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Before *Bodak Yellow* and Beyond the Post-Soul

Cardi B Performs AfroLatina Feminisms in the Trance

OMARIS Z. ZAMORA

The post-soul is an era and aesthetic marked by the post-Civil Rights movement and is part of a dedicated study of how our conceptions of blackness and Black identity would change in an era of social and political integration. As Bertram Ashe describes, it

...generally refers to art produced by African Americans who were either born or came of age after the Civil Rights movement. [He] limit[s] the post-soul aesthetic to artists or writers of the post-Civil Rights movement generation for one crucial reason: these artists were not adults during the civil rights movement.¹

Furthermore, Ashe describes that what makes writers and artists post-soul is the fact that their work pushes the boundaries of blackness and traditional African American culture in the realm of a post-Civil Rights integrationist nation state.² For other scholars like Mark Anthony Neal, the post-soul is part of a post-civil rights freedom and celebration of the complexities of Black experiences in regards to class and gender.³ While one of the most provocative assertions of the post-soul aesthetic is its pushing of the boundaries of blackness, the blackness Ashe speaks of limits itself to African Americanness. In

particular this boundary is described as one between Black—African American culture and identity, in particular—and US American white. In other words, this pushing of the boundary is not about blackness, per se, but about how much white and euro-centric cultures mix or play an influence into African American cultural production and vice versa. This dynamic is what post-soul scholars like Trey Ellis call a “cultural mulatto.”⁴ The post-soul is interested in the work of African Americans in the post-Civil Rights era—meaning that the boundaries of this blackness does not consider other Black identities like that of Black Latinos/as/xs or AfroLatinos/as/xs.⁵

We understand that the Civil Rights movement and its aftermath also encompassed the political movements of Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, Native Americans, and others. Limiting the engagement of blackness to African Americans erases the transnational Black diasporic lives of post-soul cultural producers like Audre Lorde, Denise Oliver-Velez, Felipe Luciano, and Jean-Michel Basquiat, among others. The rise of Black and Chicana/Latina feminist movements in the 1970s and 1980s are also part of the post-soul era. During the same time as the rise of post-soul scholarly conversations in the 1980s, Black and Chicana women were reclaiming a feminist theory that re-centered racialized women’s bodies and theorized in the flesh. Both Chicana/Latina and Black feminist movements continue to develop a feminist philosophy with key elements that helps us further understand the experiences of women of color. Black feminist thought has provided us with its theories of intersectionality that allows us to understand that race, sex,

nation, and class oppressions are intersectional and that the matrix of domination highlights how these intersectional oppressions are organized.⁶ Moreover, Chicana feminist thought has also contributed its theories of border identities that take migration and language as its point of departure.⁷ However, similar to the post-soul framing, they also fail to account for transnational Black diasporic identities in the United States, like that of AfroLatinas. Canonical texts offered by some of the pioneering thinkers of Black and Chicana/Latina feminisms like that of the Combahee River Collective Statement, Patricia Hill Collins' *Black Feminist Thought*, Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera*, and *This Bridge Called My Back*, one notices the essentialist notions of race and migration that do not allow the recognition of AfroLatina women's subjectivities.⁸

AfroLatinas " ... transgress essentialist conceptions of self, memory, culture, and politics corresponding to all-encompassing categories of identity and community such as simply 'Blacks' and 'Latinos.'"⁹ To locate an AfroLatina feminist thought, we must obtain not a rigid positionality, but one that is informed by afro-diasporic reading practices that challenge our thinking of the relationship of blackness to national belonging. Black diaspora queer studies scholar Rinaldo Walcott's notion of "diaspora reading practice" reminds us to disrupt the idea that Black Studies, as a diasporic project, should not be essentialized through national identities or limited to particular national spaces like the United States, which is what the post-soul does.¹⁰ As Ana Maurine Lara highlights in her own work, transnational and migratory spaces

are intermediary and unrecognizable spaces where AfroLatina bodies are located. I ask: What happens in these intermediary and transitory spaces? To begin answering this question we must access an afro-diasporic reading practice that can facilitate our understanding of an AfroLatina experience and identity as a fluid body that transgresses various spaces at a time. This methodology of an afro-diasporic reading practice articulates a fluid positionality that allows us a space from which to read AfroLatina subjectivities throughout transnational and transcendental spaces. Only this way can one begin to recognize and articulate the many transformations that AfroLatina women experience. On the one hand, AfroLatina feminist perspectives build on the legacies of canonical Black and Chicana/Latina feminisms informed by processes and intersections of Black consciousness, sexuality, and knowledges that are constructed through the body. On the other, AfroLatina feminisms challenge the hegemonic socio-political logics and epistemologies of Black and Chicana/Latina feminisms.

US AfroLatina feminist thought is an emerging field as seen by publications that have been vital to its establishment in the last decade.¹¹ In this essay, I focus on AfroLatina rapper and reality-TV star Belcalis Almanzar, more widely known as Cardi B, as a figure that embodies the pinnacle of what it is to possess multiple understandings of blackness (i.e. Caribbean, transnational, diasporic), womanhood, and feminist epistemologies. Cardi B vacillates among subjectivities from stripper to reality-TV star to hip hop artist and political critic.¹² She moves at the intersection of multiple identities—ebbing and

flowing in ways that are outside the US social logics of post-soul blackness and Latinidad. I engage the concept of “trance” as an afro-diasporic framework, which I posit, allows us to grapple with the fluidity of transnational Afro-Latina subjectivities and movements in ways that blur the boundaries of blackness, Black and Latina feminisms. This framework creates a space for re-articulating Black diasporic subjectivities and self-making—which we might miss otherwise. Through this lens, I then analyze one of Cardi B’s social media videos that captures how Afro-Latina feminism is centered in an unapologetic practice of refusal and rejection of Black and Latinx respectability politics in ways that challenge the boundaries of US hegemonic blackness and Latinidad.¹³ My aim is that this dialogue can expand the limits of the post-soul field by taking into account an urban working-class transnational Black diasporic feminism that continues to push the boundaries of blackness.

Cardi B, Who She Be?

Cardi B was born and raised in the Bronx, New York, to a Dominican father and a Trinidadian mother.¹⁴ She spent much of her time growing up between the Dominican neighborhoods of Washington Heights in Manhattan and Highbridge in the Bronx. She was brought on to the sixth season of *Love & Hip Hop: New York* as a minor personality working with and against the narrative the show created for her: a side chick, man-stealing stripper and wannabe rapper. Instead of limiting herself to the minor role, the imminently quotable Cardi B captured the audience’s attention immediately with her quick wits and

ratchet/scammer feminist philosophies.¹⁵ Furthermore, as Sherri Williams states,

Essentially what Cardi B is what Hip Hop feminist scholar Gwendolyn Pough (2004) calls “bringing wreck” to classist and even racist notions of what is perceived as legitimate feminism. By bringing wreck, resisting traditional ways and seeing things and reclaiming and recreating spaces (Pough 2004), Cardi B is demanding a space in feminism and carving out room for herself.¹⁶

To further understand Cardi B’s feminism, we must recognize the multiplicity and multidimensionality of afro-diasporic feminist embodiment within and beyond the United States in order to acknowledge the breadth of Black feminist work produced within and beyond the Academy. By taking the lessons from the post-soul about de-essentializing blackness to task by pushing it beyond its limited African American lens, we see how the fluidity of Black diaspora feminisms in the US challenges the very limits of the post-soul. While these arguments can be made of other Black diasporic, and specifically AfroLatina reality-TV stars and singers like AfroLatina Dominican singer Amara La Negra, this essay focuses on one of Cardi B’s Instagram/YouTube videos from late 2014. Her use of social media videos prior to her Summer 2017 single “Bodak Yellow” contributed greatly to her visibility in the mainstream media and led her to become part of the cast on VH1’s reality-TV show, *Love & Hip Hop New York*.

Trance as Afro-Diasporic Framework

In early 2017, an opportunity came to potentially meet the rapper and reality-TV star

Cardi B. She was doing an appearance at a strip club in Philadelphia—a non-traditional research space. There I was: waiting, taking copious field notes on my phone so as not to look out of place. I observed how dancers created a trance experience with their audience—making individuals feel like the room around them was simply empty and that this dance was for them alone and that nothing around them mattered. Their trance invoked the warping of time and space, where gender roles, sexuality, and erotic intimacy are not static, and sometimes fleeting. To build a parallel, trance is a space invoked by movement and hypnosis, which creates a new space for rupturing the social logics of gender, race, belonging, sexuality, among other things. In the same way that trance was created in the strip club through the power of the erotic and intimacy, it is also created by the constant movement of Black transnational cultures, aesthetics and experiences. The trance re-organizes our framing of blackness and belonging. Trance creates new spaces of possibilities, imaginations that rupture or step away from stagnant social logics that dictate how we think of race, gender, sexuality, etc. Trance creates new worlds, possibilities, and space for redress. The power of the erotic and intimacy as seen in exotic dancing is a spiritual praxis of trance and enchantment. For example, in her social media videos, Cardi B builds a bond with the viewer, making them feel as if they are friends hanging out, as if they know her. She uses intimacy and the erotic as Audre Lorde defines it: “The erotic is a resource within each of us that lies in a deeply female and spiritual plane, firmly rooted in the power of our unexpressed or

unrecognized feeling.”¹⁷ The power of trance is rooted in that space of the unknown, the unexpressed, and unrecognized as Lorde points here. The erotic as a powerful tool creates a space of intimacy and closeness—a place of vulnerability. Trance becomes a fluid space where expectations are challenged, re-organized, and susceptible to change. In other words, the erotic is a vehicle that creates intimacy by which trance works. It is here where we can come back to the body and its materiality as necessary to the creation of a trance space that alters dimensions in which we locate race, gender, and sexuality.

This essay offers one way to conceptualize AfroLatina feminism by recognizing that “trance” associated with an altered state of consciousness between dreams and the waking world is a place where new possibilities and subjectivities can exist. Trance is an alternative state of consciousness, which may be facilitated in afro-diasporic religions by instruments of hypnosis, movement (dance), and repetition (rhythm or music) among others, as discussed by many Black diasporic religion scholars who engage with transnational approaches.¹⁸ Furthermore, we can think of trance as a lens through which we can recognize AfroLatina women’s embodied archives from which an epistemology is rooted in the constant changes and movements from one space to another. The repetition of the centrifugal movement of coming and going between transnational migrations, other geographical movements, or simply going from private spaces to more public spaces pushes their own consciousness and subject formation into a transcendental or trance space where

new subjectivities can be formed. In this case, “trance” is an afro-diasporic reading framework that allows us to grapple with the multiple intersections at which AfroLatina subjectivities exist.

Analysis: Cardi B Sings “Cero Gogas”

Cardi B embodies her AfroLatinidad without explanations or translations. Although many viewers now know about Cardi B’s Dominican heritage, initially she did not often talk about it on her social media videos. Instead, her social media followers got to know her via her phone camera in selfie mode while she got her hair and nails done taking the viewers with her as she performed on tour, or introduced friends to La Casa del Mofongo—or “Mofongo House” as she calls it—a Dominican restaurant in Washington Heights. She would walk through the city to neighboring bodegas all meanwhile recording herself and sharing it through her first Instagram account (which was deleted in 2017). Cardi B’s movement navigating various geographies of urban Black Caribbean enclaves created multiple dimensions of time and space facilitated through her use of social media. This movement and intimate enchanting performance with the viewer echoed the trance technique of warping time and space similar to that in the strip club, while at the same time lending itself as a lens through which to see the everydayness of her AfroLatinidad.

When she posted a video on her Instagram in a car on her way to visit her then-boyfriend Tommy in prison singing along to a merengue song in Spanish, some followers expressed surprise in the

comments—admitting that they did not know that she was also Dominican, not just Trinidadian. In the video, Cardi B sings along to La Insuperable’s chorus for “Cero gogas” while facing the camera. It is as if she is singing to her viewers; as if she were the author of this song which is about having other women envy you for using “chapeadora” tactics such as altering your body (liposuction, breast and/or butt enhancements) to lure in men in order to take advantage of them and their money—regardless of their relationship status. This chapeadora tactic of hypnotizing men is like that of a cigüapa.¹⁹ In Dominican pop culture, the “chapeadora” is a hyperfeminine and hypersexualized hustler or gold-digger and the “goga” is the woman who is her hater. In other words, “cero gogas,” means: zero haters. La Insuperable’s music does not play in mainstream US Latinx pop radio stations because of its break with US Latinx respectability politics, which similar to Evelyn Higginbotham’s notion of “politics of respectability” is anti-Black, heteropatriarchal, and frames Latinos/as/xs who follow it as acceptable US citizens.²⁰ Nonetheless, these same radio stations and other mainstream Latinx media still make space for the sonic sexual escapades of men, and some white Latina and Hispanic women like Becky G, Karol G, and Rosalía. In Dominican Republic, La Insuperable represents subversive notions of womanhood that are vulgar, low-class, and de-valued—making her own femininity a contradictory citizen of the Dominican state.²¹ Similarly, in another national space like the US, Latinx radio stations

still participate in the policing of AfroLatina women's bodies and sexualities.

As Cardi B sings along to La Insuperable's song, she dances with her shoulders to the merengue rhythms of a song that only a very limited audience would recognize. Cardi B and the song's rhythms enchant you, hypnotize you into a trance where your attention is captivated. She's wearing a burgundy spaghetti-strapped shirt that exposes her cleavage and moves her long-nailed fingers into the camera as if she is letting the person on the side of the camera know that she is talking to them—the haters. Mid-song Cardi B shifts from singing in Spanish to speaking in English—a Cardi B viewers more widely recognize. She abruptly pauses the song to say, in English, that the song describes her mood and if the viewer does not understand the song's lyrics in Spanish, they should get someone to translate it for them. She also adds that she does not care what anyone says about her.²² Her dance and movement while singing the lyrics to the trance-inducing repetition of 1-2, 1-2, 1-2 of the merengue rhythms places the viewer as someone who is singing along to the song, or on the receiving end of the message of the song. As Cardi B enchants and captivates the viewer through these rhythms and movements, she possesses the viewer's attention through this hypnosis even if it is just for those 30 seconds. She then, disrupts the song and takes advantage of this to make her performative declaration of refusal. The trance here is not solely about the performance and creating space where she can finally enter center stage for such declaration, but it is also about creating the possibility for her AfroLatinidad and Dominican blackness to take space. Cardi B's trance

ruptures the viewer's potentially narrow understandings of blackness in order to pull apart the idea that blackness and Latinidad are mutually exclusive. The trance warps the social logics of Black Latina womanhood to have to subdue itself to a narrative of respectability. A parallel that might aid our recognition of Cardi B's trance and refusal of politics of Black and Latina respectability is that of Afro-Cuban singer La Lupe who rose to fame in the 1960s and 1970s. La Lupe's performances were always described as rowdy as she took off wigs, earrings, bracelets and threw them off stage as she sang about heartbreak. Others described her hypnotizing and percussion-heavy performances as her being possessed by a spirit. Different to her counterpart, Celia Cruz, who was seen as a graceful, elegant and respectable Afro-Cuban singer, La Lupe was often casted as the crazy, promiscuous, and aggressive one. It is important to note that AfroLatina women in the music industry have had to subdue themselves to a respectability politics that is anti-Black, frames the "good" immigrant narrative, and one that holds itself closer to virgin or saint. This is not to frame or limit Celia Cruz's performance, or her own engagement with her Black Latinidad, but to point out how Latina respectability politics deems what kind of AfroLatina womanhood is acceptable and not seen as a threat.

Cardi B's performance challenges these politics through her presence and intervention in social media. As performance scholar Diana Taylor writes,

Performance carries the possibility of challenge, even self-challenge, within it. As a term simultaneously connoting a process, a

praxis, an episteme, a mode of transmission, an accomplishment, and a means of intervening in the world, it far exceeds the possibilities these other worlds offered in its place.²³

Cardi B intervenes in the world by refusing to be limited to the scripts she is given. While this may seem like a casual linguistic code switch—what makes it impactful is the way that Cardi B performs refusal as part of her AfroLatina feminist genealogy. A trance framework here would allow us to recognize on the one hand, Cardi B's embodied transnational identity that connects her to a Black Dominican ratchet culture of La chapeadora—a Dominican version of the scammer—and the ways that this lifestyle has migrated among Black Dominican immigrant enclaves. On the other, that she, an AfroLatina, is speaking back to Black and Latinx respectability politics.

In a post-soul conversation, Cardi B would embody the Black marginality that Mark Anthony Neal refers to in his book *Soul Babies*—“... the niggas, the bitches, the queers, the baby-mama, to name a few—as integral to that experience as those who try to keep them at arm's distance, rhetorically, spatially, or otherwise.”²⁴ Not only is she part of this group as someone whose ratchetness marks her distant from US Black respectability, but also as someone who has “used ‘Blackness,’ and [her] own bod[y], for that matter, as [a] site to challenge prevalent notions of Blackness.”²⁵ While Cardi B's blackness has been questioned, in an interview with pop artist and actor, Zendaya, for *CR Fashion Book*, she stated:

I don't got to tell you that I'm black. I expect you to know it... I expect people to understand that just because we're not African American, we are still black... I really just want people to understand that the color that I have and features that I have are not from two white people fucking.²⁶

In particular, Cardi B's performance in her social media videos attempts to push back against Black and Latinx respectability politics as an essentializing notion of blackness and Latinidad. Cardi B has been directly and indirectly critiqued by upholders of Black respectability politics for voicing the ways stripping saved her from partnered gendered violence, or those who believe she is not intelligent—or others who have critiqued her bodily modifications to further cater to her clientele.²⁷

In the video, when Cardi B says that she does not care what anyone says about her she is not only challenging (once again) Black respectability politics, but also a Latina respectability politics that would not only question her belonging because of her blackness, but also because of her vulgar, ratchet, and loud ways of being that are in contradiction with US Latinx aspirations of the “American Dream.” In citing Arlene Dávila, Jillian Hernández reminds us in *Aesthetics of Excess* that “the politics of race for Latinxs are obscured in mainstream media through emphasis on physical markers, traditions, and ethics that are said to be in line with ‘American values,’ such as whiteness, hard work, and close family ties.”²⁸ While Hernández writes about the figure of the “chonga,” Cardi B's performance in this video also “signal[s] leisure and forms of

class, racial, and sexual difference that are occluded in these efforts for Latinx inclusion in the realm of 'good' or what Marcia Ochoa (2014, 40) calls 'sanitary citizenship.'"²⁹ In other words, the juxtapositions of these experiences in which her Black body is central is a transnational and AfroLatina feminist action to refuse to further translate not only the language, but also the meanings of the song alongside her positionality and experience. For her, you either get it, or you don't. Cardi B's performance challenges the viewer to grapple with their own potential essentialisms around blackness, Latinidad, and feminism that have invisibilized women like her.

Conclusion

The cyberspace is a trance space where Cardi B is continuously in the process of becoming and self-making. As Harvey Young argues,

Conversely, becoming looks at the body in the present day with an eye toward the future and allows for its future possibilities. Unlike being, which is an unchanging 'one true self,' becoming is a 'production,' continually developing beyond its historical base.³⁰

As such, trance as a framework challenges us to take a step into an alternate state of how our consciousness of blackness, as a socio-political and racial identity, continuously moves through and across borders. This constant movement alters our historical base where blackness is constrained to a white supremacist lens of nation-building and citizenship. Furthermore, engaging

with trance to aid our reading of Cardi B's performance in the social media video analyzed here, expands the dialogue that Black and Latinx feminisms have initiated. Contemporary scholars in the fields of Black and Latinx feminisms have yet to theorize AfroLatina women's experiences and blackness in the context of the African diaspora even when they do mention AfroLatinas.

Cardi B's performance in the social media video analyzed in this essay is important because she is doing Black diaspora feminist theory in the flesh that we often leave out—this is Black diaspora speaking from the hood. It is not to say that what she is doing is new, but it is to say that Black Studies scholars invested in what comes after the post-soul era are missing out on what she is doing because it operates at the very intersections of a transnational working-class urban Black feminist diaspora that does not limit itself to English in the United States, nor to non-Black Latinidades. This is important because it centers how blackness in the United States has become understood as monolingual; whereas Latinidad is understood as potentially bilingual in the United States—but non-Black. Cardi B does not expect us to get it, and refuses to explain her Black Caribbeanness to anyone. Her embrace of La Insuperable's "Cero gogas"—followed by a lack of translation—posits that her AfroLatinidad will have to be accepted as is and that all viewers cannot have access in the same way. Conclusively, Cardi B's social media performance pushes the viewers to remember that the Black diaspora is multilingual, multi-sited, and multi-faceted.

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Notes

1. Bertram D. Ashe, "Theorizing the Post-Soul Aesthetic: An Introduction," *African American Review* 41, no. 4 (2007): 611.

2. Ibid.

3. Bertram D. Ashe, Crystal Anderson, Mark Anthony Neal, Evie Shockley, and Alexander Weheliye, "These – Are – The 'Breaks': A Roundtable Discussion on Teaching the Post-Soul Aesthetic," *African American Review* 41, no. 4 (2007): 788.

4. Trey Ellis, "The New Black Aesthetic," *Callaloo*, no. 38 (1989): 233–243.

5. In using the term "AfroLatino" I refer to the definition proposed by Juan Flores and Miriam Jiménez-Román in the *The Afro-Latino Reader: "They are people of African descent in Mexico, Central and South America, and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean, and by extension those of African descent in the United States whose origins are in Latin America and the Caribbean."* I use Black Latino/a/x and AfroLatino/a/x interchangeably. Throughout this essay I do not hyphenate the term AfroLatina/o/x intentionally

to convey that blackness for AfroLatinos/as/xs is not separate of their Latinidad, but a part of it.

6. See Kimberle Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (1991): 1241–99 and Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment* (New York: Routledge, 2009).

7. See Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 2007) and Gloria Anzaldúa and Cherríe Moraga, eds, *This Bridge Called My Back* (Watertown: Persephone Press, 1981).

8. These canonical texts in Chicana/Latina feminist theory does not take Black Latina women into account outside of ways that are par-enthetical or invoke a discourse of racial harmony or *mestizaje*. Meanwhile, these Black feminists' texts engage blackness in essentialist ways and do not include other US non-African American Black women.

9. Agustín Lao-Montes, "Decolonial Moves: Trans-locating African Diaspora Spaces," *Cultural Studies* 21, no. 2-3 (2007): 309–38.

10. Rinaldo Walcott, "Outside in Black Studies: Reading from a Queer Place in the Diaspora," in *Black Queer Studies: A Critical Anthology*, ed. E. Patrick Johnson (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 90.

11. See Marta Moreno Vega, Yvette Modestin, and Marinieves Alba, eds, *Women Warriors of the Afro-Latina Diaspora* (Houston: Arte Público Press, 2012), Juan Flores and Miriam Jiménez-Román, eds, *The Afro-Latin@ Reader: History and Culture in the United States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010); Yomaira C. Figueroa-Vásquez, *Decolonizing Diasporas: Radical Mappings of Afro-Atlantic Literature* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2020); Lorgia García-Peña, *The Borders of Dominicanidad: Race, Nation, and Archives of Cotradiction* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016); Ana-Maurine Lara, *Queer*

Freedom: Black Sovereignty (Albany: SUNY Press, 2020); Dixa Ramirez, *Colonial Phantoms: Belonging and Refusal in the Dominican Americas, from the 19th Century to the Present* (New York: NYU Press, 2018); Vanessa Valdés, *Oshun's Daughters: The Search for Womanhood in the Americas* (2013), among others. By extension, although not US-based, Afro-Latin American Caribbean queer feminist thinkers Ochy Curiel and Yuderkys Espinosa Miñoso have had great influence on these AfroLatina scholars—including myself. See Ochy Curiel, "Identidades esencialistas o construcción de identidades políticas: El dilemma de las feministas negras," *Otras Miradas* 2, no. 2 (December 2002): 96–113 and Yuderkys Espinosa Miñoso, "Una crítica descolonial a la epistemología feminista crítica," *El Cotidiano* no. 184 (March-April 2014): 7–12.

12. During her Instagram video "Sick of the shits" (2016) Cardi B addressed the shootings of Alton Sterling (Louisiana) and Philando Castile (Minnesota) warning politicians from using these incidents to promote their political agendas. Cardi B deleted her account in early 2017 and the original video no longer exists on the internet archives.

13. Although short, the video I analyze in this essay is one of the first videos she shares on social media where viewers were surprised to learn that Cardi B, wasn't just a Black woman, but a bilingual Spanish-speaking Black Caribbean woman.

14. Rawiya Kameir, "Cardi B's So-Called Life," *The Fader*, February 29, 2016, <http://www.thefader.com/2016/02/29/cardi-b-interview> (accessed July 1, 2016).

15. Ashley N. Payne, "The Cardi B-Beyoncé Complex: Ratchet Respectability and Black Adolescent Girlhood," *The Journal of Hip Hop Studies* 7, no. 1 (2020): 26–116 and Diana Khang, "Yeah, I'm in My Bag, but I'm in His Too': How Scamming Aesthetics Utilized by Black Women Rappers Undermine Existing

Institutions of Gender," *The Journal of Hip Hop Studies* 7, no. 1 (2020): 87–102.

16. Sherri Williams, "Cardi B: Love & Hip Hop's Unlikely Feminist Hero," *Feminist Media Studies* 17, no. 6 (2017): 1114–17.

17. Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider* (Berkeley: The Crossing Press, 1984), 339.

18. See Aisha Beliso De Jesus, *Electric Santería: Racial and Sexual Assemblages of Transnational Religion* (Columbia University Press, 2015); Eziaku Nwokocha, "The 'Queerness' of Ceremony: Possession and Sacred Space in Haitian Religion," *Journal of Haitian Studies* 25, no. 2 (2019): 71–91; M. Jacqui Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory, and the Sacred* (Duke University Press, 2005); James L. Matory, *Black Atlantic Religion: Tradition, Transnationalism, and Matriarchy in the Afro-Brazilian Candomblé* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).

19. A Dominican mythical feminine figure who looms in the mountainous campos of El Cibao who is known for hypnotizing men, putting them in a trance where they then make them disappear or die. For more on the folktale of La Cigüapa see Javier Angulo Guridi, "La cigüapa," *La Campana del higo* (Santo Domingo: Imprenta García Hermanos, 1866).

20. Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880–1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993).

21. Verónica Dávila Ellis, "Uttering Sonic Dominicanidad: Women and Queer Performers of Música Urbana," ProQuest (28088837), 2020. <https://www.proquest.com/docview/2447261555?parentSessionId=iU2KQSemmy3CeusaW08HJy2szkRawTsSL1CEUROmE1s%3D&pq-origsite=primo&accountid=13626>

22. Cardi B, "La rapera Cardi B cantando el tema de cero gogas de la insuperable," *Toxic CrowHD*, 21 May 2016, video, 0:51, <https://>

youtu.be/KZR9ndcc50E. Initially posted on her Instagram account in 2016, but the account was deleted in 2017 making the original video titled “Don’t ever forget” no longer available.

23. Diana Taylor, *The Repertoire and the Archive: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 15.

24. Mark Anthony Neal, *Soul Babies: Black Popular Culture and the Post-Soul Aesthetic* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 28.

25. *Ibid.*, 21.

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