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CHAPTER 1

Re-Membering the Body: Spiritual Genealogy, Collective Memory, and Lost Histories in Delilah Montoya's *Codex Delilah*

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INTRODUCTION

In 1992, the United States conducted a nationwide commemoration of the Quincentenary, the five-hundredth anniversary of the arrival of Christopher Columbus on the shores of the Americas. While the overall tenor of the observance remained laudatory regarding Columbus, his achievement, and the subsequent “settlement”¹ of the New World by Europeans, some Americans insisted that media and other popular representations of the official recognition elided important aspects of this historical moment and its aftermath. Protests and counterdemonstrations ranged from mild to militant with churches, schools, and indigenous and other activist groups critiquing the limited portrayal of the yearlong commemoration.

To combat the incomplete and misleading information circulated in the general media, groups throughout the nation organized teach-ins and other educational and cultural events. In San Francisco, the Mexican Museum presented an alternate view of the five centuries that elapsed

since Columbus' so-called "discovery." In an exhibit titled "The Chicano Codices: *Encountering*² Art of the Americas," Chicana/o artists throughout the United States produced works that simultaneously celebrated existing American civilizations and documented the effects of European occupation.³ By introducing these works into the public record, the exhibit contested the exclusion and erasure of the cultures and histories of those inhabiting the Americas at First Contact. Curator Marcos Sanchez-Tranquilino⁴ also sought to work against the dispersal of the original pre-contact books to largely European private collections and libraries by amassing contemporary codices in an American museum space.⁵ Additionally, the artworks challenged the absence of representation of ancient cultures because the artists incorporated indigenous forms, symbols, and traditions in their artworks.

This essay investigates the reclamation and reconstruction of lost histories in visual representation and considers the imbrication and intersection of memory, spirituality, and the body in one of the works from this exhibition, a contemporary artist's book titled *Codex Delilah, Six-Deer: Journey from Mexicatl to Chicana* (Fig. 1). Produced by photographer and print-maker Delilah Montoya in conjunction with the late poet and playwright Cecilio García-Camarillo,⁶ *Codex Delilah* is a seven page screenfold book



Figure 1. Delilah Montoya, Codex Delilah, Six-Deer: Journey from Mexicatl to Chicana, 1992, Gouache on amate paper, Mixed media, 20 x 80 x 13 _ in.

Photograph: M. Lee Fatherree. Copyright Delilah Montoya. Used by permission of the artist.

that illustrates a transformative journey conducted by a fictional indigenous girl named Six-Deer. Montoya modeled her artwork primarily after the formal conventions of the *Dresden Codex*, a pre-Contact Maya book that contains both images and glyphic texts (Maya writing). The artist adopted various ancient Mesoamerican book traditions including the use of the screenfold form and multiple registers on each panel of the work.⁷ To structure the work's narrative, she used a quest for knowledge by the codex's central figure as the overarching trope, thereby illustrating the centrality of spirituality within *mestiza* life and revealing its importance throughout the codex's historical timeframe, a 600-year period. In the work, memory and spirituality overlap and embrace each other as the recollection of spiritual and everyday cultural practices demonstrates the influence and continuity of ancient healing practices and the histories of Mesoamerican peoples in contemporary society.⁸

Further, this essay discusses how Montoya uses memory to weave complex, vibrant histories from a fragmented, partially remembered past, how she reforms and recuperates the Chicana body through the depiction of iconic female figures, and how she retrieves and re-constructs the bodies of knowledge lost due to European contact through the creation of a spiritual genealogy. Seeking to discover how Montoya uses the body as a site for meaning, the work analyzes the characters found in three separate panels of the codex by examining their placement and relationship to each other within the composition as a whole, their pose or attitude, and the actions they perform.

THE BODY AS SITE OF COLLECTIVE MEMORY

In the first panel of *Codex Delilah*, Montoya begins her visual narrative by portraying the malaise of Six-Deer,⁹ the work's central character. The child experiences a sense of "dis-ease," an awareness of a disharmony in her indigenous world of 1401 that leaves her fearful and confused. Soon to be initiated as a practitioner of her people's healing traditions, the girl approaches Ix-Chel, the village elder and *tlamatani* (counselor), and asks her advice. Ix-Chel charges Six-Deer to seek *Aztlán*¹⁰ where she promises the child will understand "the nature of all things."¹¹ From the first panel of the codex, Montoya embeds the narrative in a cross-cultural

Mesoamerican cosmology that maps spiritual meaning on the bodies she represents. She combines mythic figures, images, and languages from various Mesoamerican sites to construct a collective memory that consists of multiple locations and references, thereby providing a broad inclusiveness that refuses to honor or elevate one tradition or culture over another.

The artist produces this spiritual *mestizaje* by including Mayan and Central Mexican terms and concepts such as *Ometeótl*, *Omecihúatl*, *Ix-Chel*, and *Aztlán*.¹² First, on the codex's initial and final panels, the artist mentions a deity that represents the *Náhuatl* principle of duality, the Central Mexican god(s) *Ometeótl*, thereby framing the codex with a concern for the balance between opposite forces. *Ometeótl*, one god who contains both male and female aspects, the female procreator *Omecihúatl* and the male procreator *Ometecuhli*, represents the primordial human couple that brings humanity into existence. Mesoamerican cultures frequently link the Ancestral Couple to both the sacred calendar and the practices of healing and prophecy, aspects of spiritual expression that the artist emphasizes throughout the codex. Secondly, since Montoya places *Ix-Chel*, a character fashioned after a powerful figure from the Maya pantheon, on the first panel, her presence announces the codex's concern with healing and spirituality from its inception. In ancient representations, *Ix-Chel*, a Mayan Moon Goddess, appears as both a young and an old woman. In her aspect as elder, Mayan cosmology associates *Ix-Chel* with weaving, childbirth, and healing. Lastly, in a move that parallels *El Movimiento Chicano's*¹³ embrace of indigenous identity as the source of cultural *orgullo* (pride) and power for Chicanas/os, Montoya situates *Aztlán* as the culmination of Six-Deer's pilgrimage. By positioning *Aztlán* as the source of spiritual knowledge and power for the child, the artist embeds spirituality into geographic space and implicates the earth as living body of wisdom and spiritual sustenance.

Montoya uses this evocation of place interlaced with spiritual power to foreground the construction of the codex's individual characters and to demonstrate spiritual values and beliefs. She stages *Ix-Chel's* body to illustrate a consciously attended balance of power between adult and child. Montoya illustrates the elder woman inhabiting the space equally with Six-Deer and physically positions the elder on Six-Deer's level. In every instance we see *Ix-Chel* adjusting her adult size to the child in order to experience the world

from Six-Deer's point of view (Fig. 2). IxChel's position indicates a sense of shared power, an awareness of holding and extending power between adult and child, teacher and student, rather than power *over*.¹⁴



Figure 2. Delilah Montoya, *Codex Delilah, Six-Deer: Journey from Mexicalt to Chicana*, 1992,

Gouache on amate paper, Mixed media, 20 x 80 x 13 _ in.

Detail of Panel 2, Register 2.

Photograph: Copyright Ann Marie Leimer 2004.

Artwork: Copyright Delilah Montoya.

This awareness of the nuances of power identifies Ix-Chel as the ancient forebear of the healing specialization or spiritual practice of *curanderismo*.¹⁵ Artist, psychologist, and scholar Amelia Mesa-Bains describes the healing tradition in this way.

The dominance of a worldview that rejects the separation of mind and body among Mexicanos is manifested in the ongoing traditions of *curanderismo* where the emotional psychic state of the individual expresses itself in the ills of the body. Such bodily ills are often seen to be a result of the social situation of the individual and include references between the particular psychological stress and the particular part of the body.¹⁶

In her role as teacher and spiritual visionary, Ix-Chel's body contains the traditional healing knowledges, customs, and practices of her village. She possesses the knowledge of restoring harmony and balance to the body of a patient, to the body of a people, and to the body of the earth. Present at births, deaths, and all the physical sufferings and spiritual afflictions in between, she also carries in her memory the histories of the community. She epitomizes body as repository and becomes the living archive of the

collective memory of the history, culture, and somatic and psychic life of people as individuals and as a group. Therefore, she symbolizes the living embodiment of healing practices and altepetl¹⁷ histories, not only of her village, but also of indigenous peoples throughout the Americas.

When Ix-Chel charges the young girl with her quest for self-realization, she declares “*Tienes que ir a Aztlán*” (“You must go to Aztlán”). Then she points Six-Deer northward and places a turquoise necklace containing a flint (stone knife) around her neck. The village elder informs the child that all of their people’s healers have worn this flint or tecpatl. With this ritual of blessing and protection, Ix-Chel initiates the construction of a spiritual genealogy within the codex, includes the child as an integral part of its lineage, and symbolically transmits to Six-Deer the collective memory of their people.

THE BODY AS SITE OF DESIRE, VIOLENCE, AND REDEMPTION

In the second panel of *Codex Delilah*, Six-Deer encounters a conflated figure from the Mexicana/o/Chicana/o pantheon that merges aspects of the Wailing Woman (La Llorona) with Malintzin Tenépal, Hernán Cortés’ translator, also known as Doña Marina, Malinalli, and La Malinche (Fig. 3). Montoya names her version of these *personajes* (characters) LloralLloralMalinche.¹⁸ Throughout the second register of this panel, the artist repeat-



Figure 3. Delilah Montoya, *Codex Delilah*, Six-Deer: Journey from Mexicalt to Chicana, 1992.

Gouache on amate paper, Mixed media, 20 x 80 x 13 _ in.

Detail of Panel 2, Register 2. Photograph: Copyright Ann Marie Leimer 2004.

Artwork: Copyright Delilah Montoya.

edly places Lloras's¹⁹ body in various poses that communicate intense suffering. In frenzied anguish, she pulls her hair and repeatedly cries out "Mis hijos" (My children"), but ultimately searches in vain for her lost children. Her body becomes a channel for the expression of intense emotion, her torment evident in its extreme physical tension.

Finally, her body and spirit exhausted from their performance of grief, the artist pictures her completely spent, dropped in a catatonic heap in the lower right-hand side of the composition.

In contrast, Montoya portrays Six-Deer only twice in this panel, giving the weight of representation to Lloras. A bewildered but empathetic witness, Six-Deer stands on the far left side of the composition physically overwhelmed by the immensity of the other woman's suffering. The child's footprints map a path through various images of the Conquest that chart the destruction and violence she witnesses as she travels through *Tenochtitlán*, the capital city and center of the *Mexica* empire. We see her again in the upper right hand corner of the register glancing down and touching her belly in a gesture that emphasizes an important consequence of this panel's events.

Montoya's use of Lloras produces the female body as a conflicted site of desire, transgression, and creativity. This character embodies Woman²⁰ in multiple states: as sexually realized, as mature and procreative, as sexually betrayed and abandoned, and as sexually violated. Within the conflation of La Malinche and La Llorona, each persona contains a dual aspect; woman as transgressor and transgressed, as betrayer and betrayed. If we consider Lloras in her aspect as La Malinche, several descriptions recount that Malintzin lived a privileged life as a member of a noble family until her mother remarried. Wishing to ensure the ascension to rulership by her son from this second marriage, Malintzin's mother sought to displace her firstborn daughter's birthright and sold her into slavery. Betrayed by her mother, Malintzin later purportedly "betrays" her people when she assumes the role of *lengua* (tongue/translator) for Hernán Cortés. Understood in many accounts and representations as the bringer of death and destruction to Mesoamerica and its peoples, Malintzin, as abandoned child and transgressed adolescent, then allegedly becomes the transgressor.

In its dual role as transgressed and transgressor, Llorona's body implies sexual desire, although not necessarily hers. In her aspect as La Malinche, she represents the object of male gaze, desire, and violence. Understood as the symbol of a raped womanhood, this character embodies the pain, rage, and anguish of sexualized violence. Although Montoya emphasizes Llorona in her altered state of grief for her children, one can also view this performance of anguish as the aftermath of sexual assault. Whether the historical La Malinche was a victim of sexual violence or not, she symbolizes the multitudes of women of color who experienced this brutal transgression during the Conquest, and those who experience it today.

Llorona's concurrent status as betrayed and betrayer parallels the similar construction of La Llorona. If we consider Llorona in her aspect as La Llorona, the generally accepted story positions her as an indigenous woman living a contented life with her Conquistador lover/husband and their three children, a life that indicates sexual desire and possibly, fulfillment on her part. Her husband abandons her for an upper class Spanish woman and, in a moment of desperation, La Llorona drowns their children. When she takes her children's lives, she crosses from transgressed or betrayed woman and simultaneously embodies the role of transgressor and betrayer of the protective responsibility of motherhood.

Sexual longing and contact, whether reciprocal or not, can transform the female body from the site of desire to the site of creation. Montoya imagines the bodies of the female characters in Panel 2 in their procreative aspect. In this panel's third register, Llorona advises Six-Deer that she carries a child stating, "All is lost, but I can tell you're carrying the child of the invaders." "What are you saying?" asks the perplexed Six-Deer. "What you heard. I can see what others can't."²¹ With these words, Llorona enacts the ritual transmission of the bodies of knowledge regarding pregnancy and childbirth from one generation of women to another and performs her role in the codex's spiritual genealogy. Held deep in the body's memory, spiritual practices and other cultural traditions related to childbearing pass by word of mouth from mother to daughter, from *tía* to *sobrina*, from older sister to younger sister, and prepare each initiate for the process of pregnancy and the act of birth.

Montoya uses this moment in the narrative to recuperate the traditional viewpoint that regards La Malinche as betrayer of her people. The artist positions La Malinche within the codex as the sixth portent²² of the Aztecs,²³ a series of eight ominous signs that foretold future disaster. In this way, she frees La Malinche from the heavy burden of traitor. While Montoya chronicles the destruction of indigenous peoples and their ways of life as a result of the Conquest, the artist does not blame Llorona. Instead, she emphasizes the creation of the *mestiza/o* as a redemptive act contributed by the bodies of La Malinche, La Llorona, and Six-Deer. Montoya illustrates Llorona cautioning the child, “Love your child of mixed bloods for he is the new race who will survive and populate the land.”²⁴

Montoya included this idea in *Codex Delilah* at the urging of Cecilio García-Camarillo who felt it important to acknowledge the new race born from this historical moment. García-Camarillo and Montoya viewed the creation of the *mestiza/o* as a “gift” and the artist based her depiction of this event on a family story. When one of the artist’s sisters was nearly six years old, she began walking about the house with her upper body curled forward and her arms cradled around her belly. When Montoya’s mother asked the girl what she was doing, Montoya’s sister replied, “Mom, I’m protecting my babies!” Montoya wanted to convey this sense of youthful naivety and characterized Six-Deer’s response to her pregnancy from this point of view. Six-Deer replicates the pose of Montoya’s sister in the upper right corner of the second register (Fig. 3). The artist intended Six-Deer as the “symbolic carrier of the new race” and considered her the point of genesis for contemporary Chicanas. Recognizing that, “We were born out of the Conquest, out of Nèpantla,” Montoya honored rather than denigrated this result of the indigenous-European “encounter.”²⁵

THE BODY AS SITE OF SACRIFICE: CARNAL(ITY) AND COMMUNITAS

In the sixth panel of *Codex Delilah*, Six-Deer meets La Velia, a thinly veiled reference to New Mexican community organizer and indigenous activist Velia Silva, since Silva posed for the photographs Montoya used in this section of the codex. Montoya transforms Silva into a 1960s Chicana activist and situates this panel’s events in 1969 at the height of

the Chicano Movement (Fig. 4). Six-Deer begins her journey through this register in the upper left-hand side. Here she discovers La Velia and extends an arm in greeting, while La Velia returns the gesture with a hearty “Hello, *compañera* (companion).” When Six-Deer asks for directions to *Aztlán*, La Velia remains illusive, stating that some consider *Aztlán* a state of mind.²⁶ Six-Deer learns about the farmworker movement from the activist and decides to accompany her on a *peregrinación* (pilgrimage) to Santa Fe on behalf of striking chile pickers.

Montoya pictures both La Velia and Six-Deer actively moving through the space against a background of protesting figures that echo shouts of



Figure 4. Delilah Montoya, *Codex Delilah, Six-Deer: Journey from Mexicalt to Chicana*, 1992.

Gouache on amate paper, Mixed media, 20 x 80 x 13 in.

Detail of Panel 6, Register 2. Photograph: Copyright Ann Marie Leimer 2004. Artwork: Copyright Delilah Montoya.

“*Huelga*” (Strike) and “*Ya Basta*” (It Is Enough). Appearing twice in the visual narrative, La Velia carries a wooden or cardboard box, suggesting both a platform where she makes impromptu speeches and a container that transports the produce picked by farmworkers. In Panel 6, Six-Deer’s body projects an increased confidence and a growing sense of power resulting from the assertion of her agency. Montoya depicts the child repeatedly in the center lower third of the panel. On the lower left side, she raises her fist in support of the farmworkers’ cause. Immediately to the right, she appears again, looks directly at the viewer with a broad smile, and clasps her hands in delight. Finally, she travels to the upper

right-hand corner, balanced in size and position with her initial image on the register's opposite side. Here, Six-Deer faces to the right, still smiling. A lone footprint marks the path she will take. She lifts her chin and strides confidently out of the panel.

Within the context of *El Movimiento Chicano*, what kinds of meanings does the artist map on the bodies of La Velia and Six-Deer? Mesa-Bains states that, despite the conquest and the annexation of Mexico by the United States as a result of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, contemporary cultural practices in the United States contain an awareness of the Chicana/o body as both individual and collective. This awareness arises from the holistic base of *curanderismo* and illustrates a remnant of memory from indigenous and colonial times.²⁷ By juxtaposing the terms *carnal* and *communitas*, I now discuss the concepts of body, spirituality, and sacrifice as symbolized by the figures of La Velia and Six-Deer.

The English word “carnal” refers to the body, its sensual needs and desires, while the Spanish word contains additional layers of meaning. Because of *El Movimiento Chicano*'s emphasis on collective identity and the connection between members of *la raza* (the Mexican race), the term *carnalismo*, or brotherhood, re-circulated and gained increasing favor in the late 1960s. Four decades later, Chicanos still use the term *carnal* as a slang expression to describe and identify a close male bond of friendship. For example, a typical greeting between friends might be, “*Orale, carnal!*” (“O.K.” or “Right on, brother!”). José Limón points out the multiple dimensions of the term and the connection between meat, the body, maleness, and machismo in the Chicano imagination in his work on South Texas Mexican-American life.²⁸

In addition to political ideology, existing social structures encourage collective responsibility and support close connections between men that blur the distinction between individual and collective bodies.

Compadrazgo, a practice with indigenous roots, continues today throughout Mexico and Greater Mexico.²⁹ Used in indigenous and *mestizo* societies as a means of social control and to increase community stability, *compadres* were often chosen because of their social status and financial resources. Various life cycles rituals including baptism, First Communion,

confirmation, *los quince años*, and marriage provided opportunities for the creation of larger family network, termed a “fictive kinship system.”³⁰ Most often initiated at a child’s baptism, this practice consists of a lifelong commitment between the child’s father and another male in the community, often a family member or close friend. During the baptismal ritual, the men become *compadres*, pledged partners dedicated to the spiritual and financial well being of the child, with the father’s friend assuming the position of padrino or godfather. Still practiced today, men do refer to each other as *compadres* without the official responsibility of *compadrazgo*.

If men have *carnal* and *compadre* to mark significant relationships and reflect a sense of somatic interdependence, what terms reflect significant relationships between women? Initially practiced only between men, the practice of *compadrazgo* later extended to women as *comadrazgo*. Like *compadres*, *comadres* pledge themselves at baptisms, confirmations, and weddings and form a special bond of responsibility dedicated to the child’s welfare. If not already a family member, the *madrina* (godmother) assumes a critical role through this practice and becomes a member of the extended family body. Like men, women may also refer to close friends as *comadre* and *comadrita* to describe a special friendship without the official pledge of *comadrazgo*. Other expressions that reflect connections between women include *compañera*, as in *una buena compañera* (a good companion/comrade) or *buena amiga mía* (my good friend).

Significantly, as Amalia Mesa-Bains has observed, women use the nuanced descriptor of *carnal* in its female form, *carnala*, to describe their close friendship or kinship bonds.³¹ I suggest that affectional relationships between women imply a *carnal(ity)*, a shared knowledge based in the physical experience of the female body. Expressed at the level of body, this shared sense of self forges a sisterhood that demonstrates a connection to historical memory and women’s relationship to the earth. The bond of *carnalisma* (sisterhood) imbricates flesh, land, and spirituality by recalling the memory of ancient sacrificial practices conducted as a means to guarantee the community’s welfare. In many Mesoamerican traditions, people offered droplets of blood or the body in its entirety to their deities to maintain the balance of the universe and to ensure the regeneration of the earth. Roberta and Peter Markman explain,

Metaphorically the sacrifice of life's blood, that is, returning life to its spiritual source, was necessary for the continuation of the endless cycle of transformations through which life was constantly created and maintained. Human beings, helpless without the gods, must sacrifice their blood in return for the continuation of the rains, the growth of the corn, and the healing of illnesses.³²

Later, a further layer of historical and spiritual memory where community, sacrifice, and the body intersect developed during Mexico's Colonial period. At that time, ancient spiritual practices blended with newly imposed Catholic practices. The sacrament of Holy Communion, celebrated as part of the Catholic Mass, ritually reenacts Christ's shedding of blood for the redemption of sinners and parallels the ancient Mesoamerican rituals discussed earlier. During an act of consecration within the Mass, known as the Transubstantiation, the priest ritually transforms the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. Members of the congregation then consume these humble materials and absorb God's body into their own. Thus, the sacrifice of Christ's body and blood, given in service to the community of believers, symbolically intertwines with ancient and contemporary rites.

Ancient sacrificial ceremonies conducted on behalf of the community constitute a historical memory, evoked and brought forward in time. Updated within today's contemporary urban locations, *carnal*s proclaim the connection between themselves, their communities, and the earth when they mark their bodies with symbols that demonstrate their allegiance to a specific *barrio* (neighborhood).³³ The carving of place in the skin and on the surface of the body through the process of tattooing demonstrates their willingness to dedicate their flesh (and blood) on behalf of their sisters and their communities.

In his discussion of bodily practices as part of the process of memory, Paul Connerton differentiates between two forms of social practice he terms "incorporating" and "inscribing."³⁴ According to Connerton, a social practice that incorporates memory consists of current actions performed by the body, either by individuals or groups, while an inscribing practice requires a site for the accumulation and recovery of information. He cites

the archiving and storing of written information within familiar contemporary sites such as photographs, computers, and audiotapes as exemplars of inscribing practices. In addition to enacting a ritual that dedicates their physical selves to their comrades and local group, I suggest that the tattooing of place upon the skin by contemporary *cholas* or *carnal*as forms another practice of inscription as defined by Connerton that functions to preserve historical and spiritual memory.

Now, I would like to complicate this discussion of *carnal*(ity), posited as an embodied expression of sisterhood or brotherhood that implicates sacrifice, by overlaying Victor Turner's concept of *communitas*. In 1908, Arnold Van Gennep first articulated his ideas regarding the structure of rituals, termed rites of passage, and delineated three stages these rituals contained as 1) separation, 2) liminality, and 3) return or reincorporation.³⁵ The second stage of this process, liminality, refers to the *limen*, or threshold, that represents the crossing from one role, one position, or one state of consciousness to another. Within this state of transition, Turner uses the Latin word *communitas* to describe "a relation quality of full unmediated communication, even communion, which arises spontaneously in all kinds of groups, situations, and circumstances."³⁶ I suggest that when Six-Deer and La Velia make a political pilgrimage to Santa Fe in support of the organizing struggles of New Mexican farmworkers, they experience a form of *communitas*, "spontaneous *communitas*," a special sense of connection to each other, to those who march with them, and to the larger Chicana/o community that arises specifically because of their concern for others. Further, La Velia, the instrument whose wisdom and example connects Six-Deer to the collective Chicana/o body, forms another aspect of *Codex Delilah's* spiritual genealogy.

Particularly pertinent to my discussion is Turner's consideration of identity as a fundamental part of *communitas*.

In our society, it seems that the small groups which nourish *communitas*, do so by withdrawing voluntarily from the mainstream... The social category becomes the basis of recruitment. People who are similar in one important characteristic - sex, age, ethnicity, religion... withdraw symbolically, even actually from the total system,

from which they may in various degrees feel themselves “alienated,” to seek the glow of *communitas* among those with whom they share some cultural or biological feature they take to be their most signal mark of identity.³⁷

Turner develops his concept of spontaneous *communitas* as part of a larger, more formal construction, termed “ideological *communitas*.” Developing from a base of spontaneous *communitas*, ideological *communitas* helps form “an utopian blue print for the reform of society.”³⁸ Six-Deer and La Velia then represent Turner’s notion of ideological *communitas* and express the rapport among those who participated in *El Movimiento Chicano*, those who helped forge a community based on connection to each other with sacrifice at its base. In *Codex Delilah*, La Velia symbolizes a Chicana Everywoman who reflects this understanding of body as individual and collective. As such, she represents the untold effort of women who struggled for basic needs of peoples of Mexican descent within *El Movimiento Chicano* and beyond. When La Velia and Six-Deer march to Santa Fe on behalf of striking chile pickers, they not only embody the *concept* of sacrifice but their bodies become the *site* of sacrifice as well.

La Velia and Six-Deer’s willingness to forego bodily comfort for the betterment of the community parallels sacrifices made by contemporary Chicana activists. Dolores Huerta dramatically illustrates this parallel. Huerta, co-founder with César and Helen Chávez of the United Farm Workers Union, epitomizes the concept of embodied sacrifice in the service of community. In 1989, in front of the Sir Francis Drake, one of San Francisco’s elegant Union Square hotels, Huerta staged a protest against President George Bush, Sr.’s policies on pesticides. In a demonstration that turned ugly, the San Francisco policemen severely beat Huerta along with other protestors. She suffered several broken ribs, required emergency surgery, and ultimately, lost her spleen.³⁹ Like Dolores Huerta, La Velia and a budding Six-Deer embody contemporary expressions of sacrifice that imbricate *carnal(ity)* and *communitas* while paralleling Mesoamerican spiritual practices effected to ensure the continuity and well-being of a people.

CONCLUSION

By examining the performance, portrayal, and symbolic value of the female bodies within Delilah Montoya's *Codex Delilah*, this essay analyzed the intersection of the body, memory, and spirituality. The work positioned these bodies as archive of community history and tradition; of violation, creativity, and redemption; and as the site of sacrifice and community. Through the use of memory, the artist reconstructed the indigenous female body, its contemporary Chicana figuration, and the wisdom these physical sites contain. Through the recuperation of the Chicana body, Montoya establishes a lineage of female healers of the physical and spiritual body thereby constructing a spiritual genealogy for contemporary Chicanas/os that visually connects ancient traditions with present practices. In this way, Montoya's codex forms a cumulative historical narrative of peoples, sites, and practices while serving as a storage system for a body of knowledge remembered, reinvented, and reconstructed. Reassembling the "bodies of knowledge" torn apart by the Conquest as per-formative location and as metaphor, Montoya's work creates a site for an alternate representation of the ignored or exoticized Indígena/Mexicana/Chicana body. The artist's imagination recuperates and preserves traditional wisdom suppressed or destroyed by European contact through the creation of a female hero, Six-Deer. This character constitutes a living archive of embodied knowledge that functions as repository for the collective memories of indigenous peoples.

Further, the *Codex Delilah* forms a body itself. The material piecing together of the codex, through the use of photographic inserts and scraps of torn paper attached to its surface, mimics the parallel construction or reconstruction of the re-membered histories and traditions illustrated in the artwork. This body, a repository of affect, events, and memories, provides a source for continuing histories and a site for the creation of new memories. Ultimately, in its role as body, I suggest that the artwork can function as a site of healing, serving to repair the ruptured, violated, Chicana/o body and recover the grievous losses initiated at First Contact. Tomás Ybarra-Frausto has stated that the artists of ancient indigenous cultures "...had a sacred mission: to empower and sanctify the masses through their creations."⁴⁰ Just as Six-Deer seeks healing for her people,

so Delilah Montoya provides this gift for the larger community through her artwork, an artwork that carries on the sacred mission of pre-Contact books. Activated by the viewing process, *Codex Delilah* can involve the viewer in a ritual of *limpienza* or cleaning and may provide a collective cure to restore harmony to the fragmented Chicana/o psyche and soma.

Endnotes

I first wrote this essay in the spring of 2002 and submitted it to NACCS for the consideration of the Frederick A. Cervantes Premio in the fall of 2003. The initial version served as the inspiration for my longer work on *Codex Delilah* completed in 2005. During this interval, I conducted the additional research and writing that informs this revision of the original Frederick A. Cervantes Premio essay. For additional discussions of *Codex Delilah* by this author, please see Ann Marie Leimer, "Crossing the Border with La Adelita: Lucha-Adelucha as Napantera in Delilah Montoya's *Codex Delilah*," *Chicana/Latina Studies* 5:2 (Spring 2006); Ann Marie Leimer, "Performing the Sacred: The Concept of Journey in *Codex Delilah*" (Dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 2005).

1 Since the influx of Europeans on these shores was uninvited, I think the terms "occupation" or "invasion" reflect a more accurate description of these acts rather than "settlement."

2 In much of the published material associated with the exhibit, the seven-letter section "counter" of the word "encounter" was italicized to emphasize the exhibition's aim to oppose Quincentenary festivities that applauded European arrival while negating the importance of indigenous peoples and their ways of life. Due to the convention of using italics to indicate book titles, many readers miss this critical concept articulated by the exhibition's curator, Marcos Sanchez-Tranquilino.

3 Patricia Draher, ed., *The Chicano Codices: Encountering Art of the Americas* (San Francisco: The Mexican Museum, 1992).

4 Marcos Sanchez-Tranquilino has made significant contributions to the field of Chicana/o art history through his curatorial practices and publications. He was the project co-coordinator with Holly Barnet-Sanchez for CARA, *Chicano Art: Resistance and Affirmation, 1965-1985*, as well as a member of CARA's National Selection Committee. He also served as the first Executive Director of MACLA (Movimiento de Arte y Cultura Latino Americana) in San José, California. CARA was the first large-scale exhibit of Chicana/o art produced by the joint effort of a national committee of Chicana/o scholars, artists, and administrators and a mainstream art institution, UCLA's Wight Art Gallery. Considered a groundbreaking exhibition, it took six years to produce, toured nationally for three years, and brought previously marginalized works to a broader public. Please see Marcos Sanchez-Tranquilino, "The Mestizo Head: Alchemical Image of the Chicano Coniunctio" (Pacifica Graduate Institute, 2001), Marcos Sanchez-Tranquilino, "Mi Casa No Es Su Casa: Chicano Murals and Barrio Calligraphy as Systems of Signification at Estrada Courts, 1972-1978" (Master's Thesis, University of California, Los Angeles, 1991), Marcos Sanchez-Tranquilino, "Murales Del Movimiento: Chicano Murals and the

Discourses of Art and Americanization,” in *Signs from the Heart: California Chicano Murals*, ed. Eva Sperling Cockcroft and Holly Barnet-Sanchez (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press and SPARC, 1999), Marcos Sanchez-Tranquilino and John Tagg, “The Pachuco’s Flayed Hide: The Museum, Identity, and Buenas Garras,” in *Chicano Art: Resistance and Affirmation, 1965-1985*, ed. Richard Griswold del Castillo, Teresa McKenna, and Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano (Los Angeles: Wight Gallery, University of California, Los Angeles, 1991). For the CARA exhibition catalog, please see Richard Griswold del Castillo, Teresa McKenna, and Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano, eds., *Chicano Art: Resistance and Affirmation, 1965-1985* (Los Angeles: Wight Art Gallery, University of California, Los Angeles, 1991). For an in-depth analysis of the exhibit, see Alicia Gaspar de Alba, *Chicano Art Inside/Outside the Master’s House: Cultural Politics and the Cara Exhibition* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998). Sanchez-Tranquilino works as a Depth psychotherapist and continues to write on Chicano Art History in the Pacific Northwest.

5 In this essay, I respectfully adopt the practice of using accents on non-English words and names where appropriate. In previously published works, Sanchez-Tranquilino has requested no accent be used when spelling his name and I follow this directive.

6 Cecilio García-Camarillo, poet, playwright, publisher, editor, and tireless advocate of flor y canto (flower and song), died from cancer at the age of 58 on January 16, 2002, in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Born in Laredo, Texas, he received a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature from the University of Texas at Austin in 1967, and later moved to Albuquerque in 1977 where he made his home. Nicknamed “The Chicano Renaissance Man,” García-Camarillo mentored young Chicana/o writers and was a key figure in the literary arm of El Movimiento Chicano (the movement for social justice for Chicanas/os that began in the 1960s). He founded and edited the literary magazine *Caracol* along with *El Magazin* and *Rayas* and produced numerous chapbooks of his poetry. Also known as “Xilo,” García-Camarillo founded Albuquerque’s weekly radio program “Espejos de Aztlán” on KUNM 89.9 FM and served as dramaturg for La Compañía de Teatro de Albuquerque. Delilah Montoya and García-Camarillo enjoyed a decades-long friendship and collaborative artistic partnership as evidenced by *Codex Delilah* and other projects such as *Crickets In My Mind* (1992). In *I Am Joaquín*, an important early work from El Movimiento Chicano, Rodolfo “Corky” González (June 18, 1928–April 12, 2005) declared, “There are no revolutions without poets.” Certainly, Xilo was one of the important poetic voices who furthered the Chicana/o movement’s quest for justice, access to resources, and increased representation. Please see Cecilio García-Camarillo and Enrique LaMadrid, *Selected Poetry of Cecilio García-Camarillo* (Houston: Arte-Publico, 2000), Cecilio García-Camarillo, Roberto Rodriguez, and Patrisia González, eds., *Cantos Al Sexto Sol: An Anthology of Aztlanahuac Writings* (San Antonio: Wings Press, 2002), Carmen Tafolla, “Semillas, a Tribute to Cecilio García Camarillo,” *El Aviso* 4:1 (Spring 2002).

7 *Codex Delilah* consists of seven rectangular panels folded accordion-style with the each panel’s height approximately four times its width. Every panel has three horizontal registers of unequal size that contain painted and transferred images. Each panel also contains hand-written and computer generated texts. The top or first panel holds Mayan cosmological figures while the second and largest panel visually

tells the story of Six-Deer's journey. Montoya inserted color photographs at the bottom of the second registers that portray where the action occurs. She placed the computer-generated texts developed with García-Camarillo in the codex's third registers. The texts identify the work's characters and describe each panel's events.

8 For a recent publication that discusses this continuity, see Jean Molesky-Poz, *Contemporary Maya Spirituality: The Ancient Ways Are Not Lost*, 1st ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006).

9 Montoya adopted her central character's name, Six-Deer, from Eight Deer Tiger Claw, the Mixtec ruler chronicled in the *Codex Zouche Nuttall*. For more information on Mixtec codices and this important ruler, see Bruce E. Byland and John M. D. Pohl, *In The Realm of Eight Deer: The Archaeology of the Mixtec Codices* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994), Zelia Nuttall, ed., *The Codex Nuttall: A Picture Manuscript from Ancient Mexico* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1975), John M. D. Pohl, *The Politics of Symbolism in the Mixtec Codices* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University, 1994).

10 Aztlán is the place of origins or homeland of the Mexica, also termed Aztecs, one of the indigenous peoples of Central Mexico. Understood as paradise, it is also known as the Place of Whiteness or the Place of the White Herons.

11 *Codex Delilah, Six-Deer: Journey from Mexica to Chicana*, 1992, art produced by Delilah Montoya and text written with Cecilio García-Camarillo, Panel 1, Register 3.

12 I italicize the word *Ix-Chel* when I discuss the figure from Mayan cosmology. When I refer to Montoya's character from Panel 1 of the codex, I do not italicize the name.

13 El Movimiento Chicano was the movement for social justice for Chicano/as that began in the 1960s.

14 In *Latina Healers*, Espín refers to this stewardship of power by and among females, especially those involved in healing practices, as "power to rather than power over" (emphasis added). She argues that the increased self-esteem and self-worth experienced by female healers creates a greater sense of control over their lives. This personal empowerment leads to an expanded sensitivity in the use of power, rather than to its exploitation. See Olivia M. Espín, *Latina Healers: Lives of Power and Tradition* (Encino: Floricanto Press, 1996), 109-12.

15 Curanderismo, or Mexican and Mexican-American folk medicine, treats the patient through a consideration of the person's relationship to their family and community and addresses individual symptoms with prayer, herbal remedies, massage, and other healing practices. For more information, see Jacques M. Chevalier and Andrés Sánchez Bain, *The Hot and the Cold: Ills of Humans and Maize in Native Mexico* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), Ari Kiev, *Curanderismo: Mexican-American Folk Psychiatry* (New York: Free Press, 1968), Alfredo López Austin, *Textos de medicina náhuatl*, 2nd ed. (Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1975), Diana Ryesky, *Conceptos Tradicionales De La Medicina En Un Pueblo Mexicano: Un Análisis Antropológico* (Mexico, D. F.: Secretaría de Educación Pública, Dirección General de Divulgación, 1976), Eliseo Torres, *The Folk Healer: The Mexican-American Tradition of Curanderismo* (Kingsville: Nieves

Press, 1983), Robert T. Trotter and Juan Antonio Chavira, *Curanderismo: Mexican American Folk Healing*, 2nd ed. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997).

16 Amalia Mesa-Bains, "Chicano Bodily Aesthetics," in *Body/Culture: Chicano Figuration*, ed. Elizabeth Partch (Rohnert Park: Sonoma State University, 1990), 7. Like our physical bodies, the earth's soma (body) manifests injury and imbalance. In the codex, Montoya imagines the earth as female and Six-Deer attempts to restore the earth's harmony by healing its (her) dis-ease.

17 Altepetl annals are localized community histories from Central Mexico. See Elizabeth Hill Boone, "Aztec Altepetl Annals," in *Stories in Red and Black: Pictorial Histories of the Aztecs and Mixtecs* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), 187, 237.

18 This could be understood as "Cry-Cry-Malinche," a name that references both the grief visited upon the peoples of Mesoamerica by La Malinche's supposed participation with Cortés and the grief expressed by La Llorona at the loss of her children.

19 For ease of use, I abbreviate the character's name to Llorona.

20 The so-called universal category of "woman" has been widely critiqued by gender theorists. See Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex,"* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

21 *Codex Delilah*, 1992, Panel 2, Register 3.

22 Telephone conversation with Delilah Montoya, October 2001. *The Florentine Codex* is a series of twelve volumes produced by indigenous scribes and artists post-Conquest under the direction of Spanish friars. In the twelfth book, Sahagún's informants recall numerous omens that foretold the coming of the Spanish. "The sixth bad omen: The people heard a weeping woman night after night. She passed by in the middle of the night, wailing and crying out in a loud voice: "My children, we must flee far away from this city!" At other times she cried: "My children, where shall I take you?" Fray Bernardino de Sahagún, *General History of the Things of New Spain, Florentine Codex: Vol. 12: The Conquest of Mexico*, trans. Arthur J. O. Anderson and Charles E. Dibble, 2nd ed. (Santa Fe: School of American Research, 1975), 1.

23 Aztecs is the common misnomer for the Mexica people, first used by the Prussian naturalist and explorer Alexander von Humboldt (1769-1859). Historian William H. Prescott circulated the term in William H. Prescott, *History of the Conquest of Mexico* (London: George Routledge, 1874). Harper Brothers first published the book in 1843.

24 *Codex Delilah*, 1992, Panel 2, Register 3.

25 I have taken the information and quotes contained in this paragraph from conversations between the artist and myself on 19 February 2005 in Atlanta, Georgia.

26 *Codex Delilah*, 1992, Panel 6, Register 3.

27 Mesa-Bains, "Chicano Bodily Aesthetics," 7-8.

28 José Limón, *Dancing with the Devil: Society and Cultural Poetics in Mexican-American South Texas* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994), 136-38.

29 Américo Paredes created the term “Greater Mexico” to describe the geographic territories within Mexico and the United States where people of Mexican descent embrace an identity rooted in Mexicanness. See Américo Paredes, *With a Pistol in His Hand: A Border Ballad and Its Hero* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1958), 129-30.

30 Norma Williams analyzed life cycle rituals practiced by Mexican Americans in various Texas communities including Austin, Corpus Christi, and the Kingsville region and anchored her research in social and religious ceremonies related to birth, marriage, and death. Her work documents the impact of an increasingly urban Mexican American population on these rituals. For example, over time the expectations, duties, and choice of godparents in comadrazgo/compadrazgo practices have changed. She reports that rather than one couple sponsoring several children from the same family as previously seen, often the family currently chooses a wider range of spiritual sponsors that progressively include more members of the immediate family. Williams observes that, due to social mobility and the fluidity of modern life, maintaining relationships with friends proves more difficult than those with family members. Additionally, families no longer expect that comadres and compadres chosen from among friends will provide financial support for the sponsored child in the event of the parents' deaths. However, when families incorporate family members as godparents the expectation of spiritual and financial welfare still continues. See Norma Williams, “Chapter 2, Traditional Life-Cycle Rituals among Mexican Americans in Texas,” in *The Mexican American Family: Tradition and Change* (Dix Hills, N.Y.: General Hall, Inc., 1990), Norma Williams, “Chapter 3, Changes in Life-Cycle Rituals and Family Life within the Working Class,” in *The Mexican American Family: Tradition and Change* (Dix Hills, N.Y.: General Hall, Inc., 1990). For information on the history and practices of comadrazgo in rural Tlaxcala, see Hugo G. Nutini and Betty Bell, *Ritual Kinship* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980).

31 Mesa-Bains, “Chicano Bodily Aesthetics,” 8.

32 Roberta H. Markman and Peter T. Markman, *The Flayed God: The Mesoamerican Mythological Tradition: Sacred Texts and Images from Pre-Columbian Mexico and Central America* (San Francisco: HarperCollins Publishers, 1992), 180.

33 Mesa-Bains, “Chicano Bodily Aesthetics,” 9.

34 Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 72-73.

35 Arnold Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, trans. Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 11, 21.

36 Victor Turner, “Liminal to Liminaloid, in Play, Flow, and Ritual: An Essay in Comparative Symbolology,” in *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play* (New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications, 1982), 20-60, Victor Turner, “Variations on a Theme of Liminality,” in *Secular Ritual*, ed. Sally F. Moore and Barbara G. Meyerhoff (Assen, Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1977), 46. Turner emphasizes that this communion exists between “equal individuals” in Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1969), 96-97.

37 Turner, "Variations," 47.

38 Turner, "Variations," 46.

39 Huerta's subsequent lawsuit forced the San Francisco Police Department to develop new policies regarding the treatment of protesters.

40 Tomás Ybarra-Frausto, "Santa Barraza: A Borderland Chronicle," in *Santa Barraza: Artist of the Borderlands*, ed. Maria Herrera-Sobek (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2001), 67-75.

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