Latined subject from the Global South. How the shifting terrains of black-brown personhoods are conceived at the theoretical level, not so much to arrive at formal identities but to articulate a Latined milieu of representation and emergence, is the focus of this chapter's last section.

### Like a Problem: Passing Lines of Knowledge and Open Double Consciousness

Allow me to now compositionally embark on this chapter's concluding sub-heading with a luminous yet unvarnished question posed to me by a student: Are Latinos and Latinas a problem?<sup>62</sup> Faced with this heuristic task, I harked back to whether Latinos and Latinas can rely on an account of this group through the same Du Boisian contours of being problems and the fashioning of the critical visions and political world consigned to double consciousness. My use of Du Bois's double consciousness and concern for problematic populations does not eclipse his theoretical use of twoness.<sup>63</sup> I turn to the meaning of the problem because it also guides subjects on how to have a consciousness of their otherness and their efforts to make the American way of life more manageable. Lewis Gordon has stressed that "consciousness is, always, consciousness *of* something" (2000: 73). By working through the construction of "political problems" in Latin-American contexts, I am also forging

an “epistemological openness” for new problems that have the capacity to engender consciousness in different American locations (72, 90). Latino and Latina sociopolitical emergence and American formation share genealogies of being. They are a type of derivative but overblown problem germinating from the black-and-white color line. This color line crafts new political families that are now moving into a family of problems. The revised ruminations thus call into question: How do Latino and Latina problems come about? What types of problematic practitioners do they become? And how to treat an evolving double consciousness when markers outside black and white pass through that dichotomy, cutting across and disturbing the facticity of those two main categories?

Unmistakably, we have a problem. But this is a serviceable problem. It works to problematize the existent black-white economy we endeavor to interrupt in everyday life to produce epistemic lines for this entangled composite of blackness, brownness, and dark brownness.<sup>64</sup> As broached with Grillo earlier, blackness and brownness are irreducible. They are not at a distance. Joint black-brown problematic routes engulfed Grillo’s two opened states, which were continually structured as disjointed. Yet the narrative’s black-brown rift intervenes and arranges an opening for double consciousness.<sup>65</sup> This openness for mobile subjectivities is quintessential to an open double consciousness in the context of Latinities. I affix “open” to double consciousness so as not to cut and isolate one set of U.S. African American, Latino, and Latina relations from another. Du Bois serves as my interlocutor. But I also branch off his thought, as the germane moments of—and thresholds for—double consciousness must be articulated through the multiple genealogies that admit Du Boisian critical awareness as historical knowledge.

Open double consciousness can be framed as a passing line of knowledge—or, a knowledge that has been passed on—through black-brown mutability. The link between blackness and brownness becomes a shifting relationality inasmuch as the peculiar meanings of blackness have been passed on to its substantive others, brownness and dark brownness. The openness of double consciousness is dispersed in motley directions. Its place as a knowledge has to be uncovered, as does the probing of what allows for the introduction and continuity of certain problems. Open double consciousness turns to different memberships of belonging that, as Susan Bibler Coutin puts it for “variegated national populations,” are multidimensional, since the contem-

porary United States encompasses inhabitants “whose legal statuses and national affiliations are diverse” (2003: 58). Even the American intentions and allegiances of Latined subjects with transnational connections and practices are not solely embedded in the United States.<sup>66</sup> Open double consciousness is therefore needed as a driving force for a more detailed analysis of black-brown-dark brown incoherence. We must take into account that blackness has run out of African Americanness, that brownness has migrated from Latinoness and Latinaness, that the South has become more southernly, and that America is deliquescent outside the United States.<sup>67</sup>

Open double consciousness transpires in a wide array of “translocations,” where self-awareness and self-alteration move not so much to reinscribe one’s life to patterns of opposition. I make use of Agustín Laó-Montes’s proposal of the “politics of translocation” to render visible links to — as well as the transactions within — the “geographies of power,” established “at various scales (local, regional, national, global) with the subject positions (gender/sexual, ethno-racial, class, etc.) that constitute the self” (2007: 317). Open double consciousness, as I submitted elsewhere, embraces itself in its unstable, autobiographical “I”: what it is, what it is not, and what it can be. It is a fused first-person pronoun that also suggests ensuing interactions of what is to come and what is to become (Milian, 2006). It is a pathway that charts places where Latinos and Latinas are a nonnarrative, an incoherence, a disruption. But open double consciousness is not exclusively pertinent to Latinos and Latinas, as its Latined portal continues to be renewed. While irreconcilable strivings may remain, the function of open double consciousness is its resourcefulness in taking to task the recontextualization of new twenty-first-century problems responding to the Global South’s volatile compositions and movements.

When Du Bois affirmed that between him and “the other world there is ever an unasked question [. . .] unasked by some through feelings of delicacy,” aspects of the “other [white] world” may be brought to bear on Latino and Latina worlds of color, whose shades of blackness move to other racial variations that “flutter around” problematic blackness, or deviations thereof. For José Esteban Muñoz, Du Bois’s articulation of his difficult location in “the other world” — repeatedly emphasized through what Du Bois finds as that world’s *unasked* question of “How does it feel to be a problem?” (1996b: 3) — emits the idea of “feeling like a problem.”<sup>68</sup> This feeling be-



comes what Muñoz calls “a mode of belonging through recognition,” namely “a mode of minoritarian recognition” (2007: 441). Muñoz puts across that “there may be considerable value in thinking about the problem of feeling like a problem as not simply an impasse, but instead, an opening” that could “index a communal investment in Brownness” (441, 445). Placing the promise of the “opening” that the problem could grant aside for a minute, I respectfully digress. Du Bois did not so much *feel* like a problem. He articulated blackness as part of a hermeneutical turn that, as Gordon points out, does not pertain to “*being* black but about its *meaning*” (2000: 63). One could contend that the lingering feeling of the meaning of a problem is simultaneously felt by the “other world” that first identifies and provides a diagnosis of, as Richard Wright put it, the “white problem” (Rowley, 2001: 332).<sup>69</sup>

Du Bois’s blackness was what gave bodily form to the problematic predicament. But since he does not provide a response to the question of *being* a problem (“I answer seldom a word”), the “feeling” is the way in which Du Bois controls his emotions from the “outrages” stemming from “the other world.” He admits, “At these I smile, or am interested, or reduce the boiling to a simmer, as the occasion may require.” For this feeling to be analytic and reasonable, the bothersome subject must also “unfeel” the weight of that blackness. The sensation of feeling like a problem must subside so that a theory on blackness (like double consciousness) emanates, which is what Du Bois also vied for in *The Autobiography of W. E. B. Du Bois: A Soliloquy on Viewing My Life from the Last Decade of Its First Century* (1968). In this self-illustration written during his ninetieth year, Du Bois introduces his lived experience as one that must be grasped as a *theory* of his life (1997: 12).<sup>70</sup> “Feeling brown,” as Muñoz suggests, thus needs more than a feeling or “a way of being in the world” (2007: 444).<sup>71</sup>

Latino and Latina troublesome status, under Muñoz’s critical eye, emerges from “the idea of feeling Brown,” of “feeling like a problem,” that is, “feeling together in difference.” This form of “Brownness registers as a mode of affective particularity that a subject feels in herself and recognizes in others” (2007: 443–44). In effect, “a ‘group investment’ in Brown feeling requires a certain transmission as affect and this happens through various sensory circuits” (447). These circuits open up the space for brownness as “a mode of consciousness that responds to the historical pressure of the historical” (449–50). But what is the historical weight of problematic brown-

ness if Latinoness and Latineness seem to gradually pull away from African American problems?

Du Bois's twenty-first-century millennial problem runs through a menagerie of a villainous, Latin (Americanized) freakery. These multisymptomatic problems have widened — squeezed into the rubric of a Latinness that is “freaking out” America. They provoke un-American distress and stand outside the national sphere of acceptable heteronormativity. They informally become a “freaking problem” for the nation that John Leguizamo calls “America[,] home of the freak, land of the depraved” (2006: 195). A brief but blatant pattern of examples, ranging from Gloria Anzaldúa and Miguel Piñero to Leguizamo and Junot Díaz, substantiates that Latinos and Latinas concur with feeling *like* a problem. But they also differ in “feeling like a freak,” something outside the grasp of America (Leguizamo, 2006: 188). They are, plainly said, freaks of an un-Americanized nature.

Anzaldúa's transgressive abnormalities gave way to a collective subjectivation put forward by a “weird” universal deformity that socially arranges her being. A disproportionately built populace materializes, comprising “the squint-eyed, the perverse, the queer, the troublesome, the mongrel, the mulatto, the half-breed, the half dead” (1999: 25). Piñero, a Nuyorican poet and playwright, amassed a “freakery” situated in Manhattan's Lower East Side, where “the hustlers & suckers meet / the faggots & freaks will all get / high” (1980: 7). His lyrical ode to “ghettocide” — urban alienation — actively makes him a problematic individual of “ethnic proportion” (10). Despite being an extension of what makes him, under a Du Boisian diagnosis, a U.S. “ethnic” problem, Piñero, the self-proclaimed “Philosopher of the Criminal Mind,” critically reasons through and humanizes his “criminality” (8). He embodies “the Cause” that makes him “a problem of this land” (23–25, 8). From the purview of a Dominican South in the U.S. North, Junot Díaz's cluster of social aberrations are charted as “the fat, the ugly, the smart, the poor, the dark, the black, the unpopular, the African, the Indian, the Arab, the immigrant, the strange, the femenino, the gay” (2007: 264). These different sets of disabling anomalies from different geopolitical locations (or demographics that compose a Global South), propound an open double consciousness that allows for the enabling entry of subjects who exceed the unbending oppositions of black-and-white and brown-and-white. Raising this preoccupation animates the need to more carefully probe into and rejuvenate moving epis-

temologies that deflect from and align with what Paul Miller has called “the famished souls of a geography of now-here” (2008: 5).

I have attempted in this inaugural chapter to afford Latinos and Latinas another avenue into Du Bois’s sculpting of double consciousness and the parallel lines “of color” that accompany the color line in the U.S. American order. These southern Latinities revise porous Norths and Souths and bear in mind Peter Davidson’s contention that if “North is always a shifting idea,” so are the South, the Nuevo South, the Newest South, the Global South, and the open Latinities that are passing through them (2005: 8). The transformative migrations that have been researched are but one example of these living southern Latinities. The very movement from myriad vantage points indicates how the geography of white-black-Latin relations triggers an open double consciousness among these passing groups and their passing lines.

These evanescent passages point to the need for a more nuanced focus on biographical patterns opening up larger southern conversations. Narratives like Grillo’s highlight how both blacks and browns pass into and are admitted in worlds with fairly limited possibilities of being. How they walk in and out of these worlds and the types of knowledges they carry have doubtlessly been the key points of exploration. As Danzy Senna cued us—following James Baldwin’s signal at the end of *Notes of a Native Son* that “[t]his world is white no longer, and it will never be white again” (1984: 175)—U.S. African Americanness “is black no longer too” (2009: 195). The Latino and Latina ethnoracial world, as diagrammed, has ceased to be a binding brown also. The next chapter explores this premise. It surveys the Latinities of blackness and how these shift from blackness to brownness—pursuing these geographic and racial movements from Central America and Mexico.