

José, Can You See?

Latinos On and Off Broadway

Alberto Sandoval-Sánchez

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1

Carmen Miranda and Desi Arnaz Foundational Images of “Latinidad” on Broadway and in Hollywood

Any attempt at mapping the politics of representation of Latinos/as on Broadway and in Hollywood must have as its foundation two artistic figures: Carmen Miranda and Desi Arnaz. Both immigrants have contributed significantly to the contemporary stereotypical characterizations of U.S. Latinos/as. Miranda and Arnaz materialize the inaugural depictions of our present preconceptions and visualizations of “Latinidad” in the U.S. cultural collective imaginary. Given the political landscape, particularly Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Good Neighbor policy, both performers embodied the artistic translation and mediation of political relations with Latin America in the 1930s. What, at first glance, appears to be vivid entertainment and a naive exhibition of otherness constitutes, rather, a conscious and premeditated mode of representation and stereotypization of “Latinidad.” Miranda’s and Arnaz’s performances were loaded with political and ideological practices, maneuvers, and strategies.

My goal in this first chapter is to examine critically the first fleeting theatrical instances of each of the two performers, who appeared “coincidentally” in the same season (1939–1940) on Broadway. My archeological project will center on reconstructing Miranda’s and Arnaz’s performances on Broadway. By analyzing their theatrical performances as interpolated, imported cultural units inscribed as exotic markers and

signifiers of otherness, I will demonstrate how their performances laid the foundations for contemporary stereotypes of Latinos/as in the U.S. theatrical and cultural imaginary. My reading will be documented with the films *Down Argentina Way* and *Too Many Girls* (both 1940), which incorporated, almost in their entirety, the stars' original and ephemeral theatrical acts. Initially produced on Broadway, Hollywood fixed these performances on film for future audiences. As a result, the borders between Broadway and Hollywood are blurred: each genre and cultural model (staged musical comedy and musical film) complements and replicates the other. Accepting that Broadway and Hollywood constitute an uninterrupted imaginary horizon in a cultural discursive continuum, it will be possible to examine the dominant stereotypical representations of Latinos/as.

To begin, are Miranda and Arnaz "Latinos" or "Hispanics"? The answer is, neither. At the historic moment of their arrival, both were seen as Latin American immigrants, from Brazil and Cuba, respectively. After migration, their nationalities were the determining factor of their identities in the U.S. The dominant Anglo-American sociocultural world denominated and recognized them only as "Latins," and, like many other Spanish-speaking immigrants, they called themselves "Latins" and/or "Spanish," as in "Spanish Harlem." Miranda and Arnaz were first-generation immigrants who before migration had no consciousness of being a minority solely defined by race and ethnicity. Now, if I were to situate them within the framework of a political act of recovery, reclamation, and reappropriation of "all things Latin" before the emergence of a U.S. Latino/a consciousness in the mid-1960s, in that act of recovery and re-visioning of the past Miranda and Arnaz would become integral components of the history of "Latinidad" in the U.S. Their incorporation, presence, and existence in a common U.S. Latino/a past would concretize a political action embedded in a historical process of Latino/a self-determination, self-affirmation, and ethnic pride. Consequently, as we revise our past from a critical perspective, we regain our agency by questioning and reclaiming our history, which, in turn, confers a sense of being Latino/a and belonging to an imagined Latino national community. By exercising a retroactive move, and practicing a critical retrospective gaze that positions the past within a present perspective, we will enable ourselves to reevaluate the stereotypical representation of our cultural past and reaffirm the articulation of self-representation through the process of deconstructing those stereotypical images. As a result, our act of consciousness-changing and intervention will provide us the tools to retrocede in time and space while looking forward, in order to articulate new iden-

ties and foster an imagined U.S. Latino community under the umbrella category of "Latinidad."

Charting a Genealogy

It is not useful to approach the theatrical performances of Miranda and Arnaz in isolation. Their ethnic performances on Broadway must be located within a continuum of dominant cultural images of Latinos/as in the U.S. To examine the role and function of their performances in the hegemonic cultural imaginary of Broadway and Hollywood, it is crucial to look at the Anglo-American discursive and representational landscape of the "Latin other." My task will be to chart Anglo-American repertoires of the cultural imaginary and geographies of Latin America to demonstrate how stereotypical modes of representation operate, and how meaning is produced and circulated. In order to describe and examine the politics of representation and location of the "Latin other" in the dominant cultural discursive web, a distinction must be made between the "Latin foreign other" and the "Latin domestic ethnic and racial other." "Foreign other" refers to immigrants coming from Latin America. For them, home is abroad, and they are constricted to articulating their identity according to the nationality of their country of origin. They are marked by their heavy Spanish accents. "Domestic ethnic and racial other" designates those Latinos/as who have been born or raised in the U.S. and who are fluent in English. For them, home is here. People of color within this group also experience a history of racism, disenfranchisement, exploitation, and marginalization as a result of the internal colonization of the subaltern in the U.S.: Chicanos/as, Puerto Ricans, African Americans, Asian Americans, and the like. Both categories of otherness operate within an "imagined geography" that can be conceptualized as a socioideological discursive "topo(s)graphy."¹ By "topo(s)graphy" I mean a cultural geographical map in which I chart forms and models of representation in order to display the places and regions of given territorial, visual, mental, and ideological constructs of the "Latin other." Such a topo(s)graphy includes the discursive positions and situations in which the imagined other inhabits and transacts. These constructs read as a topos—a rhetorical discursive convention composed of an ensemble of common places, motifs, themes, tropes, symbols, icons, and metonymical and metaphorical relations.

I will demonstrate how this rhetorical topo(s)graphy structures the Anglo-American model of imagining the "Latin other." I will make evident how ethnicity and race are discursively articulated, rhetori-

cally constituted, and performed through certain stereotypical locations—that is, *locus exoticicus*, *locus tropicus*, and *locus urbanus*. I aim to demonstrate (1) how discursive representations function when portraying the “Latin other”; (2) how dominant ideologies register racist and racialized discursive modes and practices in the representation of the other; and (3) how ideology interpellates and positions individuals in given social and historical contexts and power relations. The topo(s)-graphy of this ideological apparatus can be mapped in four coordinates: spectacle, exoticism, an inventory of agricultural and raw materials, and tourism.

The imagined topo(s)graphy of Latin America as a whole has its own continental umbrella designation of being “south of the border.” Only a handful of countries compose this imaginary geopolitical map: Cuba, Mexico, Argentina, and Brazil. Anything can happen, anything goes south of the border, for Latin America provides a carnivalesque atmosphere, the ideal space for romance, leisure, and sexual excitement. The inhabitants of this imaginary land, at times interacting in the liminal zone of the border itself, exist for the sole purpose of entertaining Anglo-Americans by playing whatever roles they have been assigned: performer, bandit, Latin lover, delinquent, or spittfire. “Latins”’ *raison d’être* is to sing, dance, romance, be comical, and live from fiesta to siesta. Neither time nor history regulates this exotic and mythical spatial terrain. In the 1930s and 1940s, Latin America became a postcard, a photograph, a tourist attraction, a night club, a type of theme park where fantasy and fun were guaranteed and escapism assured while U.S. national security interests were guarded. “Putting on a show” meant impersonating stereotypes in which and by which the “Latin other” is objectified, depicted in demeaning or excessive ways, and/or made into a spectacle.

Women have been a traditional source of spectacle in patriarchal society, and that misogynist tradition continues in this domain. Images of virginity, penetration, and fecundity abound in the descriptions of landscapes in the chronicles of the conquest of America. Like the Spaniards and other explorers, who in their conquests and colonizations perceived the New World as a foreign body (that of a woman), the United States has its own history of feminizing the South American continent.² Patriarchal and imperial U.S. discourse represents Latin America as a feminized and sexualized other who must be controlled, tamed, and possessed. For example, in a political cartoon published in the *Philadelphia Evening Public Ledger* in 1923 and entitled “My, How You Have Grown,” Uncle Sam courts a Latin America personified as a white Spanish lady who is wearing a mantilla and shawl and using a



1.1 Caricature: “My, How You Have Grown!”

fan all stereotypical props of “Latinness” (fig. 1.1).³ Uncle Sam, as potential suitor, displaces Europe, the previous patriarchal possessor. Europe has been replaced and Latin American men have been displaced. They have been silenced, castrated, and left out of all affairs, political and otherwise.

Representation of Latin America as a woman continued, but changed in the 1940s, when Latin America was personified as a fertile woman. It was now Carmen Miranda who emblemized Latin America’s production of agricultural goods. As historian Eduardo Galeano has stated, “Carmen is the chief export of Brazil. Next comes coffee.”⁴

Miranda was the queen of all “banana republics” (the predominant epithet used to brand Latin American countries as incompetent and ineffective in a modern capitalist world). It is ironic that the very same people who negatively stereotyped Central American countries as “banana republics” were the ones (like Rockefeller and the United Fruit Company) who turned these countries into “banana republics” in the first place.

Miranda’s exhibitionism was restricted to the spectacular staging of a cornucopia of agricultural commodities. Out of sight of the voyeur, however, was the mineral extraction that has been veiled and silenced. Rockefeller, coordinator of Inter-American Affairs for the State Department during Roosevelt’s presidency, made it quite clear that the U.S. economic interest in Latin America was not limited to fruits:

Our lines of security are not only military, they are also economic. Outward from our shores in wartime go men and finished materials. Inward must flow the raw materials to feed our factories and stock our arsenals. That demand could never have been fully met without the raw materials of our neighbors.

From them our production lines needed, and got, manganese and chromium and tungsten for the many kinds of steel alloys used in mechanized warfare. Tin for containers and copper for munitions. And bauxite for aluminum for our planes; quartz crystal for radio communications systems to lead those planes to their targets; oil to fuel the bombers, and mica for detection devices to protect us from the planes of the enemy—these and a wide variety of other strategic materials our production lines needed, and got.⁵

Uncle Sam’s relations with Latin America are not only sexist and chauvinistic, but also paternalistic and racist. In numerous caricatures in the first decades of the twentieth century, the Latin American countries appear as a child for whom the United States must baby-sit, as seen in a cartoon published in the *Columbus (Ohio) Dispatch* in 1902, in which Cuba is portrayed as a black child (fig. 1.2).⁶ The subordination inherent in such infantilization provided justification for the Anglo-American military interference in Latin American politics and economies. By infantilizing Latin America, the U.S. assumed a position of power that confined the countries and its people to viewing themselves as incompetent and in need of guidance.

Dominant cultural representations of Latinos/as were not limited to Latin Americans in their home countries. In the U.S., the “Latin domestic ethnic and racial others” have their own histories of misrepresentations and underrepresentations. Both Mexican Americans and Native Americans were targets for ridicule, stereotyping, and racism in theater and film—let’s not forget Tonto! In the film industry, there was a tradition of portraying Latinos/as as dark-skinned bandidos, villains,



1.2 Caricature: “I’ll give you one teaspoonful, Cuby. More of it might make you sick.”

and greasers. These cinematic depictions are negative and derogatory images based on ethnic and racial stereotypes.⁷

In contrast, light-skinned Latinos—Ramón Novarro, Cesar Romero, and Gilbert Roland—portrayed gracious Latin lovers, following the steps of all-time sex idol Rudolph Valentino, who played the role of a lustful gaucho in *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* in 1921. These “gay caballeros” qualify as romantic heroes whose aristocratic heritage, sex appeal, and eroticism were celluloid magnets for female audiences. Other Latinos were recruited simply as extras and used to reflect the

ethnic and racial representation needed to portray a given foreign locale.⁸

In the representational ethnic spectrum displayed in Hollywood and on Broadway (and eventually on television), the locales evolved from the wild frontiers of the West and Southwest to the jungles of the modern-day city. A new topo(s)graphy appeared in the late 1950s in the cultural imaginary of the "Latin domestic ethnic and racial other," when illegal aliens, criminals, gangsters, and drug addicts were used to stereotype Latinos/as. Cisco Kid, Speedy Gonzalez, and Tonto were displaced and replaced by juvenile delinquents and dysfunctional gang members in the ghettos of cities with large Latino/a populations: Los Angeles, Miami, Chicago, and New York. Settings such as the Alamo and the Mexican Revolution, and themes such as conquest, the Wild West, machismo, and bullfighting ceded in the 1950s to new ethnic and cultural representations.⁹ At this time, a new film genre emerged: the "social problem" film.¹⁰ The most visible example on Broadway and film is *West Side Story*, in which Puerto Ricans, who belong to a gang called the Sharks, constitute a threat to the U.S. national order. Since the 1960s, "Latin" stereotypical representations and locales have been perpetuated in the mythic derogatory constructs of the "[b]anana republics, the sleepy villages with lazy peons basking in the sun, uncivilized half-naked Indians, violent government coups spearheaded by cruel dictators, mustachioed bandits and beautiful señoritas."¹¹ In other words, the bandidos, the greasers, the *vaqueros* (cow boys), and the lazy peons became the drug dealers, the drug addicts, and the gang members. The new topo(s)graphy offered a range of urban spaces—the *locus urbanus*, *locus barbarus*, the street and jail—where the protagonists were illegal aliens, evildoers, and sinister criminals.¹²

The representation of Latinas is similar to the male stereotypical trajectory. Latinas are trapped in the stereotypes of angel, virgin, mother, whore, *cantinera* (tavern keeper), maid, and, most frequently, vamp, seductress, or spitfire. Frivolity, sensuality, and passion define women's fiery, tempestuous, and explosive personalities.¹³ If "Latin" men are reduced to being "Latin lovers," "Latin" women reach fame through other epithets: Lupe Vélez, "the flamboyant hot tamale" and "the Mexican Spitfire;" Burnu Acquanetta, "the Venezuelan Volcano;" Olga San Juan, "The Puerto Rican Pepperpot;" María Antonieta Pons, "the Cuban Hurricane;" Rita Moreno, "the Puerto Rican Firecracker;" and Carmen Miranda, "the Brazilian Bombshell."¹⁴ Such degrading and sexist labels clearly signal the exploitation of the female body and its commodification in patriarchal voyeuristic and misogynist practices. "Latin" women, or "señoritas," are objects of desire, available for

romance, to satisfy the male gaze and sexual desire, they are registered in the Anglo-American cultural imaginary in the form of woman-as-spectacle.¹⁵

In the 1940s, no image of "Latin" women was disseminated and circulated as thoroughly as that of Chiquita Banana. Chiquita comically parodied Miranda, exposing the sociocultural construction of Latin America as a female, as a banana, as a commodity. Such impudent objectification and commodification of Latin American women and Latin America placed gender at center stage, as an instrument of commercial exchange and as a means to promote the financial investments and interests of U.S. multinationals like the United Fruit Company. Chiquita was a woman and a fruit: a hybrid monster, a half-breed whose performance became an Anglo-American cultural icon. In commercials, Chiquita delivered the message that bananas should be a part of the U.S. diet and menu. She had to sell herself with a touch of "Latin" flavor, referring to her tropical nature. The ad's jingle narrates how she comes in a banana boat from a little island south of the equator in order to help the Good Neighbor policy.¹⁶

Chiquita's native home is the tropics, a symbol of exoticism that actualizes the stereotype of the "Latin foreign other" in the U.S. cultural imaginary. Undoubtedly, she is a component of the U.S. cultural topo(s)graphy of Latin America and, as such, inhabits the realm of exoticism, tropical rhythm, local color, visual pleasure, and romantic spectacle. The commercial jingle was successful because it duplicated a cartoonish version of Carmen Miranda, who was then at the top of her career. Chiquita's eagerness to advance the Good Neighbor policy demonstrates how the advertisement transmitted a propagandistic political message about issues of foreign policy. Without Miranda there would have never been a Chiquita Banana; without the Good Neighbor policy there would have never been a famous Carmen Miranda; without Chiquita Banana, United Fruit would have never made big profits.

The Good Neighbor Policy

Franklin D. Roosevelt, the Good Neighbor policy, and "Latin" musicals constituted an inseparable triad in the 1930s and 1940s. Their ideological platform depended on the existence of each component, which in exchange validated the political, economic, and cultural crusade against the Axis powers and potential Nazi penetration of the Americas. In order to secure U.S. national interests, Roosevelt sought a hemispheric alliance. He concentrated on accomplishing Pan-American unity through diplomacy, economic policies, strategic military agree-

ments, and cultural exchanges. The Good Neighbor policy's primary purpose was to safeguard foreign markets and sources, and to guarantee profitable investments "south of the border." The hardest aspect of this was having to change the image of the U.S. A succession of interventions, invasions, and military occupations in Mexico, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica had made the image of "good neighbor" a hard sell.¹⁷ An agreement was made between the U.S. and most Latin American nations that no country was to intervene militarily in another's domestic affairs. Although the U.S. abstained from explicit interference and intervention, it made sure to maintain a few strategic territories—the Canal Zone, and military bases in Guantanamo, Cuba, and Puerto Rico.

The primary U.S. policies and initiatives in Latin America concentrated on introducing industrialization, making profitable markets available to U.S. investors, promoting commercial interchange, and developing tourism.¹⁸ One of the most active architects of the plan was Nelson Rockefeller, in his position of coordinator of Inter-American Affairs.¹⁹ Rockefeller's work on hemispheric coordination and cooperation led to the implementation of cultural relations and exchange programs. In order to preserve in situ strategic and security interests, a massive campaign promoted Pan-Americanism in the cultural domain. Many programs mobilized and circulated a cultural agenda that would benefit U.S. capitalist, military, and national interests.²⁰ No other cultural medium collaborated with the goodwill campaign to the extent that the entertainment industry did, in all its aspects: music, dance, theater, and film. Hollywood embraced the hemispheric partnership, creating films such as Walt Disney's *The Three Caballeros* (1945).²¹

Interest in Latin America had already been shown in the 1930s, with movies such as *The Cuban Love Song* (1931); *Flying Down to Rio* (1933); *La Cucaracha* (1934); *Under the Pampas Moon* (1935); *Headin' for the Rio Grande* (1936); *Tropic Holiday* and *Old Mexico* (1938); *South of the Border*, *Mexicali Rose*, and *Old Caliente* (1939); and *Gauche Serenade* (1940). Such infatuation with the "Latin other" had been launched and officially endorsed in Franklin D. Roosevelt's inaugural speech of 4 March 1933, in which he explicitly addressed his political interest in Latin America, saying, "In the field of world policy I would dedicate this Nation to the policy of the good neighbor—the neighbor who resolutely respects himself and, because he does so, respects the rights of others—the neighbor who respects his obligations and respects the sanctity of his agreements in and with a world of neighbors."²²

During the years of the Good Neighbor policy, it was not only film that played a significant role in defining the Latin American as "Latin

foreign other;" music also became a prominent feature on the Anglo-American cultural imaginary topo(s)graphic map. "Latin" song and dance had entered the U.S. in the 1920s, when Valentino started a tango craze with his sexy and seductive dance scene in *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*. In the 1930s, there was a rumba craze, modeled after the Cuban *son*.²³ In the 1940s, Miranda and Arnaz popularized the samba and the conga, respectively; in the 1950s it was to be the mambo. No other artist was as instrumental in propagating the "Latin" rhythm craze as the Spanish-born Xavier Cugat. Desi Arnaz began his career with Cugat's band; Miranda costarred with Cugat in *Date with Judy*; his music vitalized many Hollywood "Latin" musical films.²⁴

On the Anglo-American airwaves, "Latin" rhythms provided the desired escapism, exoticism, and potential for fantasy which was yearned for after the Depression and during World War II. An international language, music easily crossed the border and "Latinized" the Anglo-American world.²⁵ "Latin" styles and melodies spread through all forms of Anglo-American cultural expression: the cinema, Broadway revues and musical comedies, and popular songs.²⁶

The impact of "Latin" music was seductive and contagious.²⁷ Broadway welcomed the rumba craze by interpolating "Latin" rhythms and songs in musicals such as *The Third Little Show* (1931); *Anything Goes* (1934); *Jubilee* (1935); *Panama Hattie* and *Louisiana Purchase* (1940); and *Mexican Hayride* and *Let's Face It* (1941). The placing at center stage of "Latin" song and dance reached its pinnacle with the introduction of Miranda in two Broadway musicals—*The Streets of Paris* (1939) and *Sons o' Fun* (1941)—and Desi Arnaz in one—*Too Many Girls* (1939). With the "Latin" craze, in crescendo, New York City night clubs like the Copacabana, La Conga, and the Latin Quarter featured "Latin" stars.

"Play Latin for Me"

In the 1930s and 1940s, "Latin" rhythm swept America. Rumba and conga produced a dance craze that no one could escape; it was as if everyone had dancing feet. However, it must not be overlooked that, in many of the popular songs, Latin American rhythms evoked primitivism, liberation of the instincts and the body, and pervasive sexuality. Rhythm transported dancers to exotic and erotic locations where love affairs awaited them.

In an article entitled "The Rumba is Here to Stay," published in *Song Hits Magazine* in 1941, José Morand gives the following explanation for the genealogy of the rumba:

What is this music and in what way does it differ from the ordinary American Jazz? I believe the answer lies in its racial origin. The story probably goes back to the Moors in Spain. Take some of your beautiful Latin American tunes and if you have studied the subject you can feel that Moorish influence in many of the melodies, especially those with a minor strain in them. The melodic qualities of the Moors and Spanish gypsies combined with some rhythmic ideas from the great continent of Africa just across the straits—that seems to have been the parentage of the rumba, and geographically it seems logical, though nobody seems able to produce definite proof. Mixing of races often produces unusual combinations of rhythm and melody.²⁸

While speculating, Morand connects rhythm with Africa, revealing a racial origin. Both “Latin” rhythm and the peoples of Latin America are hybrid, mestizos, mulattos—in his own words, “unusual.” Morand’s observation shows that music can be racialized and, at the same time, rhythm can mobilize racist conceptions and attitudes. In these terms, rhythm and exoticism connote race—specifically African race—and race can be musically performed.

It was through dance bands, the radio, and the recording industry that “Latin” songs became popular and in demand. And, of course, there was Hollywood to put these songs in circulation within the practice of ethnic simulacrum. In the cultural topo(s)graphical map that I am charting, the songs themselves, in this era of cultural exchange fostered by the Good Neighbor policy, re-present how the “Latin foreign other” is conceived and how stereotypical “Latin” images were propagated. Indeed, music was one of the discursive formations through which Latin American culture became visible and, most of the time, stereotyped.²⁹ The medium of music was especially powerful because it was everywhere: on stage, in film, on the radio, in the dancehall, and in everybody’s memory.

The “Good Neighbor” song (in the film *Panama Hattie*), though it was a parody of the Good Neighbor policy, clearly illustrates the stereotyping of Latin Americans. It inscribes the limited vocabulary with which Anglo-Americans communicate with “Latins”: “amiga/o, muchos amigos, hasta mañana, adiós, sí sí, macho amigo, mucho macho.” It is astonishing and illustrative that this lexicon embodies a series of images that perpetuate how “Latins” are conceived: mañana—the concept of time is fundamental to expose the differences between “Latin” and Anglo-American cultures; sí sí—the “other” is always expected to accept Uncle Sam’s will; and macho amigo, mucho macho—“Latin” men are frozen in time as machistas. These linguistic cultural constructs—and others, such as fiesta, siesta, gaucho, señor, caballero, chiquita, señorita, patio, maracas—constitute the vocabulary, a kind of

Spanish 101 dictionary that will be used repeatedly in other songs, musicals, and films. Such a limited vocabulary presupposes instant and effective communication with “Latins,” as well as assuming that Anglo-Americans understand Spanish language and Latin American cultural reality.

The Anglo-American musical discursive topo(s)graphy of Latin America would find its maximum expression in the Broadway performances of Miranda and Arnaz in 1939. After debuting on the Great White Way, their successful showmanship and charismatic personalities took them immediately to Hollywood. Furthermore, Miranda and Arnaz became the iconic mediators and cultural promoters of the Good Neighbor policy. *Variety* of 19 February 1941 made it clear that Anglo-American film stars would advance the politics of the Good Neighbor policy “south of the border”: “Film star shuttle service between Hollywood and South America, at least partially at the expense of the United States government, is in prospect starting this spring. It will be the result of a survey by Nelson Rockefeller committee to cement goodwill between the continents.”³⁰

Miranda and Arnaz became embodiments of the goodwill political strategy of the time, which intended to imprint ethnic authenticity on the movies set in Latin America and to capture the Latin American movie markets. There was some unease about Miranda’s successful appropriation, with concerns about U.S. reaction to her humor; as *Variety* of 6 November 1940 put it, “Carmen Miranda is being featured in the new ‘Down Argentine Way,’ and while she’s known in Buenos Aires and Rio de Janeiro, she is little known in the interior or in Chile, Peru or elsewhere in South America. What will happen when the film gets here no one knows but advance press notices that Miss Miranda is ‘the idol of South America’ have brought nothing but laughs—laughs of the kind that don’t bring biz.”³¹

Little did they know: instantly, Miranda took El Norte like a storm, by surprise. She became a superstar, earning at least \$200,000 a year, becoming the highest paid female star at the time.

Unlike Miranda’s, Arnaz’s career did not flourish until 1951, when he created the situation comedy *I Love Lucy* with his wife Lucille Ball. Although he was one of the original stars who promoted the Good Neighbor policy, in his autobiography, *A Book*, Arnaz expresses resentment that he was invited with other actors on a goodwill tour to Mexico not for his talent but because he spoke Spanish. His presence was used to get a reaction from the Mexican people about the Good Neighbor policy.³²

Amazingly, the *Variety* article from 6 November 1940, in its last two

paragraphs, opened the door to the issue of stereotyping the “Latin other” in the Anglo-American cultural imaginary:

Mexicans are frequently cast as South Americans, and nothing brings more grumbling. A Hollywood writer, here recently, explained that seeing the tremendous number of European types, he had an entirely new conception of casting possibilities for authentic South American locale pix. Nothing draws more resentment than the impression that North Americans believe South Americans are part Indian.

All over South America, dress is similar to that in the States and Europe. Yet films come here showing “South American characters” in tight laced pants and long sideburns or shawls and mantillas. That’s museum stuff, film men here argue, and it has no excuse.³³

This comment points to the complexity of the politics of ethnic representation. First, it shows how ignorant Anglo-Americans are in their depictions of Latin Americans. Second, it introduces the issue of race and mestizaje in Latin America. Third, it brings to the forefront the problematics of authenticity. From this vantage point, an interrogative positioning emerges, facilitating a critical reading: Where do Miranda and Arnaz fit in this model? How authentic are their performances? How do race, ethnicity, class, and gender determine their own representation and performance as “other”? How is the “other” portrayed through costumes, locale, body gestures, song and dance, and foreign accent? Do Miranda and Arnaz accommodate their performance acts within the Anglo-American cultural models of the representation of the “Latin foreign other” and within the horizon of expectations of the Anglo-American audiences on Broadway and in Hollywood? Do Miranda and Arnaz continue to involuntarily perpetuate the dominant stereotypes of the “Latin other”?

The Brazilian Bombshell: Carmen Miranda

Down Argentine Way (1940) was the product of the marriage between the Good Neighbor policy and Hollywood. Responding to the U.S. urgency to establish hemispheric ties, the movie was an ideological and political package used in initiating a new covenant with Latin America. With the goal of making the film more attractive and pleasing to Latin American audiences, Hollywood interpolated Carmen Miranda’s Broadway performance in *The Streets of Paris*, which had been a rousing box office success (fig. 1.3). Thanks to Hollywood’s effort to bring a touch of ethnic authenticity to the screen, Miranda’s performance was preserved almost in its entirety. It must be noted that this



1.3 Carmen Miranda in *The Streets of Paris*. (Billy Rose Theatre Collection, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.)

attempt at authenticity is also registered in the Latin American location of the film; as Luis Reyes and Peter Rubie have noted, "*Down Argentine Way* (1940) is notable for being the first in a series of Technicolor musicals at Fox that utilized "Latin" background and themes."³⁴ The movie is essential to a critical examination of the ethnic representation of Latinos/as on Broadway and in Hollywood. Although I am focusing primarily on Miranda's act, the movie as a whole constitutes a great example of Hollywood's "othering" practices.

Down Argentine Way's plot is simple and superficial: a young Anglo-American woman (Glenda), a rich New Yorker whose hobby is collecting horses, falls in love with a rich Argentine (Ricardo), who is attending a horse show in the U.S. Ricardo refuses to sell Glenda a horse after finding out that she is a Crawford. His father, who has had a longstanding family feud with the Crawfords, has instructed him not to sell them any of his horses. After Ricardo's return to Argentina, Glenda flies to Buenos Aires with her aunt to acquire a new horse and to conquer Ricardo. Her interest in horses parallels her search for a husband. But there is an inconvenience: the romance gets complicated when Ricardo's father discovers that Glenda is a Crawford. In order to gain his father's consent for his relationship with Glenda, Ricardo decides to enter the best horse in a race. After intensive training, the horse wins. The victory convinces the father to change his mind. In the end, the father accepts Glenda and the couple lives happily ever after.

How does Carmen Miranda fit in this Anglo-American imaginary topo(s)graphy of Latin America? After Miranda's success on Broadway, Twentieth Century Fox foresaw the lucrative potential of her act. Precisely, she incarnated the ideal symbolization of the Good Neighbor policy. Miranda's cameo appearance in the film was viable through the inclusion of a Buenos Aires night club performance. This scene occurs as part of a tour of the city's night life, given to Glenda by Tito, a "Latin hustler." The Club Rendezvous, featuring Miranda, was among the clubs visited. In this club scene, Miranda's Broadway act was transplanted to Hollywood, revealing the ideological discursive continuum between the Great White Way and the Factory of Dreams.

Down Argentine Way opens with the song "South American Way" and immediately exposes the limited and stereotypical ways through which Hollywood visualizes and characterizes Latin Americans. This song, in both the Broadway performance and the movie, circulates and reinforces the stereotypical Anglo-American representations of South America. As on Broadway, Miranda mesmerizes the film audience. She appears in the Technicolor brilliance of colorful costumes and glittering jewelry. In this opening scene, Miranda introduces the dazzled au-

dience to the flavor, glitter, rhythm, and vivaciousness of Latin American culture. Her song, "South American Way," maps the stereotypical representation of Latin America as the land of romance where all worries are forgotten.³⁵ The tropics signal sexual liberation and leisure time. South America offers a "crazy" good time, and dreams of love.

As the opening number of the film, this song is out of place, since the action takes place in Argentina. Shouldn't Miranda, have been singing in Spanish instead of Portuguese? Such an error of ethnicity/language was not well received in Latin American movie markets. Miranda's introduction of Argentina was a total embarrassment for the Anglo-American film industry and exposed Anglo-American misunderstanding of nationalist, ethnic, and racial differences in Latin America. Miranda's act at the night club is credible, but rumba and samba are not dances native to Argentina. This opening scene registers the confusion within the Anglo-American cultural imaginary regarding the representation of the "Latin foreign other" and its geography: one signifier is same as the other and the other and the other. All geographic locations become a conflation of different exotic sites: the tropics, the pampas, the Andes—where romance, comfort, fiesta, and siesta are forever guaranteed.

Within this prejudiced and racist way of seeing, "Latins" in the film are one-dimensional. Miranda stands for the "Latin" stereotype of the gayest señorita who is always dancing and advocating the enjoyment of life, inciting passion and sexual desire through her exotic looks. Other "Latins" in the movie are experts in romance or known for their laziness and slow-paced life. As "South American Way" demonstrates, "Latins" ride on mules, signaling primitiveness and farcical behavior; the chauffeur is always taking a siesta; the caretaker of the horses is a grotesque and comical character; the servants and villagers look like condescending caricatures of Mexican peasants; Tito is an opportunistic hustler who takes advantage of the tourists; Ricardo crystallizes the image of the handsome Latin lover, the courteous and charming rich caballero, the colorful gaucho.³⁶ No wonder, given all the above offenses, that the spectators in Buenos Aires protested the film and Twentieth Century Fox had to reedit and reshoot some scenes that were degrading and insulting to Argentines.³⁷

It is important to note that Miranda's first appearance in a Hollywood film was her Broadway act per se. This not only confirms her tangentiality to the film, but, most important, it anchors Miranda in her Broadway experience.³⁸ Why did she become such an immediate sensation and a cultural icon for the audiences and theater critics?

Carmen Miranda was no newcomer to the entertainment industry;

she was an experienced performer. Before her arrival on Broadway, she had been a star in Brazil. She had recorded more than three hundred records and had been featured in five films. On a cruise to South America, Lee Shubert, after seeing her performance at the Casino de Urca, recruited Miranda to appear in his latest musical revue, *Streets of Paris*, which opened on Broadway on 19 June 1939. Her performance stopped the show at the end of the first act. Though she sang in Portuguese, communication through language was not necessary as long as there was music and spectacle. As one critic noted, "The language of Brazil is Portugese. Maybe you no spikka. But let Miranda sing to you and you're practically a native. For her language doesn't need an interpreter. Her flashing smile, those what-big-eyes-you-have, a shrug or two and those marvelously expressive hands, ring the bell the world round. Call it 'oomph,' 'yumph,' or go way back to Elinor Glyn and call it 'it.' That's Miranda."³⁹ Miranda's rendition of "South American Way" (which, with her heavily accented pronunciation as "Souse American Way," became her signature tune) was one of the musical numbers.

For Broadway audiences, Miranda constituted the most eccentric, exuberant, and popular cultural manifestation of Latin America. Theater critics described her as a fiery Brazilian singer and dancer, with picaresque eye movements, hips in motion, sensual hand gestures, and exotic language, a woman who hypnotized and electrified audiences on Broadway and in Hollywood. She impersonated not only Latin American women but Latin America itself, becoming both the "ambassadors of Brazil" and the "ambassadors for the Good Neighbor policy." Critics were well aware of Miranda's political role:

As an advertisement for Roosevelt's good-neighbor policy, she is worth half a hundred diplomatic delegations. It's that 'Sous American way.'⁴⁰

Miss Miranda is the greatest event in our relations with South America since the Panama Canal.⁴¹

Here is a fine advertisement for the good-neighbor policy, here is a superb neighbor. Last night the audience hailed her raptuously.⁴²

Miranda, a foreigner singing in a foreign language, became such a visual spectacle that the Portugese lyrics did not interfere with the reception process at all. Indeed, some critics assumed that she was singing in Spanish:

The Miranda sings rapid-rhythmed songs in Spanish to the accompaniment of a Brazilian band. . . . But she radiates heat that will tax the Broadhurst air-conditioning plant this Summer."⁴³

Her name is Carmen Miranda. Señorita Miranda sings three Spanish songs to the accompaniment of her own sextet of guitarists.⁴⁴

Spanish has always been a blessing of a language. . . . For Miss Miranda, the chief good in the present good neighbor policy, is the chica who in six sizzling minutes, the finale to the first act, star-spangles The Streets of Paris.

"Nobody here knows what I sing. All they can do is understand from my tone. From my movement. It is a maravilla."⁴⁵

Not only did Miranda make a spectacle of herself, of Latin American women, and Latin America, but critics and audiences glamorized her as a tropical bird with all its plumage and splendor, a native of the jungles:

Enveloped in beads, swaying and wriggling, chattering macawlike Portuguese songs, skewering the audience with a merry, mischievous eye, the Miranda performs only once, but she stops the show.⁴⁶

She is an astonishingly gracious singer, making lively, limpid, sweet, enchanting sounds. No rarer bird has come here in years.⁴⁷

The critics did not hesitate to make metaphor of Miranda's difference and sexuality through animalization and monstrous objectification:

[W]hen she insinuates one of her Brazilian ditties into the audience with the dexterity of a snake charmer, the effect is devastating.⁴⁸

She has the face of an animated gargoyle and entrancing movements and whatever else it is that makes the toasts of towns.⁴⁹

It appears that critics lacked the words to describe Miranda's performance: it was her difference that obstructed language; she was too slippery to be classified:

What it is that Carmen has is difficult to describe; so difficult, in fact, that dramatic critics have grown neurotic in their attempts to get it into words that would make sense and at the same time not brand them as mad sex fiends. Nevertheless, it must be attempted again. First, there is the impact on the eye of Carmen's costumes, always barbaric and brilliant, but nearly always covering her thoroughly with exception of a space between the seventh rib and a point at about the waistline. This expanse is known as the Torrid Zone. It does not move, but gives off invisible emanations of Roentgen rays.⁵⁰

In the absence of words, critics confuse race and ethnicity. Miranda personifies, in its entirety, the racial, ethnic, and sexual "barbaric other" in the Anglo-American cultural imaginary as informed by the topo(s)graphical discursive repertoire of Latin America as the "Torrid Zone." Miranda's place of origin adjudicates her the epithet of "hot

tamale," with all its erotic connotations, in addition to locating her in the racial constituencies of the Latin American native peoples:

When Carmen Miranda joined the cast of *The Streets of Paris* the boys and girls of the ensemble adopted her as their Inca Goddess of Good Fortune and token of a lengthy run.⁵¹

She seengs song from Brazeel and her body sings with her—eyes, hands, hips, feet—a princess out of an Aztec frieze with a panther's grace, the plumage of a bird of paradise and the wiles of Eve and Lilith combined.⁵²

[The] public . . . adored her hot tamale outbursts, and wildly fun knack for chewing the English language around until it came out sounding like an ancient Inca dialect.⁵³

These racialized and racist images (Inca, Aztec) combined with the animalization (panther, bird of paradise) perpetuate the stereotype of Latinos/as as exotic racial "others." Miranda, a native Portuguese whose name was Maria de Carmo Miranda da Cunha, becomes the personification of all native Americans; even her singing becomes an Inca dialect. This act of ignorance, resulting from misperceptions and cultural misrepresentations of the "Latin foreign other," occurs because Miranda, an immigrant from Latin America, inhabits and validates the Anglo-American cultural imaginary alongside Incas, Aztecs, and the wild fauna and flora of the tropics and jungles. In these circumstances, Miranda's linguistic play with words and exaggerated accent are markers of race and ethnicity. Although her singing is delectable, it is incomprehensible noise, nothing is said.⁵⁴ Moreover, her accent registers a sense of artificiality; as Ana M. López has noted, "At once a sign of her otherness as well as of the artificiality of all otherness, her accent ultimately became an efficient marketing device, exploited in advertisements and publicity campaigns."⁵⁵

Within this perspective, Miranda's performance displays a simulacrum where ethnic and national identities are in constant construction and negotiation. In fact, she stages a spectacle of ethnicity and femininity. Shari Roberts, in a 1993 *Cinema Journal* article, explains that "because Miranda so exaggerates signifiers of ethnicity and femininity, her star text suggests that they exist only as surface, that they do not refer, and in this way Miranda can become sheer spectacle."⁵⁶

Carmen Miranda was transfigured into a stereotype and a caricature that not only embodied the construction of "Latinness"/"South Americanness" in the Anglo-American cultural imaginary of the 1940s and thereafter, but also registered a spectacle of difference, using her body and sexuality as a site of exoticism and racial and ethnic otherness.⁵⁷

Film scholar Ana López has precisely interpreted Miranda's function as a spectacle of ethnicity and sexuality, explaining that

Miranda functions narratively . . . and discursively as a sexual fetish, freezing the narrative and the pleasures of the voyeuristic gaze and provoking a regime of spectacle and specularity. She acknowledges and openly participates in her fetishization, staring back at the camera, implicating the audience in her sexual display. But she is also an ethnic fetish. The look she returns is also that of the ethnographer and its colonial spectator stand-in. Her Latin Americanness is displaced in all its visual splendor for simultaneous colonial appropriation and denial.⁵⁸

After becoming a sensational celebrity, Carmen Miranda became part of the Anglo-American cultural imaginary as a vivacious and beautiful señorita who would always entertain. Her image, quite a queer act, has continued to be imitated in campy cross-dressing performance acts by male actors or parodied by females in the theater, movies, commercials, and TV: As John Kobal, the author of *Gotta Sing Gotta Dance*, points out, "her exaggerated mannerisms and clothing became a female impersonator's delight" (fig. 1.4).⁵⁹

Bananas Is My Business, a film documentary released in 1994, illustrates how Miranda invented her stage persona.⁶⁰ As her popularity wore off, Miranda began to parody her own self-creation: the more she performed her ethnic invention, the more she became a clownish caricature. Indeed, when she returned to Brazil in 1940, Brazilians did not accept her performance. They felt betrayed by Miranda, who had sold her act out to Hollywood; they accused her of being Americanized. In Miranda's effort to construct her ethnic and nationalist persona in the U.S., she had undoubtedly become "Hollywoodized." Her musical act was a fake, an act of mimicry, a carnivalesque spectacle addressed to satisfy the horizon of expectations of Anglo-American audiences. Rejection by her people led Miranda to respond with the song "They say I came back Americanized." She left Brazil with a broken heart. Over time, Brazilians have reconciled with her Hollywood image and U.S. audiences still worship the "lady with the tutti-frutti hat."⁶¹ As Sara J. Welch observes in "The Mirandification of America," "only in retrospect is it clear that she Mirandified America as much as it Americanized her."⁶² Let me clarify that the "Mirandification" of America cannot be confused with transculturation. The cultural exchange is limited to the Anglo appropriation of rhythm and image within a carnivalesque setting; Miranda's Portuguese language is reduced to noise. Under these circumstances, her accent drives home the fact that Miranda functions primarily within the parameters of "Latin-



1.4 Willard Scott on the *Today* show, impersonating Carmen Miranda.

ization." The "Latin exotic foreign other" in the U.S. is only assimilated as long it plays the function of entertainment (music, song, dance, and comedy), and when Miranda's look and fashion are objects of consumerism and spectacle.

With the passage of time, Miranda has become more complicated, more campy, more postmodern. Miranda's performances will always

be remembered as the most outrageous and hilarious representation of "Latinidad" in Hollywood and in the U.S. cultural imaginary.⁶³ She became the pseudostereotypical image that would define the Latin American/U.S. Latina identity. Her obituary in the *New York Times* acknowledged this: "Miss Miranda, whose explosive, hippy dancing, thick-accented singing and garish costumes, became a prototype of the dynamic 'Latin' female."⁶⁴ An unforgettable parody of Miranda was Betty Garrett's imitation, with her rendition "South America, Take It Away" in *Call Me Mister* (1946).⁶⁵ The song pokes fun at the implementation of the Good Neighbor policy and the Latin rumba, samba, and conga crazes. It also refers to Miranda's hypnotizing hip movements and stylized mannerisms. Although this parody is a response to Miranda's Broadway performance and popularity, it also registers the presence on Broadway of another Latino. In the refrain "South America! Babalú! Babalú ay yay, babalú!" none other than Desi Arnaz was parodied.

It is the word "babalú" that refers to Arnaz's performance, a musical act that, like Carmen Miranda's, would activate and mobilize the Anglo-American topo(s)graphical imaginary of the "Latin other." At this discursive intersection, the Queen of Samba and the King of Rumba were the spokespersons for the Good Neighbor policy and shared the cultural pedestal on Broadway as the sole representatives of Latin Americans and performers of "Latinness." Miranda and Arnaz were onstage representing, performing, and speaking for all Latin Americans and U.S. Latinos/as. Their vocabulary may have been limited to bizarre, primitive, exotic, and incomprehensible sounds, but they spoke more than words. "Babalú" and "ay ay" said it all about Latin America and its peoples. The sound and musical interpretation of "babalú" and "ay ay" were powerful evidence for Anglo-American audiences that these performances were indisputably ethnic, authentic, and exotic. With Miranda's and Arnaz's debuts on Broadway in 1939, the Anglo-American cultural representation of the "Latin foreign other" was here to stay. Miranda and Arnaz were predestined to become the foundational images of "Latinidad" in the U.S. topo(s)graphical cultural imaginary of Latin America.

The Latin Lover: Desi Arnaz

Unlike Carmen Miranda, the daughter of migrant Portuguese working-class parents, Desiderio Alberto Arnaz y de Acha III, better known as Desi Arnaz, was the son of one of the wealthiest political families in Cuba. After a group of military men, among them Fulgencio

Batista y Zaldívar, overthrew Gerardo Machado's dictatorship in 1933, Arnaz's father was jailed and the family property was confiscated. Arnaz and his parents went to Miami in exile. Arnaz, whose life story is a riches-to-rags-to-riches one, was not embarrassed to admit publicly the menial jobs he had taken to earn a living, and he willingly expressed his gratitude to the U.S. for his fortune and success: "I really wanna tell you my first job in this country was cleaning bird cages. It's very true. We came to this country, we didn't have a cent in our pockets. From cleaning canary cages to this night here in New York, it's a long ways and I don't think there is any other country in the world that could give you that opportunity. I wanna say thank you, thank you America, thank you."⁶⁶

Arnaz's artistic career began in 1936 at the Roney Plaza Hotel in Miami Beach, when he joined a rumba band, the Siboney Sextet. He was discovered by Xavier Cugat, who, after seeing him perform, asked Arnaz to join his band. In a short time, Arnaz learned the art of show business from Cugat and, in 1937, put together his own band, which became a great sensation after introducing the conga line. When the band reached New York, Broadway's musical director and producer George Abbott and the musical team of Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart (who had a new show, *Too Many Girls*, in the works) were attracted to Arnaz's charismatic and artistic potential.⁶⁷

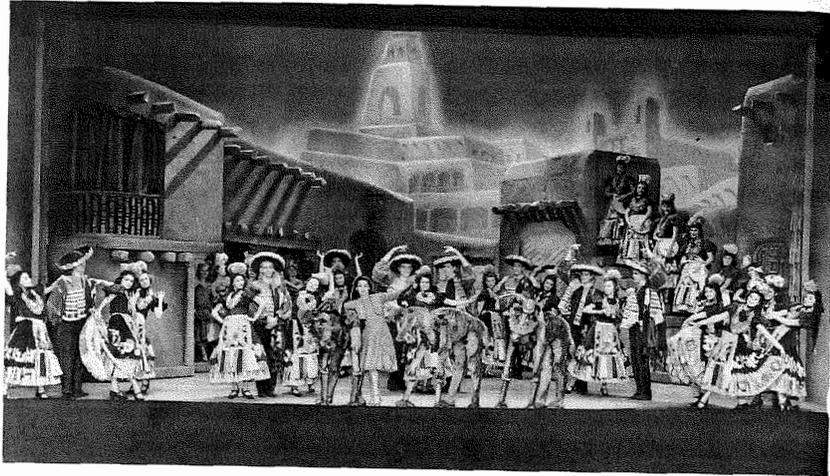
On 14 October 1939, Arnaz appeared on Broadway as Manuelito in *Too Many Girls* (figs. 1.5 and 1.6), a role he would later reprise in the film version. This musical tells the story of young Consuelo (played by Lucille Ball), whose wealthy father hires four young men to guard her while she attends the fictional Pottawatomie College in New Mexico, his alma mater. The all-American boys, whose contract forbids any romantic involvement with Consuelo, get involved in college life, join the football team, and bring about a winning football season. The student body does not know that these four are ringers: three have previously played in the Ivy League, and Manuelito has played in Argentina. As the plot advances, Consuelo falls in love with one of the boys, who struggles with his decision to break the contract. In the end, romance wins and Consuelo marries her bodyguard.

During the filming of *Too Many Girls* Arnaz met Lucille Ball, whom he married. Together they later produced and starred in the most popular situation comedy television series of all time, *I Love Lucy*.⁶⁸ What is Arnaz's role in this film? His Manuelito is not critical to the development of the plot; he is simply a minor character whose accent is explained by giving him an Argentine nationality. Manuelito's presence is required to add a touch of "authenticity"; not only is he a hotshot football player, he is a hot "Latin" obsessed with Anglo-American



1.5 Desi Arnaz on Broadway in *Too Many Girls*. (Vandamm Collection, Billy Rose Theatre Collection, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations.)

women. His interpolation in the film reaches its climax when he sings and dances a few musical numbers. In the Broadway production, Arnaz performed "Spic and Spanish," which was ethnicized with sombreros, sarapes, other Mexican costumes, and castanets; "She Could Shake Her Maracas"; and the song that closes the first act, "Babalú," an overwhelming, fiery, erotic, and seductive conga number. Diosa



1.6 The Broadway cast of *Too Many Girls*. (Billy Rose Theatre Collection, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations.)

Costello was Arnaz's song-and-dance companion in these numbers, a Puerto Rican actress whose "trademark was that she could swish her derriere at warp speed."⁶⁹ This duo's popularity was so immense that they would perform at Club La Conga after the stage show.

In the film version of *Too Many Girls*, Ann Miller took over Costello's role, and Arnaz's performance of "Babalú" was moved to the closing of the film, where a big, loud celebration was needed to mark the victory of the last football game. In this final musical act of the film, Arnaz appears in football regalia with his conga drum hanging around his neck. The scene is energizing and sexy, exploiting Arnaz's vivacity, sex appeal, and virility, which are all corporalized in the exhilarating, impulsive, "savage" movements and sounds of his drum playing. The crescendo of rhythm is accentuated by Arnaz's placement in front of a bonfire that frames him, facilitating close-ups of his agitated, sweaty body. Students are dancing the conga at Arnaz's feet, expressing euphoria and eroticism; the rhythmic drive builds as he furiously pounds his conga.

That same passion made Arnaz a matinee idol on Broadway. Women went crazy for his good looks and sex appeal. Thus, Arnaz embodied a new Rudolph Valentino, an updated version of the "Latin lover." That each played an Argentine (Valentino's being the gaucho in *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*) made the connection more explicit. The press did not fail to notice the "Latin lover" aura; Arnaz was hailed as a "terpsichorean Rudolph Valentino" by one critic;⁷⁰ another said that

"as a South American broken-field runner, Desi Arnaz is a good wooer of women."⁷¹ Obviously, Arnaz was defined in terms of sexuality and his ability to seduce women. Men reacted differently; to them he was merely noise: "Mr Arnaz is a noisy, black-haired Latin whose face, unfortunately, lacks expression and whose performance is devoid of grace."⁷²

Arnaz is not the only marker of difference in the musical. The story takes place in New Mexico, and, significantly, the name of the college is Pottawatomie, a word that inscribes difference within the othered space of the Native American. The sets and costumes register difference in terms of Mexican and Native American signs of otherness. This space of otherness is a liminal zone where passion is set loose and morals relaxed. This ambience explains why Consuelo must be guarded under "the law of the father." Also, this layered liminal border allows Arnaz to shout like a "tribal chieftain,"⁷³ and to "[approximate] a tribal chant to Chango, the African God of War" in the final musical number.⁷⁴ The whole scene constructs itself in relation to a primitive worldview in which Native American and African cultures converge at center stage, with tribal rituals, chants, and accessive rhythms.

In the film's opening musical numbers, which take place at the college, the camera deliberately presents a few close-ups of some Native American faces.⁷⁵ Furthermore, Arnaz's drum is decorated with "Indian" motifs, revealing how African and Native American cultures are fused in the final musical number of the film.⁷⁶ Such moments of pseudotransculturation do not represent the multicultural nightmare Cuban critic Gustavo Pérez Firmat observes in his analysis of the film: "The movie's ignorance is so utterly blissful that I find its mindless agglutinating energy difficult to resist. To be sure, *Too Many Girls* is a multiculturalist's nightmare."⁷⁷ Rather, I would say, this is a case of blatant cultural appropriation and "Latinization," given that the final movie scene has been molded and accommodated for the entertainment and enjoyment of an Anglo-American audience. The lyrics have disappeared, thus erasing the Spanish language, which has been replaced by unintelligible sounds signaling generic ethnic otherness and cultural difference. Thus, Spanish language has been reduced to mere noise. The audience does not care about the verbal content; it prefers to enjoy the visual spectacle of difference and the primitive sounds of Arnaz's "oé oé" as the conga beat intensifies, possessing the cast and audience. This exotic and racialized space liberates individuals (actors and audience), unleashing their sexual instincts as they dance a conga until the beating of the drums provoke the explosion of their bodies in a volcanic fury.

On Broadway, “Babalú,” sung in Spanish, was a spectacle of otherness because of its exoticism and primitiveness. Arnaz’s rendition of “Babalú” located the audiences in the realm of African religious rituals.⁷⁸ Those audiences did not understand the relation of the lyrics to Afro-Cuban cultural and religious practices. In Santería, Babalú Ayé is one of the Orichas, a deity in the Yoruba mythological world. The chant functions as a prayer and an offering in exchange for protection and future happiness in love, health, and prosperity. Given the syncretism of African and Catholic religions in Cuba, Santería identifies Babalú Ayé with Saint Lazarus. In the Yoruba mythical world, Babalú was a lascivious and promiscuous man who, after having sex with many women, became ill. His body was covered with lacerations and only dogs, licking his sores, would follow him. When appropriated by Santería, Saint Lazarus became the patron saint of people sick with leprosy, smallpox, venereal diseases and, more recently, AIDS. In “Babalú,” Arnaz impersonates and mimics the voice of a black man (“negro”) who is worshipping the Orisha to be successful in love with his “negra.” The issue of race and racism is embedded in the line “quiero pedir a Babalú una negra bembona” (I want to ask Babalú for a negra with thick-nigger-lips). The spectacle and the vocal impersonation only perpetuated the notion of the racial “other” as performative.⁷⁹

Lacking a translation, the audience had no knowledge of the African origin of the song “Babalú,” nor of the African origins of the rumba and the conga; neither were they informed of the African roots of Carmen Miranda’s sambas and bahiana outfits.⁸⁰ Like Miranda, Arnaz was condemned to communicate through queer sounds, hyperbolic ethnic representations, running gags, and visual spectacle. In this aspect, a statement by Xavier Cugat helps explain the reception process of such ethnic spectacles: “Americans know nothing about Latin music. They neither understand nor feel it. So they have to be given music more for the eyes than the ears. Eighty percent visual, the rest aural.”⁸¹

In films and in song, Miranda’s and Arnaz’s English was fractured and mangled whenever, in excitement, anger, or frustration, they burst into a chain of incomprehensible noise. Such instances of verbal nonsense were overemphasized by their thick accents. These tongue twisters, plays on words, and linguistic anarchy were major components of their performances and critical to their efforts to please Anglo-American audiences. Their accents and linguistic outbursts translated as markers of exoticism and ethnic difference, and particularly articulated their “fiery Latin temperaments.” However, both actors, by refusing to show full command and performance of the English language and grammar, and by insisting on converting it into gibberish once

they had learned it, challenge Anglo-American audiences. As they pleased, they imposed their difference and foreignness: within the carnivalesque, they camouflaged their Latin American origins and staged humorously their ethnic identities. Pleasing, in these terms, means to give enjoyment, as well as to perform within one’s own will (in spite of how constrained one may be by stereotypes). On the stage, Arnaz and Miranda did as they pleased.

Significantly, their accents limited Miranda and Arnaz to playing the roles of marginal characters. Arnaz’s accent would haunt him throughout his life, and was emphasized in his famous recurring line as Ricky Ricardo in *I Love Lucy*: “Honey, I’m home!” In an episode after his Little Ricky was born, Lucy is afraid their son will have his father’s accent. She tells Ricky, “Please promise me you won’t speak to our child until he’s nineteen or twenty.” Throughout *I Love Lucy*’s TV run, Arnaz’s accent was not only in a comic context but in a cruel reality: his accent was a form of embarrassment, one that impeded the progress of his artistic career. Even within the domestic sphere, Arnaz as Ricky Ricardo must clean up his ethnic act; his accent must be exiled from the home, because it is a marker of difference. It is allowed only in the public sphere, as a form of entertainment in his night club, the Tropicana (which would eventually be renamed Babalú). It is ironic that “what we remember most about Ricky is the sound of his voice,”⁸² that is, his accent, and his “Babalú” cries.

As the years passed, Arnaz sounded like a broken record, always performing “Babalú” on *I Love Lucy*. This repetitiveness paralleled the evolution of Miranda’s singing and performance into comedy and parody. Through the years, Miranda’s voice became squeaky, her exaggerated, accented broken English, over-pronounced *rs*, and plays on words became monotonous, nonsensical, predictable, and sometimes annoying. When her film *If I’m Lucky* (1946) was released, critic Bosley Crowther of the *New York Times* reduced her performance act to “animated noise.”⁸³ Her act ceased to develop; it became more artificial, excessive, grotesque, clownish, and farcical. Indeed, her bahiana turbans and hats became a comic amalgamation of fruits, as in *The Gang’s All Here* (1943).

In this aspect, Miranda and Arnaz were condemned to repeatedly enact their performances as pure ethnic entertainment. They had no choice other than to make the best of the “Latin foreign other” roles Hollywood had for them. Arnaz was very conscious of his limitations, as he confessed in his autobiography. Referring to the auditions for *Too Many Girls*, he said, “At that time the Latin type they were describing, [able to handle comedy, song, and dance] was not easy to find in

this country. . . . The only ones who were known then were the romantic Rudolph Valentino types and the George Raft types, or the other extreme, the Crispin Martin lazy Mexican character or the Leo Carrillos."⁸⁴ "Latin" roles were so scarce in Hollywood that when Arnaz returned from military service in 1945, he had already been replaced with Ricardo Montalbán.

Broadway and Hollywood's racist practices were apparent in producers' initial refusals to televise a situation comedy with the characters Lucy and Ricky as protagonists who had an interethnic marriage: "The big brass at CBS thought he was not the type to play a typical American husband."⁸⁵ Ball and Arnaz were well aware of the difficulties of doing a show together: "[E]xperts insisted the program was doomed to fail. They said 'a foreigner' with an accent wouldn't be believable, playing an average American husband."⁸⁶ There is no doubt that race was a subtext: Arnaz was the other, the "Latin" type; although Caucasian, his origins were "south of the border." Furthermore, Cuba was seen in racial terms, linked to Africa culturally and ethnically, as we saw earlier in the 1902 political cartoon about Cuba. Precisely because of his Cuban ethnicity, it was inconceivable that Arnaz could play certain roles, including the husband in *I Love Lucy*. Arnaz once declared, "You know, I think if it wouldn't have been for Lucy, I would have stopped trying a long time ago because I was always the guy that didn't fit. When she did 'My Favorite Husband' on radio they said I wasn't the type to play the part. Then finally she wanted to do the television show and she said 'Well, I want to do it with Desi.' So everybody again said, 'Well he doesn't . . . he is not right to play your husband.'"⁸⁷ At work here are racist practices. The Hays Code stated that "miscegenation (sex relationship between the white and black races) is forbidden."⁸⁸ This prohibition included half-breeds, mulattos, Native Americans, African Americans, Asians, Arabs, and, of course, "Latinos."

Even off stage, Arnaz was not the type to receive an invitation to join the most prestigious golf course in Palm Springs, the Thunderbird.⁸⁹ Arnaz's racial and ethnic roots were exposed and overtly devalued on another occasion. In a television appearance on *The Ed Wynn Show*, in which Lucille Ball was being interviewed, Arnaz interrupted by playing the drums. After a series of interruptions Wynn finally said, "You'll ruin the whole show playing those drums. They'll think it's some African show."⁹⁰ These comments not only racialize Arnaz's performance, but also register blatant racism. This appraisal of Arnaz's performance supports the idea that, since his first appearance on Broadway, Arnaz's musical number "Babalú" was read as a racial and ethnic performance. The "savage" percussion, the rapturous music,

and the loud tribal chanting transported the audiences to Cuba and specifically to the topo(s)graphical Afro-Cuban discursive location as represented in the Anglo-American cultural collective imaginary.

The convergence of race and ethnicity is also crystallized in "She Could Shake Her Maracas," one of the songs Arnaz performed in *Too Many Girls*.⁹¹ This song stereotypes Latin American culture and comically degrades Latinos/as by attributing to them a bad temper and lack of intelligence. It tells the story of Pepito and Pepita, who fall in love despite their national origins—he is from Cuba and she is from Rio del Mar. (Notice how these locations echo Arnaz and Miranda's homelands.) Furthermore, like Arnaz and Miranda, both Pepito and Pepita are entertainers: Pepito plays the guitar, and Pepita shakes the maracas. Of all places, they end up in Harlem, where they can consummate their love. In these terms, the location of the protagonists in Harlem signals their position in the U.S. as "Latin foreign ethnic and racial others": They are allocated to the othered space of African Americans, since race determines a priori their identity in the U.S.

Arnaz also activated and perpetuated the stereotyped imaginary construction of Cuba as the land of romance and *mañana* with another song, "Cuban Pete."⁹² With this song, he is self-proclaimed as the "king of the rumba beat" and exalts his expertise as a "Latin lover"; he sends the señoritas dancing, and people can forget their worries if they dance to his tune all day long. How, then, can we separate the Latin American ethnic identity from the Anglo-American stereotype of the "Latin other"?

Moreover, Arnaz goes farther in his representation of the "Latin other" as a racial other. If, in his rendition of "Babalú," he impersonated the African race and Cuban ethnicity through music and sound, and "Cuban Pete" shamelessly stereotyped "Latinos," it would not be until 1953 that Arnaz carried his ethnic and racial act to its maximum expression. It is only reading backwards that "Babalú" exposes its full meaning: the visual representation of the racial other, which had been partially silenced and camouflaged, is disclosed in the 19 January 1953 *I Love Lucy* episode, "Lucy Goes to the Hospital" (figs. 1.7 and 1.8).⁹³

The episode opens with the character Ricky holding a book that has a photo of an African with a painted face on one page and a photo of an African mask on the other. As Ricky intensely studies the photos, he makes faces in imitation of what he imagines to be African: he opens wide his mouth and eyes and grimaces. It is not until later in the episode that the audience learns that he is rehearsing a voodoo act. This is a new act, and Ricky's performative act of creation parallels Lucy's act of giving birth. When Lucy and Ricky arrive at the hospital,



1.7 Desi Arnaz in blackface in the *I Love Lucy* episode "Lucy Goes to the Hospital."

Ricky realizes that he has to get ready for the new voodoo number at his night club. He calls his friend Fred to ask him to bring over his makeup kit. Once Fred returns, Ricky goes to the bathroom to put the makeup on. Ricky comes out in blackface and goes to the fathers' waiting room, where he scares a nurse because "the voodoo make-up is a grotesque amalgam of whitened eye sockets, darkened skin, painted-on fangs and a fright wig of black hair."⁹⁴ The terrified nurse calls a policeman and Ricky leaves for the club. During his performance, Fred calls and informs him that the baby is born. Still with his makeup on, Ricky heads back to the hospital. Chaos reigns when he terrorizes the staff and the policeman tries to arrest him. Ricky clarifies his identity as a performer, thus justifying the blackface, to the policeman. Nevertheless, when a nurse comes to the waiting room to announce that Lucy delivered a baby boy, Ricky responds as the father and she is shocked, paralyzed, and speechless.

As a whole, the blackface episode is a distorted and grotesque masquerade that articulates racist practices within the domain of comedy and performance. Blackface impersonation converts the racial other into an object of humor. What attempts to be amusing and entertaining



1.8 Desi Arnaz in blackface performing at the cabaret in the *I Love Lucy* episode "Lucy Goes to the Hospital."

inscribes a vulgar and demeaning deformation of the racial other, and establishes power relations. As Eric Lott has aptly observed in "Love and Theft: The Racial Unconscious of Blackface Minstrelsy": "'Black' figures were to *be looked at*, shaped to the demands of desire; they were screens on which audience fantasy could rest, securing white spectators' position as superior, controlling, not to say owning, figures."⁹⁵

Ricky's impersonation of the racial other positions his voodoo act within a discursive web where Africans incarnate primitiveness and cannibalism. Yet I would like to go a step further. Race is a significant element in this episode, from the opening to the closing frame. It is crucial to examine the spectacle of blackface because, at this moment, when Little Ricky is being born, ethnicity and race intersect. The racist practices that confined Arnaz are now made visible in his character Ricky's blackface. It can be read that Ricky/Arnaz is parodying, subverting, and transgressing the Hays Code, which banned miscegenation. It is obvious that an interracial marriage was not a usual occurrence in the hospital, which explains why the nurse was so taken aback. A black man was not expected to be in that space. Ricky/Arnaz was able to bring a black man into a forbidden zone by means of black-

face, just as he had been able to bring a “Latin” man into the forbidden zone of an interethnic marriage, one which was perceived as an interracial marriage. I interpret this moment of ethnic, racial, and sexual intersection as Arnaz’s effort to perform race as spectacle through blackface. Ironically, underneath all that makeup, there is a *white* man. Consequently, the baby will be white. Similar to the function of masquerade at carnival, the blackface functions as a catalyst to expose and then subdue all fears and suspicions that the baby was the offspring of an interracial marriage. In these terms, Ricky’s enactment of race at the moment of his son’s birth is pure masquerade, just as it was when Arnaz sang “Babalú” on Broadway in 1939. His blackface musical number is all simulacrum, held up by the scaffolding of racist stereotypes and practices, and continuing the Broadway tradition of “racialized entertainment as [a cultural] commodity.”⁹⁶

Authenticity and the Burden of Representation

In *The Latin Tinge*, John S. Roberts quotes Xavier Cugat as saying, “To succeed in America I gave the Americans a Latin music that had nothing authentic about it.”⁹⁷ This declaration is loaded with all kinds of issues. How authentic are cultural, ethnic, and racial representations? Up to what point do Latin American migrant entertainers—like Miranda and Arnaz—have to accommodate their performances according to the Anglo-American stereotypical representations of the “Latin foreign other” and to satisfy the Anglo-American horizon of expectations? Why, above all, do artistic performances like music and dance embody and activate national identities? In the cases of Miranda and Arnaz, why are they singing in Portuguese and Spanish when they are not being understood? Are they speaking to themselves, to reassure their belonging to an imaginary nationhood abroad? From where are they speaking? Who are they representing; for whom are they speaking?

Nobody questions Miranda’s and Arnaz’s nationalities. They are the quintessential personifications and emblems of Brazilian and Cuban national identities. It seems as if, after migration, Miranda and Arnaz had to objectify their ethnicities in order to stage them and to reaffirm their national differences. Yet such a task requires a process of selection of national traits and symbols, through which a new identity is forged and made visible. This process mobilizes an inventory of “national things” containing all elements native to a given nation: music, dance, rhythms, typical costumes, folklore, foods, national holidays, religions, and art. This inventory is charged with ideological and political views

as well as with class, racial, gender, and sexual biases. Undoubtedly, it is the entertainment industry that serves best to stage, perform, and enact national, cultural, racial, and ethnic identities. In these terms, Miranda personifies the samba and Arnaz the rumba and the conga.

When examined closely, both entertainers appropriated music and rhythms from the African components of the socio-national spectrum of ethnic identities, social classes, and races that constitute the imaginary national communities of Brazil and Cuba. Although there is a high degree of transculturation and hybridization, what is absent here is the self-representation of and by the African constituency. Consequently, Miranda’s and Arnaz’s ethnoracial spectacles must be approached with caution. When analyzed their performances reveal the institutional ideological apparatus and social practices of racism in Latin America, translocated to the U.S.

Both Miranda and Arnaz are Caucasians who simulate blackness. Their performances of blackness speak for the African demographic component of both countries, but, in both musical acts, the African is made invisible. The African is unrepresentable because the racist dominant culture has not opened a space of or for African self-representation. There is no room for the subjugated and the subaltern to speak, to perform, and to re-present himself. Instead, two successful entertainers who are white have taken African culture and have appropriated their own re-presentation. Miranda and Arnaz have turned African culture into a performance and an impersonation of the other with their staging of blackness as simulacra. In this sense, their performances function in accordance with given relations of cultural hegemony, social power, and racialized/racist practices at home and abroad. This means that the Afro-Brazilian and the Afro-Cuban are left out, silenced, and relegated to the margin. As a result, a black physical body marked by race has no “authentic” representation or voice in the sociocultural arena. Afro-Cuban and Afro-Brazilian representations are acceptable as long as the performers *perform* blackness—that is, put at the forefront the *performance* of blackface.

When considering that Miranda’s and Arnaz’s theatrical acts inscribe signs of otherness and racial markers of difference, it must be asked: whose culture is being represented? Whose race is being performed? Both entertainers invent an ethnic spectacle of the African racial other: Miranda does this through both her costumes and her samba;⁹⁸ Arnaz does this with his drum and voice, performing a Santería ritual incorporating the rumba and the conga. In this process of cultural appropriation of the African other, a process that keeps at a distance the legacy of transculturation in their native countries, Mi-

randa and Arnaz represent and perform the African components of their respective countries by using stereotypical elements that define the African other: vivacity, vitality, rhythm, brilliant colors and exoticism. Additionally, both the samba and the conga incarnate the carnival tradition of Brazil and Cuba. In the evolution of the Brazilian, and Cuban national identities, these festive forms of music and dance were popularized, giving voice to the marginalized lower classes composed mainly of African descendants and mulattos. For each respective nation, these national constructions became cultural icons that signified and emblemized a populist representation of what it is to be Brazilian, or Cuban within the parameters of transculturation.

Once Miranda and Arnaz emigrated, they entered the Anglo-American topo(s)graphical cultural domain of the representation of Latin America, primarily as racialized and exoticized others. It is here that the "authenticity" of their ethnicity metamorphoses into a stereotype. With the passage of time, both performers had to hold on to their memories and constantly reenact and reaffirm their foreignness, nationality, and ethnicity. At this intersection of nationalism and migration (always constructed within the realm of the memory of what was ethnic or racial in their homelands) Miranda's and Arnaz's musical performances convert, over time, into parody. This process applies to their "Latin" accents and their overemphasized mispronunciation, exemplified predominantly in the extravagant and exaggerated rolling of the letter *r*. This is most noticeable in Arnaz's musical rendition of a Spanish popular tongue twister that overpronounces the *r*: "r con r cacharro con r barril, rrr, rrr, rrr." In Miranda's case, at the beginning of her career her songs delivered the softness, gentleness, and musicality of the Portuguese language ("Mama eu Quero" and "Bambu, Bambu"); later, she was overemphasizing syllabic repetitions and atypical sounds, turning herself into a caricature. Her *rs* and plays on words became her signature in songs like "I yi yi yi yi (I Like You Very Much)," "Chica Chica Boom Chic," "Chattanooga Choo Choo," and "Weekend in Havana." In her recordings with the Andrew Sisters, "Cuanto le gusta," "The Wedding Samba," "I See, I See," and "The Matador," Miranda's pronunciation locates her in the realm of comedy, clownishness, and laughter. More surprising is that her lyrics refer to Mexico instead of Brazil. In "The Wedding Samba" she sings about the land of the Río, and in "The Matador" the lyrics refer to a utopic love relationship in the Rancho Grande. Obviously, Miranda's way of seeing Latin America has been influenced and shaped by the Anglo-American topo(s)graphical discursive construction of the nations "south of the border." It is ironic that Miranda's assimilation of the Anglo-American

imagined topo(s)graphy of Latin America, her heavy and faked accent, her compelling charisma, and her breathtaking talent made her *more* "authentic" according to the Anglo-American ways of seeing the "Latin other". Her presence accurately corroborated and validated dominant Anglo-American stereotypes of Latin America and Latin Americans.

The ultimate irony is that native Brazilians and Cubans see and identify with, respectively, Miranda's and Arnaz's cultural performances and ethnic and racial impersonations as accurate representations of their national identities. Miranda and Arnaz appear to consolidate a national identity that can only be seen, objectified, and projected from a distance, particularly when that national identity is reenacted and exported by emigrants. Indeed, these emigrants became the guardians, preservers, bearers, and transmitters of nationalism. They became the cultural ambassadors of their country of origin and its people. Thus, Carmen Miranda, according to Heitor Villa-Lobos, represents Brazil at its best: "Carmen Miranda carried her country in her luggage, and taught people who had no idea of our existence to adore our music and our rhythm. Brazil will always have an unpayable debt to Carmen Miranda."⁹⁹

Miranda's and Arnaz's authenticity was not questioned by U.S. audiences, who assumed that, since the two were native Latin Americans, they automatically embodied a native Latin American nationality. In both cases, their representations of ethnicity in the domain of performance were equivalent to ethnic Latin American realities. This was not true, however, for their representation of race. As discussed above, Miranda's and Arnaz's musical acts appropriated African elements that relegated Afro-Brazilians and Afro-Cubans to the margins. In this sense, their performances staged a partial blackface minstrel show that perpetuated the racist stereotypes within the Anglo-American cultural imaginary.¹⁰⁰ Furthermore, their ethnicity, which converged in the Anglo-American cultural imaginary with race, restricted them from acting in any roles that signified white ethnicity and race. Of course, their accents, not their skin color, were the main obstacles. However, they were considered ideal actors for impersonating any nationality marked by race or "Latin" ethnicity: for example, Miranda played Cubans and Brazilians and Arnaz played Argentines and Cubans. Hoping to get more serious acting roles, Miranda even dyed her hair blond. Unfortunately, her efforts to whiten her performance never succeeded. In contrast, white actors were allowed to play "Latin"; for example, Don Ameche played an Argentine in *Down Argentine Way*. Given these racist practices in which the other plays the imagined "Latin other,"



1.9 The *I Love Lucy* episode "Be a Pal."

Miranda and Arnaz shared the *burden of representation*: any roles they played represented all "Latinos." Given that their ethnic performances situated them within the Anglo-American cultural imaginary, both had to enact ethnicity according to the Anglo-American stereotypical constructs and expected behavior of the "Latin other."

No image puts into question the authenticity of Miranda's and Arnaz's ethnicity as much as the stereotypical portrayal of both of them in the 22 October 1951 third episode of *I Love Lucy*, "Be a Pal" (fig. 1.9). When Lucy is afraid that Ricky is losing his interest in her, her friend Ethel suggests a Dr. Humphrey book, *Keep the Honeymoon from Ending*. Its third chapter suggests "that the wife surround the husband 'with things that remind him of his childhood.'" ¹⁰¹ Lucy, in her effort to recreate the authenticity of Ricky's homeland and childhood, decorates the living room with all kinds of things that she thinks are Cuban: palm trees, bananas, sombreros, sarapes, a flock of chickens, a mule.

There is also a sleepy Mexican peon, a character with a sarape, and Lucy impersonating Carmen Miranda by wearing a Mirandaeque costume and lip-synching to "Mama eu Quero."¹⁰² This scene is of vital importance in understanding Miranda's and Arnaz's position in the Anglo-American cultural imaginary. First, it displays an inventory of what Anglo-Americans (Lucy) consider Latin America to be. Second, it puts all Latin American countries in the same shopping bag (Cuba, Brazil, Mexico). Third, it reveals the dominant stereotypes of the "Latin other": the beautiful señorita, the sleeping peon, and, although absent at the moment, Arnaz's "Babalú" act, which is silently present and associated with these dominant representations. Lucy's display concretizes how all these stereotypical objects constitute the "Latin other." Within this Anglo-American cultural, racial, and ethnic construction of the "Latin other," the world of entertainment converges with the world of the sleepy and lazy peon. This conflation crystallizes how, for Anglo-Americans, the concept of "Latinness" exists as a conglomeration of "Latin" things and peoples. Within this Anglo-American cultural imaginary construction, the "Latin foreign other" intersects with the "Latin domestic ethnic and racial other," the Mexican American. As a whole, this episode stages, activates, and mobilizes the Anglo-American stereotype of a Latin American primitive world "south of the border" and in the Southwest.

With this episode, such a semiotic representation of "Latinness" inaugurates a historical moment through which a foundational image of "Latinidad" emerges as a stereotype. This image exemplifies how, within the Anglo-American cultural and topo(s)graphical imaginary of Latin America and the Southwest, the "Latin other" can be represented and objectified with a given number of "authentic" props. Critic Gustavo Pérez Firmat, in his analysis of the episode and the song, concludes that "Lucy momentarily turns the living room into a womb, or at least a maternal space."¹⁰³ I believe that this scene signifies more than an attempt to bring Ricky to his childhood, to the world of the mother; it also signifies a new mode of representing and performing the "Latin other." Pérez Firmat also states that Lucy turns the living room into a Little Havana. Such an interpretation, from Pérez Firmat's Cubacentric perspective, fails to see the new representation of "Latinidad." No Little Havana would make room for Mexican cultural icons, for a primitive and underdeveloped economy with lazy peasants and mules, nor claim Miranda's performance in Portuguese and her queer costume.

Ricky's response to Lucy's act of ethnic impersonation is direct and plain: "Lucy honey, if I wanted things Cuban, I'd have stayed in Ha-

vana."¹⁰⁴ This declaration reveals how conscious Arnaz was of his migration and of what he had left behind. He had no intention of living within a nostalgic re-creation of Cuba, because that would be an imposture; all replicas are fake. Nevertheless, Arnaz seemed to have found a way to deal with his past through his music. He erased any symptoms of nostalgia, which would have led to a representation of authenticity by placing ethnicity and nationality within a sacred domain, untouchable and unchangeable. He was then able to perform Cuban ethnicity within the Anglo-American cultural construction of the "Latin other." In this scene, Arnaz was conscious of his stereotyping, participation in, and propagation of "Latinness" and "Latinidad" in the U.S. Pérez Firmat finds it "odd that Ricky does not notice the inappropriateness of sombreros, sarapes, and Carmen Miranda as metonyms of his childhood."¹⁰⁵ But Arnaz did not react to these props, because those stereotypes were not his true self; he was capable of staying at a distance. He knew (as did Miranda) that he was performing for an Anglo-American audience and that stereotypes would sell. Thus, "authenticity" was not a *performance* issue onstage for either Arnaz or Miranda but it might have been a personal identity issue offstage.

As a whole, this episode of *I Love Lucy* functions as a palimpsest of Latin American ethnic, racial and national identities.¹⁰⁶ What has happened is that this symbolic Anglo-American representation of "Latinness" has been written and superimposed over the ethnic, racial, and national identities of Latin Americans. That is to say, in this collage, those previous identities are only registered as Anglo-American stereotypical representations of the "Latin other." Yet the original identities are not completely erased, are still legible. They can be (t)rac(ed). Since Miranda and Arnaz incarnate in their performances the presence of given Latin American national authenticity, for Anglo-American audiences that presence as "Latin foreign other" authenticates Miranda's and Arnaz's original national, racial, and ethnic identities. It is necessary to scrape those stereotypes in order to dismantle them. In this process, the true meaning of "palimpsestos" in Greek—to scrape again—registers its whole significance: it is urgent to scrape stereotypes, to deconstruct them again and again in order to do away with them.

After migration, both Arnaz and Miranda had to reinvent themselves according to the Anglo-American cultural imaginary of the "Latin other" and their horizon of expectations. By doing so, they appropriated those stereotypes, making possible the execution of their own agency and articulating contestatory discursive strategies as they

negotiated with the dominant stereotypical representations of the "Latin other." In these terms, Miranda and Arnaz's exaggerated accents can be read as resistance. This is the reason why Arnaz is wearing a suit in the "Be a Pal" episode. If he had worn a "Babalú" costume, he would have acted in complicity with the dominant practices of stereotyping.

Reading Miranda and Arnaz superficially erases their agency and their complex negotiations with the dominant Anglo-American culture. Hence, authenticity itself must be questioned: how "authentic" are immigrants after they leave their homeland? How "authentic" are ethnic performances? Up to what point did Miranda and Arnaz perform the artificiality of authenticity that Anglo-American stereotypes provided them? Although their authenticity may be argued, it is certain that Miranda and Arnaz constituted a new mode of representing "Latinidad." These new representations were propagated through theater, music, film, and television in a moment in U.S. history when popular culture was intersecting with mass culture. The commodification and mass-marketing of these images magnified their power and reach, transforming them into foundational images of "Latinidad" in the U.S.

nial population within the U.S. Their exploitation and poverty, based on social discrimination or blatant racism, can be seen as a product of imperialism. Indeed, third world ghettos in the U.S. function as a form of internal neocolonialism, according to J. M. Blaut: “[Neo-colonialism] leads to the poverty, social immobility, and physical permanence of the Third World ghetto.” J. M. Blaut, “The Ghetto as an Internal Neo-Colony,” *Antipode* 6, no. 1 (1974): 39. See also his “Assimilation versus Ghettoization,” *Antipode* 15, no. 1 (1983): 35–41.

24. Kobena Mercer, *Welcome to the Jungle: New Positions in Black Cultural Studies* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 91; emphasis in the original.

25. *Ibid.*, 92.

26. *Ibid.*, 214.

Chapter One

1. I have adopted Edward Said’s terminology “imaginative geography” from chapter 2, “Imaginative Geography and Its Representations: Orientalizing the Oriental,” of his *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979), 49. *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 3d ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1992), 1889, gives the following definition of “topography”: “1. Detailed, precise description of a place or region; 2. Graphic representation of the surface features of a place or region on a map, indicating their relative positions and elevations. 3. A description or an analysis of a structured entity, showing the relations among its components. . . . 4. a. The surface features of a place or region. b. The surface features of an object. . . . 5. The surveying of the features of a place or region. 6. The study or description of an anatomical region or part.”

2. For example, Columbus reads the New World as a woman’s body: “I find that [the world] is not round. . . . and on one part of it is placed something like a woman’s nipple.” “The Third Voyage of Columbus,” in *The Four Voyages of Columbus*, vol. 2, ed. Cecil Jane, (New York: Dover, 1988), 30. Among the scholars who have worked on the imagery of womanhood when used to materialize the conquering and colonization of a “virginal space” and to express colonial relations of power, see Rebecca Scott, “The Dark Continent: Africa as Female Body in Haggard’s Adventure Fiction,” *Feminist Review* 32 (1989): 69–89; Chandra Mohanty, “Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses,” *Feminist Review* 30 (1988): 61–88; Joanna De Groot, “Sex and Race: The Construction of Language and Image in the Nineteenth Century,” in *Sexuality and Subordination: Interdisciplinary Studies of Gender in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Susan Mendus and Jane Rendall (New York: Routledge, 1989), 89–128; and Louis Montrose, “The Work of Gender in the Discourse of the Discovery,” *representations* 33 (1991): 1–41.

3. Sykes[?], “My How You Have Grown,” *Philadelphia Evening Public Ledger* 1923, reproduced in John J. Johnson, *Latin America in Caricature* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993), 103.

4. Eduardo Galeano, *Memory of Fire: Century of the Wind*, trans. Cedric Belfrage (New York: Pantheon, 1985), 131.

5. Nelson A. Rockefeller, “The Fruits of the Good Neighbor Policy,” *New York Times Magazine*, 14 May 1944, 30.

6. “William Ireland [?], ‘I’ll Give You One Teaspoonful, Cuby. More of it Might Make You Sick,’” *Columbus (Ohio) Dispatch* 1902, reproduced in Johnson, *Latin America in Caricature*, 123.

7. See Allen L. Woll, *The Latin Image in American Film* (Los Angeles: UCLA Latin American Publications, 1997) and Arthur G. Pettit, *Images of the Mexican American in Fiction and Film* (College Station: University of Texas Press, 1980).

8. For the issue of Latino surplus as extras, see Luis Reyes and Peter Rubie, *Hispanics in Hollywood: An Encyclopedia of Film and Television* (New York: Garland, 1994), 8.

9. For an excellent inventory of “Hispanic” types of characters and themes in film, see Gary D. Keller, *Hispanics and United States Films* (Tempe, Ariz.: Bilingual Review/Press, 1994).

10. For a critical reading of “social problem films” see Chon A. Noriega, “Internal Others: Hollywood Narratives ‘about’ Mexican-Americans,” in *Mediating Two Worlds: Cinematic Encounters in the Americas*, ed. John King, Ana M. López, and Manuel Alvarado (London: British Film Institute, 1993), 52–66.

11. Reyes and Rubie, *Hispanics in Hollywood*, 2.

12. See Charles Ramírez Berg, “Immigrants, Aliens, and Extraterrestrials,” *CineAction!*, Fall 1989, 3–17, for an insightful article in which he reads aliens in science fiction films as a metaphorical representation of Latino/a illegal aliens in the U.S. Berg’s provocative critical reading unmasks science fiction fantasies in order to demythify how the dominant culture represents the “other;” and how issues of migration are embedded in science fiction films. This alternative reading opens the door to a new topo(s)graphy, one that is interplanetary and located in outer space, the *locus sidereus*, whose inhabitants are horrific alien creatures and monsters. Indeed, I have noticed how these films take place in the Southwest and California, locations whose populations have a large number of Latinos/as—for example, *Starman*, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, and *E.T.* More recently, *Jurassic Park* and *The Lost World* represent Central America as a *locus primitivus*. Indeed, in *The Lost World* the dinosaur brought to San Diego constitutes a threat when it crosses the border illegally, while the film shows illegal migrants being detained at the border headquarters.

13. In order to achieve recognition and fame, many U.S. Latinas had to deny their Hispanic roots and change their names; for example: Margarita Carmen Cansino morphed into Rita Hayworth. This practice continues: Raquel Tejada changed her name to Raquel Welch, Florencia Bicenta de Casillas Martinez Cardona to Vicki Carr, Dolores Conchita del Rivero to Chita Rivera.

14. Now, how are we to think about women who display their bodies as spectacle, as Carmen Miranda did, and which Charo perpetuates in her exhibitionism? Given that roles for Latinas are limited and require the incarnation of negative stereotypes, can Latinas use these stereotypes as a tactic of/for agency and assume the position of a speaking subject? Are Latina performers conscious of the imprisonment of their bodies and subjectivities as desired

objects in the cultural imaginary as “Latin foreign other,” “Latin domestic ethnic and racial other,” and/or “sexual other”? When nonstereotypical roles are not available and sex and race are visual markers of identity, Latina actresses must perform within the limited stereotypes available; such is the case of Rita Moreno in *West Side Story*, and Lupe Vélez in the film series *The Mexican Spitfires*, and as a lascivious jungle native in *Kongo* (1932). Vélez had to portray “Chinese, Eskimos, Japs, Squaws, Hindus, Swedes, Malays and Javanese.” See Woll, *The Latin Image in American Film*, 38. Moreno had to impersonate other ethnic and racial groups, including “half-breeds,” native Americans, and even an “oriental” in *The King and I*; María Montez is well-known for her exotic roles, including that of *Cobra Woman* (1944), and her impersonations of Arab women, such as Scheherezade in *Arabian Nights* (1942).

15. I am using Laura Mulvey’s theorization of women as visual pleasure: “In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its fantasy onto the female figure, which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote *to-be-looked-at-ness*. Woman displayed as sexual object is the *leitmotif* of erotic spectacle: from pin-ups to strip-tease, from Ziegfeld to Busby Berkeley, she holds the look, and plays to and signifies male desire.” Laura Mulvey, *Visual and Other Pleasures* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 19; emphasis in the original.

16. “Chiquita Banana (I’m Chiquita Banana),” words and music by Len Mackenzie, Garth Montgomery, and William Wirges, 1946; in *Great Songs of Madison Avenue*, ed. Peter and Craig Norback (New York: Quadrangle, 1976), 87–89.

17. Paul W. Drake summarizes briefly the U.S. military interventions in Latin America in “From Good Men to Good Neighbors,” in *Exporting Democracy*, ed. Abraham F. Lowenthal (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 3–40.

18. For an excellent outline of the political framework of the Good Neighbor policy, see Harold Molineu, *U.S. Policy Toward Latin America: From Regionalism to Globalism* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1986), 11.

19. Rockefeller published two “manifestos” that sum up the philosophy and political platform of the Good Neighbor policy. In one he stated, “I believe the Good Neighbor Policy expresses the will of the people of the United States. It proclaimed complete forbearance from interference by any one republic in the domestic affairs of any other. It inspired greater confidence and trust. It developed the inter-American system as a realistic laboratory for the form and type of world organization which may lie ahead . . . The New World has been, is today and always will be, a land of opportunity. Together we hold the resources, the mutual confidence and the experience which, with courageous leadership, can translate our common aspirations into reality.” Rockefeller, “The Fruits of the Good Neighbor Policy,” 15, 31. He also proclaimed, “the opportunities are there. An atmosphere of mutual confidence has been built

up by many years of political, commercial, technical and cultural contacts. The partners—the United States and the twenty other American republics—are already co-operating in a dozen practical fields, including long-range plans for the post-war period. Why should we not succeed? The problems are great, but they are not insurmountable. . . . Improving food supplies in all parts of the hemisphere and establishing rising standards of health and sanitation are basic necessities. Better transportation by land, sea and air, and a marked advance in industrial organization are the other factors on which we count to transform this hemisphere, raise its living standards, and immeasurably strengthen its world position.” Nelson A. Rockefeller, “Will We Remain Good Neighbors After the War?” *Saturday Evening Post*, 6 November 1943, 16.

20. These projects included many sectors: the appointment of cultural attachés; radio broadcasting; journalistic propaganda; the study of Spanish; visiting scholars; translations; Latin American studies projects; exchanges of intellectuals, writers, faculty and graduate students; the establishment of libraries; the presentation of lectures; the financing of research; art exhibitions; the Rockefeller Foundation and Guggenheim fellowship awards; and many other activities and programs. I highly recommend the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs’ *Cultural Relations Programs of the U.S. Department of State, Historical Studies 2* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State, 1976) for a detailed description of all the programs and cultural exchanges available during the time of the Good Neighbor policy.

21. Latin America was finally on the map. Proof of this is in the many movie titles with actual geographical references to countries with a surplus of material goods, commercial ports, and militarily strategic locations: *The Cuban Love Song* (1931); *Flying Down to Rio* (1933); *Under the Pampas Moon* (1935); *Down Argentine Way* and *Girl from Havana* (1940); *Down Mexico Way, That Night in Rio, Havana Rose*, and *Weekend in Havana* (1941); *Panama Hattie* and *Moonlight in Havana* (1942); *Holiday in Mexico* and *Club Havana* (1946); and *Mexican Hayride* (1948). For those films without a specific geographic referent, there was always an imaginary topo(s)graphy of exotic and stereotypical locales that had cropped up since the 1920s: “Bargravia, San Mañana, Santa Maria, Costa Blanca, Costa Casaba, Centralia.” Keller, *Hispanics and United States Film*, 116.

22. Franklin D. Roosevelt, “The Year of Crisis: 1933” in *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin Delano Roosevelt*, vol. 2, comp. and collated by Samuel I. Roseman (New York: Random House, 1958), 14.

23. “The son is perhaps the oldest and certainly the classic Afro-Cuban form, an almost perfect balance of African and Hispanic elements. Originating in Oriente province, it surfaced in Havana around World War I and became a popular urban music played by string-and-percussion quartets and septetos. Almost all the numbers Americans called rumbas were, in fact, sones. ‘El Manicero’ (‘The Peanut Vendor’) was a form of son derived from the street cries of Havana and called a pregon. The rhythm of the son is strongly syncopated, with a basic chicka-CHUNG pulse.” John S. Roberts, *The Latin Tinge* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 231.

24. Cugat appeared in the following films: *Go West, Young Man* (1936); *The*

Heat's On (1943); *Bathing Beauty* and *Two Girls and a Sailor* (1944); *Weekend at the Waldorf* (1945); *Holiday in Mexico* and *No Leave, No Love* (1946); *This Time for Keeps* (1947); *Luxury Liner*, *Date with Judy*, and *On an Island with You* (1948); *Nep-tune's Daughter* (1949); and *Chicago Syndicate* (1955).

25. Within the Anglo-American cultural worldview, "Latinization" often implies a cultural appropriation that exoticizes or commodifies the "racial and ethnic other."

26. After talkies appeared, "Latins" were always represented in exotic locales, performing romantic or spicy musical numbers. Evidently, "Latin" actors and actresses could work as long as they had exotic looks and pronounced accents. Gary D. Keller has stated that "the production of Hispanic-focused musicals immediately followed the advent of the sound era. In fact, the stereotype of the "Latin world" as lively and musical, characterized by fiestas (when not siestas) and even music and dancing in the cantinas carried such sway that beginning with sound, it became commonplace for music to enter Hispanic-focused films even if they were not musicals per se." Keller, *Hispanics and United States Film*, 121.

27. In addition, Technicolor (full-color cinematography) opened the doors to exotic and colorful locales "south of the border."

28. José Morand, "The Rumba is Here To Stay," *Song Hits* 5, no. 7 (1941): 13.

29. Many songs had as the main theme Latin America or the peoples of Latin America. I have categorized these songs in the following manner: (a) romanticizing Latin America as paradise: "Havana," "A Weekend in Havana," "South of the Border," "Down Argentina Way," "They Met in Rio," "In Copacabana," and "Romance and Rhumba"; (b) exoticizing Latin America as sexual paradise: "With my Concertina," "I, Yi, Yi, Yi, Yi (I Like You Very Much)," "Sing to Your Señorita," "Tropical Magic," "South American Way," "Rio Rhythm," and "Thank You South America"; (c) exoticizing Latin American women: "Conchita, Marcheta, Lolita, Pepita, Rosita, Juanita Lopez," "Pepita," "Lily—Hot from Chile," "Carmenita McCoy," and "Nenita"; (d) stereotyping Latin American men: "Cuban Pete," "The Gaucho Serenade," and "The Gaucho with the Black Mustache"; (e) racist: "Rhumbaboogie," "Macumba," "Chica Chica Boom Chic," "Spic and Spanish," "Shake Your Maracas," and "South America, Take It Away."

30. "U.S. Film Stars the Best Good Will Ambassadors, Say Latin Americans," *Variety*, 19 February 1941, 1.

31. "Films' Latin-American Cycle Finds Congarhumba Displacing Swing Style," *Variety*, 6 November 1940, 22.

32. Desi Arnaz, *A Book* (New York: William Morrow, 1976), 133–35.

33. "Films' Latin-American Cycle," 22.

34. Reyes and Rubie, *Hispanics in Hollywood*, 17.

35. "South American Way," Words and music by Al Dubin and Jimmy McHugh, 1939.

36. Interestingly, Miranda is not the only "other" here: there is a song-and-dance number performed in Spanish by the Nicholas Brothers, "negro hoofers" from the U.S. whose participation puts race at the center stage. "Celluloid

Hemispheric Bid," *Newsweek*, 28 October 1940, 59. Miranda's and the Nicholas Brothers' performative acts speak from the margin, as pure entertainment and exoticism. In the film, the presence and participation of people of color is limited to a stereotypical representation as comic characters, joyful entertainers, and fiery dancers. This ethnic and racial rainbow is magnified and intensified with Miranda's sambas and the Nicholas Brothers' tap dancing and acrobatic moves, all seen in Technicolor.

37. "Twentieth-Fox erred on "Down Argentine Way" . . . in picturing the Argentinians as operating a phoney race track, while the gents from the U.S. were the good folk. (There has also been some criticism on the casting of Carmen Miranda as an Argentine. She's a native of Brazil.)" "Films' Latin American Cycle," 22.

38. In the reconstruction of Miranda's life and professional work on Broadway and Hollywood, I am indebted to the following books: James Robert Parish, *The Fox Girls* (New Rochelle, N.Y.: Arlington House, 1971) and Martha Gil-Montero, *Brazilian Bombshell: The Biography of Carmen Miranda* (New York: Donald I. Fine, 1989).

39. Joyce Dana, "Carmen, Rio Style: This One Has a Last Name (It's Miranda) And She's the Good Neighbor Policy Itself." Clipping from Carmen Miranda file, Lincoln Center Library for the Performing Arts, New York; no sources available.

40. Wilella Waldorf, "'The Streets of Paris' Opens at the Broadhurst Theater," *New York Post*, 20 June 1939, 10.

41. John Anderson, "The Streets of Paris Opens As Summer Revue," *New York Journal and American*, 20 June 1939, 10.

42. Arthur Pollock, "Carmen Miranda Tops *The Streets of Paris*," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 20 June 1939, 7.

43. Brooks Atkinson, "The Streets of Paris Moves to Broadway," *New York Times*, 20 June 1939, L 25.

44. Burns Mantle, "There's Hellzapoppin' in This Streets of Paris Revue, Too," *New York Daily News*, 20 June 1939, 33.

45. Peter Kihss, "Gestures Put It Over for Miranda," *New York World-Telegram*, 8 July 1939, 6.

46. "New Shows in Manhattan," *Time*, 3 July 1939, 42–43.

47. Pollock, "Carmen Miranda Tops 'Streets,'" 7.

48. Waldorf, "'The Streets of Paris' Opens," 9.

49. Richard Lockridge, "The New Play: 'The Streets of Paris,' a Bright Revue Opens at the Broadhurst," *New York Sun*, 20 June 1939, 13.

50. Robert Sullivan, "Carmen Miranda Loaves America and Vice Versa," Clipping from Carmen Miranda file, Lincoln Center Library for the Performing Arts, New York; no sources available.

51. Clipping from Carmen Miranda file, Lincoln Center Library for the Performing Arts, New York; no sources available.

52. Ida Zeitlin, "Sous American Sizzler," Clipping from Carmen Miranda file, Lincoln Center Library for the Performing Arts, New York; no sources available.

53. John Kobal, *Gotta Sing, Gotta Dance: A History of American Musicals* (New York: Exeter, 1971), 193.

54. Chon Noriega has observed that [w]hen the characters speak Spanish [in films] . . . it functions as an empty code for ethnicity. In short, there is no need for subtitles, because nothing is said." Noriega, "Internal Others," 61.

55. Ana M. López, "Are All Latins from Manhattan? Hollywood, Ethnography, and Cultural Colonialism," in *Unspeakable Images: Ethnicity and the American Cinema*, ed. Lester D. Friedman (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 419.

56. Shari Roberts, "'The Lady in the Tutti-Frutti Hat': Carmen Miranda, A Spectacle of Ethnicity," *Cinema Journal* 32, no. 3 (1993): 14–15.

57. On the subject of exoticism and otherness in films, see Ella Shohat, "Gender and Culture of Empire: Toward a Feminist Ethnography of the Cinema," *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* 13 nos. 1–3 (1991): 45–84.

58. López, "Are All Latins from Manhattan?" 418–19.

59. Kobal, *Gotta Sing*, 193. Miranda's impersonators include Imogene Coca, Betty Garrett, Mickey Rooney, Ethel Bennett, Joan Bennett, Jo Ann Marlow, Esther Williams, Eddie Bracken, Denis Quilley, Cass Daley, Jerry Lewis, Milton Berle, Bob Hope, Carol Burnett, *Today Show* weatherman Willard Scott, Bette Midler, and animated characters Bugs Bunny and Donald Duck.

60. *Carmen Miranda: Bananas Is My Business*, prod. David Meyer and Helena Solberg, dir. Helena Solberg, 91 min, Fox-Lorber Home Video, 1994, videocassette.

61. In the 1990s, Miranda's popularity has been resurrected with *Bananas Is My Business*, and also with *Biography: Carmen Miranda*, prod. Kerry Jensen-Izsak, dir. Elizabeth Bronstein, 50 min., Arts and Entertainment Television Network, 1996, videocassette.

62. Sara J. Welch, "The Mirandification of America," *Samba* 2, no. 19 (1995): 4.

63. Miranda performed in the following movies: *Weekend in Havana* (1941), *That Night in Rio* (1941), *Springtime in The Rockies* (1942), *The Gang's All Here* (1943), *Four Jills in a Jeep* (1944), *Greenwich Village* (1944), *Something for the Boy* (1944), *Doll Face* (1945), *If I'm Lucky* (1946), *Copacabana* (1947), *A Date with Judy* (1948), *Nancy Goes to Rio* (1950), and *Scared Stiff* (1953). By 1945 she was making over \$200,000 yearly, becoming the highest paid actress in Hollywood. See Parish, *The Fox Girls*, 514.

64. "Carmen Miranda Is Dead at 41: Movie Comedienne and Dancer," obituary, *New York Times*, 6 August 1955, 15.

65. "South America, Take It Away," words and music by Harold Rome, 1946.

66. Desi Arnaz, in *A Tribute to Lucy*, prod. Film Shows, Inc., 93 min., Goodtimes Video, 1989, videocassette.

67. John S. Roberts had reservations about Arnaz's talent, saying, "Like Cugat, Arnaz was an important popularizer. Unlike Cugat, he knew relatively little about the music he was hybridizing. But he had looks, charm,chutzpah,

and the great advantage over most important "Latin musicians" of being both upperclass (the son of a former mayor of Santiago de Cuba) and pure white. He also had a talent for meeting useful people, encountering Bing Crosby while he was with Cugat, and Sonja Henie and Joe E. Smith in Miami. In reality, Arnaz was not a musician but an entertainer." Roberts, *Latin Tinge*, 82.

68. Arnaz also appeared in the following films: *Father Takes a Wife* (1941), *The Navy Comes Through* (1942), *Bataan* (1943), *Cuban Pete* (1946), *Holiday in Havana* (1949), *The Long, Long Trailer* (1954), and *Forever Darling* (1936).

69. Kathleen Brady, *Lucille: The Life of Lucille Ball* (New York: Hyperion, 1994), 96.

70. Review of *Too Many Girls*, *Time*, 11 November 1940, 76.

71. Brooks Atkinson, "Too Many Girls Opens with a Score by Rodgers & Hart Under George Abbott's Direction," *New York Times*, 18 September 1940, 19.

72. Bosley Crowther, "The Screen in Review," *New York Times*, 21 November 1940, 43.

73. Brady, *Lucille*, 96.

74. Will Friedwald, liner notes for *The Best of Desi Arnaz the Mambo King*, RCA/BMG compact disk CD 07863–66031–2.

75. The Native American presence is registered as another exotic token in the scene in which Consuelo is on her way to the college. After she writes a letter addressed to Beverly Waverly Esq., her secret boyfriend, she asks the bus driver to stop at an Indian trading post. She gives the letter to a Native American woman who hands it to a Native American man, who is wearing an Indian outfit and sitting with his legs crossed. This scene represents the Southwest as the land of the "other" and, by doing so, the film pretends to incorporate a touch of authenticity.

76. Arnaz relates the following anecdote about a trip to Taos, New Mexico, where Lucille Ball was filming *Valley of the Sun*: "There were a lot of Indians in the movie and, having nothing else to do, I took one of their drums and showed them the conga beat. Soon I had the whole Indian tribe doing the conga all over their village"; Arnaz, *A Book*, 127. This shows how easily Afro-Cuban culture can replace Indian culture, since both cultures are marked by difference. The drum is the medium that facilitates such a transition; in other words, the iconic image of a drum—associated with otherness—can speak a thousand words.

77. Gustavo Pérez Firmat, *Life on the Hyphen: The Cuban-American Way* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994), 54.

78. I am assuming that Arnaz did a rendition of "Babalú" on Broadway. In the film he only performed a conga. However, in the recording *The Best of Desi Arnaz the Mambo King* he starts with "Babalú" and metamorphoses it into a conga. I suggest that both "Babalú" and the conga constitute a single unit. Arnaz's racialized act does not acquire its full significance until he performs, in blackface, the same conga in *I Love Lucy* ("Lucy Goes to the Hospital"). *The "I Love Lucy" Collection* vol. 4., prod. CBS Entertainment, CBS/FOX Video 1989, videocassette.

79. “Babalú”, Spanish words and music by Margarita Lecuona, 1939.
80. For definitions and descriptions of the African roots of conga, samba, and rumba, see the glossary included in Roberts, *Latin Tinge*, 220–33.
81. Xavier Cugat, in an unnamed interview quoted in Roberts, *Latin Tinge*, 87.
82. Pérez Firmat, *Life on the Hyphen*, 29.
83. Bosley Crowther, review of *If I’m Lucky*, *New York Times*, 20 September 1946, 41.
84. Arnaz, *A Book*, 77.
85. Lucille Ball, *Love Lucy* (New York: Putnam, 1996), 189.
86. Desi Arnaz and Al Stump, “America Has Been Good to Me,” *American Magazine*, February 1955, 84.
87. Desi Arnaz, in *A Tribute to Lucy*.
88. Keller, *Hispanics and U.S. Film*, 98.
89. According to Lucille Ball, Thunderbird in Palm Springs was not only one of the most beautiful golf courses, but also “one of the most prejudiced. Not only did it refuse to admit Jews, but, celebrity and property owner or not, Desi was not invited to join either,” Ball, *Love Lucy*, 245.
90. Desi Arnaz, in *A Tribute to Lucy*.
91. “She Could Shake Her Maracas,” music by Richard Rodgers, words by Lorenz Hart, 1939.
92. “Cuban Pete,” words and music by José Norman, 1936.
93. The episode, which centered around the character Lucy’s giving birth, was enormously popular: “That night 44 million Americans (more than one fifth of the population—and 30,000 of them sent personal congratulations) tuned in to watch.” Brady, *Lucille*, 213.
94. Michael McClay, *I Love Lucy: The Complete Picture History of the Most Popular TV Show Ever* (New York: Warner Books, 1995), 165.
95. Eric Lott, “Love and Theft: The Racial Unconscious of Blackface Minstrelsy,” *representations* 39 (1992): 28; emphasis in the original.
96. Michael Rogin, *Blackface, White Noise: Jewish Immigrant in the Hollywood Melting Pot* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 9.
97. Xavier Cugat, in an unnamed interview quoted in Roberts, *Latin Tinge*, 87.
98. Miranda dressed as a bahiana, with “a silk turban, golden earrings, a starched skirt, trimmed sandals, golden bracelets and *balangandās* . . . an ornamental silver buckle, with amulets and trinkets attached, worn on feast days by the slaves. . . . The long, broad skirt was suitable for Carnival; indeed men who dressed like Bahian women had always participated in Carnival parades. Moreover, outside the markets and doorsteps of Bahia where the true Bahianas sat, turbans and the *balangandās* were considered leftovers from slavery days.” Gil-Montero, *Brazilian Bombshell*, 54, 56.
99. Heitor Villa-Lobos, quoted in *Bananas Is My Business*.
100. A friend once told me the story of how her mother dressed her as Carmen Miranda and darkened her face for Halloween.

101. Bart Andrews, *The “I Love Lucy” Book* (New York: Doubleday, 1985), 231.
102. It is interesting to notice that Ball asked Miranda for permission to imitate her. *Ibid.*
103. Pérez Firmat, *Life on the Hyphen*, 40.
104. Cited in *ibid.*, 38.
105. Pérez Firmat, *Life on the Hyphen*, 41.
106. According to the *American Heritage Dictionary*, 1303, “palimpsest” means “1. A manuscript, typically of papyrus or parchment, that has been written on more than once, with the earlier writing incompletely erased and often legible. 2. An object, a place, or an area that reflects its history. Latin *palimpsestum*, from Greek *palimpseston*, neuter of *palimpsestos*, scraped again: *palin*, again.”

Chapter Two

1. Norris Houghton, ed., *Romeo and Juliet/West Side Story* (New York: Dell, 1965), 167. All citations refer to the above edition of *West Side Story*, and are hereafter cited parenthetically in the text. When, however, there is no page number next to the citation, I am directly citing the movie: *West Side Story*, prod. Robert Wise, dir. Robert Wise and Jerome Robbins, 152 mins., CBS/Fox Video, 1984, videocassette.

2. The term “Nuyorican” applies to Puerto Ricans born and raised in New York City. It was mainly used by literary writers to denominate their literary and artistic movement in the late 1960s as “Nuyorican poetry.” This label of/for identity expresses a consciousness about ethnic pride and difference, cultural and linguistic hybridity. For a definition of Nuyorican literature, see *Nuyorican Poetry: An Anthology of Puerto Rican Words and Feelings*, ed. Miguel Algarín and Miguel Piñero, (New York: William Morrow, 1975); and Sandra María Esteves, “Ambivalencia o activismo desde la perspectiva poética de los Nuyoricanos,” in *Imágenes e identidades: El puertorriqueño en la literatura*, ed. Asela Rodríguez de Laguna, (Río Piedras, P.R.: Huracán, 1985), 195–201. See also Soledad Santiago, “Notes on the Nuyoricans,” *Village Voice*, 19 February 1979, 12–15; *Herejes y mitificadores: Muestra de poesía puertorriqueña en los Estados Unidos*, ed. Efraín Barradas and Rafael Rodríguez, (Río Piedras, P.R.: Huracán, 1980); and Alberto Sandoval-Sánchez, “La identidad especular del allá y del acá: Nuestra propia imagen puertorriqueña en cuestión,” *Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños Bulletin* 4 no. 2 (1992): 28–43; Sandoval-Sánchez, “Puerto Rican Identity: Air Migration, Its Cultural Representations, and Me ‘Cruzando el Charco’,” in *Puerto Rican Jam: Essays on Culture and Politics*, ed. Frances Negrón-Muntaner and Ramón Grosfoguel (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997); and Sandoval-Sánchez, ¡Mira, que vienen los Nuyoricans!: El temor de la otredad en la literatura nacionalista puertorriqueña,” *Revista de Crítica Literaria Latinoamericana* 45 (1997): 307–25.