

RACISM REMAINS A CONSTANT reality in the lives of women of color in the United States, a reality that manifests itself in varying capacities. María Lugones explores these experiences in her scholarship by examining the logic of sameness that cloaks racism and inhibits the preservation of difference. By analyzing the theoretical tensions produced between and among women of color and white women, Lugones develops an account of boomerang perception described as the racist and colonialist perception of people of color that denies their independence. On her account, people of color are constructed through a white imaginary lens, which collapses difference and implies that the construction of the nonwhite body is dependent on the vision or perception of the white body for its history, self-construction, and social perception.

This essay explores the complexity of the perceptual epistemological structures that comprise boomerang perception. I focus on the lived experiences of Latinas today and consider the ways in which boomerang perception plays out as part of social and cultural life by specifically looking at the way in which Latinas have become part of a commercialized homogenized identity. I argue that such constructions evoke a fake/real dichotomy that is rooted in the internalization of boomerang perception, which can be resisted through the insights offered by the work of Gloria Anzaldúa on *conocimiento*. The methodological framework of *conocimiento* elucidates a transformative embodied sense of knowing that can resist the impact of boomerang perception. In this capacity, I offer the case of resistance through chonga-style politics as one that exemplifies the possibilities of *conocimiento*.

## Thinking Through Boomerang Perception: Reflections on the Quotidian and Belonging

In “Boomerang Perception and the Colonizing Gaze: Ginger Reflections on Horizontal Hostility,” the seventh chapter of *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes*, María Lugones launches a theoretical exploration of boomerang perception, which she describes as an endemic dimension of racist racial perception in the United States. Broadly, boomerang perception is the way in which people of color are perceived through white eyes that see them only in relationship to white identity and construction. She describes the structure of perception in the following fashion: “The racist/colonialist perception is narcissistic, it denies independence to the seen, it constructs its objects imaginatively as a reflection of the seer” (Lugones 2003, 157).<sup>1</sup> The quotidian dimension of boomerang perception is found in the way in which it is folded into the education of young white children as they learn about their nonwhite peers through a framework of assimilation. The language that emerges takes the form of “Black people are just like us” or “Latinos are very similar to us.” The consequence of this logic of perception is that white people are taught to think of racial difference nonreciprocally. People of color are understood only to the extent that they can accommodate white racial perceptual expectations. To this effect Lugones notes: “The white person is the original, the Black person just an image not independent from the seer” (157).

Following this schema, the nonwhite body is dependent on the vision or perception of the white body for its history, self-construction, and social perception. As a result, the racial other is constructed as imitative and robbed of any personal history or circumstance that is independent of whiteness.

As reflected in the title of the essay, Lugones opens her discussion on racist/colonist perception gingerly. She warns that her project should not collapse into an interrogation of the white-other binary, which she takes to be dangerous for people of color. Rather, she seeks to explore the implications of the internalization of boomerang perception for the construction of belonging in communities of color. One such consequence is the evoking of ethnic legitimacy tests within communities that construct some people as “real” participants in ethnic/racial communities and others as “fakes” (Lugones 2003, 159). The language of legitimacy finds expression through the real/fake dichotomy instantiated in phrases like: “You are not *really* Puerto Rican” or “You are not a *real* Latina.”

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<sup>1</sup> Lugones notes that this term originally comes from the work of Elizabeth Spelman.

The internalization of boomerang perception, or the seeing of other people of color through white eyes, impacts horizontal relationships, that is, the relationships between and among people of color. Lugones (2003, 156) insists on a horizontal focus because attention to the oppressor's construction of the subjectivities of people of color (hierarchical focus) can become paralytic. The audiential target of the essay is pointedly reflected in her opening dedicatory paragraph, in which she writes to "people of color; for women first and mainly, but also for men: green-eyed Blacks, never-been-taught-my culture Asian Americans and U.S. Latinos, emigres, immigrants and migrants, mixed-bloods and mixed cultures, solid core, community bred, folks of color" (151).

Central to Lugones's analysis of boomerang perception is not just the perceptual process itself, but also its intimate relationship to constructions of relatedness and belonging as these emerge through racialized intersubjective encounters. How I come to see myself as belonging to a community is to tell a racialized narrative of my encounters with others. However, racialized encounters are constructed in and through our racist environments from which none of us are immune. As a result, the formation of belonging is impacted by boomerang perception, which materializes in the form of legitimacy tests. To this effect she writes: "Thus, we administer legitimacy tests with white eyes on, and what moves us to administer the test is the same logic that invokes the distinction between original/real and the image/fake" (Lugones 2003, 162). Boomerang perception seeps into our quotidian encounters that construct our senses home, heritage, and descent whereby the impact of seeing with white eyes is harmful to the development of positive horizontal relationships.

Following her focus on the impact of boomerang perception on horizontal relationships, Lugones takes concern with the development of homeplace as a method of resistance. Building homeplace provides refuge and conditions survival because it forges the possibilities of an alternative vision and history of oneself that is independent of the oppressors' gaze (Lugones 2003, 159). However, the formation of belonging or the production of a seeing circle, as Lugones refers to it, can come to reinscribe the distortions of boomerang perception, detrimentally impacting horizontal relationships. The impact is most notably felt through fear, the intention of which is the possible loss of ones constructed community or homeplace. In her words: "One fears that one may become what one is in the racists perceiver's eye, and nothing else, all other subjectivity erased. And as I have argued, that is to become something insubstantial, dependent, a distorted image of white humanity. So one guards the seeing circle zealously" (160). Fear entrenched in the loss of subjectivity generates two decisive logics. On the one hand, one can be seen through the pangs of boomerang perception. On the other hand, one can resist the boomerang construction

by creating and guarding ones seeing circle. But as Lugones notes, there is trouble in the oscillation between these logics because those outside of one's seeing circle are still being constructed through the white gaze (160). In the process, the real/fake dichotomy emerges and shapes relations of self to others as a method to guard homeplaces.

Lugones's analysis has two implications. On the one hand, people of color are constructed in the image of white people. Their senses of history, relatedness, and belonging are contingent on white history and identity with no perceptual reciprocity. On the other hand, people of color may be constructed as monstrously different as bad imitative copies of white identity (Lugones 2003, 158). Regardless of the construction of self, the internalization of boomerang perception entails damaged horizontal relationships because we come to see each other and ourselves through a white perceptual schema. In response we construct homeplaces or home seeing circles that are vigilantly guarded through ethnic/racial legitimacy tests.

A key feature of Lugones's analysis of boomerang perception is its quotidian entrenchment as it comes to shape the most intimate practices of the everyday lives of people of color. It participates in what Sharon Patricia Holland (2012) has termed the quotidian life of racism. Boomerang perception is not aberrational and comes to inform ordinary intersubjective experiences. It shapes how we understand our relative histories. Our world is one that requires history: a narrative of the past that explains our descent (Holland 2012, 20). One must have a history to be connected to other people, and this fact racializes history, while simultaneously placing deep importance on *relatedness* in the narratives we construct about ourselves, and others (21). The fact that we are racialized implies that we *belong* or are *related* to a certain social group. While clearly placing a deep importance on the problematic biological discourses that often congeal our senses of racial belonging, this observation also demonstrates the importance of how we perceptually ascertain belonging and relatedness to each other. Boomerang perception negatively impacts these types of social relationships. In what follows I explore the impact of boomerang perception with respect to Latinas in the United States, treading carefully to ensure a focus on intra-Latina relationships and not the white-other binary.

## Latinas in a Commercialized Context: The Real/ Fake Dichotomy

The contemporary situation of Latinas is socially and politically complex. The world is permeated with and constructed through perceptions

(e.g., boomerang perception) of people of color that leave senses of being self-disjointed (e.g., xenophobia), assimilated (e.g., passing), or violently objectified (e.g., hypersexualization). In this context, Latina identity is readily negotiated, challenged, or reinforced through the body (Mendible 2007, 4). It is a gendered, hybrid, and transactional site of ethnic identity articulated through embodiment (4). As a transactional site of ethnic identity, Latina identity has also become a signifier of commercialization and consumption in a world where boomerang perception overwhelmingly informs the narratives of cultural and racial authenticity. In our global economy, the Latina body has come to function as a type of negotiable currency that participates in the mythological national narrative of a multicultural United States (13). The trope of the exotic ethnic beauty has served as a commercialized spectacle of national incorporation using discourses of authenticity and realness, which belies the lived realities of Latinas today, who are overrepresented in high school dropout rates, teen pregnancy, and low-wage factory and domestic labor (14).

The “realness” of identity gains traction through cultural messages that register horizontal relations of identity through the possibilities sameness. For instance, a claim like “Real Puerto Ricans are only those born on the island of Puerto Rico” makes sense when cultural messages dictate that the only way to participate in the shared history of Puerto Rico is through a logic of homogeneity premised on a belonging that is built through birth and geography. Similarly, when we consider what it means to be a “real” Latina, cultural messages indicate that authenticity can be found in homogenous commercialized measurable scales. For instance, L’Oreal Group commercials for the “True Match” foundation centered Jennifer Lopez as (unlike any of the other models in the advertisement) 100 percent Puerto Rican. Carmen R. Lugo-Lugo (2015, 99) has subsequently argued that a claim to 100 percent Latina ethnicity is a marketable condition in a way that 100 percent whiteness or 100 percent blackness is not. Being “real” or “authentic,” as opposed to fake or maybe only “50 percent,” is given credence in a world where what it means to be Latina has been disjointed or objectified through a white perceptual process. Moreover, it is a process that now takes the object of identity as marketable and profitable.

Lugo-Lugo (2014, 126) argues that the pan-ethnic label of “Latina” is flattened through commercialization that homogenizes the term by lumping all Latinas into one category, and making it a desirable object of consumption through a narrative of pride. Having pride in ethnic, racial, or national heritage makes identification viable with the category. Unfortunately, the commercialized homogenization of Latina constructs the identity through a white imaginary lens that does not leave room for differences. The feeling of pride, Lugo-Lugo (2015, 136) argues, emerges

from a sense of belonging, community, or accomplishment. However, it becomes very difficult to garner a sense of belonging when the category is manufactured in a manner that renders it vacuous due to the universalizing forces that are at play in its commercialization. To this effect, Lugo-Lugo (2014) writes: “In fact, we could describe Latina pride as the byproduct of a society that imagines Latinas in one way and that forces those who fall within the category (by label or identity) to create a fundamentally empty space from which to operate and in which to take refuge from their daily existence in that very society” (139). The narrative of authenticity marks the category of Latina as a commercialized, homogenized category that can only be real (authentic) or fake. If, as Lugo-Lugo suggests, the identity of Latina is produced through commercialization that universalizes and homogenizes, then it should be no surprise that the fake/real dichotomy is often deployed as a way of constructing a sense of belonging. However, the difficulties arise, much as Lugo-Lugo has noted, when we recognize that the category in the perceptual process has become empty in that it refers potentially to everyone and to no one. Hence, the identity of Latina in the US twenty-first century is often guarded zealously through the fake/real dichotomy because what it means to be “real” is so fragile in its construction. Commercialization has helped to make the category of Latina an empty, but desirable, object of identification.

The fake/real dichotomy gains epistemic traction when one has been objectified or rendered part of a narrative of sameness constructed through white perception that does not offer an independent narrative of history and self. Protecting the sense of belonging through narratives of “authenticity” and “realness” demonstrates just how impactful boomerang perception is in our constructions of quotidian belonging. In the case of Jennifer Lopez there is no construction of Latina identity that is not independent of a commercialized hyperfeminine and sexualized *Latinidad* that young Latinas aspire to participate in, thus constructing their relationships to each other through their abilities to approximate an embodiment of the “real” Latina. Moreover, the “realness” is sustained through the affirmation and protection of national and ethnic origins. After all, Jennifer Lopez is claiming 100 percent Puerto Ricanness, which subsequently implies 100 percent Latina. As Lugones has noted, one of the effects of boomerang perception on people of color is the protection of seeing circles that congeal around national or ethnic homeplaces. In this instance, Lopez’s 100 percent status entails that there are certain criteria that qualify her as such and failure to meet those criteria will result in exclusion from the “seeing circle.” The processes of producing states of inclusion and exclusion are sustained by rebuke of those that do not belong, but, given the state of commercialization, belonging seems in many capacities both desirable and unobtainable.

## Resistant Logics

Lugones (2003) argues that resistance to boomerang perception cannot come from an attachment to nation and culture that mistrusts the perception of other people of color (161). Rather, resistance is found in the recognition that there are larger and more complex seeing circles that allow us to form collective subjectivities of resistance (160). The work for Lugones is in dismantling the effect of boomerang perception through the disavowal of dichotomous visions (real/fake) of other people of color that recognize the effects of boomerang perception. However, how do we go about constructing such a positive subjectivity? How can Latinas enact this collective labor of horizontal relationality? Although Lugones expounds on the conditions for resistance, the answers to these questions remain unanswered. As an offering in the direction of a resistant logic to boomerang perception I suggest we look to the work of Gloria Anzaldúa, who was deeply influential on the work of Lugones.

Resistance to boomerang perception on the part of Latinas (in their multiplicity) first and foremost requires acts of self-knowing that recognize the impact of internalized colonialist/racist perception that make the real/fake dichotomy viable in the first place. However, self-knowing is not an easy process. As Gloria Anzaldúa explains in *Borderlands/La Frontera* (1999) knowledge makes one more conscious and aware, but *knowing* (the action of knowledge internalization) is painful because after we are not the same person we were before (48). Knowing is transformative, but transformations are rarely easy. In “Now let us shift . . . the path of *conocimiento* . . . inner work, public acts” (2002, 540), Anzaldúa expands on the transformative action of self-knowing or *conocimiento*. She notes that *conocimiento* requires confronting what you have been programmed by your culture to avoid or unknow (*desconocer*). The path of *conocimiento* necessitates that we confront the traits and habits that have distorted how we see the world (541). In this context, the effect of boomerang perception yields *desconocimiento* through trauma on the subjectivities of people of color that preclude the possibilities of positive coalitional horizontal relationships. The vision of oneself in the throes of boomerang perception is one constructed through objectification, a line of self-perception that is not one’s own. Seeing the world through white colonialist eyes and seeing fellow Latinas through these internalized perceptions is the result of the trauma caused by boomerang perception. Unsurprisingly, boomerangs in their nonreturning iterations are weapons intended to maim. The perception wielded through boomerang perception injures, breaks, objectifies, or disjoins its subject. Enacting self-knowing from conditions maimed through boomerang perception calls into question categories and artifices that we are conditioned to know ourselves through (e.g., race, gender,

nationality) that then allow us to reformulate how we relate to ourselves and each other. It strikes me that resistance to boomerang perception will require that we recognize that the harm comes from the categories themselves, the boomerangs. As Anzaldúa (2002, 541) argues, the path of *conocimiento* requires questioning conventional systems of knowledge and their respective categories that have come to distort how we see ourselves and structure how we relate to others. So in guarding our seeing circles we must question how we have come to see fellow Latinas as objects that can be constructed as real/fake in order to render their participation in belonging appropriate. The path of *conocimiento* requires a skepticism of the binary categories that yield a sense of the self as “real,” “fake,” or “100 percent anything,” as these become fragmenting categories. Fostering positive horizontal relationships among and between people of color must begin with the self; and Latinas are no different. The drive to understand others is, first and foremost, foregrounded by a drive to understand and love yourself (543).

Anzaldúa (2002) describes the process as “an opening up from all of the senses, consciously inhabiting the body, and all of its symptoms” (542). *Conocimiento* is multiple and challenges the conventional ways we look at the world (542). As a result, we must necessarily explore how our constructions of knowledge, identity, and subsequently reality violate other people’s ways of being, knowing, and living (544). We must question boomerang perception; the process by which we come to construct other people through problematic categories that we ourselves internalize. To resist boomerang perception in our horizontal relationality the boomerang must be abandoned. In other words, the categories that construct impermeable seeing circles have to be interrogated, and one key method for doing so is through stylized resistance.

## Latina Stylized Resistance: From Pachuca to Chonga

The process of critical interrogation foundational to *conocimiento* hinges on the development of a self-knowledge that does not rest on the use of ethnic legitimacy tests for the construction of positive self-identity. One method for ascertaining such knowledge can be found through stylized resistance, which deploys the use of embodied style as a way of resisting normative expectations of Latina identity. The use of embodied style requires a conscious inhabitation of the body as it is sculpted and molded to challenge gendered, sexual, ethnoracial norms. Furthermore, given that narratives of race, gender, and sexuality are crucial vehicles to the production of national identity, stylized resistance can interrupt expectations of multicultural assimilation often associated with appropriate Latina



embodiment. Style is both self and other directed, and permeates one's sense of self as well as how others perceive our identity. As a result, it has political valence. The use of style can challenge the categories through which we construct the world and thus offers a path toward *conocimiento*.

The use of the body and its style to resist dominant systems of power is hardly new for Latinas in the United States. In *The Women in the Zoot Suit: Gender, Nationalism, and the Cultural Politics of Memory* (2009), Catherine S. Ramírez draws attention to the omission of Mexican American women in the 1930s–1940s from the history of the Chicano movement. Mexican American women who wore zoot suits were often termed *pachucas*, *chukas*, *cholitas*, *malinches* (xiii). Many were working-class and second-generation Americans whose families had emigrated to the United States, were bilingual, and were located in the urban centers of California and the Southwest (xiii). Ramírez demonstrates the way in which style for the women of the zoot suit era functioned as a form of resistance. By specifically focusing on *pachuca*-style politics, Ramírez centers the use of the body, gender performativity, and style as methods that interrupted the norms constructing femininity, sexuality, and nationhood. Women of the zoot suit era became a “sign of aberrant femininity, competing masculinity, or homosexuality during the early 1940s. As a nonwhite, working-class, and queer signifier, it was perceived as un-American” (Ramírez 2009, 56).

Style politics, as Ramírez refers to it, encompasses the use of clothing, hairstyles, and makeup to engage in subversive action (2009, 57). Generally, zoot suits were a sign of disposable income and socially underscored the instability of class and race (60). For some the zoot suit was viewed as a status symbol, a class accomplishment. However, for others, particularly those of the upper class, the zoot suit was read as excessive (61). The use of zoot suits interrupted the social norms of class ascribed to Mexican Americans of the time. It was further accompanied by a brazen attitude that deviated from the norms of femininity in the World War II era (2009, 61). Appropriate femininity was racialized (white) and characterized by the protection of domesticity whereby women were responsible for their homes, families, and appearance in efforts to preserve the nation (65). Furthermore, if women were recruited into the workforce, their femininity was always foregrounded in the process (67).

The *pachuca* emerged as a destabilizing figure whose use of style functioned as a method of subversion of the norms of her times both within her own community as well as within the broader US culture during World War II (Ramírez 2009, 81). The *pachuca* interrupted dominant narratives of femininity. The use of heavy makeup and at times short skirts ran against the image of the self-sacrificing mother (68). Although *pachucas* were feminine, their style was often read as excessively feminine. The feminine

excess interrupted the norms of ladyhood that deemed them unpatriotic and pernicious to society (69). As a result, *pachuca* sexuality was rendered abnormal because the woman was apprehended as sexually available (70).

The Latinas that engaged in stylized resistance during in the World War II era provide an instructive historical framework for better understanding contemporary Latina stylized resistant politics. Ramírez's account calls attention to the way in which stylized politics is multidimensional. Style can interrupt discourse of class, race, femininity, sexuality, nationhood, and citizenship. For instance, the use of hyperfemininity and hypervisibility interrupts racialized gendered norms that teach appropriateness, particularly for young immigrant Latinas, through the deployment of respectable feminine bodily comportment that creates the possibilities of assimilation. Through the use of aesthetics, stylized resistance creates subversive action on and through the body that can interrupt oppressive vertical and horizontal relationships.

Recalling Anzaldúa's reflections in "now lets us shift" (2002), the path of *conocimiento* recognizes that the body is more than its marked categories (555). Identity is fluid, and we can share in an identity larger or wider than any social position or label (558). Identity has roots that extend. To this effect, Anzaldúa writes: "The roots del árbol de la vida of all planetary beings are nature, soul, and body" (560). Anzaldúa's claim insists that the national boundaries that divide us from "others" (*nos/otras*) be porous. The cracks that make the fluidity of identity possible serve as gateways to *otras/others* (561). In this capacity, stylized resistance serves as a mechanism through which to participate in positive self-knowing that does not require the debasement of others and cracks at the artifice of zealously guarded seeing circles built on the language of authenticity and fakeness.

A more contemporary instantiation of Latina stylized resistance can be found through *chonga* stylized politics. Much like *pachucas*, *chongas* interrupt the discourse of the "proper" Latinas who are supposed to blend in, be quiet, respectable, and invisible. *Chonga* stylized politics interrupts the idea that real Latinas are those who can be appropriately folded into the narrative fiction of national multiculturalism. To this effect, the figure of the *chonga* operates as a critical intervention in the impacts of boomerang perception by gesturing toward a critical self-knowing that disrupts norms of gender, class, and sexuality. As such, *chonga* stylized politics resists the signification of Latinas as homogenized objects for consumption.

## Embodying Resistance: Chonga Stylized Politics

*Chonga* stylized politics deploys the use of the body and its performative style to disrupt hegemonic norms coded in the language of authenticity

that regulates Latina identity. Chongas are often described as young, low-class, slutty, tough, and hypervisible Latinas from south Florida (Hernandez 2009, 64). Their presence in visual culture reflects the way in which chonga bodies produce and reflect discourses about sexuality, ethnicity, and class (64). Most notably, the figure of the chonga sheds light on biases within Latina communities, as chongas have come to discursively represent what not to emulate, those against whom seeing circles are guarded. Yet at the same time chongas trouble the politics of authenticity by complicating the normative behavior imposed on Latina communities intended to produce the good/bad and real/fake dichotomy (64). Chongas are marked by what Jillian Hernandez has identified as a sexual aesthetic excess, which functions through the use of style often considered to be “too much”: too sexy, too young, too cheap, too ethnic (66). However, rather than reading the sexual aesthetic excess as participating in the stereotyping of Latinas, we ought to understand it as potentially disruptive. The deployment of chonga style functions as a resistant measure to discourses of Latinas that attempt to empower by dissociating them from the sexual excess. By participating in sexual aesthetic excess, chonga identity renegotiates the relationship between agency and sexual identity, and in doing so calls into question what it means to be a good, real, and authentic Latina. Thus, chonga stylized resistance gestures toward a methodological resistance that reshapes self-knowing, as well as the relationships that Latinas have between each other that often read sexual excess as that which should be disciplined.

Anzaldúa (2002) articulates *conocimiento* as a form of spiritual inquiry that is achieved through creative acts where the body is a site of creativity (542). It is a process that she articulates in seven stages or stations through which relationships of the self are renegotiated and rearticulated. However, we are never only in one stage, but rather at the crossroads of many processes of *conocimiento* articulated through the mind/body/spirit. Informative for the role that stylized resistance plays in *conocimiento* is the fifth stage. The fifth station is one characterized by reconstruction whereby we recreate personal narratives that poke holes in the paradigms that construct our current reality. In so doing, we also aid in the cocreation of group cultural narratives (Anzaldúa 2002, 560). The fifth stage lays the possibility for alternative potentials that contribute to more expansive *conocimiento* (560).

In this context, the sexual aesthetic excess of chonga style can be read as not merely resisting the assimilative homogenized model of Latina identity, but also rearticulating a creative way of being that is resistant. Chongas grate against the politics of respectability that discipline Latinas into practices that fuel narratives of authenticity tied to appropriate femininity. Speaking to this point is the work of Prisca Dorcas Mojica

Rodriguez, a self-identified chonga *mujerista* blogger, whose writing thinks through the resistant dimensions of chonga stylized politics. In her “Chonga Manifesto” Prisca (2016a)<sup>2</sup> articulates a narrative of self that takes sexual aesthetic excess as a site from which to creatively embody resistance. She writes: “I wanted to speak in affirmatives about our boldness, power, and resilience. Because this is not a disembodied document; this document is reflexive of real women, real chingonas, who on a daily basis embody their praxis of resisting assimilation and white-washing. We put our brown bodies on display to disrupt narratives of respectability” (2016a). Prisca reflects a negotiation of subjectivity that actively and creatively uses the body to shift the understanding of the self toward new ways of knowing. Here the sexual aesthetic excess troubles narratives of what is read as too sexy, cheap, or ethnic. Hypervisibility resists the assemblage of what it means to be a respectable and good Latina through the excessive aesthetic embodiment of categories that negotiate inclusion and exclusion. A further quote from “Chonga Manifesto” speaks to the resistant dimensions of chonga feminine style: “I understand that growing up poor meant that people distrusted me because of my aesthetics, so I learned a particular kind femininity, which bubbles to the surface as my class mobility. So when I wing my eyeliner, outline my lips, put on my mini skirt and crop top, I am adorning myself with my war paint and armor. Because to you, I am not human—but it’s okay because to me and to those who understand: I am a goddess.” The use of makeup, which many readily refer to as a disciplining feminine practice, is rearticulated creatively, resisting the disciplining of the body by a shift in meaning. Further, part of the methodology of resistance through the sexual aesthetic excess involves a call to spiritual life that centers the figure of the goddess. Prisca’s account demonstrates the way chonga stylized resistance through the use of the sexual aesthetic excess participates in a process that creatively expands the narrative of the self and others by picking apart the paradigms that construct reality, the crux of the fifth station of *conocimiento*. In this capacity, chonga stylized resistance offers a window into the many practices through which we can dismantle and recompose the self, thus forging a path of toward *conocimiento* with the self and with others.

## Conclusion

I have argued boomerang perception functions as a way of unknowing that deeply impacts horizontal relational possibility as it problematically constructs bodies of color through a white racial lens that leaves them

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<sup>2</sup> The author prefers to be referred to by her first name. I will subsequently refer to her as Prisca.

disjointed and objectified. The impact of this perceptual process on Latinas is violent and traumatic. It leaves in its wake a distinction between real/fake that serves on face to protect a location from which one can speak. Claiming the status of 100 percent Latina through whatever means necessary (gender, race, nation) ensures a connection to a homeplace that grounds identity. However, the construction of this seeing/speaking circle is problematic in that it reflects the internalization of boomerang perception, which thwarts positive horizontal relationality that recognizes difference. The construction of myself as 100 percent authentic anything necessitates that I potentially construct others violently as fakes and exile them. The solution is found in mending the wounds of white perception horizontally, questioning how even our deepest senses of identity might necessitate the wounding of others, even when those others are mirrors of myself. I invite chongas as a vision of what resistant healing to the wound of boomerangs might look like.

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