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14

SITUATING AMBIGUITY: DOMINICAN IDENTITY FORMATIONS

By

Ginetta E.B. Candelario

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Sociology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

2000

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Sociology in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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ABSTRACT

SITUATING AMBIGUITY: DOMINICAN IDENTITY FORMATIONS

By

Ginetta E.B. Candelario

Adviser: Professor Robert Alford

This dissertation examines Dominican identity formations and displays in various cultural sites from the 19th to the 20th centuries. Foreign travel narratives, history texts, museum exhibits and beauty culture are analyzed utilizing sociological, feminist, post-colonial, post-structuralist, cultural studies, and critical race theories. Research methods include ethnography, ethnomethodology, oral history interviewing and content analysis.

I argue that 19th century Dominican identity formations were fostered by the emergent Dominican state in the context of U.S. imperialism and concerns over Haiti. Dominicans were narrativized as "the whites of the land" as much by U.S. travel writers and government agents as by the local Dominican elite. Trujillo most effectively institutionalized that formulation during the 20th century, again in the context of U.S. geo-political interests in the Caribbean. Trujillo's legacy found its late 20th century public history expression in the Museo del Hombre Dominicano, which favors a heavily indigenist representation of Dominican identity.

Dominican communities in New York City and Washington, D.C. engage their national history together with their local socio-racial contexts in the United States. If in the United States skin is the primary marker of race, for Dominicans it is hair. In New York City, therefore, Dominican women's hair culture practices affirm their Hispanic identity, while at the same time reconfiguring that hispanicity to include greater evidence

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of African descent, and challenging local race semiotics. In Washington, D.C. Dominicans have affirmed their membership in the larger African American, Latin American, and (Afro)-Latino communities simultaneously, as their participation in the Anacostia Museum's *The Black Mosaic* exhibit illustrated.

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Para Elena, mujer bella
antes, ahora y siempre.

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In the process of undertaking fieldwork and bibliographic research, I have relied on the good graces and generosity of very many people. In individual terms, first and foremost I am indebted to my mother, for inspiring in the questions that drive this research, and for providing the wherewithal to pursue their answers. It is to her, that I dedicate this work in the fervent hope that she may finally feel as beautiful as I know her to be.

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Ginetta E.B. Candelario
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Introduction
Bodies of Knowledge

> *In much of Latin America, the official and unofficial policies of the state are played out on the bodies of its citizens, thus becoming the intimate personal experience and shaping the unique vision of the individual that gets expressed in what we recognize as the writer's particular voice.*[1]
>
> *As group markers the difference between citizenship and identity is that, while the former carries legal weight, the latter carries social and cultural weight.*[2]

The nation state of the Dominican Republic was inaugurated on February 27, 1844 with the overthrow of Haitian colonial rule. The new Republic's very first independence manifesto defined as Dominicans "all those children of the eastern part and all those who want to follow our fate [can] so call themselves".[3] The "eastern part" of the island was what during the colonial era was known as the "Spanish part" of Santo Domingo. This early formulation of membership in the national polity defines belongingness on the basis of birth and the self-selected affiliation "of all those who want to follow [the] fate" of the independence leaders. That would conceivably include

---

[1] Amy K. Kaminsky, Reading the Body Politic: Feminist Criticism and Latin American Women Writers, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993, p. xv.

[2] Engin F. Isin and Patricia K. Wood, Citizenship and Identity, London: Sage, 1999, p. 20.

[3] *Manifestación de los pueblos de la parte del este de la isla antes Española o de Santo Domingo, sobre las causas de su separación de la Repùblica haitiana*, in E.Rodríguez Demorizi, ed., *Documentos para la historia de la Repùblica Dominicana*, vol. 1, Ciudad Trujillo, RD: Editora Montalvo, 1944, p. 15. Unless otherwise noted, all Spanish language translations are my own.

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Haitians who remained in the new Republic and their native born children. In point of fact, however, both Haitian immigrants and their children born in Dominican national territory have been excluded from Dominican citizenship since the 1844 declaration of independence. From that moment onward, "Dominican"[4] identity formations fostered by the state and national elite has centered on the polarized pillars of anti-Haitianism, anti-blackness, anti-African, anti-femininity and pro-hispanicity, pro-whiteness, pro-Catholicism, hyper-masculinity and indigenism. Small wonder, then, that of the five thousand naturalizations into Dominican citizenship that occurred from 1844 to 1987, only ninety-eight were granted to Haitians.[5] Yet, Dominicans, plebeian and elite alike, predominantly are of European, African, and often Haitian descent, and Dominican women are vitally implicated in national identity projects. Dominican bodies, material culture, and cultural practices are evidence for the Afro-European heritage of the nation. Further, the nation relies upon female bodies for its production and reproduction.

The national identity project of the Dominican State has centered at various historical moments on the erasure of African ancestry and of women from official identity narratives and displays and from the national body. This project, while reviving, re-embodying and institutionalizing an imagined mestizo, rather than mulatto past and present, culminated in the 1937 massacre of 20,000 Haitians and Dominico-Haitians. It

---

[4] For the purposes of this project, "Dominicans" are all those who are Dominican citizens as defined by the Dominican state and all those who subjectively define themselves as Dominican, whether within or outside the national territory.

[5] Carlos Dore Cabral, "*Nuevas formas de la presencia Haitiana vs. viejos enfoques de la cuestión Haitiana en la República Dominicana*," Unpublished Manuscript prepared for a colloquim held in Santo Domingo, Equipo de Investigación Social (EQUIS) and Instituto Tecnologico de Santo Domingo (INTEC), 1988, p. 6.

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continues today in the forced and often violent mass expulsion of Haitian immigrants and second and third generation Dominicans of Haitian descent, who comprise the vast majority of the population labeled "Haitian" in the Dominican Republic, from the national territory.[6] For example, in 1999 "at least 14,000 Haitians were repatriated, many forcibly removed from their homes without a chance to collect their belongings and paychecks before being bused back to Haiti."[7] The exclusion and expulsion of Haitians, defined as the only "real blacks" in the country, is central to the sustenance of officially defined Dominican identity.[8]

The official identity narrative is one of cultural, political, racial contact and interaction between male Spanish colonizers and indigenous Táino/a natives. The masculinist, culturally hispanicist and racially indigenist projections of the Dominican State have been assimilated by much of the Dominican community. Assimilation, however, is incomplete, and indeed often challenged, if in contradictory and complex ways. In historic and macro-sociological terms, the idea of a Dominican identity developed in relationship to colonization by Spain, France and Haiti, and to imperialism and neo-imperialism by the United States, and their attendant political, economic and cultural systems and interventions.

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[6] See Report on the Situation of Human Rights in the Dominican Republic, Washington, D.C.: Organization of American States, 1999; Susannah A. Nesmith, "Dominican Troops Fire on Haitians", The Associated Press, June 18, 2000.

[7] Mireya Navarro, "At Last on Hispaniola, Hands Across the Border," The New York Times, July 11, 1999.

[8] Ernesto Sagas, Race and Politics in the Dominican Republic, Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000.

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From the time of Columbus' arrival in 1492 to the final declaration of independence from Spanish colonial rule in 1865, Dominican racial identity was informed by an economy based on first indigenous and later African slave labor, a patriarchal, and on a monarchical and aristocratic political system. A Creole cultural system emphasized and institutionalized *limpieza de sangre* (purity of blood) and *blanqueamiento* (whitening) through the *casta* system. In the post-colonial period, the state and national elite institutionalized a white-hispanic-and-catholic-supremacist notion of Dominican identity.

Beginning at the very end of the 18th Century, overlapping somewhat with Spanish colonial and Creole rule, Haitian revolutionaries abolished slavery in both Haiti and the Spanish part of Santo Domingo. Land was repatriated and redistributed in an attempt to promote economic development via small-scale agriculture. A Republican system of government was instituted. The continuing threat and fact of French imperial aggression, however, forced the new Haitian Republic to colonize the Spanish part of Santo Domingo from 1822 to 1844. The Haitian colonial government employed pro-negritude socio-cultural policies and practices, including the invitation to African Americans to settle in Santo Domingo.[9] Patriarchy continued to be the cornerstone of political, economic and cultural life.

Not long after Dominican nationalists overthrew Haitian colonial rule in 1844, and following its own Civil War, the United States began to employ the principles it had established in the Monroe Doctrine. Although the Monroe Doctrine had been authored in 1823, due to domestic concerns around abolition, secession and Reconstruction, the

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[9] Harry Hoetink, The Dominican People, 1850-1900: Notes for a Historical Sociology, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982, p. 20.

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United States had been unable to enact its provisions. In political terms, under the Monroe Doctrine the United States reserved for itself the right to intervene in the national affairs of any nation in the western hemisphere, and did so in the Dominican Republic on various occasions. From 1904 to 1942 it established and operated a customs receivership. In 1916 the United States Marines occupied the Dominican Republic and established a military government that remained until 1924. In 1961 the United States armed, trained and supported dissidents who assassinated Trujillo, the 30-year-dictator whose regime it had helped establish and maintain. In 1965 U.S. Marines invaded to "re-establish order" following the period of political instability that ensued from Trujillo's assassination. And from subsequent decades to the present moment, the United States has continued to monitor and intervene in domestic elections and politics.

In economic terms, U.S. capital and financial incursions and investments in the Dominican Republic began in earnest in the mid-nineteenth century with the establishment of the Santo Domingo Improvement Corporation. North American economic intervention was solidified at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century with the development of large, commercial sugar plantations, and continues to date with the nearly total reliance on United States' import and export markets. In socio-cultural terms, Dominicans have operated in the context of White Anglo-Saxon Protestant supremacist ideology nearly from the moment of independence in 1844 when "Dominican special envoy José M. Caminero pointedly emphasized to U.S. Secretary of State John C. Calhoun that in the Dominican Republic whites largely held political power [and] claimed that of the country's total population of two hundred

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thousand, half were white...and two-thirds of the remainder were mulatto."[10] That claim was repeated and reiterated for next century and a half by nearly every Dominican leader, and institutionalized by Trujillo and Balaguer, his prodigé and president of the Republic for twenty-two of the last thirty-six years.

In micro-sociological terms, Dominican racial identity is informed and mediated by the gender, sexuality, class, regionalism, geographic location and generation of given individuals at given historical moments. Women and men, lesbian/gay and heterosexual, rich and poor, Dominican and Dominican Yorks, immigrant and native born, Cibaeño, Banilero, Capitaleño, Samaneño, or otherwise, each of those categories and combinations is bound by particular, historically determined contexts. This work, therefore, also considers micro-sociological development and expression of Dominican national identity in particular racialized, sexualized, gendered and classed terms. "Dominicans", then, are all those who are Dominican citizens as defined by the Dominican state and all those who subjectively define themselves as Dominican, whether within or outside the national territory.

"We are all black behind the ears," is a popular Dominican saying that mirrors the simultaneous folkloric acknowledgment of African ancestry and relegation of blackness to the hidden and the unheard of spaces of Dominican national and individual bodies.[11] And yet, there are Dominican communities, in the Dominican Republic and in Diaspora, that center blackness, that put it up front, that wear it and display it bodily and

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[10] G. Pope Atkins and Larman C. Wilson, The Dominican Republic and the United States: From Imperialism to Transnationalism, Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1998.

[11] An analysis of the *décima* (poems comprised of rhyming, ten line stanzas) from which this saying is drawn follows ahead.

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institutionally. This thesis will provide an overview and analysis of three Dominican communities – in the Dominican Republic, in New York City, and in Washington, D.C. -- and their identity technologies and displays in three related and mutually referential cultural sites: the museum, the beauty shop and the female body

The principal research questions are 1) What are the historical, political and cultural processes that construct social identities among Dominicans? 2) How do race, nationality, ethnicity, regionalism, gender, sexuality, and class interact and inform Dominican identities? 3) Under what conditions do individuals or subgroups deviate from institutionally sanctioned identity constructions? 4) What are the theoretical implications of Dominican identity formations? The research methods include archival research, content analysis, museum studies, participant observation, visual sociology and oral histories.

Research Methodology

Historiographic Foundations:

An historical methodology is indispensable in constructing any viable sociological argument.[12] Thus, backgrounding this consideration of how a given phenomenon is constructed as meaningful is a historical mode of argument. Although in large measure the historical aspect of my project is in the realm of ideological history, I am also concerned to provide a political economic history as the context for ideology. I have generally relied on existing secondary historical analyses for empirical evidence. At the same time, however, because I am concerned to describe and document institutionalized national identity narratives, these texts and institutions themselves will

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be subjected to analysis as cultural productions. The effort, in other words, will be to sustain an analysis of the dialectically charged relationship between secondary sources as evidence of both historical "facts" about real identities and as evidence of how national identity narratives are produced and disseminated.

Theories of race circulating between Europe, the Spanish colonies and the United States provide the relevant ideological context for understanding Dominican social identity formation. Chapter One, "Race Theory in the Americas" considers comparative scholarship on race in Latin American and the United States, particularly on the question of blackness. I argue that Dominican identity must be understood as "ethno-racial" in that it is both achieved and ascribed, and it operates at the crossroads of several theories of ethnicity and race in the Americas.

Chapter Two, "The Most Hispanic, Catholic and White of Nations", provides an overview of historical and contemporary Dominican identity narratives, in the Dominican Republic and in diaspora. I situate those narratives in the relevant literature and theoretical paradigms. Surprisingly little work, whether historiographic, anthropological or sociological, has been done on the African Diaspora into the Dominican Republic. Indeed, those who have done work in this area are lauded for "having distanced themselves...from the traditional reactionary currents" which refuse scholarship on negritude. This hesitating tradition is so dominant, that the use of the word "black" in reference to the Dominican population has to be qualified and justified, even in the context of one of the few works on African slavery in the Dominican Republic. The publishers of this text, the Museum of the Dominican Man, written in 1980, felt

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[12] Robert Alford, The Craft of Inquiry: Theories, Methods, Evidence, New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

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behooved to remind a presumably literate and educated reading audience that acknowledging African descent was not disgraceful.[13] What this reveals is not as clear cut as some observers have claimed, and will be considered in this study.

This refusal of the African presence historically and at present, is further exhibited precisely by the dearth of national research on this topic. While the First Colloquium on the African Presence in the Antilles was held in 1973 at the Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo, for the most part scholarship and research on the African diaspora in Santo Domingo has been nearly non-existent.[14] This lack of scholarly, and thus seemingly institutional, interest is not due to a lack of primary data, as has often been claimed by Dominican scholars. A wealth of relatively unexplored, promising archival materials exist in Seville and Simanca, Mexico City, and Santo Domingo which not only have been ignored, but worse, distorted by existing scholarship.[15] In lieu of negritude or pan-Africanism, the preferred identification seems to be one of hispanicity and "indian-ness"[16], both nationally and transnationally.[17]

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[13] Carlos Esteban Deive, *La esclavitud del negro en Santo Domingo, 1492-1844*, vols. 1 & 2, Santo Domingo: Museo del Hombre Dominicano, 1980.

[14] Carlos Esteban Deive, "*La herencia Africana en la cultura Dominicana actual,*" *Ensayos sobre cultura Dominicana*, Fundación Cultural Dominicana, Museo del Hombre Dominicano, 1997, 5th edition, p. 107.

[15] Deive, 1980.

[16] Rather than use the language of negritude -- *negro, mulatto*, etc. -- to describe themselves, Dominicans use language which limits their racial ancestry to Europeans and Taino "Indians" -- *indio, indio oscuro, indio claro, trigueño, moreno/a.*

[17] Joaguin Balaguer, *La isla al reves: Haití y el destino Dominicano*, Santo Domingo: Editora Corripio,1990; Deive, 1997; Carlos Dore-Cabral and José Itzgohn, "*La formación de la identidad hispana entre los inmigrantes Dominicanos en Nueva York,*" paper presented at Congreso Internacional: La República Dominicana en el umbral del siglo XXI, July 24-26, 1997, Pontífica Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra, Santo

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In Chapter Three, "The Whites of the Land" I argue that a variety of narrative venues – history texts, travel writers, tour books, tourist propaganda – produce and circulate a national story of origins and evolution that centers and normalizes masculinity, hispanicity and indigenousness, while reifying, erasing and pathologizing the female, the black and the African in those narratives. Of particular relevance are U.S. governmental reports, travel writings and immigrant memoirs, particularly those produced by U.S. travelers and tour book writers. One important question is: to what extent have Dominican narratives of national identity and history, particularly around the questions of race, sexuality and gender, been assimilated, replicated and propagated by foreign observers? The converse question is: what impact did the presence of those U.S. travelers and agents have on Dominican self-representation?

During the later half of the eighteenth century, several United States commissions and delegates traveled to Santo Domingo to evaluate the country's potential as a site for agricultural colonization schemes, military outposts and even annexation. (Perhaps the most famous of these is Frederick Douglass, who served as foreign attaché in Santo Domingo for two years at the turn of the century.) At the end of the nineteenth century, U.S. and European business interests established a permanent presence in the burgeoning sugar plantation industry. Those commissions and attachés produced reports that were discussed and debated in Congress and in the popular press. In the early part of the twentieth century, U.S. Marines invaded and subsequently established a U.S. military government that lasted nearly a decade. Once again, the Dominican Republic and its people were discussed and represented in U.S. forums and venues. As a consequence of

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Domingo, Dominican Republic; Frank Moya Pons, The Dominican Republic: A National History, New York: Hispaniola Books Corporation, 1995.

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the various political and military interventions, U.S. ideology and culture was introduced in a much more extensive and intensive manner than ever before, and with significant impact on Dominican ideology and institutions.

The late eighteenth century had produced accounts from French travelers and observers after the transfer of the colony from Spain to France.[18] Similarly, in the period after the 1844 declaration of independence a number of U.S. government agents and venture capitalists documented their perceptions of Dominican society. The early part of the 20th produced many travel accounts by U.S. businessmen and adventurers. What is especially fascinating about the majority of these accounts is their complicity with the anti-Haitian, white supremacist Dominican nation building project, despite the fact that the authors of those accounts were written and circulated during the most racially segregated and openly racist eras of U.S. history. Why, then, did they support Dominicans' contentions that they were "the whites of the land"?

The Trujillo era, 1931 to 1961, and the period from 1970 to present are explored in Chapter Four, "Engendering Dominicanness." During both those periods a repressive Dominican state spent enormous amounts of money on public relations in the United States. Trujillo paid millions in media advertisements and in graft to U.S. Congressmen and Senators, hosted U.S. dignitaries, and engaged a New York public relations firm to present a positive economic, political and racial image of the Dominican Republic under his rule. Similarly, the post-Trujillo era, beginning with Balaguer's extended and repeated presidency, and through the Blanco, Guzman and Fernandez presidencies, has

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[18] The most famous of these is M.L. Moreau de Saint-Méry, A Topographical and Political Description of the Spanish Part of Santo Domingo, Translated by C. Armando Rodriguez, Ciudad Trujillo: Editora Montalvo, 1944, p. 432.

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been characterized by the shift from a one-crop sugar economy to a tourist economy that requires extensive representation and marketing of the nation and its peoples. That representation has emphasized the burgeoning modernity in the Dominican Republic. It is a modernity that is presented in masculinist and white supremacist terms that relegate women and people of color to the status of exotic consumables of the tourist economy.

Sites of Identity Formation, Representation and Dissemination:

Since my concern is to determine and document what Dominican identity *means* for Dominicans, phenomenologically and politically, I have employed a combination of ethnomethodological study, participant observation and institutional analyses. Given that individuals do not construct identities in a vacuum, institutional and elite constructions of identity are considered influential frames of reference that individuals draw upon, respond to and create.

The national museum and the beauty shop have been chosen as physical, social and cultural spaces that simultaneously reflect, mediate and construct group identity. That both of these sites historically developed simultaneously and in relation to department stores, which also arose in the nineteenth century, and originated as explicitly gendered and classed locations of culture, is of no small theoretical importance to this project. Museums borrowed heavily from department store display and architectural models; beauty shops originated from the department store "'ladies' parlor,' which had been used by women to try on dresses and to rest."[19] Of the similarities between museums and department stores, Bennett writes: "Both were formally open spaces

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[19] Frida Kerner Furman, Facing the Mirror: Older Women and Beauty Shop Culture, New York: Routledge, 1997, p. 47.

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allowing entry to the general public, and both were intended to function as spaces of emulation, places for mimetic practices whereby improving tastes, values and norms of conduct were to be more broadly diffused through society."[20] What has not been noted elsewhere, is the connection between the beauty shop and the museum as locations with civilizing agendas predicated on ethnographic bodily displays.

Furman notes that the "beauty salon is one place, among others, that assists women in attending to their appearance: by setting its standards, by maintaining it at an acceptable level, and just as critically, by improving it. In these ways the beauty salon serves as an important tool in the creation and maintenance of femininity."[21] I argue that it also functions in the creation and maintenance of group identities and authentication through women as embodied displays.

Both the museum and the beauty shop operate on the premise of display. "Individual and state formation take place, in part in the visual sphere through a complicated play of looks: looking, being looked at, identification, recognition, mimicry."[22] Here, the issue of looks, both in terms of appearances and in terms of the act of perceiving, surfaces. If Dominicans are said "contrary to appearances" promote themselves "as a white Hispanic society"[23], the issue is as much who is doing the looking

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[20] Tony Bennett, The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics, New York: Routledge, 1995, p. 30.

[21] Furman, 47.

[22] Diana Taylor, Disappearing Acts: Spectacles of Gender and Nationalism in Argentina's "Dirty War", Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997, p. 30.

[23] Franklin W. Knight, The Caribbean: The Genesis of a Fragmented Nationalism, 2nd ed., New York: Oxford University Press, 1990, p. 225.

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as looking as it is who is being looked at. Looks operate within the context of a "political economy of bodies" in that the "materiality of the body" is central to "the production of gender, sexuality, and other cultural values"[24], cultural values which dialectically buttress and create national identity narratives and paradigms, and which are performed on and via the body.[25] Following Susan Bordo[26], I ask what "cultural gestures" are involved in the performance of *Dominicanidad* – racialized, gendered, classed, sexualized – in these cultural locations?

The national museum, endowed as it is with a mandate to protect the national cultural patrimony, is an official institutionalization of identity narratives *par excellence*. On the one hand, museums draw their collections and exhibit themes from the communities they represent, and ostensibly they reflect a pre-existent reality. On the other hand, the display of those collections scripted as they are in particular ways act to inform the community of its identity. The act of educating the public about itself *creates*

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[24] Roger Lancaster, Life is Hard: Machismo, Danger, and the Intimacy of Power in Nicaragua, Berkley: University of California Press, 1992, p. 142.

[25] It is interesting to note that world fairs and expositions were central sites of bodily display, both self-structured and imposed. Dominicans participated in at least two major world's fairs, the 1893 Brussells Exposition and the 1889 Exposition Universelle de Paris. As has been amply documented, ethnographic displays of the era were very much connected to larger colonial and imperialist projects, and as such, operated within the tenets and premises of positivism. Recall that from 1848 when the Mexican-American War began, to 1868 when the United States nearly annexed the Dominican Republic, to 1898 when the Spanish-American War was finalized with United States' occupation of Cuba and Puerto Rico, the elite throughout the Americas were confronting and constructing national identity discourses which were explicitly racial in nature in response, usually, to considerations of how they were perceived by the United States. See F. Knight, 1990; Winthrop Wright, Café Con Leche: Race, Class, and National Image in Venezuela, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990. Thus, Dominican participation in these two fairs certainly bears further exploration.

[26] Susan Bordo, Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture and the Body, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.

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the public as much as reflects it. The national museum, then, acts a vehicle for the collection, dissemination and institutionalization of national identity imaginaries. What's more, the museum is an implicitly gendered, racialized and class-bound space in terms of access, content and control. As such, it functions both as data resource and social text.

Chapter Five, "The Africans Have No History" examines the ways in which the Dominican Republic's and United States' public history and public culture institutionalize narratives and counter-narratives of Dominican racial identity. Here I undertake an extended comparative analysis of two museums representing Dominicans, El Museo del Hombre Dominicano in the Dominican Republic, and the Anacostia Museum of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. This component of the research employed elements of content analysis and visual sociology methods. The museum can be understood both spatially and textually. As a space, it is a physical manifestation and construction of ideology and narrative. In this thesis, I document both how museum space is constructed and how it is allocated. Museum space is treated as an outline of the identity narrative the museum is presenting.

Under the auspices of a Latino Studies Fellowship from the Smithsonian Institution, I was in residence at the Anacostia for two months in 1998. This fellowship was granted for the study of the participation of Dominicans in "The Black Mosaic: Community, Race and Ethnicity Among Black Immigrants in Washington, D.C." mounted by the Anacostia from August 1994 to November 1995. "The exhibit examined migration, issues of race and ethnicity, music and community history in Washington, D.C. 'Black Mosaic' programs included films, family days, gallery talks, teachers'

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workshops, and a conference on Latino music in the District of Columbia."[27] Included in the exhibit were Dominicans who identified as black.[28] Indeed, much of the publicity literature for the exhibit features images of Dominican immigrants. In light of the fact that Dominicans have been officially constructed as rejecting negritude, their participation in this exhibit represents a substantial departure from dominant Dominican cultural identity narratives.

The final part of my museum studies research was an extended visit to El Museo del Hombre Dominicano in the Dominican Republic in order to gather comparative data on institutional representations of Dominican national identity. In preparation for that, I interviewed Bernardo Vega, Dominican Ambassador to the United States in Washington, who provided preliminary insights into the Museo's mandate and history during his five-year tenure as its Director. I later interviewed Dr. Dato Pagán-Perdomo, the current Director of the Museo del Hombre and researched archival documents provided by Museo del Hombre staff.

The permanent exhibit at El Museo is dedicated entirely to Dominican archeological history and culture. "The Black Mosaic" exhibit included Dominicans in Washington, D.C. Both these exhibits are interesting not only in terms of how Dominicans were represented, whether by themselves or by others, but also in terms of

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[27] Smithsonian Institute, Latino Resources at the Smithsonian, Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institute, 1997.

[28] "The Black Mosaic" exhibit was not the first time Dominicans were incorporated into the Smithsonian. The founder of the Anthropology Department, Dr. Herbert Krieger, was a specialist in Taino archeology and had lived and worked in the Dominican Republic for several decades prior to joining the Smithsonian. It was primarily from Taino artifacts bought or otherwise acquired from the Dominican Republic that the Smithsonian's collection was developed.

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how those representations both reflect and impact the racial ideologies of those communities.

Thus, analysis of *Black Mosaic* is valuable within this study for several reasons. First, it represents an embodied and contemporary departure from the Dominican State's officially sanctioned Dominican racial imaginary. Second, it represents the interaction between Dominican immigrants and African-Americans charged with representing communities. Third, it offers the possibility of examining a larger social fact, the black self-identification of forty percent of Dominicans in the Washington, D.C. area, and the theoretical issue of the impact of residential and socio-economic context on that racial identity. Finally, it provided rich data via the oral histories, family photos and slides already collected by the museum, as well as those I collected subsequently.

In preparation for the Black Mosaic, and as part of twenty life history interviews of other Afro-Latinos in D.C., Anacostia staff collected eight extensive life history interviews with D.C. Dominicans. My original intention was to transcribe those interviews while in residence at the Anacostia, to compare those life histories with others I was gathering of Dominicans in New York, and to compare the racial representation of Dominicans by the Smithsonian with that of the Dominican national museum, El Museo del Hombre Dominicano. Ultimately, however, I was able to gather far more data from the Anacostia, the Smithsonian at large, and from the Dominican community in D.C. than I had ever anticipated.

According to the 1990 Census, forty percent of Dominicans in Washington, D.C. self-identify as black, compared with only twenty six percent of Dominicans in New York City, and ten percent of those in the Dominican Republic. My principal research at

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the Anacostia concerned exploring why these Dominicans affirmed their African ancestry more often and more extensively, as symbolized by Dominican participation in Black Mosaic, than the Dominicans in New York City and in the Dominican Republic itself. Chapter Six, "Black Behind the Ears' and Up Front Too" explores why that is so.

The original contingent of Dominicans in the Capital arrived in the 1940s as domestics for the Dominican Embassy and its diplomatic families. This fairly small group expanded as a result of the 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act's family preference provision. Hector Corporan, a Dominican community scholar charged by the Anacostia with reaching out to the Dominican community in Washington, D.C., has noted that a central mission of the exhibit was to determine how immigrants such as these had "negotiated U.S. racial ideologies and institutions" across various decades of racial flux.[29] At the same that the exhibit represented Dominicans, however, it is also represented the African-American communities' perception of Dominicans. As Steven Newsome, Director of the Anacostia Museum put it, "exhibits define civic culture, they tell the public what is important to know, they act as definers of culture and validators of exhibit."[30]

Shortly after arriving at the Anacostia, I quickly realized that I needed to understand the origin, history and scope of the Black Mosaic in its entirety in order to

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[29] Hector Corporan, "Building Bridges: African-American and Latino Communities in Washington, D.C.," talk presented at the 1997 Inter-University Program for Latino Research Qualitative Methods and Museum Studies Seminar, Smithsonian Institute, Washington, D.C., June 1997.

[30] Steven Newsome, "Approaches to Material Culture Research and Representation," talk presented at the 1997 Inter-University Program for Latino Research Qualitative Methods and Museum Studies Seminar, Smithsonian Institute, Washington, D.C., June 1997.

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contextualize the nature of Dominican participation. After developing a sense from the documents of the origins and outcomes of the exhibit, I interviewed current and former Anacostia staff involved with the exhibit – Steven Newsome, Sharon Reincken, Portia James, Robert Hall, Louis Hicks, Fulami Ahota, Kim Freeman and Hector Corporan -- as well as other related Smithsonian staff, such as Neani Kalkani of the Program in African American Arts and Culture. These interviews fleshed out not only the contours of the exhibit from origins to completion, but provided useful insight into the response of the staff and the Anacostia's constituency to the exhibit and to the communities represented.

Another eight, single session interviews were conducted with Dominicans who participated in the exhibit, whether by donating artifacts or by being profiled: Francia Almarante, Juana Campos, Julia Lara, Maricela Medina, Carmen Quander, Ramberto Torruella. I also interviewed Rolando Roebuck, an Afro-Puerto Rican participant who has continued to be actively involved with the Anacostia as a result of Black Mosaic.[31] The interviews I conducted explored elements of the participant's life histories that I felt might elucidate how these Dominicans came to their pro-negritude racial consciousness. These interviews were both thematic and life history compilations. The interviews I conducted more extensively explored elements of the participant's life histories that I felt might elucidate how these Dominicans came to their seemingly pro-negritude racial consciousness. I also asked participants to comment on their experience of *Black Mosaic* and of the Anacostia more generally.

Like the museum, the beauty shop is an institution that both provides access to culturally determined aesthetic norms, and also creates and disseminates those norms. For

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[31] The real names of these respondents and participants are used because they were used in the exhibit, which was a public venue and forum.

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example, while beauty shops respond to industry standards and fashions, they also innovate and market their own products and services. One goes to one's hairdresser for aesthetic guidance as much as for attainment of a particular look previously decided upon. The guiding premise here is that aesthetic norms are loaded with racial, gender, class and sexual meanings. As an openly and avowedly gendered space, the beauty shop is explicitly dedicated to producing *certain* kinds of female beauty, while at the same time implicitly providing a space where *certain kinds* of women come together regularly. Moreover, beauty shops operate within specific, whether implicit or explicit, cultural/ethnic contexts and communities. Indeed, they are one of the last public/private spaces in the U.S. where segregation is explicitly accepted. Beauty shops openly cater to particular economic classes. Given this confluence of race, gender, class and sexuality, the beauty shop is an excellent research site. That only one book-length and a few article-length studies on the role of the beauty shop in identity production exist makes the appeal of this site all the greater.

During the late Spring of 1998, beginning in April, I began my participant observation at a Dominican beauty shop in Washington Heights. A Dominican colleague in the Graduate Center who has used this salon herself, and who could therefore vouch for my authenticity as a graduate student introduced me to this salon late in January. I attended the shop four to five days of the week, for five to six hours at a time, over a period of six months. During that time I also conducted extended life history interviews with the six salon staff, the two owners, and one hair care products vendor. In addition, I established preliminary contacts with thirty regular salon clients whom I would later approach for interviews.

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I interviewed each of the staff members at least once, usually twice. In addition to establishing a life history regarding the respondent's migrations, labor market experience, educational experience, family life, I was concerned to understand how the stylists came to their profession and how they viewed their role in the larger community. In order to get a sense of the economic magnitude of Dominican beauty culture in Washington Heights, I interviewed the top Sebastian products salesman in the area. Through these interviews, I was able to piece together a preliminary oral history of Dominican beauty culture here and in the Dominican Republic. That history, I now believe, is tied to the evolution of a particular racializing and sexualizing of Dominican national identity in the last four decades. In addition, the daily practices and technologies of Dominican beauty culture in New York City speak to the role Dominican women's bodies play in displaying Dominicanness and in differentiating Dominicans from other immigrant and racialized communities.

The other question, that is the mechanisms through which Dominicans assimilate indigenist ideology on its face, is "how" Dominicans with facial and bodily features which evidence African ancestry see not Africa in themselves and each other, but Native America. Indeed, it is this question which drives my inquiry into Dominican racial identity, and ultimately, it is the one best answered by research in the extended interviews.

Chapter Seven, "Of Roots and Race" examines the ways in which heterosexual female bodies are the landscape upon which Dominican racial identity is constructed, represented and contested. Ethnomethodological research fleshes out how social group members construct their sense of social reality in the context of larger historical, political,

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economic and cultural structures. By analyzing the accounts group members provide of given social phenomena, the researcher is able to understand how those phenomena are constructed in everyday life practices.

> Common sense knowledge of the facts of social life for the members of the society is institutionalized knowledge of the real world. Not only does common sense knowledge portray a real society for members, but in the manner of a self-fulfilling prophecy the features of the real society are produced by persons' motivated compliance with these background expectations....Seen from the person's point of view, his [sic] commitments to motivated compliance consist of his [sic] grasp of and subscription to the "natural facts of life in society."[32]

In the context of this study, how Dominicans construct and experience race in their everyday life experiences and practices will be approached both through a beauty shop ethnography and through extended, open-ended interviews with respondents culled from that ethnography.

A central aspect of Dominican hair culture has been the twin notions of *pelo malo* (bad hair) and *pelo bueno* (good hair). *Pelo malo* is hair that is perceived to be tightly curled, coarse and kinky. *Pelo bueno* is hair that is soft and silky, straight, wavy or loosely curled. There are clearly racial connotations to each category – the notion of *pelo malo* implies an outright denigration of African-origin hair textures, while *pelo bueno* exalts European, Asian and indigenous-origin hair textures. Moreover, those with *pelo bueno* are, by definition, not black, skin color notwithstanding. The beauty shop, thus, is the cultural site that provides the technology to sustain and create "good hair."

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[32] Harold Garfinkel, Studies in Ethnomethodology, Oxford: Polity Press, 1994, pp. 53-54.

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Dominican women with a much broader range of hair textures employed hair straightening techniques -- whether through chemical relaxers, roller sets, *toobies*[33] or blowdrying -- is than might be expected by non-Dominicans. For example, Dominican women with curly hair that is neither coarse nor kinky often employ straightening techniques, while African-American women with similar hair textures do not generally feel compelled to straighten their hair. Furthermore, while in African-American communities specifically Afrocentric hair styling techniques and styles such as braiding, corn rowing, dread locking, etc, have a committed following,[34] such a parallel does not currently exist in Dominican communities. This is so even though many Dominicans have hair textures that would be amenable to those styles and practices. Indeed, it was to hair culture that my respondents pointed when asked what distinguishes Dominicans from African-Americans.

What is distinctive about the Dominican case is the seeming possibility of racial transformation through hair care. As one respondent noted, "For Dominican women it's not just straightening, but transforming it into white hair", and by extension, themselves into "whiter", but not white, women. The goal is an approximation of indigenous looks as those are popularly understood: straight haired, tan skinned, "fine" featured.

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[33] A *doobie* is a hair-straightening tactic in which the hair is divided into sections that are then wrapped flat around the head and held in place with pins. After a period of time, generally depending on the hair texture, the hair is let down and is usually fairly straight and smooth. A *doobie* is done with little, if any, use of lotions or oils and is done on many different hair textures, including those which are already fairly straight.

[34] Kamau Kenyatta and Janice Kenyatta, Black Folk's Hair: Secrets, Shame, and Liberation, Somerset, NJ: Shonghai Press, 1997; Noliwe Rooks, Hair Raising: Beauty, Culture and African American Women, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1997; Kathy Russell, Midge Wilson and Ronald Hall, Color Complex: The Politics of Skin Color Among African Americans, New York: Doubleday, 1992.

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The imposition of "African-ness" and by extension of "blackness" on non-Dominicans, specifically on Haitians and African-Americans, is part and parcel of the assumption – literally, the taking on -- of "indian-ness" by Dominicans. This assumption is buttressed by educational literature from primary school onward, by print and electronic media, by the national museums, by commercialization of Taino words, images and icons, and by proto-indigenist models of female beauty. The aesthetic model is the body that is a "middle term" as my respondents named it, neither too white nor too black. This is reflected in the ambivalence that exists towards *pelo bueno*. For example, while *pelo bueno* is usually defined in positive terms, it is also called *pelo muerto* (dead hair) and *pelo lambio* (limp hair). Hair can be (as each of the hairdressers mentioned) "too good". Similarly, while light skin is generally valorized, white skin in and of itself is insufficient, and skin that is too white is considered unsightly. In other words, it is the "mestiza/mulatta," the embodiment of the Taina/o icon that is displayed at the museum, in the beauty pageant, in the media and the history books that is desired, literally and figuratively, politically and culturally.

Ethnomethodological Interviews:

I conducted fifteen extended life history interviews with regular clientele of the salon I was observing. The participants represented a variety of socio-economic, residential, sexual and age statuses. The basic criteria were that informants should be:

1) Regular salon clients.

2) Over eighteen years old.[35]

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[35] This was requirement was due primarily to the limitations placed by the Human Subjects Research guidelines followed by the Graduate Center upon research with minors.

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3) Evenly distributed between permanent residents, U.S. citizens and undocumented statuses if possible.

4) Reflective of larger Dominican socio-economic patterns

5) Diverse in their sexual orientations, if possible.

6) Diverse in their relationship statuses, if possible.

The interviews consisted of two to three separate, three-hour interview sessions. The first interview was a life history interview in which the respondent's migrations, labor market experience, educational experience, family life and personal history were explored. The second interview inquired into the respondent's experience of Dominican beauty culture, both at the shop in question, and more generally. If time permitted, the second interview also included a photo elicitation component during which respondent's were asked to rank and describe men and women of various ethnicities and appearances selected by the interviewer from hair styles books utilized at the salon being observed. If time was short, a third interview was conducted for the photo elicitation.

The respondents ranged in age from 21 to 62 years old. They represented a variety of socio-economic and residential statuses, as well as being diverse in point of origin and generation of immigration, where applicable. The interviews are incredibly rich in terms of the information and insights they generated.

In his study of race in Brazil, Conrad Kottak[36] presented one hundred Bahians with photographs of three sisters who were considered physically "representative" of various "racial types." Each respondent was asked to racially categorize or describe each of the sisters. Kottak found that there was no uniformity in how each sister was

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[36] Conrad Kottak in Marvin Harris, Patterns of Race in the Americas, New York: Walker and Company, 1964, p. 57.

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identified. Indeed, the answers reflected the "idiosyncratic" nature of perceived racial types. In addition to the variety of racial designations for any one individual, Kottak discovered that there was no consensus on the "abstract meaning of the racial terms" assigned. Finally, there was variability across time in how a given respondent racially characterized the same person.

Kottak also documented the system of racial identification in Brazil. Another sample of one hundred people were shown nine drawings of persons with diverse combinations of hair textures and shades, nose and lip shapes, and skin tones. In all, respondents offered forty different "racial types". In many ways, this project mirrors what I undertook methodologically. However, my research question extends beyond merely documenting the Dominican racial system; I am also concerned to determine *how* that system is maintained in everyday practices. Thus, the subjectivities of Dominicans are of central importance.

In her study of older women and beauty shop culture, Furman (1997) employed photo elicitation as a method of discovering how her informants evaluated themselves – physically, socially, etc. -- across time. Accordingly, she asked each informant to gather together photographs from various stages and ages of their lives, and to describe himself or herself to her in each photograph. She then took a Polaroid picture of them and asked them to describe themselves in the present moment. She found that this methodology provided her an excellent window into both informants' self-perceptions and self-representations, as well as into the larger social contexts within which they developed.

Employing a similar method in my study elicited self-evaluation not only across time, but across place as well for those who immigrated into the U.S. The background

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assumption here is that both national and individual identities are temporally and spatially fluid, yet constrained by political economic relations. Moreover, photo elicitation is a subtle way to explore both cultural models of race and racial self-conceptions, allowing these to emerge from the informants' evaluations, rather than being guided by the researcher. I was not comfortable with taking pictures of my respondents, because I assumed that would heighten the structural power differential between me as ethnographer, native or otherwise, and my participants as subjects (objects?) of study. Instead, participants were asked to collect pictures of themselves across their lifetime, as well as of their parents and siblings. They were asked to describe each person in terms of physical appearance, personality, etc.

In addition, each of the respondents was shown a series of head shots selected from the hairstyles books kept at the salon. Those particular books were utilized on the assumption that they reflect the tastes the salon owners and staff propagate and cater to, and that they are the ones the clientele had access to while there. Moreover, these books depict "real people", not professional models whose countenances are widely familiar and whose ethnicities are public knowledge. Of the ten books available, one featured African- American hairstyles modeled by possibly African-American and Latina/o models. The other nine featured hairstyles and models who are possibly European, Euro-American and Latina/o. Color photocopies of the photos were made in order to remove them from the context of the books, which are explicitly directed at particular audiences, so that the respondents could evaluate the photos independent of their bindings. All the models from the book directed at African-Americans were utilized. A selection from each of the non-African-American books was employed. While the selections were

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probably subjective, I felt it important to utilize as many of the non-African-American books as possible given that I had no pre-determined assumptions about which was particularly popular or influential.

Respondents were shown pictures of women with short, medium and long hair; of men; and of female children. Each of the groupings contained an equal number of photos from the African-American and non-African-American books. The photographs of women were divided by hair length in order to control somewhat for the relationship between hair length and perceptions of female beauty. From each of those groupings respondents were asked to select the most beautiful and least beautiful[37]; those most qualified and the least qualified for political office; those best suited and least suited for business endeavors; and those who appeared to be Latina based on appearances alone. Among the photographs of the men, respondents were asked to select the handsomest and least handsome; those most qualified and the least qualified for political office; those best suited and the least suited for business endeavors; and those who appeared to be Latino based on appearances alone. Respondents were also asked to select the girls they considered to be the prettiest, the smartest, the most likely to succeed, and Latina.

As stated earlier, criticisms of Dominican racial self-identifications, both individual and national, have implied that rejection of negritude is absurd in that it flies in the face of what "is visibly so" – i.e. dark skin color, "African" facial features, kinky hair, etc. Yet, as Shohat reminds us, "Identity and looks...are negotiated differently in

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[37] I framed the dichotomy in these terms in order not to impose "ugliness" on any of the photographs. Several of the respondents themselves used the term "ugly", however, when describing the individual they found least beautiful.

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different contexts."[38] Three theoretical and empirical questions are important: 1) Is the "visible" real *sui generis*, that is, regardless of cultural, historical and political context? 2) Around what issues do one's color or other racially significant bodily features become socially significant (i.e. experience with authorities, perception of social interactions, work experiences, etc.)? 3) What are the power relations inscribed in polysemic racial identities and identifications? These concerns guided my interviews.

Relevant Methodological Issues

An observant reader will have noticed that I undertook only one part of my fieldwork in the Dominican Republic, the analysis of El Museo del Hombre Dominicano. Otherwise, data was gathered in the United States from Dominican communities in Washington, D.C. and New York. The question of whether Dominicans in the diaspora are "too" distinct from Dominicans in the national territory to allow generalization bears examination. In addition, I have assumed that my membership in the Dominican diaspora community, and therefore my familiarity with Dominican cultural norms, as well as my native fluency in Dominican Spanish worked to my advantage as a participant observer and an ethnographer. Does my simultaneous membership in the U.S. community and assimilation of U.S. ideologies of race influence what I "see" in the Dominican community? Further, I have concerns about how language both reflects and constructs ideology, and what distorting effect translation (in both directions) has on the content of my argument, particularly around racial semantics and gender as a category of analysis. As Kaminsky so aptly notes, there are linguistic and political minefields in the application of the semantics, both applied and theoretical, of English-language feminist

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[38] Ella Shohat, ed., Talking Visions: Multicultural Feminism in a Transnational Age, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998, p. 47.

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analysis, criticism and theory to Spanish language societies and communities.[39] I agree with Kaminsky that "For neither feminists nor Latin American writers has language ever been a simple matter of transparency."[40] For example, what is one to do with the explicitly gendered nature of Spanish, which assigns masculinity or femininity to all objects and subjects, and which subsumes the female into male when both are present, particularly when analyzing written texts as I do in Chapter Three?

In addition, being white-skinned, fair-haired, and female, I am concerned about the impact my physical appearance and gender had on the respondents' constructions and presentations of themselves and their beliefs. Finally, I entered the field shortly after having given birth to my second child, whom I took with me into the field, daily at first and intermittently later. His presence certainly had an impact on my relationship to the staff and clients of the salon. I turn to each of these considerations below.

Research Site and Cultural Authenticity

The question of cultural authenticity is central to my project in that I undertook ethnographic field research among Dominicans outside the Dominican Republic. Are Dominicans in the United States "authentic" enough? Where are the borders of the Dominican nation? The central question is the connection between the theoretical issue – "authenticity" – and the methodological one – the choice of site and the topics of analysis.

Individuals who participated in my study are located outside the Dominican Republic itself, and thus might be perceived by some as culturally inauthentic

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[39] Kaminsky,1993.

[40] Ibid., p. 10.

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Dominicans. Indeed, much has been written in both the Dominican national press and academia that denigrates the authenticity of Dominicans in diaspora.[41] Nonetheless, given that the New York City metropolitan area currently is home to the world's second largest concentration of Dominicans (15% of all Dominicans); the extensively regional nature of Dominican identities in the Dominican Republic; the extensive historical and contemporary physical and cultural presence of the United States in the Dominican Republic; and the fluidity of culture generally, it will be argued in this study that the experiences and identities of these Dominicans illuminate and inform larger patterns of national identity formation. Thus, while the study will not allow for solid generalizations to all "Dominican culture", this will be due to the small sample size and not the sociological noteworthiness of that sample.

Native Ethnographer

I am the U.S.-born and raised daughter of a Dominican immigrant mother and an absent Italian immigrant father. My interest in Dominican identity originated in the questions my mother posed to me. She is a Dominican immigrant to the United States, who arrived during the early 1960s, at the height of the Civil Rights movement here and of larger global, anti-colonial and anti-imperialist independence movements abroad. She was concerned with her position in the racial ideology and race system of social stratification of the United States, which she experienced as radically opposed to those she had lived through in the Dominican Republic.

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[41] Manuel Nuñez, *El ocaso de la nación dominicana*, Santo Domingo: Editor Alfa y Omega, 1990.

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I am a fluent Spanish-English bilingual. I have also lived in both the United States and the Dominican Republic at different times while I was coming of age. Consequently, I am cross-culturally conversant. Nonetheless, I am English-dominant, fully immersed in U.S. culture and have resided in the United States consistently for more than thirty years. Moreover, my explicit understanding of the history, socio-economic structure, and culture of race, gender, class and sexuality developed in the context of U.S. social and educational institutions. That is to say, I have been trained to see these stratification modalities through the lens of the United States. Nonetheless, as a gendered, racialized and class-marginalized member of the United States, my perspective has also been informed by my lived experience.

Negotiating Gender, Class and Color in the Field

In the context of the beauty parlor, my being a white-skinned and lank-haired *rubia*[42] certainly had an impact on the participants, at least initially and during particular moments in the interview process. My lifelong experiences inside various Dominican communities, both on the island and in the United States, prepared me for those moments. On a countless number of occasions the revelation that I am Dominican was met with initial disbelief, which then generally evolved into celebration of my membership *because* of my appearance. My body has been literally displayed to other Dominicans as an example of exceptionality: *"!Mira, Mira! !Una Dominicana rubia!"* ("Look! Look! A blonde/white Dominican!")

The implication of this interesting inversion of Fanon's "Look! A Nigger!" could be manifold. Perhaps I am being displayed as proof that Dominican whiteness is possible.

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[42] Although *rubia* narrowly means blonde, in Dominican contexts it refers more generally to light-haired, light-skinned, and "fine"-featured individuals.

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It could also be that the particular "racial" attributes of my appearance are somehow objectified in Dominican cultural contexts, particularly as these intersect with my gender signifiers. Or, maybe my claiming a Dominican identity despite the possibility of "passing" into "American" given my appearance, U.S. birthplace and paternal Italian ancestry is worthy of comment. Indeed, the possible meanings of this experience are investigated in this thesis, and to the extent possible, were treated as entry points into national and individual racial ideologies.

A related concern was one of whether my appearance would influence the racial self-identification for informants who perceived themselves to be darker or of a lower socio-economic status than me. Might they be more likely to classify themselves as lighter (or possibly darker) than they might have had I been perceived to be more similar to them in appearance? Did my very corporeality construct a socio-racial context? I believe that my experience with the informants in a variety of locales – the beauty salon, neighborhood, and interview sites –provided some insights into the issue.

On Motherhood in the Field:

My son Christian accompanied me to the beauty salon every day for the first five weeks. I am sure that his presence influenced on my experience in and of the field in several salient ways. First, because I nursed my son while he was with me, and expressed milk for him when he was not, conversations were often initiated on the subject of motherhood, and by extension, Dominican gender roles, as well as on the nature of employment and domestic labor. Second, my son's physical appearance occasionally provoked the comments that were racial and culturally specific. Third, my obvious mothering role made me trustworthy. I was less likely to be a government agent.

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The reaction to my nursing Christian was ambivalent. On the one hand, the salon staff and clients seemed to approve of breast-feeding babies. I was often told that breast milk "*es lo mejor que hay*" ("is the best there is") and women would share with me information on how long they nursed their own children. The fact of my nursing seemed to be taken as an indication of my appropriate mothering skills, and by extension, of my suitable womanhood. On the other hand, once Christian was 10 weeks old and I had been in the field with him 4 weeks, a consensus began to develop that he was too big to nurse. The salon owner, for example, said "*¡ya dale una botella a ese niño!*" ("Give that boy a bottle already!"). This sentiment increased when I began going to the salon without the baby and then expressed milk for him in the salon bathroom.

Expressing breast milk with a manual pump is time consuming, taking twenty minutes to half an hour. Only two places in the salon allow for sufficient privacy – the bathroom and the facials/massage room. Since the facials' room had to remain available should a client arrive, the bathroom was the only option. However, since the bathroom also had a fair amount of traffic, I had to inform the staff that I was going to express milk and would be in there for some time. In addition, I had to carry a breast milk kit in which to store the milk as there isn't a refrigerator at the salon. My nursing and expressing were thus very public endeavors.

Two of the salon staff were in advanced stages of pregnancy when I entered the field and they gave birth during the time I was there. Their experiences, choices and decisions regarding pregnancy, labor, birthing and nursing were often juxtaposed with my own. Our quite different experiences of our reproductive female bodies and of mothering highlighted key issues of class, color and citizenship for Dominican women in

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the United States.[43] My experiences in the health care system, of pregnancy and the care of my children marked the boundaries between myself as native and myself as privileged ethnographer. These insights inform the analysis in Chapter Seven.

Summary: Implications of the study

In essence, what I want to know is how and why Dominicans manage to engage in what looks like a "suspension of reality" in the realm of race when their race ideologies are viewed from a North American perspective. My argument challenges conventional epistemologies and ontologies of race. So while my research entry point is empirical, I want to facilitate anti-racist political action by showing the fallacy of regarding race as an inherently meaningful biological concept. Further, I am also weaving together the various social positionalities of social subjects, a task that I have not seen accomplished elsewhere.[44] The concluding chapter, "Situating Ambiguity", situates my findings in the relevant theoretical and empirical paradigms and points the way to future research.

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[43] See Nancie L. Gonzalez, "Giving Birth in America: The Immigrant's Dilemma," in Rita James Simon and Caroline B. Brettell, eds., International Migration: The Female Experience, NJ: Rowman and Allanbeld, 1986, pp. 241-53.

[44] A recent exception is Annick Prieur, Mema's House, Mexico City: On Transvestites, Queens, And Machos. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.

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Chapter One
Race Theory in the Americas

> *I contend that the science of race, with its emphasis on biological determinism, its focus on the body as the site of behavioral-cultural variations, and its obsession with creating homogenizing and essentializing categories, was first articulated in colonial Spanish America in the seventeenth century, not in nineteenth-century Europe.*[1]
>
> *The English-speaking world borrowed the majority of its early racial terms from the Spanish language during the period dating approximately from the 1570s to the 1670s.*[2]

Dominican identity can be considered in the context of three areas of race theorization: race in Latin America, race in the United States, and theories of "Hispanic" or Latina/o identity formation in the United States. Each of these areas individually provides for only partial analysis of Dominican identity formation. Taken together, however, they provide a useful frame of reference for understanding how Dominicans have experienced and institutionalized their identity. In particular, the questions of how Dominicans construct blackness and whiteness, their own and others, is central to notions of *Dominicanidad* or "Dominicanness".

Not all people who are Dominican citizens, or whose ancestors were Dominicans, necessarily identify as Dominican. Citizenship may well reflect an instrumental

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1 Jorge Esguerra Cañizares, "New World, New Stars: Patriotic Astrology and the Invention of Indian and Creole Bodies in Colonial Spanish America, 1600-1650," American Historical Review, v. 104, no. 1, February 1999, p. 35.

2 Jack Forbes, "The Evolution of the Term Mulatto," The Journal of Ethnic Studies, vol. 10, no. 2, 1982, pp. 46-66.

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relationship to the Dominican State, rather than some affinity or commitment to Dominican nationality, society and culture. Similarly, ancestral ties to the Dominican Republic and its people may not be a salient category of self-identification, especially in Diaspora and for those of multiple origins. Conversely, some whose ties to the national territory are fairly recent, whether by immigration or by birth, may identify as Dominican. For example Pedro Mir, the Dominican Republic's poet laureate, was born to Cuban and Puerto Rican immigrants to the Dominican Republic.

Others may belong to families several generations old in the Dominican Republic and yet not identify or be identified as Dominican. This is the case among Dominicans of Haitian descent, who have been prevented from self-identifying as Dominican by state policy and institutional practices.[3] Others still may have been born or raised outside of the Dominican Republic's national borders to Dominican parents and are recognized by the Dominican constitution as "citizens abroad." Whether they identify themselves as "Dominicans" or not, or how they understand Dominicanness may vary from their parents or the nation's understandings.

Here, Amy Bakalian's work on Armenian Americans is helpful. Bakalian describes shifts in Armenian identity in the United States as that from "being" Armenian to "feeling" Armenian. "Being" Armenian is defined as sharing Armenian language, culture, social relations and life style. "Feeling" Armenian refers to the fact that "the majority of Armenian-Americans, even the great grandchildren of the immigrant generation, continue to maintain high levels of Armenian identity, fierce pride in their

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3 Dore Cabral, 1988.

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ancestral heritage, and a strong sense of we-ness or people-hood."[4] "Being" Armenian, in other words, seems to be about social organization and material culture, both of which are objectively observable. "Feeling" Armenian, on the other hand, is a much more subjective affiliation and not necessarily observable. The question for us here is: how is that "we-ness" or "people-hood" defined by the various socio-political groupings that call themselves "Dominican." In particular, in this chapter I am interested in theories of race and nationality as intersecting identity categories.

Race in the Anglo Americas

Historically, Northern/Western[5] theories of race have centered on one of two main lines: race as a fixed category, as opposed to race as a contingent, constructed category. Under the first domain, we have race as a biological fact, and race as means of class domination; in the second, race as a political fact and race as a fluid social construction. We shall explore each of these dimensions in turn. The most fundamental issue is what is meant by "race" in each of these theories. Thus, I am not concerned to provide extensive overviews or critiques of each discourse. Rather, my concern is a thumbnail sketch of the essential elements of each representation of race, together with some basic lacunae in each theory.

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4 Amy Bakalian, Armenian-Americans: From Being to Feeling Armenian, New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1993, p. 6.

5 By this I mean the Western Hemisphere, but specifically, bearing in mind the critiques of Latin American development theorists, the economically and politically dominant nations of the North -- the United States, Canada, Western Europe.

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Scientific Theories of Race

In the eighteenth century European theorists were concerned to map and explain the differential position of the world's people relative to one another, in line with the Aristotelian tradition of determining group positioning in the "Great Chain of Being." United States theorists joined in the debate with special interest during the nineteenth century as the future of slavery, and later of African Americans, became an increasingly pressing matter. The monogenesis vs. polygenesis theological debate that underlay scientific models of race ultimately only differed in terms of whether steps on the evolutionary ladder were considered transitional or permanent placements. Monogenesis theories held that all humans shared a common ancestor, Adam, and that diversity among humans were the result of dispersal throughout the Earth and/or a sign of God's favor or wrath. Humans were diverse because of "degeneration" from the "pure origin of man...the white male."[6] Polygenesis theories, conversely, argued that each human population was *essentially* and permanently distinct. Therefore, diverse human populations were considered separate species. In either case, European males were thought uniquely perfect, and by extension, physically, intellectually and theologically superior.

Physical markers of "difference" were assumed to provide visible proofs of where "Caucasoids," "Mongoloids" and "Negroids" stood in relation to one another.[7] Efforts to

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6 Robert Young, Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race, New York: Routledge, 1995, p. 65.

7 Although the first systematic classification of human races undertaken by J.F. Blumenbach in the 1770s detailed twenty-eight varieties, ultimately the world's population was divided into these three "major" categories. Blumenbach is also said to have coined the term "Caucasian" to denote white Europeans. Young, p. 64. By 1800,

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quantify racial differences have ranged from simple classificatory schemes and ranking systems -- such as Linneaus' *Systema Naturae* (1754) and Joseph Arthur, Comte de Gobineau's *Essai sur l'Inegalité des races humaines* (1853-55) -- to the more "rigorous"[8] study of craniological differences undertaken by Samuel Morton (1839, 1845) and his followers, to recent studies of gene pools and genetic distribution.

While Foucault says "blood was *a reality with a symbolic function*"[9], perhaps it might be more accurate to say that in matters of race, blood is a symbol with a reality function. As Dominguez notes,

> The problem...stems from the existence of widespread assumptions about the properties of blood -- that identity is determined by blood; that blood ties, linearly and collaterally, carry social and economic rights and obligations; and that both racial identity and class membership are determined by blood....The point is that property is not just a corollary of racial classification; it is also a criterion of it.[10]

French anatomist Georges Cuvier had simplified the classificatory scheme into a hierarchically arranged trilogy. Lucius Outlaw, "Toward a Critical Theory of Race," in David Theo Goldberg, ed., Anatomy of Racism, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990, p. 63.

8 The use of the word "rigorous" is meant only to convey that there was some reliance on the scientific method in the research undertaken by Morton, et.al. Cf. Samuel George Morton, Crania Americana; Or, A Comparative View Of The Skulls Of Various Aboriginal Nations Of North And South America, London: Simpkin, Marshall & Co., 1839. As Stephen Gould has pointed out at length, however, although Morton's methodology may have been scientific, although this too is contested, his data analysis was flawed. Stephen Jay Gould, The Mismeasure of Man, New York: Norton, 1981. Ultimately, of course, this is but one of many examples of the symbiotic connection between ideology and "science" which Sandra Harding so eloquently explores in Whose Science? Whose Knowledge? Thinking From Women's Lives, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991.

9 Michel Foucault, The History of Sexuality: An Introduction, vol. 1, New York: Vintage, 1990, p. 147.

10 Virginia Domínguez, White By Definition: Social Classifications in Creole Louisiana, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1986, p. 89.

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In the United States, and indeed, in much of the Northern/Western world, what Marvin Harris has termed *hypo-descent* has been the principle paradigm of "race" as a biological concept.

Hypo-descent is predicated on the idea of a pre-existent European and European-diaspora racial purity so that one "drop" of non-European "blood" taints the entire ancestral line. "'Hypo-descent' means affiliation with the subordinate rather than the superordinate group in order to avoid the ambiguity of intermediate identity."[11] Thus, progenitors of a "mixed" union are relegated to the subordinate racial category forevermore, quite often regardless of the presence of physical markers of the intermixture in any given individual.

> The rule of hypo-descent is, therefore, an invention which we in the United States have made in order to keep biological facts from intruding into our collective racist fantasies. With it, we have gone so far as to create Alice-in-Wonderland kinds of Negroes about whom people say, "He certainly doesn't look like a Negro."[12]

The question left unanswered even by Harris is, of course, what *does* a "Negro" look like, not to mention the unproblematized assumption of "biological facts." Further, hypo-descent is not applied to all "minorities"; instead, it applies specifically to persons of any African descent, a fact that we will take up again below.

Epiphenomal Race

Marxist theories of race in the United States consider race an epiphenomenon in the political economy, a fact that is meaningful to the extent that it is one weapon in the arsenal of bourgeois exploitation and extraction of surplus value from the working

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11 Harris, 1964, p. 56.

12 Ibid., p. 56.

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masses. Some Marxist scholars of race, most notably Oliver Cox[13], have theorized that this system of racialization serves to maintain the dominant class small, elite and hegemonic. Socialist revolution, Cox theorized, would undo racism "because the social necessity for ['crackers' and 'niggers'] will have been removed."[14] The physical, biological materiality of race is generally unquestioned. Instead, what is subjected to critique is the meaning of race in capitalist societies in terms of its focus on "the lived experiences of *real* persons"[15]. Race, and racial conflicts, then are the creations of racial meanings out of "naturally" meaningless *differences* in the interest of capitalist market relations[16]. Race, therefore, is "a key mechanism for the stabilization of capitalism and the legitimation of inequality."[17]

Others, such as David Roediger[18], have noted that the notion of pure whiteness provided a psychological wage to supplement the low pecuniary wages of the nascent

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13 Oliver C. Cox, Caste, Class & Race: A Study In Social Dynamics, New York Monthly Review Press, 1948.

14 Oliver C. Cox, Race Relations: Elements and Social Dynamics, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1976, p. 6.

15 Outlaw, p.74.

16 The term market relations is used in lieu of "class" because, as Omi and Winant point out, class can be understood either "in the Marxist sense of relation to the means of production, or in the Weberian sense of relationship to the mode of distribution (giving rise to particular `life chances')". Michael Omi and Howard Winant, Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1980s, NY: Routledge, 1986, p. 25.

17 Stuart Hall in E. San Juan, Jr., Racial Formations/Critical Transformations: Articulations of Power in Ethnic and Racial Studies in the United States, New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1992, p. 43.

18 David Roediger, The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class, New York: Routledge, 1991.

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white working classes. Roediger argues that the United States' working class notions and institutionalization of whiteness developed symbiotically and dialectically. He utilizes "dialectical and materialist approaches within the psychoanalytic framework"[19] to structure his argument. Roediger is successful in proving his thesis. His thesis, however, is weakened by its general disregard for the relationship between class, race and gender. Although he notes throughout his study that working class whiteness was aggressively masculine, he does not sufficiently theorize the meaning of that racialized and classed masculinity.

Theories of race as a political fact of United States history treat race as a terrain where struggles over economic *and* social privileges and resources are waged. This school of thought, best represented by the works of Omi & Winant and San Juan, arises out of the realization that class based theories of race are flawed to the extent that they infer "racially oriented political interests from economic ones." Thus, Omi & Winant

> ...use the term *racial formation* to refer to the process by which social, economic and political forces determine the content and importance of racial categories, and by which they are in turn shaped by racial meanings. Crucial to this formulation is the treatment of race as a *central axis* of social relations which cannot be subsumed under or reduced to some broader category or conception....The effort must be made to understand race as *an unstable and 'decentered' complex of social meanings constantly being transformed by political struggle.*[20]

Under racial formation theory, race is considered a historically specific project that is fluid and dialectically related to various lines of social stratification. At the same time, however, by concentrating almost entirely on institutional politics and hypostatized

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19 Ibid., p. 14.

20 Omi & Winant, pp. 61-68.

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hegemony, Omi and Winant privilege state apparatuses of power and conflict. Because the focus of the argument is specifically the United States and, it seems, modeled primarily within a nationally specific Black/White paradigm, the global positionality of the United States is obscured, if not neglected. As E. San Juan notes,

> Without this global framework inaugurating the rise of capitalism, any account of the tactical and strategic reconstitution of the U.S. racial dispensation would be deficient because, right from the onset of chattel slavery and colonial conquests, the U.S. formation has been conditioned if not determined by its position in the world market of labor, raw materials, etc.[21]

This is a critique which is of special interest and relevance in the case of Dominicans, primarily because their constitution as a "group" cannot be removed from the context of colonialism, but also because they do not "fit" within a dichotomized discourse of race.

Colonialisms and White Supremacies

Some United States theorists, most notably Robert Blauner[22], attempted to connect emergent colonialism theory to United States system of stratification based on race. Blauner argued that African Americans and people of color in the United States should be considered internal colonies, from whom resources were extracted and in whom little was reinvested in social, political and economic terms. Internal colonialism theories were a direct response to the ethnicity paradigm explained above in that they highlighted the difference between voluntary immigration and forced migration caused by colonial processes. Like Cox, however, Blauner considered racial stratification to be a

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21 San Juan, Jr., p. 57.

22 Bob Blauner, Racial Oppression in America, New York: Harper & Row,1972.

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direct outgrowth of capitalism, although in this case, within its historically accurate imperial framework.

More recent Anglo-American post-colonial theory of race considers race an engine of colonialism, rather than colonialism's by product. For example, in Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race, Young centers on the relationship between British colonialism, European imperialist capitalism and race / culture / desire. Young's question is essentially this: given that race is not a true biological fact, and given the simultaneous history of race and colonialism, what does the idea of race symbolize or mean? What is race *really* about? The answer is provided through the semiotics of hybridity. Hybridity is the grafting of two distinct species into one; it is a term which appears and re-appears throughout text and discourses concerned with culture (particularly language), with colonialism, with race, and fundamentally, with sexuality.

Ultimately, Young concludes that "biological" race is an idea that, despite its seeming focus on repulsion, betrays the erotic desires of European colonialism for the "natives."

> The ideology of race, a semiotic system in the guise of ethnology, `the science of races', from the 1840s onwards necessarily worked according to a doubled logic, according to which it both enforced and policed the differences between the whites and the non-whites, but at the same time focused fetishistically upon the product of the contacts between them. Colonialism was always locked in the machine of desire....Folded within the scientific accounts of race, a central assumption and paranoid fantasy was endlessly repeated....Nineteenth-century theories of race did not just consist of essentializing differentiations between self and other: they were also about a fascination with people having sex -- interminable, adulterating, aleatory, illicit, inter-racial sex.23

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23 Young, p. 181

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The underlying theoretical premises, thus, are the hermeneutics of suspicion, particularly Freudian psychoanalysis, together with Marxist theory of imperialism, and post-modernist concerns with knowledge-power. Young's analysis of the colonial administrative and ideological discourse on race and how it betrays an abiding concern with "hybridity" -- that is, sexual contact and outcome -- not only presupposes heterosexuality ontologically, which he acknowledges but leaves unproblematized, but also overlooks the raw concreteness of power dynamics beyond the realm of knowledge and discourse.

In other words, and of special interest to my project, in considering race a psycho-social ideological project and projection of European colonizers, the economic, political and cultural subjugation of colonization and imperialism, and the agency of the colonized are elided.

> It is the act of racial categorization that foregrounds power relations, whether one group can impose its categories of ascription upon another group and what resources the categorized collectively can draw upon to resist that ascription....racial categorization: a categorical identity based on purported inherent and unalterable differences that mark inferiority to the dominating group is imposed by one group on another in the process of subjugation, colonization, conquest, and so on.[24]

Racial categorization, then, is re-theorized as central to the global political economies of race. It is also central to notions of gender.

Race in Latin America

Scholarship on race in Latin America has focused on three general areas of study: slavery, colonialism and nationalism, and ideologies of race. Each of these areas considers three basic sites of analysis: state institutions and political systems, economic

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24 San Juan, p. 68.

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institutions and systems, and socio-cultural institutions and systems. Each site of analysis illuminates distinct ideological systematizations of race. We will consider each of these areas and sites in turn.

Slavery Studies

For the purposes of this project, the most relevant studies of slavery are those which seek to historicize the origins of contemporary racial identity in Latin America by considering how the legacy of slavery has impacted on the present that are most relevant. Generally speaking, those studies have belonged to one of two schools: those favoring "the Tannenbaum thesis," and those de-bunking it.

Tannenbaum's thesis derived from Latin American scholarship on slavery and modern race relations. Specifically, Tannenbaum draws upon the notion of a Latin American "racial democracy" developed by Brazilian social historian Gilberto Freyre in his oeuvre The Masters and The Slaves: A Study In The Development Of Brazilian Civilization.[25] Freyre argued that Brazil's long history of miscegenation was indicative of a more open Portuguese racial sensibility, which then manifested itself in integrated social and political institutions. Freyre's thesis was picked up and uncritically circulated by U.S. theorists of race such as sociologist E. Franklin Frazier. It was historian Tannenbaum, however, who explored the differences in slave systems as a root cause of the distinctive approaches to race in North and South America.

In Slave and Citizen: The Negro in America, Frank Tannenbaum undertook to examine why race relations were so different between North and South America. He

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25 Frank Tannenbaum, Slave and Citizen: The Negro in America, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946.

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proposed that Latin American and U.S. slave systems differed in the respective colonizers' experiences with slavery, legal traditions and types of religion. He argued that slavery in Latin America was more "a contractual arrangement between the master and his bondsman" due to the variety of economies slaves operated within, as well as to the *Siete Partidas*.[26] The *Partidas* were extensive manumission codes and provisions developed and enforced by the Spanish crown. Under these, slaves could, and often did purchase their freedom on installment. They were also allowed to sue their masters over purchase agreements, over bodily integrity, and over family integrity, legal privileges that stand in sharp contrast to U.S. slave codes. In addition, Tannenbaum argued that the Catholic Church and its dogma played a central role in reigning in masters and defending the moral and human rights of Latin American slaves, while U.S. Protestant faiths generally upheld slavery as a just moral order. Finally, in Latin America, non-whites "could purchase 'whiteness' for a specific price" through the provisions of Crown certificates, *Gracias al Sacar*, an option not available in the U.S.[27]

Tannenbaum concluded, therefore, that "[t]he Negro slave under [the Latin American] system had both a juridical and a moral personality, even while he was in bondage. This legal tradition and juridical framework were strengthened by the Catholic religion and were part of its doctrine and practice."[28] This distinctive legacy echoes in contemporary Latin American race systems because "the easy and continuous change of

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26 Ibid., p. 55.

27 Ibid., p. 93.

28 Ibid., p. 98.

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status implied a process of evolution and capacity for absorption within the social structure that prevented the society from hardening and kept it from becoming divided."[29] In contrast, the lack of manumission and insufficient presence of freed men and women in U.S. society meant that "the Negro became identified with the slave...he carried all of the imputation of the slave inside him."[30]

In the context of the Jim Crow United States of the 1940s Tannenbaum's thesis was certainly quite radical. However, in the interests of critiquing his own contemporary and historic national reality, Tannenbaum presented Latin American slavery as fairly mild. Tannenbaum's is an analysis of legal and doctrinal codes based only on documents, not a sociology of slavery. As such, the distance between *de jure* rights and *de facto* everyday practices is obliterated. Tannenbaum's thesis was taken up and expanded upon by several major scholars of slavery and race in the Americas, most famously Elkins and Klein.[31] As early as the post-World War II period, however, social scientists funded by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) began publishing scholarship debunking the myth of a Brazilian racial democracy.[32] One of those scholars was Marvin Harris.

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29 Ibid., pp.105-106.

30 Ibid., pp. 106-107.

31 Gilberto Freyre, The Masters and The Slaves: A Study In The Development Of Brazilian Civilization, New York, Knopf, 1946 (1933); Stanley Elkins, Slavery: A Problem In American Institutional And Intellectual Life, New York: Universal Library, 1963; Herbert Klein, Slavery In The Americas: A Comparative Study Of Virginia And Cuba, Chicago: University of Chicago Press,1967.

32 For a more recent exploration of the racial democracy myth see France Windance Twine, Racism in a Racial Democracy: The Maintenance of White Supremacy in Brazil, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1998.

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Following his work on Brazil[33], Marvin Harris extended his research into an exploration of the salience of race in everyday Latin American life, if again in comparison to the United States. In Patterns of Race in the Americas, Harris begins by drawing distinctions between sugar plantation slavery and *hacienda* slavery. The first engaged in intensive capital accumulation and reinvestment, and consequently worked against community development among enslaved peoples. The second used surplus for the purchase of luxury and status goods. The hacienda also worked within indigenous village systems and structures. This allowed for the maintenance of both native cultural forms and of social distance between *hacendados* and indigenous peoples. Harris notes that the Catholic Church had different spheres of influence in each system, and consequently played different roles. For example, in plantation slavery, "plantation owners did not require the services of the Church for maintaining control over their labor force, nor was there any possibility of the Church's fulfilling its own requirements by imposing economic burdens upon the slaves."[34] In hacienda systems, on the other hand, the Catholic Church acted in consort with *hacendados* by providing the moral justification for control of indigenous communities, as well as by reaping economic benefits through the imposition of the *fiesta* system, a synthesis of indigenous ritual festivities and Catholic saint patronage.

In short, according to Harris, there has been no single Latin American race model. Rather, there have been several, each arising both from the types of labor employed (plantation or hacienda) and from the types of communities enslaved (Africans or Native

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33 Marvin Harris, Town and Country in Brazil, New York: Columbia University Press, 1956.

34 Harris, 1964, p. 52.

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Americans). Harris argued, "that differences in race relations within Latin America are at root a matter of the labor systems in which the respective subordinate and superordinate groups became enmeshed.... It is the obligation of all those who wish to explain the difference between United States and Latin American race relations to examine those material conditions first, before concluding that it was the mystic of the Portuguese or Spanish soul that made the difference."[35] Thus, Harris challenged Tannenbaum's assumption of unitary slave systems.

Harris also disagreed with Tannenbaum by stressing to the distance between legal codes and actual practices. These practices, while to some degree different from United States' racially normalized behavior, created neither the historic nor the contemporary racial utopias Tannenbaum alluded to.

> The distinguishing feature of these systems is not that whites have no color prejudices. On the contrary, color prejudice as we have seen is a conspicuous and regular feature in all the plantation areas. The parts of the system which need explaining are the absence of a descent rule; the absence of distinct socially significant racial groups; and the ambiguity of racial identity....Although the slave plantation *per se* was remarkably similar in its effects regardless of the cultural background of the slaves or slave-owners, the natural, demographic and institutional environment with which slavery articulated was by no means uniform.[36]

The demographic factors were the limited amount of Spanish and Portuguese immigration, territorial dispersion, low European to non-European ratios, and occasional population surpluses caused by economic downturns in world sugar demands. Politically, Creole elites were forced to rely on free people of color, mulattos and mestizos in key military and economic goals for which there were not enough whites

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35 Ibid., pp. 65-81.

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available and for which slave labor was untenable: removal of natives from arable lands, enslavement of natives, oversight of slaves, and capture of fugitives. In the United States, the Southern yeomanry performed those functions. For this reason, Harris argues, while a system based on hypo-descent (a term he coined) was necessary in the United States, it was neither necessary nor functional in Latin America.

Although Harris contributed enormously to the study of slavery and race in Latin America and the United States, ultimately he considered race to be an outgrowth of economic structures and institutional exigencies. As detailed earlier, such an analysis is insufficient to the extent that race is regarded as epiphenomal to labor structures. Later scholars of slavery and contemporary race systems such as Bergard, Davis, Degler, Hall, Knight, Palmer, Patterson, Scarano, and Sharp have tended to follow this line of argument.[37]

Given the high social and physical cost to being black or "less" white, is it any surprise then, that the Dominican elite reject hypo-descent and negritude, but glorify and institutionalize their barely existent indigenous ancestry? Moya Pons argues that:

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36 Ibid., pp. 68-81.

37 Laird Bergard, Fe Iglesias García and María del Carmen Barcia, The Cuban Slave Market, 1790-1880, New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1995; Carl Degler, Neither Black Nor White: Slavery and Race Relations In Brazil And The United States, New York, Macmillan 1971; Franklin Knight, Slave Society in Cuba During the Nineteenth Century, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press,1970; Colin Palmer, Slaves of the White God: Blacks in Mexico, 1570-1650, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976; Orlando Patterson, The Sociology Of Slavery: An Analysis of the Origins, Development and Structure Of Negro Slave Society In Jamaica, London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1967; Francisco Scarano, Sugar And Slavery in Puerto Rico: The Plantation Economy of Ponce, 1800-1850, Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984; William Sharp, Slavery on the Spanish Frontier: The Colombian Chocó, 1680-1810, Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1976.

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> By calling themselves Indians, Dominicans have been able to provisionally resolve the profound drama that filled most their history: that of being a colored nation ruled by a quasi-white elite that did not want to accept the reality of its color and the history of their race. Somehow Dominicans assimilated the romantic discourse of the "*indigenista*" writers of the 19th century, and found it instrumental in accommodating their racial self-perception to the prejudices of the elite, by accepting their "color" while denying their "race."[38]

While Moya Pons' argument might seem fairly reasonable, there are several points that require more extensive consideration.

First, is the material veracity of the notion "race" implied by Moya Pons' argument. Second, is the question of precisely how the *indigenista* discourse, an elite and erudite discourse available to an infinitesimal percentage of the population, was assimilated by the majority of Dominicans. A sociological exploration of how Dominicans engaged the administrative and socio-cultural institutionalization of *indigenista* racial categorization that took place under the Trujillo regime is sorely lacking. Third, is the issue of the process by which accommodation of "racial self-perception" takes place. Fourth, is elaborating the relationship between "color" and "race." Finally, is exploring (debunking) the assumption that race is a material fact.

Moreover there is little analysis of why slave labor and slave systems were employed by colonizers and their descendants. Indeed, the assumption is often that slavery was necessary for the development of the Americas and the metropoles, and therefore, beyond question. Such arguments have been central to the question of both historic and contemporary race systems, as slavery scholars David Brion Davis and

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38 Moya Pons, "Dominican National Identity: A Historical Perspective", Punto 7 Review: A Journal of Marginal Discourse, New York: The Dominican Studies Institute, City College of the City University of New York,1996, p.6.

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David Eltis have shown.[39] Nonetheless, it has been scholars of colonialism and nation building who have taken up the issue of cultural imperatives to race systems.

Colonialism and Nation Building Studies

Benedict Anderson's Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism is perhaps the pre-eminent theorization of nationalism to date. Anderson maps the rise of the nation and nationalism. He defines the nation as "an imagined political community...imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign." Nations are imagined because members believe themselves to be similar in some way, despite the number and heterogeneity of their fellow nationals; limited because there are membership boundaries, be these geographic or ideal; sovereign because they are based on socially supported legitimacy and not on divine ordainment; and communities "because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship."[40]

According to Anderson, imagining a nation became possible only when 1) vernacular languages gained legitimate cultural status; 2) monarchy ceased to be the only conceivable form of socio-political organization; and 3) the concept of time changed to allow for both synchronicity and simultaneity. Moreover, a distinctive national consciousness was disseminated through print-capitalism. In reading the same texts, the literate elite were able to feel themselves connected to other readers; texts served as a medium for representing the nation as ancient, which Anderson feels is central to national

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39 David Brion Davis, The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture, Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell University Press, 1966 and David Eltis, The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

40 Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities, New York: Verso, 1991, pp. 6-7.

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imaginings of legitimacy. Language, therefore, became the symbolic territory through which national boundaries were established, so that only certain groups had authority over the national language. At the same time, there is a desire and policy to turn natives into speakers of the imperial language in order to convert them culturally and politically. "The interlock between particular educational and administrative pilgrimages provided the territorial base for new 'imagined communities' in which natives could come to see themselves as 'nationals'."[41] Therefore, language is not a symbol of nation and nationalism, but the medium through which these are invented and sustained.

In terms of colonialism, Anderson claims that Creole pioneers and pilgrims (i.e. Spanish *criollos* and English colonialists) rather than colonial centers (Spain, England) were pivotal in the creation of national consciousness, which made nation states "emotionally plausible and politically viable."[42] This consciousness arose not just because of economic, geographic or political divisions created by the metropolis, but because of the experience of pilgrimage and the dissemination of Creole national consciousness through print capitalism. Pilgrimage was meaningful to the formation of Creole nationalism both internally and externally. Internally, Creole elite felt themselves to be distinct from both the natives and the metropolitans through their roles as bilingual functionaries within colonial regimes. Externally, in the context of European positivist ideas of race, the Spanish Peninsulars claimed that the Creoles had experienced "biological and ecological contamination" because of their physical distance from the

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41 Ibid., p. 140.

42 Ibid., pp. 52-152.

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peninsula and their social and physical intermixture with indigenous, African, Asian peoples in the colonies. Andersen explains that "the writings of Rousseau and Herder, which argued that climate and `ecology' had a constitutive impact on culture and character, exerted wide influence. It was only too easy from there to make the convenient, vulgar deduction that Creoles, born in a savage hemisphere, were by nature different from, and inferior to, the metropolitans -- and thus unfit for higher office."[43]

To summarize, then Anderson first defines nations and then considers how these came to be. In his paradigm, the nation is as much an ideological construction as it is a set of institutions. In any case, the nation is reliant on print language and on print capitalism for it's very origin and subsequent constitution. There are several major flaws in Anderson's historiography and theorizing, primarily due to his Eurocentric, androcentric and heteronormative presumptions.

First, all of Anderson's three preconditions to the rise of nationalism outlined above assume a specific European context to be not only universal, but globally definitive: the European vernacular/ecclesiastical language split which occurred during the Enlightenment, the eighteenth century European discovery that monarchy was not the only conceivable form of government, and the connection between European concepts of time and European print language. Each of these preconditions is specific to the European historical, social, economic and political context. To posit them as preconditions to nationalism generally is not only a-historical, but slipshod theorizing.

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43 Ibid., p. 60.

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Similarly, Anderson argues that nationalism was originally disseminated through print capitalism. Note for example, that in Anderson's argument, originally humans could only conceptualize time as synchronous and simultaneous through print language.

> Why this transformation should be so important for the birth of the imagined community of the nation can best be seen if we consider the basic structure of two forms of imagining which first flowered in Europe in the eighteenth century: the novel and the newspaper. For these forms provided the technical means for "re-presenting" the *kind* of imagined community that is the nation.44

Therefore, ostensibly, since print languages of sufficient scale and type originated in Europe, so too did time.[45] Under this logic, communities based on oral language could not/did not have notions of synchronicity and simultaneity, nor could they be considered nations, for by definition nations are imagined through print language.

Anderson also refuses to recognize the mutual constitutiveness of language and race systems. He writes:

> ...from the start the nation was conceived in language, not in blood, and that one could be 'invited into' the imagined community. Thus today, even the most insular nations accept the principle of *naturalization* (wonderful word!), no matter how difficult in practice they may make it....What limits one's access to other languages is not their imperviousness but one's own mortality.[46]

In this formulation, there are no power structures. Linguistic access is simply a matter of mechanical/technical capacity, rather than of social, political, economic and cultural systems. Anderson also disregards the permutation of language into a racial

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44 Ibid., pp. 24-25.

45 Indeed, the very beginning of time continues to belong to England, as the Greenwich meridian attests.

46 Ibid., pp. 144-148.

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characteristic. Language and race have not been distinctive, but rather mutually constitutive[47], although a certain amount of social passing through linguistic fluency has been tolerated.[48] Further, there have been and are concerns over racialized language contamination, so that for example, English is "broken" when in the mouths of non-natives or subordinated groups and "real" Spanish is only spoken in Spain.[49] Otherwise, there would be no need for grammars, dictionaries, academies, etc., systemizations that both mirror and define racialized boundaries.

Anderson seems to envision language as an egalitarian sphere, and by extension the nation as accessible to all seekers, a perspective that is naïve, a-historical and at times, contradictory. He writes:

> "The fact of the matter is that nationalism thinks in terms of historical destinies, while racism dreams of eternal contaminations, transmitted from the origins of time through an endless sequence of loathsome copulations: outside history. Niggers are, thanks to the invisible tar-brush, forever niggers; Jews, the seed of Abraham, forever Jews, no matter what passports they carry or what languages they speak and read. (Thus for the Nazi, the *Jewish* German was always an impostor.)[50]

Note that while Anderson directly acknowledges the role of racial ascription in nationalist imaginings, he nonetheless considers this incidental to the nation, not consitutive. Perhaps this desire to absolve nationalism of racism accounts for Anderson's near total

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47 Young, 1995.

48 José Piedra, "Literary Whiteness and the Afro-Hispanic Difference," in Dominick LaCapra, ed. The Bounds of Race: Perspectives in Hegemony and Resistance, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991, pp. 278-310.

49 Rosina Lippi-Green, English with an Accent: Language, Ideology, and Discrimination in the United States, New York: Routledge, 1997.

50 Anderson, p. 150.

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disregard for the Haitian revolution in his discussion of American colonialisms and nationalisms. Indeed, Anderson completely elides the distinction between nation building undertaken by the metropole and that undertaken by the colony and post-colony. The latter are developed their imagined communities viz not only the metropolitan center, as Anderson points out, but also viz internal Others – indigenous peoples, enslaved peoples, those defined as racial, sexual and gender minorities.

In endeavoring to separate nationalism from racism, Anderson looks to class ideologies as the source of racism. He argues that racism arose during the 19th century struggles between beleaguered aristocrats and petty-bourgeoisie, naming Joseph Arthur, Comte de Gobineau, "the putative sire of modern racism."[51] Omi and Winant (1986) and Young (1995) among others have debunked the premise that race is an epiphenomenon of class. Further, Anderson attributes the intellectual systematization of modern racism to Gobineau, which is only partially true.

Gobineau, writing in 1853, was operating in the tradition and context set by Auguste Comte (1798-1857), student of ardent petit-bourgeois nationalist Henri de St. Simon (1760-1825), and father of positivist thought. However, as Cañizares Esguerra argues effectively, "the science of race, with its emphasis on biological determinism, its focus on the body as the site of behavioral-cultural variations, and its obsession with creating homogenizing and essentializing categories, was first articulated in colonial Spanish America in the seventeenth century, not in nineteenth-century Europe."[52]

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51 Ibid., p. 150.

52 Cañizares Esguerra, p. 35.

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Although Cañizares Esguerra also maintains that "none of the ideas created in Spanish America later proved influential in Europe" they certainly left their legacy in Spanish colonial America in the form of the *Casta* system of racial categorization discussed further below.

What's more, as Homi Bhabha has pointed out, there is a distinction between *pedagogical,* that is, historically constituted national identity formation and *performative*, that is dialectical, contingent, contradictory, lacking-originary-centers national identities. The nation is "*internally* marked by cultural differences and the heterogenous histories of contending peoples, antagonistic authorities, and tense cultural locations."[53]

Finally, Anderson's argument also overlooks the masculinist, androcentric and heteronormative constitution of nation/language.[54] There is absolutely no discussion of the embodied nation, neither in terms of nationalist ideologies, nor in terms of national institutions, governing practices and nationalized bodies themselves.[55] Still, for all the historical and theoretical flaws of his larger argument, Anderson's concept of imagined communities has proven enormously useful to students of Latin American nationalism

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53 Homi Bhabha, Nation and Narration, New York: Routledge,1990, p. 299.

54 Cf. Yolanda Martinez-San Miguel, "Deconstructing Puerto Ricanness Through Sexuality: Female Counternarrations on Puerto Rican Identity (1894-1934)" in Ramon Grosfoguel and Frances Negron-Muntañer, eds., Puerto Rican Jam: Essays on Culture and Politics, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1997, pp. 127-139; Nancy Stepan Leys, "The Hour of Eugenics": Race, Gender and Nation in Latin America. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991; Taylor, 1997.

55 In the revised 1995 edition, Anderson has added a chapter on "Census, Map, Museum" drawing largely on the works of Charles Hirschman, "The Meaning of Measurement of Ethnicity in Malaysia: An Analysis of Census Classifications", Journal of Asian Studies, August 1987, vol. 46, no. 3, pp. 552-582 and Thongchai Winichakul, "Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of Siam", Ph.D. Thesis, University of Sydney, 1988.

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and colonialism who have expanded and improved upon his historiography and theorization.

Latin American Imagined Communities:

Chanady, for example, employs imagined communities to consider the various ways and strategies employed by Latin Americans to consider their status as nations. He divides these into three basic types: external Other, internal Other, and constituitive hybridity. Certain theorists of Latin American identity claim it is constituted in relation to colonial (Spain) and imperial (United States) Others. Fernández Retamar's thesis that Latin Americans deliberately forget origins and differences as a strategy of unification, solidarity and resistance to the neo-colonial Prosperos of U.S. and Europe is of this type.[56] Others note that Latin American identities have been constructed through contrast with indigenous peoples. "In the third model, difference is located irremediably within Latin American society, and considered as constitutive of its identity. Terms such as Marti's 'mestizo America,' José María Argueda's 'Indo-America,' Angel Rama's 'transculture,' and Ventura García Calderón's 'Indo-Afro-Sino-Ibero-America' (Ortega 86) indicate an attempt to conceive of Latin American culture as hybrid...."[57]

Following the internal-other model, political scientists Dore-Cabral and Sagas noted the role of Haitians as Other in Dominican national imaginings, while González and Betances similarly considered the explicit exclusion of black Puerto Ricans from the

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56 Roberto Fernández Retamar, Caliban and Other Essays, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989.

57 Amaryll Chanady, "Latin American Imagined Communities and the Postmodern Challenge," in Amaryll Chanady, ed. Latin American Identity and Constructions of Difference, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994, p. xxxiii.

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Puerto Rican imaginary.[58] Anthropologist Wade analyzes the imagined communities created by and against Chocoanos in Colombia.[59] Piedra and Jimenez Román note that while dark skinned Latin Americans with African ancestry did attain stature in literary and social circles, this was on explicitly hispanophilic terms.[60] Piedra's article, for example, details whiteness as an achieved status mediated through language; one's ability to use Castilian properly was key to citizenship rights and social rights.

Others, such as Sommer, who considers the role of national literature in forging Latin American imagined communities, consider the racialized masculinist imperatives of national imaginings under colonialism and neo-colonialism.[61] Wright undertook an excellent historical study of nation, race and class in Venezuelan imagined communities of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries founded on the principle of constituitive hybridity.[62] A very few – most notably Martínez-Alier, Martínez-Fernandez and Stepan

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58 Dore-Cabral, 1990 and Ernesto Sagas, "The Politics of *Antihaitismo* in the Dominican Republic: From its Inception to the 1994 Elections," Research Seminar, April 15, 1994, The Bildner Center for Western Hemisphere Studies, The Graduate School and University Center, City University of New York, José Luís González, Puerto Rico: A Four Storeyed Country, Edison, NJ: Marcus Weiner, 1984 and Samuel Betances, "The Prejudice of Having No Prejudice", Rican, 1972, pp. 41-54.

59 Peter Wade, Blackness and Race Mixture: The Dynamics of Racial Identity in Colombia, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993.

60 Piedra,1991 and Miriam Jiménez Román, "*Un hombre (negro) del pueb*lo: José Celso Barbosa and the Puerto Rican 'Race' Toward Whiteness," Boletín del Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños, Focus/En Foco: Race and Identity, 1997, vol. 8, nos. 1 & 2, pp. 8-29.

61 Doris Sommer, Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.

62 Wright, 1990.

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Leys -- consider race, ethnicity, class and gender as simultaneously constitutive of national imaginings.[63] Fewer still centralize sexuality in analyses of national imaginaries, and these integrate race, gender and class to varying degrees of success.[64]

Racial Ideology

Throughout the eighteenth century, the Latin American elite, much like the elite in the United States and Europe, struggled to define itself racially as it developed independent nation states in opposition to the metropolis. Unlike elite Europeans and North Americans, however, Latin Americans, elite or otherwise, were racialized, politically, socially, bodily and territorially because of their colonial and neo-imperial relationship to Europe and North America. The central issue was the relationship of mixed ancestry Latin Americans to dominant European and North American racial theories that privileged biological purity and white supremacy. Stepan Leys explains:

> Henry Thomas Buckle, Benjamin Kidd, Georges Vacher de Lapouge, Gustave Le Bon, the Count de Gobineau, and various social Darwinists were widely quoted for their theories of Negro inferiority, mulatto degeneration, and tropical decay. From the United States the message was the same; as evidence that "halfbreeds" could not produce a high civilization, anthropologists pointed to Latin Americans, who, they claimed, were now "paying for their racial liberality." According to U.S. thinkers, the "promiscuous" crossings that had occurred in much of Latin America had produced a degenerate, unstable people incapable of progressive development.[65]

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63 Verena Martínez-Alier, Marriage, Class, and Colour in Nineteenth-Century Cuba:A Study of Racial Attitudes and Sexual Values in a Slave Society, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1989; Luís Martínez-Fernandez, "Life in a Male City: Nineteenth Century Havana," Cuban Studies, vol. 25, no. 1,1995; Stepan Leys, 1991.

64 Lancaster, 1992; Ian Lumsden, Machos, Maricones and Gays: Cuba and Homosexuality, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995; Martinez-San Miguel, 1997; Stepan Leys, 1991; Young, 1995.

65 Stepan Leys, p. 45.

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At stake was the right of the Latin American elite to power, domestically and internationally, particularly as power prerogatives had been defined in explicitly racial terms. The solution: *blanqueamiento* and *mestizaje* ideologies.

In 1925, José Vasconselos, Minister of Public Education in revolutionary Mexico, coined the term *la raza cósmica* (the cosmic race) to describe Mexican racial heritage, comprised of various indigenous and European ancestries. He argued that Mexicans were of superior racial stock precisely *because of* their mixed racial heritage, rather than in spite of it. He argued, further, that to be Mexican was to be *mestizo*. Thus Mexicanness, and Latin Americanness more generally, was defined in explicitly pro-miscegenation terms. This would seem to stand in sharp contrast to prevalent racial ideologies based on white supremacy. In fact, as various scholars have aptly illustrated in Latin America the racial democracy ideology that nationalism-based *mestizaje* has promulgated is more mythical than not.[66] Despite widespread social, political and cultural tolerance, and at least discursive support for *mestizaje*, the goal of such mixture is progressive *blanqueamiento* (whitening). This is often expressed in folk sayings that denote heterosexual union between darker and lighter individuals as "*mejorando la raza*" ("improving the race") of the darker family. The question then becomes: What is the relationship between mestizaje and hypodescent?

What distinguishes the two systems, I would argue, is not the relationship between racial categorization and social power, nor the relative value or taint of biological ancestries. Rather, it is the kinship relationship between individuals who are categorized in particular ways. As Zack (1993) points out, in the United States, Blacks

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66 Windance Twine, 1997; Wade, 1995; Wright, 1995.

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and Whites can only have Black or White relatives, *by definition*.[67] In the Dominican context, it is commonly remarked that individuals of "different races" can be relatives. Individual kin are considered racially distinct, *regardless of common origins*. This is taken to mean that hypo-descent, therefore, does not obtain.

William Javier Nelson, for example, argues that "Although color and class are strongly related in the Dominican Republic, with lighter skin associated with higher status, there is little caste like division, which is most notably reflected in the absence of the 'hypo-descent' rule (in which children of parents of different races take on the race of the lower caste parent) common in the United States."[68] Similarly, Safa, following Harris, argues that hypo-descent doesn't obtain in Latin America generally, nor in the Dominican case specifically.[69] She notes that the difference between hegemony and dominance is what distinguishes Latin American race systems from that in the United States. Hegemony requires internalization and complicity with ideology, racial or otherwise. Dominance requires repression. In Latin American race systems, Safa argues that it is hegemony that operates, as mestizaje and blanqueamiento indicate. In the United States, it is domination that rules racial formation as the hypo-descent rule and its repressive institutionalization indicates. Safa writes:

> Hegemony incorporates and re-interprets; domination represses, excludes or silences opposition and difference....One critical difference between

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67 Naomi Zack, Race and Mixed Race, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993.

68 William Javier Nelson, Almost a Territory, Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1990, pp. 22.

69 Helen Safa, "Introduction" special issue on Race and National Identity in the Americas, Latin American Perspectives, vol. 25, no.3, May 1998, pp. 3-20.

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> the bipolar system and mestizaje is, therefore, the level of degradation associated with race mixture.[70]

In other words, mestizaje and blanqueamiento require sexual and social contact, and by definition incorporate people of color into the white body politic and become complicit with its supremacy. Safa goes on to note that it is precisely the repressive nature of hypo-descent that leads to the "politicization of identity" among, for example, African Americans and other people of color in the United States. Conversely, hegemonic mestizaje effectively co-opts racialized identity politics because of the possibility and nationalist promise of membership in the national polity through blanqueamiento.

We must ask, then, are mestizaje and blanqueamiento simply hegemonic? Does the according of an intermediate social status to mulattos indicate an institutional, as well as ideological rejection of hypo-descent in the Dominican case? In other words, does the distinction between racial hegemony (mestizaje/blanqueamiento) and racial dominance (hypo-descent) in fact hold in the Dominican case? Blanqueamiento and mestizaje are fundamentally about physical relations, sexual and otherwise, between people. This is not to say that blanqueamiento and mestizaje do not operate in non-material culture as well, as Piedra's work on literary whiteness has aptly illustrated it does. However, there is an explicit physicality to mestizaje and blanqueamiento, particularly as these implicate racialized gender, and it is there that domination comes into play. The patriarchal, white supremacist capitalism that blanqueamiento and mestizaje uphold and propagate require the physical domination, as well as the ideological complicity, of women and female bodies that produce and reproduce the nation. Dominican hypo-descent is evidenced in

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70 Ibid., 1998, p. 6.

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precisely the racial taxonomies that circulate discursively and socially. Dominican race categories hark back to one of the three "original" (read: pure) racial-ethnic groups in the national imaginary: White/Spanish, Black/African, and Indian/Táinos. Furthermore, folk sayings such as "*¿Y tu abuela donde esta?*" ("Where is your grandmother?") and "*tenemos el negro tras de la oreja*" ("We are Black behind the ears"), indicate not only an abiding concern over racial ancestry, but an implication that race is biologically inherited and transmitted, particularly blackness, and that the fact of black ancestry prohibits social pretensions.

Dominican historian Deive notes that when someone "pretending" to whiteness "crows in the yard of his stringent whiteness and upper class status, there is without exception always some caustically forward soul who will immediately ask: "And where is your grandmother?" an inquiry which is intended to "lower the 'cupcakes' from their heights."[71] Lower them, it would seem, from their high pretensions of whiteness to the fact of their blackness. While it is true that *blanqueamiento*, that is, whitening through racial mixture, was and continues to be a socially sanctioned option in the Dominican Republic -- an option not available in the U.S. where racial mixture is only degenerative -- this does not in and of itself indicate an ideological rejection of institutionalized hypo-descent.

The rhetorical question "Where is your grandmother?" is usually asked of one who is perceived to be putting on airs or claiming the sort of social respect accorded only to the most privileged: the white upper class. This indicates a breach of the unspoken

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71 Carlos Esteban Deive, *"¿Y tu abuela, donde esta?"* Boletin 16 Museo del Hombre Dominicano, año X, no. 16, 1981, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 1981, p. 109.

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distinctions between *gente* (persons) and *individuos* (people). As Roberto Da Matta has suggested with regard to Brazilian society, persons "are those who have the power and status to make themselves known to others through affirming their social relations and position in society....Individuals, on the other hand, have no such social connections and relations, and are thus part of the anonymous masses."[72] In the Dominican context, the distinction is between "*la gente decente*" or "*la gente de categoria*" and those "*del montón*." *La gente decente* refers to the bourgeoisie, and thus, by extension, a person of the white race. Those *del montón* are those of "the anonymous crowd."[73]

Dominican poet and essayist Pedro Mir poetically explores the connections between race, particularly blackness, and notions of anonymity. In *Tres Leyendas de Colores*, Mir writes of the central role of Africans and their descendents in the history of the Dominican Republic, a role that has been repudiated, diminished and perhaps worse, ignored by the Dominican elite and authors of state-sanctioned histories.

> History could not get his name. The black had no time to pose for the lens of history, which is a dialectical form of photography...He is, thus, anonymous. To be anonymous is to be unanimous. Not to have a name is to contain all names...Anonymity is a kind of sum total, collectivity, unanimity. To be no one is, at the same time, to be everyone. Anonymity is plural.[74]

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72 Suzanne Oboler, Ethnic Labels, Latino Lives: Identity and the Politics of (Re)Presentation in the United States, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995, p. 128.

73 Hoetink, 1982, p. 179.

74 Mir, 1984, p. 199 translated by Silvio Torres-Saillant, "Introduction to Dominican Blackness", Dominican Studies Working Paper Series 1, City College of New York, CUNY Dominican Studies Institute, New York: New York, 1999, p. 57.

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Mir re-claims the notion of the faceless (black) masses as nameless and inverts the relationship between mass anonymity and social cohesion. Inverting the notion that *personas* are anonymous nobodies, Mir argues that it precisely that overwhelming, majority presence that makes "the black" *the* Dominican. Mir, in other words, is arguing against the power of the elite, those who are *gente*, to imagine and represent Dominicanness in singular ways.

Similarly, one hundred years earlier, Dominican poet Juan Antonio Alix, renowned author of dozens of *décimas* (rhyming poems comprised of 10-line stanzas) composed "*El negro tras de la oreja.*" ("The Black Behind the Ears") "*El negro tras de la oreja*" was written in 1883[75], during the dictatorship of Ulises ("Lilis") Hureaux, the Republic's first (and to date, last) "black" president taunts and ridicules Dominicans who ignore or deny their black ancestry. Alix opens by noting that he "employs his weak pen" in order "to teach a lesson" to more than one "person" ("*gente*") overwhelmed by the preoccupation (over race), ending the stanza with the assertion that "the black behind the ears" is "abundant nowadays." Further ahead, he notes that those who are "fine whites" never notice whiteness. Instead, it is those who are not "pure blooded" who "go crazy trying to be white."

Recall that hypo-descent functions to sustain positions of dominance and subordination based on racial classification. It is in the realm of racialized reproduction

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75 As I explain ahead, this was also one year after the publication of Galván's Enriquillo, *the* indigenist romance and "foundational fiction" of the Dominican nation. Cf. Sommer,1991.

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that the "repressive apparatus"[76] of blanqueamiento and mestizaje are obscured. A window into the relationship between race, class, gender and sexuality is offered by the popular Dominican saying: "*Una blanca para el boato social; una negra para el servicio de la casa; y una mulata para la cama.*" (A White woman for social display/marriage; A Black woman for housekeeping; and a mulatto woman for the bedroom.) Stolcke has argued that the inter-relatedness between race, class, gender and sexuality of women has been evident since Spanish colonial conquest in that indigenous women, and later African women, were considered primarily as vehicles of both colonial and national production and reproduction. The remark by an English physician in the mid-nineteenth century aptly describes the view current in the sixteenth century Spanish colonies: "The uterus is for the race what the heart is for the individual: It is the organ for the circulation of the species."[77]

In his study of nineteenth century Havana, Martínez-Fernandez notes the physical and social isolation of upper-class white women, who literally lived behind barred windows through which they could be viewed but not approached, and the concomitant physical liberty of poor, working-class and enslaved non-white women who were "free" to walk the streets and associate with men of all classes. In this social arrangement, white women were physically cloistered and made accessible only to white men, whose seed they were expected to bear. Their function, in other words, was strictly racialized reproduction. Virtue was contingent on virginity and acquiescence to sex only for

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76 Louis Althusser, Lenin and Philosophy, and Other Essays, London: New Left Books, 1971.

77 Verena Stolcke, "Conquered Women," NACLA Report on the Americas, Vol. 24, no. 5, February 1991, p. 25.

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reproductive purposes. In return, they lived lives of material comfort and security, but were neither encouraged nor allowed independent intellectual and social development.[78]

Conversely, women of color were allowed greater physical freedoms, both in order that they fulfill their productive tasks and, in being accessible to all men, particularly white men, their reproductive roles as well. At the same time, however, they were not afforded "the protections of private patriarchy" that shielded white women from aggravated sexual assault.[79] Albert notes that in the Dominican case, particularly during the Spanish colonial period, African slave women were explicitly used to reproduce both the nation and the slave economy:

> ...the African woman in the slave period was not just chattel and labor force. She was also an important slave reproductive machine. In this woman, therefore, we have a fairly complex role in the production process, development and socio-political slavery for the ends of colonial society in America.[80]

While marriages between Táinas and Spaniards were legally allowed by 1514, marriage between Africans and Spaniards were outlawed well into the nineteenth century, although concubinage was commonly practiced.[81] In either case, there was little concern for what

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78 Martínez-Fernandez,1991.

79 Leith Mullings, "Images, Ideology and Women of Color" in Maxine Baca-Zinn and Bonnie Thorton Dill, eds. Women of Color in U.S. Society, Philadelphia: Temple University Press,1994, p. 271.

80 Celsa Albert Batista, *Mujer y esclavitud en Santo Domingo*, Santo Domingo: Ediciones CEDEE, 1993, p. 27.

81 Ibid., p. 59.

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women's erotic autonomy,[82] and heterosexuality was both presumed and enforced. In addition, there is an explicitly hierarchical connection between national identity, sexuality, race, class and gender.

> This biological mestizaje dynamic in America from its onset generated *a socio-racial stratification* imposed by the Crown, which implicitly bore discriminatory weight, fundamentally because of the biological superiority of whites integrated in all the different segments, and because of whites relationship to the entire legal order and state development activities.[83] [italics in the original]

Blanqueamiento-driven marital and sexual practices indicate, in Albert's words, the "concrete assimilation of the social-racial parameters the Spaniard established."[84]

Of course, racial discourses, systems and policies had existed in Spain prior to conquest and colonization. Whether the hostility toward, anxiety about and finally expulsion of Jews and Moors from Iberia in the centuries prior to the conquest can be characterized as "racial" rather than "religious" has been debated.[85] Most agree that anti-Semitic and anti-Moor sentiment, ideologies and policies pre-date the scientific racism of the late eighteenth and its solidification in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It seems fairly evident that the crown operated on the assumption that peoples could be grouped in particular ways and that those groupings were hierarchical, whether due to religious beliefs or to bodily attributes. Indeed, it has been argued that Columbus' first voyage purposefully coincided with the expulsion of the Jews and the subsequent availability of Marano seamen.[86] The conquest's agents, in other words, brought with them a set of beliefs and an historical memory that framed their view of, and their

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82 M. Jacqui Alexander, "Not Just (Any)Body Can Be a Citizen: The Politics of Law, Sexuality and Postcoloniality in Trinidad and Tobago and the Bahamas," Feminist Review, Autumn 1994, no. 48, pp.5-19.

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policies toward the indigenous peoples of they encountered, the Africans they enslaved and imported, and later of the children of Spanish, indigenous and African unions they categorized.

Throughout the slow abolition of slavery and increasing social gains of free people of color in nineteenth century Santo Domingo, a finely tuned system of racial categorizations and rankings flourished.[87] The colonial era Dominican racial taxonomy was modeled on the *casta* system that originated in colonial Mexico, but it was also distinctive in its parameters and specificity. The casta system attempted to classify and rank the various racial groupings and the permutations that resulted from sexual contact across groups. As many as forty racial categories were developed to denote the racial classification of racially mixed people, together with depictions of each "racial type" in casta paintings. Together, these taxonomies "suggest a basic principle: Spanish or white blood is redeemable; Black is not."[88]

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83 Albert Batista, p. 63.

84 Ibid., p. 71.

85 Stolcke, 1991; Cañizares Esguerra, 1999.

86 Sosua, Teaneck, NJ: Ergo Media, 1987.

87 The casta system of racial categorization, which developed in Mexico, was employed throughout the Americans during colonization. Under this taxonomy the number of racial categories ranged from fourteen to forty. What was consistent throughout was the Spanish racial supremacy. Ilona Katzew and John A. Farmer, eds., New World Orders : Casta Painting and Colonial Latin America, New York: Americas Society, 1996.

88 Ilona Katzew, "Casta Painting: Identity and Social Stratification in Colonial Mexico," in Ilona Katzew and John A. Farmer, eds., New World Orders : Casta Painting and Colonial Latin America, New York: Americas Society, 1996, p. 10.

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Cope argues that in the Mexican colonial context both the taxonomies and the paintings were intended to create order where indigenous resistance to colonization threatened political instability.[89] In Santo Domingo, by the time the casta system was developed, there was no indigenous community to resist. On the other hand, there were substantial numbers of Cimarron communities, or communities formed by and for previously enslaved runaways and rebels, but by definition those fell outside of the casta system.[90] Casta systemizations of race categories would have to have been applied to people within the bounds of colonial society, that is, the elite, the Creoles, the freedmen, and the enslaved classes.

According to Lizardo, in the Dominican context, the colonial era racial taxonomy included the following categories:

Table 1: Colonial Era Racial Taxanomy, Santo Domingo

One Parent Classified	+	One Parent Classified	=	Child Classified as:
Black	+	White	=	*Mulato* or *Pardo*
Mulato	+	White	=	*Tercerón*
Tercerón	+	White	=	*Cuaterón*
Cuaterón	+	White	=	*Mestizo*
Mestizo	+	White	=	*Alcatraz*
Indio	+	Black	=	*Zambo*
Alcatraz Or *Zambo*	+	*Mulato* *Tercerón* *Quadroon*	=	*Grifo*
Tercerón *Quadroon* *Mulato* *Mestizo*	+	Black	=	*Saltapatrás* (Leap backwards)

89 R. Douglas Cope, The Limits of Racial Domination: Plebian Society in Colonial Mexico City, 1660-1729, Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994.

90 For more on these communities see Jane G. Landers, "Maroon Ethnicity and Identity in Ecuador, Colombia, and Hispaniola," Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Latin American Studies Association, Hyatt Regency, Miami, March 16-18, 2000.

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Zambo *Alcatraz*			
Tercerón *Alcatraz* *Zambo* *Mestizo* *Mulato* *Quadroon*	+	Any mixture =	*Tente en el aire*(Up in the air)
Mulato *Octoroon* *Quadroon* *Mestizo*	+	White =	*Blancos de la tierra* (Whites of the land)

Source: Lizardo, 1979, pp. 19-20.

While these categories concentrated on more on ancestry than on actual appearance, today a more comprehensive system exists, one which implicitly considers not only ancestry, but explicitly concerns physical appearance, specifically skin color, hair texture, and the shape and size of the nose, lips, and eyes.

Several centuries later, Dominican anthropologist Daisy Josefina Gúzman documented nearly three-dozen racial descriptives in use in the Cibao region.[91] In general, however, she notes that three general categories obtain:

> 1) Whites: "are distinguished because their skin color runs from pinkish white to dark brown; their hair is long, flexible and are from blonde to black, with a well-developed hair system."
>
> 2) Blacks: "in the black race skin color ranges from brown to ebony black; their hair is kinky and wooly, the chin is thin and the body is hairless; flattened nose, high cheekbones, thick lips and long arms."

91 Daisy Josefina Gúzman, "*Raza y lengua en el Cibao*," Eme-Eme:Estudios Dominicanos, vol. 11, 1974, pp. 3-45.

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> 3) Mulattos: "applies to persons born of parents of different races, and especially, to the child of a white man and a black woman or of a black man and white woman."[92]

These categories, like their predecessors, rely on both ancestry and physical appearance. Note especially that skin color is not the sole determinant of racial status. Hair, as will be explained ahead, is a central race marker. Most recently, Cambeira says the primary categorizations are:

- *Grifo*: the offspring of a mulatto person and an indigenous person
- *Indio claro*: a light-complexioned indigenous person, usually tan in coloring or one who is Black/White mulatto with straight hair texture
- *Indio oscuro*: a dark-complexioned indigenous person, or one who is darker than the indio claro, but still with straight hair and slightly thinner lips than the person of African descent
- *Jabao*: yellowish in coloring with the characteristically descriptive African features in lips, nose, and hair texture
- *Zambo*: the offspring of an indigenous person and an individual of African descent
- *Negro lavao*: literally a "washed or cleaned-up" Black person; a Black individual with considerably thin lips, not-so-broad nose, perceived as being not so dark, but not altogether light-complexioned, with hair texture between straight and wooly.
- *Blanco jipato*: a Caucasion with rather yellow complexion, resembling a light-skinned Black person in coloring and with kinky hair texture. [93]

Although the above taxonomies imply that it is individual bodies that are racialized based primarily on physical attributes, in seeming contrast to hypo-descent which racializes entire family lines, it is possible that a Dominican type of hypo-descent does in fact operate.

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92 Ibid., p.5.

93 Alan Cambeira, Quisqueya La Bella: The Dominican Republic in Historical and Cultural Perspective, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1997, pp. 221-222.

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Many observers have concluded that a refusal of dichotomous, hypo-descent as a racial paradigm indicates a fundamental psychological and biological self-delusion. Route, for example, writes that:

> A mulatto nation situated in the Negroid Caribbean is undoubtedly ailing if it cannot accept its racial image. Dominicans may feel constrained to call each other white, but it is hard to say who is deceived. In view of these considerations, the glorification of Caucasian features by the mulatto majority is disturbing and, for the black minority, psychologically disjunctive.[94]

There is a lot going on in this sort of critique of the Dominican situation, and it is representative of most foreign reactions. Rejection of hypodescent is equated with a kind of anti-scientific idiocy. Race (for example, "black") is understood as a material fact, denial of which can only constitute a (failed) attempt at deception. Eurocentric aesthetic preferences are assumed, rather than proven. While primary acceptance of African descent is implicitly equated with psychological well being, similar preference for "non-African" somatic norms is dysfunctional. Let us consider each of these issues in turn.

In the first instance, an assumption of the immutability of identity underlies the privileging of racialized ascription. Are identities in fact fixed, a-historical, and natural? Or is identity formation a process, fluid across time and place? Further, what is the relationship between individual and group in the realm of identity? The charge of self-delusion levied against Dominicans who, at least to some extent, treat race as an achieved status indicates that the underbelly of accepting race as only ascribed forecloses resistance to state supported racialization projects. The question of "who is deceived" by

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94 Leslie B. Rout, Jr. The African Experience in Spanish America: 1502 to the Present Day, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980, p. 288.

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(presumably dark-skinned) Dominicans who "call each other white" assumes and reproduces scientific racism in its hypo-descent variant.

The rule of hypo-descent, and indeed the foundational belief in the materiality of race and race categories, is rendered unproblematic when Dominican refusal of assignation to subordinate racialized categories is considered delusional. One might ask, however, why the same charge is not levied at people who explicitly accept hypo-descent. Indeed, one need only consider the extensive legal battles waged in the United States over racial classifications to discern the absurdity of hypo-descent and its enforcement.[95] That this mandate exists beyond the courtroom is evidenced by the response of those outside the legal system to Dominican self-perception.

Further, as mentioned earlier, hypo-descent has been applied only to persons with African ancestors.[96] Is it not an overly facile critique of Dominicans reinforcing the implicit notion that African ancestry is a "taint" which cannot be escaped? Why aren't Dominicans, who have in the last two centuries absorbed various European, Middle Eastern and East Asian ancestries, criticized for not considering themselves White or Asian? Is preponderance of one ethnicity or another the key? And if so, to what degrees? How much of one ancestry or another situates the individual and the society racially? At the same time, however, despite the fact that the Dominican population is predominantly (if not primarily) an Afro-European one, many Dominicans do reject negritude as a

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95 Dominguez, 1986; Ian Haney López, White by Law: The Legal Construction Of Race, New York University Press, 1996.

96 F. James Davis, Who Is Black? One Nation's Definition, University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991.

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racial, ethnic and political identity, both at the individual and social levels.[97] However, Dominicans understand both negritude and whiteness differently than their hemispheric neighbors.

Dominicans have considered themselves *los blancos de la tierra*, "the whites of the land" in opposition to their Haitian neighbors from the early nineteenth century.[98] Indeed, the historical centrality of Haiti and Haitians in the formation of a Dominican imaginary has been frequently commented upon, if not sufficiently explored. As I argue in Chapter Three, Haitians have figured as the racial, cultural and sexual Others against whom Dominican identity is forged.[99]

Until the mass exodus that began in the 1960s, it was largely Dominicans within the national territory who had an extended but distant, imbalanced, and often violent, and occasionally complicit relationship with the United States and its white supremacist racial ideologies. Therefore, Dominicans were indeed "*los blancos de la tierra*/the whites of

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97 Balaguer, 1990; Cambeira, 1997; Deive, 1981; Dore-Cabral & Itzgohn, 1996; Jorge Duany, Quisqueya on the Hudson: The Transnational Identity of Dominicans in Washington Heights, New York: CUNY Dominican Studies Institute, 1994; Jan Knippers Black, The Dominican Republic: Politics and Development in an Unsovereign State, Winchester: Allen & Unwin, 1986; Peggy Levitt & Christina Gomez, "The Intersection of Race and Gender among Dominicans in the U.S.", paper presented at the 1997 Meeting of the American Sociological Association, Toronto, Canada, August 8-13; Nelson, 1990; Pedro Andres Perez Cabral, *La comunidad mulata: El caso socio-politico de la Republica Dominicana*, Caracas, Venezuela: Gráfica Americana CA, 1967; Dagoberto Tejada Ortiz, *Cultura popular e identidad nacional*, Santo Domingo: Instituto Dominicano de Folklore, 1998; Torres-Saillant, "*El rotorno de las yolas: La vista desde la diaspora,*" Paper presented at Congreso Internaciónal: La República Dominicana en el umbral del siglo XXI, July 24-26, 1997, Pontífica Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

98 Moya Pons, 1996.

99 Sagas, 1994; Sommer, 1991.

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the land" -- their land. Whiteness is no more a biological reality than blackness. Rather, whiteness is an axis of social, political, economic and physical dominion and privilege. With the development and evolution of established Dominican communities in the United States, in the belly of the racial beast as it were, Dominican identities simultaneously are more directly impacted by and impact upon United States' racial discourses and white supremacist practices and policies predicated on hypodescent. We turn next to a theoretical consideration of Dominican identity in the context of Latino/a identity in the United States.

Latina/o Identity in the United States:

Surprisingly little has been written on Latina/o racial identity in the United States. Rather, individual Latin American origin groups – primarily Mexican/Chicano, Puerto Rican, and Cuban -- have been written about in terms of community formation, assimilation, minority politics and cultural forms.[100] At the same time, historically these diverse Latin American national origin groups have been categorized together as a "race" by U.S. policy makers, by educational and governmental institutions, by the corporate media and by the general public as "Hispanics" and more recently, as "Latinos." The racialized representation of "Hispanics"/ "Latinos" in television, film and print media has

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100 See for example: Acuña, 1988; Clara Rodriguez, Puerto Ricans: Born in the U.S.A., Boulder: Westview Press, 1991; Manuel Maldonado-Denis, The Emigration Dialectic: Puerto and the U.S.A., New York: International Publishers,1980; Alejandro Portes and Roberto Bach, Latin Journey: Cuban and Mexican Immigrants in the United States, Berkeley: University of California Press,1985; Eleanor Meyer Rogg, The Assimilation of Cuban Exiles: The Role of Community and Class, New York: Aberdeen Press,1974; Felix Masud Piloto, From Welcome Exiles to Illegal Immigrants: Cuban migration to the U.S., 1959-1995, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield,1996; Silvio Torres-Saillant and Ramona Hernandez, The Dominican Americans, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998.

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been considered most fully by Clara Rodriguez and Alberto Sandoval-Sanchez.[101] How Latina/os self-identify and are identified, however, is relatively under explored.

Felix Padilla's Latino Ethnic Consciousness: The Case of Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans in Chicago[102] was among the first scholarly considerations of Latina/o identity in the United States.[103] Drawing on a case study of Puerto Rican and Chicano political mobilization in Chicago, Padilla argues that the two communities were able to organize under the umbrella of "Latino" identity despite their quite different histories, cultures and political statuses in the United States. Their shared experience of political and economic disenfranchisement because of their status as Spanish-speaking groups brought them together for "social action and mobilization." In Padilla's formulation, Latino/a identity is situational, interactive and utilitarian. "Rather than deriving from historically fixed and primordial ties, the collective representations that adhere to the Latino ethnic identity and consciousness derive from the observation of the strategic reactions of disadvantaged peoples to their assignment to underprivileged statuses offered within the context of this society's political economy."[104]

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101 Clara Rodriguez, Latin Looks: Images of Latinas and Latinos in the U.S. Media, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997; Alberto Sandoval Sanchez, Jose Can You See?: Latinos On and Off Broadway, Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press,1999.

102 Felix Padilla, Latino Ethnic Consciousness: The Case of Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans in Chicago, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985.

103 Notable literary treatments include Piri Thomas, Down These Mean Streets, New York: Knopf, 1969; Junot Diaz, Drown, New York: Riverhead Books, 1996; Maritza Loida Perez, Geographies of Home, New York: Viking, 1999.

104 Felix M. Padilla, "On the Nature of Latino Ethnicity," in Antoniette Sedillo López, ed. Historical Themes and Identity: Mestizaje and Labels, New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1995, p. 663.

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Latino identity, Padilla argues, is ethnic to the degree that it is a politicized identity utilized by Spanish-speaking groups in order to gain access to resources denied to them. This "Latinismo" can manifest both as cultural-political identity and a social-political one, depending on the situation. Padilla draws on Barth's theories of group boundaries to explain cultural-political Latinismo.

> From this point of view Latino identity is an ascribed or self-ascribed device that socially locates an individual with reference to language similarity. The Spanish language represents and ever-present feature of the process of interaction of those individuals labeled as "Latinos" by the proponents of the cultural-political dimension of Latinismo. In other words, language has become for some Spanish-speaking a primary bond of social cohesion as they take on a wider Latino group identity. The distinction made here is between "Hispanics" or "Latinos" and the wider American society or simply non-Spanish-speaking groups.[105]

Social-political Latino identity, on the other hand, references shared histories rather than common cultural practices. "From this point of view the Latino or Hispanic membership provides certain Spanish-speaking persons with an historical base or framework which they use to orient themselves to other Spanish-speakers, either as fellow members or as 'other kinds' of people."[106] The problem here is the insufficient attention to racial ascription.

More recent research has focused on the issue of categorization. The relative merits of the labels "Hispanic" versus "Latina/o" have been debated. Those favoring the term "Hispanic" – which was institutionalized by the U.S. government in the past three decades -- treat Latin American immigrants and their U.S. born children as an ethnic

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105 Ibid., p. 80.

106 Ibid., p. 81.

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group that can assimilate in much the same way previous immigrant groups have. Others such as David Hayes-Batista and Jorge Chapa, for example, argue in favor of the label "Latino" because it connotes the shared political economic experience of imperialism and neo-colonialism of Latin American immigrants to the United States. In general, those arguing in favor of "Latino" have disagreed with the applicability of assimilationist theories of ethnicity to Latin American immigrants and their U.S. born children. They have noted that Latin American immigrants and their children as a group have been and continue to be structurally excluded from U.S. social, cultural, political and economic life.

As Murguia notes "the term Hispanic fundamentally is integrationist with some amount of pluralism within it, while Latino is fundamentally pluralist with some amount of integration within it."[107] Further, those arguing in favor of Latino note that the term connotes racial multiplicity and brings mestizo identity to the United States. Torres, for example, argues that mestizo identity and racial ambiguity undermine dichotomous models of race enough to have deep political implications. If Latinos continue to assert a mestizo or multiple racial identity, they both are aligned and align themselves on the side of non-whiteness, which in the United States means "black" for all intents and purposes. To choose Latino identity, then, turns hypo-descent back on itself. "The fear is that anyone who voluntarily agrees to be black is in some sense not really black, because our culture has defined blackness as something that you can never escape." [108]

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107 Edward Murguia, "On Latino/Hispanic Ethnic Identity," Latino Studies Journal, vol. 2, no. 3, September 1991, p.11 as quoted in Oboler, p. 167.

108 Gerald Torres, "The Legacy of Conquest and Discovery: Meditations on Ethnicity, Race, and American Politics," in Frank Bonilla, Edwin Meléndez, Rebecca

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The salience of a mestizo-based identity formation in the United States is considered best by Alcoff who analyzes the discrepancy between the European model of identity and the self which "value racial purity and cultural authenticity" and the Latin American reality and model which are by definition multiple and mixed. "Part European, part indigenous, half colonialist aggressor, half colonized oppressed, we have never had an unproblematic relationship to the questions of culture, identity, race, ethnicity, or even liberation." [109] Alcoff argues that in Latin America mestizaje "itself did not pose any difficulties; the issue of concern was the *nature* of the mix - lighter or darker" that mattered.[110] She uses concept of "status ambiguity" to elucidate the position of mestizos in societies such as the United States' where dominant "pure race" groups reject mestizos as "impure" while subordinate groups reject mestizos as privileged. Further, race identity impacts both public status and "experienced selfhood."[111] If the right wing views mixture as "pollution", Alcoff argues, left wing theorists view mixture as "symbols of colonial aggression or cultural dilution."[112] In both cases, Latina/os, whom Alcoff claims, are by definition mestizos, "are treated as the corporeal instantiation of a lack -- the lack of an

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Morales, and María de los Angeles Torres, eds. Borderless Borders: U.S. Latinos, Latin Americans and the Paradox of Interdependence, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998, p. 168.

109 Linda Alcoff, "Mestizo Identity," in Naomi Zack, ed., American Mixed Race: The Culture of Microdiversity, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1995, p. 257.

110 Ibid., p. 259.

111 Ibid., p. 262.

112 Ibid., p. 260.

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identity that can provide a public status."[113] Although I disagree with Alcoff's assumption of universal mestizo-based Latino racial identity, her analysis of the response to Latino racial identity in the United States is quite prescient.

The question of whether Dominicans identify as "Latino", "Hispanic", both or neither is an important one for both first and subsequent generations in the United States. The answer, however, is mediated by variables such as geographic location, generation, class and gender, as we will see ahead. Typically, however, students of Dominican identity have done little contextualizing. In this regard, Earl Shorris' article "Latinos: The Complexity of Identity" is a prime example. He wrote:

> A small group of Dominican artists and intellectuals met in Manhattan in the closing days of 1989 to plan the attack. It seemed less than serious at first, an idea born over drinks and a little smoke in a dark room, whispered, enjoyed, explored over the sound of drums and an old piano. They laughed. Later, the next day and the day after, it became more than an amusement. They hated the imperialists, their witnesses [sic], the soft dough feel of them, their thin hair hanging. And they hated Christopher Columbus most of all.
>
> This was the plan: When the ships arrived to recreate his landing in celebration of the 500th anniversary of the discovery of Hispaniola, and all the weaklings, all the ass-lickers, rushed out to greet them, the true Dominicans, hundreds of them in native dress, would rise up out of their hiding places and attack the white invaders. With spears and stones, they would drive the Europeans back to their ships and away from the island of Hispaniola forever.
>
> The Dominicans had overlooked history; they had permitted the symbolism to become confused. No one remembered that by 1570 only the imperialists and their African slaves were left; the genocide of the native population of Hispaniola was virtually complete. It did not occur to the little group of angry romantics in Manhattan that it was themselves they planned to drive away, for the Columbus Day conspirators were children of the conquest, doomed to a life of unendurable irony-Latinos.[114]

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113 Ibid., p. 260.

114 Earl Shorris, "Latinos: The Complexity of Identity," NACLA, vol. 26, No. 2 September 1992, p. 19.

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Shorris immediately establishes the fantastical nature of a Dominican indigenist identity by making it the brainchild of drunken, expatriate artists and intellectuals. He exocitizes the group and the locale in the tradition of Harlemesque primitivism, alluded to by reference to drums and pianos. The editorial error – "witnesses" rather than "whiteness" – is almost Freudian in positioning Shorris as imaginary white observer to the (imagined) scene. In the tradition of such observers, Shorris is omniscient, apparently more knowledgeable of Dominican history than the Dominican artists and intellectuals themselves who had become confused by their own symbols. They are, after all, emotionally consumed, romantic, and childish in their perceptions. And if the Dominican anti-imperialist conspirators had forgotten the genocide, Shorris is ready to remind them of their reality. Of course, who would remind Shorris of the imbricated role of U.S. imperialism and racism in the evolution of Dominican ethno-racial identity, indigenist and otherwise?

Further, as mentioned earlier, hypo-descent has been applied only to persons with African ancestors.

> No other ethnic population in the nation, including those with visibly non-caucasoid features, is defined and counted according to a one-drop rule. For example, persons whose ancestry is one-fourth or less American Indian are not generally defined as Indian unless they want to be, and they are considered assimilating Americans who may even be proud of having some Indian ancestry. The same implicit rule appears to apply to Japanese Americans, Filipinos, or other peoples from East Asian nations and also to Mexican Americans who have Central American Indian ancestry, as a large majority do. For instance, a person whose ancestry is one-eighth Chinese is not defined as just Chinese, or East Asian, or a member of the mongoloid race. The United States certainly does not apply a one-drop rule to its white ethnic populations either, which include both national and religious groups.[115]

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115 Davis, 12.

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Could it be that the Dominican paradigm and self-identification system is so disturbing to observers because it is perceived as an assault on racial ordering which refuses the subterfuge of passing, an assault which is flamboyant, un-remarked, unabashed, indeed, unawares?

Is White Supremacy, Dominican Style, Still White?:

This question, of course, is of extreme importance to the maintenance of white supremacy. Whiteness is predicated on the existence of dark Others. If those Others refuse the role of subaltern, what happens to white identity? Whiteness requires blackness. Butler reminds us:

> ...[one] cannot be white without blacks and without the constant disavowal of [one's] relation to them. It is only through that disavowal that...whiteness is constituted, and through the institutionalization of that disavowal that...whiteness is perpetually--but anxiously--reconstituted.[116]

Although the Othering and erasure of Haitians peaked in the 1937 massacre of more than 20,000 Haitians by Trujillo's national guard – a massacre which he justified as necessary to "deafricanizing the country and restoring Catholic values"[117] – Haitians continue to be othered by Dominicans. Dore-Cabral has found that historically and contemporarily the only socially, economically, politically and residentially segregated group is Dominicans of Haitian descent, whether *"rayano"* (a common, pejorative term for those of mixed Dominican and Haitian parentage) or *dominico-haitiano* (of Haitian parentage but

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116 Judith Butler, Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity, New York: Routledge, 1990, p. 171.

117 F. Knight, 1990, p. 225.

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Dominican-born.)[118] Indeed, *dominico-haitianos* are the only "hyphenated" group in the nation. Haitians continue to be the only group set off from Dominicans symbolically as well as materially. They cannot cross the divide implied by the hyphen, no matter that the border is crossed daily, purposefully and with the state's complicity, as warranted by the economic exigencies of the moment. And while the hyphenated divide is removed somewhat for children of both Dominicans and Haitians, they continue to be set off as distinctively marginal. R*ayano*, which means "*fronterizo*/bordering on", is by definition not quite *dominicano*.

Dore-Cabral & Itzgohn's ethnographic research on how Dominican racial identity changes in the U.S. found that only twenty-five percent of respondents in New York City where their study was undertaken, self-identified as black.[119] That this group reported having a black identity in the Dominican Republic as well could indicate that racial identity is fixed regardless of residential context. However, since questions pertaining to the relationship between these respondents and other New York racial-ethnic communities were not asked, the question remains open. Where the Dore-Cabral and Itzgohn respondents originated from is certain to have influenced how they self-perceive in the U.S. context, as does the New York racial-ethnic context itself.

While only ten percent of Dominicans in the Dominican Republic self-identified as black in the 1960 census, the last to include a race question, on average about twenty

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118 Dore-Cabral, 1988.

119 My 1990 Census data analysis indicates that twenty nine percent of Dominican New Yorkers identified as black.

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five percent of Dominicans in the United States identified as black in the 1990 Census. Levitt & Gomez found that there was substantial variability by region:

Table 2: Dominicans identifying as black in 1990 Census, Selected States

State	% Identifying as black
New York	27
Massachusetts	23
Washington, D.C.	40
California	12
Texas	12

Source: Peggy Levitt and Cristina Gomez, "The Intersection of Race and Gender Among Dominicans in the U.S.", Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association Meeting, August 1997, Toronto.

Of note is the fact that there seems to be a relationship between black self-identification and residential context. Why, for example, do nearly half of Dominicans in Washington, D.C. identify as black, while only about ten percent do in California and Texas? Is there some sort of context effect, due to say the existing preponderance of one ethnic group or another? Or, is it that Dominicans begin with some sense of self that leads to settlement preferences? Could it be that certain kinds of regional labor markets draw Dominicans from certain social and class segments of Dominican society, segments that are related to color? Is it some combination of these possibilities? These questions are answered in ahead, when I present my findings on Dominicans in D.C.

Levitt & Gomez also found that there was a positive correlation between class and racial self-identification. For example, they found that "as socioeconomic status increases and English language proficiency increases, both foreign-born and native-born Dominicans were more likely to classify themselves as White."[120] My findings in

120 Levitt & Gomez, 1997, p. 9.

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Washington, D.C., however, indicate the exact opposite: greater degrees of educational attainment levels and socioeconomic status were related to an affirmative Black identity.

In the Dominican Republic, class status affects racial identification. That is, where, for example, in the United States, race is a fixed status regardless of class, in the Dominican context, class can have a "whitening" or a "darkening effect." Thus, a member of the upper classes who would be "black" in the United States, is perceived and perceives him or herself to be "white" with much more ease than s/he might were s/he to occupy a lower socioeconomic status. As Marvin Harris has pointed out in the Brazilian case, where this also seems to occur, this phenomena indicates that, at least to some extent, race is as much an openly achieved status as it is an ascribed one. In the U.S. race often determines socioeconomic status; race is considered a pre-existent, fixed reality. Thus, the "fact of blackness", as Fanon calls it, might be covertly denied and hidden through "passing", but never overtly challenged.

In contrast, in the Dominican case, the notion of "passing" seems not to exist because one's race is as *contingent* on one's class position as it is *determinative* of it. Nonetheless, although class can supersede race as a means of social stratification, the fact remains that while "acceptability to the highest social class in Santo Domingo is based on a variety of factors,...persons exhibiting a distinct Negroid appearance are excluded."[121] Moreover, as Hoetink has pointed out, features that are considered "white" or "European" seem to be more highly valued than those which are not.[122] Does being a whiter

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121 Mejía Ricart in Rout, p. 287.

122 H. Hoetink, *El pueblo Dominicano (1850-1900): Apuntes para su sociologia historica*, Santiago: Universidad Catolica Madre y Maestra, 1985.

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Dominican lead to experiencing less discrimination and doing better socially and economically? Or, does socio-economic success lead to assimilation of the dominant racial self-identification model, whatever that may be in a given context? Again, these questions are treated further ahead

Conclusion:

Dominicans have time and again reported anecdotally undergoing some sort of racial identity re-evaluation experience upon contact with U.S. racial paradigms.[123] Sociologist and poet Chiqui Vicioso, for example, writes:

> I was also racially classified at Brooklyn College, which was an interesting experience for me. In Santo Domingo, the popular classes have a pretty clear graps of racial divisions, but the middle and upper-middle classes are very deluded on this point. People straighten their hair and marry "in order to improve the race," etc., etc., and don't realize the racist connotations of their language or their attitude. In the United States, there is no space for fine distinctions of race, and one goes from being "trigüeño" or "indio" to being "mulatto" or "Black" or "Hispanic." This was an excellent experience for me. From that point on, I discovered myself as a Caribbean *mulata* and adopted the Black identity as a gesture of solidarity.[124]

That Viciosio feels able to "adopt" a racialized identity as a "gesture of solidarity" highlights the unique position Dominicans in the United States find themselves in. I argue that Dominican identity in the United States must be understood as simultaneously ethnic and racial, or what I have termed "ethno-racial." By ethno-racial I mean that Dominicans are negotiating their status as racialized minorities operating in the context of

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123 Oboler, 1995; Shorris, 1992; Sherezada (Chiqui) Vicioso, "An Oral History (Testimonio)" in Asuncion Horno-Delgado, Eliana Ortega, Nina M. Scott and Nancy Saporta Sternbach, eds. Breaking Boundaries: Latina Writing and Critical Readings, Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1989; Peter Winn, Americas: The Changing Face of Latin America and the Caribbean, Berkley: University of California Press, 1992.

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histories and structures beyond their control, but they do so with a degree of agency and self-determination. They bring to the situation, in other words, their own histories and understanding of their identities and they enact them accordingly. To what degree they are successful – in other words, how much more ethnic or racial they are – depends on their receiving context and the relative salience of gender, class, citizenship and place in their lives.

Is what we have then a counter-hegemonic project situated within a larger hegemonic system of racialization? Are Dominicans in fact questioning either "whiteness" or "blackness" as categories? Or is it rather their placement within a system of racialization that is challenged, as well as how that system is specified? Is what Dominicans are questioning, in other words, whether race is an ascribed or an achieved status, and not whether it should be a status at all? An examination of Dominican historiography is instructive in this regard, and will be turned to next.

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124 Vicioso, p. 231.

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Chapter Two
"The Most Hispanic, Catholic and White of Nations": Official Dominican Histories

> *At the end of the 18th century, Dominicans perceived themselves as a very special breed of tropicalized Spaniards with dark skin, but nevertheless culturally white, Hispanic, and Catholic.*[1]
>
> *Duarte took the Haitian colors [red and blue], arranged them in four alternate squares and placed a white cross in the center to signify the union of the races through Christianity and civilization.*[2]

This chapter presents a brief overview of the story of the origins of the Dominican Republic and its people as recounted in the leading Dominican history texts and in historic English language (usually United States-origin) texts. The focus is on literature that considers events, relationships and structures that influenced the contours of historic and contemporary Dominican identity formations. I will be presenting the "facts" of the story, accepting these as "true" on their face, and replicating the most common narrative structure of that story. Thus, at this point I will be presenting the "peculiar history"[3] of Dominican identity formation without extended critical commentary on the narrative structure. Further, the Dominican case, as constructed in these narratives, will be situated within the relevant theoretical paradigms and literatures, primarily European, U.S. and Latin American theories of race and racial identity explored in Chapter One.

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1 Moya Pons, 1996, p. 15.

2 Otto Schoenrich, Santo Domingo: A Country with a Future, New York: The MacMillan Company, 1918, pp. 43-44.

3 Silvio Torres-Saillant, 1999, p. 49.

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While Dominicans often liken themselves, either bodily and socially, to "*un sancocho*" (a stew of many meats), it is the notion of a trilogy, tripartite or triad that runs through the Dominican historic narrative. There are three original foundational "races" (Táino, Spanish, African). The three fathers of the motherland (Duarte, Sanchez, Mella) organized into *La Trinitaria*/The Trinity. *La Trinitaria* is an explicit allusion to the Christian trilogy: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Three guiding forces or principles of nationhood (*Dios, Patria, Libertad*) are echoed in the three essential elements of *Dominicanidad* (Hispanic, Catholic, White). "Three colored legends," Dominican writer Pedro Mir notes, characterize Dominican history. Each formulation builds upon and resonates with the others.

Táinos are claimed as the first ancestors of Dominicans, and Táino culture is considered the second layer to primarily Hispanic Dominican cultural foundations. Given the historic and demographic preponderance of African ancestry among Dominicans, the origin could just as easily, and possibly more logically, be located in Africa, in its nations, cultures, cosmologies and linguistic communities. It is known, at least in academic circles, that the Africans in Hispaniola, who arrived as early as 1503 and eventually numbered in the tens of thousands, were Mandinga, Bantu, Dahomean, Minas, Angolan, Cape Verdean, Guinean, Sudanese, and Baifran.[4] Ostensibly, the historic, political, economic, and cultural relationship between those societies and Dominican society could be established, as has been done in the United States. And while it is true that links to Africa have been mythologized and commercialized to a certain degree in the U.S., it is also true that they have worked in tandem with the

4 Deive, 1980, p. 235.

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development of an affirmative black consciousness and identity. In contrast, Dominicans begin their story with the Táino past, as if that cultural and physical legacy had survived and was foundational in some extensive and intensive demographic sense. The emphasis on *lo indio* indicates a simultaneous recognition of "non-European" bodily features and erasure of African ancestry.

At the time of Columbus' arrival on the island, the Táinos had named it Quisqueya, "mother of all lands."[5] Dominicans today still call the island Quisqueya and themselves *Quisqueyanos*. The Dominican national anthem opens with a patriotic appeal to "*Quisqueyanos valientes*" (Valiant Quisqueyans). Washington Heights, where sixty percent of the Dominican population in New York resides, is commonly known as "Quisqueya Heights," and the name Quisqueya graces national products from beer to bread, as well as nearly every single type of business. Following Davila's work on the commodification and corporate-sponsored circulation of Puertoricanness based on the jibaro myth,[6] I argue that indigenist Dominicanness is likewise circulated and verified through the extensive and intensive use of Táino references and icons. It is also sustained, as will be argued in Chapter Seven, in beauty culture practices.

The second appellation, La Española, also referred to the whole island and was imposed by Columbus who claimed the territory for Spain. Although it too continues to circulate, it is generally employed when reference is being made to the island as a whole

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5 Prior to the Táinos, the Arawaks had named the island Hayti, "land of mountains". This was subsequently the name that the black revolutionaries in the former French colony adopted for their newly independent nation and later for the island itself during the unification period of 1822-1844.

6 Arlene Davila, Sponsored Identities: Cultural Politics In Puerto Rico, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997.

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during the period of sole Spanish dominion (1492-1700). Following the Devastations of 1605-1606 and the general seventeenth century de-population caused by elite immigration, epidemics and hunger, French incursions into the island increased. As the French began to establish settlements, particularly in the Western third of the island which they would later claim for France, the appellation Hispaniola came into greater use, indicating lexically the lessening Spanish dominion over the territory.

The third name, Santo Domingo (Holy Sunday), came into usage in the seventeenth Century, and has been used to refer both to the French colony and Haiti (Saint Domingue) and to the Spanish colony, its capital city and what would become the Dominican Republic. Originally the name of the capital city founded in 1496, it is said variously to refer to the weekday of the city's founding (Sunday), to Columbus' middle name (Domingo), and to "Saint Dominic, the Castilian founder of the Order of Friars and Preachers in the thirteenth century. The members of the order were known as the Dominicans, and centuries later the inhabitants of Santo Domingo would adopt that name for their republic.[7] But it was the French who, upon gaining control of the territory and then establishing a colony in what is today Haiti, called the entire territory Saint Domingue. The French version, Saint Domingue, was readily popularized in Europe by the eighteenth century and eventually replaced completely the term La Española.[8] Following the Haitian Revolution, Santo Domingo came to refer exclusively to the former Spanish colony. Santo Domingo continues to refer both to the Capital and to the Dominican Republic as a whole.

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7 Torres-Saillant and Hernández, 1998, p. 3.

8 Cambeira, p. 28.

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The fourth and current appellation, "The Dominican Republic" (*La República Dominicana*) first came into usage in 1833, with the establishment of an independence movement during the Haitian colonial period. Indeed, the name was central to the declaration of independence from Haiti. With Juan Pablo Duarte, one of the Padres de la Patria, the use of the term "Dominican" reached a still greater dimension. It was in 1833 that Duarte conceived the country's independence under the glorious banner "*Dios, Patria y Libertad, República Dominicana.*" Since the period of the country's independence, the designation "*Dominicana*" has taken on the desired political character, as well as the sought-after political separation from neighboring Haiti.[9] In its reference back to the founding trilogy, "Dominican Republic" metonymically reiterates the Hispanic Catholicism of the nation.

The use of each of these appellations in the current moment indicates the contours of Dominican national identity as imagined by the state and the nation. What does it mean to name the residents of "the Spanish part of Hispaniola" "Dominicans" prior to the constitution of the Dominican state in 1844? Further, what does it mean to speak of Quisqueyanos five hundred years after the people so-named have died? And, although hardly considered, one must ask: Why have no African-referential appellations existed in a nation so heavily African in its origins?

Torres-Saillant argues that traditional Dominican scholars have internalized, and thus continue to propagate, a white-supremacist and Eurocentric model of Dominican history. Thus, they "have learned to see slave-masters and planters as their ancestors" rather than the slaves, freed people and maroons who predominated demographically and

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9 Ibid., p. 28.

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culturally. It is that identification with the (white) slave masters and their descendants that informs "the State-funded distortion of Dominican ethnicity and culture."[10] Torres-Salliant has called for universal recognition of African ancestry of Dominican culture and nationals, stating that Dominicans "are all ex-slaves!"[11] This statement responds to the hegemonic and institutionalized centering of the slave masters' version of Dominican national history and modern identity, primarily through white supremacist literary discourses and educational texts. Indeed, Torres-Saillaint made this statement while on a panel shared Manuel Nuñez author of anti-Dominican York and negrophobic diatribe, *El ocaso de la nación dominicano*. As Torres-Saillaint explains elsewhere, his intent is ask "Dominican historians, in effect, to embrace a narrative that privileges the many rather than the few."[12]

Although I agree that it is necessary to undermine white supremacist discourses and their related social manifestations, this particular discursive method replicates homogenizing and unitary nationalist discourse. In fact, not all Dominicans are *simply* "ex-slaves", at least solely. Many are, *in fact*, simultaneously ex-masters. That is to say, within a given family unit, our ancestors occupied both positions. And while, for example, as David Ball has recently illustrated[13], in the United States it is a feat to un- and re-cover one's missing family members due to the legacy of slavery, the Dominican

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10 Torres-Saillaint, 1999, p. 57.

11 Sylvio Torres-Saillant, "*El rotorno de las yolas: La vista desde la diaspora*", paper presented at Congreso Internacional: La República Dominicana en el umbral del siglo XXI, July 24-26, 1997, Pontífica Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic 1997.

12 Torres-Saillaint, 1999, p. 57

13 David Ball, Slaves in the Family, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998.

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family suffered no such dispersal. Other Dominicans whose roots on the island were established during the last century are ancestrally related to neither the slaves nor the masters. Their ancestors (i.e. Lebanese peddlers, Jewish refugees, Italian merchants, and Chinese agricultural laborers) are neither ex-slaves, nor former masters, although they have benefited from the legacy of slavery and white supremacy. To hinge Dominican identity exclusively on our collective legacy of slavery excludes and erases the multiplicity of ancestries that inform our collective present, a point which Torres-Saillant himself makes in *El retorno de las yolas*.[14]

Dominican National Identity Formation:

Generally speaking, research scholarship on Dominican identity has been quite limited. That research which does exist has focused on Dominicans in the Dominican Republic. It has overwhelmingly concentrated on documenting the historical evolution of the national cultural identity sanctioned by the state of the moment and on the particularities of economic relations and systems. Major areas of historical study include the history of the republic[15], indigenous and European cultural antecedents[16], and repudiation of African cultural antecedents.[17] The Museo del Hombre Dominicano's

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14 Silvio Torres-Saillant, *El retorno de las yolas: Ensayos sobre diaspora, democracia y dominicanidad*, Santo Domingo: Librería La Trinitaria : Editora Manatí, 1999.

15 Juan Bosch, *Composición social dominicana: Historia e interpretación*. Santo Domingo: Editorial Alfa y Omega, 1986; Moya Pons, 1995.

16 Bernardo Vega, ed. Ensayos sobre cultura Dominicana, Fundación Cultural Dominicana, Museo del Hombre Dominicano, 1997, 5th edition.

17 Federico García Godoy, *Compendio de la historia de Santo Domingo*, Santo Domingo: Publicaciones ¡Ahora! C. por A.,1968; Nuñez, 1994; Manuel Arturo Peña

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anthology *Ensayos sobre cultura dominicana* provides an excellent selection of writings in each of these areas.[18] Frank Moya Pons' oeuvre The Dominican Republic: A National History is the most comprehensive and politically progressive Dominican history text available in both English and Spanish. Barely anything has been written on African slavery in the Spanish part of Santo Domingo. The major works to date have been written by Celsa Albet, who wrote on women in slavery, and by Carlos Esteban Deive and Ruben Silie, each of who has written fairly extensive research monographs on the political economic history of slavery on Hispaniola.[19] Franklin Franco Pichardo has likewise included slavery as a key component of Dominican culture, politics and ideology.[20]

Schoolbooks consistently vilify Haitians and "blacks" generally, but especially those who were enslaved. This historic popular characterization is replicated the modern texts employed by the state in the public education system. Celsa Albet points to the simultaneously visual misrepresentation of blackness, a point to which we will return further ahead.

> The majority of textbooks' illustrations of people have white phenotypes and when a black person is illustrated, it is in a position of inferiority. There is rarely a black female figure in these educational materials, but it is troubling when illustrations of blacks and mulattos from our history are caricatured in ways

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Batlle, Juan Daniel Balcácer, ed. *Ensayos históricos*, Santo Domingo: Fundación Peña Batlle, 1989.

18 Fundación Cultural Dominicana, 1997.

19 Batista, 1993; Deive, 1980; Ruben Silie, *Economia, esclavitud y población: Ensayes de interpretación historica del Santo Domingo Español en el siglo XVIII*, Santo Domingo: Taller, 1976.

20 Franklin Franco Pichardo, *Santo Domingo: Cultura, política e ideología*, Santo Domingo, RD: Sociedad Editorial Dominicana, 1997.

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> inconsistent with their actual phenotypes, in which manner our historical reality is deformed.[21]

Thus, both popular culture and scholarly narrators of the nation's history from the late 19th Century onward link blackness with foreignness, and Dominicanness with Hispanic-indigenous mestizo ancestry.

The works of José Gabriel García, Bernardo Pichardo, Pedro Henriquez Ureña, Emilio Rodriguez Demorizi, Ramón Marrero Aristy, Joaquín Balaguer and Jacinto Gimbernard were institutionalized in the educational system, and in their mutual referentiality, perpetuated through the generations.[22] Such that, for example, Gimbernard's *Historia de Santo Domingo*, used by Dominican school children for generations, cites liberally from each of the above throughout his text.

An illustrative example is the following quote from Balaguer's *El centinela de la frontera*, with which Gimbernard closes his brief chapter on "Toussaint's Death, Independence from Haiti, Dessalines' Invasion":

> The year 1806 was flowing. The late echo of the French Revolution, swollen with human grievances, still reverberated in the western part of the island of Saint-Domingue, which at the time served as the seat of the most prosperous colonial organizations in the world.
>
> A native African lion, Toussaint Louverture, had launched the battle cry that penetrated the soul of more than six hundred thousand slaves of the African race. From the start, the uprising took on the cast of

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21 Batista, pp.109-110.

22 José Gabriel García, *Compendio de la historia de Santo Domingo*, 2 vols., Santo Domingo, 1879, 1882; Ramón Marrero Aristy, *La República Dominicana*, 2 vols., Ciudad Trujillo: Editorial El Caribe, 1957, 1958; Américo Lugo, *Historia de Santo Domingo (de 1556 hasta 1608)*, Ciudad Trujillo: Editora Librería Dominicana, 1952; Manuel Arturo Peña-Batlle, *Historia de la cuestión fronteriza*, vol. I, Ciudad Trujillo, Ed. Luis Sánchez Andújar, 1946. In addition to being a Trujillista historian and ideologue, Peña-Batlle was Foreign Minister during the Trujillato; Joaquín Balaguer, *El centinela de la frontera*, Buenos Aires, 1962;Balaguer, 1990; Jacinto Gimbernard, *Historia de Santo Domingo*, Madrid: MELSA, 1978.

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> a battle to the death inspired by the desire for liberty, but nourished above all by profound racial antagonisms. Jean Jacob Dessalines, Toussaint's successor in that epic battle, launched his famous "Decree of Death To Whites" and a legion of tribal chiefs, convened by the noise of the drum in impressive ceremonies improvised in the midst of the jungles, responded, sinisterly, to that macabre order. The European-descent colonists were run through with knives or burned alive in their own bedrooms.[23]

Here Balaguer's unabashedly racist characterizations of Haitians are presented without commentary as factual historicization of Dominican history. Louverture is equated with a wild jungle animal. The references to echoing and reverberating battle cries, tribal chiefs and jungle drums impute primeval savagery to "the African race." The "profound racial antagonisms" seem to spring of mere blood lust, rather than centuries of enslavement, barbarous treatment and genocide. As is often the case in white-supremacist responses to slave and/or colonial insurrection, the Europeans and their descendants in this narrative are the victims rather than the victimizers.[24] Finally, in the juxtaposition of foreign African to "native" European, Dominicans are subsumed under those of "European-descent."

Later in his text, Gimbernard himself affirms the seemingly essential differences between nascent "Dominicans" of the early and mid-eighteenth Century and "the Haitian invaders." He writes:

> The new Haitian occupation increased the out migration of the most distinguished families, a process that had been developing, in its latest stage, since the 1795 signing of the Treaty of Basel.
>
> The abandonment by the people most capable of opposing the invader based on a solid culture and tradition, sustaining an Hispanic society that would be a bastion against the efforts to Haitianize the Dominican population, did not manage to quash the conviction among the

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23 Balaguer in Gimbernard, p. 134.

24 One is reminded of similar demonizations of the Mau Mau by Kenya's British colonials.

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> inhabitants of the ancient Spanish part of the island that unity with Haiti was impossible.
>
> The permanent resistance of Spanish Dominicans to assimilation with Haiti remained firm throughout the twenty-two years the occupation lasted.
>
> Boyer's government was particularly characterized by its determination to blacken the Dominican population and to destroy the culture it had enjoyed.[25]

Once again, the narrative frames Africanness and blackness as foreign impositions on an essentially white and Hispanic Dominican population. African slavery in the Spanish part of Santo Domingo is mentioned in the briefest of terms, while several chapters are devoted to the Taino and Spanish colonial legacy, including a chapter each for Enriquillo and Bartolomeo de las Casas. It is an intellectual legacy engineered by "the ideological descendants of the Spaniards and white Creoles who directed the colonial system in Santo Domingo. When they imagine Dominican history and the Dominican people only the experience of their ancestors comes to mind, the experiences of others, meaning the majority of the population, receiving only tangential, if any, treatment."[26]

The story of the Haitian revolution and invasion of Santo Domingo is cast as a literally and figuratively "dark" period in Dominican history. The Haitian colonization, embodied in the person of Boyer, who is cast in the most racist and negrophobic of terms, figures as the antinomy of the (anti)climatic, victorious revolution and establishment of Dominican nationhood, personified in the figure of Juan Pablo Duarte, *el padre de la patria*, the Spanish Creole son returned home to rescue "*la madre patria*" (the motherland) the nation/mother ravaged by the Black invaders. This representation,

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25 Gimbernard, 1978, p. 150.

26 Torres-Saillaint, 1996, p. 42.

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however, is not representative of the historic responses of the masses to the various Haitian occupations and subsequent rule. Franklin Franco argues:

> The new regime was supported, above all by former slaves, black and mulatto freedmen [sic], small and median businessmen [sic] and by farmers and Creole ranchers in the Cibao and border regions.
>
> Not so among the small oligarchy comprised of white Spaniards and Frenchmen who remained in the region after 1809, nor among the white Creole children of Peninsulars, and much less among the small but influential nucleus of Catholic priests.[27]

Part of what Duarte and his Trinitarios had to struggle against as they developed and engineered their independence movement was the slave-descended masses' fear that abolition would be overturned in the absence of Haitian rule, as much because of the Trinitarios socio-racial statuses, as because of Haitian pro-negritude ideology and abolitionist policy. As Nuñez de Cáceres, the leader of the first if short lived independence from Spain in 1821, later realized "the majority of the Dominican population was mulatto, and many were favorably disposed to the unification with Haiti. To them, the Haitian government promised land, the abolition of taxes, and the liberation of the few remaining slaves."[28]

Indeed, one of Duarte's principal tasks was that of ideologically forging an imagined Dominican nation that would seek its independence from Haitian rule out of heretofore racially heterogeneous masses still arranged in casta-origin socio-racial hierarchies. His solution was the elaboration of Dominicanness based on the conflation of race with nation, as his most famous poetic verse illustrates:

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27 Franklin J. Franco, *Historia de las ideas políticas en la República Dominicana*. Santo Domingo: Editora Nacional, 1981, p. 42.

28 Moya Pons, 1995, p. 123.

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Los blancos, morenos, cobrizos, cruzados,
Marchando serenos unidos, y osados,
La patria salvemos, de viles tiranos
Y al mundo mostremos que somos hermanos.

Whites, blacks, coppery and mixed,
United, calmly and boldly marching
To save the fatherland from vile tyrants
And demonstrate our brotherhood to the world.[29]

The terms "*blancos, morenos, cobrizos, cruzados*" are casta categorizations. The conflation of nation with "race / *raza*" is part and parcel of the white supremacist, patriarchal, phallocratic and masculinist nationalist project organized against Haiti and Haitians. The most nationalist of symbols, the Dominican flag, which Duarte designed, symbolizes this. "Duarte took the Haitian colors [red and blue], arranged them in four alternate squares and placed a white cross in the center to signify the union of the races through Christianity and civilization."[30]

To affirm blackness, therefore, is to bring into question one's Dominicanness. Dominicanness is constructed as "cultural" – that is ethnic or national -- rather than strictly "biological" – that is, racial. Nonetheless, the foundational cultural model, hispanicity, is implicitly racial in its origins. The leading early 20th Century articulator of Dominican identity, Pedro Henríquez Ureña, explained: "What unites and unifies this race, an ideal rather than a real one, is the community of culture, determined primarily by the community of language."[31] Henríquez Ureña was closely associated with José

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29 Juan Pablo Duarte as cited in Franco, 1981, p. 46.

30 Schoenrich, pp. 43-44.

31 Henriquez Ureña, 1978, pp.12-13 in Torres-Saillaint, 1996, p. 47.

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Vasconcelos, the Mexican writer, philosopher, post-revolutionary educator and articulator of "*la raza cósmica*" ideology in support of mestizaje.

If what Dominicans mean by "race/*raza*" is national identity, rather than explicitly biological heritage per se, that national identity is racialized precisely to the degree that language is understood in the Dominican context to denote ancestry, their own and others. An example of this connection lies in the linguistic markers taken to denote Haitianness, markers that were key to the genocidal project under Trujillo, such as the infamous "parsley test."

Dominican lore holds that Kryol-speaking Haitians pronounce the "r" in "*perejil*", the Spanish word for parsley, as "l." During the massacre of 1937, people who were not immediately identifiable as Dominican were asked to say "*perejil*". Those who were deemed to have mispronounced the word were taken to be Haitian, and summarily beaten or butchered. Edwidge Danticat dramatizes the test in The Farming of Bones, set during the 1937 massacre. A group of young Dominican toughs tests the protagonist, Amabelle, witness to and survivor of the massacre.

> "Tell us what this is," one said. "Que diga perejil."
> At that moment I did believe that had I wanted to, I could have said the word properly, calmly, slowly, the way I often asked "Perejil?" of the old Dominican women and their faithful attending granddaughters at the roadside gardens and markets, even though the trill of the *r* and the precision of the *j* was sometimes too burdensome a joining for my tongue. It was the kind of thing that if you were startled in the night, you might forget, but with all my senses calm, I could have said it. But I didn't get my chance. Yves and I were shoved down onto our knees. Our jaws were pried open and parsley stuffed into our mouths. My eyes watering, I chewed and swallowed as quickly as I could, but not nearly as fast as they were forcing the handfuls into my mouth....I told myself that eating the parsley would keep me alive.[32]

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32 Edwidge Danticat, The Farming of Bones, New York: Soho Press,1998, p.193.

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Ultimately "eating the parsley" -- that is, assimilating Dominican culture and language – does not save Amabelle. Her compatriots and her will to survive do.

Interestingly, Dominicans themselves go to great pains to verify the linguistic purity of the Castillian Spanish spoken in the Dominican Republic. Dominican Spanish, particularly the variant spoken in the Cibao region, is popularly reputed to be a linguistic massacring of Castillian, especially in terms of pronunciation, as much by Dominicans themselves as by other Latin Americans. Cibaeños are reputed to "eat their *r*'s", pronouncing them as "*i*" instead, so that "*comer*" becomes "*comei*." Dominican scholars have attempted to interpret this linguistic anomaly as evidence not of the degeneration of pure Castillian, but as its *maintenance*. Balaguer, for example, argues that the physical isolation and social insularity of founding Spanish and (white) creole families in the Cibao region accounts for the retention of colonial era pronunciation and sentence patterns. He writes:

> There abound conclusive proofs among the best Dominican poets and writers of that tendency in the national literature which remains spiritually subordinate to Spain's. Archaisms are more abundant in popular Dominican speech than in any other American country, as Pedro Henríquez Ureña indicated in his book, Spanish in Santo Domingo.33

Indeed, a popular joke recounts:

> *Jesus Cristo era Cibaeño. El decia, `comeis, bebeis y canteis en mi nombre.`*
> ("Jesus Christ was Cibaeño. He'd say `eateth, drinketh and singeth' in my name.")

In this joke, the purity of both Dominican Spanish and Dominican Catholicism are affirmed precisely because of the linguistic distinctiveness of the region.

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33 Joaquin Balaguer, *Discursos: Temas históricos y literarios*, Santo Domingo: Sirvenase, 1977, p.188.

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Foreign observers have likewise remarked on the quality of Dominican Spanish and of Haitian French as an indicator of the racial composition of each. Schoenrich, puts it thus:

> The language of Santo Domingo is Spanish, and the comparative purity with which it is spoken is remarkable when the long period of isolation of the country and the extended duration of Haitian rule are considered. In this particular, Haiti offers a contrast, for though French is the official language the mass of the people speak French Creole, a patois unintelligible to anyone who has not lived in Haiti. The Dominicans do not lisp the "c" as do the Spaniards, and other peculiarities of Spanish spoken in America are manifest, but on the whole the difference between the Dominican's Spanish and the Spaniard's Spanish may be compared to the difference between English as spoken in the United States and as spoken in England.[34]

The anxiety Dominicans and others exhibit over the purity of their language parallels the anxiety over the presence of blackness in their midst, collective and individual, linguistic and bodily. And indeed, it is an anxiety justified to the extent that it is true that Dominican Spanish is heavily laced with linguistic Africanisms,[35] just as Dominican culture generally is marked by the African diaspora.[36] Moreover, the socio-cultural premium placed on the ability to deploy language poetically and easily situates Dominicans in the African diaspora more generally. "As Roger Abrahams says in The Man-of-Words in the West Indies, people in African-American settings often place high value on verbal control and eloquence."[37] But again, that heritage is erased, subsumed or

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34 Schoenrich, p. 172.

35 William M. Mengenny, *Africa en Santo Domingo: Su herencia lingüistica*, Santo Domingo: Museo del Hombre Dominicano,1990.

36 Tejada Ortiz, 1998.

37 Christian Krohn-Hansen, "Masculinity and the Political Among Dominicans: 'The Dominican Tiger,'" in Marit Melhuus and Kristi Anne Stølen, eds. Machos,

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unrecognized. Instead, in its place the Táino linguistic and cultural heritage is affirmed and circulated.

Dominicans are reminded time and again -- by schoolbooks, popular culture, commercial venues, and cultural institutions – that words such as *conuco, bohio, yuca, maiz, cacique, hamaca,* etc. are Táino.[38] And again, the inclusion of Táino words is cast in positive terms as indicative of the linguistic innovativeness of Dominicans. As Balaguer argues:

> Santo Domingo was the country that most enriched the [Spanish] language's trove with indigenous voices in the first years of the Discovery of America. Cuervo cites no less than 40 words originating on the island that were vulgarized by Columbus, by Diego Alvarez Chance, the physicist who accompanied the Admiral on his second voyage, and by the principal chroniclers of the Indies, especially by Fernández de Oviedo, by Las Casas and by Pedro Mártir de Anglería, who incorporated them in the glossary that accompanies the Decades published in Alcalá in 1516. [39]

Here, Balaguer not only makes Dominicans the most authentic Spanish speakers in the Americas, he makes them the most authentic of Caribbean Táinos through reference to their linguistic, if not their actual, mestizaje. Indeed, it is often the most hispanophile Dominican scholars who acclaim indigenous linguistic, archeological and cultural legacies.[40]

Mistresses, Madonnas: Contesting the Power of Latin American Gender Imagery, New York: Verso,1996, p. 117.

38 Cf. Emiliano Tejera, *Palabras indígenas de Santo Domingo*, Santo Domingo: La Nación, 1935.

39 Joaquin Balaguer, 1971, p. 193.

40 Emiliano Tejera, for example, celebrates both linguistic indigenism and Columbian remains in *Los restos de Colón en Santo Domingo* and *Los dos restos de Cristóbal Colón*, Santo Domingo: Editora Vda. García, 1926.

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More recent work has considered the impact of national immigrations and immigrant communities on national identity. Bosch, Hoetink and Inoa for example, have all written on Arab migrations into the Dominican Republic and on the related establishment of a Lebanese Dominican community.[41] Eichen, Lockward and Hoetink all have examined the European Jewish community in Sosua.[42] Dominican-Haitian relations and communities have been written about by Balaguer, Dore Cabral and Sagas.[43]

Work on Dominican cultural forms, especially folklore and religion, has expanded in recent years. Davis, Deive, and Tejada Ortiz each have written extensively on Dominican syncretic religious forms.[44] Balaguer's various writings on Dominican language have recently been repudiated by Megenny's work on Africanisms in Dominican Spanish.[45] Sommer and Cocco de Filipis have written on Dominican literature and national identity, while in music Austerlitz's and Duany's works on Merengue and Pacini-Hernandez's work on Bachata consider two key expressive forms' relationship to

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41 Juan Bosch, *Breve historia de los pueblos arabes*, Santo Domingo: Alfa & Omega, 1996; H. Hoetink, Santo Domingo y el Caribe: Ensayos sobre cultura y sociedad. Santo Domingo: Fundacion Cultural Dominicana, 1994; and Orlando Inoa, "*Los arabes en Santo Domingo*", Estudios Sociales, vol. 24, no. 85, Julio-Septiembre1991, pp. 35-38.

42 Josef David Eichen, Sosua: From Refuge to Paradise, Santiago de los Caballeros: Pontífica Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra, 1995; Lockward, 1994; and H. Hoetink, *Santo Domingo y el Caribe: Ensayos sobre cultura y sociedad*. Santo Domingo: Fundación Cultural Dominicana, 1994.

43 Balaguer, 1990; Carlos Dore Cabral, "*Actividades realizadas y documentas elaborados en el marco de la investigacion en marcha acerca de la presencia Haitiana en la Republica Dominicana: Informe para la Fundacion Ford,*" June 1990; and Sagas 1994, 2000.

44 Martha Ellen Martha Ellen. *La otra ciencia: El vodu dominicano como religion y medicina populares*. Santo Domingo: Editora Universitaria de la Universidad Autonoma de Santo Domingo, 1987; and Tejada Ortiz, 1998.

45 Megenny, 1990.

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Dominican national identity.[46] In terms of sports, Klein and Ruck have been the leading students of baseball and *Dominicanidad* in the Dominican Republic.[47]

Work on political economy and identity has tended to focus on the impact of capitalist neo-colonialism and imperialism on Dominican national identity[48]. More recently, racial identity has been examined by sociologists Fennema and Loewenthal and by British social geographer David Howard.[49]

What little work has been done on gender in the Dominican Republic has concentrated overwhelmingly on Dominican women's labor market insertions and on kinship structures. Contributions to this area have been made by Brown, Finlay, Pessar

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46 Sommer 1983, 1991 and Cocco de Filipis have written on Dominican literature and national identity, while in music Paul Austerlitz, Merengue: Dominican Music and Dominican Identity, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996 on merengue and Pacini-Hernandez, Bachata: A Social History of a Dominican Popular Music, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995 on Bachata.

47 Alan Klein, Sugarball: The American Game, the Dominican Dream, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995 and Rob Ruck, The Tropic Of Baseball: Baseball In The Dominican Republic, Westport, CT: Meckler, 1991.

48 Emilio Betances and Hobart Spaulding, The Dominican Republic Today: Realities and Perspectives – Essays in English and Spanish, New York: Bildner Center for Western Hemisphere Studies, 1996; Juan Bosch, *Composición social dominicana: Historia e interpretación*, Santo Domingo: Editorial Alfa y Omega, 1986; J.F. Calder, The Impact of Intervention: The Dominican Republic During the United States Occupation of 1916-24, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984; Eugenia Georges, The Making of a Transnational Community: Migration, Development and Cultural Change in the Dominican Republic, New York: Columbia University Press, 1992.

49 Meindert Fennema and Troetje Loewenthal, *La construcción de raza y nacion en la Republica Dominicana*, Santo Domingo: Editora Universitaria, Universidad Autonoma de Santo Domingo, 1987; J. Franklin Franco, *Los negros, los mulatos y la nacion Dominicana*, 8th edition, Santo Domingo: Editora Nacional, 1972; Perez Cabral, 1967; Pedro San Miguel, *La isla imaginada: Historia, identidad y utopia en La Espanola*, Santo Domingo: Libreria Trinitaria, 1997; Tolentino Dipp, 1992.

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and Grasmuck, Safa, and most notably, by Ramona Hernandez.[50] Further, there has been no work on Dominican men as such. In all cases, there has been no extended consideration of how Dominicans become gendered subjects. Finally, next to no work has been done on sexuality in the Dominican Republic.[51] There is enormous silence on the constitution of Dominican heterosexuality, which like gender and race, is seemingly assumed to be normative. In most instances, therefore, a unitary Dominican national identity has been assumed, with little, if any, consideration of the regional, religious, gender, sexuality, ethnic and racial complexity of Dominican nationals themselves.

Dominican Transnational Identities:

Scholarship on Dominicans in diaspora has tended to replicate national scholarship in both focus and theoretical paucity. The primary foci have been class, specifically labor market insertion[52]; gender, again generally in terms of labor market experiences[53]; family structures, particularly rates of intermarriage and kinship systems[54];

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50 Susan E. Brown, "Love Unites Them and Hunger Separates Them: Poor Women in the Dominican Republic" in Rayna Reiter, ed. Toward an Anthropolgy of Women, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975, pp.322-332; Barbara Finlay, The Women of Azua: Work and Family in the Dominican Republic, Westport: Praeger/Greenwood, 1990.

51 E. Antonio De Moya and Rafael Garcia, "AIDS and Bisexuality in the Dominican Republic," in Peter Aggleton, ed. Bisexualities and AIDS: International Perspectives, Bristol, PA: Taylor and Francis, 1996, pp. 121-135.

52 Duany, 1994; Eugenia Georges, The Making of a Transnational Community: Migration, Development and Cultural Change in the Dominican Republic, New York: Columbia University Press, 1992; Ramona Hernandez, "Notes on the Incorporation of Dominican Workers into the Labor Market of New York", Punto 7 Review, Vol. 2, No. 1 1989; Sherri Grasmuck and Patricia Pessar, Between Two Islands: Dominican International Migration, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.

53 Ginetta E.B. Candelario and Nancy Lopez, "The Latest Edition of the Welfare Queen Story: Dominican Women in New York City," Phoebe: A Journal of Feminist Theory, Politics and Ethnic Studies, State University of New York College at Oneonta,

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cultural forms and transformations[55]; political identity[56]; and, to a much more limited extent, ethno-racial identity.[57] Nothing has been published yet on transnational Dominican sexualities.

The Dominican – American Dialectic:

There has been a dialectical relationship between Dominican and U.S. representations and understandings of Dominican racial identity. On the one hand, racial identity, ideology and systematizations in the Dominican Republic evolved partially in

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Spring 1996; Nancie González, "Multiple Migratory Experiences of Dominican Women," Anthropology Quarterly, Vol. 49, No. 1, January, 1976; Douglas Gurak and Mary Kritz. "Dominican and Colombian Women in New York City: Household Structure and Employment Patterns," Migration Today 10 (3-4):14-21, 1982; Nancy Lopez, "Dominican Women on Welfare: Labor Market Experience," Paper presented at the Political Science Conference of the City University of New York Graduate School and University Center, April 8, 1994; Pessar & Grasmuck, 1991.

54 Duany, 1994; V. Garrison and C.E. Weiss, "Dominican Family Networks and United States Immigration Policy: A Case Study," International Migration Review, No. 13, 1970; Greta Gilbertson and Douglas T. Gurak, "Household Transitions in the Migration of Dominicans and Colombians to New York," International Migration Review, Center for Migration Studies, Vol. 26, No. 1, Spring 1992, New York, 1992.

55 Adele Bahn and Angela Jaquez, "One Style of Dominican Bridal Shower," in Vernon Boggs, Gerald Handel and Sylvia F. Fava, eds. The Apple Sliced: Sociological Studies in New York City, New York: Praeger, 1984, pp. 131-146; Christopher Dwyer, The Dominican Americans, New York: Chelsea Publishers, 1991; Barbara Fischkin, Muddy Cup: A Dominican Family Comes of Age in America, New York: Scribner,1997; Sherri Grassmuck, "Immigration, Ethnic Stratification, and Native Working Class Discipline: Comparisons of Documented and Undocumented Dominicans," International Migration Review, No. 18, 1984; Glenn Hendricks, The Dominican Diaspora: From the Dominican Republic to New York City Villagers, New York: Teachers College Press, 1974; Silvio Torres-Saillant, "Dominicans as a New York Community: A Social Appraisal," Punto 7 Review: A Journal of Marginal Discourse, Vol. 2, No. 1, (1989): 7-25.

56 Eugenia Georges, "New Immigrants and Political Process: Dominicans in New York," Occasional Paper No. 45, Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, New York University, 1987.

57 Dore Cabral & Itzgohn, 1996; Duany, 1994, 1998; Levitt & Gomez, 1997.

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response to the United States' racial ideologies, their domestic institutionalization and their foreign policy implementations. On the other hand, the United States and U.S. travelers have supported Dominican racial self-representation, despite the schism between it and United States' understandings of race. The key question is: Why? Why would U.S. observers, whether private or governmental, replicate negrophobic and mythico-white-mestizo models of Dominican identity, particularly given the U.S. institutionalization and idealization of hypo-descent? The answer lies in the relationship of the U.S. to Haiti.

After the United States, Haiti was the second nation in the Americas to seek its independence from European colonizers. Haiti was also the first nation in the Americas to abolish slavery, followed by Santo Domingo under its intervention and subsequent colonization. Haiti was and continues to be the only explicitly "Black Republic" in the Americas. Other Caribbean nations that reject a Europe-identified racial identity claim mulatto or mestizo identities or euphemistically "colored" identities, including Cuba[58]

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58 José Martí, for example, articulated the notion of a mestizo and Hispanic America conceptualized in contrast to North America precisely in its miscegenation and Hispanicity. Martí's "Nuestra America" mythologized regionally the racially democratic nature of Latin American societies so that the "process of acquiring national identity [was] largely synonymous with racial integration....Racial tensions, however, survived in Cuba, though they became less acute." Martínez-Alier, 1989, p. 41. Indeed, as Martínez-Alier points out, the very social mechanism through which integration is enacted – marriage and/or reproduction – just as easily indicates the pervasiveness of racist ideology and practices. Similarly, the existence of a distinct Afro-Cuban identity and grouping around which political, economic and social actions have been undertaken mark the boundaries between black, white, and "mestizo" ideology in Cuba. Cf. Aline Helg, Our Rightful Share: The Afro-Cuban Struggle for Equality, 1886-1912, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995 and Robin D. Moore, Nationalizing Blackness: Afrocubanismo and Artistic Revolution in Havana, 1920-1940, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997. The shift from a "mestizo" identity to a "black" identity at the level of state-sanctioned ideology in post-revolutionary, twentieth century Cuba is neither

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and Puerto Rico[59], modeled on *blanqueamiento*. As such, Haiti represented and continues to represent an on-going threat to European and U.S. white supremacy. As Mimi Sheller argues, "the Haytian Fear" influenced European and U.S. economic, social and political policy toward the region and at home throughout the nineteenth century. Those policies both operated within and influenced contemporary U.S.' racial ideologies and constructs.[60]

Similarly, Dash notes that nineteenth century U.S. literary representations of Haiti referenced domestic race relations, particularly the fear that the Haitian example of black liberation and abolition would spread to the United States.[61] That fear, of course, was not unjustified. Word of the Haitian Revolution did in fact reach and inspire Africans throughout the diaspora, including those in the United States, as Winthrop Jordan has

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completely nor uniformly enacted in every day practices of socialization and social reproduction.

59 Cf. José Luis González, Puerto Rico: The Four-Storeyed Country, Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishing, Inc., 1993. González argued that mestizaje-based nationalism erased the foundational role played by Africans and by African cultural forms in the development of the Puerto Rican nation and state. Flores agrees with González in so far as the foundational role of Africans is concerned, but argues against the dismissal of indigenous ancestries. Juan Flores, "The Puerto Rico that José Luis González Built," Divided Borders: Essays on Puerto Rican Identity, Houston: Arte Público Press, 1993. One might also note the masculinist bent of González's construction as well, particularly in his exaltation of Luis Rafael Sánchez as uniquely autochthonous and representative of the national reality.

60 Mimi Sheller, "The 'Haytian Fear': International Narratives and Regional Networks in the Construction of Race," Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association, Toronto, 1997.

61 J. Michael Dash, Haiti and the United States: National Stereotypes and the Literary Imagination, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997.

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argued.[62] U.S. and European travel writers and observers of the nascent and evolving Dominican nation represented Haiti as it's "Other" as much because of U.S. racial identity and ideology, as because of Dominican self-perception. The "non-black" Dominican Republic, therefore, is a useful and willing anti-thesis to Haiti and its explicit black supremacy. Thus, the repeated representations of Haitians as barbaric, savage, violent, ape-like buffoons relative to cultured, refined, progressive Dominicans reflects the writer's concerns of over Haiti and Haitian's in relation to European and the United States' systems of white supremacist liberalism and capitalist imperialism.

Dominicans, then, who might have been considered black by European and U.S. observers were it not for their own colonial antipathy toward Haiti and later, toward Haitians, were endowed with a sort of literary and political honorary whiteness. It is an ethno-racial identity formulation predicated on the physical disappearance of Taino natives, coupled with their literary and iconographic re-inscription, and a concomitant textual and ideological erasure of blackness. The result is an imagined Hispanicized Indian, what I call "mythico-white-mestizo" identity. French travel writers of the nineteenth century, when visiting the Spanish part of then Saint Domingue, noted that there people who seemed obviously of mixed African and Spanish descent considered themselves not mulattos or colored, but "*los blancos de la tierra*", "the whites of the land." Raybaud, the French consul in Haiti, for example wrote a year after Dominican independence from Haiti:

> The double layers of free blood that the conquering race and the last nucleus of the indigenous race were mixing with African blood was so little distinguished after the second generation – the bronzed complexion

62 Winthrop Jordan, White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, New York: Norton and Company, 1977, pp. 380-386.

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> of the Spaniard, the copper complexion of the Indian, and the bistre complexion of the mulatto tended to be confused to such an extent under the influence of a common hygiene and climate – that interested observers, if there had been any, would have often found themselves with a problem in discovering in the faces the secret of a genealogy lost in the savannas and forests. This labor of fusion, which was retarded by neither European immigration, from a moral point of view, nor African immigration, from a physiological point of view, was summed up at the time of the revolution in the following figures: 25,000 whites of pure Spanish stock; 15,000 Africans, who, by being scattered, were not victims of any insurrectionist propaganda and who moreover, felt too proud of the social superiority that daily contact with their masters imparted them over the slaves in the French section to consent to imitate the latter, whom they haughtily called "*los negros*"; finally, 73,000 mestizos who said they were white and who, as they gave no cause for injurious objections regarding themselves, had ended up being considered just that. The separatist element of the French colony [the mulattoes] had thus become the conservative element of the Spanish colony. The vanity that had dug an abyss of hatred between the three classes there had operated for their cohesion here.[63]

According to Moya Pons, "this meant that despite their color, [the whites of the land] were different from the slaves whom they saw as the only blacks of the island."[64] In other words, whiteness in pre-Dominican[65] history is an explicitly achieved (and achievable) status with connotations of social, political and economic privilege.

Moya Pons, Bosch, Torres-Saillaint are several of the Dominican scholars who attribute this self-perception to the historically distinctive material conditions of European colonialists, their slaves and their descendents in the Spanish colony of Santo Domingo. They argue that a series of regionally anomalous events in the political economic history of Santo Domingo account for this distinctive formulation of whiteness. Chief among those anomalies are: 1) the relatively short duration and limited importance

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63 Raybaud as quoted in H. Hoetink, 1982, pp.186-7.

64 Frank Moya Pons, 1996, p. 16.

65 By "pre-Dominican" is meant prior to the formation of the Dominican Republic, that is, prior to the rise of the state.

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of plantation slavery; 2) the massive de-populations caused by white emigration; 3) the immiseration of the remaining white and Creole colonials during the "Devastations"; and 4) the concomitantly heavy reliance upon blacks and mulattos in the armed forces and religious infrastructure. While it is a convincing argument, it is only a partial explanation.

Plantation-based African slavery in the Spanish colony of Santo Domingo began in earnest in 1516 when colonist Gonzalo de Vellosa developed a successful method for processing sugar cane.[66] However, the Spanish crown's imposition of trade restrictions made the industry far less lucrative than it would become in Brazil, and later in Haiti. As a result, the Spanish colonists engaged in contraband trading with smugglers and pirates who frequented and ultimately established outposts on the island's shores. The crown responded from 1605 to 1606 by forcibly depopulating the northern coastal zone towns of Monti Cristi, Puerto Plata and Yaguana, an event known as *Las Devastaciones*, "The Devastations." Colonists' homes and crops were burned, towns were razed and the Creoles, the enslaved and the freedmen alike were forced to reside in cities more easily controlled by the Crown. The Devastation, taken together with pirate Francis Drake's 1585 sacking and plunder of the Capital, lead to a sharp drop in the Spanish colony's European and Creole population. The African and Afro-Creole population, however, remained, and outnumbered the remaining colonials by as much as nine to one.

Those colonials who remained found themselves increasingly impoverished, and therefore unable to sustain either the slave trade or the sugar industry that relied upon it. The seventeenth century came to known as "The Century of Misery" on Hispaniola.

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66 Torres-Sallaint, 1999, p. 6.

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Epidemic illnesses such as small pox combined with economic misfortunes to completely transform the colony's social organization. The material distance between slave and master was so small as to be negligible. At the same time, the numbers of Africans and their descents in the Spanish colony was increased by runaways from the neighboring French colony of Saint Domingue, established by the Treaty of Ryswick in 1697.

By the eighteenth century the two colonies had created an effective division of labor in the production of sugar. French Saint Domingue established itself as a major producer of sugar utilizing plantation-based slavery. Neighboring Spanish Santo Domingo supported the industry indirectly. "Because of the growing demand in Europe for items made from leather, Hispaniola's cattle industry became considerably important."[67] Ironically, Hispaniola's cattle industry also came to support Haiti's sugar industry in that it was Santo Domingo's cattle that fed Haiti's slaves.

Although the cattle industry was reliant upon slave labor, it was a far less labor intensive, and much more autonomous mode of production than that of the sugar plantations. "The uniqueness of the eighteenth-century cattle ranch (*hato ganadero*) lay in the peculiar combination of labor forces: a strikingly unconventional blend of labor performed by free property owners alongside slaves. What evolved was a kind of socioeconomic unit that was both patriarchal and feudal."[68] Moreover, by the time the industry surfaced as the island's principal economic and social base, a large group of freedmen existed. It was from their ranks that soldiers, petty administrators and religious

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67 Cambeira, p. 102.

68 Ibid., p. 116.

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leaders were often drawn. That economic and social unconventionality would influence, some have argued, subsequent Dominican identity formation.

Regional context:

Although the insularity of Caribbean islands is an oft-repeated motif in the literature of the Caribbean, neither the Spanish colony on Hispaniola nor the Dominican Republic were, in fact, insular. Indeed, the repeated motif from the seventeenth century to the present moment is that of incursions, invasions and interventions by competing foreign powers. Hispaniola, and the various nations and states it has housed, have never quite managed political, economic, cultural nor ideological insularity. The racial identity formation of its people, therefore, evolved as much in relation to global conditions – material and ideological – as to domestic. Thus, if the domestic conditions of mythico-white-mestizo identity are those cited above, the international dimension is that of European colonialism, and of U.S. liberalism, Manifest Destiny, and burgeoning imperialism. That is to say, Dominicans act as convenient honorary white front-line in the context of European and U.S. governmental and transnational elite anxiety over black independence and self-rule epitomized by the Haitian Revolution. The implications of black independence and self-rule have varied according to the historical moment and context, but the fact of there being implications has remained constant.

Montague, for example, argues that sensational, distorted and racist depictions of Haiti and of Haitians in travel writings and newspapers during the late eighteenth century and throughout the nineteenth century supported the Manifest Destiny ideologies of U.S. governmental and emergent capitalist imperialists. The rise of an independent Black Republic in the Caribbean threatened U.S. ideological, military and economic interests:

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> The cataclysm that engulfed the French colony in 1791 brought dismay to all parts of the United States. The North had a stake in the preservation of the *status quo* measurable in terms of commerce. Threatened was a plantation system that had operated to the profit of Boston merchants as well as creole masters. The South had no such direct interest involved, but Southern planters naturally took alarm at servile insurrection so close to home. The sympathies of these elements, predominant in the administration, were entirely with the old regime in Saint Domingue.69

Northern U.S. economy was reliant upon continued access to the inexpensive molasses produced in the French colonies. The Southern economy was explicitly built upon black slavery writ large and its ideological justification. As Montague explains it, molasses circulated together with hard currency, rum, and slaves in New England, the British West Indies, the French West Indies and the European circuit. The Haitian Revolution and the concomitant abolition of slavery interfered with that trade and jeopardized incipient U.S. global economic interests and their attendant political interests.

There was conflict among U.S. statesmen over domestic versus international political philosophies and policies. Jefferson, for example, reacted to the Haitian Revolution on the one hand in support of the revolutionary principles of liberty and equality upon which his vision of federalism rested, and on the other in sympathy with the exiled Creole planters with whom he had shared much in common as a Virginia planter and slave owner.[70] It is not for us to examine the intricacies of these interests and counter-interests here. Suffice it to say that the U.S. had as considerable stake in the region during the last two centuries, as it does today.

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69 Montague, pp. 32-33.

70 Ibid., pp. 34-35.

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In the late 18th century and throughout the 19th century the concern of the newly founded United States nation was to limit the European sphere of influence in the Americas, primarily by undermining and removing European colonial rule while expanding the sphere of U.S. influence and neo-colonial dominion under the aegis of the Monroe Doctrine. Thus, the wars of 1848 in Mexico and 1868 in Cuba, and 1898 in Cuba and Puerto Rico to expel the Spanish colonizers were motivated as much in ideological and political defense of the new U.S. republic as by long-term economic interests in the region. (The Caribbean basin comprises the eastern rim of the isthmus through the Panama trade route.)

The Dominican Republic stands out in the region, however, in its ability to retain its "political and economic autonomy and territorial integrity." Ironically, it was precisely the contentions between Spain, France, England and the United States over Dominican territory and governance that forced its independence, sometimes despite the desires of certain pro-annexation sectors within the nation. "The designs of one nation were neutralized by those of others, producing a stalemate."[71] Nonetheless, despite the general failure of foreign powers after the Haitian governance (1822-1844) and the short-lived España Boba period (1861-1865) to re-colonize the nation, the imbrication of the Dominican Republic in the economic, political and ideological web of the region influenced its racial identity formation.

In the mid-nineteenth century United States, there were two representations of Dominican racial composition and identity, each reflecting the political and economic interests of the observer. Whites, whether Northern or Southern, were essentially agreed

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71 Martínez-Fernández, 1994, p.20.

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as to the biological nature of blackness and whiteness. They also generally agreed with the principles of white masculine supremacy. The debate was not over whether white men should rule, but rather over whether their approach to their subjects should be paternalistic (because Blacks were child-like innocents) or domineering (because Blacks were savage, sexually dangerous primitives). These basic principals and ideological stances carried over into discussions of the relationship between Dominican racial identity and U.S. interests in the region.

"White southerners' perception of the Dominican Republic as a struggling nation comprising a lawless, free, dark-skinned population made it difficult for any administration to establish solid diplomatic relations, or even to grant recognition, which was deemed by many the first step toward acquisition."[72] Northerners and annexationists, therefore, argued forcibly that Dominicans were not, in fact, primarily Black. Rather, the nation was principally white, racially, culturally and ideologically. "Not surprisingly, the U.S. Department of State exhibited a continuous preoccupation with the racial composition of the Dominican Republic. Virtually all agents dispatched there were instructed to assess the proportion and numbers of the different racial groups and to comment on the relative strength of the white element."[73] The comparison to Haiti was a useful benchmark.

Similarly, the Spanish Creole elite of Hispaniola traveled to the United States and Europe, read U.S. and European literature, and was well aware of predominant ideological currents. José Núñez de Cáceres' 1821 manifesto of independence from

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72 Ibid., p. 40.

73 Ibid., p. 41.

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Spain reflected not only "many of the principles and the rationale of the liberal Constitution of Cádiz, Spain, issued in 1812," but the U.S. Declaration of Independence of 1776 as well. As Torres-Saillant and Hernández note:

> In the declaration penned by Núñez de Cáceres, the separatists did "declare and solemnly publish" the birth of their new nation as a "free and independent state," thereby absolving the colony of any obligation to the Spanish government; in the north, the signatories of the 1776 declaration stated: "We...solemnly publish and declare...these United Colonies...to be Free and Independent States," thus rendering them "absolved from allegiance to the British Crown." The Dominicans avowed their "full power and faculty to establish the form of government most suited to them, contract alliances, declare war, conclude peace, negotiate commerce agreements, and perform all other transactions and treaties that are the rightful due of free and independent states"...., in defense of which privileges they vowed to sacrifice their "lives, fortune and honor"....Their decree obviously resonates with vocabulary and clauses taken from the text espoused by the American Continental Congress in 1776, whose leaders had asserted their "full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, and to do all other acts and things which independent states may of right do," and they too had pledged "our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor" to protect their prerogatives.[74]

Juan Pablo Duarte himself studied in Europe and traveled to the United States as a young man. The experience informed his nascent liberalism based on individual rights. The Dominican Republic's governmental apparatus was modeled on the U.S. Constitution's division of powers between the Executive, Judicial and Legislative branches. Most telling, however, was the direct relationship between the founding Dominican constitution and the U.S. Constitution.

> The first Constitution proclaimed in November of the same year [1844] was a revised copy of the Haitian Constitution of 1843, which in turn was copied, with some adaptations, from the North American constitution.
>
> The influence of [North] American liberalism on the political independence leadership's generation was so evident that the first paragraphs of the January 16, 1844 "Declaration of the People of the

74 Torres-Saillant and Hernández, 1998, pp. 11-12.

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> Spanish Part of the Island of Hispaniola, Santo Domingo, Pertaining to the Cause of its Separation from the Republic of Haiti" transcribes not only the principals upon which the [North] American Declaration of 1776 is founded, but copies almost verbatim some of its wording.[75]

Alexander Saxton explores at length the connection between foundational white supremacist political and racial ideologies in the evolution of U.S. liberalism.76 Omi & Winant inform us that the U.S. state developed on the principles of the North American Declaration of Independence is an inherently "racial state" predicated on repression and exclusion.[77] Citizenship was explicitly constructed on the basis of young, white, heterosexual, wealthy, Christian masculinity, what Audre Lorde has termed "the mythical norm" of Americanness.[78] At the same time, an assimilationist cultural mythology emphasized the mutability of ethnic (if not racial) diversity in the fashioning of an American nation (epitomized by de Crèvecoeur, Letters From An American Farmer).[79] Its political companion, liberalism, emphasized individualism and individual rights to liberty, what Gunnar Myrdal called "the American Creed", while the practice of everyday

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75 Franklin J. Franco, *Historia de las ideas políticas en la República Dominicana*, Santo Domingo: Editora Nacional, 1981, p. 49.

76 Alexander Saxton, The Rise and Fall of the White Republic, New York: Verso, 1990.

77 Omi and Winant, 1996. See also, Edmund Morgan, American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1975, and Roediger, 1991.

78 Audre Lorde, Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches by Audre Lorde. (Freedom, CA: The Crossing Press, 1984), p. 116.

79 J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, Letters from an American Farmer, New York, E.P. Dutton & Co.,1926.

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life was based on the repression and dehumanization of African Americans and people of color more generally, leading to the "American dilemma."[80]

Duarte's ideology replicated the assimilationist model of liberalism. What is distinctive in the Dominican application of assimilationist liberalism is that the foundational racial ideology is assimilationist as well. Neither his Dominican predecessor, Núñez de Cáceres in his independence manifesto, nor the U.S. Declaration of Independence upon which the Dominican manifestos were modeled, abolished slavery. The very first act of the new Dominican State was a reaffirmation of personal liberties and the abolition of slavery established under Haitian colonization. Lest one attribute higher moral principles to Duarte than might be justified by the historical record, however, it must be remembered that the second Dominican independence took place in a different historical, political and economic context than the first, short-lived period. Duarte and the Trinitarios were engineering an independent state after a twenty-two year period during which abolition and Black self-determination were well established, in legal code and daily practice, under Haitian unification. Dominicans of color, who comprised the mass of the people, demanded assurances of continued liberty in the absence of Haitian unification.[81]

In the U.S., conversely, the preponderant white demographic and ideological supremacy based on hypo-descent helped to sustain the schism between ethnic assimilation and the racial order. In the Dominican Republic, white supremacy based on

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80 Gunnar Myrdal, An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy, New York: Harper, 1948.

81 Recall that Bobadilla made almost immediate demands that the Trinitarios affirm abolition and personal liberty for Dominicans of color.

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blanqueamiento, that is reproductive genocide or biological assimilation (depending on one's political stance), melds with assimilationist liberalism so that race and ethnicity are nearly synonymous terms. Thus, Juan Bosch can argue that Dominican society is a racially democratic one.

Similarly, nineteenth century Dominicans were well aware of Manifest Destiny ideologies. They responded by at once assimilating Manifest Destiny and adapting it to their own socio-historical exigencies. Pedro Franciso Bonó, for example, prominent late nineteenth century thinker and according to Franklin Franco, "the first Dominican social scientist" in a 1884 letter to Gregorio Luperón wrote:

> It is good that the government...begin to think seriously about the destinies that Providence is setting aside for blacks and mulattoes in America. From this point on these destinies are manifest, given the current numbers of this race; and I believe the island of Santo Domingo is called upon to be the nucleus, the model of its exaltation, and its embodiment in this hemisphere. And who better than you will be able to begin to place the first stones, to establish the bases of this grandeur? Who better than you can know just how necessary the white race is for attaining it, but at the same time know the superiority of combinations of this so superior race; and who better than you will be able to fuse, amalgamate, and shape a homogeneous whole out of the wisdom and the ignorance of both families so that, model of tolerance and contention, we might place ourselves in an enviable position in the Universe.[82]

Predating Henriquez-Ureña and Vasconcelos' *la raza cósmica* formulation by several decades, Bonó articulated an explicitly white supremacist model of mestizaje that reflected the internal logic of the foundational Duartian brand of racial and political liberalism. No wonder, then, that when Vasconcelos "proclaimed the advent of the cosmic race to a large mulatto audience in Santo Domingo, he was applauded as though

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82 Pedro Franciso Bonó as quoted in Hoetink, 1982, p. 188.

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he were some kind of messiah."[83] If for nineteenth century North Americans "amalgamation was an abomination," for their contemporary Dominican elite, amalgamation was salvation.

Post-emancipation white North Americans struggled with the conflicting desires to rid themselves of African Americans and the realization that African Americans were vital to the U.S. economy.[84] Nonetheless, because African Americans comprised a relatively small proportion of the population, white North Americans could entertain thoughts of doing away with African Americans, whether via colonization or genocide. In the Dominican context, conversely, people of African descent comprised the vast majority. To remove them through expulsion or genocide would be to destroy the society itself. The solution, therefore, was reproductive genocide, or *blanqueamiento*, the erasure of blackness through sexual relations between lighter and darker individuals. The tension in the Dominican context, therefore, is how to sustain white supremacy while encouraging intimate relations between them or their proxies and people of color. That is, given the centrality of aesthetics in the construction of race and in sexuality, how to at once convince Dominicans that those closer to Whiteness are more beautiful than those who are not and should therefore be sought out as reproductive partners, while enabling those who are closer to whiteness to desire those who are further from whiteness? Desire must be reciprocal even if unbalanced. The solution is the displacement of blackness onto Haitians, who are constructed as ugly by definition, and the aesthetic exultation not

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83 Stepan Leys, p. 148.

84 Marlon Riggs' documentary film Ethnic Notions, for example, notes that U.S.' cultural forms such as nursery rhymes, post cards, and songs indicate an abiding desire to disappear African American children especially.

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of whiteness, but of *lo indio*, the indigenous. *Lo indio* is the middle term, the central point of the racial continuum, the (historically and ideologically) native solution to domestic blackness.

Apparently, Dominicans can continue to think of themselves as white, so long as they do so relative to Haiti and within the confines of the national territory. Once Dominicans leave the island and come to the U.S. mainland, they are to assume a subordinate racial status in relation to Anglo-Americans. It is that subordination that Dominicans often refuse for themselves, if not for others. In other words, Dominicans in the United States find themselves in the awkward position of finding themselves subject to the same sort of negrophobia they impose on Haitians at home. Perhaps this explains, in part, the shock Dominican immigrant's experience upon arriving to the United States. Had not the Americans themselves told Dominicans they were whiter?

Historic Texts

> *The function of History is to create a national consciousness, and this is acquired through an understanding of the past.*[85]

Between 1844 and 1871, the United States sent several commissions to explore the possibility of expanding U.S. economic and military presence in the Dominican territory. The earliest inquiries, however, took place in order to determine whether recognition of the new state should be granted. Having refused to recognize Haiti, due largely to pressure from Southern congressmen and slaveholders (who were occasionally one and the same), U.S. governmental inquiries were explicitly concerned with the racial

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85 Frank Moya Pons, *Historia Dominicana para niños (Cuarto Curso)* [Dominican History for Children (Fourth Grade], Barcelona: Gráficas Manuel Pareja, 1979. Translation my own.

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composition of the Dominican Republic. Vehemently racist Secretary of State John C. Calhoun's concerns enough for him to suggest that "the new Republic [be recognized] as a means of preventing the further spread of negro influence in the West Indies"[86] assuming, of course, that the nation itself was sufficiently white.

> That Dominican statesmen were fully aware of the importance of race and color in the recognition policy of the United States is evident from their attempt to minimize the proportion of the Negro element in their republic. Dr. José Maria Caminero, the Dominican agent to the United States, declared in his note of January 8, 1845 to President Tyler that it had been the "white Dominicans" who had led the uprising against the "oppression and vexations of the negroes of Hayti."[87]

As Logan notes, Caminero's assurances were insufficient in the context of the slave-holding United States. Consequently, investigator John Hogan was specifically charged by Calhoun to ascertain the "aggregate population of the country and the proportions of European, African and mixed races."[88] In his only report on the matter, Hogan emphasized the relative whiteness of the Dominican Republic vis a vis Haiti, which was an explicitly black republic. He assessed the country's population as comprised "of about two hundred and thirty thousand of whom forty thousand are Blacks and over one hundred thousand are whites," the rest being mixed.[89] In Hogan's report Haitian rapacity

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86 Sumner Welles, Naboth's Vineyard: The Dominican Republic, 1844-1924, Vol. 1, Savile Books, 1966, p. 76.

87 Rayford W. Logan, The Diplomatic Relations of the United States with Haiti, 1776-1891, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1941, p. 238.

88 Logan, p. 239.

89 Martínez-Fernández, 1994, p. 41 and Logan, p. 239. Martínez-Fernández notes that contemporary Spanish observer Antonio López Villanueva estimated the population to be roughly half mulattoes, one third black and one eighth white. While Martínez-Fernández credits López Villanueva's assessment with greater accuracy than Hogan's, I would again point to the interests and ideologies of the observer in making his assessment given that there are in fact no "objective" measures of race.

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was, as Caminero had argued, primarily responsible for whatever blackness did exist in the Dominican Republic. That is to say, if Dominicans were less than white, it was due not to affinities between Haitians and Dominicans, but to sexual violence on the part of Haitians.

This explanation is one that resonates through most domestic and foreign accounts of the Haitian occupation and rule. Generally, readers are told that Toussaint, Dessalines or Soulouque themselves lusted after and violated white, Spanish women immediately upon entering the vanquished city. Sumner Welles, for example, wrote:

> On the 27th of January, 1801, Toussaint L'Ouverture entered Santo Domingo at the head of his troops. Picture him as he rode through the narrow streets, followed by his numerous aides-de-camp, decked out with as much gold lace as they could muster, bearing themselves like their leader, with simian self-importance. All of the officers on the staff were powdered and queued like their commanding general, and attempted to ape the expression of pompous determination depicted on the countenance of Toussaint, which in his case his noticeably prognathous jaw rendered easy....After the reading of the proclamation announcing the immediate emancipation of the slaves, Toussaint proceeded with a few companions to pass the members of the feminine sex in review, and the General amused himself for some time by passing from one to the other of the women, prodding with his cane those better favoured [sic] by nature, and indulging in coarse pleasantries revolting to the Spanish women. On the following day, a consignment of female members of the population was sent to Toussaint's headquarters at Boca Nigua.[90]

The racist depiction of Toussaint and his troops is noteworthy on several counts.91 First, Welles explicitly exhorts his readers to draw upon their stock of racial images, particularly those provided by black face minstrelsy as he paints, using familiar racist

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90 Welles, pp. 22-23.

91 An important intervention into this narrativization is C.L.R. James, The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution, New York: Vintage Books, 1963.

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brush strokes, his own image of savage, ape-like, buffoons and dandies who are at once laughable and threatening. Second, echoing a familiar post-Reconstruction theme, he links the emancipation of slaves with the ravaging of white women. Third, the Spanish women are not subjects, but implicitly passive sexual objects.

A few months after Hogan's visit in 1846, during President Polk's term, the matter of Dominican recognition not yet resolved, Navy Commander David D. Porter was sent to once again assess the island and people. "Like Hogan he held the Dominicans to be superior to the Haitians,"[92] although he was less willing than Hogan to assign whiteness to Dominicans. "Porter stated that there were only 5,200 pure whites and 20,000 pure Africans in the Dominican Republic. Porter also estimated populations of 75,000 quadroons, 60,000 light-skinned mulattoes, and 14,000 dark mulattoes."[93]

Three years later, recognition still not granted, the Taylor administration dispatched Benjamin Green as special agent to Dominican Republic to once again access the state of the Republic. Green was fervently anti-Haitian in his reports, and while he noted that "most Dominicans were of mixed blood....he advanced the arguments that most of these mixed-bloods called themselves white and that there was a preponderance of what might be termed a 'white interest.' Some Negroes even called themselves 'white Negroes' or 'Negroes with a white heart.'"[94]

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92 Logan, p. 240.

93 Martínez-Fernández, 1994, p. 42.

94 Logan, p. 247.

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The principle political and economic projects considered were colonization of the Samaná Bay or annexation of the entire country, both for resource extraction and military outposts. Martínez-Fernández notes that:

> A correlation [sic] between the perception of race and the desire to acquire the island emerges from their reports: the more ardently expansionist the reporter, the lighter the racial portrayal of the Dominican people. Significantly, several of these envoys were northern entrepreneurs who established exploitative ventures in the island.[95]

Among the entrepreneurs were William L. Cazneau and Joseph W. Fabens. Together with Cazneau's wife, author Jane MacManus Cazneau, they spent the better part of three decades after Dominican independence from Haiti accumulating land and resource concessions from the Dominican government, developing investment schemes with New York financiers, and lobbying in both the media and U.S. governmental circles in favor of annexation, either total or partial.[96]

Jane MacManus Cazneau, recently credited with having coined the term "Manifest Destiny" before John L. O'Sullivan's now famous editorial, was a prolific writer of national renown. MacManus Cazneau was also a public proponent of Texas Annexation and a facilitator of German immigrant colonization projects in Mexican Texas. She encouraged U.S. territorial and commercial expansion both westward and south in New Yorker, New York Sun, The Democratic Review, New York Tribune, Union, as well as in dozens of books and pamphlets. MacManus Cazneau, was known as

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95 Martínez-Fernández, p. 42.

96 Cf. William Javier Nelson, Almost a Territory: America's Attempt to Annex the Dominican Republic, Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1990; SumnerWelles, Naboth's Vineyard: The Dominican Republic, 1844-1924, Vol. 1, Savile Books, 1966; Melvin M. Knight, The Americans In Santo Domingo, New York: Vanguard Press, 1928; Martínez-Fernández, 1994.

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a "terror with her pen" and, Hudson has recently argued, an influential figure in expansionist United States' circles.[97]

Interestingly, both Southern racists and Northern abolitionists opposed annexation because they perceived the country to be predominantly black. For the racists, the question was one of political, moral, intellectual and physical inferiority. For the abolitionists such as Senator Charles Sumner, an ardent supporter of recognition of Haiti and of the Fourteenth Amendment, and Chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the issue was black sovereignty. Thus, efforts to represent Dominicans as white or nearly white were perceived as not only inaccurate, but also propagandistic. "An abolitionist paper declared on April 8, 1847, that a 'white' Dominican Republic was 'a convenient fiction...fabricated for the purpose of securing some of our destiny-folk a foot-hold in Hayti, that they might play the same game there that has been enacted on a larger theater in Texas.'"[98] That game, of course, was the violent expulsion and subjugation of landed Mexicans by the Texas Rangers and Anglo colonizers.

What is especially interesting about this state of affairs is the political paradox of Dominican racial identity as formulated by nineteenth century U.S. observers. Either Dominicans were white or nearly white, and thus could lose their sovereignty to United States political and economic interests, or they were not white and therefore could remain sovereign, at least officially. Given that whiteness by definition meant moral, political, intellectual and physical superiority, and non-whiteness meant its obverse, the conundrum must be understood in the context of larger U.S. expansionism and

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97 Linda Sybert Hudson, Jane McManus Storm Cazneau (1807-1878): A Biography, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of North Texas, 1999.

98 Logan, pp. 242-243.

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colonialism. In all its other annexation, colonization and expansionist projects – the North American west and southwest, the Philippines, Puerto Rico, Alaska, Hawaii, etc. – it was the non-white status of the inhabitants that justified U.S. imperialism.

The Dominican case is exceptional because of the way its relationship to Haiti was perceived and represented by Dominican and U.S. elite alike. Thus, for example, Dominican pro-annexationists would warn of the threat of Haitian colonization or native black rule as an impetus to U.S. action. In a communication to the U.S. Secretary of State Hamilton Fish, his Dominican counterpart under Báez, Manuel Maria Guatier the Minister for Foreign Affairs wrote:

> The enemies of peace and progress of the country, fearful lest a change be made from this provisional state of affairs which favors so highly their shady projects, have made every effort to overthrow this Government in which they see a menace and a bar to their iniquitous plans. General Gregorio Luperón, a voluntary exile, a man of vindictive spirit and very backward ideas, has declared that the African race shall dominate this Island and that that race shall dominate in this Island and that that race should unite in order to exterminate the other races....In this situation, overcoming natural reluctance brought about by the idea of asking too much, my Government has decided to ask most urgently of Your Excellency's Government that like a powerful and philanthropic sister it may be good enough to assist the Dominican Government in its difficulties.[99]

Guatier's claim is doubly ironic. Luperón was in fact quite willing to erase the African presence from the Island, symbolically and politically, in the pursuit of blanqueamiento. Secondly, Santana, Báez's predecessor and long-time nemesis, had made the same charge against Báez a decade earlier. "Writing [to President Buchanan] on behalf of Santana on April 7, 1859, Cazneau stressed that with [Santana], "the Cabinet, Congress, and the

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99 Manual Maria Guatier to Secretary Fish, July 9, 1869, as cited in Welles, Vol. 1, p.369.

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Courts are filled by white men," in contrast to the manner of a Báez whose party "aims at placing the supreme control in the hands of the negroes."[100]

Sumner's staunch resistance and his ability to marshal substantial public and congressional opinion against the annexationist project forced President Grant to appoint a Commission of Inquiry to visit Santo Domingo early in 1871 in order to access the viability of annexation. The Commission, comprised of Senator Benjamin F. Wade, Andrew D. White, and Samuel G. Howe, together with A.A. Burton and Frederick Douglass as Secretaries, arrived in Santo Domingo on January 16, 1871. They were charged with ascertaining popular support for annexation, the physical, moral and intellectual conditions of the people, and the quality of the land and its resources. Another part of the commissions' task was to assess the racial composition of the country and the power of the white elite, both of which were central to any viable colonization or annexation scheme.

After spending two months in the country, and several weeks in Haiti, the Commissioner's Report concluded, as President Grant informed Congress, "that the interests of our country and of San Domingo alike invite the annexation of that republic."[101] Commission's Assistant Secretary, Frederick R. Douglass[102] who was in favor of annexation, summarized the matter thus:

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100 Torres-Saillant and Hernández, 1998, p. 17. Similar rhetoric was deployed during the 1992 and 1996 presidential election campaigns during which Francisco Peña Gomez was accused by Balaguer and his party of a pro-Haitian, negrophile plot to blacken the country and to concentrate power in black hands.

101 Ulysses S. Grant, "Message of the President of the United States, Communicating the Report of the Commission of Inquiry to the Island of Santo Domingo," April 5, 1871, in Report of the Commission of Inquiry to Santo Domingo, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1871, p. 3.

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> To Mr. Sumner, annexation was a measure to extinguish a coloured nation, and to do so by dishonourable means and for selfish motives. To me it meant the alliance of a weak and defenceless [sic] people, having few or none of the attributes of a nation, torn and rent by internal feuds and unable to maintain order at home or command respect abroad, to a government which would give it peace, stability, prosperity, and civilization....Santo Domingo wanted to come under our government.[103]

In the end, because of more pressing domestic concerns and a changing domestic situation[104] annexation became a dead letter issue.

It is necessary to understand the mutual referentiality of native and foreign, history and literary texts in the discursive formulation and circulation of Dominican ethno-racial identity. U.S. observers and narratives of Dominican racial composition brought with them their own stock of racialized images and figures. In the United States, Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin (1852) established the figure of the tragic mulatto as a central character in the nineteenth century solidification of hypo-descent in the United States.

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102 Douglass' position in favor of annexation is particularly paradoxical in light of his own status as a former slave, and his crusades in favor of the civil and human rights of women and people of color, including his support and defense of Haiti. After serving as American minister in Port-au-Prince, Douglass was appointed by President Harrison to serve in the same capacity in the Dominican Republic, which he did for two years. That he served while Heureaux was President of the Republic is also worth noting.

103 Frederick R. Douglass, The Life and Times of Frederick R. Douglass written by himself. His early life as a slave, his escape from bondage, and his complete history to the present time, including his connection with the anti-slavery movement, Hartford, CT: Park, 1881.

104 Sumner Welles notes that Southern Reconstruction, Northern industrialization, and Western expansion absorbed political energies and economic priorities. At the same time, the completion of the transcontinental railroad reduced "the importance of the isthmian route and [removed] the necessity for a West Indian naval station" which had been the principal argument in favor of colonizing the Samaná Bay Peninsula in the Dominican Republic. Welles, p. 110.

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The literary tragic mulatto figure was originally abolitionist literature's most effective stereotype because it elicited sympathy from white audiences by virtue of perceived physical and moral similarities between the tragic mulatto and themselves. Faced with the melodramatic plight of the "near-white victim of slavery", white audiences were forced to ask themselves whether an institution that took as its victims the children of the dominant race could be tolerated. An expansion upon that theme was introduced during Reconstruction when freed people were portrayed as encroaching upon White domains. In one of the most infamous novels of the Reconstruction Era, The Clansmen,[105] Thomas Dixon introduced the mulatto as defiling element through "sensational caricatures [which] presented [the mulatto] as the despoiler of white womanhood, the corrupter of the white gentleman, and the usurper of political power." [106]

These dual characterizations of the nature of the mulatto – either tragically sympathetic or sexually dangerous in his or her "near" but not quite white status – informed competing characterizations of Dominicans by U.S. observers. Symbolically, the defining arbitrator of the question of Dominican racial status was, of course, Haiti. If Reconstruction and post-Reconstruction Era mulattos in the United States are characterized as defilers of the white supremacist U.S. polity and as potential usurpers of patriarchal prerogative, near-white Dominicans during the same period are ultimately cast as proxies for white supremacist patriarchal prerogatives relative to Haiti. Pro-Annexationist forces had to construct Dominicans as white, for citizenship (or its

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105 The Clansmen was subsequently developed into The Birth of a Nation, the foundational cinematic representation of white supremacist identity in the U.S.

106 Ginetta E.B. Candelario, "Mastering the Form and Deforming the Mastery: The 'Passing' Figure as Minstrel," Unpublished Manuscript, 1993, p. 3.

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potentiality) and whiteness were synonymous in the United States well into the 20th Century.

The "foundational fiction" of the Dominican Republic, Manuel de Jesús Galván's Enriquillo (1882), was written and published in the midst of racialized specifications of citizenship in both the United States and the Dominican Republic, and must be understood in both contexts simultaneously. In the United States, citizenship – and by ideological extension rationality, the ability to self-govern, and morality -- had been understood from 1790 onward as the exclusive provenance of "white persons." Accordingly, those who were non-white – particularly Native Americans and African Americans -- were irrational, incapable of self-governing and immoral, by definition and by law, as Dominguez and López have argued respectively.[107] By 1882, which marked the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act, a three-quarter of a century-long series of limitations to immigration for "non-whites" based on their imagined proximity to blackness had begun.

Dan Caldwell, for example, has noted the textual and visual "negroization of the Chinese stereotype" in U.S. print media during this period.[108] That "negroization" was

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107 Virginia Domíguez, 1986 and Haney López, 1996.

108 Cf. Dan Caldwell, "The Negroization of the Chinese Stereotype in California," The Historical Society of Southern California, Vol. 53, June 1971, pp. 123-132; Stuart Creighton Miller, The Unwelcome Immigrant: The American Image of the Chinese, 1785-1882, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969; and Ronald Takaki, Iron Cages: Race and Culture in 19th Century America, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979. For primary sources see: George B. Benham, "The Asiatic Problem and American Opinion," in Chinese Immigration: Its Social, Moral and Political Effect, Report to the California State Senate of its Special Committee on Chinese Immigration, Sacramento, California, 1878; "On the Mongolian Race of Eastern Asia," Anthropological Review, IV (1866); Sir John Barrow, Travels in China, London 1804; and "The World in California," Hutchings California Magazine, Vol. 1, No. 9, March 1857, pp. 386-7.

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central to the elaboration of the case for excluding Chinese immigrants from the national territory and from citizenship based on their similarity to the foundationally disenfranchised group: African Americans. The visual and textual depictions emphasized the corporeal and behavioral similarities between Chinese immigrants and African Americans. Facial and bodily features were compared as similar, and both were cast as exceedingly libidinous, deceptive, dirty and diseased. Indeed, similar slurs were employed to denote each group.[109] As Alexander Saxton has noted, "the Chinese issue...referred metaphorically to nationwide anxieties over the potential power of free blacks."[110]

Similarly, in the Dominican Republic, the late nineteenth century saw the beginnings of the modern sugar industry, and with it the rise in immigration from neighboring non-Hispanic Caribbean islands and nations. Primarily from the Grand Turks Island, the Windward Islands, the Leeward Islands and from Haiti, these immigrants were perceived as black, and therefore, as potentially destructive to already tenuous and embattled Dominican whiteness. Bryan notes that the Dominican elite, largely responsible for the formulation of a hegemonic national identity that distanced itself from blackness, was caught between the competing interests of domestic racial ideology and expanding foreign capital upon which they relied for national development.

The lessons of the Chinese Exclusion Act were not lost upon the Dominican elite. Hoetink notes that prominent Dominicans made reference to the Act in the elaboration of

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109 Ginetta E.B. Candelario, "From 'Celestial John' to 'Nagur': The Stereotyping of Chinese Immigrants in the Nineteenth Century," Unpublished Manuscript, 1993.

110 Alexander Saxton, The Rise and Fall of the White Republic, New York: Verso, 1990, p. 295.

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anti-Haitian sentiment in the Dominican Republic. The immigration of Haitian workers in the sugar industry was accompanied by a concomitant rise in anti-Haitian editorials and diatribes.

> [I]mportant spiritual and educational leader Francisco X. Billini, head of the Colegio San Luis Gonzaga...directed a strong editorial in his newspaper *La Crónica* on 18 April 1885 against the arrival of even more Haitians. In this editorial he wondered whether the immigration could not be prohibited by using as a basis the same grounds with which Asian immigration was prohibited in the United States.[111]

That there were on two known Chinese men in Santiago as late as 1898[112] makes Billini's awareness of the Chinese Exclusion Act all the more salient as an indicator of elite intercourse with U.S. ideologies and politics. The use of parallel terminology to describe both groups – invading, hordes, dirty, heathen – is notable as well. It is in the context of regional anxiety over the circulation of emancipated black bodies that the nineteenth century erasure of Dominican Africanness and assignation of honorary whiteness must be understood.

By 1912 a law restricting the immigration of "natives of European colonies in America, those of Asia or Africa and of Oceana, as also laborers of any race except Caucasian" was passed.[113] In fairness, one must note that the immigration of Sephardic Jews and Arabs, who were perceived as white in the Dominican context, was also subject to editorial debates. However, while the concerns over Arab and Jewish immigration

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111 Hoetink, 1982, p. 32.

112 Ibid., p. 35.

113 Patrick E. Bryan, "The Question of Labor in the Sugar Industry of the Dominican Republic in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," in Manuel Moreno Fraginals, Frank Moya Pons and Stanley L. Engerman, eds., Between Slavery and Free Labor: The Spanish-Speaking Caribbean in the Nineteenth Century, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985, p. 242.

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were economic, concerns about Haitians and other Caribbean islanders were explicitly racial – particularly around the question of racial "degeneration", ostensibly through the possibility of reproduction. Del Castillo and Murphy note that Caribbean islanders were eventually treated as "white blacks" due to their "superior formal education, strict child rearing practices, discipline in the capitalist system" and their English-language and technical skills.[114] Admittedly, this exceptionalism reflects the domestic socio-economic history of the Dominican Republic. However, it is as reflective of foreign exceptionalism that cast nationals as either honorary whites or "white blacks" as well. Nonetheless, "from both the protection that the [Dominican] government gave to the immigrant groups criticized and the initiatives taken by the government to encourage [white] immigration, one can deduce the ideology that motivated the official attitude: the economic development and progress of the country are stimulated by attracting immigrants with education, preferably well-off, preferably from Europe."[115]

At the same time, by the mid-19th Century, American Indians were being disappeared from the American literary, visual and ideological landscape. Portrayed as a vanquished and extinct people, with a noble if bloody past, American Indians were erased from the present precisely through their literary mythologization, as in for example, James Fenimore Cooper's The Last of the Mohicans (1826), and through their ethnographic display at World's Fairs and national museums. "From 1890 there are many 'last' Indians in literature and art, not to mention the sociological and journalistic

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114 José del Castillo and Martin F. Murphy, "Migration, National Identity and Cultural Policy in the Dominican Republic, " The Journal of Ethnic Studies, Vol. 15, No. 3 (1987): p. 57.

115 Hoetnik, 1982, p. 36.

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narratives of the supposedly inevitable decline of the North American Indians, for which the historical point of reference was the massacre at Wounded Knee at the beginning of that decade."[116] The rise of anthropology was as firmly connected to the domestic racial project against American Indians, as to colonial and imperial projects abroad. In the Caribbean case, both projects converged.

The last quarter of the nineteenth century saw the initiation of United States' interest in the indigenous legacy of the Caribbean islands being considered for annexation and/or colonization. U.S. archeologists and anthropologists were active participants in the indigenous mythicization project, as much domestically and abroad. In the Antilles, the focus was on the "pre-historic" period – that is, prior to 1492 – while in the United States, the concern was with preserving "rapidly disappearing" languages and material culture. As Peter Hulme notes:

> In a country conscious of its own Manifest Destiny, it was inevitable that interest in the history of the coveted islands would arise. Descriptions of the islands were undertaken, as well as of the anatomy of their political systems, their natural resources were enumerated and there were interminable discussions of the strategic positions they occupied. Thus, their indigenous and colonial histories were reconstructed until they were endowed with an adequate image. It was Washington Irving who summarized the history of the Spanish Empire in the Antilles for United States' readers, thanks to his works on Columbus and on the dawn of the colonial period.[117]

Enriquillo is a romantic novel that has functioned in the pedagogical national identity formation[118] as if it were both historiographic and historic. Sommer argues that

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116 Peter Hulme, "*El Encuentro con Anacaona: Frederick Albion Ober y la Historia del Caribe Autócono*," Op.Cit., No. 9, 1997, p. 87.

117 Hulme, p.78.

118 Homi Bhabha, 1990.

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"the Dominican Republic was virtually constituted as a modern nation with the publication of [Enriquillo]."[119] Franklin Franco notes that Enriquillo became required reading in Dominican public schools shortly after it was published and quickly "fulfilled its roles as an ideological bridge that allowed for the rehabilitation of Hispanophilia." At present, the average high school graduate will have been required to read Enriquillo at least four times in the curriculum.[120]

Galván's Enriquillo dramatizes and romanticizes the story of the 16th century Táino cacique named in the title. Enriquillo the text metaphorizes the noble, masculine and indigenous origins of the Dominican nation in the person of Enriquillo the man. In so doing, the romance undertakes egregious erasures and revisions:

> By pushing this story so far back that blacks seem not to figure in Dominican origins, by squinting at the Dominican crowd to create an optical illusion of racial simplicity, Galván manages to write a national identity by erasing....By shifting the historical emphasis from the mass of black slaves to Enriquillo's remnant of a tribe, he offered a conciliating fiction that such distinguished readers as José Martí and Pedro Henríquez Ureña enthusiastically claimed as a model of American writing. From the time Galván published Enriquillo....Dominicans are Indians or mestizos, descendant of Enriquillo's valiant tribesmen and of the Spaniards to whom they were bound by love and respect, whereas the blacks are considered foreigners, Haitians.[121]

Enriquillo, Sommer argues, is not an historic novel, despite its fictionalization of historic occurrences and figures. Rather, it is a romance in that it is structured around the story of predictably star-crossed lovers who manage against all odds to re-unite. The romantic structure of the text metaphorizes the shift from white supremacist patriarchy

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119 Sommer, 1983, pp. xiii-xiv.

120 Franco, 1981, pp. 29-30.

121 Sommer, 1991, pp. 251-252.

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under Spanish colonialism to post-independence creole populism. The fictionalization, in other words, is not simply of the Spanish conquest, indigenous responses and the African past. The contemporary moment is fictionalized as well. Galván, in other words, was a "political story-teller", fashioning a cohesive, contemporary national identity out of a heterogeneous, complex and contradictory past through the model of romantic love textually embodied in the figure of Enriquillo.

"Enriquillo" is both the iconographic representation and the symbol of Dominican identity on several levels. "Enriquillo" is a figure, a symbol of the mythico-white-indigenous Dominican from the moment of his creation via his name. The person who came to be know Enriquillo was born Guarocuya. He was indoctrinated into Christianity, becoming a devout Catholic, and baptized "Enrique." This is a dual imposition, of a foreign cosmology and a foreign name. The assimilation of Hispanic culture "whitens" Enriquillo, both relative to his previous indigenous status and to his African and mulatto contemporaries. This is the first mestizo: "racially" indigenous, "culturally" Hispanic. Importantly, unlike the mestizos who populate other foundational indigenist myths, he is not born of heterosexual relations between Spaniards and Táinos. Instead, Enriquillo is born of white men (Jeroniman Fathers) without the intervening bodies of native women. Dominican nationhood, as symbolized in the iconography of Enriquillo, results from spiritual, military, homoerotic and discursive intercourse between men.

The exclusion of women from the foundational national imaginary is clear precisely in the selection of Enriquillo, rather than, for example, Anacaona, as the indigenist prototype. Anacaona was a Taina cacique and poet whom the Spanish

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considered "a libidinous and shameless woman".[122] She was betrayed and executed by Spanish colonial governor, Ovando. Anacaona's exclusion is at once formative of and responsive to the feminization of the Dominican Republic such an icon implied. Frederick Ober's The Last of the Arawaks (1901) written after both Keim's[123] and Galvan's texts, resurrects Anacaona and has her willingly handing over her people's treasures to two young Yankee explorers. Interestingly, both Galván and Ober frame Black subjects in their narratives as disruptive of the love affair between native peoples and White conqueror/adventurers. The only Blacks in Galván's narrative are the rebellious slaves on Colon's plantation who engage in the first rebellion and are quickly suppressed.

The Blacks in Ober's text are Heureaux and random "dark brutes" in his police state. The narrative desire is to align the civilized native and progressive European elements of the Dominican Republic with the United States' imperial project. Opposition to the U.S. presence is by extension, exemplary of barbarism and degeneracy. Heureaux is "the political `villain' who impedes the country's progress, which would otherwise be attained through a close collaboration with the United States."[124] Ironically, Galván, Ober's literary predecessor, was Heureaux's minister of foreign relations who negotiated with the United States its military use of the Samaná Bay peninsula.[125]

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122 *Enciclopedia Dominicana*, 3rd ed., Santo Domingo: Editora Alfa y Omega, 1988, p. 56.

123 De Bonneville Randolph Keim, Santo Domingo, Pen Pictures and Leaves of Travel, Romance and History, from the Portfolio of a Correspondent in the American Tropics, Philadelphia: Claxton, Remsen & Haffelfinger, 1870.

124 Hulme, p. 8.

125 Moya Pons, 1995, p. 270.

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That both Kiem and Ober chose Anacaona as representative of the nation the United States sought to first annex and later to assume as a financial protectorate, spoke not only to the relationship of the United States to Spain, its imperial antagonist in America, but to the young Dominican state as well. Thus, Galván's selection of Enriquillo, and his subsequent national iconographic status, might be seen as an affirmation of the masculinity – that is, inviolability – of the state and the nation. Indeed, Galván's chronicling of Enriquillo's protracted and successful war against the Spanish as initiated by the attempted rape of his wife by a Spanish *encomendero* could be read as a metaphorical warning against a similar incursion by the United States, particularly in the context of Heureaux's dictatorship. If Anacaona was betrayed and defeated by the Spanish despite her poetic prowess and physical charms, Enriquillo was not. Indeed, as Sommer notes, in his devout Catholicism, his reliance upon the Spanish legal system and his physical appearance, Enriquillo was a better Spaniard than the Spaniards themselves.

The historic facts of African and Black opposition to enslavement and affirmation of humanity, represented for example in the numerous cimarron communities and slave insurrections that begin as soon as slavery is introduced in 1503 --precisely the period Galván erases and re-writes -- are neither circulated nor glorified by the Dominican educational system and its core texts. Indeed, it is precisely in response to the presence of blackness – in the country's midst, at the borders and to the North – and the "absence" of Native Americans that Enriquillo resonates. Dominicans would be neither rebellious Africanized Haitians nor tragic mulattos. Instead, they would be honorary whites relative to Haiti, and willingly acculturated – but not feminized -- Native Americans relative to the North American Native peoples. "Luperón even pointed to the supposedly scientific

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link between men of color and the Indians: the mulattoes, `through the law of climates, [tend] to return to the primitive race of the island.`"[126] Nonetheless, there are during this era popular Dominican responses to the erasure of blackness.

The tension between the popular recognition of African ancestry and the elite formulation of white supremacist indigenism contingent on the erasure of blackness is nowhere more evident than in Juan Antonio Alix's décima, "*El negro tras la oreja*/Black Behind the Ears." Written in 1883, one year after Enriquillo was published, the décima's central refrain continues to circulate in Dominican daily life.[127] Through it, Dominicans are humorously chastised for their "overwhelming" desire to whiten.

El blanco que tuvo abuela	The White who had a grandmother
Tan prieta como el carbón,	As black as coal
Nunca de ella hace mención	Never mentions her
Aunque le peguen candela.	Even if they set fire to him.
Y a la tía Doña Habichuela,	And the aunt *Doña* Bean
Como que era blanca vieja	Because she was an old White lady
De mentarla puede tener	Mentioning her he could have
"el negro tras de la oreja."	"Black behind the ears."

Pre-dating Freud by several decades, Alix (1833-1918) implies that the obsessive referencing of a White past only highlights the presence of Blackness in the present. The popularity and wide public dissemination of Alix's décimas would indicate their extensive influence, while their content, tone and colloquialisms reflect the community at large. Alix was well known in Santiango, his hometown, and his work enjoyed both national and local exposure. "His innumerable productions were distributed in flyers and

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126 Hoetink, p. 188.

127 The resonance of the expression in signifying the dilemma of Dominican racial identity, particularly in relationship to U.S. models of hypo-descent is exemplified in its use, for example, by Julia Alvarez as the title for an article published in Essence, February 1993.

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in almost all the country's newspapers, from his youth to his later days." Indeed, he often used his décimas as currency, trading them for goods in local markets and stores.[128]

Like Galvan, Alix was born and experienced his childhood under the Haitian occupation. That both texts were published during the Heureaux dictatorship and in the midst of the transition into a modern plantation economy bears mentioning as well. Alix and Galvan both were supportive of Heureaux, the former expressing his appreciation for the dictator in several décimas and the later acting as the dictator's Foreign Minister. Yet, despite his recognition and affirmation of African ancestry among Dominicans, like Galvan's Enriquillo, several of Alix's décimas reflect the consolidation of Dominican nationalism based on anti-Haitianism. For example, in "February 27th" the day of Dominican independence from Haiti, written in 1884, his depiction of black Haitians and the atrocities of the occupation are nothing short of racist:

Los cafres de grande boca	The big-mouthed Kaffirs
Y de bembes de soleta,	With their patched thick lips
Cogían los niños de teta	Would take children from the tit
Y al aire los arrojaban	And fling them into the air
Y al caer los aparaban	And on falling they would land
En aguda bayoneta.	On sharpened bayonet.
Esos diablos infernales	Those infernal devils
El año cinco quemaron	In the fifth year burned
A Santiago, y degollaron	Santiago, and they slaughtered
Miles sere racionales.	Thousands of rational beings.
Todos fueron ahorcados,	All were hung
Y otros asesinados	And others were assassinated
De la Iglesia en el altar,	At the Church altar,
Sin dejarlos terminar	Not letting them finish
La misa, esos condenados!	The mass, those damned ones!
Los infames degollaban	The infamous slaughtered
A los de familia padres,	Fathers of families,

128 Alix, Juan Antonio, Décimas inéditas, with a prologue by Emilio Rodriguez Demorizi, Santo Domingo: Impresora Moreno, 1966, p. 8.

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Y en presencia de las madres	And before the mothers,
A sus hijas las violaban;	They raped the daughters;
A nadie pues, respetaban,	So they respected no one,
En estos pueblos cristianos	Of these Christian peoples,
Pero hoy, dominicanos	But today, Dominicans
Debemos todos decir:	We should all say:
Morir, cien veces morir!	Death, a thousand times Death!
Antes que ser haitianos!	Rather than Haitian be!

Written just few months after "Black Behind the Ears", this décima contains all the ideological markings of Dominicanization based on negrophobia, white supremacy and anti-haitianism. Haitians are textually depicted in gross caricature as embodying uncivilized hyper-masculinity: savage, animalistic, sexually violent and heathen. Dominicans are, by contrast, are respectable fathers and mothers, virginal daughters, Hispanic, Catholic and White.

Conclusion:

> *On October 12th of every year the entire country celebrates different cultural, religious, sports and social events organized by both public and private institutions to commemorate the "Discovery of America", subsequently baptized as "The Day of the Race" and today labeled more subtly but still maliciously, "The Day of Hispanicity."*[129]

The establishment of the Dominican State and the parameters of citizenship within that state relied upon the disavowal of all things Haitian. Leading Dominican independence leaders, intellectuals and nationalists defined *Dominicanidad* as White, Hispanic and Catholic because Haiti was defining itself as Black, African and spiritually syncretic. The period of Haitian colonization and unification has been cast as a figurative and literal "dark era" in Dominican history. This formulation has equated

129 Tejada Ortiz, 1998, p. 240.

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Dominicanhood with anti-Haitianhood. Support for this paradigm of Dominican identity came from several hemispheric sectors, the most politically influential of which was the United States. We turn next to an exploration of the United States' role in the development of official Dominican identity formation.

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Chapter Three
"The Whites of the Land": Traveling Narratives of Dominican Racial Identification

> *To respect the wholeness of the past means to leave it open to inquiry, to refuse to neutralize the contingencies of history by transforming them into the safe zone of myth.*[1]
>
> *But regardless of the research resources that will become available to the scholar, ultimately the most decisive tool in determining success in the enterprise of reconstruction will necessarily be the scholar's own eyes. For one's way of seeing derives from a particular education. Perception is learned.*[2]

This chapter presents and analyzes the representational and narrative strategies of foreign travel writers visiting Santo Domingo from the nineteenth century to the twentieth centuries, including recent travel writing and tourist guides. Chief among those are the works of M.L. Moreau de Saint-Mery (1796), W.S. Courtney (1860), De Bonneville Randolph Keim (1870), Samuel Hazard (1873), William D. Boyce (1914), Harry L. Foster (1929), and Arthur J. Burkes (1932). The Trujillo era, and its legacy in the later half of the twentieth century are considered separately in Chapter 4. Given the rise and reach of the World Wide Web, the present moment is considered through a comparison of state-developed tourism propaganda on the Internet and U.S. tourist guides. Throughout, the development of Dominican racial ideology development is

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1 David K. Herzberger, Narrating the Past: Fiction and Historiography in Postwar Spain, Durham: Duke University Press, 1995.

2 Torres-Saillaint, 1999, p. 56.

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situated in the contemporary political-economic context its related cultural-ideological framework.

In terms of World Wide Web sites, I examine the Spanish-language State Tourism Secretary, World Wide Web Site, http://www.domincana.com.do, and the English-language "Dominican Republic Press Kit" at the Web Site put together by the National Hotel and Restaurant Association, www.domrep-hotels.com.do/PressKit/dr-profile.html. These are the two principal Dominican tourism web sites. They are treated as exemplary of state-developed and state-sanctioned commercialized pedagogical representations of Dominican ethno-racial identity and culture.

The structure of the narrative presented in each of these media, and the impact of prevailing theories and ideologies of race upon the narrative, and of the narrative upon Dominican race paradigms, is examined here. My argument is that foreign narrators replicate and reproduce Dominican nationalist narratives that emphasize the Hispanicity and relative whiteness of Dominicans and the Dominican Republic, especially in relationship to Haiti and Haitians. That ideological collaboration has been motivated at different historical moments by specific political and economic exigencies, contexts and interests. None-the-less, it has been fairly consistent in its presence.

European and U.S. travel writers over the past two hundred years have colluded in the representation of Dominicans and the Dominican Republic as an essentially white, or at worst, mestizo nation, with a minimal degree of "pure blackness" such as exists in Haiti. But have they colluded in the hyper-masculinization of Dominicanness? Have they, instead, feminized the Dominican nation, following thus the more typical pattern of

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colonial and imperial imaginaries? Or, has the eroticization of Dominicanness fluctuated with the political and economic exigencies of the given historical moment?

Travel and Tourism

> *Tourism has depended on presumptions about masculinity and femininity. Often women have been set up as the quintessence of the exotic. To many men, women are something to be experienced. Women don't have experiences of their own. If the women are of a different culture, the male tourist feels he has entered a region where he can shed civilization's constraints, where he is freed from standards of behavior imposed by respectable women at home.*[3]

The narratives of early travel writers and contemporary tour books alike follow the classic pattern. The history of the Dominican Republic originates with the Táino peoples, about whom a fair amount is known through archeological and anthropological materials. The "discovery" or the "encounter" between Columbus and these "classic Táinos", depending on the ideological stance of the writer, is explored next. Inevitably, Columbus' representation of the Táinos as a peaceful, simple people is reiterated. African slavery is mentioned briefly and in the most superficial of terms, before the various intrigues and political machinations between the French buccaneers and later colonialists in the western part of the island and the Spanish colonialists in the eastern are summarized.

The willingness of a country to make tourism one of its major industries and source of foreign exchange indicates its compliance with international rules of law.

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[3] Cyntia Enloe, Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics, Berkeley: University of California Press,1989, p. 30.

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Political stability, local congeniality, and the safety of the tourist, especially the single woman traveler, are key selling points. These are all contingent upon a certain amount of domestic repression of challenges to the state, for example strikes, military *coups d' etat*, electoral conflicts, etc. At the same time, the very poverty of a nation, while on the one hand comprising the material context of many challenges to the state, on the other hand makes the country attractive, "for to be a poor society in the late twentieth century is to be 'unspoilt'."[4]

In the Dominican Republic, for example, eco-tourism has undergone an "explosion...in the interior of the country, focusing on hiking, biking and rafting through the Dominican Alps."[5] Tour books note that "Although parts of the country have been developed for the mass tourist market, much remains untouched, unspoiled, and virtually unvisited."[6] That is, virgin territory is still available in the Americas.

The development of the tourist sector began under the Trujillo regime, and his ideological fingerprints are evident in the industry's present rhetoric and strategy. Its present dominance in the Dominican economy is exemplified by the mid-1980s sale of Gulf and Western's former sugar production land holdings in La Romana to the Fanjul brother's for development as a tourism Mecca. Tourism has been the leading economic development strategy and the primary earner of foreign currency in the Dominican

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[4] Enloe, p. 31.

[5] "Dominican Republic Press Kit," Dominican Republic On-line, http://www.domrep-hotels.com.do/PressKit/dr-profile.html.

[6] Harry Pariser, Explore the Dominican Republic, 3rd Edition, Edison, NJ: Hunter Publishing, Inc., 1998.

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Republic since 1984. Today, "the country has the largest hotel plant in the Caribbean", accommodating over 2.5 million visitors annually. [7] In 1997, 445,000 of those tourists were from the United States.[8] Presently, nary a week passes that a New York Times article or a lecture by the Dominican Ambassador to the U.S. does not extol the "Economic Climate and Investment Opportunities in the Dominican Republic."[9]

The extensive influence of travel writing, particularly in the nineteenth century is evident in its use as a primary source by historians, both contemporary and modern. Moreau de Saint-Méry's travel writings about both the United States and Santo Domingo, for example, were and are widely cited. Similarly, Samuel Hazard's text is referenced in nearly every history of the Dominican Republic. The political affiliations, ideologies and contexts within which these travelers were writing is usually unremarked. Both Moreau de Saint-Méry and Hazard write from an explicitly pro-annexationist agenda. Moreau de Saint-Méry, for example, details "six reasons for France to possess the entire island."[10] If this is not born in mind, using his work as a source of data replicates (unawares?) the propagandist nature of his text.

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[7] "Dominican Republic Press Kit," Dominican Republic On-line, http://www.domrep-hotels.com.do/PressKit/dr-profile.html.

[8] Business Wire, "Dominican Republic Reports Increase in Tourism from U.S.", Santo Domingo, RD: March 9, 1999.

[9] Honorable Bernardo Vega, Ambassador of the Dominican Republic to the United States, "Economic Climate and Investment Opportunities in the Dominican Republic", The Americas Society, 680 Park Avenue (at 68th St), New York City, in association with the Council of the Americas and the Dominican-American Chamber of Commerce, Thursday May 13, 1999.

[10] Moreau de Saint-Méry, p. 432. These are improved defense, naval security in times of war, increase subsistence capacity, population increase, improved agriculture, and increased commerce. See pp. 433-471.

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Of course, a distinction must be drawn between travel writing and tourist guides. Those differences are primarily due to the larger, global political-economic moment of each genre. All the same, within those given historical contexts, both travel writing and tourism literature function as an ethnographic depiction of a land and its people for consumption by foreigners -- individual, governmental and corporate – who are in an economic, political and ideological position to do so. Travel writing as a genre is explicitly highly individualistic. It arose and operated in tandem with colonialism, and although usually it was not affiliated with any given commercial venture or organization, there are some exceptions, as will be explored below. Tourism literature, conversely, arose and operates in the context of neo-imperialism, and is explicitly intended to promote the economic sector it represents. While foreign travel guide writers presumably write from the position of impersonal objectivity, in writing the historical background of their chosen sites they rely on both state tourism boards and existing references. Accordingly, it is likely that they follow the "master narrative" to some degree

The pre-eminent travel writing pertaining to the Dominican Republic is M.L. Moreau de Saint-Méry's A Topographical and Political Description of the Spanish Part of Santo Domingo[11] (1796). Moreau de Saint-Méry was a Martinique-born French creole. Educated in Paris as a lawyer and subsequently appointed as a lawyer in French St. Domingo, Moreau de Saint-Méry collected and codified French West Indian laws. In the course of doing so, he traveled to St. Domingo, Martinique, Guadeloupe and St. Lucia. He returned to Paris and published from 1784 to 1790 a six volume collection of laws. He also became a member of the Musée de Paris, and an accepted member of the

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[11] Moreau de Saint-Méry.

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intellectual elite. With the outbreak of the French Revolution, and his ardent support of it, Moreau de Saint-Méry's fortunes rose and fell, and he subsequently immigrated to Philadelphia. There he ultimately opened a small book store and print shop, from which he published his two volume travelogue.[12]

After presenting a brief history of the island from the point at which the French presence became relevant (1630 to 1777 in his estimation) Saint-Méry proceeds to describe the island's topography and people. Interestingly, he expends a disproportionate share of the text to describe Spanish women, usually negatively. In his account, they are fat, poorly coifed, lacking in fashion sense, uninspired cooks, tobacco-chewing, ugly, falsely modest, promiscuous and prolific breeders. Spanish men are lazy, siesta-loving, syphilitic braggarts ill-suited to the proper husbanding the land and the women require, as their state of near-abandonment reflects. In short, the entire condition is one of backwardsness and decay among these white Spaniards.[13]

Moreau de Saint-Méry states that the population of the Spanish part is comprised of whites, freedmen and women, and slaves. In his estimation, whites outnumber free people of color, who in turn outnumber the slaves. He attributes the large population of free people of color to the liberal manumission policies encoded in Spanish law and to the weakness of Spanish masters for their slave concubines. It is that weakness, he argues, that leads freedwomen into "infamous commerce", that is prostitution. Moreau de

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[12] For a more extended biography, see Kenneth Roberts and Anna M. Roberts, translators and editors, Moreau de St. Méry's American Journey (1793-1798), Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1947.

[13] Moreau de Saint-Méry, pp. 83-92.

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Saint-Méry alludes to a connection between liberal sexual relations, renumerative or otherwise, and race relations overall. Immediately following his commentary on prostitution he writes:

> Color prejudice, so powerful in other nations where barriers between whites and freedmen or their descendents have been established hardly exists in the Spanish part. That is why the Spanish laws in the Indies regarding freedmen have absolutely fallen into disuse...[14]

Ironically, having stated this, he then lists the many limitations to freedmen and women, in their majority proscriptions against participation in certain professions, use of bodily adornment, intermarriage, and civil and military employment if "the color of [an individual's] skin still indicates his origin." Still, he asserts that in part because Spaniards themselves are mestizo and because material conditions create a situation in which a slave's "luck will always be analogous to his master's, as a result of which they are companions than slaves" racial animosity is far more limited than in other slave-holding societies.[15]

Interestingly, Moreau de Saint-Méry is much less generous in his assessment of claims to indigenous ancestry by residents of the Spanish part. He writes:

> If we could believe some individuals of the Spanish part, we would have to add to the three classes into which this population is divided a fourth class that would be very interesting due to the long series of misfortunes which it recalls. I refer to certain Creoles (really a small number) who have hair similar to that of the Indians, that is, long, straight, and very black, who claim to be descendents of the primitive natives of the island. They give great importance to that ancestry, although denied by

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14 Ibid., p. 92.

15 Ibid., p. 94.

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> the historical facts that prove that that race of men was completely exterminated.[16]

This paragraph is informative on several levels. First, as an historical document, it informs us that the notion an indigenous ancestry was claimed by creoles as early as the 1790s. Thus, subsequent nineteenth century mythico-indigenism had earlier antecedents upon which to draw. Second, his notation of hair as bodily sign of indigenous ancestry historicizes its importance in the construction of mythico-indigenous racial identity, to which we will return in Chapter Four. It is notable that Moreau de Saint-Méry's skepticism regarding the survival of "purely" indigenous traits is included in this translation given that it was commissioned during the Trujillo regime. And finally, Moreau de Saint-Méry's overall characterization of the Spanish part of the island and its people (including his principle focus on Spanish creole women) is explicitly influenced by his pro-French perspective.

His political agenda is French dominion over the entire island, and the extension of the French empire generally. Accordingly, the emphasis in his analysis is untapped potential. The land is rich and ripe for development, as are its women. Though three times as large as the French part, it is barely one-tenth as productive. This is due in large measure to deism, laziness and misguided liberal intercourse (social and sexual) with slaves and freed people. Although it was researched and written prior to the Haitian Revolution, Moreau de Saint-Méry's text was published after it. Thus, he writes in his prologue that it was written "in a manner as distant as possible from all that the French

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[16] Ibid., p. 95.

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Revolution could have produced."[17] That is, Moreau de Saint-Méry's critique was intended to support French colonial designs, not Haitian Revolution and expansionism.

Nearly one hundred years later, The Gold Fields of Santo Domingo (1860), written by W.S. Courtney, was published. The New York Herald's editor James Gordon Bennet was in favor of annexation and had frequently published the pro-annexationist editorials and propaganda penned by Jane McManus Cazneau, William Cazneau's wife.[18] Courtney, following the model developed by McManus Cazneau's letters to the New York Herald, depicts the island as fecund, virginal and passively awaiting U.S. husbanding and fertilization. Santo Domingo is a new "El dorado," unexploited and ripe for U.S. intervention. Dominicans themselves were docile, polite and utterly unmotivated. Courtney found it "scarcely credible that such vast wealth, and especially mineral wealth, should have lain there so easily attainable, for so many years and almost within the suburbs of our great commercial cities, without exciting at least the cupidity, if not the enterprise of the Yankee."[19] The timing of Courtney's panegyric, however, was unfortunate for the would be entrepeneurial colonizers and annexationists. Santo Domingo was re-annexed by Spain and the U.S. Civil War broke out a year after The Gold Fields of Santo Domingo was published and the matter was tabled once again.

By 1865, Dominicans once again declared their independence from Spain, and once the Civil War was over, the ideological terrain was once again amenable to colonization and annexation schemes. De Bonneville Randolph Keim's Santo Domingo.

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17 Ibid., p. 5.

18 Nelson, pp. 61, 75.

19 Courtney in Torres-Saillant and Hernández, 1998, p. 18.

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Pen Pictures and Leaves of Travel, Romance and History, from the Portfolio of a Correspondent in the American Tropics (1870) was commissioned by his editor at the New York Herald[20] to gather information in support of President Grant's annexionationist agenda. Keim includes in his book "large chunks of romanticized history, among those the figure of Anacaona, based largely on Washington Irving's depiction [as the archetypical victim of Spanish brutality]...."[21] If Hulme is surprised that Keim dedicates a fourth of his text to the story of the Spanish colonial contact and conquest of the native peoples of "San Domingo", it is because the interplay between U.S. and Dominican narratives, ideologies and histories is not considered. As Nelson notes, "Keim was instructed to send Bennet proannexation materials and letters. The letters, to be published in the New York Herald, were expected to create a public sentiment friendly to U.S. expansion in the Caribbean."[22]

In Keim's narrative the Dominican Republic is a worthy neo-colonial subject because Dominicans are white or nearly white or honorary whites relative to Haiti. Regarding Dominican President Báez, who was the son of a white merchant and a black slave woman,[23] "Keim informed his readers that [Dominican President] Báez had an `off

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20 Although annexation never took place, the New York Herald continued to favor an active United States role the governance of the Dominican Republic as late as 1899 when it called for military intervention. Cf. Hoetnik, 1982, p. 93.

21 Hulme, p. 88.

22 Nelson, p. 75.

23 Martínez-Fernández, 1994, fn. 106, p. 249 and Logan, p. 247.

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color' complexion with a 'brunette face' and had a 'very agreeable expression.'"[24] Second, they are appropriate subjects because, although almost white, they are not quite white, and thus by definition colonizable.

In Santo Domingo, Past and Present: With a Glance at Hayti (1873) Samuel Hazard, another pro-annexation journalist, accompanied the United States Commission in 1871, the connection between travel writing and the imperial project is clear. Hazard is implicit in his connection to pro-annexationist elements when he tells the reader that he traveled on the steamer *Tybee*, which was owned by Spofford, Tileston & Company, a New York investment company of which Faben was an agent and which sponsored junkets to the Dominican Republic.[25] Hazard admits in his introduction that he has "freely" used his references, "at times even quoting their very language." And indeed, Hazard quotes entire sections of the Commission's Report without citation.[26] Given that the Commissioners Report concluded that annexation was favorable, the propagandist nature of Hazard's account, particularly because it is written in travelogue form and without proper citations, is evident.

Following Keim, Hazard describes Báez thus:

> President Báez is a courtly, pleasant man, of medium height and agreeable appearance. He is just fifty-seven years of age, and would never

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[24] Nelson, p. 75.

[25] Nelson, pp. 70-74.

[26] For example, Hazard quotes verbatim the sections on "The Conditions of the People", "Population", and "Agricultural Products" among others. He also provides anecdotes illustrating the Commissioners findings that "the Dominican people are not averse to work when certain of reasonable reward," are supportive of annexation, and that insurrections and anti-annexation feelings are the work of foreign Jews and exiled political leaders. Hazard, 1873.

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> be taken for other than a Spaniard were it not that his hair, as he turns his head, shows just a little of the character of the African. He speaks French as well as he does Spanish, but English only tolerably well. He seems perfectly frank. With the easy air and manner of a thorough man of the world, he impresses me as a perfectly upright man, and that seems to be generally the impression made....The portraits circulated representing him as a black man are utterly false.[27]

Interestingly, Keim at once notes the presence of African ancestry, and denies Báez's blackness, even as he admits "in some parts of the South he would have been placed on a par with the field labourer of the plantation."[28] Pro-Annexation Dominicans, it seems, are the exception to the one-drop-of-blood rule. Similarly, the Dominican people in general are presented as "of a mixed race, much nearer white than black." Although Hazard makes several references to black or colored Dominicans, he devotes equal attention and more emphasis to white Dominicans.

Haitians, conversely, are described as "piccaninnies", "uncles and mammies," at once "quiet, docile, and peaceful" and "brutish." Hazard laments the loss of French colonial rule, for "now, with these semi-barbarians, [Haiti] has been for years retrograding in civilisation and improvement."[29] The land is under developed and overgrown, the houses are "of the most ordinary kind" and the nation is overcrowded. In these metaphors Hazard alludes to the stereotype of wanton black hyper-sexuality. Of course, references to "the sound of the tum-tum" and to "Vaudoux" are made as well.[30]

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27 Ibid., p. 215.

28 Ibid., p. 249.

29 Ibid., p. 398.

30 Ibid., pp. 459, 111.

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The comparative and at times anxious glance at Haiti, is in fact, a fairly sustained one throughout the text, both explicitly and implicitly. He writes:

> The great majority [of Dominicans], especially along the coast, are neither pure black nor pure white; they are mixed in every conceivable degree. In some parts of the interior considerable numbers of the white race are to be found, and generally in the mixed race the white blood predominates. The Dominican people differ widely in this particular from the Haytians, among whom the black race is in complete ascendancy. The cultivated and educated, such as the President, members of his Cabinet, senators, judges, and local magistrates, compare well with the same classes in other countries, and the uneducated appear to equal to the same class in any country with which we are acquainted. They seem to be practically destitute of prejudice of class, race, or colour. In their intercourse with each other and with strangers, they are courteous in manner, respectful and polite. In all their relations with them the Commissioners found them kind and hospitable.[31]

Relatively speaking, then, Dominicans are progressive, civilized, capable of political maturity and supportive of white supremacy. Alternatively, the Dominican Republic is a worthy neo-colony because Dominicans are the ancestors of a noble – but dead and therefore not threatening -- people whose cultural and racial legacy positions them in opposition to Spanish imperialism. It is a difficult balance to strike.

The mutually supportive and referential tropes of race and gender are employed to negotiate the potential contradictions between the sort of passivity and congeniality required for effective annexation and U.S. imperialism, and the intelligence, willingness to work and love of democracy that makes them sufficiently civilized to appease U.S. racists and Reconstructionists alike, particularly in the aftermath of the U.S. Civil War. "[B]oth Manifest Destiny and the Monroe Doctrine were invoked, but, more specifically, the natural resources of the republic and the commercial possibilities were temptingly

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[31] Ibid., p. 485.

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portrayed."[32] Throughout his narrative, the leitmotif is that of untapped potential expressed in racialized and gendered metaphors.

> As regards the future, this question of population is a very satisfactory one, if St. Domingo should become allied to any strong Government; for five years' emigration would entirely change its character, as has been the case in California.
>
> It has been the fashion among some of our politicians to urge the purchase of Cuba, even at the price of one hundred millions of dollars, and it has a large and extensively mixed population, with all their habits, ideas, and customs fully established, with still a larger number of slaves and coolies.
>
> But here [in Santo Doming] there is an almost virgin island, more desirable in every way, with a free, limited, and simple people, who have no particularly fixed ideas, or customs, that would not readily assimilate to those of the new-comers. One-tenth of the above-named sum, expended in improving the means of communication, in exploring and seeking information of its resources, with the change that American machinery and enterprise, accompanying emigration into the island, would bring, would in a few years give us an island equally valuable as Cuba, and aptly illustrate the fact that our institutions and civilization are adapted to any climate and to any people.[33]

A familiar colonialist discursive move is the equation of coveted territories with "virgin" female bodies and their people with children. That the project is one of white colonization is the service of Manifest Destiny is clear by the reference to California, which was made a state in 1850 via extensive Anglo colonization during the Mexican-American War of 1848 and the California Gold Rush. The role of military and vigilante violence in the expulsion and subjugation of Mexican *californios* in the establishment of California[34] underscores Hazard's emphasis on the passive, congenial, and hospitable nature of Dominicans. The people, like women (who are by definition childlike and

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32 Montague, p. 108.

33 Ibid., pp. 486-487.

34 Cf. Acuña, Chapter 5.

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unformed), are malleable and open to the invaders who will "cultivate" them as well as the land with "intelligence, industry, and enterprise." The emphasis on the "depopulated" nature of the land highlights the call to (re)productive emigration.

Here again, the contrast to Haiti is seminal, both literally and figuratively. Haiti is black, over-populated, and ugly in land and people. Dominicans are *not black*, under-populated, and attractive if "dusky." Of course, several anecdotes serve to assure readers that there are established pockets of "pure white people...of a superior nature" that would easily prove hospitable to Anglo immigration, particularly in the Cibao region. The "unmistakable" whiteness of Moca, for example, is epitomized both by the town's architecture and infrastructure and by the presence of "the first really beautiful women" before whom some of Hazard's party prostrated themselves. This is key, for U.S. anti-miscegenation sentiments, if not practices, ran deep.

The land is "fertile" and "virgin," awaiting the technologically advanced (that is, racially superior) husbanding of U.S. emigrants: "though to-day impoverished and a beggar, yet she will prove, under proper care, such a precious jewel to the power that may be induced to take her under its protection, as many kings would be glad to place in their crowns."[35] Thus, the sexualized language of the imperial project overlaps with the racial language of its concomitant white supremacy. Dominican literary indigenism as exemplified by Enriquillo and its role in the formation of Dominican racial identity, therefore, must be understood in that context as much as in relationship to Haiti and the larger indigenist movement.

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35 Hazard, p. 2.

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In the early 20th Century, William D. Boyce's United States Colonies and Dependencies, Illustrated, published in 1914, contains a chapter on the Dominican Republic. Boyce, the publisher of The Saturday Blade, Chicago Ledger, The Farming Business, and the Indiana Daily Times, was a well-traveled exponent of Manifest Destiny and of the international colonial project as agent of civilization. He is a proponent of ecological theories of race, and openly white supremacist in his assessment and depiction of the Filipinos, Alaskans, Hawaiians, and sundry other colonial and neo-colonial "natives." Yet, he is almost salutory in his description of Dominicans. Boyce writes:

> As in almost every land, the types in this country differ widely. There are white Dominicans, cultured and traveled; there are coal-black Dominicans quite uneducated. Yet every man, woman and child in the land has the courtesy of the Latin...At the time of the conquest there were estimated to be one million aborigines on the island, but so terrible was the treatment accorded them that fifty years later the race was virtually exterminated. Their blood flows today in the veins of many a Dominican, mixed with that of the Spanish conquerors and the American slaves.[36]

Apart from the familiar contradiction between the reference to the near total demise of the "aborigines" and the assertion that "their blood flows today" in Dominicans, the politely limited references to the African origins of Dominicans is striking. Indeed, the Dominican Republic is depicted as both kin and akin to the United States: "The 'black and tan' Dominican Republic has a Spanish-speaking population and its metropolis, Santo Domingo City, is grandmother of the Americas."[37]

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[36] William D. Boyce, United States Colonies and Dependencies, Illustrated, New York: Rand McNally & Company, 1914, pp. 572-584.

[37] Ibid., p. 566.

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The depiction of Haiti that follows the Chapter on the Dominican Republic is strikingly different. Boyce, like others before and after him, draws upon existing United States tropes of blackness:

> As far as we are aware, Haiti's story has never been really staged in a literary sense. There is so much action that it would require three rings and a several side shows to do it justice. It certainly lends itself to black-face tragedy or a melodrama of blood and thunder in every scene. There would be enough material left over for a first-class minstrel show and a gorgeous costume piece. But, as a motion-picture film, it would hardly get by the censor....This fertile country, where the white man is not allowed to own land, is an interesting study. Its childlike people have been bullied, ridiculed, exploited and maligned in turn, through the years....Born in Africa, or the offspring of savages captured in the jungles of the Dark Continent, the Haitians were ill-fitted for self-government and have been left to work out their own salvation....When roused by the fear of recurrent white domination, these happy-go-lucky children of nature revert to savagery, fighting to preserve for their own this one little isle of the earth where they are working out their destiny.[38]

The references to buffoonery, black-face, minstrelsy, rampantly violent and fertile nature, bloody melodramas, people who are alternately "childlike" and "savages", draw on all too familiar stereotypes of African Americans. Given that Haiti was, in fact, subsequently occupied by U.S. Marines a year later, Boyce was ultimately dis-proven in his last assertion. Moreover, as I indicate ahead, Haiti had been frequently depicted in print and was later depicted in films employing established Haitian stereotypes.

The contrast drawn between Dominicans and Haiti extends beyond racialized bodies to racialized social settings such as the market place and to governmental bodies such as the military. If Boyce perceives only cleanliness and order in the Dominican markets and military, the converse is true in Haiti. Of the Dominican he writes: "The country folk, with their wares, are bound for the marketplace, undoubtedly the most

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[38] Ibid., p. 595-604.

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"colorful" spot in town, where beasts of burden form a patient line, relieved finally of the ill-fitting straw saddles and huge panniers woven from banana and plantain fiber."[39] Similarly, the multiple revolutions, caudillos, and sundry political imbroglios are glossed over. A photograph of neatly attired and orderly "soldier-policemen" is included, and the picture of Dominican market women shows them well-dressed, standing or sitting at their vending tables.

Haitians, conversely, are represented as un-disciplined, dirty and disorderly:

> "Generals are thicker than flies down here," the steamer captain told us, and on the very first street back of the waterfront we met a batch of officers, dazzling beyond description, their multi-colored uniforms heavily incrusted with gilt. We followed some tattered soldiers to a public square. They did not seem in the least belligerent. Some sprawled in the shade chewing sugar cane; others accosted us with the one scrap of English on the tongue of every Haitian private, "Give me five cents."
>
> There are over 20,000 of these ragamuffins under arms and probably 6,000 bedecked officers....
>
> If you want to see the people of Haiti at their liveliest, take your smelling salts and sally forth to the marketplace. You will find one market well housed, where the food is shaded from the fierce tropic sun, and another, more popular, in an open square. Here the glistening white cathedral with its stately spires seems out of tune with the surroundings, as it towers above overladen donkeys, sun-spoiled products and a chattering, perspiring crowd of blacks.[40]

The accompanying photographs show rag tag soldiers and squatting women sifting through coffee beans in the street. If the Dominican Republic is underpopulated in Boyce's narrative, "like a pail overflowing with blackberries is Haiti, the Ebony Land."

Fifteen years later, the U.S. occupation of Haiti in full effect, and the Marines having recently left the Dominican Republic, Harry L. Foster publishes his travel

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39 Ibid., p. 37.

40 Ibid., pp. 597-603.

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account. Combing the Caribbees (1929) is a classic travelogue. Foster, whose racism is far more explicit than Boyce's, travels throughout the West Indies. He casually calls its inhabitants "darkies", and like Boyce, depicts them alternatively as child-like innocents astride donkeys and violent savages engaged in voodoo rituals. Like Boyce, he depicts Haiti as over-populated, exceedingly black, and under-developed, if sufficiently orderly under U.S. military rule. The Dominican Republic, on the other hand, is more civilized, whiter and more developed. The difference is so stark as to be immediately discernible upon crossing the border between the two nations.

> ...the two little nations which share this island have very little in common.
>
> As one crossed the line, one noted the decrease in the density of the population. This Santo Domingo, although it covered two-thirds of the island, had only one-third as many citizens as the contiguous Black Republic. And although complexions were occasionally rather dark, the majority of those one met were predominantly Castilian. On the Dominican side, one found an "Aduana" instead of a "Duane"; the officer who put me through a polite third degree was unmistakably white; and the language was now Spanish, with no French understood....
>
> This was a very prosperous land – a contrast to poor Haiti.[41]

The Hispanicity of the Dominican Republic is emphasized throughout. Cross perceives its manifestations in the historic architecture, in the people's faces, and in their social customs and culture. Even the seclusion of women from the overtly public sphere is noted appreciatively. Dominican women, unlike their Haitian counterparts, who roam the streets and hills of Haiti freely, are more civilized and beautiful precisely to the degree that they are constrained.

> Along toward evening, however, the womenfolk would begin to emerge. Windows, shuttered against the tropic sun, opened now to

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[41] Harry L. Foster, Combing the Caribbees, New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1929, p. 271.

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> disclose the *señoritas* refreshed from the siesta, and powdered for the evening promenade....In some cases, they were a trifle dark and their hair curled betrayingly, but they scorned the turbans so typical of Haiti. Instead they wore Parisian chapeaux, or more frequently went bareheaded, carrying dainty parasols.[42]

Cross sums up the historic, racial, social, and political-economic differences between the Dominican Republic and Haiti thus:

> In Haiti one found today a modern capital, with wide rectangularly-arranged streets, but a people completely unchanged since the days of Dessalines. In Santo Domingo one found an old, old city, yet one with a very up-to-the-minute population, addicted to pep and progress.[43]

In 1932 Arthur J. Burkes published Land of Checkerboard Families. Burkes' memoir of his time in the Dominican Republic as a lieutenant in the occupational Marine force, bridges the period during which travel accounts of the Dominican Republic virtually disappear, while the public relations propaganda of the Trujillo regime establishes itself as the primary source of information.[44] Burkes account is also interesting in that he is a narrator of lower middle class origins, unlike his travel account predecessors who were all solidly upper class, directly attached to the U.S. military, rather than to the elite U.S. financial sector. Burkes' liberal use of the epithet "nigger" in reference to Dominicans, indicates straightforwardly hypo-descent-based assessment of Dominican racial composition. Further, his assessment marks the disjuncture between

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[42] Ibid., p. 282.

[43] Ibid., p. 288.

[44] Arthur J. Burkes, Land of Checkerboard Families, New York: Coward-McCann, 1932.

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elite, policy-driven representations and the more common folk understandings that influence everyday interactions.

It is the very complexity of race in the Dominican context that leads Burkes to write his narrative. And while he states emphatically early on that "There is no Dominican 'type'," [45] Burke nonetheless endeavors to provide the reader with an ethnographic sense of Dominican racial identity. Thus, in his description of Dominicans, Burkes engages earlier descriptions, but ultimately draws upon his own, cinematic frame of reference.

> Someone has called the Dominican Republic the land of quadroons, which comes as close as any description, perhaps. There can be found blacks, browns, yellows, whites and piebalds. Porto Ricans occasionally, Haitians in plenty, English speaking blacks from Saint Croix and Saint Kitts, and Dominicans. The Dominican, if there may be said to be a true Dominican, looks like a motion picture "type" of Mexican, and even that scarcely describes him. Checkerboard families are not especially rare. A black boy may have a white, brown or yellowish sister and vice versa. Or there may be four children in the same family, presumably the same father and mother, of four different colors.
>
> The basic mixture, however, consists of Spanish and Negro, with a dash of Carib aborigine. The language is Spanish, the religion Creole.[46]

Burkes, thus, perceives Dominicans as mixed or mulatto to varying degrees, although not entirely removed from whiteness as the references to "white" siblings, and the Spanish origins and language of the people indicate.

Nonetheless, chapter after chapter is devoted to detailing the rampant misery, dirtiness and leprosy of "the natives", whom he is not above calling "chattering apes." The overwhelming image is one of horrible ugliness and decay. Beauty in Burkes'

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45 Ibid., p. 17.

46 Ibid., pp. 14-15.

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account is limited to the lush, natural surroundings and to young women, their narrative equivalent. A recurring theme in Burkes' narrative is the desire of "the native" for his seed. Indeed, his first encounter with a Dominican woman is framed by her explicit desire to have him sire a "white baby" for her. At several other points in his story, Dominican women openly offer themselves to him, usually aggressively. Later, he assists a Dominican woman in labor, and becomes the namesake of her infant son. The anecdote emphasizes his husband-like relationship to her (and the land) – "At that moment she became as precious to me as though she had been my own wife or sister." The fruit of their interaction, his near son, has all the bearings of a military man, even just a few hours after birth. Like any proud father, he notes that the child is a "husky little blighter" who "is eight years old this spring."

In the rhetorical strategy of narrators before and after him, Burkes' depicts Haitians as dirty, disorderly and stupid.

> The Haitian is capable of going from cradle to the grave unbathed....The Haitians looked as much alike as so many peas in a pod....there isn't anything so dumb![47]

They are also, of course, "voodoo practitioners." Burkes devotes an entire chapter, entitled "Tom Tom," to his capture by Dominican and Haitian rebels who plan to torture and kill him. Alluding to popular depictions of cannibals preparing their human catch, he tells of being encircled by his captors, who beat drums and plan his demise:

> The negroes surrounded us and sat down in the form of a nice black circle....A few rods away a Haitian stood beside the gasoline drum and hammered out the Haitian jungle song – the rhythmic beating of a tom-tom....The tom-tom can easily drive a white man mad. They also drive

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[47] Ibid., pp. 18-20.

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> the blacks mad, for they can work themselves into a frenzy to the tune of the tom-toms.
>
> Another black man built a bonfire near the gasoline drum, so that when darkness fell the whole scene became one from darkest Africa....But this was Santo Domingo, the land of quadroons! That didn't help, though, for the only brown-skinned people present were Garcia and Nicolai...The rest were negroes...and negroes had skinned the men I recalled.[48]

Of course, Burkes, in the tradition of courageous white men, manages to escape (with the help of his faithful "native" sidekick, Garcia).

Burkes is quite explicit that Haitians and Dominicans are "utterly different" in terms of race, language and economic condition. Burkes' relates "one more touch of horror – which is set down here to show something of the difference between Haitians and Dominicans." The horror, of course, is Haitian cannibalism. Lest the reader not be convinced that cannibalism exists in Haiti, Burkes account verifies that Haitian cannibalism is factual, quite rampant and not contained by Haitian borders. Dominicans, however, punish it harshly, and their elevated degree of civilization and near-whiteness proclaimed.

The only similarity Burkes' can discern between Dominicans and Haitians is that the are both eloquent, if gesticulating, "born gossips". In sum, however, Dominicans "are far less primitive" than Haitians, as evidenced by their lighter coloring. "The people were usually old bronze of color, free of disease, and easy laughers, happy children....The Haitian invasion had trod but lightly here and the 'tar brush' had stroked softly."[49] That is, Dominicans were whiter, and thus closer to civilization. If they were not yet there, the Marine occupation certainly inched them along.

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[48] Ibid., pp. 138-140.

[49] Ibid., p. 43.

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Current state-mandated and state-sanctioned institutional representations of the cultural and racial antecedents of Dominicans and the Dominican Republic continue to privilege Táino culture and mythico-mestizo-white bodies over African culture and black bodies. The World Wide Web site maintained by the State Tourism Secretary and visited 54,500 times as of August 1998, provides pages on "Táino Culture," "History", "Arts and Crafts", "Music, Rhythms, and Dances", "Religious Traditions", "Gastronomy", and "Ruins and Historic Sites". The audience is the Spanish-speaking world, as the web site currently is not translated. Much as in historic narratives, the central ethnic group explored and represented is the Táino.

In a page entitled, "Before Discovery: The Táino Culture" the opening paragraph explains that the word "táino...means 'good or noble' in the Arawak language," a discursive move that undermines Kallendorf's contention that Dominican representations of Táinos move beyond the noble savage.[50] Although that same page notes that the "discovery and its methods of conquest exterminated this race in a period of approximately 50 years, which limited the impact of said indigenous culture on Dominican culture", one sentence later explains that "the Táinos left [Dominicans] a great social inheritance." An inheritance that was "the richest in the Caribbean area." The interlocutors would seem to be Puerto Rico and Puerto Ricans,[51] who have also

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[50] Hilaire Kallendorf, "A Myth Rejected: The Noble Savage in Dominican Dystopia," Journal of Latin American Studies, Vol. 27, Part 2, May 1995, pp. 449-470.

[51] By contrast, Cuba has neither mythologized indigenous antecedents nor institutionalized *indigenismo*. Instead, a distinctive Afro-Cuban identity and social grouping was developed and institutionalized, first through explicit segregation in the colonial period, implicit segregation in the pre-revolutionary period, and through a program of nationalizing blackness in the post-revolutionary period.

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institutionalized a mythical indigenous past and present, somewhat more extensively and successfully than Dominicans, and against and by whom Dominicans are often represented as unambiguously black.[52]

Moreover, absence of a similar page on the African antecedents of Dominican culture and society betrays a continuing privileging of indigenism. Indeed, although this page mentions that the colonial system imported "persons stronger and more resistant to the hard labor", thereby alluding to the importation of African slaves, these are not explicitly mentioned.

Similarly, the two graphics employed on this page – a snapshot of a diorama from the Museo del Hombre Dominicano and a caricature of a Táino hunter and a Táina -- replicate the

Illustration 3-1: Taino Hunter and Taina, State Tourism World Wide Web Site



Source: State Tourism Secretary, World Wide Web Site
http://www.domincana.com.do/cultura/epocaprecolombina.html

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[52] Cf. Jorge Duany, Luisa Hernández Anguiera, and César A. Rey, *Barrio Guandul: Economia Subterránea y migración indocumentada en Puerto Rico*, Caracas: Nueva Sociedad, 1995; and Luisa Hernández Anguiera, "Across the Mona Straight: Dominican Boat Women in Puerto Rico," in Consuelo López Springfield, ed. Daughters of Caliban: Caribbean Women in the Twentieth Century, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997, pp. 96-111.

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visual economy of gendered indigenism employed at the Museo del Hombre Dominicano, which is considered in Chapter Four. Like the photographs of South American natives employed at the Museo to contemporanize the Táino past, the snapshot of the diorama with its life-like figures, and outside of and without any reference to its museum context gives off the impression of a certain currency of Táino life.

Illustration 3-2: Taino Diorama, Museo del Hombre Dominicano



Source: State Tourism Secretary, World Wide Web Site
http://www.domincana.com.do/cultura/epocaprecolombina.html

Similarly, it is an implicitly gendered visual text. The Táino hunter is a standing man, wielding a phallus-like bow and arrow aimed at a flying bird, while the Táina is squatting behind him, cooking and serving. As in the Museo's diorama, each fulfills a traditionally gendered role. Further, the figure of the squatting woman serves to reiterate the primitivism of native women relative both to native men and to foreign women. It is that very primitivism that makes them sexually alluring and available to the tourist consumer who ostensibly cannot experience similar license "at home."

In this narrative, the history of Dominican society begins with the conquest of those same Táinos by Spain and the Spanish. Dominican bodies originate at the point in which "the grand transculturation process that characterizes the Dominican" produces the "son of the encounter of cultures, product of *mestizaje*." In Spanish, the words for both

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the singular male "child" (*hijo*) and the plural "children" (*hijos)* are masculine, as are all plural forms that include "female" subjects or objects. The feminine is subsumed. The masculine is representative of all humanity. Moreover, in a construction such as this one, the singular pronoun "*el*" references Dominican plurality, not individual singularity. Thus, ostensibly the phrase "son of the encounter of cultures, product of *mestizaje*" merely follows standard grammatical form. I argue, however, that it is more than normative grammatical form that is adhered to in this narrative. In the larger context of Dominican ideological history, and viewed from the perspective of the feminist interlocutor, it is a masculinist framing of national bodies as well.

There is a contradictory yet cohesive tension between the erasure of women and the female from national(ist) discourses, particularly in terms of the production and reproduction of nation, and the employment of fetishized female bodies and feminized lexicon to represent and denote the nation, respectively. Kamisky notes:

> To pose the question, What is the gender of content of the word, as it connotes notions of fatherland, patriarchy, and *la patria* [the fatherland]?/ *¿Cuál es el género de la patria*?[What is the gender of the fatherland?], is to ask two different questions. For the English speaker, the word "gender" refers first and foremost to the semantic a particular set of political and social relations. *La patria* is gendered masculine through etymology and because of the emotional, historical, and interpersonal charge it bears. In Spanish, the semantic content of the term is, traditionally, as masculinely loaded as it is in English, while the gender of the lexical term, *la patria*, is undisputedly feminine....For the Spanish speaker, the grammatical femininity of the word *patria* makes it possible to ignore the semantic connection in favor of the morphological one. Shifting the meaning of *patria* from masculine to feminine can be a powerful discursive tactic.[53]

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[53] Kaminsky, p. 5.

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The shift is in, for example, the seeming contradiction expressed in the term "*la madre patria*", literally "the mother fatherland", or, more generally the "mother country."[54] That country and fatherland are synonymous is indicative of the masculinity and androcentricity of nationhood. What is more interesting is the semantic implication in "*la madre patria*" that fatherlands are reproductive (mothers) but not female.

This is different from pointing to the racialized feminization of country and land in colonial, anti-colonial and post-colonial discourses and practices. Those constructed the colonial lands and incipient nations as virgin, fertile and awaiting husbanding, or ravaged, pillaged and in need of protection, depending on the particular perspective and political agenda of the observer. That is, this is not simply the colony or neo-colony as Native American female (*La Malinche/la Chingada*) and feminized colonial and Creole males raped by penetrating, masculine European colonizers and imperialists. This is the reproductive father who has *replaced* the mother. This is the uterus that is at once central and invisible. This is Dominican phallocracy.

Dominican society is a "'*mestizo* society in its beliefs and customs; mestizo of the Spanish conquistador and the African slave, with some drops of indigenous blood in its nostalgias.'"[55] Indigenousness is at once physical -- that is, biologically ancestral (racial) and evidenced in blood lines -- and mythical -- that is, nostalgic in its ideal cultural forms and masculinity. The nostalgia is betrayed in precisely the employment of the word *mestizo* rather the more accurate, if more offensive "*mulato*", thus transposing "Indian" semantically and physically onto African.

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54 Harper Collin's, Spanish Unabridged Dictionary, 5th edition.

55 "History," State Tourism Secretary Web Site.

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The subsequent paragraph establishes the original and established nature of Dominican Hispanicity.

> The island of Hispaniola was the first European colony in the New World and in its capital, Santo Domingo, called "The First City in America," there originated the first colonial social and cultural institutions, the first forts, the first churches, the first cathedral, the first hospital, the first monuments and the first university were constructed.[56]

Hispanicity, thus, is physically embedded in Dominican society, both in its architecture and its institutions, much as Táino material culture continues to circulate in contemporary foodstuffs and crafts. As the opening page emphasizes, the Dominican Republic is "where it all began."

Indeed, the claim to being the first (read the purest) European political and cultural outpost in the "New World" is repeated and circulated time and again. From nineteenth century nationalist statesman and scholar Pedro Henríquez Ureña's to the mid-twentieth century's legal mandates protecting the cultural "patrimony"[57] via museums to the present State Tourism Board's World Wide Web site, it is repeatedly noted that "Santo Domingo, birthplace of America, [was] the only country in the New World settled my Spaniards in the fifteen years immediately following the Discovery, is the first city in which European culture took root."[58] What is ignored is that the colony was also the first

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56 "History," State Tourism Secretary Web Site.

57 My thanks to Bob Alford for pointing out that the word "patrimony" is also a masculine one. Given that "cultural patrimony" refers to the country's legacy, the centrality of masculinity in the defining the parameters of that legacy is noteworthy. It is not, after all, women's words and women's lives that are catalogued, display or debated in the national museums, nor is it women who determine what deserves inclusion into the cultural patrimony.

58 "History," State Tourism Secretary Web Site.

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to be abandoned in the quest for gold in Mexico and Peru and subsequently depopulated by emigration, epidemic and the Devastations. By the eighteenth century, the New World's first colony became a port of call, rather than the seat of the Spanish Empire.

In this narrative Africans, by contrast, "arrive" via the French Saint Domingüe and its introduction of slave plantations, rather than via the Spanish *encomienda* system that actually introduced plantation slavery in the Americas, first of indigenous peoples, and later of Africans.

> French buccaneers who employed the island as a contraband bridge...took over the western part of the island where they founded the colony of Saint Domingüe, which was based on the exploitation of African slave plantation labor. This change in the economic system represented a variation in the social framework of our island, due, fundamentally to the arrival of the slaves, producing a cultural fusion, which was immediately manifested in the development of different ethnic groups: mulattos, sambos, black *ladinos* and the *mestizos*, predominant in Latin America to this day. [59]

Thus, the Africans arrive and disrupt the previously existing cultural/racial purity. In their wake, "different ethnic groups" develop, simultaneously attesting to an African presence, erasing "pure" blackness, and producing hybrid peoples. The use of colonial era racial taxonomy implied by the terms "sambos" and "black *ladinos*", together with their descriptive categorization as "ethnic groups", harked to the *casta* system that socially institutionalized those racial groupings. It also echos Duarte's call to unity on the part of "*blancos, negros, mestizos, y cobrizos.*"

But in this narrative, it is not the *casta* groups that survive "to this day." Rather, it is "the *mestizos*" who not only survive, but predominate, in Latin America, and by

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[59] Ibid.

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extension, in the Dominican Republic. And, it is not simply mestizos, but primarily Hispanic-Táino mestizos who predominate, as the following statement alludes.

> Cultural values arise as the fruit of this clash, where the predominance of the stronger culture over the weaker must be highlighted, although the latter has not totally disappeared.[60]

In this thinly veiled allusion to the Spanish conquest of both Africans and Táinos, the preponderant Hispanicity of Dominicans is affirmed.

When the African origins of Dominican identity is explicitly recognized, it is in fairly negative terms. For example, negative Dominican cultural traits such as arrogance and machismo are attributed to the African heritage, while presumably positive masculine virility is European.

> The structure itself of our identity is the product of a syncretism in which the arrogant and the *machista* [macho] values from the African plains are mixed with the warrior potency of the European, comprise the vale of flavors of our own Caribbean populations, and extraordinarily enrich the composition of our identity.[61]

It bears noting that regardless of whether the traits are considered positive or negative, African or European, the foundational masculinity of the national identity is affirmed. The European conquerors or "warriors", after all, were primarily men, and it is men's bodies that are understood to be potent or not. Likewise, their African counterparts are described as "macho" and "arrogant", characteristics attributed to masculinity.

The pages on "Music, Rhythms, and Dances," the only one with an identified author (Fernando Casado), summarizes the website's culturally hispanicist and racially

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60 Ibid.

61 Ibid.

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mythico-mestizo representation of the Dominican Republic and of Dominicans and is worth quoting at length.

> The Dominican Republic, which is today the country of Dominicans, inserts itself in the history of the other nations in the Universe, from the discovery of America onward. European civilization enters the New World through Santo Domingo, as the historic city was called, and from there the great names of the conquest depart to spread the history of what is today.
>
> The aboriginal core that inhabited the island, which Christopher Columbus called Hispaniola, were the most important and advanced of that civilization that composed the blossoms that came to be called the Antilles.
>
> On that favorable platform, the interest and effort of Spain, integrate the first society of the new continent discovered, and with the assimilation of the black slaves a conjugation of cultures is conformed. The first expressions, the processes of synthesis completed over time, illuminate in Santo Domingo the nascent notations of a different culture, no longer Spanish, Aboriginal or African, but rather of particular character: the creole culture...Dominican.
>
> That process wasn't repeated in the rest of the Antilles, where racial segregation impeded an early mixture, retarding the encounter with what should have been the expression of authentic local bill from each nation.[62]

The first sentence asserts the Dominican-ness of the Dominican Republic by repetitively calling it "the country of Dominicans." This double affirmation implicitly references the historic and present exclusion of Haitians from the body politic, as well as from the national body. Dominicanization projects from the establishment of the Republic in 1844 have centered on legislative, ideological and physically violent anti-Haitianism.

In legislative terms, Dominicans of Haitian ancestry continue to be denied Dominican citizenship, the only immigrant group so excluded from the polity and the

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[62] Fernando Casado, "Music, Rhythms, and Dances," State Tourism Secretary Website.

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franchise.[63] In discursive terms, Haitians and their Dominican-born descendents are time and again characterized not only as the anti-thesis of Dominicanness, but as the preeminent threat to Dominican national identity and sovereignty. Balaguer's classic anti-Haitian diatribe, *La isla al revés: Haïti y el destino dominicano*,[64] a minimally revised version of his 1947, *La realidad dominicana*, was released and distributed during his campaign against presidential contender Peña Gomez, a Dominican of Haitian descent. The text is an anti-Haitian diatribe that is openly racist against both Haitians en mass and against black Dominicans, who are tolerated so long as "they not become, as in Haiti, a dominant majority."[65]

What is fascinating about the anxiety over the Haitian presence and proximity is that it betrays an awareness of similarity between the two societies precisely to the degree that differences are affirmed. That, in the Dominican context, is "the Haytian fear."[66] Thus, "the Republic, in order to survive as a Spanish nation, must strengthen the somatic differences that separate it from Haiti, because otherwise it [Haiti] would end up absorbing the Dominican population, assimilating it into its own."[67] If the two nations are, in fact, so diametrically, fundamentally and biologically distinctive as official anti-Haitianism would have us believe, there would be no danger of mutual absorption or

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63 Carlos Dore Cabral, 1988.

64 Balaguer, 1990.

65 Balaguer in Franco, p. 234.

66 Sheller, 1997.

67 Balaguer in Franco, p. 233.

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assimilation. That the distance between the two nations is not that great marks the continued racial anxiety and genocidal violence.

> ...Colonel Bolívar Belliard Sarubi, director of the Office of the Frontier Command Promotion of Balaguer's [1977] government came to affirm in statements to the press (*El Sol*, June 24, 1977) that the assassination of nearly 20,000 Haitians by Trujillo in 1937 was "a prophylactic for Dominicanness" and that "if Trujillo hadn't done that, we wouldn't be Dominicans."[68]

Anti-Haitianism has ranged from the 1937 genocidal massacre intended to "de-Haitianize" the border, to periodic round-ups, beatings, deportations and murder of Haitian sugar cane workers at the present moment.[69] Taken together, the intense and sustained efforts to remove Haitians from the Dominican Republic or to proscribe their existence while in the national territory can be considered genocidal.

At the same time, there is often a difference between discursive anti-Haitianism and everyday practices, particularly in border regions. Derby argues that although the Dominican-Haitian border has long been the site of the most extensive and intensive Dominicanization projects, and thus of the most anxious state interventions, discursive and otherwise, it is precisely in this region that anti-Haitianismo breaks down.[70]

Similarly, Torres-Saillaint points to the gap between negrophobic discourse and racialized action, whether affirmative or destructive. That is to say, Dominicans can dis-

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[68] Franco, p. 234.

[69] See Report on the Situation of Human Rights in the Dominican Republic, 1999; Susannah A. Nesmith, "Dominican Troops Fire on Haitians", The Associated Press, June 18, 2000; "Haiti's Sugar Cane Slaves Expelled from a Bitter `Paradise'", The Guardian (London), September 4, 1998.

[70] Lauren Derby, "Haitians, Magic, and Money: *Raza* and Society in the Haitian-Dominican Borderlands, 1900 to 1937", Comparative Studies in Society and History, vol. 36, no. 3, July 1994, pp. 488-526.

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identify with "the blacks" targeted by negrophobic discourses because "nothing in their history indicates to the masses...that their precarious material conditions or the overall indignities they suffer constitute a strictly racial form of oppression."[71] At the same time, racial violence against "the blacks" generally takes the form of reproductive genocide and aesthetic stigmatization. Racial violence, in other words, is enacted in more insidious bodily and social psychological forms.

The next sentence harks back to the claim that Santo Domingo is *the most Hispanic* of nations, for "European civilization enters the New World through Santo Domingo." At the same time, Dominican Táinos, though aboriginal (that is, heathen and savage) are "the most the most important and advanced of that civilization." Consequently, they, together with the Africans provide the raw resources that the Spanish improve upon with their "interest and effort." This formulation at once extols mixture, while privileging white supremacy. The result is "a different culture, no longer Spanish, Aboriginal or African, but rather of particular character: the creoie culture...Dominican." Paradoxically, just as Santo Domingo is the most Hispanic of American nations, with the most noble of savages, it is also the most mestizo and integrated of mestizo cultures and peoples.

The English-language "Dominican Republic Press Kit" put together by the National Hotel and Restaurant Association (NHRA), claims that the country is "a multi-racial and multi-cultural society of Spanish predominance. (Caucasian 16%, Negro 11%, Mixed 73%)." (www.domrep-hotels.com.do/PressKit/dr-profile.html) The Kit

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[71] Torres-Saillaint, 1996, p. 27.

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emphasizes the hispanicity of the Dominican Republic, noting that UNESCO "proclaimed Santo Domingo the cultural heritage of the New World" an indirect allusion to the project that funded Enriquillo's translation. In that tradition, the vast majority of the historic references, historic sites and contemporary attractions offered to tourists emphasize the hispanicity and indigenous heritage of the nation, as does the emphasis on the preponderance of "mixed" Dominicans and the greater number of "Caucasians" than of "Negroes."

Potential visitors are offered their choice of historic, erudite and Hispanic Santo Domingo or contemporary, hedonistic and exotic Santo Domingo. The former is exemplified in the dozens of museums, colonial buildings and cobblestone streets. The latter, in "the city's modern society, its music, fine dining, its casinos and five-star hotels." In either case, colonial and neo-colonial order, civilization, and progress abound.

> Santo Domingo is an enchanting city of modern sophistication, Old World charisma, and Latin charm.... Santo Domingo is the ideal spot for travelers interested in the old and the new.... The exuberance of all that is Santo Domingo's past and present awaits discovery by travelers hungry for the rich history, culture, and pleasures of this tropical island.[72]

The potentially subversive construction of traveler as cannibalistic consumer is undermined by the willing offering-up of the nation and its resources for consumption. That is to say, the desires and hungers of the traveler are not questioned. The question, rather, is the ability of the nation to satisfy.

It is a legacy that had its origins under Trujillo. In the premier issue of A Look at the Dominican Republic, readers are given three reasons why the Dominican Republic is

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72 "Dominican Republic Press Kit."

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Big Tour-News!" They are the free port at the World's Fair grounds, the "New Luxury Hotels," and "Fun for Everyone." This last is explained thus:

> There's pleasure in variety for all visitors, in the "Land of Discovery." Beach resorts and mountain resorts alike are quickly reached from Ciudad Trujillo. Sports facilities, for both player and spectator, abound. Sightseeing reveals both earliest American history and ultra-modern progress, in a panorama of natural and man-made beauty. Casinos, theatres and dance-floors make every evening a delight for everyone.[73]

The Hispanicity of the nation – signified by the reference to "Land of Discovery" -- and the historic yet progressive, pleasurable physicality of the island are the leitmotifs.

In terms of parallel U.S. produced and circulated print media, Harry S. Pariser's Explore the Dominican Republic and Gaylord Dold's Dominican Republic Handbook are examined as exemplary of contemporary Dominican Republic travel guides with wide distribution. Pariser's text, for example, is in its third edition as of this writing. Pariser is a prolific[74] and well-respected travel writer, having won the 1996 Silver Award from the Society of American Travel Writers at the Lowell Thomas Travel Journalism Competition.

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[73] Embassy of the Dominican Republic, Washington, D.C., A Look at the Dominican Republic, vol. 1, no. 12, December 1956, p. 5.

[74] His other publications include: Guide to Jamaica, Moon Publications, 1986; Guide to Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, Moon Publications, 1986; The Adventure Guide to Puerto Rico, Hunter Publishing, 1989, 1994, and 1997; The Adventure Guide to the Virgin Islands, Hunter Publishing, 1989, 1992, 1994, and 1997; Jamaica: A Visitor's Guide, Hunter Publishing, 1990, 1993, and 1995; The Adventure Guide to Barbados, Hunter Publishing, 1990 and 1995; The Adventure Guide to Costa Rica, Hunter Publishing, 1992, 1994, and 1996; The Adventure Guide to Belize, Hunter Publishing, 1992, 1994, and 1995; The Adventure Guide to the Dominican Republic, Hunter Publishing, 1993 and 1994; Explore Belize , Hunter Publishing,1998.

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Dold, conversely, is not a full-time travel writer. Rather, he is a well-published crime novelist who "was the managing editor of the Watermark Press in Wichita, Kansas and is a regularly featured book reviewer in the Wichita Eagle." (Moon Travel Handbooks, web site, www.moon.com) He describes himself as "a writer who travels." According to his publisher, Bill Newlin, Dold's has sold 10,000 copies of his Handbook within eighteen months of its publication.[75]

What makes Dold's work relevant to this analysis is his explicit reliance upon prominent Dominican scholars, intellectuals and cultural workers. Among those are Marisol Ortiz of the Tourism Promotion Council and sociologist and journalist Dagoberto Tejeda[76]. Yet even in his publisher's Web Site summation of the Dominican Republic – "diverse country rich in history, culture, nature, and rum....Pristine beaches, moderate weather, rugged mountains, an educated populace" – the only reference to the race or ethnicity of Dominicans is to the "Engaging articles on indigenous peoples" Dold writes of in his text.[77]

Dold dedicates to Táinos ten of the twenty-seven-page section on the history of the Dominican Republic. Half of those ten pages are dedicated to the indignities and cruelties of the original Spanish colonizers toward the Táinos, but it is the Táinos themselves who remain at the center of the story. The Spanish colonial period, by contrast, is explained in four pages, of which the last two pages include information on

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75 Personal communication, August 1999.

76 Gaylord Dold, Dominican Republic Handbook, Chico, CA: Moon Publications, 1997, p. vi.

77 Moon Travel Handbooks, web site, www.moon.com.

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the French-Spanish relations and machinations over control of the island. The initiation and institutionalization of the African slave trade is summarized in one extended paragraph at the beginning of the section of the Spanish colonial period. And, like most narratives of slavery in Santo Domingo, Dold contrasts the harshness and cruelty of plantation slavery in the rest of the Americas, particularly in Haiti, with the relatively less abusive system in Santo Domingo:

> In the 1790s, the French colony of Saint Domingue (modern Haiti) had a slave population of more than 500,000 outnumbering their French masters eight to one. These slaves were miserably overworked and dangerously angry. In Spanish Hispaniola, however, even after large increases in slaving throughout the 1700s, the latter part of the century found only about 40,000 slaves in the country. Under Spanish law, they were treated with relative lenience and could easily buy their freedom. The harsh racial laws of the French side of the island were largely unknown; black freemen in Spanish Hispaniola already outnumbered the slaves and soon formed a mulatto society integrated with the Spanish one. By the beginning of the 19th century, life in Santo Domingo had developed a Spanish insouciance, dominated by religion, music, and food, all overseen by a laziness of mood commented upon by contemporary observers.[78]

Similarly, the Haitian revolution, invasion and colonization of Santo Domingo, the period is cast as particularly brutal and savage relative to previous colonizers and colonizations. In a section entitled "Haitian Occupation and Terror" Dold writes:

> Along with his senior general, Dessalines, and aided by the English – who were eager to break both French and Spanish power in the Caribbean – Toussaint went on a murderous war of conquest against all Hispaniola, killing, raping, and butchering....for 10 years, the entire island of Hispaniola was a terror house of murder.
>
> For 20 years, until 1844, the Haitians occupied Spanish Hispaniola. Under the mulatto General Jean-Pierre Boyer, this occupation was anarchic and degrading.[79]

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78 Dold, p. 57.

79 Ibid., p. 57.

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One is forced to wonder whether Spanish, British and French occupation and colonization were somehow orderly, progressive and liberating. Recent revisionist Dominican historiography has claimed that in fact under Haitian rule the "social and economic forces of the formerly Spanish part [of the island] experienced a developmental leap forward" and the "majority of the Dominican population was revindicated."[80]

Closely echoing both the content and tone of Dominican historical narratives and earlier travel writers, Dold emphasizes the cultural and racial distinctiveness of the Haitian colonizers:

> The Haitian occupation was probably doomed from its start. There was a vast gulf in language and tradition, but the matter of race was vital. Dessalines himself was committed to racial domination by black former slaves....[81]

The antithesis to Dessalines, and later Boyer, and to Haitianness and blackness more generally, arrives in the figure of Juan Pablo Duarte. Dold describes Duarte as a native son, educated as a young man in the two major metropoles, New York and Europe, exposed to progressive, anti-tyrannical ideas and "philosophical romanticism" that he brought home to Santo Domingo.

Pariser, like Dold, was assisted by Dominican governmental representatives, chief among them now-President Dr. Leonel Fernández and Marisol Ortiz of the Tourism Council. He is a much more established travel writer, however, whose works cover other

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80 Franco Pichardo, p.50-51.

81 Dold, p. 57.

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Caribbean islands and Japan.[82] Additionally, he is a photographer and employed many of his own photographs in his text and on his website.[83] He employs a fairly extensive bibliography, although in the tradition of travel and tourism literature, he provides no citations within his text.

He opens with a description of the island's geography, flora and fauna, followed by a brief historical political economy summary. Of interest to us here, is Pariser's description of the Dominican people, whom he describes as creole *par excellance*. He writes:

> Caribbean culture is truly creole culture. The word "creole" comes from *criar* (Spanish for "to bring up" or "to rear"). In the New World, this term referred to children born in this hemisphere, implying that they were not quite authentic or pure. Later, creole came to connote "mixed blood," but not just blood has been mixed here. Cultures have been jumbled as well.... Today, a new synthesis has arisen in language, society, crafts, and religion.[84]

He then briefly summarizes indigenous, African, Spanish, and American influences, in that order. The indigenous "spirit lives on – in traditions, in the feeling of dramatic sunsets, and in the wafting of the cool breeze." In other words, the indigenous island itself embodies the indigenous past. The African influences are "the strongest of all outside influences", while the Spanish influences although intrusive are predominant, particularly in terms of language and "in the form of *personalismo*, the worship of

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82 Indeed, his website, www.jps.net, contains an interesting article on Japanese families in Costanza, a mountain town of the Dominican Republic.

83 Among these is a wonderful photo of a woman under a hair dryer.

84 Pariser, p. 53.

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leaders." Finally, he notes that "the history of the U.S. is inextricably linked with the Caribbean in general and the Dominican Republic in particular."[85]

Pariser, unlike earlier and contemporary writers, de-emphasizes the relative whiteness of Dominicans. He does not villanize Haitians, and in fact, places them squarely inside the Dominican Republic:

> Some 60% of the population is mulatto, with another 35% black and 5% white. Today, it is estimated that some half-million Haitians reside in the Dominican Republic.[86]

In this text, unlike others, a fairly complex understanding of Dominican history and population emerges.

Conclusion:

The recurring themes of 19th and 20th Century representational discourses – historic narratives, narrative histories, travel writings, government propaganda, and tourism literature – are political liberalism, socio-economic progress, racial and cultural mestizaje, and the health/hygiene/order of Dominican bodies. The narratives were written and circulated for distinct, but often complementary, purposes by Dominicans and North Americans alike. Both the United States and the Dominican Republic had a political and ideological stake in the denigration of Haiti and Haitians. For the United States, Haiti represented an immediate threat to its political and economic system in that it modeled Black revolution and liberty. For the Dominican Republic, Haiti was the internal Other against whom a unique Dominican nation could be forged. The United States supported and supplemented the Dominican identity project to the extent that it

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85 Ibid., pp. 53-54.

86 Ibid., p. 55.

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furthered U.S. interests. These themes evolved together with the nation's modernization projects of the late 19th and early 20th Centuries. They were most effectively institutionalized and circulated, however, by Rafael Leonidas Trujillo, to whom we turn next.

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Chapter Four
"En-Gendering Dominicanness": The Trujillo Era

> *Students of the Trujillato have paid great attention to his accumulation of land, commerce and capital, disregarding what is perhaps the most important aspect of the creation of his masculine status in the Dominican Republic. Trujillo accumulated prestige through his women.*[1]

> *Tourism is the arena in which the moves to privatize the economy through foreign investment, imperial constructions of masculinity and femininity and state constructions of sexualized woman all intersect.*[2]

In the twentieth century, U.S. political, economic and ideological interests more generally (including the Dominican Republic) drove the United States' fixation on Haitian affairs and on those of the Caribbean as well. However, the concern became more explicitly one of political ideology, and implicitly a matter of race. The issue in the nineteenth century was defending the new republic from the colonial European sphere of influence in the region, albeit through its own brand of capitalist imperialism. In the twentieth century the abiding concern of the United States from the late 1930's onward was limiting the influence of another European political form: communism. Thus, the tenor of travel writings from this period shifts somewhat from an emphasis on the racial and cultural barbarism of Haitians, and the concomitant racial and cultural superiority of

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[1] Lauren Derby, "*La seducción del dictador: Lo masculino y el espectáculo estatal durante la Era de Trujillo*", in Ramonina Brea, Rosario Espinal, and Fernando Valerio-Holguín, eds., *La República Dominicana en el umbral del siglo XXI: Cultura, Política y Cambio Social*, Santo Domingo: Pontífica Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra, Centro Universitario de Estudios Politicios y Sociales, 1999, p. 202.

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White Americans, and their local proxy, Dominicans, to the political distinctiveness of the neighbors. That political distinctiveness, however, was cast in terms of political maturity, social progress and economic development, twentieth century euphemisms for racialized notions of civilization.

It is in that context that Trujillo's thirty-year military and ideological dictatorship and its influence on Dominican ethno-racial identity must be understood. Trujillo's negrophobic phallocracy and Dominicanization based on indigenism evolved and hardened in response both to domestic and international histories, ideologies, politics and economics. The Trujillista legacy found continued legitimating under Balaguer's fifty-year ideological and political leadership, which again, has influenced and reflected U.S. ideology and policies.

Despite the similar histories of Haiti and the Dominican Republic in terms of experiencing turbulent revolutionary periods followed by periods of "stable" dictatorial regimes, the depictions de-emphasize the Dominican upheavals relative to those in Haiti. For example, Dominican texts of the Trujillo era point to the Haitian colonial period's black colonization policies and practices as the origins of an on-going Haitian effort to blacken, de-Catholicize and impoverish the "essentially" white, Hispanic, Catholic and progressive population of Santo Domingo. The tenor and tone is of an on-going battle between the forces of degeneracy (Haiti) and the forces of progress (Dominican Republic).

The Dominican Republic is the most masculine of nations. The virility, potency, and vigor of the Dominican nation, past and present, are unceasingly re-iterated and

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[2] Alexander, p. 19.

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constituted precisely through the paradoxical mythico-indigenous racialization project. Torres-Saillaint writes of the homoerotic relationship between Trujillo, the supreme macho who possessed the Dominican nation in meta-sexual, sexual and political-economic terms for thirty years, and his fawning ideologues and followers.[3] The question is why? Did Trujillo represent to Dominican men an affirmation of their collective masculinity, one that had been impinged upon time and again over the previous decades by French, Haitian, and Spanish colonialism and most recently by U.S. imperialism?

The memory of the Marine's eight-year military occupation and government was fresh in the minds of Dominicans at the time of Trujillo's first presidency. The customs receivership and subsequent occupation were both cast by the United States and understood by Dominicans in racialized, paternalistic and masculinist terms. Were Dominicans willing to be possessed by Trujillo so as not to be re-possessed by the United States?

Trujillo was the ultimate patriarch, as his many self-legislated and permanent titles attest. Although at the time of his death he had accumulated nearly forty titles[4], the most renowned were: *Benefactor de la Patria* (Benefactor of the Fatherland) (1932), Generalissimo (1933), Doctor (1934), *Restaurador de la Independencia Economica* (Restorer of Financial Independence) (1940) and *Padre de la Patria Nueva* (Father of the

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[3] Silvio Torres-Saillaint, "*El Trujillismo Erótico o La Orgia del Terror*," Rumbo, vol. 2, no. 61 (April 3, 1995): 13-17.

[4] C. Pope Atkins and Larman Wilson, The United States and the Trujillo Regime, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1972, p. 41.

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New Fatherland (1955).[5] Each of these titles alludes to Trujillo's role as savior of the nation, first from natural disasters and later from foreign usurpers. Trujillo was cast as Benefactor in the context of the country's recuperation from a devastating hurricane several weeks after his inauguration in 1930. He became Generalissimo in the context of establishing the Emergency Law of 1931, ostensibly in order to facilitate his "own 'plan of refinancing' to lighten the burden of external debt"[6] still owed to the U.S. under the Customs Receivership agreement. When the debt was re-paid, he became Restorer of Financial Independence. And when the national identity project had been consolidated, he became the Father of the New Fatherland.

He personally husbanded the nation, as much through his profligate hyper-heterosexuality and violent promiscuity, as through his personally guided and engineered development of national industries and infrastructure.[7] The conflation of Trujillo's person with the nation first, and later God himself, resonates with the casting of the nation as the fecund land, the feminized body politic and the female body itself. Indeed, the only jokes about Trujillo allowed were those that emphasized his sexual exploits and conquests.[8]

"Joaquín Balaguer recounts in *La palabra encadenada* that on one occasion, angered by the impropriety with which he was informed of an article in the New York

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5 Jesús de Galíndez, The Era of Trujillo, Dominican Dictator, Russell H. Fitzgibbon, ed. Tuscon: University of Arizona Press, 1973, p. 182.

6 Atkins and Wilson, 1972, p. 48.

7 At the time of his assassination in 1961, Trujillo and his family owned 80% of the Dominican land, resources, infrastructure and capital.

8 Howard Wiarda, Dictatorship and Development: The Methods of Control in Trujillo's Dominican Republic, Gainesville: University of Florida Center for Latin American Studies, 1968, p. 38.

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Times critical of the regime, the Chief dispatched the messenger with these words: "Come to me when you find an article in the United States' press saying that Rafael Leónidas Trujillo is a faggot."[9] The threatened loss of his representational status as supreme heterosexual macho, in other words, was more devastating than political defamation. Thus, his official biographer, Abelardo R. Nanita assures us: "He loves women. His contacts with them show delicate gallantry; suavity in repartee; he is seductively gratifying. A pretty feminine face is to him the best letter of introduction."[10] In fact, for Trujillo women were no more than pretty faces to be displayed publicly, sex objects to be had, often violently, and malleable "constituents" to be called upon as needed.

Ironically, the Dominican feminist movement began under Trujillo's regime. *Acción Femenista Dominicana* (Dominican Feminist Action) was founded in 1931 by upper class women such as Lara Fernandez. In keeping with Trujillo's eugenicist ideologies and policies, "Feminist Action centered its attention on the moral issue of the times: breakdown of the family, prostitution, child abandonment, alcoholism, drugs, etc.,"[11] each of which threatened social, political and economic order. In return for their support of Trujillo's agenda, Dominican "feminists" were allowed to vote "symbolically"

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[9] Joaquín Balaguer, *La palabra encadenada*, 2nd ed., Santo Domingo: Sin sello editorial, 1990: 367 in Torres-Saillaint, 1995.

[10] Abelardo Nanita, Trujillo: A Full Size Portrait, 2nd Edition, translated by M.A. Moore, Santiago: Editorial El Diario, 1939, pp. 25-6.

[11] "*Feminismo Balaguerista*: A Strategy of the Right," NACLA Report on the Americas, vol. 8, no. 4, April 1974, p. 28.

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in 1934 and 1938. These Trujillista feminists proved during the 1934 and 1938 elections their ability "to mobilize support for the dictatorship."[12] In 1942, therefore, they were constitutionally granted the vote. These concessions were as much international public relations gestures as domestically consolidating ones.

> By 1945, there was a "Feminist Section" of the Trujillista Party, which later became the "Feminine Branch" of the Dominican Party, founded and headed by Trujillo. The National Council of Women, which emerged from within this party, is today affiliated with the Inter-American Commission for Women.[13]

Significantly, the vice chairman then chairman of the Inter-American Commission for Women from 1944 to 1949 was Minerva Bernardino, a founding member of *Acción Femenista*. Bernardino was also the Dominican Republic's United Nation's representative in 1950, and was one of only four women – Eleanor Roosevelt among them -- to sign the United Nations charter of 1945.[14]

"At the same time, a series of laws were passed to reinforce the maternal role of Dominican women, and thereby to soften the potential consequences of a strong feminist movement."[15] Women, in other words, were vehicles for the establishment of Trujillo's masculinity, symbolically and physically, as evidenced by his fathering dozens of children with dozens of women. They were also quite explicitly mere reproducers of nationhood whose very status as appropriately fecund women was ordained by law. The

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12 Ibid., p. 29.

13 Ibid., p. 30.

14 Barbara Crossette, "Minerva Bernardino, 91, Dominican Feminist", The New York Times, obituaries, September 4, 1998.

15 Ibid., p. 29.

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paragon of the most Catholic of nations Trujillo wrote and signed into law the right to divorce an infertile woman after five years. Motivated primarily by his own desire to rid himself of his second wife, Bienvenida who did not bear him children during their marriage (although she did afterwards)[16] and whom he divorced in 1935, it is equally symbolic of his larger personal and public policy toward women. As his power increased and was consolidated, Trujillo married increasingly whiter women who bore him increasingly whiter children.

Ironically, the anxiety and the violence surrounding the establishment of Trujillo's heterosexual masculinity illuminate the very homoeroticism of his rule. Who precisely is Trujillo "seductively gratifying"? Again, Nanita's description is useful:

> His figure is martial, erect though not tall, he exudes a certain indefinable pre-possessiveness, which causes a favorable impression and inclines one toward him and even disarms the hate of enemies. On two occasions, he has penetrated into the encampments of factious insurrection, with great peril of his life and to the greater astonishment of his officers, to whom he had given orders to await him at a certain place. The magnetic attractiveness emanating from his person, together with his innate gift of seductive persuasion won the battle without a shot from gun or rifle: the insurrectionists put down their arms at his command.[17]

The recurrent allusions to phallic power and attractiveness, the symbiosis between military and sexual metaphors, the feminization of his enemies who relinquish themselves to him once he has "penetrated" them, are quite obvious.

Political and military power under Trujillo was concentrated exclusively in the hands of men. Their preponderant complicity and collaboration in Trujillo's "orgy of

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[16] Eric Paul Roorda, The Dictator Next Door: The Good Neighbor Policy and the Trujillo Regime in the Dominican Republic, 1930-1945, Durham: Duke University Press, 1998, p. 163.

[17] Nanita, pp. 26-27.

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terror", their literary and physical fawning over the person of the dictator[18], their servility, position them as feminized men. Torres-Saillaint states the matter succinctly:

> Trujillo eroticized Dominican males. He possessed them, metasexually speaking. Like docile concubines, his devotees prostrated themselves before the phallic energy that emanated from the Chief's physical being.[19]

Further, Trujillo's visage and body, both naked and costumed was spectacularly deployed in the assertion of his phallocratic rule. Abelardo Nanita, his most prolific biographer, gushes:

> Trujillo's face is an oval of soft outline, characteristic and very expressive, of choleric passion when in a rage, illumined as the sunshine on a flower, when graced with a smile of cordiality. His eyes are always full of expression and of an undefinable hue not easily to be described; his gaze is penetrating and searching, and makes one feel a piercing to the very depths of one's soul, as with a burnished hard-pointed arrow. At times his glance is soft as silken velvet, and caresses with humid tenderness.[20]

Unlike the fabled emperor whose fragile humanity is betrayed by his nakedness, Trujillo's nakedness was employed to emphasize his super- and supra-human status. Thus, he regularly walked about naked after bathing, whereupon his servants and lackeys dressed and exalted his body: "What a body...What form! What muscles! This explains why women can't resist the Chief!"[21] Trujillo's lackeys elided the sexualized violence of

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18 "United States newspapers in 1952 printed a picture of Ambassador Thomen fixing the cuff buttons in Trujillo's shirt before he entered the office of Secretary Acheson." Galíndez, p. 201.

19 Torres-Saillaint, 1995, p. 279.

20 Nanita, p. 22.

21 Almoina Mateo, *Una satrapía en el Caribe* (1950) in Torres-Saillaint, 1995, p. 282. According to Galíndez (p. 186) Mateo was Trujillo's former personal aide who wrote under the pseudonym Gregorio Bustamante.

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the dictatorship. Indeed, Trujillo was in fact physically irresistible. To refuse the Benefactor his desires, sexual or other wise, rarely escaped violent retribution or the physical imposition of his will. That is to say, Trujillo raped with impunity.

The centrality of sexualized torture in Trujillo's homoerotic phallocracy must not be overlooked. Ximena Bunster's argument that sexual torture in Latin American countries graphically evidences the ideological and political alliance between the misogyny of the Church, the State and the military takes on added significance under the Trujillato.

> It seems that military regimes exhibit the impulse of the state to secure and defend the patriarchal structure and the privileged status of "masculinity" more blatantly than do other authoritarian states. The military state understands itself to be run for the perpetuation and extension of the values of the military, masculinity, power, and public authority to a greater extent than do other patriarchal states. It is founded on the assumption that women and notions of the "feminine" are tools to be used by men; simultaneously, militarism as an ideology purports that women are fearsome threats to public order, to the hierarchy defined and controlled by men.[22]

With Trujillo assuming divine omnipotence, and given the complicity of the Church during most of his regime, the sexual torture of political opponents was specifically intended to feminize and de-humanize them as if it were divine retribution for their sins. The Military Intelligence Service's (SIM) torture chambers, *La Cuarenta* and *Kilometro Nueve* were equipped with electric chairs, *el pulpo* ("another electrical apparatus with long tentacles which were attached to all parts of the body and a cap which was attached

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[22] Ximena Bunster, "Surviving Beyond Fear: Women and Torture in Latin America," in Marjorie Agosin, ed. Surviving Beyond Fear: Women, Children and Human Rights in Latin America, White Pine Press, 1993, pp. 102.

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to the skull by means of screws"), rubber garrots, and electric cattle prods. Castration, immolation, and extraction of nails were also common.[23]

His image was displayed throughout the countryside, in public and private spaces alike. His picture was hung alongside Jesus's in every home, from the humblest shack to the finest mansion. Failure to do so was met with swift and violent punishment. It is also symbolic of the Church's complicity in the institutionalization of Trujilloist misogyny and terror that Trujillo named himself plenipotentiary to the Vatican and signed a Concordat with the Holy See during a trip to Rome in 1954, the first in the history of the most Catholic of nations.[24] The mission, cast in explicitly anti-Communistic terms, at once solidified Trujillo's military and ideological alignment with the United States, and emphasized the Hispanic, Catholic and White nationhood of the Dominican Republic.

> The two main Dominican external problems solved [the border question and the foreign debt], the country entered international life with a new perspective. It lives on a basis of equality with other states and works exclusively in the name of great community interests and in the defense of those principles which are indispensable for a people's existence.
>
> This last assertion explains the anti-communist policy which, for sometime, has been followed by the Government of the Dominican Republic, true to the Christian traditions and principles of occidental culture.
>
> This attitude of frank opposition to everything alien to the Dominican people's standards in life, led Generalissimo Trujillo to negotiate with the Holy See a concordat that has regulated the relationship between State and Church, and places a new barrier to the infiltration of the Marxist theory onto Dominican soil.[25]

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[23] Wiarda, 1968, p. 57.

[24] Ibid., 1968, p. 34.

[25] Embassy of the Dominican Republic, Washington, D.C. "Under Trujillo the Dominican Republic Progresses", A Look at the Dominican Republic, Vol. 2, No. 7, July 1957, p. 4.

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The pictoral equation of Trujillo and Jesus presented visually the omnipotent patriarchal power of the Father of New Fatherland echoed in Balaguer's famous speech, "*Dios y Trujillo*" ("God and Trujillo") from which it is worth quoting:

> It is 438 years after the Discovery that the Dominican nation ceases to be exclusively aided by God in order to be equally assisted by a hand that seems endowed from the start with a sort of divine providence: the providential hand of Trujillo.[26]

This conflation of God and Trujillo is dramatized in Julia Alvarez's In the Time of the Butterflies, a fictionalized history of the Mirabal sisters. Patria, the eldest sister, recounts:

> In the entryway hung the required portrait of El Jefe, except it wasn't our old one of Trujillo as a young captain that used to hang next to the Good Shepard. Mamá had aquired this latest portrait and hung it all by itself, out as far as she could get it from the rest of the house....Maybe because I was used to the Good Shepard and Trujillo side by side in the old house, I caught myself praying a little greeting as I walked by....I don't know if that's how it started, but pretty soon, I was praying to him, not because he was worthy or anything like that. I wanted something from him, and prayer was the only way I knew to ask.[27]

In a country with an average seventy percent illiteracy rate at the time,[28] visual and audio media were key to the Trujillista project. Accordingly, Trujillo owned and/or controlled the national airwaves, television stations and radio stations. As Austerlitz and Pacini-Hernandez each document, Trujillo employed both the broadcast technology and the music itself to nationalize his megalomaniacal vision of Dominicanness.[29] "In this

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[26] Joaquín Balaguer, "*Dios y Trujillo*" as quoted in Doris Sommer, 1983, fn. 31, p. 37.

[27] Julia Alvarez, In the Time of the Butterflies, Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin, 1994, p. 202.

[28] "*Feminismo Balaguerista*", p. 28.

[29] Austerlitz, 1997 and Pacini-Hernandez, 1995.

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way the population of the Dominican Republic was almost completely alienated from the rest of the world. Only the ideas censored and authorized by Trujillo were allowed."[30]

Moreover, the timing of their development indicates the role of television, radio and music in disseminating a positive image of Trujillo's regime in the international arena. Radio broadcasting developed most rapidly during the 1940's and '50s. "By 1955 there were 31 radio stations broadcasting to 15,000 radio receivers." Radio broadcasts were transmitted on equipment strong enough to reach the United States and Europe, and specifically intended to counter "the negative image of his regime." Similarly, La Voz Dominicana T.V., the Dominican Republic's first television station, was inaugurated in 1952, only eleven years after the United States' first station, and close on the heels of Cuba, Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, Venezuela and Canada. [31]

Trujillo's body was endowed with a Rasputin-like ability to withstand pain and possibly even death.[32] Although his assassins riddled his car with fifty-two bullets, only six entered his body. The news of Trujillo's demise would not be accepted as fact until the body was actually made available for viewing.[33] Thus, the Merengue[34] narrating the

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[30] Antonio V. Menéndez Alarcón, Power and Television in Latin America: The Dominican Case, Westport, CT: Praeger, 1992, p. 16.

[31] Ibid., pp. 16-17.

[32] In this regard, as in his love of fine clothing and grand military costumes, the mythology around Trujillo's bodily endowments reflects a tradition established during the caudillismo and military and political turmoil of the mid- to late-nineteenth century. Hoetnik notes that there was widespread superstition that powerful generals "could not be hit by any bullet" and that late nineteenth century dictator Heureaux "could only be wounded by silver bullets." Similarly, Heureaux dressed in French marshal's gear, complete with military decorations and his Sword of Honor. Hoetnik, 1982, pp. 98, 106.

[33] Bernard Diederich, Trujillo: The Death of the Goat, Maplewood, NJ: Waterfront Press, 1990, pp. 113-121.

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death of the dictator, "*Mataron al chivo*/They've Killed the Goat" insists "Let me see, Let me see, Let me see."[35]

Like his body and his image, Trujillo's name assumed divine status. Mountain ranges, towns and hamlets, entire provinces, buildings, museums and monuments bore his name. Even the Capital was "re-baptized" with his name, so that Santo Domingo de Guzmán became Cuidad Trujillo in 1936.

> This adulation increased with the passing years; one observer reported in 1960 that "at the latest count, there were 1,870 monuments to the 'Benefactor' in the ancient city of Santo Domingo; no reckoning has been made of the monuments in towns and villages. Public buildings blaze with neon signs 'God and Trujillo.' A new hospital carries the slogan 'only Trujillo cures you'."[36]

In the ultimate public testament to his phallocratic rule, Trujillo erected an obelisk in his name modeled on the Washington Monument on Avenida George Washington in the Capital. In one simple structure, the white, potent, United States-backed masculinity of the dictator is concretized. Time itself bowed, his rule being decreed "The Era of Trujillo" in 1940.[37]

Trujillo's public relations campaign was explicitly concerned with presenting Trujillo as the white patriarch firmly in control of a fertile land and feminized nation. Although Trujillo was himself of *rayano* (that is, of mixed Dominican-Haitian

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[34] It is sweetly ironic that Trujillo was instrumental in establishing the merengue as the national music form. See Austerlitz, 1997, pp. 55-59, 63-80.

[35] "*Mataron al chivo*," December 1961.

[36] Pope Atkins and Wilson, 1998, p. 42.

[37] Galíndez, p. 182.

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background) and was considered a mulatto in Santo Domingo, he had his and his family's pictures lightened and their racial history erased. "Trujillo ordered his rubber-stamp legislature to issue a *limpieza de sangre* document certifying that his mother's family was 'pure French' and his father's as 'pure Spanish.'"[38] In fact, Trujillo's paternal lineage did originate in the Canary Islands, and was established with the settlement of José Trujillo Monagas in the Dominican Republic during 1861-1865 *España Boba* period of Spanish re-annexation. His maternal ancestry, however, was directly Haitian. His grandmother, "Diyetta Chevalier, [was] a Haitian who settled in San Cristóbal during the 1822-44 Haitian occupation of the country."[39] Again, Nanita was instrumental in the literary whitening of Trujillo's lineage:

> The genealogical ascendance of President Trujillo is well known. On one hand he is descended from a Spanish soldier of cloak and sword. On the other side, from a marquis of France; two conquerors of lands in the New World, whose prowess adorned their breast with golden crosses.[40]

In this Galvanesque erasure of his personal past, Trujillo foreshadows his extensive and intensive institutionalization of Dominican negro-phobia and mythico-white-indigenism.

Ideologies of race become coded in terms of political (in)stability. In this way, Trujillo's negrophobic racial ideology, his institutionalization of indigenism, and his phallocratic rule operated in tandem with his role as U.S. Marine-trained, installed, and supported military man. In the first fifteen years of his rule, Trujillo's spectacular militarism was instrumental in the evolution of several U.S. policy initiatives, domestic

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38 Atkins and Wilson, 1998, p. 79.

39 Wiarda, 1968, p. 27.

40 Nanita, p. 21.

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and foreign. Trujillo's rise and consolidation of power was aided by the professionalization of the U.S. Marine Corps, whose consummate protégé he was.

The United States Marines during their occupation and military dictatorship of 1916-1924 had trained Trujillo. He came away from the experience with a clear understanding of U.S. racial ideology, militarized politics and eroticized violence. The cultural and political legacies of his Marine training were expressed through the orchestration of social, military, and fashion spectacles such that each drew upon and reinforced the others. According to Eric Roorda,

> Trujillo's efforts to create and publicly depict a new Dominican nation are inseparable from his re-interpretation of all references to the colonial past.... In the cultural forms through which foreign relations between the United States and the Dominican Republic were acted out, what began as mimicry became mastery in the process of consolidation of Trujillo's dictatorship and the Dominican state.[41]

Dressed nearly at all times in imposing military uniforms, rife with self-bestowed medals, his shoulders broadened with epaulets and his boots fitted with lifts, and his face lightened with whitening make-up, Trujillo thus displayed bodily his dominion over and embodiment of the imagined Dominican military, state and nation.

Indeed, as Roorda argues, Trujillo's savvy deployment of military spectacle, personally and en masse, as well as his militarization of public spaces, earned the esteem and support of U.S. military leaders.

> Trujillo's training at the Haina Military Academy and the Officers' Scholl of the Northern District imparted to him the lessons of the Marine occupation: to construct public works, keep public spaces clean, and extinguish opposition. One a more personal level, Trujillo absorbed with great alacrity the Marine style of dress and comportment, earning his

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[41] Roorda, 1998, pp. 190-191.

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> highest marks in the categories of "military bearing," "cleanliness of person and uniform," and "way of wearing uniform and care of same."[42]

Trujillo arrived at the Marine's national constabulary with experience as a private police chief on a sugar plantation, where he is reputed to have utilized violence liberally in the discharge of his duties. That experience was compounded with Marine training. "Trujillo is reported to have served under the infamous Captain Merckle, notorious for his persecution and oppression of Dominican nationals."[43] Melvin Knight's The Americans in Santo Domingo[44] (1928) describes some of the wonton violence of the Marines toward Dominicans:

> A number of Dominicans – we may be certain that nobody knows exactly how many – were put to death offhand by the Marines, and some were tortured, without ever having had their day in court at all....One of them, a man eighty years old, had first been dragged at the tail of a horse....Emilio Suarez, drafted as a guide in April, 1918, described such tortures as cutting off ears, burning a wounded leg, and putting acid fruit juices in slashes made in a man's chest.

That is to say, it was precisely to the degree that Trujillo consolidated his military power, enforced law and order via military rule and terror, developed public works programs employing forced labor, and displayed his total sexual dominion and control over his body and the bodies of others, that U.S. military officials supported "the Dictator next door."

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42 Roorda, 1998, p. 164.

43 Wiarda, 1968, p. 28.

44 M. Knight, 1928. Funded by the American Fund for Public Service's research initiative on imperialism, the Studies in American Imperialism series, directed Harry Elmer Barnes, examined U.S. imperialism toward Cuba, Santo Domingo and Bolivia.

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Statesmen, on the other hand, were much more responsive to the nuanced dictates of U.S. foreign policy than the military men with whom they were competing for political dominion over the Caribbean. Later with the onset of the Cold War, Trujillo evolved into the anti-Communist stalwart of the Caribbean. For both his Dominican consorts and his U.S. supporters and financiers, Trujillo himself embodied anti-Communist aggression. Senators George S. Long (D-La.) and Olin D. Johnston (D-S.C.), and Representative B. Carroll Reece (D-Tenn.) and Gardner R. Winthrow (R-Wis.) were his most effusive Congressional supporters.[45]

Trujillo frequently hosted numerous U.S. politicians and diplomats, among them Vice President Richard Nixon, Senators Theodore Green[46], Olin Johnston, and Ambassadors Ralph H. Ackerman and William T. Pheiffer.[47] While he did have several critics in the U.S., among them the State Department and Congressman Charles O. Porter (D-Ore)[48], U.S. policy toward Trujillo was essentially supportive, or at the very least, non-interventionist, because of his anti-communism and support of the U.S. during World

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[45] Johnson's statements, for example, are reprinted in the Embassy of the Dominican, A Look at the Dominican Republic, vol. 2, no. 7, July 1957, p. 16.

[46] Green was Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee under Roosevelt.

[47] Ackerman was awarded an honorary Ph.D. at the University of Santo Domingo, which was under the personal influence of Trujillo, in 1952. In his acceptance speech, Ackerman praised Trujillo, crediting him with raising the standard of living in the Dominican Republic and bringing progress to the country. Similarly, Pheiffer praised Trujillo as "'an authentic genius who thinks and labors, primarily, in terms of the best interest of the people.'" (cf. Atkins and Wilson, 1998, fn. 65, p. 177 and p. 71, respectively)

[48] Gerald Murphy, who piloted the plane used to transport Jesús de Galíndez to the Dominican Republic, and who himself later disappeared, was from Porter's home district. The State Department investigated Murphy's disappearance and found the Dominican explanation of the events untenable.

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War II. "Trujillo's supporters and his own official publications pointed to four facets of his regime for which they all said the United States should be thankful: effective anti-communism, economic and social progress, political stability and total cooperation with the United States."[49]

Frequently violating of the Foreign Agents Registrations act proviso requiring that foreign propaganda be labeled as such, Trujillo planted unidentified stories in the U.S. media written by public relations professionals and that cast his regime in favorable terms. "In addition, the Dominican Republic became a major foreign-government employer of lawyers, lobbyists, and public relations experts, hired to influence the Dominican sugar quota and promote a favorable image of the Trujillo regime."[50] The image promoted time and again was that of a benevolent patriarch in firm, masculine control of his submissive and fawning (feminized) polity and equally willing to confront communist "penetration" at home and in the Caribbean generally.

Trujillo was keenly aware of generalized negative publicity. He successfully managed to represent the Haitian massacre as reflective of natural animosities between the nations (rather than between the States). Likewise, his status as the only head of state willing to "accept" Jewish refugees at the 1938 conference called together at Evian, France by President Roosevelt was much touted. The refugee re-settlement plan was re-cast as a sign of his racial egalitarianism, rather than as part and parcel of his larger European immigration driven *blanqueamiento* project. (If the Jewish refugees were

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[49] Atkins and Wilson, 1998, p. 75.

[50] Ibid., 1998, p. 88.

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insufficiently Aryan for Hitler, whom Trujillo admired, the whiteness of their bodies and the quality of their hair was sufficient for Trujillo's vision of diffuse reproductive genocide.) Later, his "humanitarian 'open door' policy" extended to two thousand Spanish exiles of the Spanish Civil War. (Again, the anti-Communist stalwart in favor of their valuable "infusion" of whiteness overlooked their status as communists, socialists and/or sympathizers.)

If, as Enloe argues, it is the female traveler who has historically been most constrained, the Trujillistic feminization of the Dominican nation is further evidenced by the personal control Trujillo exerted over immigration. During his regime, a mere four thousand Dominicans out of a population of approximately four million were abroad, an average of about nine hundred per year.[51] Perhaps more telling, however, was Trujillo's control over Dominican citizens abroad, as the 1956 kidnap and murder of anti-Trujillo expatriate and scholar Jesús Galíndez indicates.[52] In addition to Galíndez, exiled labor leader Mauricio Báez disappeared from Havana in 1950 and anti-Trujillist journalist

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[51] Ibid., 1998, p. 78

[52] Jesús de Galíndez was a Spanish exile who had resided in the Dominican Republic for several years during the Trujillo dictatorship. Soon after arriving, Galíndez was employed Dominican Foreign Office as a legal teacher in the diplomatic and consular school. He later became a legal advisor in the Labor and National Economy Department. He was granted an exit visa in 1946 following his involvement with the minimum wage strike comity. He entered Columbia University in New York City in 1951. There he pursued and had nearly completed a Ph.D. in Political Science. He had defended his dissertation on Trujillo's dictatorship on February 27, 1956, the 112th anniversary of Dominican independence from Haiti. He was kidnapped and disappeared on March 12, 1956. Although Galíndez's personal English-language copies of his dissertation disappeared as well, fortuitously he had given a Spanish version to a Chilean friend who subsequently had it published by Editorial del Pacífico in Santiago on June 15, 1956. He received his Ph.D. *in absentia* on June 5, 1956. Russell H. Fitzgibbon, "Foreword," Jesús de Galíndez, The Era of Trujillo, Dominican Dictator, Tuscon, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 1973, pp. xiii-xv.

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Andrés Requena was mysteriously shot in New York in 1952. Trujillo's reach even extended to non-Dominicans he deemed critical of his regime. Puerto Rican tourist Eduardo Colón y Piris disappeared, and Charles Barnes, an Episcopalian minister who had smuggled out information about the Haitian massacre, was murdered.[53] Most famous among his foreign targets, however, was Venezuelan President Rómulo Betancourt, whose criticisms Trujillo countered with an assassination attempt in 1960.[54]

Stanley Walker's account of Dominican history, Journey Toward the Sunlight is an excellent example of the breadth of Trujillo's public relations campaign. Published by the Caribbean Library in 1947, Journey Toward the Sunlight was written under the auspices of the National News-Feature Syndicate, Inc., the public relations publicists for the Dominican Information Center. It is not surprising, therefore, that the entire text is a panegyric to Trujillo and his nation. Nor is it surprising that a recurrent theme throughout the text is Trujillo's anti-communism and evocation of the Good Neighbor Policy. Walker indicates in his epilogue, "Notes of a Well Meaning Visitor," his connection to the Trujillo propaganda machine by making a familiar reference to Morris Ernst. Ernst, whom Walker describes simply as "the New York lawyer," was in fact under retainer with the Dominican government, and less than a decade later was called upon to vindicate Trujillo in the Galíndez affair.[55] While Walker weakly assures his

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53 Wiarda, 1968, p. 58.

54 Moya Pons, 1995, p. 371; Diederich, 1978.

55 Morris L. Ernst, Report and Opinion in the Matter of Galindez, New York: Sidney S. Baron and Co., Inc., 1958. Ironically, Ernst was a staunch critic of Hollywood censorship, communist baiting and right wing conservatism.

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readers that his text "is by no means a political treatise", in fact Journey is a propaganda all the more insidious for being written in the format and tone of travel writing.

Like his pre-cursors, Walker replicates the mythico-white-mestizo representation of Dominican ethno-racial identity. He writes:

> ...one must understand that the Spanish influence, which came to this strange and tragic land with Columbus, is still predominant. It is predominant to a degree beyond that which obtains in most, perhaps all, of the Latin-American countries....Spain, in the biological sense, is regarded as the great Mother whose indomitable qualities manifest themselves in the blood stream of generation after generation.
>
> To some observers all this may seem odd, particularly when they reflect that, according to the best statistics available, only about 13 per cent of the Dominican population may be termed pure "white." Nineteen per cent is classified as Negro, and the remainder, the great overwhelming majority is a mixture containing varying percentages of black blood. Such individuals vary considerably in appearance – mulattos who are very dark and whose features would cause them to be classified in the United States without hesitation as Negro; people the color of coffee or chocolate, with more or less aquiline features, in whose veins flows some Negro blood; and a great many others, of different hues and cast of countenance, who defy casual classification. Some are called "Creoles," which is an historically and ethnologically inexact term. Others have been described as "mestizo," which has more justification. An occasional glint of reddish hair, or a luminous golden complexion, may indicate a strong trace of Celtic blood. The "Indian" influence, both in blood and culture, is so nearly non-existent as to be negligible – which is one of the great differences between Dominicans and, let us say, the people of Mexico....They are first of all Dominicans, and even those with a strong admixture of Negro blood have a pride in their Spanish language, the Spanish culture of the country, which is similar to that of any caballero who can trace his descent all the way back to the Conquistadors.[56]

Walker's description of the Haitian Revolution and of its leaders, by contrast, is rife with racist caricatures. He details the savagery of the black insurrectionists in the typical manner.

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[56] Stanley Walker, Journey Toward the Sunlight: A Story of the Dominican Republic and Its People, New York: The Caribbean Library, 1947, pp. 8-11.

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> Vast waves of black men overran the whole western end of the island. It was their custom to kill the white men first. Then came the women and children, who were tortured and at length put to death in all manner of strange and revolting forms.[57]

Employing what Toni Morrison has called "the economy of stereotype,"[58] Walker draws upon existing racist characterization of African American men as alternatively idiotic buffoons, dandies and savage rapists. Toussaint L'Ouverture is described as "a Negro with an ape-like jaw" and is lampooned as a dandy, a draw upon an image familiar to North American's of the 1940's. Walker mocks L'Ouverture's military attire ("powdered and bewigged") and comportment ("He rode a fine white horse.") At the same time, the dandified L'Ouverture is also a potential rapist. "This playful barbarian seemed to find considerable pleasure in poking at the more comely white Spanish women with his cane, laughing as he did so." The depiction seems straight out of Dixon's Birth of a Nation. Similarly, Dessalines, Toussaint's successor, is a savage barbarian.

> He loved to kill whites; he took a great satisfaction in dispatching members of his own race; when human victims were not readily at hand, he would torture animals. He tried to surpass even Toussaint L'Ouverture in fancy dress. He was a baboon who sought to be a French fop.[59]

The Haitian occupation under Boyer is termed "the era of the Great Darkness" characterized by "Haitian savagery" exemplified by the disempowerment of the Catholic Church, the closure of the University, the draft into the Haitian army, the concerted

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57 Walker, p. 28.

58 "This allows the writer a quick and easy image without the responsibility of specificity, accuracy, or even narratively useful description." Toni Morrison, Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination, Cambridge, MA: The Harvard University Press, 1992, p. 67.

59 Walker, p. 33.

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blackening of the nation, and the "rotting away" of manhood. Salvation arrives in the person of Juan Pablo Duarte, " a young man, a fine-looking fellow with broad forehead and deep-set eyes."

The Haitian occupation of the 19th Century is linked with the contemporary Haitian presence and Trujillo's genocidal policy justified accordingly.

> In this occupation an attempt was made to blot out the members of the Caucasian race in Santo Domingo, and the further attempt was made to eradicate, wherever possible, all traces of that European culture which had made the country respected among civilized people. In resisting the Haitian hordes, the Dominicans were fighting for everything that a patriot can hold dear – and they fought with their backs to the wall and with the everlasting darkness, it seemed, closing over them.
>
> Thus, if this explanation is correct, there is little wonder that it has usually been easier for force to rule in Santo Domingo than pure reason. In times of chaos, and these have been many, it has been easy for the people to forget all the fine-spun theories of constitutional government and pin their faith on a strong man who would give them security.[60]

Thus, both the 1937 massacre a decade earlier and the current dictatorial rule are justified in the face of the Haitian threat.

Equally interesting is the 1954 English translation and U.S. publication of Galván's Enriquillo as The Cross and the Sword. The Cross and the Sword, translated by Robert Graves, was "published in accordance with an agreement between UNESCO (United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization) and the government of the Dominican Republic, with the cooperation of the Organization of American States."[61] That it was the first text published in a series of Latin American classics deemed representative of the "cultural history of mankind" is perhaps not unexpected given

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60 Ibid., p. 89.

61 UNESCO, front piece, The Cross and the Sword.

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Trujillo's and Trujillista spokeswoman Bernardino's earlier tenure at the United Nations.[62] Nonetheless, it is noteworthy in the context of 1950's. In particular, pan-American responses to Trujillismo, the Cold War, and the U.S. civil rights movement provided relevant political and ideological frames of reference for understanding The Cross and the Sword/Enriquillo as an exemplar of the State and the nation it represents.

Enriquillo's devote Catholicism segued nicely with the nation's official Catholicism as personified by Trujillo's anti-Communist, anti-atheistic rhetoric. That Trujillo enthusiastically supported the project, therefore, should come as no surprise. In many ways, Galvan's fictional Enriquillo represented Trujillo more subtly and more effectively than his vast public relations campaign. Brown vs. Board of education was decided in 1954. Under Brown vs. Board, Mexican American school children, legislatively re-classified as white, were used to "de-segregate" African American southern schools. Enriquillo, in textually re-classifying Dominicans as mythico-mestizo-whites, operates in the larger global setting in similar fashion. Dominicans in the Dominican Republic, like Mexican Americans, are honorary whites in relationship to their neighboring Haitians and African Americans, respectively.

The appearance in January of 1956 on the public relations scene of A Look at the Dominican Republic, published and distributed by the Dominican Embassy in Washington throughout the remainder of the Trujillo era serves a more directly controlled representation of the feminized Dominican nation. Published to coincide with the inauguration of the International Fair of Peace commemorating twenty-five years of

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[62] Trujillo was a Delegate to the U.N. from February 1953 during his brother's first rubber-stamp presidency. Cf. Robert D. Crassweller, Trujillo: The Life and Times of a Caribbean Dictator, New York: Macmillan Company, 1966.

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Trujillo's rule, the mini-magazine proclaims the success of Trujillismo. Santo Domingo is represented as a progressive, bountiful tourist and business Mecca, eagerly awaiting U.S. businesses and tourists alike. "Visitors called the country `the most modern of our Latin American neighbors', `Switzerland of the Tropics', and the Dominicans 'the Yankees of Latin America'; in short, an island filled with the familiar in the midst of a sea of differences."[63]

In an interesting echo of Walker's assessment of Dominican political culture, Trujillo justifies his dictatorship as morally justified by Dominican history:

> Our heritage, which is perhaps the most turbulent of all the Latin nations, is steeped in fraticidal bloodshed, debt, poverty and ignorance. The transformation since 1930 has required a strong, responsible government....We are daily perfecting a Dominican brand of democracy suitable to our own needs and idiosyncracies and in the future when illiteracy is more completely eradicated as a result of the vigorous drive we have undertaken, and when our advancements have been more completely stabilized, I feel certain the people will be ready for a more "americanized" variety.
>
> It should always be remembered that the Spanish-speaking peoples have a completely different cultural, religious, racial and economic background than the anglo-saxons and that this is reflected in government as well.[64]

Astutely drawing upon prevalent North American theories of race, economics and politics, Trujillo admonishes his Anglo readers that his methods are dictated by the under-developed nature of his subjects, and thus naturally justified. At the same, progress is possible over time, as his twenty-five year-long "transformation" of the nation

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63 Derby, 1999, p. 204.

64 Embassy of the Dominican Republic, Washington, D.C., "An Interview with Generalissimo Rafael L. Trujillo," A Look at the Dominican Republic, vol. 1, No. 6, June 1956, p. 3.

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indicates. The transformation, however, is incomplete and not "completely stabilized", and thus potentially prey to the forces of disorder: "bloodshed, debt, poverty and ignorance."

That his message reached U.S. government observers is evident in the near verbatim reiteration of Trujillo's rhetoric in congressional circles. Senator Alexander Wiley (D-WI), for example, explained:

> Let me make it quite clear: I, for one, like all of my colleagues here, prize freedom as much or more than any other American....
>
> But I also point out that each people – in Latin America, Europe, Asia – is the product of a different background. Our national cultures are different, our religious [sic] and interpretations of religion are different.
>
> We come from different political, economic, military, and other conditions.
>
> We all live on the globe. But we are at different stages of development. Peoples are in different stages of readiness for government and self-government.[65]

Again, the emphasis is on developmental stages – economic, political, military, and by implication, racial – that pre-sage ultimate arrival at advanced levels of civilization, as modeled by the U.S., of course.

Throughout A Look at Santo Domingo, the recurring theme is of order, cleanliness and progress engineered with military precision and rigor by Trujillo. Each issue includes pages entitled "Food, Funds and Common Sense: All These are in Good Supply on this Business-Like Isle of Progress," "Here a Health Program that Really Works: Individualism and Government Aid Combine Successfully on this West Indies Isle of Progress," and "Dominican Republic: A Debt-Free Nation with a Balanced

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[65] "Two Leading U.S. Senators Alert the Senate to the Rising Danger of Communist Infiltration in the Caribbean," reprint of statement to the Senate, June 21, 1957, in A Look at the Dominican Republic, vol. 2, No. 7, July 1957, p. 14.

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Budget, Its Agricultural and Industrial Growth Marked by a Growing Volume of Exports." Readers are informed that pre-natal to geriatric health care is available for all, thanks to Trujillo. The order, hygiene and health of the state and the nation are stressed. "Cleanliness is a fetish in this Caribbean country" reads the caption to an image of a young boy holding a pineapple before a fruit stand. Each issue also includes the page where new industries, foreign trade, imports and exports, and foreign investment are detailed. This is followed by a "Directory of United States Exporters to the Dominican Republic" and of "Dominican Importers and Exporters," the former three times as large as the latter.

The emphasis throughout is the health of the economy, the health of the people, the health of the regime. The principle evidence is offered in articles featuring major public works projects (hospitals and schools), major cultural projects (the International Fair) and major industries, particularly the Central Rio Haina sugar mill and the Barahona salt mine, both of which were owned and operated by Trujillo and his family. At the same time, U.S. capital, investors and tourists are exhorted to participate in the economic miracle, for which they are partly responsible:

> We, of the Dominican Republic, can never overlook our close ties with the United States. It is therefore appropriate that we extend to the American businessman an invitation to consider our natural resources, markets, favorable income and property tax situation, beneficial labor conditions and our over-all building, financial, export and import conditions; in short – our investment opportunities....
>
> The economic policies of the republic have improved the business structure of the nation and brought about unparalleled prosperity. The fiscal policies of the country are favorable to business. Judge for yourself.[66]

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[66] Embassy of the Dominican Republic, Washington, D.C., "Business and Investment Opportunities in the Progressive Dominican Republic," A Look at the Dominican Republic, vol. 1, No. 6, June 1956, p. 18.

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Trujillo, the Father of the New Fatherland, selectively pimped the Dominican nation while embodying the Dominican State. The Dominican Republic of the 1950's, thus, is served up by Trujillo and his ideologues for controlled consumption by the U.S. and European political and economic elite. On the one hand, Trujillo retains the most productive lands and resources under his personal and nepotistic control and husbanding. On the other, he offers up Dominican land for (controlled) husbanding by White others.

Similarly, Trujillo demanded and received unimpeded sexual access to women throughout the country, his version of the Middle Age's *jus primae noctis*, [67] "a custom that gave the lord the right to sleep with the vassal's wife the first night of marriage."[68] His officers were required to seek his permission before marrying, lest Trujillo desire the intended bride.[69] He was willing, nonetheless, to offer up his eldest daughter, Flor de Oro, for public spectatorial consumption as symbolic of the nation, making her one of the country's first beauty queens. That she is named (in Spanish) after Anacaona, the famous Queen of Jaragua betrayed and murdered by the Spanish conquistadors is equally symbolic. Similarly, his younger daughter, Angelita, performed the role of national beauty queen at the inauguration of the International World's Fair of Peace. [70]

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[67] Under the Bolivian hacienda system of the 1950s, *ladino hacendados* had the "right" to de-flower native women employed by the plantation, which they termed "*derecho de pernada*."

[68] Menéndez Alarcon, 1992, p.15.

[69] Diedrich, p. 77.

[70] See Derby, 1999 for an excellent analysis of the World's Fair of Peace.

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The viability of the nation is cast in positivistic, capitalistic and militaristic terms. Although each of these had domestic nineteenth century antecedents, Trujillo explicitly attributes his vision and methods to the U.S. Marines:

> My contact for several years with the United States Marines allowed me to observe the principles of obedience to authority, as practiced by the Marines, and equally important, the requirement of unfailing devotion by an officer to his men. These tenets have guided my career...
>
> To restore law and order we had to fight force with force. Only then could we survive to do good. [sic] Unfortunately, from time to time the small but vocal Dominican Revolutionary Party in New York, which includes a number of fugitives from justice, agitates against us by magnifying, and in many cases fabricating, the stories about our early years. We point with pride to our constructive achievements, but are forced to recognize that the "outs" want to be "in", and that to accomplish this they will not stop short of using the basest means.
>
> The standards of sanitation introduced by the Marines, although limited, were an improvement over the facilities we were accustomed to, which had changed little since the days when Columbus and his men first arrived. Today, thanks to government efforts, we have pure drinking water in every city and town and modern sewage systems in all our major cities. Dysentery, malaria and other endemic diseases are practically non-existent due to these measures.[71]

The nation, in other words, is clean, disciplined and healthy through careful and personal husbanding by Trujillo. The threat is the ever-encroaching illness, disorder and dirt embodied by Haitians, dissidents, and unruly bodies. Rather than representing repression, Trujillismo embodies progress. The word itself is used on each and every page, usually in bold, upper case or italicized letters.

While Hoetink, for example, notes that in the later half of the nineteenth century "the *entire* society was, to a certain point, `militarized'" because of the constant political

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[71] Embassy of the Dominican Republic, Washington, D.C., "An Interview with Generalissimo Rafael L. Trujillo," A Look at the Dominican Republic, vol. 1, No. 6, June 1956, p. 4.

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turmoil and the "multiplicity of war actions", the Marines were explicitly charged with unarming the Dominican population, centralizing military and police power in the National Guard, and enforcing respect for the military state. This represented a substantial shift from an earlier situation in which "it was difficult to draw a boundary between army and citizenry *as institutions*, so it was difficult to do so between the military man and the citizen *as persons*."[72] The concentration of military power under Trujillo was in fact precisely about de-militarizing, and therefore about de-masculinizing, the citizenry.[73]

The emphasis on cleanliness, order, health and discipline in Trujillo's rhetoric must also be understood in relation to U.S. policy in Puerto Rico. Americanization programs there emphasized precisely those elements of Puerto Rican life considered detrimental to the urbanization and proletarianization of the peasant masses: high fertility, consumption of locally-grown natural, unprocessed foods, utilization of traditional healing methods, and independence from wage labor. The every-day practices of rural life were constructed as backwards, anarchistic, un-hygenic and immoral. Urban modernity on the U.S. model, by contrast, defined civilization and progress. This entailed consumption of processed foods, utilization of licensed professional medical doctors, and

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[72] Hoetnik, 1982, p. 101.

[73] As will be elaborated in Chapter Six, The corollary to this, of course, is the multiple *de facto* and *de jure* exclusion of women from full citizenship. If nineteenth century citizenry are "military men" *de facto* and women were disenfranchized *de jure*, then women represent on both counts the antinomy of citizenship. Similarly, if the twentieth century elaboration of citizenship was predicated on the feminization of Dominican men, Dominican women represent the lack of political power, the granting of the franchise by Trujillo notwithstanding.

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reliance upon wage labor, each forming the larger web of capitalist production and development.

In "Here a Health Program that Really Works: Individualism and Government Aid Combine Successfully on this West Indies Isle of Progress," Trujillo seems to be responding directly to Americanization mandates. In it, the emphasis is upon the professionalization of health care, particularly, maternal health and child care, public cleanliness, balanced diets, and modern, affordable housing. The caption below a photograph of newborns in neatly arranged metal bassinets, attended to by a masked and uniformed nurse reads:

> Dominican babies are born under expert auspices. Prospective mothers are prepared with prenatal care and advice, and free layettes. Needy mothers receive a free milk supply for infants. No mother need be without complete postnatal care.[74]

Expert control over reproduction and the introduction of baby formula, emphasize Trujillo's control over the fertility and mothering of Dominican women and the nation at large. Similarly, Dominican bodies more generally are disciplined in the most modern of terms, as the caption beneath a photo of a new hospital notes:

> This modern hospital at Ciudad Trujillo is staffed and equipped for prevention and treatment of disease. Under the prevention program radiograph and flouroscope examinations are conducted on a wide scale for early disease detection.

The public space is equally ordered and medicalized. Accompanying an image of a street cleaner, dressed impeccably in white shirt and pants, the caption reads:

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[74] Embassy of the Dominican Republic, Washington, D.C., "Here's a Health Program that Really Works," A Look at the Dominican Republic, vols. 1 - 2, Nos. 1-12.

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> City streets are swept clean every day on this Isle of Progress. In rural and urban areas motorized clinics travel from house to house, give free advice and diagnoses.

Again, the motorized clinics are reminiscent of a similar project in the Puerto Rican countryside during the 1960s in which legions of female social workers were trained and employed as part of "community health" programs, primarily intended to limit reproduction and alter consumption patterns.[75]

The orderliness, abundance and cleanliness of Dominican diets and homes are emphasized. A photo of a young boy holding a ripe pineapple before a lush and well-stocked fruit stand reads: "Spic and span food markets with complete stocks of the native foods and fruits assure well-rounded diets from Dominicans." The last photo is of a woman pushing a broom before the lush garden of a trim home, and accompanied by two little girls. The caption informs us that "individualized workers' homes, at rentals of $14 to $23 a month, afford tenants electricity, water supply, modern plumbing and sewer facilities. Tenants can receive title after 10 years." Again, a similar program was under way in Puerto Rico, where the establishment and growth of a middle class was seen as key to the sort of economic and political stability that would attract U.S. capital and tourism.

The outcome of this social engineering program conceptualized, funded and administrated by Trujillo is the transformation of the national polity into disciplined, hard-working, healthy, productive and appropriately reproductive bodies:

> A visitor to the Dominican Republic today finds a happy, well fed, well dressed and hard working population. This is a marked contrast to the conditions prevailing before the present Era, when the country was

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75 *La operación*, New York: Cinema Guild, 1982.

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> underdeveloped, lacking in financial resources, and its inhabitants devoting themselves to primitive work unaided by modern tools and implements.
>
> With the development of new trades, professions and industries; with the improvement in sanitary conditions and with the general raising of the standard of living, the population has increased notably. By the early 1960s the population will have reached the three million mark.[76]

In sum, there is in this narration of public policy under Trujillo a simultaneous nod to U.S. ideology and an insistence on its autonomous and culturally-specific implementation.

Trujillo also employs A Look at the Dominican Republic to respond to negative press reports surrounding the Galíndez affair. Interviews, advertisements and reprints from The Congressional Record are utilized. In "To the Members of the American Newspaper Publishers Association: A Message From Your Friends in the Dominican Republic", signed by various Dominican dignitaries and political figures,[77] United States journalists are exhorted to apply the "interpretative journalism," "background news", and "objective and impartial reporting" principles they advocated at their seventieth annual convention in New York City. Like Trujillo's representation of the uniqueness of the Dominican political culture, the call is to bear in mind the particularities of the Dominican situation, domestic and international. Criticism of the Trujillo regime arises

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76 "Building a Strong Nation: Health, Welfare and Education in the Dominican Republic," A Look at the Dominican Republic, Vol. 5, No. 6, June 1960, p. 9.

77 Monsignor Ricardo Pittini (Archbishop Primate of America), Dr. Pedro Troncoso Sanchez (Rector of the University of Santo Domingo), Dr. Arturo Damiron Ricart (President, Rotary Club of Ciudad Trujillo), Dr. Amable Lugo S. (President of the Dominican Red Cross), Reverend Carlos Amado Ruiz (Pastor of the Consultative Council of Evangelical Churches of the Dominican Republic), Dr. Hipolito Herrera Billini (President, Supreme Court of Justice), Franklin Mieses Burgos (Director, Institute of Hispanic Culture), and Dr. Julio Jupiter (President, Dominican American Cultural Institute).

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from "Communist groups that spread propaganda about us." Thus, those who criticize Trujillo are pro-Communist, and disregard the central role Dominicans play in anti-Communism. "We have played our part – a crucial one for our people – in the great conflict of our time, the battle against international, atheistic communism, and it is our proud boast that we have so far succeeded that there is not a single communist in the whole of our country."[78] That they had been repressed, exiled and/or murdered as Galíndez was is, of course, unmentionable.

A later issue reprints "The Other Side of the Galíndez Story," a Memo from Trujillo that had been published in the U.S. press. The prelude to the memo sums up the tenor and tone of the memo: "Generalissimo Rafael L. Trujillo, leader of the progressive, strongly anti-communist Dominican Republic, in a memo that follows, reveals a facet of the conspiracy by Communist-leftist [sic] and others to destroy the good will of a friendly Caribbean neighbor strategically located at the gateway to the Panama Canal."[79] The allusion to the Good Neighbor Policy, and direct references to anti-Communism, to the military and economic importance of the region, and to explicitly Anglo-model rule of law, and the assertion that Galíndez himself was a Communist murdered by New York

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[78] Embassy of the Dominican Republic, Washington, D.C., "An Interview with Generalissimo Rafael L. Trujillo," A Look at the Dominican Republic, vol. 1, No. 5, May 1956, p. 12.

[79] Embassy of the Dominican Republic, Washington, D.C., "An Interview with Generalissimo Rafael L. Trujillo," A Look at the Dominican Republic, vol. 1, No. 10, October 1956, p. 12.

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Communists in order to garner attention to their cause, are the rhetorical and ideological tools reiterated in all subsequent responses to the Galíndez affair.[80]

The roll of visual media, particularly film and television, in both the domestic and international spheres in the development of contemporary Dominican ethno-racial identity must not be overlooked. As in other representational sectors, there existed a complex interplay between the exigencies of the United States policy and interests, and those of the domestic elite. During the Trujillato, the Good Neighbor Policy framed representational discourses as well as military and overtly political ones. That the Dominican Republic per se was not depicted in any United States' film, neither as an actual filming location nor as a setting, from 1936 to 1955 is noteworthy and worth further study. One could hazard a guess that at least part of the exclusion is attributable to Trujillo's firm dictatorial control of the country and its representation.

Another consideration, however, is the explicit mandate of the Good Neighbor Policy institutionalized in the Production Code Administration's requirement that "film makers eliminate the more offensive of their stereotypical Hispanic images and racial epithets"[81] in the interests of hemispheric unity. As Richards notes:

> Good Neighbor musicals continued for almost a decade after the war. Possibly the most important metaphor they projected was that of one people within two hemispheres, individually different, but who could share love and friendship to insure inter-American security....lots of Anglos were hugging and kissing lots of Hispanics. The musicals did more than destroy assumed racial barriers. Some Latins were now seen as affluent peoples, living in modern cities with sky-scrapers and beautiful

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80 Cf. Harold Lord Varney, "What is Behind the Galíndez Case?," A Look at the Dominican Republic, vol. 2, no. 7, July 1957, pp. 7-10.

81 Alfred Charles Richard, Jr., Censorship and Hollywood's Hispanic Image: An Interpretive Filmography, 1936-1955, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1993, p. xv.

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> tree lined avenues who shared Anglo concerns about love and money....Also, screen Latins seemed to be in love with everything in the North, including the peoples who lived there. That mythology came to an abrupt end when Vice President Nixon experienced one of the six crises during his tour of South America in 1958 because the crowds threatened his life.[82]

Of course, that Nixon received a warm welcome in his 1955 visit to the Dominican Republic is emblematic of the mutual ideological and political support between the Dominican State in the person of Trujillo, and the United States. As Ella Shohat explains:

> The national and racial hierarchies of the cinema allegorize, in other words, extra-discursive social intercourse. In the period of the Good Neighbor Policy, Hollywood attempted to enlist Latin America for hemispheric unity against the Axis. As European film markets were reducing their film consumption due to the beginning of the war, Hollywood, in hopes for South American markets and pan-American political unity, flooded the screens with films featuring "Latin American" themes.[83]

Nixon, who was "cheered like a local hero returning home after a conquering journey," praised Trujillo and his regime. His comments on Trujillo's pro-European immigration plans undertaken to aid the whitening and civilizing mission, pointed to the United States' own similar legacy. They were reprinted in the publication of the Dominican Consul General in New York City:

> "The progress of the United States," he declared, "is due to a large extent to the immigration currents during all the nineteenth century. That immigration had a decisive influence in the transformation of the United States into a great nation."[84]

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82 Ibid., pp. xxxvi-xxvii.

83 Ella Shohat, "Gender and Culture of Empire: Toward a Feminist Ethnography of the Cinema," Quarterly Review of Film and Video, vol. 13 (1-3): 1990, p. 68.

84 Consulate General of the Dominican Republic in New York, "Nixon Lauds Dominican Cooperation with U.S.," Dominican Republic, Vol. 4, No. 2, March 1955, p. 5.

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The reference, of course, is to the strictly European immigration policies that were coupled during the 19th Century with the Chinese Exclusion Act and restrictions of citizen to those of European descent.

The status of Dominicans as honorary whites in the Trujillo period, then, must also be understood in reference to in the U.S. film-imaginary of love affair between Anglos and nearly white "Hispanics," so long as they remained in Latin America. The same period saw the proliferation of tragic mulatto films emphasizing the impossibility of similarly loving African-Americans.[85] Similarly, featured in fourteen films during the same period, the characterization of Haiti and Haitians is overwhelmingly centered on voodoo, zombieism, and primitivism, as in literary depictions.[86]

Conclusion:

The Trujillo era's articulation of "*Dominicanidad*" relied upon and subsequently institutionalized gendered and racialized understandings of the Dominican

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[85] Cf. Donald Bogle, Toms, Coons, Mulattoes, Mammies, and Bucks: An Interpretive History of Blacks in American Films, New York: The Viking Press, 1973; Candelario, 1993; Thomas Cripps, Slow Fade to Black: The Negro in American Film, 1900-1912, New York: Bantam, 1977; Daniel J. Leab, From Sambo to Superspade: The Black Experience in Motion Pictures, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1975; James R. Nesteby, Black Images in American Films, 1896-1954: The Interplay Between Civil Rights and Film Culture, New York: University Press of America, 1982.

[86] Ouanga (1886), Revolt of the Zombies (1936), Sign of the Zombies (1940), Love Wanga (1942), Guadacanal Diary (1943), I Walked With a Zombie (1943), Revenge of the Zombies (1943), Voodoo Man (1944), Zombies of Broadway (1945),Valley of the Zombies (1946), Royal Wedding (1951), Lydia Bailey (1952),Voodoo Tiger (1952), and Golden Mistress (1954). Alfred Charles Richard, Jr., Censorship and Hollywood's Hispanic Image: An Interpretive Filmography, 1936-1955, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1993.

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subject/citizen. The discursive and material practices of modernity, imperialism and jingoism in the Americas of the period from World War I to Trujillo's assassination in 1961 provided the geo-political frame of reference within which Trujillo operated and upon which he relied in the diffusion and consolidation of his rule. At the same time, domestic cultural practices and ideological structures – especially *machismo*, *hispanofilia*, Catholicism, and anti-Haitianism – acted as axes in Trujillo's nation-building strategies. In brief, Trujillo propagated a homogenous white supremacist, masculinist and heteronormative notion of "*Dominicanidad*" that subsumed or erased the country's cultural, political and ideological heterogeneity. Trujillo's legacy continues to resonate in state-sponsored representations of Dominican identity and citizenship, as we see in the next chapter.

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Chapter Five
"The Africans have no history": Transnational Museum Displays of Dominican Identity[1]

> *We can expect the negrophobia and Eurocentric notions of Dominicanness to live on for as long as those who are in power remain there, controlling the official tools of cultural definition and the institutions that shape public perceptions.*[2]

> *For Hispanophile Dominicans, to speak of the Black, to concern oneself with him, to study his native cultures and his Creole contributions is not in good form....No less extreme are the cloak and dagger Africanologists, those intellectuals whose anticolonial fervor leads them separate themselves upon smelling a Spaniard, as if the Spaniard were a plague from which one has to run like a scalded cat.*[3]

The companion to defining identity officially is displaying it in state institutions. These processes are dialectically complimentary, each influencing and reflecting the other. To this point I have presented the historic trajectories and intersections between "Dominican" identity development and its textual definition by Dominican and United States' nation states and their agents. I turn now to a consideration of their displays.

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[1] Funding for this research was provided by a Rockefeller Foundation Humanities Fellowship at the Dominican Studies Institute of the City College of the City University of New York, and by a Pre-Doctoral Latino Studies Fellowship at the Smithsonian Institution's Anacostia Museum.

[2] Torres-Saillant, 1999, p. 54

[3] Deive, 1997, p. 107.

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El Museo del Hombre's General Catalogue states unequivocally that "Spanish influences predominate in Dominican culture."[4] At the same time, the Museo is dedicated almost entirely to the collection, preservation and display of Taino artifacts. Indeed, those artifacts have long been a fundamental link between Dominican and United States public history.[5] In this chapter I ask what is involved and invoked in the performance of *Dominicanidad*[6] – in all its racialized, gendered, classed, sexualized contours – in El Museo del Hombre's permanent exhibit, in the Smithsonian Institution's Anacostia Museum 1994 exhibit, *"Black Mosaic: Community, Race, and Ethnicity Among Black Immigrants in Washington, D.C."*

Building upon the ethnographic tradition of travel writings of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, world's fairs and museums served as principal media of dissemination of information about non-European peoples. "[The] symbolic construct [built at the word's fairs] centered on the interpenetration of Darwinian theories about racial development and utopian dreams about America's [sic] material and national

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[4] Fausto Arturo Rodríguez R. y Humberto Soto-Ricart, Catalogo General, Museo del Hombre Dominicano, Santo Domingo, RD: Museo del Hombre Dominicano, 1989, p. 91.

[5] If we look at the historic encounters between subjects and objects related to Dominican national identity and the Smithsonian Institution, we see that there have been three defining moments. The first moment is an affirmation of the cultural "Hispanicity" and relative whiteness of Dominicans embodied via Columbus's remains. The second was the racial "indigenousness" of Dominicanness materialized in Taino archeology and ethnography. The third and most recent moment is the display of "black" Dominican immigrants to Washington, D.C. at the Anacostia.

[6] "*Dominicanidad*" or Dominicanness, consists of the complex of cultural qualities said to be uniquely Dominican.

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progress."[7] Like travel writings, world's fairs and museums provided public histories, of self and other, to the masses. "Carefully designed exhibits left little doubt that the same set of ideas that had been used to justify the political and economic repression of Native Americans, Afro-Americans, and Asian-Americans were being used to validate American [sic] imperial policy overseas."[8] Unlike travel writings and world's fairs, however, museums have proven more permanent, and perhaps as a result more influential than their precursors.

Museums, built explicitly in order to bring colonial and imperial knowledge about and to their societies, were designed with public consumption in mind. "As such, these museums became the primary scholarly means by which the public came into contact with the 'primitive' – that is, people of color."[9] Like their contemporary social institutions the beauty shop and the department store, museums were part of the (seeming) democratization of knowledge -- and in particular the diffusion of scientific knowledge -- in Europe and the United States. Thus, from the late nineteenth century onward, thousands of United States residents traveled through world's fairs, and their permanent manifestations, museums. Indeed, the country's preeminent museum, the Smithsonian Institution funded in 1829 by James Smithson and opened in 1846,

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[7] Robert W. Rydell, All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984, p.235.

[8] Ibid., p. 236.

[9] Faith Davis Ruffins, "Mythos, Memory, and History": African American Preservation Efforts, 1820-1990," in Steven D. Lavine and Ivan Karp, eds., Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display, Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991, pp. 506-611.

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participated actively in the organization, staffing and exhibits World's Fairs throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. "The continuing involvement of experts from the Smithsonian Institution in providing exhibits, advice, and display classifications [at the World's Fairs] also confirmed the intermeshing of upper-class purpose and federal power."[10] The continuing mandate of the Smithsonian has been the "the increase and diffusion of knowledge".

By way of illustrating the influence of museum based public histories, let me recount my own experience as a child visiting the Dominican Republic. When I was eight my mother took me to El Museo de las Casas Reales, a museum of Spanish colonial history in Santo Domingo. The permanent exhibit is principally of Spanish artifacts and images of the Conquest. One display case in particular made an indelible impression on my young mind. In it were a pair of tooled leather boots fitted with a long, sharpened metal tip. The card accompanying the case explained that the boots were worn by the Spaniards who used them to kick enslaved Tainos into submission or to death, whichever came first. That I have never forgotten that object and its historic message illustrates the power of public history. As important, however, is the lack of a similar experience related to the nature of African slavery in my mother's country. That legacy is as, if not more relevant to my personal and Dominican national history than the Taino. But it is a legacy that, like my mother, I was explicitly exposed to in the United States, not in the Dominican Republic.[11]

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[10] Ibid., p. 235.

[11] At the same time, of course, Dominican national cuisine, music, linguistic patterns, religious practices, dance and body movements provide implicit evidence of the African Diaspora into the island. Tejada, 1998.

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Primacías de America en La Española, a poster exhibition presenting twenty-nine "firsts" – social, political, economic, demographic, architectural, and cartographic -- during the first fifty years of the Spanish colonial presence, from 1492-1542, was commissioned by the Permanent Dominican Commission for the Celebration of the Fifth Centennial of the Discovery and Evangelization of America in 1989. The exhibition traveled from the Dominican Republic to the United States, and several hundred of its catalogues were ultimately distributed by the Dominican Studies Institute at City College of the City University of New York, from whom I received mine. In the Balaguer-era inaugural presentation statement of the exhibition, Archibishop Nicolás de Jesús López Rodriguez noted that the Commission that he headed

> ...want[s] all Dominicans to be more aware of this historical truth, especially the younger generation, often so distanced from their past and therefore ignorant of the roots of their own culture. Knowing that we must offer a great deal of information in order to achieve this end, the Commission of the Fifth Centennial will present a series of this Exhibition to each province of the country so that the greatest number of people will be able to appreciate its interesting and valuable content. We plan to do the same for the various centers of higher learning and for some cultural institutions, which, by their very nature, regularly attract large numbers of people. In reference to our international plan, as I stated earlier, the Exhibition will be sent to the Honorable Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, requesting that he kindly send it to our embassies in the various countries so that, according to the judgement of our distinguished representatives there, it will be shown when and where it is considered most opportune. We will do something similar with the principal international organizations to which we feel it is important to send each series of the Exhibition.[12]

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[12] Nicolas de Jesus López Rodriguez, "Presentation," *Primacías de America en La Española*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Hispanic Business and Professional Association, 1989, p. 8.

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It is not coincidental that the desire to spread the "truth" of Dominican hispanicity, particularly among the young, many of whom were contemporarily participating in *la nueva ola* ("the new wave") and its attendant reclamation of African cultural and physical legacies, should bear fruit during Balaguer's hispanophile regime.

And, it is noteworthy that the compilation, publication and distribution of the exhibition catalogue was undertaken by the Hispanic Business and Professional Association, Inc. of Bergen County, New Jersey, the state with the second largest Dominican population in the United States. The introductory statement by Association President Kay Palacios, states "These posters are more than a collection of Dominican remembrances of history, they are History, a lantern from the past giving new light to pave our way to the future." In other words, Dominicans abroad must remember their Hispanic roots, roots which one gathers are in danger of being forgotten or re-routed.[13]

The culturally hispanicist and racially indigenist projections of the Dominican State have been institutionalized more permanently in its public history venues. Governmental moves to protect the Dominican national patrimony began during the Báez era on February 3, 1870 with Decree No. 1164, which declared Diego Columbus's fortress a national monument. That this was also the period during which U.S. Annexation of the Dominican Republic was being hotly debated and contested, and just before the U.S. Senate's investigative Commission left for Santo Domingo is probably not coincidental. Indeed, the monument was one of the Commission's stops. As mentioned earlier, Báez worked to represent the Dominican Republic as a nation more

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[13] Junot Diaz's Drown, for example, explores how the urban, working class and poor New Jersey context impacts and intersects with Dominican identity formation.

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"Hispanic" than not. The preservation of colonial architecture and artifacts was in line with that socio-political ethos.

Thirty years would pass, however, until Decree No. 4347 of October 15, 1903 declared existing archeological objects property of the State and proposed the creation of a National Museum. That this Decree was issued during the exceedingly short-lived, three-month presidency of Alejandro Woss y Gil in an era of considerable political upheaval[14] can be taken as an indication of the importance of the matter. Although Amado Franco Bidó opened a municipal museum in Santiago in 1907, twenty more years would pass until the creation of the first museum of the Republic, the National Museum, under the auspices of President Horacio Vasquez in 1927.[15] It is noteworthy that this was not long after the end of U.S. military occupation of the Dominican Republic in 1924. The Occupation era created a degree of political stability through disarmament and repression of the population and it "accelerated the growth of a plantation economy highly dependent on the world sugar market over which the country had little control."[16] These material shifts were accompanied by shifts in Dominican identity and culture. Moya Pons informs us that:

> The U.S. occupation also left a marked taste for the consumption of U.S. goods. In the following years, Dominicans resumed their use of European products, but more than half of the country's imports continued to come from the United States. A marked Americanization of the language also

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[14] Moya Pons, 1995, p. 286.

[15] Harold Olsen Bogaert, Fanny García, and Mayra de Jesús, "Un Modelo de Administración para El Museo del Hombre Dominicano," Masters Thesis, Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo, Facultad de Ciencias Economicas y Sociales, Departamento de Administración y Mercadeo, Santo Domingo, RD, 1999, p. 14.

[16] Moya Pons, 1995, p. 337.

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> took place during these years with the dissemination of U.S. trade marks on almost all the products consumed in the country. U.S. games and toys became popular, and baseball eventually replaced cockfighting as the national sport. Among the urban elite U.S. music became a sign of good taste, although the inverse phenomenon took place among the mass of the population, which espoused the merengue as a sign of protest against foreign domination.

In such a context the role of a National Museum in the development and the display of Dominican national identity is all the more salient. The country's leading newspaper, *El Listín Diario*, for example, reported that:

> The National Museum's founding initiative dates back many years. Since the birth of our nationality, or since the founding of the Dominican Republic, which is one and the same, a great deal was written in the national press favoring the realization of such a noble goal. The initiative to found the Museum, therefore, is not a single person's alone. Rather, it belongs to many, because many labored diligently toward its crystalization. On the other hand, the glorious realization of the handsome goal, the honorable and dignified founding of the National Museum, is attributable to one man, a distinguished and progressive citizen, General Horacio Vasquez.[17]

What is perhaps less known is the fact that the Smithsonian Institution was a key player in the National Museum's founding.

It is especially interesting to remember that the founder of the Smithsonian Institution's Anthropology Department, Dr. Herbert Krieger (1889-1970), was a specialist in Taino archeology who lived and worked in the Dominican Republic from 1929 to 1953 after joining the Smithsonian in 1924. Although Krieger was not the first Smithsonian official to excavate and collect in the Dominican Republic, he was the most

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[17] Luis E. Alemar, "*Historia del Museo Nacional*," *El Listín Diario*, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, March 22, 1930, as cited in Bogaert, García, and de Jesús, p. 14.

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successful.[18] Krieger noted his debt to the Fewkian legacy of excavation and collection in Puerto Rico, and casts his work with Dominica artifacts in that tradition. What Dato Pagán Perdomo, current director of El Museo del Hombre Dominicano, generously has called Krieger's "questionable professional ethics" were evident in Krieger's blatant and unapologetic sacking and robbing of Taino archeological artifacts and graves in the Dominican Republic for over three decades.[19] This was in direct violation of the 1903 Decree 4347 of the Dominican government that "declared existing archeological objects property of the Dominican State and territory." The Decree was issued by provisional President Carlos F. Morales Languazco specifically "to prevent the removal and exportation of the country's indigenous archeological pieces."[20]

The connection between U.S. military imperialism and cultural imperialism is perhaps best illustrated by Krieger's employment of Harry E. Hurst, a former U.S. occupation officer, to travel the Republic collecting on his behalf. Hurst, who supplied both Krieger and Mark Harrington, an agent of the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, was apparently quite successful in his incursions. Just from March 5 to

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[18] As Krieger himself documents (1929) William M. Gabb collected pottery and bones from Samana Bay between 1869 and 1871 which were exhibited at the United States National Museum in 1872. Dr. William Abbot, also of the National Museum, began his expeditions in 1883, making "repeated visits" from that date to the first decades of the 20th century. Herbert William Krieger, Archeological and Historical Investigations in Samaná, Dominican Republic, Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1929.

[19] Dato Pagán Perdomo, "*Notas sobre el tráfico ilícito de bienes culturales en República Dominicana*", Paper presented at *Museos ¿Dinosaurios o Dínamos? Explorando el Futuro de los Museos en el Siglo XXI, Conferencia del ICAMI-ICOM, 16-20 Noviembre1999, Auditorio del Banco Central, R.D.*

[20] Lugo Lovatón, "*¿Museo del Hombre Dominicano?*", Periódico Listín Diaro, Santo Domingo, RD, 28 de agosto de 1971, cited in Bogaert, García and de Jesús, p. 14.

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June 6th, 1924 Harrington made six shipments of archeological objects to Harrington.[21] Significantly, U.S. occupation troops, who had arrived in 1916, left the Dominican Republic in July of 1924. Pagán notes:

> The purchases were an important and permanent means of acquiring indigenous objects and he [Krieger] shamelessly admitted to his friends that he had purchased in Santo Domingo all sorts of artifacts that interested him for the Smithsonian Institution, exulting over the fact that his best collector in Constanza was the police commissioner. In 1930 he removed from the country hundreds of ceramic pieces and various crania obtained form La Caleta.[22]

Between purchases and his own excavations, Krieger acquired Taino artifacts from Monte Cristi, Samaná, Dajabon, la Bahia de Andres, La Caleta, Azua, La Vega, Constanza, Los Picos Culo de Maco, Rucilla, Pico del Yaque, Monte Cucucho and Chinguela. Although the existence and availability of indigenous artifacts on Hispanoila was documented by Europeans as early as 1760 when Jeffrey's Natural and Civil History of the French Dominions in North and South America was published, archeological explorations began in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. That period saw the proliferation of United States' interests in the indigenous legacy of the Caribbean islands being considered for annexation or colonization.[23]

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[21] Correspondence between Harrington and Hurst, Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, cited in Pagán, p. 3.

[22] Pagán Perdomo, p. 3.

[23] Cf. Robert Schomburgk, "Notes on Santo Domingo," Proceedings of the British Association, London, 1851; "On the Currents and Tides of La Mona," Nautical Magazine, London, 1852, vol. 21; "On the currents and Tides of the Southern Coasts of Santo Domingo," Nautical Magazine, London, 1852, vol. 21; "On the geographical position of Santo Domingo," Nautical Magazine, London, 1852, vol. 21; "Ethnological researches in Santo Domingo," Report of the 21st Meeting of the British Association, Journal of the Ethnological Society, London, 1852, vol. 3, pp. 115-122; "Visit to the

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Frederick Albion Ober, ornithologist, Caribbean traveler, novelist and the Smithsonian Institution's Special Commissioner for the World Columbian Exposition of 1893, was charged with obtaining Columbus's remains from the Dominican Republic for the Exposition. Ulysses Heureaux, then dictator of the Dominican Republic, was willing to send the remains to the Exposition for a $100,000 loan. Although, as Ober relates in Our West Indian Neighbors, the exchange was never realized, the seeming willingness to display Dominicanness via the proxy of the nation's most iconographic "Spaniard's" remains is instructive. Nor was this particular possibility quickly dropped. U.S. Consul to the Dominican Republic, Astwood, was removed by President Cleveland for his "indecent proposal" to travel the United States displaying Columbus's remains at circuses and expositions.[24]

The Caribbean islands, then, were valuable not only in terms of economic and geo-political considerations, as has been amply documented elsewhere, but also in terms of cultural ones as well. Finally, as John Weeks has noted, Jesse Walter Fewkes' classic work "Prehistoric Puerto Rico" (1902) was written to bring newly independent Puerto Rico and Cuba to the attention of U.S. archeologists.[25] Of course, sacking of material

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Valley of Costanza in the Cibao Mountains of the Island of Santo Domingo and to An Indian Burial Ground in its vecinity," The Atheneaeum. London, 1853, No. 1338, pp. 787-799; "Remarks on the principal ports and anchoring places along the coast of the Dominican Republic," London, 1953; "The Peninsula and Bay of Samaná in the Dominican Republic," Journal of the Royal Geographic Society, London, 1853, vol. 3, no. 8.

[24] Welles, p. 463. Astwoods was an African American who was originally appointed under Hayes.

[25] John M. Weeks, "Herbert W. Krieger y la Práctica de la Arqueología Colonial en la República Dominicana," cited in Dato Pagán Perdomo, "*Notas sobre el tráfico ilícito de bienes culturales en República Dominicana*", Paper presented at *Museos ¿Dinosaurios*

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culture operated hand in glove with extraction of natural resources, colonization of lands, and military intervention. Indeed, much as Latin American resources helped fuel U.S. political, economic and military development in the 19th and 20th centuries, Latin American material culture was key to the foundation of central U.S. cultural institutions such as the Smithsonian Institution. Ironically, Krieger found a colleague in the Dominican Republic whose work he admired and supported: Dr. Narciso Alberti Bosch, archeologist and founder of the Dominican Republic's National Museum. That National Museum eventually evolved into El Museo del Hombre Dominicano.

El Museo del Hombre Dominicano:

> *The mission of the Museo is to contribute to the creation of a clear consciousness of the national identity.*[26]

El Museo del Hombre Dominicano is an archeological and ethnographic museum located in the Plaza de la Cultura in the capital city of the Dominican Republic, Santo Domingo. Inaugurated on October 12, 1973, the anniversary of the "discovery of America,"[27] and opened in 1974, the Museo began as an archeological museum mandated to collect and exhibit Taino artifacts. Currently, it houses the largest collection of pre-Columbian artifacts in the world and receives over 30,000 visitors per year.[28] It is by far

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o Dinamos? Explorando el Futuro de los Museos en el Siglo XXI, Conferencia del ICAMI-ICOM, 16-20 Noviembre1999, Auditorio del Banco Central, R.D.

26 Dato Pagan Perdomo, Interview, November 1999, Santo Domingo, DR.

27 Inaugural Exhibit Catalogue, Museo del Hombre Dominicano, Santo Domingo, RD, October 12, 1973, p.1.

28 Pagán Perdomo, Dato, *Programación de proyectos y desarrollo institucional, 1997-98*, Santo Domingo, RD: Museo del Hombre Dominicano, April 1997.

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the most visited of the country's museums, outstripped only by Columbus' fortress, the Cathedral, and the infamous Columbian Lighthouse[29]. Catering primarily to students and the domestic Dominican general public, who comprise ninety-four percent of its visitors, the Museo receives twice as many visitors as the National History Museum and one third more visitors than the Museum of History and Geography.[30] In short, it is potentially an influential Dominican cultural institution.

In 1984, the Museo expanded its mandate to include more contemporary anthropological projects. According to Bernardo Vega, the Museo's director during the early 1980s, "Its basic function is actually the study of the Dominican man, past and present, from an anthropological perspective. With that study, which considers both sexes, the Museo del Hombre Dominicano has been converted into the Museum of Dominicanness. What is sought is an exhaustive understanding of the Dominican people's culture and its museographic representation."[31]

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[29] The Columbian Lighthouse project began during the customs receivership and just before Trujillo's regime with international architectural design competitions held in 1929. Cf. Pan American Union, Program And Rules Of The Second Competition for the Selection of an Architect for the Monumental Lighthouse, Which the Nations of the World Will Erect in the Dominican Republic to the Memory Of Christopher Columbus, Pan American Union, 1930. Dominican lore holds that the plans to honor the famous colonial explorer have been long cursed, as evidenced by the repeated obstacles and delays to initiating and later completing the project, including the unexpectedly sudden death of project supporter's family members. When the lighthouse construction was finally begun in the 1980s in preparation for the 1992 Quincentennial Celebration, it was amidst local, national and international protests by displaced poor and low-income residents, by the American Indian community and by progressives worldwide.

[30] Bogaert, García, and de Jesús, p. 79.

[31] Bernardo Vega, "*¿Porque los tres?*" Opening remarks at the opening of the Taino and Spanish Heritage in Today's Dominican Culture, March 24, 1981, reprinted in Boletin 16 Mueo del Hombre Dominicano, Year X, No. 16, 1981, pp. 129-130.

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At the entrance of the Museo stand three imposing, larger than life-size statues of Fray Bartolomeo de las Casas, Enriquillo and Lemba. These three figures are said to represent the racial and ethnic trilogy, which comprise Dominican national identity. These three figures were chosen as archetypal of the three ethnic antecedents of Dominicaness because they each lived during the first sixty years of the colonial system and played important roles therein. According to the Museo, their commonality lies also in their:

> ...search for a common goal: the liberty of man, the right of every human being – not withstanding his social status or the color of his skin – to be free and to freely express his ideas. The three battled, pacifically or violently, against the oppression that subjects man. Taino, Spanish and African in origin, each one of them appear historically committed to one goal: the defense of human dignity, in his reason and his free conduct, in short, they fought for what we know today as human rights.[32]

Las Casas, also known as "The Protector of the Indians" was as Spanish friar based in the Spanish colony of Santo Domingo during the early colonial period. Las Casas launched the now famous debates over the enslavement of indigenous peoples in the Americas from Santo Domingo, a battle which he ultimately won, if only legislatively. It bears mentioning that his concern was not with slavery as such, but with the enslavement of American Indian natives whom he came to perceive as endowed with souls, and therefore human and beyond enslavement. Indeed, Las Casas owned indigenous slaves himself until 1544.[33] As an alternative to natives, he suggested that Africans be imported into Santo Domingo.

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[32] Vega, 1981, p. 131.

[33] Davis, 1966.

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Illustration 5-1: El Museo del Hombre Dominicano, 1997



Photo by: Ginetta E.B. Candelario

Enriquillo was a Taino *cacique* or chief, and convert to Christianity in the early sixteenth century. He collaborated with *encomiendados* and slaveholders in tracking and returning *cimarrones* or runaway slaves, both Taino and African. When his wife was raped by Spanish colono who was not duly punished, however, Enriquillo began to wage war on his former masters, together with the same cimarrones he had formerly hunted. Ultimately, Enriquillo was captured and burned at the stake. His story was mythologized and nationalized in the novel Enriquillo by Galvan, and is what Doris Sommer has called the "foundational fiction" of Dominican national identity.[34]

Sebastian Lemba was a sixteenth century maroon of Cameroonian origins who waged continuous war on Spanish *encomenderos* (or recipients of land grants and the right to slaves from the Crown) for nearly two decades, commanding a standing army of four hundred at any given time. He was, according to Landers, "one of the most feared of the maroon leaders of the 1540s."[35] The details of Lemba's demise are uncertain – either

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[34] Doris Sommer, 1991, 1993.

[35] Landers, p. 2.

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he died in the *palenque* named for him and his head was hung in the Capital, or he was taken prisoner and executed in the Capital. In any event, Governor López Serrata recorded his death with great relief in 1547. Unlike Enriquillo, Lemba's story has been neither mythologized nor nationalized in any extensive manner. Indeed, his statue wasn't added to the Museum's frontspiece until 1980, nearly a decade after the Museum's opening, and then only because the political climate – a brief, post Balaguer, economic and political re-structuring moment – allowed for a revisiting of official Dominican historiography.

The relationship between the Museo and the Dominican state has been somewhat embattled. Both Vega and current Director Dato Pagán alluded to the direct and indirect constraints on the Museo's exhibition policy and on research, programming and education efforts. Joaquín Balaguer was the intellectual engineer of 30-year dictator Rafael Leonidas Trujillo's institutionalization of hispanophilia, anti-Haitianism and indigenist racial identity. Following Trujillo's assasination in 1961 and with the support U.S. military intervention in 1965, Balaguer became President of the Dominican Republic from 1966 to 1978. In 1978, he lost to Antonio Guzmán of the Dominican Revolutionary Party. Guzmán was much more supportive of, or at least did not impede, research into the African roots of the nation. It was during Guzmán's tenure as President of the Republic and Vega's tenure as Director of the Museo that Lemba was added to the Museo fronts piece, anthropological and ethnographic research and exhibits were undertaken, and several research monographs were published. As current Director Pagán

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put it: "It was the era in which the most serious research projects were undertaken."[36] Upon Balaguer's return in 1986, such research was again stymied. What had been accomplished, however, was not undone. As Vega put it, "It wasn't expanded, but it wasn't reversed."[37]

Currently, indirect impediments generally consist of poor and insufficient funding for salaries, research, publications, and diffusion by the Legislature in its General National Budget appropriations to the Museo. Bogaert, García and De Jesús have documented that "whether or not the approved budget is executed depends on various factors: the Government's availability of funds at any given moment, the redirection of those resources to other areas, political or personal motivations to approve, withhold or reject a given request based on the Approved Budget, etc."[38] In recent years, as much as fifty-six and one half percent of the Museo's approved budget has not been rendered to it.[39] Indirect restraints, often channeled through funding, are far more pernicious and difficult to quantify.

Regardless of political climate, however, the Museo's text is and has always been overtly male and heteronormative. De Moya writes that "In Dominican society, the cult to the large and wide *sacred phallus*, vested with magical-religious, erotic and political powers, is a driving force in the socialization of boys, as well as a social temptation for

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36 Interview, Dato Pagan Perdomo, Santo Domingo, November 1999.

37 Interview, Bernardo Vega, Washington, D.C., August 1998.

38 Bogaert, García and De Jesús, p. 33.

39 Ibid., p. 39.

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the initiation of male-to-male competitive sexual relations which validate gender-role definitions through transgression."[40]

The Museo's three central icons represent the origins of the nation, origins that are exclusively male and phallocentric. There seems to be a reiteration of the phantasmagoric Christian story of origins in which humanity arises from male bodies spontaneously. If we consider the Museo as a text of national identity, the particular configuration of women's and feminine (re)presentations and disappearances is a key area of analysis. Mary Louis Pratt has written that the "nation by definition situates or 'produces' women in permanent instability with respect to the imagined community....Women inhabitants of nations were neither imagined nor invited to image themselves as part of the horizontal brotherhood."[41] Dominican women's subjectivity, reproductive, political, cultural, economic or otherwise, generally is either overlooked or actively elided. The question here is how notions of Dominican womanhood and manhood operate both metaphorically and materially in the construction of a racialized Dominican national identity display.

Women are presented in the Museo only in certain contexts and are excluded from others. The inclusions and exclusions reflect the Museo's read of the role of women in the evolution of Dominican identity. The first introduction to women is diorama exhibits of Taino life. These dioramas create a visual economy of gendered indigenism. Táino men are depicted as hunters, often standing and wielding a phallus-like bow and arrow, while the Táinas are shown squatting below and behind the men, cooking and

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[40] De Moya and Garcia, 1996, p. 127.

[41] Pratt in Taylor, 1997, p. 29.

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serving. Each fulfills a traditionally gendered role. Further, the figure of the squatting woman serves to reiterate the primitivism of native women relative both to native men and to foreign women.[42] Further, Taina bodies are always presented nude or semi-nude, and their positioning emphasizes both their reproductive functions and their primitivism.

The use of dioramas alongside artifacts is exemplary of what Kirshenblatt-Gimblett has termed *in situ* display. "In-situ approaches to installation enlarge the ethnographic object by expanding its boundaries to include more of what was left behind, even if only in replica, after the object was excised from its physical, social, and cultural settings." The Museo's displays of Taino artifacts are classically in-situ in that they are arranged in period rooms, recreate dioramic ethnographic villages, depict Taino rituals, and deploy photomurals.[43] Considered in the context of larger Dominican political, sociological and economic history each of these "mimetic displays" reinforces state-sanctioned identity imaginaries.

The Museo has four levels -- a ground floor lobby level plus three exhibition levels -- which are connected by an elevator, a stairwell (generally used by employees) and a series of ramps. The visitor is expected to take the elevator from the ground floor entrance level to the first exhibit level and then to proceed upwards via the ramps. Each exhibit level is arranged such that visitors must enter the exhibit and proceed in a counter-clockwise direction through the exhibit area until once again at a foyer and at the

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[42] Photos of Museo dioramas are currently displayed on the Dominican State Tourism Secretary World Wide Web Site, http://www.domincana.com.do/cultura/epocaprecolombina.html.

[43] Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Objects of Ethnography,' in Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine, Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display, Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1991, p. 389.

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base of the ramp up to the next level. The physical space and the bodily negotiation of that space both imply an upward spiraling, a progression of sorts through the story of Dominican cultural history.

The spiral is not cylindrical, however. Instead, because of the content and space allocation, it is pyramidical. The entire first exhibition level and large parts of the second exhibition level are dedicated to Taino archaeology, culture, dioramas and contributions to contemporary Dominican culture. Its disproportionate physical presence through space and motion reinforce the notion that the indigenous heritage comprises the original racial base of the national trilogy.

The first exhibition floor is arranged chronologically in a series of exhibition halls, beginning with the Monolithic Room. Here, according to the Museo's Catalogue are displayed artifacts "whose common denominator is their sculptural engravings. These confer a symbolical, religious and magical context to the introductory physical space of the Museo." Named for and dedicated to pioneering archeologist Dr. Narciso Alberti Bosch (1860-1932)[44], the room and its contexts act as "evidence of the aboriginal culture" of the country. The artifacts, consisting primarily of ceremonial, masculine anthropomorphic figures, are displayed singly and collectively in glass classes.

The second exhibition level, located on the third floor, has four exhibition halls.[45] The first two halls present the predecessors of the Tainos encountered by the Spanish

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[44] Alberti Bosch was the Director of the Dominican National Museum. A prolific archeologist, researcher and writer, his work was internationally recognized.

[45] The Museo's administrative offices are located on the second floor. The potential disruption caused by this intervention is assayed by the display of a Taino *areyto* (ritual

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colonizers in 1492. Tainos appear, in both text and artifacts, in Hall Three. Distinguished from both their contemporaries and their predecessors by their "important artistic abilities," Tainos are presented as conquering, absorbing and improving upon the Mesoindians who lived on the island upon their arrival. Their rituals are more elaborate, their material culture is more artistic, and their economies and political systems are more developed. They are, in other words, emblematic of progress. With natural and human made artifacts as a background, we are introduced to Tainos in the Taino Peoples Hall.

A curious combination of archaeological artifacts, dioramas and photography comprise the representation of Taino life and culture on Quisqueya[46] pre-conquest. The artifacts predominate, both in quantity and spatially. However, the dioramas and photography in the "Taino Hall" are fairly extensive. The dioramas depict "scenes from the daily life Antillian aborigines of the neo-Indian or agricultural period." These scenes were developed using descriptions provided by Spanish chroniclers and data collected by contemporary ethnologists. As the Museo's inaugural exhibit catalogue puts it, "they are a cultural synthesis of more than five hundred years of study."[47] As a companion to the dioramas, nearby cases display Taino artifacts of daily life depicted in the dioramas, alongside items currently utilized by Arawakan and Caribe Indians in contemporary Venezuela. This placement connects a Taino Dominican past with a Latin American present. Of additional note is the use of unidentified photographs of contemporary

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dance performance and celebration) in the foyer of the second floor. The visitor is guided by the placement of this display toward the ramp leading up to the third floor.

[46] "Quisqueya" and "Haiti" are the island's indigenous monikers.

[47] Inaugural Exhibit Catalogue, p. 14. Interestingly, renowned archeologist, J.M. Cruxent, donated the Venezuelan artifacts.

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indigenous people from South America to represent Quisqueyan Tainos who are long since dead.

According to the Museo's inaugural exhibit catalogue, these photographs are "dramatic and authentic representations of the daily lives" of Amazonian and Orinoco River Indians who are "members of the Arawak people who populated the Antilles." Use of the photographs is explained in the catalogue as illustrative of the continuity between the Spanish chroniclers' descriptions of Taino communities and peoples in the Antilles and current Arawak peoples in "the jungle zones of Venezuela, Brazil and Colombia."[48] No similar explanation is offered in the exhibit itself. The photographs are unlabeled. Thus, the contemporaneous nature of photographic technology subconsciously buttresses the contention that contemporary Dominicans are the descendents and kin of the people depicted in those images.

In other Latin American nations indigenous communities exist in the here and now, and American Indians[49] are physically present, confronting and challenging the indigenist mythos. In the Dominican Republic, "the real indians" exist only in one dimensional pictures and three dimensional glass-cased dioramas, and cannot manifestly challenge the assumption of an indigenist identity by Afro-European Dominicans. The Museo del Hombre Dominicano, in its own materiality and in the exhibits it displays, thus acts as a reification of the mythical Dominican *indio*. As one of my New York

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[48] Inaugural Exhibit Catalogue, p. 13.

[49] This term is used interchangeably with Native Americans throughout this work because both have been preferred and critiqued by various Nations, theorists and activists and a universally acceptable term has not been agreed upon.

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respondents put it amidst giggles "the Africans have no history." And indeed, she is correct. In the Dominican Republic, and in the New York Dominican community, the African story is extant, untold, and unknown.

Archeology, the Museo's principle mission, does not preclude the unearthing of materials and data concerning African life on Hispanoila. In her study of La Isabela, the first Spanish colonial settlement in the Americas located in the Dominican Republic, Kathleen Deagan, for example, has documented the existence of artifacts indicating the nature of early colonial daily life on Hispaniola. Employing an explicitly gendered analysis, Deagan has focused her research on the tools of domestic life. Insights into the daily lives of and relations between Spanish, American Indian and African peoples, for example, come "from one of the most humble categories of material culture, the cooking pots and food in colonial kitchens."[50] Deagan elaborates:

> In general, both traditionally "male" categories and socially visible categories of the material world remained Spanish or European in form from the fifteenth through the eighteenth centuries. This situation is especially evident in the areas of spatial patterning, architecture, and the built environment....One of the most profound of the post-Isabela changes in the Spanish Caribbean colonies, however, was also one of the least visible historically. This was the adoption and incorporation of American [Indian] traits and technologies in domestic spheres of activity....by the sixteenth century, archeological evidence has demonstrated both the regular and systematic incorporation of African and Indian elements in Spanish colonial domestic life and a clear divergence from household material patterns of Spain.[51]

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[50] Kathleen Deagan, "Colonial Transformation: Euro-American Cultural Genesis in the Early Spanish American Colonies," Journal of Anthropological Research, Vol. 52, No. 2, Summer 1996, p.146.

[51] Ibid., 1996.

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Looking at cookware and foodstuffs, in other words, provided clues in how the division of labor was both gendered and racialized. More importantly, it indicates three way cultural contact, influence and adaptation in the realm most often definitive of group identity – food ways. Spanish women were enlisted by the Spanish Crown to help domesticate, as it were, the new colonies. Part of that domestication involved the importation of foodstuffs unavailable in the "new world", even if at great physical and monetary cost.[52] That Eurocentric domestication, however, could not be sustained. Instead, the food ways and domestic practices of Tainas and the various African ethnic groups present on the island held sway. [53]

The Spanish heritage, interestingly, is less dominant in terms of space allocation, comprising only one third of the fourth floor space, with an emphasis on "the discovery", conquest and the colonial period. At the entrance to exhibit a life size bronze sculpture by Aberlardo Rodríguez Urdaneta of the cacique Caonabo in shackles foregrounds a panel depicting the arrival of the Spanish. The General Catalogue informs readers that "the word GENOCIDE has been greatly utilized in reference to the conquest of our island", but argues what while it is "undeniable that there were excesses on the part of the conquistadors", a great deal has been "exaggerated." Maps of the Caribbean are displayed alongside demographic information on the indigenous population. Their conquest, we are informed, was motivated by the desire to "convert the indians to Catholicism, to take gold and plants to Spain and to control politically the new

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[52] Amanda P. Angel, "The Negotiation of Transatlantic Travel for Sixteenth-Century Spanish Women," Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Latin American Studies Association, The Hyatt Regency, Miami, March 16-18, 2000.

[53] Deagan, 1996.

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territories." These goals are symbolized by the display of swords, epaulets and spurs, church bells and a cross. Governmental institutions, the *encomienda* socio-economic model, religion and language are presented as the major cultural legacies.

Illustration 5-2: "Discovery"



Photograph by: Ginetta E.B. Candelario

Large, colorful panels arranged in a series of aisle contain text historicizing the conquest, the Devastations, the arrival of buccaneers, the French colonization, and subsequent political intrigues between the two European colonial powers. We are reminded here that the contact between the Spanish and the Tainos affected the culture and life ways of each,

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although for the Tainos, with devastating results. Nonetheless, Taino people may have disappeared, but their cultural forms live on in contemporary Dominican culture.

Illustration 5-3: "The Spanish, 16th Century"; "The Tainos"



Photograph by: Ginetta E.B. Candelario

The "third" heritage, the African, is relegated to the remaining space, also about one third of the second level. The focus here is primarily slavery, although quite limited and softened, and more marginally, African antecedents of contemporary Dominican culture. This section was added to the Museo in the early 1980s, after the publication of *Ensayos sobre la cultura dominicana*. This anthology served as the research based for both the African and the ethnographic displays of contemporary Dominican culture and people.[54]

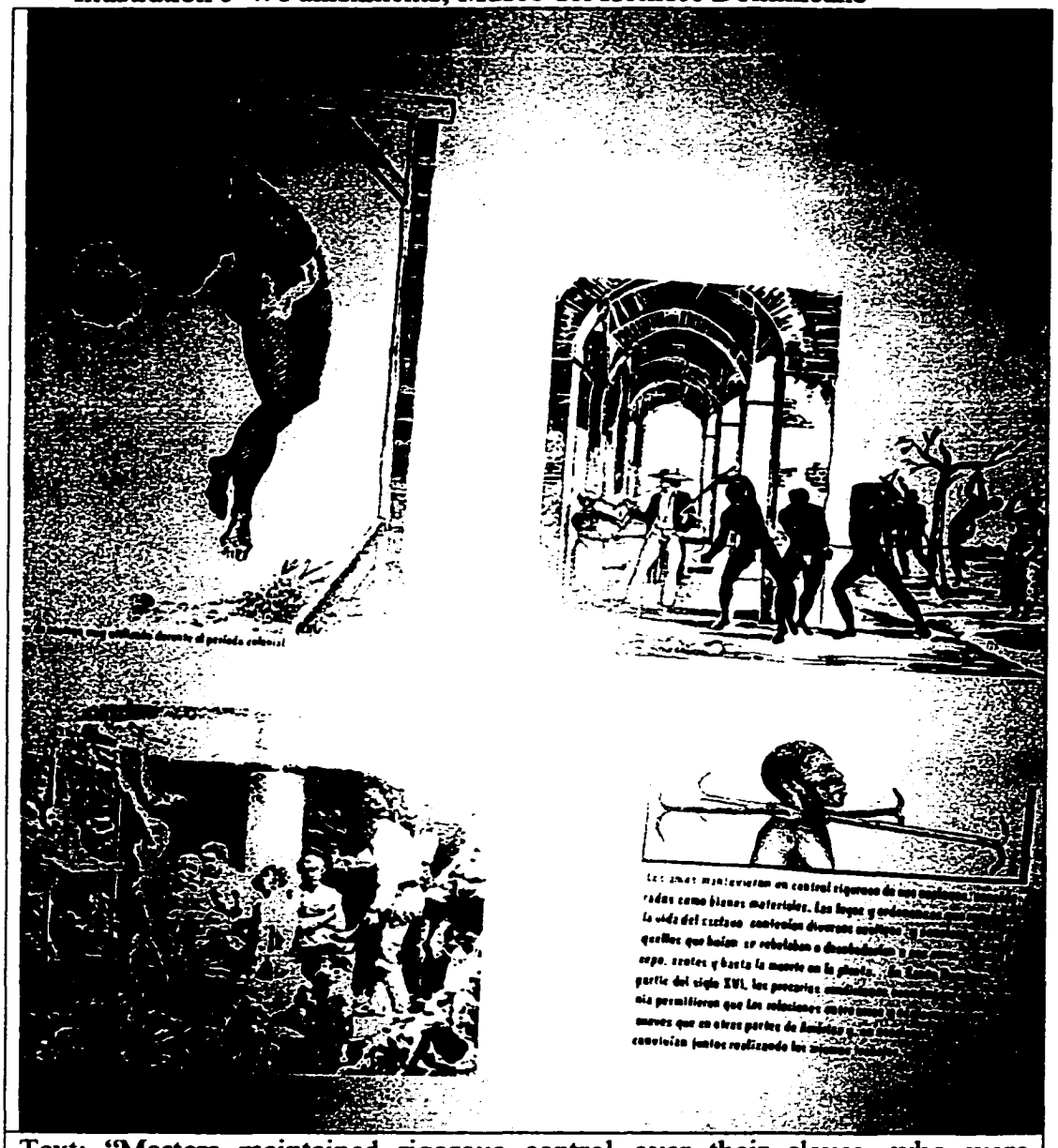
The section on slavery covers the "Capture" of Africans, their transportation to the Americas, and the conditions of slavery in Santo Domingo. This history is presented primarily through ink depictions on large panels such as the one above. In this panel, the

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[54] Interview, Bernardo Vega, by Author, Washington, D.C., July 1998.

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Illustration 5-4: Punishments, Museo del Hombre Dominicano



Text: "Masters maintained rigorous control over their slaves, who were considered property. The laws and ordinances that regulated the life of slaves contained various punishments and sanctions for those who fled, rebelled or disobeyed their masters, such as stocks, lashes, and even lynching. In Santo Domingo from the Sixteenth Century on the precarious economic conditions of the colony allowed for more softened relations between masters and slaves than in other parts of the Americas, and on occasion, they lived and worked together."

Photographed by Ginetta E.B. Candelario

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methods used to control and punish enslaved Africans are depicted. The accompanying label begins by documenting the use of punishment and torture. In this way, the display does attempt to counter the myth of "benevolent" slavery in Santo Domingo. However, it ends by emphasizing the lessened social distance between master and slave early in the colonial period. When asked for his impression slavery on the Tannenbaum thesis, Pagan Perdomo similarly engaged in both refutation and affirmation.

> That's a thesis that has argued that slavery here was softer. That means less torture, fewer punishments because the system, the slave system, is one of humanity's undeniable disgraces, in the history of humanity there isn't any other period as repugnant as slavery. I'll confess that there are books on slavery which are jewels such as Moreno Franginals on Cuba which my students at the University, when I asked them to summarize some of them used to confess that they couldn't complete the assignment because they would be disgusted by what they read about slavery in Cuba, Puerto Rico, Jamaica, in all the Lesser Antilles and the things that were done to slaves and their children. Horrors that made their hair stand on end and are disgusting and give umbrage. Especially in those places where they don't have the black in the skin, they have it behind the ears, as we say.[55]

Although slavery as an institution is "repugnant" and disgraceful in general, it is slavery in Cuba, Puerto Rico, Jamaica, etc. that makes one's "hair stand on end." This sense of is "umbrage" especially strong in the Dominican Republic precisely because blackness resides "behind the ears". It is, in other words, not part of one's consciousness. Thus, the history of slavery is all the more shocking, all the more disruptive.

However, because the Museo's display is primarily visual and textual, it is not shocking and indeed much less visceral than the Taino displays. The only slavery artifacts are a pair of manacles displayed in a glass case and an actual *trapiche*, or sugar

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[55] Interview, Dato Pagan Perdomo, by author, Santo Domingo, November 1999.

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press utilized on cane plantations. This display makes it easy to imagine that slavery in colonial Santo Domingo was not quite the brutal institution it was.

Similarly, while marooning -- or the rebellion and independent community formation of previously enslaved Africans from both the French and the Spanish colonies -- is depicted in several pen and ink drawings, the full dept and breadth of this explore is under explored. Maroon communities, archeological researchers have found, developed rich, multicultural material cultures and were able to organize militarily in self-defense across ethnic and linguistic diversity. "By 1545 it was estimated that some seven thousand runaway slaves were living in such communities."[56] Landers informs us that:

> Surface collection and shallow excavations as an early eighteenth-century maroon settlement in eastern Hispaniola, the Maniel José Leta, confirm some of Archbishop Cueva Maldonado's observations in the Bahoruco mountain settlements. The José Leta site yielded seventeen copper bracelets, metal arrowtips, and a variety of iron objects, including tongs and a lance point. Iron slag deposits are evidence that the runaway [black] smiths were manufacturing the objects on site. The simple bracelets of coiled metal may have only been body decoration but perhaps, as in Kongo, they also implied status or leadership functions for those who wore them. In nearby caves explorers have also found metal daggers, clay water jugs, and triton shell trumpets which they identify as the work of African runaways....The Dominican archeologist Manuel García Arévalo has assembled an important collection of pots made by African runaways and retrieved from water-filled caves near the Santo Domingo airport.[57]

By contrast, the Museo currently only has four slavery related artifacts.[58] Why, one wonders, are those types of artifacts not pursued and displayed? When asked directly, Pagan Perdomo referred several times to the lack of sufficient resources for a proper and

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56 Cambeira, p. 76.

57 Landers, p. 15.

58 Pagan Perdomo, Interview, by Author, Santo Domingo, November 1999.

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full-scale investigation and to the reliance upon foreign and private funds for such research. Yet funds, it seems, are available for indigenous archeology and research.

Illustration 5-5: "Lo Criollo", Museo del Hombre Dominicano



Above text: "Features that were exclusively indigenous, European or African transform into something else in America: The Creole. The African cultural heritage in the Caribbean, united with other heritages, has survived, even though many of its original cultural features have undergone changes wrought by adaptation, recreation, and interpretation."

Photographed by Ginetta E.B. Candelario

Further, the cultural and physical mixture that occurred between the Spanish, the Taino and the African is emphasized in several panels and labels throughout this area. I do not wish to argue that the fact of cultural and physical contact and mixture should be excluded. However, it must be noted that in the larger ideological context, repeatedly emphasizing cultural mixture re-inscribes the racial democracy thesis implicitly, if not explicitly. In absence of equally factual narratives of disadvantage, it becomes easy once again to overlook the continued marginalization of the Republic's darkest citizens.

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Women's bodies are central in the narrative and portrayal of Dominican *mestizaje*. Cultural maintenance, transformation and transmission are encoded visually as women's work. All of the images emphasizing the survival of African cultural forms and practices – be they hair care, basket weaving, modes of carrying babies or bundles, worship, music and dance – are depicted as women's practices.

Illustration 5-6: "Africanisms", Museo del Hombre Dominicano



Above text: "The carrying of objects on the head, including very heavy ones, is still a prevalent habit among Dominicans and is inherited from African slaves. The picture on the left is of modern Africans (not shown here). The picture below was taken early this century in our country."

Left: image of schoolgirl doing another girl's hair.

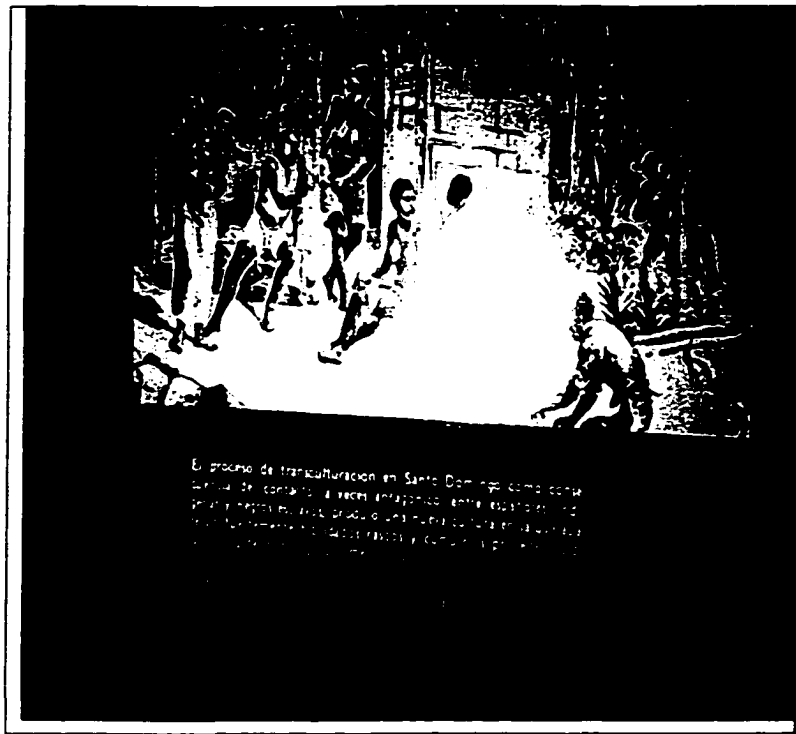


Photographs by: Ginetta E.B. Candelario

The reproduction of the Creole, likewise, is an implicitly feminine function. An ink drawing of a slave cabin and its primarily female inhabitants is made symbolic of the process of "transculturation" by the accompanying label and by the copious presence of infants.

Illustration 5-7: "Transculturation", Museo del Hombre Dominicano

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Text: "The process of transculturation in Santo Domingo that resulted from sometimes antagonistic contact between Spaniards, Natives and Black slaves produced a new culture in which hybrid features and complexes from the cultures of the three aforementioned groups appear. The black slave retained, in certain cases, aspects of his traditional culture still observable in music, dance, language, etc., while in other (cases) he had to accept the culture of the dominant group."

Photographed by Ginetta E.B. Candelario

Again, although the ostensible emphasis is on "hybridity" and retention of Africanisms, the final word is had by the "dominant group", that is, the Hispanics. In fact the Spanish were militarily and politically dominant. However, read against the context of the Hispanophilia that defines the Dominican education system and official identity narratives, dominance comes to be understood as superiority.

A final interesting note about this part of the exhibit is the use of pen and ink drawings from some of the very same U.S. travel writings discussed in Chapter Three.[59] They are reproduced to illustrate 19th Century life and modes of dress, as in the following panel. At the Museo, their provenance is left unmentioned.

Illustration 5-8: "Spanish Influence", Museo del Hombre Dominicano

[59] For example, several of ink drawings – "Dominican American" and "Old Negro" -- from Hazard's Santo Domingo, Past and Present; With a Glance at Hayti are reproduced in the panels.

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Label Text: "Among the distinct influences that Dominican clothing received, Spanish colonization left its mark most vigorously. This clothing has relatively few decorative elements, which is explained by the social and economic marginality of the Spanish colony in Santo Domingo during several centuries.

The use of turbans by both men and women was common until the 19th Century.

There were no regional variations in attire in the Dominican Republic, although certain differences are discernible between rural and urban areas, produced in part by the influence of communications media, greater cultural contact, and economic means."

Photographed by Ginetta E.B. Candelario

The final area of the exhibit contains an authentic Dominican wood cabin, complete with typical furnishings and a light-skinned and straight-hair peasant family. The kitchen and the family altar are highlighted in the display and visitors are informed that this continues to be a typical Dominican home. Interestingly, however, this area also displays the carnival masks made and utilized in certain regions of the nation during the Easter season. Like carnival masks elsewhere in the Caribbean, they signify the black heritage of their makers and wearers. They do so, however, in the context of Christian celebration. The final note of the exhibit, in other words, resonates with ambiguity.

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Black to the Anacostia:

Unlike the Museo del Hombre Dominicano, the Anacostia Museum is a community-based museum. Its founding mandate was to serve the community it is located in. Anacostia is a low-income poor and working class African American neighborhood located across the river and about fifteen-minutes driving distance from the Smithsonian Institution's Mall. In geo-political terms, it is a far-flung Smithsonian outpost.[60] Originally intended by Smithsonian chairman S. Dillon Ripley as vehicle for bringing Smithsonian to the people, the primarily African American Anacostia neighborhood community transformed it quickly into a way of putting themselves in the Smithsonian.[61]

The Anacostia Neighborhood Museum opened in 1967, five years before the Museo del Hombre Dominicano and at the height of the Black Power Movement. Washington, D.C. was a central axis of the Civil Rights Movements agenda and actions.

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[60] While the Anacostia Museum's location in the community continues to be touted as one of its chief cultural and historic strengths, recent African American efforts at self-representation at the Smithsonian have argued in favor of a permanent and significant presence on the Mall. House Representatives John Lewis and Mickey Leland each introduced bills in 1989 to found a national museum of African American history and culture at the Smithsonian. Although the bills were not passed, the public debate they engendered about the nature of African American citizenship, history and representation at the Smithsonian continue to resonate. Today, the common wisdom at the Smithsonian is that a new African American museum will not be built on the Mall, the last possible location having been selected for the new National Museum of the American Indian scheduled to open in 2002. Instead, exhibits researched, designed and curated by Anacostia staff such as "Speak to My Heart: Communities of Faith and Contemporary African American Life" recently have been mounted at the centrally located Arts and Industries Building and the offices of the Center for African American History and Culture have been located there as well.

[61] Portia James, "Building a Community-Based Identity at Anacostia Museum," Curator, vol. 39, no. 1, March 1996.

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Faith Davis Ruffins, of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History, describes the historic moment thus:

> Between 1963 and 1972 hundreds of thousands of Americans came to Washington to protest government policies or to lobby for various political goals, including civil rights and an end to the Vietnam War. In 1968 the Poor People's Campaign brought many tens of thousands of Black and activist people to the Mall. Erecting masses of tents -- nicknamed Resurrection City – between the Capital and the White House, in the shadow of five governmental museums, these people almost certainly included many who had never visited the Smithsonian. But the simple presence of masses of Black people created pressure on the institution.[62]

The Anacostia Neighborhood Museum's founder John Kinard – a former minister and Washington native -- actively integrated local residents in its work force, volunteer staff, and Neighborhood Advisory Committee. In turn, those residents became the Anacostia's leading constituents. For Anacostia staff, the Museum "became a way of doing things, an approach to the work of the museum and a key to its self-perceived identity as a community-based institution."[63]

Historically, African Americans were either excluded from or exocitized by European American museums, as they had been at the World's Fairs. The World's Fairs excluded African Americans from the development, planning, construction, and curation of the Fairs and included them only as objects of spectacle and on special "Negro days." The struggle for African American self-representation in public history and public culture venues dates back to at least the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition of 1876.[64] David Roediger, David Nasaw and Eric Lott each argue convincingly that throughout the nineteenth century U.S. public culture – typified by black face minstrelsy – had long

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62 Ruffins, p. 573-574.

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relied upon African Americans as the foil against which cultural, ideological, and ultimately political citizenship was formed.[65]

The issues were essentially the same in the museums. As they had done in other segregated social, economic and cultural arenas, African Americans developed their own public history institutions to service their community's needs. Although black museums have existed since the 19th century, it was the last three decades of the 20th century that witnessed the proliferation of museums dedicated to presenting the African American experience from the community's vantage point. "The courses, classes, lectures, exhibitions, concerts, archives, and libraries of these 'democratized' cultural institutions provided neighborhoods and families with opportunities for achievement and accomplishment."[66] The Anacostia Museum was founded and operated in that spirit for nearly two decades. The increasing professionalization of the Anacostia, however, eventually created barriers to the kind of daily and full community participation that characterized its first five years. "By the mid-1980s, museum/community interaction was

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63 James, p. 34.

64 Rydell, 1984.

65 Eric Lott, Love And Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and The American Working Class, New York: Oxford University Press, 1993; David Nasaw, Going Out: The Rise And Fall Of Public Amusements, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999;Roediger, 1991.

66 Mary Schimdt Campbell, "Introduction," in Azade Ardali, Black And Hispanic Art Museums: A Vibrant Cultural Resource, New York: Ford Foundation,1989, p. 1.

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largely confined to the education department's programs and the director's individual activities."[67]

According to Portia James, the Anacostia's senior historian and *Black Mosaic* originator and curator, *Black Mosaic* represented a modified return to the Anacostia's original methodology and orientation because of its extensive community involvement. However, that return was conditioned by new internal and external political circumstances. The most salient internal change was the death of the Anacostia's founding director, Jchn Kinard.[68] In his absence, Anacostia staff was forced to reconsider its mandate and constituency. "From the museum's inception, there had been questions about which groups were being included in the museum's community. *Black Mosaic* further underscored such questions. Although encountered every day, black immigrants form an invisible community existing within the very core of Washington's African-American community life and social history and yet still exist on the margins of the city's public history."[69]

According to Faith Davis Ruffins, "the use of the term *diaspora* to describe the experience of Black people in the Americas" by scholars of African American history and culture began in earnest in the early 1970s.[70] At the Smithsonian, the African

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67 Ibid., p. 26. The Anacostia also moved from the Carver Theatre, in the heart of Anacostia, to its current location on a landscaped park. No longer a drop-in museum, the Anacostia is primarily accessible by car or public transportation.

68 On Kinnard see Z. Martin-Felton and Gail Lowe, A Different Drummer: John Kinard and the Anacostia Museum, 1967-1989, Washington, D.C.: Anacostia Museum, Smithsonian Institution, 1993.

69 James, p. 38.

70 Ruffins, p. 577.

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diaspora in the Americas was first made "manifest" at the 1976 Festival of American Folklife's African Diaspora Festival organized by Bernice Johnson Reagon. "Perhaps for the first time ever in American public history, a Black American mythos – the notion of the unity of African peoples across time and space – was presented by a preeminent cultural institution."[71] By the time the Anacostia began its discussions about Black Mosaic, in other words, the Smithsonian had had some experience presenting the African diaspora in the Americas.

Internal discussions about how to integrate that "invisible community" into Anacostia exhibits began in 1990 in the context of larger Smithsonian plans to mark the Quincentennial. In 1991, the Mount Pleasant Riots highlighted festering tensions between the African American and Latino communities. In May of 1994, three months before the opening of *Black Mosaic*, the Smithsonian Institution Task Force on Latino Issues published its report, Willful Neglect: The Smithsonian Institution and U.S. Latinos, an indictment of the near total exclusion of Latina/os from Smithsonian staff, curators, exhibits, etc.

> The findings of the Task Force are extremely clear: The Smithsonian Institution almost entirely excludes and ignores the Latino population of the United States. This lack of inclusion is glaringly obvious in the lack of a single museum facility focusing on Latino or Latin American art, culture, or history; the near-absence of permanent Latino exhibitions or programming; the very small number of Latino staff, and the minimal number in curatorial or managerial positions; and the almost total lack of Latino representation in the governance structure. It is difficult for the Task Force to understand how such a consistent pattern of

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71 Ibid., p. 577.

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> Latino exclusion from the work of the Smithsonian could have occurred without willful neglect. [72]

Willful Neglect argued that because "their indigenous roots and their Spanish heritage" predate British colonization in the Americas. This formulation, while partially accurate, perpetuated a indigenist-based mestizo notion of Hispanicity, one that glaringly excluded the fact of African heritage within Spanish heritage, and within Latin American heritage. Both Africans and Asians are mentioned later in the Report as part of the mestizo "roots of the Americas" when the methodological and empirical lessons of the Quincentenary Commeration for Latino initiatives are presented.

> The Quincentenary Commemoration offers two critical lessons for future Latino initiatives: the model it generated of a true consultative process and the message it communicated of *mestizaje* and multiculturalism. In preparing Quincentenary programs, the Secretary demonstrated a model of internal and external cooperation and consultation by opening up the Institution to outside experts and community scholars in an unprecedented way. Several key Latinos within the Smithsonian served as catalysts for the Quincentenary programs. This model could become the foundation for a broad-based and inclusive Latino initiative. The Quincentenary programs were also unique in being truly multicultural. Their message of mestizaje reflected the Spanish, African, Asian, and indigenous roots of the Americas.[73]

A more recent report published by the Latino Oversight Committee in 1997, Towards a Shared Vision: U.S. Latinos and the Smithsonian Institution is a far more historical in its foundational formulation and rational for Latino inclusion. "Because of both their indigenous roots and their Spanish and African heritage," notes the report early on,

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[72] Smithsonian Institution Task Force on Latino Issues, Willful Neglect: The Smithsonian Institution and U.S. Latinos, Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1994, p. ii.

[73] Ibid, p. iii.

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"Latinos predate the British in the Americas."[74] This revised definition taken together with the repeated use of the word "mosaic" in this report, one could easily conclude that the Anacostia and *Black Mosaic* have been influential. At the same time, the Anacostia is still the only Smithsonian Museum with a Latino Board Member.[75]

Additionally, Anacostia curatorial staff were influenced by the national discussions around immigration and the "changing face" of U.S. society, and echoed in a review of *Black Mosaic* by The Torch: A Monthly Newspaper for the Smithsonian Institution.[76] According to Anacostia Director Steve Newsome, *Black Mosaic* was intended to served as a connection between the African American community and the Latino community in D.C.[77] Indeed, Newsome received special acknowledgement from the Latino Task Force, which noted that the Anacostia was "among the museums making a positive effort"[78] to represent Latina/os as the Smithsonian. *Black Mosaic* was mentioned several times in Willful Neglect, both for its utilization of community scholars and its documentation of "the fact that many African Americans are also Hispanic."[79]

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[74] Latino Oversight Committee, Towards a Shared Vision: U.S. Latinos and the Smithsonian Institution, Final Report of the Latino Oversight Committee, Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, October 15, 1997, p. 4.

[75] Roland Roebuck, an active participant in *Black Mosaic* and vocal Afro-Latino activist in D.C. became an Anacostia Museum Board Member in 1998. Interview, Steve Newsome, Washington, D.C., August 1998. Interview, Port James, Washington, D.C., August 1998.

[76] Jo Ann Webb, "Anacostia Exhibition Looks at Diversity," The Torch: A Monthly Newspaper for the Smithsonian Institution, No. 94-8, August 1994, p. 1.

[77] Newsome, June 1997; Interview, Steven Newsome, July, 1998.

[78] Willful Neglect, p. 31.

[79] Ibid., p. 30.

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Speaking to a Torch reporter, Newsome expressed the hope that "'The exhibition will give us inroads to communities that were totally disenfranchised from the Smithsonian as a whole and from the Anacostia Museum in particular. There was no consistent relationship between the Afro-Latino community and SI."[80] Nor would there be after the *Black Mosaic* came down, for reasons I think are illustrative of the difficulties of attempting to display fluid and contextual Dominican identities within the constraints of hegemonic notions of blackness.

In cultural terms, "African Americans" and "black" have been assumed to be synonymous in the United States. As a result, "black culture" – from language (English, even with the modifier "black") to music and dance (jazz, rap, rhythm and blues, etc.) to religious forms (heavily Protestant) – generally refers to African American culture in the United States. In ideological terms, the hypo-descent notion of race is both accepted and propagated as the operative model of inclusion into blackness.

The Anacostia has helped local educators to train African American children to accept hypo-descent. In How and Why African People Came to North America, an educational kit developed by the Anacostia's Department of Education in 1979 and still used, including in the context of *Black Mosaic* tours for student groups,[81] educators are told:

> In working with groups of black children, we usually begin by asking whether there are any black people in the room with us. If children recognize themselves as being black, we go on to talk about a place – as yet unidentified – that is the home of all black people. If children are

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[80] Webb, p. 7.

[81] Unedited Visitor's Comments, March 5, 1995, comment #8, *Black Mosaic* files, Education Department collection, Anacostia Museum, Smithsonian Institution.

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> confused as to who they are, we point to ourselves and say, "I am black," and to others, and say, "He is black, and she is black." We speak of the commonality of blackness in terms of our ancestors who came from that special land where most of the black people in the world lived then and still live now. And we say that because our ancestors – our great-great-great-grandmothers and –grandfathers – were black, and came from that land of black people, we, too, are black, even though some of us may be lighter or darker than others.[82]

When the staff at the Anacostia took up the issue they were understandably perplexed and in some cases downright annoyed by the seeming unwillingness of Dominicans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Costa Ricans, Brazilians and Haitians of African descent to identify simply or primarily as "Black." Internal memos and research notes for the exhibit document the ongoing dialogue among Anacostia staff and between them and participants over the issue of racial identity.[83] Anacostia staff accustomed to the primacy of race in the United States asked themselves and one another how it could be that nationality could be as salient an identity referent as race.

The ethno-racial identity of Dominicans in D.C. (which is presented in Chapter Six) was flattened by the structure of Black Mosaic, because of its insistence on blackness as a universal experience and despite attempts to understand and present the complexity of racial identity. Anacostia staff struggled with this throughout the development of the script, the recruitment of participants and community scholars, the

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[82] Anacostia Neighborhood Museum, How and Why African People Came to North America; An Introductory Flannel Board Activity on Black History for the Pre-School and Primary Teacher, Department of Education, Anacostia Neighborhood Museum, Smithsonian Institution, September 1979, p. 4.

[83] Meeting notes, Sharon Reincken files, 1994, *Black Mosaic* archives, Anacostia Museum.

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collection of artifacts, and the preparation of the exhibit itself. In her notes on race for an early script, for example, Black Mosaic project director Sharon Reincken wrote,

> Race is a concept, not a biological given. Changes through time and space....Race different in countries of origin; racial terms from different communities. History of nationalities in Cuba, Brazil, Haiti...Race is dynamic elsewhere. Here it is cut and dry. How do you connect notions of race?[84]

This was key area of difficulty for Black Mosaic and ultimately, its greatest conceptual weakness.

The Black Mosaic:

> *Every museum exhibition, whatever its overt subject, inevitably draws on the cultural assumptions and resources of the people who make it. Decisions are made to emphasize one element and to downplay others, to assert some truths and to ignore others.*[85]

Black Mosaic was organized in five major thematic areas: Identity, Memories of Home, Migration, Race and Ethnicity in D.C., and Community Life. It utilized video-taped interview displays, audio-taped interview listening stations, music, participant artifacts (family photographs, documents, clothing, and furnishings), documentary photographs and artifacts collected for the exhibit, most notably a Cuban raft recovered

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[84] Untitled document, *Black Mosaic* files, Sharon Reincken collection, Anacostia Museum, Smithsonian Institution.

[85] Steven D. Lavine and Ivan Karp, "Introduction: Museums and Multiculturalism," in Steven D. Lavine and Ivan Karp, eds., Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display, Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991, p. 1.

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off Florida's coast.[86] By all accounts, it was a rich and textured display that appealed in both audio and visual terms.[87]

Illustration 5-9: *Black Mosaic* visitors viewing Cuban refugee raft.



Source: *The Black Mosaic* archive, photo by Harold Dorwin.

The Anacostia staff utilized its signature innovative research methods in the development of *Black Mosaic.* Through a series of meetings held in each of the communities represented, oral history interviews, use of community scholars and a fifteen-member Community Advisory Committee, and traditional bibliographic research, exhibit researchers and staff gained increasing insight into Afro-Latin American

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[86] This boat and its passengers were spotted by *Hermanos al Rescate* (Brothers to the Rescue) in July of 1992 thirty-five miles off the Miami coast. Both the passengers and their vessel were recovered by the U.S. Coast Guard, who subsequently gave the vessel, made of Styrofoam, tar, cotton fabric, wood and shower curtains to Mr. Humberto Sanchez, a Cuban American collector of refugee artifacts. Mr. Sanchez loaned the vessel to the Anacostia for the exhibit. Kim Freeman files, "History of this Object: Cuban Refugee Boat", March 1994, *Black Mosaic* archives, Anacostia Museum.

[87] I undertook my research in 1998, three years after the exhibit had been dismantled. I have relied on archival photographs of the exhibit at the Anacostia, newspaper accounts, exhibit photographs, scripts and documentation, and interviews for data on the look and feel of the exhibit.

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community, race, and ethnicity in Washington, D.C. This was Black Mosaic's greatest success.

Nineteen Afro-Latinos[88] were interviewed by Anacostia-trained community scholars. Of those Afro-Latinos, nine were Dominican, two were Cuban, three were Puerto Rican, four were Panamanian, and one Costa Rican. In other words, Dominicans comprised nearly half of the Afro-Latino respondents. Of the nine Dominicans, seven were women and two were men: Francia Almarante, Daniel Bueno, Juana Campos, Luis E. Druyard, Julia Lara, Juanita Laureano, Casilda Luna, Maricela Medina, and Esperanza Ozuma. In addition, Juana Campos' children, Ramberto Toruella and Carmen Quander, provided artifacts and oral histories of the Latino/a community. Dominican participants, particularly Dona Campos and Julia Lara, were featured prominently in promotional literature and local media coverage of the exhibit. Finally, *Black Mosaic*'s lead community scholar was Hector Corporan, himself a forty-year Dominican resident of D.C.

The issue of black immigrants' racial identity was taken up immediately in the exhibit. Visitors were informed that:

> This exhibit looks at the immigration of people of African descent from Central and South America and the Caribbean to the Washington metropolitan area. It examines how the perceptions and the realities of race, color, and ethnicity have shaped people's identity. It also illustrates their impact on the community life of these groups of Black people in their homelands and in the Washington metropolitan area.[89]

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[88] Since Brazilians in Black Mosaic were considered apart from Afro-Latinos although they are Latin Americans, it seems that the designation refers specifically to Latinos from Spanish-speaking communities or Afro-Hispanics.

[89] *The Black Mosaic: Community, Race, and Ethnicity Among Black Immigrants in Washington, D.C.*, exhibit script, pp. 2-3.

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A video of various *Black Mosaic* participants speaking about their identities played on a television screen just inside the exhibit space. In it, the featured participants discussed their understanding of nationality and race, and of their pre- and post-immigration experiences of these. Lara recalled growing up in the Dominican Republic essentially unaware of race, despite her poor economic circumstances. She explained:

> Well, although I was the darkest child in my family at the time, color was not an issue in any way that influenced my relationship with my parents, my aunt, my uncles, my cousins. It just was not an issue. I was never made to feel that I was less than a full human being. It wasn't an issue for me growing up in the Dominican Republic. It just wasn't. And so feelings of difference in ways that one feels here in the States when one is growing up was not something that I experienced until I came to the States.[90]

Many visitors noted that this video was especially compelling and useful in furthering their understanding of the communities represented.[91]

The first historically substantive section, "The African Diaspora in the Americas", followed this humanistic opening. A brief definition and history of the African Diaspora, a map of the diaspora from the 16th to the 19th centuries and a chart of "Blacks and Mulattoes in Latin American countries" were displayed. The accompanying label read:

> It is difficult to determine the exact numbers of people of African descent in Central and South America and the Caribbean. Different regions and countries have different definitions of who is Black. In addition, African ancestry is often overlooked or ignored in official censuses, particularly where people of African descent exist in small numbers or where intermarriage with other groups has been common.[92]

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90 "Identity", exhibit videotape, *Black Mosaic*, Anacostia Museum.

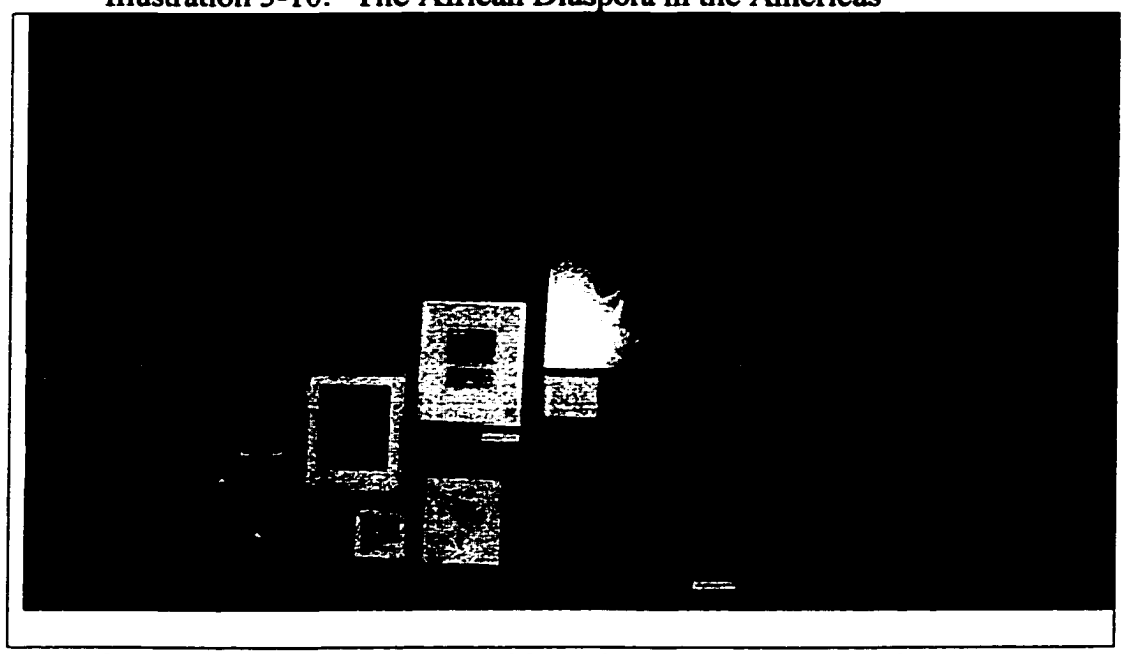
91 Anacostia Museum Education Department files, Unedited Visitor's Comments, March 5, 1995, *Black Mosaic* archives, Anacostia Museum.

92 *Black Mosaic,* exhibit script, p. 7.

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The next panel displayed Black Ecuadoreans as a case study of the African experience in Latin America. The story of 16th century Maroon leaders Francisco and Juan Mangache of Esmeraldas was presented alongside current literature produced by the Centro Cultural AfroEcuatoriano and photographs of the Esmeraldas.

Illustration 5-10: "The African Diaspora in the Americas"



Source: *The Black Mosaic* archive, photo by Harold Dorwin.

The connection between this history of Africanity in Latin America and blackness as understood in the United States was made by the next panel, "The Diaspora as Pan-African Community." The work and experiences of Marcus Garvey and his Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) were explored in a large label, together with the work of "the activities of Black writers and intellectuals of the Harlem Renaissance and the Negritude cultural movements in the 1920s and 1930s." Photos and memorabilia of UNIA and such pan-Africanist luminaries as Jean Price-Mars, Aime Cesaire, Langston Hughes, Leon Damas, Claude McKay, Leopold Senghor, Frantz Fanon, and W.E.B. DuBois were displayed alongside the label. The connection between their work and

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Afro-Latin America is not made until the artifacts of the Congress of Black Culture in the Americas meetings of the 1970s and 1980s.

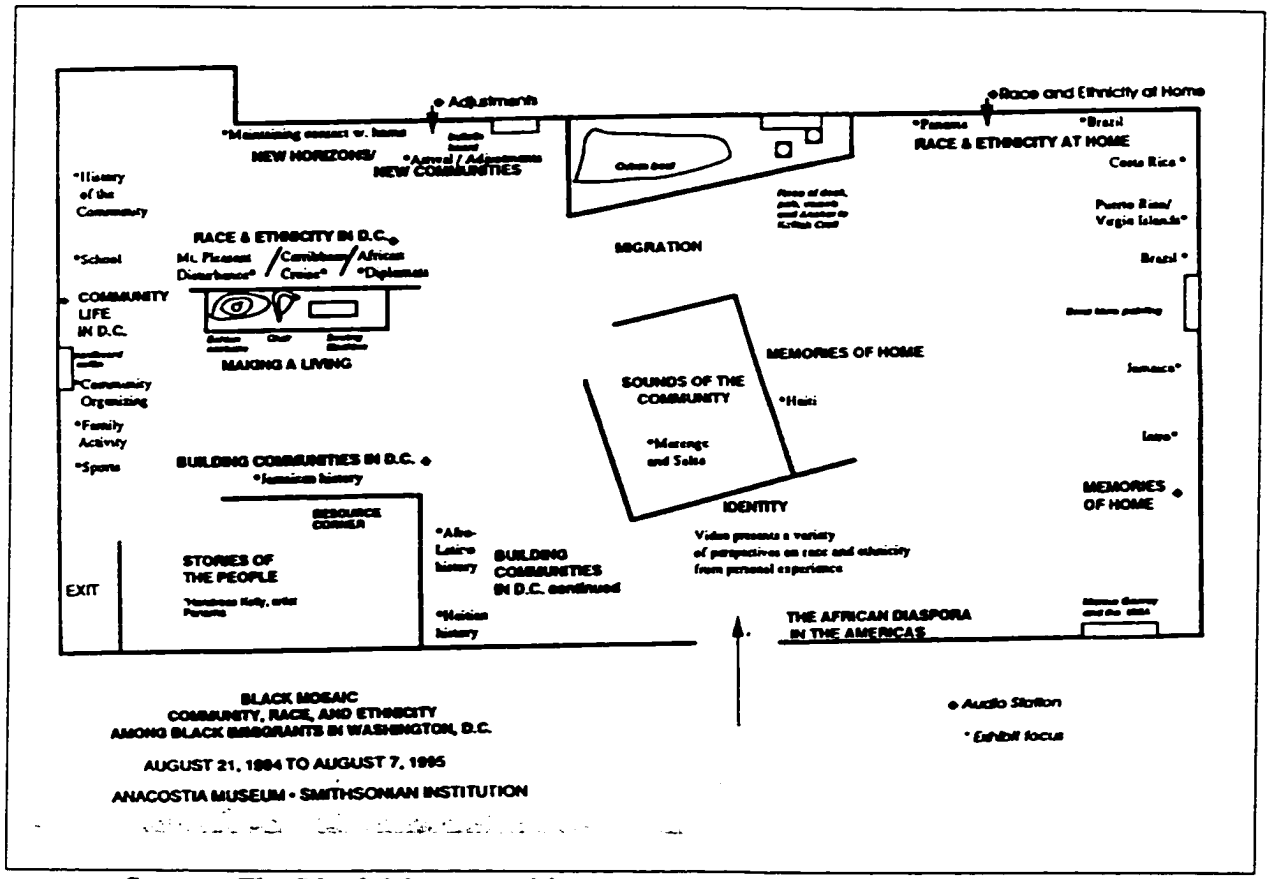
This section leaps over the 18th and 19th centuries, periods of anti-colonial revolutionary foment and Latin American nation state building. Most striking is the lack of reference to the Haitian Revolution, particularly given the inclusion of the Haitian community in the *Black Mosaic*. The Haitian Revolution was undeniably a pivotal event in the development of blackness and institutionalizations of nationhood throughout the Americas, including the United States. The only reference to that history in this section is elliptical and gives short shrift to the distinctive ways in which race was used in Latin American and United States' nation building projects. "Although individuals may have thought of themselves as, say, Haitians or Cubans," visitors were told "some Black religious and political leaders argued that people of African descent should look to Africa as their ancestral home and echoed slave folk beliefs of an eventual return to Africa."[93] That the African American masses in Latin America did not agree is left unexamined.

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93 Ibid., p. 9.

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Illustration 5-11: *The Black Mosaic* Floor Plan



Source: *The Black Mosaic* archive.

Following a list of common race terms from the region, however, a later section on "Race and Ethnicity in Latin America and the Caribbean" explained that:

> The racial and ethnic environments of the English- and French-speaking West Indies where there are large Black majorities, are significantly different from those in Central and South America and the United States. In the final years of the colonial era, the emergence of black political leadership, economic and social institutions have encouraged the expansion of the Black middle class. Recent economic difficulties and political crises, however, have prompted significant immigration from these islands.[94]

Accompanying objects included photographs, newspaper articles, dolls of several skin tones in traditional folk dress, Colombia's anti-discrimination law, a Dominican passport,

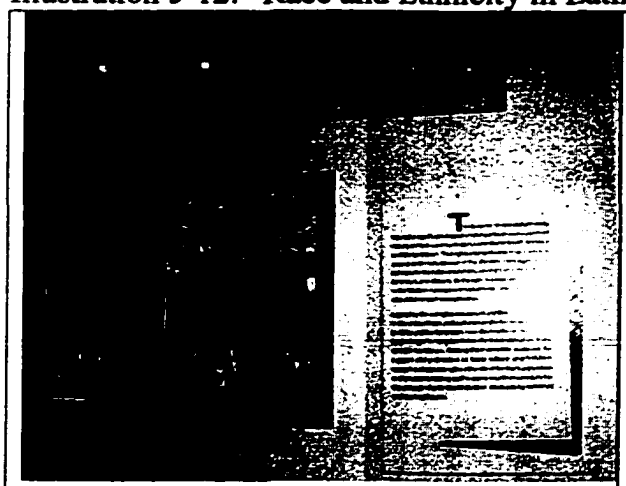
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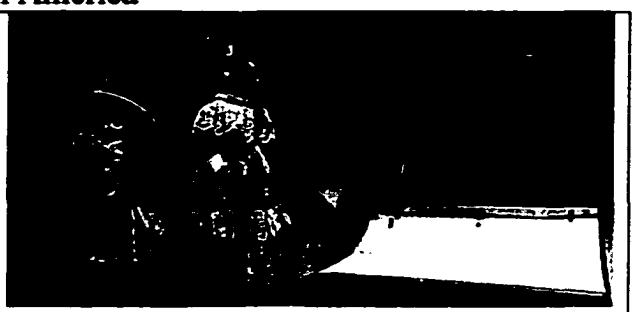
94 Ibid., p. 44.

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a Dictionary of Latin American Racial Terms and a copy of Moreau De Saint-Mery's famous Description de la Patrie Francaise de Saint Domingue. Together these objects conveyed, at least in part, the importance of colonialism and imperialism in the development of Latin American racial identities. Case studies of black consciousness movements in Brazil and Panama were presented and effectively situated in their proper political-economic contexts. The relationship between U.S. imperial interests in Panama, the racist work and living structures experienced by British West Indian laborers in the U.S.-controlled Canal Zone, and the formation of an Afro-Panamanian identity is made explicit.

Illustration 5-12: "Race and Ethnicity in Latin America"





Above: Brazilian dolls and Dictionary of Race Terms in Latin America.

Left: "Race and Ethnicity at Home"

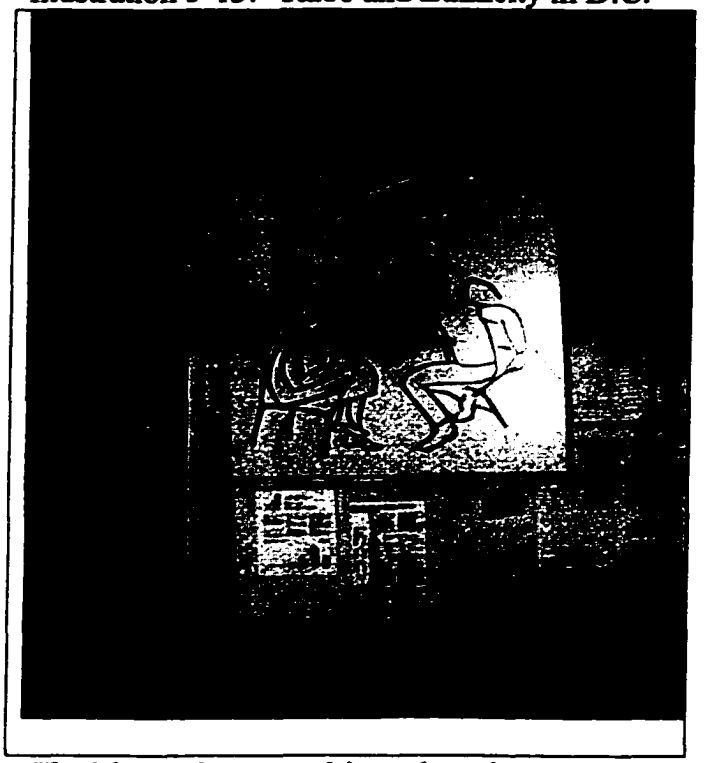
Source: *The Black Mosaic* archive, photo by Harold Dorwin.

In a following section on "Migration", an analogy of sorts was drawn between the history of British West Indians in Panama and African Americans in D.C. Visitors were reminded that the African American community was established in D.C. following the great labor migration of African Americans from the Southern United States during the 1930s and 1940s. "But," the opening panel in the section on Migration explained, "international migration has also made its mark. The vast majority of Black immigrants

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to this country come from Central and South America and the Caribbean." United States' African American's Great Migration north coincided in Washington, D.C. with the arrival of a Latin American diplomatic community. That community relied primarily upon the domestic labor of Afro-Latino migrants from their countries. Mirroring socio-racial and political conditions in the Dominican Republic at the time, for example, Dominican domestic labor migrants typically hailed from the traditionally African American and West Indian regions in the Dominican Republic.[95]

Illustration 5-13: "Race and Ethnicity in D.C."



Source: *The Black Mosaic* archive, photo by Harold Dorwin.

Black Mosaic situated the experience of Dominicans in the context of African American history in the United States. Because of this, it missed the opportunity to note

[95] See Alfonso Aguilar, "Leyendas de nuestra historia: Juanita A. Campos, 54 años de vida en D.C.", Foro Newspaper, April 28, 1994; Interview, Juana Campos by Hector Corporan, *Black Mosaic* archives, Anacostia Museum; Interview, Juana Campos by Author, August 1998, Washington, D.C.

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that African American history began in Santo Domingo. For example, both the enslavement of Africans and the first African revolutions first occurred on Hispaniola.[96] The absence of that historic connection was glaring even to visitors.

> Throughout the Black Mosaic exhibit, two concerns clearly emerged from the expressions of support and feedback from visitors: Visitors communicated that the concept of the African Diaspora as presented by the exhibit was not sufficiently explored. They were intrigued by the concept and wanted a more concrete, historical discussion. Also, many in our traditional (African American) community miss seeing themselves. They want an examination of how the histories of the African American and immigrant communities were linked.[97]

It would have been possible, for example, to explore those centuries overlooked by *Black Mosaic* during which the African presence in the Americas was principally located in the Spanish, French and Portuguese colonies. At the same time, the migration of African Americans from the United States and establishment of colonies in places like Haiti and the Dominican Republic during the early 19th century would have added an often overlooked dimension to African American history.

Similarly, there was no discussion of how the diverse slave economies impacted subsequent racialized nation building projects. While the Museo's exhibit may have overstated the case, reliance on a cattle- ranching-based slave economy in the context of an impoverished and abandoned Spanish colonial outpost certainly must have impacted on the social, political, cultural and economic distance between the "white" Creole elite

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[96] Enslaved Wolofs from the Senegambia region of African led a successful revolt on Christopher Columbus' son Diego's sugar plantation in 1521.

[97] "Building Bridges: African American and Latino Communities in Washington, D.C.", Internal Memo, Date and Author unknown, *Black Mosaic* archives, Anacostia Museum.

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and the African and Afro-Hispanic masses through until the mid-nineteenth century.[98] That legacy has impacted subsequent Dominican ethno-racial identity formations and representations, at home and abroad.

An exhibit titled "Building Bridges: African American and Latino Communities in Washington, D.C." was proposed following *Black Mosaic* "to explore and document the ongoing relationships between the African American and Latino communities and provide an opportunity to examine shared histories and commonalties of experience as well as challenges." This has yet to materialize. After the exhibit closed in November of 1995 there were continued attempts by Anacostia researchers and staff to institutionalize a relationship with the Latino community. Several programs geared toward Caribbean and Afro-Latino communities were organized post- *Black Mosaic*, primarily around music. These petered off, however, by mid-1996.[99] Dominican community scholar Hector Corporan was charged with researching possible sites for a Latino Community Museum that would be located in Adams Morgan and initially sponsored by the Anacostia. Although internal discussions, research and community outreach progressed to the point that two sites were being considered actively, the project was ultimately dropped and Corporan subsequently did not have his contract renewed at the Anacostia.[100] In many ways, those events are reflective of the current status of Afro-Latinos and our public history, at the Anacostia and beyond. This proposal was being discussed and circulated as recently as June 1997, when Hector Corporan presented it to

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98 See Torres-Saillant, 1999.

99 Interview, Louis Hicks by Author, Washington, D.C., June 1998.

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the Latino Graduate Seminar in Qualitative Methods at the Smithsonian in which I participated.[101]

Conclusion: The Africans Still Have No History

> *In this sense, all history is an interpretation of the past.*[102]

In his Philosophy of History Hegel philosophized that civilization, reason and history were mutually defining. That being the case, he mapped the rise of history as congruent with the rise of European civilization and peoples. Africa, lacking in civilization, and Africans lacking in reason, could not have history. He wrote:

> It has properly been said, Africa has no history. We leave Africa at this point without further mention. It does not belong to the historical world; it shows neither movement nor development and what happens to occur there, that is in the north, belongs to the Asiatic and European worlds... What we subsume under the word Africa is an undeveloped, ahistorical world, entirely prisoner of the natural spirit; its place is still at the threshold of universal history. [103]

If we take Ruffins' argument that "all history is an interpretation of the past" seriously, then Hegel's comments bear more fruit than perhaps he intended. The "Africans have no history" in the Americas because their past has been denied, ignored, erased, fragmented, naturalized or reified.

The first job of the public history museum in the Americas has been to document, preserve and interpret the past in the service of the State's and economic elite's interests.

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[100] Hector Corporan, Interview by Author, Washington, D.C. August 1998; Sharon Reincken, Interview by Author, Washington, D.C., July 1998.

[101] Corporan, 1997.

[102] Ruffins, p. 509.

[103] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, The Philosophy Of History, translator, J. Sibree, M.A, New York, Willey Book Co., 1944.

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The place of Africa, Africans and the African diaspora in the museum has long been conditioned by that fact.

> Museum exhibitions draw on the resources of public culture and public imagery to produce their effects. They are as much an arena of discourse about the "other" as editorial cartoons or travel books. They also use the organizing principles of difference and similarity to produce the imagery of the "other." Which principle predominates in the account or image of a cultural "other" often determines the strategy for how the "other" is portrayed. Usually we think of the "other" as represented primarily as different. Quite the opposite can occur, however. Similarity can be used to assert that the people of other cultures are no different in principle than the producer of the image, or that the differences that appear so great are only surface manifestations of underlying similarities.[104]

Karp calls this strategy "assimilating". Such displays "appeal to the audience's sense of the familiar and natural. They don't stop exhibition-goers in their tracks and produce a 'what in the world is that?' response."[105] This was the strategy of the *Black Mosaic*. Dominicans are assimilated into the organizing principle of the exhibit - "black" immigrants to D.C. In this regard, *Black Mosaic* is a conservative presentation. It erases the prevailing non-black identifications of Dominicans, both on the island and in Diaspora, simply by not exploring it. Like the Dominicans in D.C. who were conditioned by historic socio-economic and political circumstance to identify as black, those who reject a black identity are operating in context. If the Museo's displays are classically in-situ, the Anacostia's *Black Mosaic* is classically "in context." As Kirshenblatt-Gimblett explains:

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[104] Ivan Karp, "Other Cultures in Museum Perspective," in Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine, Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display, Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1991, p. 375.

[105] Ibid., p. 375.

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> Objects are set in context by means of long labels, charts, and diagrams, commentary delivered via earphones, explanatory audiovisual programs, docents conducting tours, booklets and catalogues, educational programs and lectures and performances....In-context approaches to installation establish a theoretical frame of reference for the viewer, offer explanations, provide historical background, make comparisons, pose questions, and sometimes even extend to the circumstances of excavation, collection, and conservation of the objects on display....In-context approaches exert strong cognitive control over the objects, asserting the power of classification and arrangement to order large numbers of artifacts from diverse cultural and historical settings and to position them in relation to one another.[106]

Yet, on another level, the open presence of Dominicans at the Anacostia represents a substantial shift in the history of transnational Smithsonian-Dominican relations.

Dominican display at the Smithsonian began and remained for over fifty years in the Department of Anthropology in what is now the National Museum of Natural History. If indeed, as Karp argues, the display of American Indian peoples as part of natural history is dialectically related to the display of other "Americans" as creators and participants in history, then the representation of Dominicans at the Anacostia may be considered positive. If originally the connections between contemporary Dominicans and the illicitly obtained artifacts of their nation were erased by Krieger and the Anthropology Department, by contrast the Anacostia staff worked hard to display Dominicans in what it considered respectful terms. However, because they were working from within a U.S. African American frame of reference, they placed Dominicans inside that context, rather than interrogating the connection between contexts.

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[106] Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, p. 390.

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Black Mosaic situated the experience of Afro-Latinos in the context of African American history in the United States. Because of this, it missed the opportunity to note that African American history began in South America. For example, the enslavement of Africans and African revolution first occurred in the Caribbean, specifically on Hispaniola. The absence of that historic connection was glaring even to visitors.

> Throughout the Black Mosaic exhibit, two concerns clearly emerged from the expressions of support and feedback from visitors: Visitors communicated that the concept of the African Diaspora as presented by the exhibit was not sufficiently explored. They were intrigued by the concept and wanted a more concrete, historical discussion. Also, many in our traditional (African American) community miss seeing themselves. They want an examination of how the histories of the African American and immigrant communities were linked.[107]

It would have been possible, for example, to explore those centuries overlooked by *Black Mosaic* during which the African presence in the Americas was principally located in the Spanish, French and Portuguese colonies. At the same time, the migration of African Americans from the United States and establishment of colonies in places like Haiti and the Dominican Republic during the early 19th century would have added an often overlooked dimension to African American history.

After *Black Mosaic* came down in November of 1995 there were continued attempts by Anacostia researchers and staff to institutionalize a relationship with the Latino community. Several programs geared toward Caribbean and Afro-Latino communities were organized post- *Black Mosaic*, primarily around music. These petered

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[107] "Building Bridges: African American and Latino Communities in Washington, D.C.", Internal Memo, Date and Author unknown, *Black Mosaic* archives, Anacostia Museum.

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off, however, by mid-1996.[108] Hector Corporan was charged with researching possible sites for a Latino Community Museum that would be located in Adams Morgan and initially sponsored by the Anacostia, which would also provide training in community-based museum building. Although internal discussions, research and community outreach progressed to the point two sites were being actively considered, the project was ultimately dropped and Corporan subsequently did not have his contract renewed at the Anacostia.[109]

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[108] Interview, Louis Hicks, Programming Director, Anacostia Museum, June 1998.

[109] Hector Corporan, Interview, August 1998; Sharon Reincken, Interview, July 1998.

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Chapter Six
"Black Behind the Ears" and Up Front Too: Dominicans in Washington, D.C.

> *In 1613, after many decades of research and travel in Perú, Huamán Poma (A Quecheua Indian) wrote: "when mulattoes – a mixture of negro and Indian – produce quadroon children, these children lose all physical trace of their negro origin except for ear, which still gives them away by its shape and size."*[1]
>
> *The fear is that anyone who voluntarily agrees to be black is in some sense not really black, because our culture has defined blackness as something that you can never escape.*[2]

As has been explored in earlier chapters, Dominican ethno-racial formations have developed historically against the backdrop of Spanish, French, Haitian colonialism and U.S. imperialism and racism. A Dominican who claims, rejects or is ambivalent about a black identity, then, references and contends with multiple histories, contexts and semiotic systems. *Black Mosaic* attempted to understand and present that complexity fully. However, it excluded the political-economic framework of Dominican immigration to the U.S. and the ambiguity of Dominican ethno-racial formations more broadly. Thus, it was only partially successful. The experience of *Black Mosaic* Dominicans is a useful case study of the complexity of situating ambiguous Dominican ethno-racial formations in the United States. This chapter will extend Black Mosaic's analysis to a fuller consideration of how historic, institutional and cultural factors and contexts frame and influence Dominican ethno-racial formation in Washington, D.C.

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1 Forbes, 1983.

2 Torres, p. 168.

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We turn first to an exploration of the socio-racial terrain of Washington, D.C. Simultaneously a provincial Southern city and a cosmopolitan international city, various ethno-racial systems are mapped upon the nation's capital. These mappings overlay one another at key historic and institutional points, and diverge at others. In domestic terms, black/white relations have been the defining lines of community formations. In international terms, U.S./foreign relations have mapped the borders of communities in Washington, D.C. Dominicans in D.C., therefore, have had to be "world travelers" in the sense developed by Maria Lugones: "[t]hose of us who are 'world'-travellers have the distinct experience of being different in different 'worlds' and ourselves in them. . . . The shift from being one person to being a different person is what I call 'travel'." Those shifts, Lugones notes, may or may not be conscious or willful. And, "[e]ven though the shift can be done willfully, it is not a matter of acting 'world'."[3] Rather, to shift into the theoretical language of phenomenology, it is a matter of "being in the world."[4] We turn now to an exploration of Dominicans being in those worlds.

Receiving Context:

Washington, D.C. is a city with a complex history. It was founded in 1791, less than a year after the Naturalization Act of 1790 restricted citizenship to white, landowning males. By 1800, enslaved African Americans comprised one quarter of the population. In the pre-Civil War era, the District suffered a severe labor shortage and it

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[3] Maria Lugones, "Playfulness, 'World'-Travelling, and Loving Perception," in Gloria Anzaldúa, ed., Making Soul, Making Face: Creative and Critical Perspectives by Women of Color, San Francisco: aunt lute foundation, 1990, pp. 396.

[4] Alfred Schutz, The Phenomenology of the Social World, Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1967.

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became increasingly attractive to free African Americans. By 1860, eighty four percent of the nearly eleven thousand African Americans in the District were freedmen and "together with their slave brethren, accounted for 17.9 percent of the total D.C. population."[5]

European immigration to D.C. was not substantial during the nineteenth century. "In 1900, a year in which 37 percent of the population of New York (and 35 percent of Boston's population) was foreign-born, the District of Columbia counted on 7 percent of its residents as foreign-born."[6] As a result of lessened competition, African Americans were able to gain an impressive foothold in skilled fields.

> Unlike most urban centers along the Eastern Seaboard, the District of Columbia did not develop an industrial economy. Instead, the aftermath of the Civil War witnessed the rapid expansion of the civilian government work force....The growing demand for blue-collar tradesmen and urban services led to impressive levels of entrepreneurship and relatively high socio-economic status among African Americans in the late nineteenth century.[7]

These accomplishments were offset by the post-Reconstruction era institutionalization of Jim Crow. Jim Crow policies and practices restricted African Americans' work opportunities to unskilled occupations, forced them out of self-employment and denied them government employment, and concentrated them in the inner city residential districts. "This deteriorating occupational status of African Americans, which pervaded

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5 Robert D. Manning, "Multicultural Change in Washington, D.C.: The Contested Social Terrain of the Urban Odyssey," Report 91-3, Institutional Studies Office, Smithsonian Institution, April 1991, p. 11.

6 Terry A. Repak, Waiting on Washington: Central American Workers in the Nation's Capital, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995, p. 49.

7 Manning, p. v-vi.

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both private and public sectors, became official U.S. government policy following the election of Woodrow Wilson in 1912; it not only reserved most federal jobs for whites but it offered only the most menial jobs to blacks."[8]

The 1920's extended the Wilsonian legacy to a "new nadir" in African American life in D.C. At the 1922 dedication of the Lincoln Memorial, for example, seating was segregated. Consequently, African American dignitaries – including keynote speaker, Dr. Robert R. Morton, Principal of the Tuskegee Institute -- sat below the speakers' platform, while White dignitaries sat on top. Three years later, some 50,000 Ku Klux Klan members paraded down Pennsylvania Avenue to the Washington Monument in an apparent effort to show their strength in Washington, D.C.[9] Although the federal government's labor force and demand for labor expanded exponentially, African Americans were excluded from that job market.

By the 1930s, African Americans in D.C. began to organize politically to combat Jim Crow and racism generally. The New Negro Alliance, for example, boycotted business that would not hire African Americans, and protested segregation in public places.[10] "In 1939, the famous black singer Marian Anderson was refused permission by the Daughters of the American Revolution (D.A.R.) to sing in Constitution Hall."[11] The sponsors of the concert, the Howard University School of Music, arranged to have

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8 Manning, p. 14.

9 City of Magnificent Intentions: A History of the District of Columbia, The D.C. History Curriculum Project, Washington, D.C.: Intac, Inc., 1983, p. 380-383.

10 Ibid., p.361.

11 Ibid., p. 373.

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Anderson perform on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, which had been offered by Secretary of the Interior, Harold Ickes. This shift in the location of African Americans at the Memorial from a Jim Crow seating area to the platform mirrored the evolving position of African Americans in D.C.

The exigencies of World War II created new employment and political opportunities for African Americans in the U.S. government bureaucracy. Segregation in the public school system was declared unconstitutional in 1954, and integration was mandated. Not surprisingly, however, white families preferred leaving the city to having their children attend integrated schools. "The exodus of whites to the suburbs and continued influx of southern African Americans to Washington, D.C. led to a dramatic shift in the racial composition during the 1950s; by 1960, over one half (53.9%) of the District of Columbia is comprised of African Americans."[12] Despite comprising a numerical majority in the District proper, and becoming increasingly present in the suburbs, Black D.C. was heavily segregated and disadvantaged through the 1960s.

The Civil Rights movement and Black Power changed that, however. Although the most remembered event was the 1963 "March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom" in which Dr. Martin Luther King delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech, a great deal of local, grassroots activism had been taking place in the education, health, housing and public accommodations as well. Following Dr. King's assassination on April 4, 1968, the Capital burst into riots, as did many other U.S. cities. Howard University was shut down by teach-ins. Local African American leadership and residents alike banded

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[12] Manning, p. vi.

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together and once again, brought local and national attention to the plight of African Americans in D.C. The election of Harold Washington to the mayoral seat was both the culmination and the beginning of African American civil and economic rights gains in the District.

Jim Crow was in the flower of youth when the Latin American diplomatic community arrived in Washington, D.C. in substantial numbers. The Pan-American Union, officially established in 1910 and headquartered in Washington, D.C., was the first venue of the Latin American diplomatic community.[13] That community expanded during the Hoover administration and was solidified by Franklin Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy. [14] The Latin American diplomatic community relied primarily upon the domestic labor of migrants from their countries. In the 1940s and 1950s these Latin American service workers lived alongside African Americans south of Columbia Road, the racial dividing line of the Adams Morgan neighborhood, where much of the international community had settled due to its proximity to the embassies being established.

This group was arriving and establishing itself in D.C. during the Trujillo era, when migration out of the Dominican Republic was severely limited and controlled. Other scholars have noted that Trujillo era migrants were primarily of three types: those who Trujillo felt furthered the interests of the regime, those Trujillo felt would not

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[13] The Pan-American Union was the lead organizer of the Columbus Memorial Lighthouse to be constructed in Santo Domingo. It sponsored several international design competitions and exalted the Columbian legacy in the Americas.

[14] See E.R. Curry, Hoover's Dominican Diplomacy and the Origins of the Good Neighbor Policy, New York: Garland Publishing, 1979 and Roorda, 1998.

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undermine him, and those exiled.[15] Members of these groups were primarily from elite "white" families in Santo Domingo. Dominican migration scholars have overlooked a fourth class that migrated during this time: the domestic servants of the first two. "Linda Martin and Kerry Segrave (1985) observed elsewhere that nearly half of the 120,000 U.S. visas granted to Latin American women in 1968 were for prospective live-in domestics."[16] Mirroring socio-racial and political conditions in the Dominican Republic at the time, Dominican domestic labor migrants were women who typically hailed from the traditionally African American and West Indian regions in the Dominican Republic.[17]

Ironically, it was precisely because they were poor, female and black that this group was able to leave Santo Domingo and stay in the United States, even after their employers left the country, as was often the case. (Their working class and peasant cousins, by contrast, had few opportunities to migrate and were subjected to the full force and effect of the Trujillato's ideological and repressive apparatus.) Although their employers often engaged in a variety of repressive measures to retain control over their staff, including keeping their passports, many managed to remain nonetheless.

Finally, in national terms, on the east coast large Latina/os communities were beginning to form and the Mexican and Mexican American communities of the southwest

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[15] Cf. Franc Báez-Evertsz and Frank D'Oleo Ramírez, *La emigración de dominicanos a Estados Unidos: Determinantes socio-económicos y consequencias*, Santo Domingo: Fundación Friedrich Ebert, 1985; Black, 1986; Robert Crassweller, Trujillo: The Life and Times of a Caribbean Dictator, New York: Macmillan, 1966.

[16] Repak, pp. 77-78.

[17] See Aguilar, 1994; Interview, Juana Campos by Hector Corporan, *Black Mosaic* archives, Anacostia Museum; Interview, Juana Campos by Author, August 1998, Washington, D.C. Author's notes.

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and California had long been the object of governmental and media attention.[18] In New York City, Philadelphia, and other urban manufacturing centers poor and working class Puerto Rican migrants pushed out of Puerto Rico by Operation Bootstrap were arriving and settling in unprecedented numbers, while middle class Puerto Ricans began entering the U.S. government bureaucracy in Washington, D.C. Elite Cubans continued to travel and study across the country as they had throughout the nineteenth century. [19] Images of "Latin Americans", both abroad and in the U.S. began to proliferate in film and television, providing an ideological and material context for U.S. policies toward Latin America, [20] and for the new Latin American immigrants those policies brought to the country.[21]

The travelers:

The Dominicans who participated in *Black* Mosaic – and who I subsequently re-interviewed for this project -- were exceptionally well educated as a group, although they

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[18] See Acuña, 1981. The terms "Mexican" and "Mexican American" are used here as they are the historically accurate ones for the period under discussion. Although "chicano" was used, it did not come to designate a self-aware community in the 1960s civil rights movements.

[19] See Virginia Sanchez Korrol, From Colonia to Community: The History of Puerto Ricans in NewYork City, 1917-1948,Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1983; Frank Bonilla and Ricardo Campos, "A Wealth of Poor: Puerto Ricans in the New Economic Order," Daedalus: Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, vol. 110, Spring 1981, pp. 133-176; Luis Peréz, "A Circle of Connections: 100 Years of U.S.-Cuba Relations," in Ruth Behar, ed., Bridges to Cuba/Puentes a Cuba, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995, pp. 161-179; and Masud-Piloto, 1996.

[20] Rodriguez, 1998.

[21] For a good overview of this phenomena see Juan González, Harvest of Empire: A History of Latinos in America, New York: Viking, 2000.

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occupied a range of occupational statuses. As Table 6-1 illustrates, they all had at least a high school degree, one had a bachelors, another a Masters, and two had Ph.D.'s. Most obtained some, if not all of their education in Washington, D.C. and were exposed to the history of race in the United States in both academic and daily life. Their high educational attainment levels, together with their middle class socio-economic standing are influential in this particular group's ethno-racial formation. Through them we gain key insights into larger patterns.

Juana Campos arrived in Washington, D.C. in 1940 after having docked in New York City and spent several weeks with a cousin who resided there. Contracted to work as a seamstress for a Dominican diplomatic family in Washington, when the family left Washington, she stayed and continued to work independently. She met and married Ramberto Toruella, Sr., a Puerto Rican migrant who arrived in the Capital in 1941 to attend American University where he earned a B.A. in electrical engineering. They had two children, Ramberto and Carmen Toruella (subsequently Mrs. Carmen Quander). Doña Campos divorced her husband following his marital infidelity and raised her children as a single mother. She is considered a "godmother" of the Dominican community due to her long history in D.C. and to her service to the community. She was instrumental in the provision of Spanish language masses in the local Catholic diocese. In 1954 she organized an annual celebration for the Dominican Republic's patron saint, *La Virgen de la Altagracia*, which continues to be observed. And, together with her then adult children, she was an early participant in the annual Latin American Festival.

Casilda Luna arrived in Washington, D.C. as a domestic with a Dominican diplomatic family in 1961. Like Campos, when the family returned to Santo Domingo,

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she chose to remain. An outgoing person, Luna would organize weekly social gatherings in her apartment. Those gatherings became community discussion sessions during which their social problems would be presented and collectively considered. It was in those sessions that Luna "cut her teeth" in community organizing. She subsequently became involved in the Latin American Festival organizing community and most recently, in the Latino Affairs Office of the District of Columbia.

Daniel Bueno was a sixteen-year-old teenager when he arrived in Washington from Santo Domingo. The son of *Ingleses* (the British West Indian immigrants to the Dominican Republic and their descendants) and a politically progressive youth, he left the country during the post-Trujillo political turmoil. His father had migrated ahead and was a self-employed mechanic. Bueno worked for his father, obtained a GED and became a well-established east coast records industry entrepreneur. He married a Salvadorean woman, Coco, who is his business partner as well.

Following a three-year separation, when she was twelve Maricela Medina joined her mother in Chevy Chase, Maryland where she was employed as a domestic for a European American family. Medina quickly learned English and graduated from the Catholic high school her mother had enrolled her in at the top of her class. She was awarded a full scholarship to Howard University, where she majored in Latin American history. Again a top graduate, she received a fellowship to study in the Ph.D. Program in History at the University of Michigan. She completed her Ph.D. in 1986 and joined the faculty at Howard in a tenure-track appointment. Although she did become tenured, Medina became disillusioned with academic life and went on to open her own insurance services firm.

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Table 6-1: Dominican Participants in *Black Mosaic*, Socio-economic indicators

Name	Sex	Year Arrived in D.C.	Highest Grade Completed	Where educated	Occupation
Juana Campos	F	1940	*Bachillerato* †	DR	Seamstress
Ramberto Toruella	M	Native Born	B.A.	Ohio	Human Resources, D.C. Government
Carmen Quander	F	Native Born	M.A.	New York	Artist
Casilda Luna	F	1961	*Licenciatura* ≠	DR	Social Worker
Daniel Bueno	M	1963	7th Grade GED	DR Carlos Rosario Center Cardosa	Entrepreneur/ Record Shop
Maricela Medina	F	1964	B.A. Ph.D.	Howard Univ. of Michigan	Historian, Howard Entrepreneur/ Insurance Agency
Francia Almarante	F	1974	*Nearly Bachillerato* † GED Cosmetology License	DR Carlos Rosario Center D.C. Beauty Academy	Beautician Entrepreneur/ Beauty Shop
Juanita Laureano	F	1977	GED	Carlos Rosario Center	Beautician
Esperanza Ozuma	F	1983	GED	Lincoln Jr. H.S., NCIT	Beautician
Julia Lara	F	1984	Ph.D.	George Mason Univ.	Educator/Researcher

† Dominican degree equivalent to a high school diploma.
≠ Dominican university degree.

Francia Almarante arrived in Washington, D.C. in 1974 to live with her mother, a domestic at the Moroccan Embassy. They lived at the Embassy for several years, during which time Almarante attended the Americanization School, learned English, obtained a GED and went on to become a licensed cosmetologist and hairdresser. After apprenticing at a Georgetown beauty shop that primarily serviced white customers and later at an African American shop in the District, Almarante went on to open her own shop in the Adams Morgan section.

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Juanita Laureano, who arrived in 1977, and Esperanza Ozuma, who followed in 1983, are also licensed cosmetologists. They work together as hairdressers in a beauty shop. Laureano also attended the Americanization School, now known as the Carlos Rosario Center, where she obtained a GED. Ozuma likewise obtained a GED, although through the program run by Lincoln Jr. High School.

Finally, Julia Lara arrived in Washington, D.C. as an adult professional relocating from New York City. She had arrived in New York City as a twelve-year-old child. She attended primary and high school in the New York City Catholic school system, entered the College of Staten Island, and subsequently received a full scholarship to Middlebury College in Vermont. At Middlebury she completed a B.A. in political science. Following several years working in New York City, she moved to Washington to join her husband, an African American professional. Once settled in Washington, she entered the graduate program in Education at George Mason University, where she completed her Ph.D. in 1998.

Arriving in Washington, D.C.:

Corina Sallaint arrived in Washington, D.C. in 1921 from Monte Cristi, in the northwestern part of the Dominican Republic. She came employed as a domestic for a United States family who met her while travelling in the Dominican Republic. D.C. Dominican lore has it that she was among the first Dominican domestics to settle in Washington. Mama Corina, as she came to be know, married an African American man,

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Nelson Washington, had seven children, and made her home in Maryland a social haven for Latin American immigrants and their children.[22] Carmen Quander recalled:

> Mama Corina and her house were like an international house. And we would all go out to her on Sunday and every nationality...this is why in Washington we didn't have the racism between Latin Americans that you do in New York. Because all Latin Americans could go to Mama Corina's house.

Dominican domestics organized their social lives with one another because they were primarily a Spanish-monolingual, female group. Maricela Medina, whose mother was domestic for a family in Chevy Chase, Maryland recalled:

> There were a number of men who were brought and who worked at the Embassy but for the most part if was a female staff. You always had a few to do the driving and do the gardening and stuff like that but the bulk of the staff was female. And the stories about people who mistreated them, who overworked them and didn't want to pay them and would keep their passports. And remember, many of these women were working for people out in the suburbs and I'm talking about when the suburbs, when you saw cows over there by the Naval Hospital, okay. So this was the country.

At the same time, however, because of their status as Spanish-speaking immigrants and their work connections to Latin American legations and embassies, Dominicans worked and socialized primarily with other Latin American immigrants. "On Thursdays, which was the maid's day off," Maricela Medina recalled, "all of them would come together and there were only a few that had a partner. So you met at someone's apartment and they would and socialize and you would go shopping and buy clothes or this and the other." As mothers, often without their partners, these women combined their parenting responsibilities – providing food, clothing, household goods – with their social needs for

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[22] Nelson Washington, "A Final Glimpse of Vapors", Unpublished Manuscript, Washington, D.C., 1994. My thanks to Gladys Martínez for sharing this manuscript with me.

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contact with other women similarly situated. At the same time, they trained their daughters in the ways of Dominican culture.

Daniel Bueno, now owner of Zodiac Records and a prominent East Coast Latin music distributor, explained the role of music and parties in Dominican community building.

> We grew up in house parties. We would ask, "Where's the party?" every Saturday. There were very few clubs and we would visit the parties and our friends. And that was our life. We grew up in house parties, which doesn't exist anymore. People would share and we would get to know each other. People used to spend time together and we would get to know one another. Parents were there with their children, they would take their children. The house parties we would go to, almost every one was older.

Dominican immigrants in Washington, D.C., in other words, replicated patterns of socializing typical in the Dominican Republic. Young and old alike dance to the same music, using the same or at least similar dance steps, inside the same spaces, often relatives' and friends' homes. There was, in other words, no "generation gap" in terms of Dominican cultural practices in the United States.

While regular daily or weekly socializing was organized along class lines, because the Latino community was so limited, service staff had fairly regular social contact with elite embassy and legation families during the 1940's and 1950's. Ramberto Toruella, Juana Campos' son born and raised in D.C. during the 1950s and 1960s recalled:

> The only Latinos in this town were embassy personnel. The support staff of the embassy. So we grew up with all the embassies. If the Embassy of Venezuela would have a celebration to celebrate their Independence Day, all the Latinos were invited. And we'd go to the Venezuelan Embassy, eat Venezuelan food and dance Venezuelan dances. And the same with the Mexican Embassy, the Dominican Embassy. There was a handful, within

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> a fifty-mile radius there must have been one hundred Latinos. We knew every Latino in D.C. Every Latino in D.C. knew each other.[23]

This working and social relationship with Latin Americans of all classes and with white D.C. shielded early Dominicans somewhat from the sort of Jim Crow policies and practices their contemporary African American neighbors and co-workers were experiencing. It also enabled the retention of a Latin American identity for the first generation, and the formation of a generalized Latina/o identity for the second generation through shared cultural practices -- particularly food ways, music and dance, and religion -- and through the retention and use of Spanish.

The vast distance between African Americans and whites in the United States perplexed Juana Campos when she arrived in 1940. An astute reader of the social landscape, Doña Campos recalled more than fifty years later "people here were separated like tuberculosis patients, black and white apart."[24] Neither in New York City, where her boat from the Dominican Republic had docked, nor in her hometown of Pelmar had she experienced the kind of visibly entrenched Jim Crow segregation that characterized the U.S. capital. Indeed, it was a new Puerto Rican friend who "instructed" the recently arrived Campos on the rules of Jim Crow. A brown skinned woman, to U.S. observers Juana Campos was clearly of African descent to some degree or another and, her friend warned, likely to experience discrimination. From the first, Juana Campos was

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23 Interview, Ramberto Toruella by Author, August 1998. Author's notes.

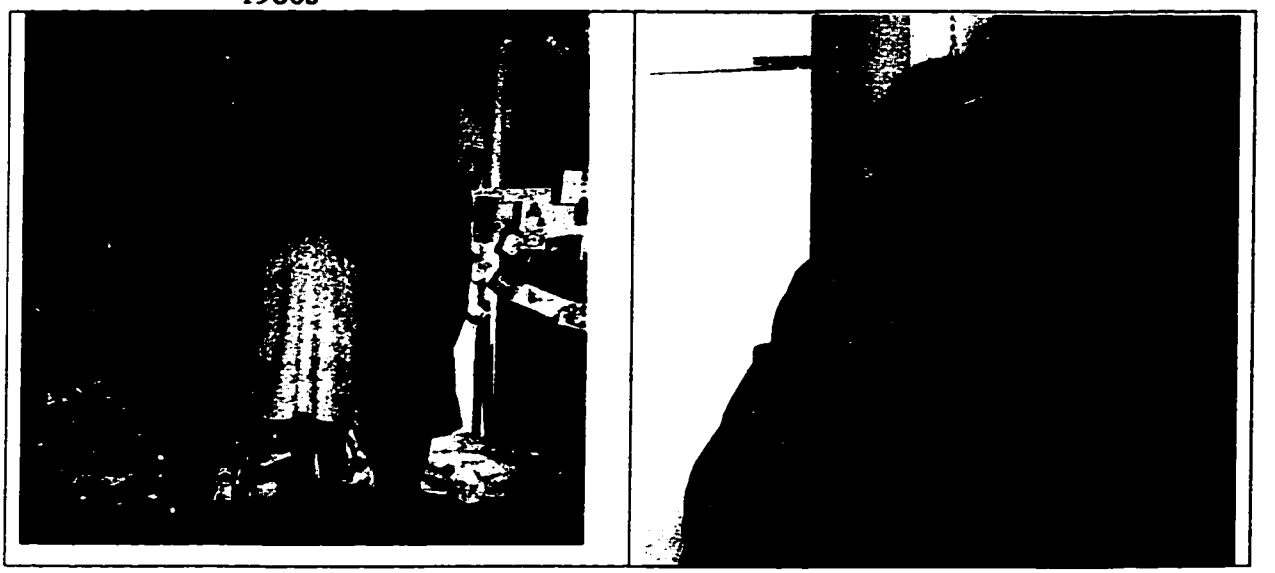
24 Interview with Juana Campos by Hector Corporan, 1994, *Black Mosaic* archives, Anacostia Museum. *Black Mosaic* files were not systematically archived when this research was undertaken in 1998. Instead, *Black Mosaic* materials were stored in various offices, file cabinets and boxes throughout the Research Department of the Anacostia. As a result, data source citations are descriptive rather than archival.

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determined that neither she nor her children who were born in Washington, Ramberto and Carmen Toruella, would be constrained by Jim Crow. Ramberto Toruella described the socio-racial geography.

> In those days we were the first Latino family in the black section. North of Columbia Road was all white. South of Columbia Road was all black. The north side was very wealthy. The south side was the poor people. And the south side, that's where all your black chauffeurs and nannies and cooks and housekeepers lived. So we were always on the fringe of the good area. The wealthy area. And my mom was a seamstress and she sewed for all the rich white folks on the north side. We were raised by my mom being a seamstress sewing for the rich white folks. [25]

Illustration 6-1: Juana Campos with Ramberto and Carmen Toruella, Washington, D.C. 1960s



For second generation Dominicans coming of age in the 1950s and 1960s, Spanish language use became a means of affirming a Latina/o identity, and for Afro-Latina/os a shield against anti-black racism. As *Black* Mosaic pointed out, a series of widely publicized racist incidents leading to diplomatic debacles occurred in 1961. International attention was focused on the United States and on D.C. in particular when

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[25] Interview, Ramberto Toruella, Washington, D.C., 1998. Author's notes.

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several dignitaries from newly independent African nations were refused service at Maryland and D.C. establishments on repeated occasions.[26] As a result, President Kennedy sent identical letters to governors of Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia – states through which diplomats frequently traveled. These letters asked the governors for their cooperation in assuring "friendly and dignified receptions for diplomatic representatives of foreign countries who may be working, living, and traveling in your State during their Assignment in the United States."[27] In this context, Ramberto's recollections are instructive:

> All we spoke at home was Spanish. So we didn't know any English. All our friends were Spanish speaking. And we when we started learning English, my mom would always say, "Never speak English in public. Always speak Spanish." At the People's Drug Store, blacks couldn't eat. "No coloreds." Coloreds could not sit at the counters and my mom would take us there and the waitresses would look at her and look at us. We were actually speaking Spanish because then they'd say, "Oh, they're not colored, they're foreigners. You can feed them." We grew up like that. We grew up going everywhere because my mom knew how to play the game. So we grew up knowing it was important that we were *Dominicano*, Latino, *Dominicano*.[28]

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[26] Calvin B. Holder, "Racism Toward Black African Diplomats During the Kennedy Administration," Journal of Black Studies, 1983, Vol. 14, No. 1, pp. 31-48; Timothy Maga, "Battling the 'Ugly American' at Home: The Special Protocol Service and the New Frontier," Diplomacy and Statecraft, 1992, Vol. 3, No. 1, pp. 126-142.

[27] John F. Kennedy, Correspondence, April 13, 1961, Central Files, John Fitzgerald Kennedy Library.

[28] Interview, Ramberto Toruella by Author, August 1998, Washington, D.C. Author's notes.

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Doña Campos clearly understood that she and her children could be taken for African American. She was also, it seems, aware of the foreigners' exemption.[29] Through her use of Spanish she actively resisted the social and spatial restriction African American identification implied, and she taught her children to do the same. As her daughter Carmen explained, "I grew up as white and I fit into the white community and it's the black community that I've had a problem with because I don't have the baggage." The "baggage" Carmen refers to is the experience of segregation and violent racism. Growing up "as white" meant making full use of the public resources Washington, D.C. offered to Whites.

On the one hand, Doña Campos' refusal to be perceived as African American could be understood as a negation and a refusal of a black identity. And indeed, Doña Campos does not identify as black; instead, she understands herself to be *india*, just as she did nearly sixty years ago when she left the Dominican Republic.[30] However, soon after her arrival in D.C., Doña Campos understood that her racial self-perception differed radically from the perception of both Anglo and African Americans. To them she was "black" and that meant subordination. She understood quickly that Spanish language use and retention would mediate anti-black racism.

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[29] Similar experiences and negotiations occurred for Latin American and Latino baseball players during the same era in the United States. Cf. Adrian Burgos, Jr., "Jugando en el Norte: Caribbean Players in the Negro Leagues, 1910-1950", Focus/En Foco : Race And Identity, New York: Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños, Hunter College, 1996.

[30] Interview, Juana Campos by Author, August 1998, Washington, D.C. Author's notes.

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The issue for Doña Campos was not one of allegiance to one group or the other, however. Rather, it was a refusal to be relegated to second-class citizenship by either community. Doña Campos was a labor migrant who left the Dominican Republic in 1940, during the Trujillo era and shortly before the end of the decades' old U.S. Customs Receivership.[31] Her pre-migration experience of the United States, in other words, was in the context of a country deeply impacted by U.S. neo-colonial and military intervention.[32] It is understandable, then, that Doña Campos did not feel herself to be caught in the horns of the United States' "American dilemma".[33] The issue for Doña Campos, instead, was her family's ability to negotiate both "the [U.S.] racial state", as Omi and Winant put it, and the socio-racial geography of D.C. on pragmatic terms.[34]

Ironically, Doña Campos' story was at the center of *Black Mosaic*. The pedal-footed sewing machine with which she made her living in Washington was prominently displayed in *Black Mosaic*, and a picture of her along side it at the exhibit's opening day was widely circulated in promotional materials. She derived great pleasure from her participation in *Black Mosaic* not because she understood herself to be a black immigrant, but because she understood the exhibit to be a celebration of Latin American immigrants'

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31 The U.S. collected and managed Dominican Customs revenues from 1905 to 1941. Since import revenues represented the principal source of currency exchange, the U.S. was effectively managing the Dominican economy during this period.

32 See Atkins and Wilson, 1998.

33 Myrdal, 1944.

34 Omi and Winant, 1994.

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survival in Washington, D.C.[35] For Doña Campos, *Black Mosaic* was a more permanent version of the yearly Latin American Festival she had helped establish in Washington twenty or so years earlier.[36] Why, then, did Doña Campos participate in *Black Mosaic*? Simply stated, as she had done throughout her experience in Washington, she ignored the racial context of the event and focused on the part of the exhibit that served her purposes. For her, *Black Mosaic* was an affirmation of her success as an immigrant and as the "godmother" of the Dominican community in Washington.

By contrast, for Doña Campos' children and those of their generation who came of age in Washington during the 1960s and 1970s, *Black Mosaic* was successful in affirming their membership in several socio-political communities: Dominican, black, Latina/o, Afro-Latina/o. As it was noted in *Black Mosaic*'s section on Race and Ethnicity in D.C., "Afro-Latinos had to adjust to an unaccustomed social distance between the races and to U.S. classifications that sought to divide their ethnic community into two racial groups: 'Blacks' and 'Hispanics'."[37] However, the underlying sociological and historic reasons for those affiliations were not sufficiently explored by *Black Mosaic*. Despite recognizing and presenting race and ethnicity in Latin America as distinctive from that in the United States, *Black Mosaic* never questioned, and therefore never explained why this particular group of Latin American immigrants identified as black.

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35 Interview, Juan Campos by Author, Washington, D.C., August 1998. Author's notes.

36 See Olivia Cadaval, The Hispano American Festival and the Latino Community: Creating an Identity in the Nation's Capital, Ph.D. Dissertation in American Civilization, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, George Washington University, Washington, D.C., 1989.

37 *Black Mosaic*, exhibit script, p. 86.

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Sending context:

The Dominicans who participated in *Black Mosaic* came from very particular ethno-racial backgrounds in the Dominican Republic. They were nearly all either from communities that had historically received large contingents of British West Indian labor migrants ("*cocolos*") in the late 19th and early 20th century, or were themselves the descendants of those migrants. British West Indian migrants from the Lesser Antilles were brought to the Dominican Republic to work in the newly industrialized sugar plantations owned by Cuban, Puerto Rican and North Americans. Like the African American colony in Samana ("*Ingleses*"), these migrants sustained a unique ethnic identity – typically through English language use and membership in the A.M.E. Protestant church -- while becoming integrated into Dominican society.[38]

As in other Latin American regions where they migrated, Dominican *cocolos* perceived themselves as superior to the Dominican natives, due in large measure to their ability to speak English with North American owners and managers, who put them in skilled and supervisory positions.[39]

> In spite of the slur campaigns in the press, the Cocolos progressively achieved acceptance in the communities where they lived. The White elite and mulatto masses of the nation began to view the Cocolos in a positive manner. Their superior formal education, strict child rearing practices, discipline in the capitalist system, the ability of most to speak to the North American plantation owners and managers in English, and the specialized skills of many, converted the image of these Black immigrants in the Dominican society to that of the 'negro blancos' (white blacks).[40]

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[38] H. Hoetnik, "'Americans' in Samana," Caribbean Studies, Vol. 2, No. 1, April 1962, pp. 3-21.

[39] See for example Trevor W. Purcell, Banana Fallout: Class, Color and Culture Among West Indians in Costa Rica, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993.

[40] Del Castillo and Murphy, 57.

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In other words, unlike the Haitian experience, *cocolos* have been able to sustain a unique ethno-racial identity in the Dominican Republic that is positively perceived. They do not, therefore, necessarily understand black self-identification as a negative gesture. They are "white blacks" because although identified as "black" they are socially and economically positioned as "whites."

Julia Lara, a Dominican policy analyst and daughter of immigrants from St. Kitts, arrived in Washington from New York in the early 1980s and was profiled in *Black Mosaic*. In her interview with community scholar Hector Corporan she explained:

> I was very well aware in the Dominican Republic and in St. Thomas, that I was black. But it wasn't institutionalized and what that means, the meaning of that was not the same in the U.S. as it was in the Dominican Republic and in St. Thomas, because while there was somewhat of a negative attribute attached to it, it wasn't a source of high status in the Dominican Republic or in St. Thomas. It was certainly not as negative characteristic, personal characteristic as it is in the United States and was at that point in time. So I guess what I'm trying to do, is establish gradations of differences. I think there is a difference in terms of how people are perceived as you go from the Caribbean and you come to the U.S. primarily because in the Caribbean and in the Dominican Republic you had for many, many, many years people of color, specifically people of African descent living with others who are lighter skinned. Beyond that, the reality is that it is a very small population in the Dominican Republic who could be considered in American terms white. Very small. So Dominicans are people of color and while there is a lack of consciousness, historical consciousness and knowledge about where we came from, because there was never institutionalized racism the impact is different.[41]

That Lara does identify as black racially is due in large measure to her experiences within the educational system of the United States and her subsequent political consciousness of

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[41] Interview, Julia Lara by Hector Corporan, 1994, *Black Mosaic* archives, Anacostia Museum.

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the salience of race as an organizing principal here.[42] That she also continues to identify as Dominican and more generally as Latina, however, points to the multiple negotiations Dominicans undertake.

Finally, they nearly all either worked for or with African Americans at some point in their work lives. Often they had African American bosses and mentors who modeled appropriate professional behavior and upward social mobility for them. Washington's population is the most highly educated one in the nation. More than half of the population has attended college, and eighty percent of adults over twenty-five years old have completed at least high school.[43] The class stratification of the African American community in Washington, D.C. actually serves as an incentive to Dominican assimilation into a black racial identity. As Carmen Quander explained:

> So that the Dominican blacks that come here or the mixed blacks, like myself, that come here, we get involved in the African American community and we see that there is a very, very deep class-consciousness and that there is a place for us. A positive place. But for example, in New York City, although there are affluent African Americans, they are not in a mass concentration the way you have in D.C.

Conversely, the relative political and economic dis-empowerment of African Americans in New York, particularly those next to whom Dominicans live, work and go to school with, reinforces the prevailing Dominican association of blackness with low socio-economic standing.

In Washington, D.C. there was and continues to be an incentive to black self-identification. There African Americans are a numerical majority, wield increasing

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42 Interview, Julia Lara, by author, July 1998, Washington, D.C. Author's notes.

43 Repak, p. 56.

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political power, hold the vast majority of government posts and jobs, and occupy a diversity of socio-economic statuses (for example, just outside D.C., Maryland's Prince Georges County has the highest percentage of affluent blacks in the country)[44]. In 1991 the D.C. Latino Civil Rights Task Force found "that even though Latin American residents represented between 10 and 15 percent of Washington's population, African Americans monopolized the city government as well as city services and outreach programs. None of the city council or school board members was Spanish-speaking, and Latin Americans consituted only 1 percent of the bulging D.C. municipal workforce of forty-eight thousand."[45] While the Dominican women arriving in D.C. during the 1960's and 1970's may have come from a position of disadvantage and arrived into a much more segregated community than their New York counterparts, over the long term they have been able to experience greater upward mobility because they have been able to benefit from the political activities of and set-asides for African Americans. The U.S. Civil Rights Act of 1960, for example, opened up clerical jobs to African Americans, prompting a shift out of domestic service and into pink and white-collar labor. Repak informs us that:

> The percentage of African American women who were private-household workers in 1960 (37.5 percent nationwide) plummeted by the end of the 1980s, when only 3.5 percent of employed African American women still worked in domestic service. The move out of service and into clerical

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[44] This is not to imply that African Americans in D.C. are universally well off. In fact, African Americans in the District continue to experience high poverty rates (22%), have median per capita incomes of $12,226, on two thirds less than the median white per capita income of $34,563, and disproportionately fewer college and graduate degrees. See 1990 U.S. Census data, Database C90S5F1A, State level statistics. That said, however, the presence of a large and visible black middle class is sociologically relevant.

[45] Repak, p. 69.

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> occupations enabled African American women to improve their occupational distribution to such an extent that their median income increased from 51 percent of white women's income in 1955 to 98 percent in 1975.[46]

It is shift Dominican women who arrived as adults or came of age along side African American women in D.C. experienced with them. A case in point is that of Casilda Luna, who emigrated from Santo Domingo in 1961 to work as a domestic for a Dominican General and his family in Washington, and went on to become a professional community organizer employed by the Office on Latino Affairs.[47] Carmen Quander explained:

> You have to understand that Dominicans that constitute the District of Columbia came originally...came in a servant capacity and so they came here as maids and chauffeurs and stuff like that. So the class that came to New York is working class poor. They're still not servants. So the servant class that came here are in fact the black people. The difference here also and then in New York, the servant class here has managed to still serve but their children go on to college whereas in New York they don't.

For example, they have been able to make use of Affirmative Action in higher education at Howard University, a local, historically black university. As former Howard University alumna and professor Maricela Medina put it:

> Well, in my case I didn't have to go the Dominican route. I could go the African American route. And that was another thing that I found out, as opposed to people who think they are only disadvantages to being African American. There were a lot of advantages when I went to school because this was the time of the Civil Rights Movement. The Black Power movement. The militancy on campus. A lot of things were changing and there were a lot of opportunities offered to African Americans. Puerto Ricans were always included and Mexican Americans, but if you were Hispanic of any other origin, unless you qualified as African American, you weren't able to participate.

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[46] Repak, p. 57.

[47] Interview, Casilda Luna by Olivia Cadaval, 1993, *Black Mosaic* interview tapes archives.

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Participating for Dominican immigrants, who had made so many sacrifices to get to Washington, was of course of the utmost importance. As Medina further explained:

> That's why you came to the United States. You came to the United States for opportunities. Your parents made this big trip. See, this was always very clear to me that my parents...my mother, because at that time it was just my mother...my mother came here and she sacrificed. I could not let my mother down by getting poor grades. I could not let my mother down by failing. So this was not even an issue.

Choosing Ambiguity:

Both Anglos and African Americans expect Dominicans to choose where their racial loyalties lay. For white Americans, the issue is whether one is willing to establish belongingness in the United States by rejecting African Americans, as immigrants have traditionally been required to do.[48] Maricela Medina explained it this way:

> Americans, period, required that you make choices. Because even whites, even though you were black, whites would make that kind of...they put you in a separate category because you were Spanish. But they always wanted you to choose. It seemed like society was always asking you to choose between being black and being Hispanic.

African Americans, historically and contemporarily, insisted that Dominicans (and African diaspora communities generally) identify as black. Other Latina/os, conversely, insist that ethnicity supercedes race in the structuring of Latina/o identity. *Black Mosaic* explained, "Unlike other immigrants, Black immigrants must also adjust to and successfully situate themselves within two distinct environments – society at large and the African American community. Thus they must often negotiate a conflicting set of

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[48] Cf. Noel Ignatiev, How the Irish Became White, New York: Routledge, 1995.

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expectations."[49] For Afro-Latinos, they must negotiate yet another "set of expectations": those imposed by the Latino community at large.

Julia Lara's experience at Middlebury College in Vermont is illustrative.[50]

> Well, it was an experience just in terms...well, it was an experience because it was for the first time when I was caught between an African American population, a Latino population, who were not of African descent....The Latino students who were not from the Caribbean did not view me as legitimately Latina because I was of African descent. These are people who, for the most part, came from South America. Some from Mexico. But they were not Latinos of African descent. They were Latinos who might have been Spanish or Indian and did not recognize or value their heritage as Indian people. So being Latina and being of African descent was strange for them. And for the African American population, being of African descent yet speaking another language and having some sense of pride in where I came from and not in any way denying where I came from, was interesting to them.

Lara distinguished between Latinos from the Caribbean -- who presumably are either themselves of, or familiar with Latinos of African descent -- and those from South America and Mexico – who presumably are not. This group, Lara explained, did not perceive Lara "as legitimately Latina" because they were either unfamiliar with Afro-Latinos[51] or "did not recognize or value their [own] heritage as Indian people." That

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49 *Black Mosaic*, exhibit script, p. 86.

50 For Lara's reflections on her undergraduate experience see Julia Lara, "Reflections: Bridging Cultures," in L. Steven Zwerling and Howard B. London, eds. New Directions for Community Colleges Special Issue: First-Generation Students: Confronting Cultural Issues, Winter 1992, no. 80, pp. 65-70.

51 There are, of course, Afro-Mexicanos and large Afro-Latino populations throughout Central and South America. However, as Lara points out, these groups are generally excluded or overlooked from their nation's imagined communities. See Edmund T. Gordon, Disparate Diasporas: Identity and Politics in an African-Nicaraguan Community, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998; Richard Graham, ed. The Idea of Race in Latin America, 1870-1940. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990; Purcell, 1993; Wade, 1993; Wright, 1990.

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tension over recognition and legitimization as Latina by non-Afro-Latinos is one that has gained increasing salience in Washington, D.C. due to the influx and numerical predominance of Central Americans.

Up until the late 1970s, the Latin American community in D.C. was small and highly heterogeneous. The largest sub-groups were Cuban, Dominicans and Puerto Ricans. Although South and Central Americans were present as well, it was the series of civil wars in Central America that created a large Latin American community of over 200,000 as of the 1990 Census. "Within a single generation, Washington could claim the second largest settlement (after Los Angeles) of citizens from El Salvador to the United States and the third largest community of Central Americans overall."[52] According to the Dominicans interviewed for this project, this sea change in the composition and size of the Latino community impacted African American/Latino race relations. Maricela Medina explained it thus:

> The composition of the community now is completely different. You have mostly Central Americans. Mostly Central Americans of Amerindian background who don't necessarily mix well with blacks, whether Hispanic or African American. Many of them are openly antagonistic to blacks. They harbor many of the prejudices that whites harbor against blacks ...and one of the things that bothers me is that when they talk to you or not necessarily to me but to a person and they are relating something that happened to them, they will always say, "*El policia negro.*"["The Black police officer."] My thing is: Why do you have to specify that he was black? Because when they are talking about a policeman who is white, they don't say, "*policia blanco.*" ["White police officer."] They only make the reference to race when it's a black policeman. "*El Negro.*" ["The Black guy."] And I never thought I would learn to dislike a word like that, because I never had any problems accepting...I shouldn't say "never had any problems" but I don't have a problem accepting who I am or what I am. But the way that word is used carries a similar connotation to the word "nigger." I don't mean any disrespect by that but the way it is said, It always had that kind of meaning, the expression in which they

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52 Repak, p. 1.

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> express that word....And of course I am speaking heresy when I say this because, you know, Hispanics are not supposed to...we're not prejudiced you know. It doesn't matter to us whether you're black or white, right?

As an Afro-Latina, Medina signifies her membership in the larger "Hispanic" community, which Central Americans belong to, though her use of "we" and "us." At the same time, she signals that Blacks can be both African American and Hispanic. She takes offense, therefore, at the pejorative way in which the Central Americans she's encountered use the term "black". This anti-black prejudice marks the tenuous nature of Dominican inclusion into the categories "Hispanic" and "Black" in Washington, D.C.

The lack of familiarity with African American history in the United States also marked Central American / African American relations in D.C. Several respondents indicated that African Americans deserved to be respected both in terms of their ancestor's accomplishments in Africa and in terms of their own survival in the United States. As Casilda Luna put, "they were kings and queens in Africa and now you want to treat them badly?" Carmen Quander expressed similar sentiments.

> Because something happens to the Latin American who comes here. To the Washington area. Because everything is so divided between black and white. And all of a sudden all of these other people become white, whereas their own....they don't have blacks in their country...come on, get out of here!!! And you have to remind these people and this is why the blacks have so much resentment towards the foreign. Because they come in and they have to step on somebody. The white men have to step on somebody. So they come in and step on a black person as lower than they are. But this is the black man's country. They built it. They made it. They've been here much longer than the whites. How dare you come in and condemn them in their own country?

These Dominican respondents, while sustaining a separate ethnic identity from U.S. African Americans, expressed a shared racial history in D.C. They witnessed and participated in Jim Crow, the Civil Rights Movement and Black Power. Accordingly,

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they feel their own histories are tied to African American history. At the same time, as Latinos, they helped organize the first Spanish masses, the first community dances, the first Spanish language films at the Colony Theatre, the first Latin American Festival, the first bilingual education programs, and the Office on Latino Affairs. They are, in other words, invested in many communities and their histories. And they've had to fight and push each to acknowledge their perspective. Hair stylist Esperanza Laureana explained:

> I consider myself black and I have considered myself black since I was in my country. The difference is that when they call you black here it's because of problems African Americans have had with White Americans, with the differences, with that blacks can't be and whites can. So that exists also in that sometimes there are Latinos and they don't know where you are from and they are talking about you and they don't know if you speak Spanish and then after they know that you are Dominican they don't know how they're going to apologize, due to the same difference they mistake people a lot. I don't agree with that racism where you're black and I'm lighter.

African Americans ask her what she considers herself, she responds "black", in part because she identifies as such, but also because she wants to align herself with them. Similarly Maricela Medina noted that:

> The black Hispanics would be caught in the middle because the African Americans wanted to kick the Hispanics' butt because they were white or as the African Americans say, "They think they're white." And then the black Hispanics would say, "Hey man, you can't beat up my friends." "How can you be a friend with that whitey?"

Being friends across color is not exceptional in the Dominican Republic. Lara recalled growing up in the Dominican Republic essentially unaware of race, despite her poor economic circumstances.

> Well, although I was the darkest child in my family at the time, color was not an issue in any way that influenced my relationship with my parents, my aunt, my uncles, my cousins. It just was not an issue. I was never made to feel that I was less than a full human being. It wasn't an issue for me growing up in the Dominican Republic. It just wasn't. And so

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feelings of difference in ways that one feels here in the States when one is growing up was not something that I experienced until I came to the States.[53]

Illustration 6-2: Julia Lara (right) and her childhood best friend, Ofelia, in the Dominican Republic, circa 1960.



Photo by: Lara Family, *Black Mosaic* archive.

Carmen Quander, who married into a prominent African American family in D.C. recalled on-going negotiations with Washington's African American elite.

> Why do you want to take my heart and soul just because you see the color of my skin? Toruella is my last name. That's from the south of Spain. I said, "I'm Dominican. I am a person of color. I am of the African Diaspora but you know what you talk to me about other stuff too, o.k.? We came here knowingly. I know my roots. I took my family to the

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53 "Identity", exhibit videotape, *Black Mosaic*, Anacostia Museum.

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> grave of all of my ancestors. I am a person of color and very proud of it but you cannot stay in that box.[54]

The "box" Quander refers to is the one that gives racial identity primacy over national or ethnic identity. It is the one based on hypo-descent that would have identify solely as African American because she has African ancestors. As she reminds her questioner, however, she feels as connected to her European ancestors (who are from the South of Spain) as to African ones. What's more, she feels herself to be more than the sum total of the "parts" that constitute her background. She refuses to be boxed in.

Speaking of her interactions with African American beauty shop co-workers, Francia Almarante echoed a similar sentiment.

> I have arrived in places where I've noticed the looks, but as soon as I speak Spanish, everything changes. Their faces change, I notice the difference immediately. From both whites and blacks. Because blacks here are a little discriminatory too. They also discriminate a little bit. As soon as I speak Spanish, things change because now they know I'm not Black American. And everything changes. I did notice a bit of difference between the other Latinas who had white skin and me. They treated me better than them, friendlier. I don't know why. They identified with me more than with the other girls because I am black.

Francia identifies both with Latinas, of whatever color they may be, and with African American women as a black woman. She is, in other words, both at once. Julia Lara explained:

> [If I am] asked where I came from, I will say I'm Dominican. But that's a nationality. It's not a race. If they want to know where I'm coming from in terms of race, then I am of African descent – recognizing that in many Latin American countries, being of African descent really means being that and some other things. But certainly I am an Afro-Latina. I am an Afro-Latina who was born in the Dominican Republic. [55]

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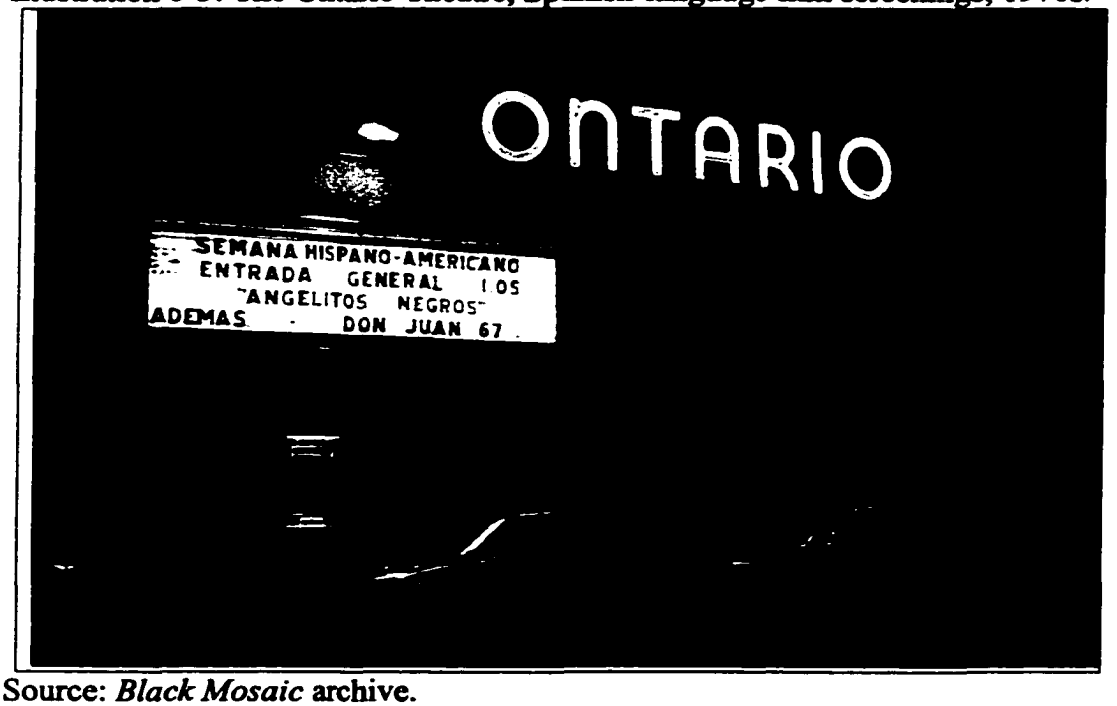
54 Interview, Carmen Quander by Author, Washington, D.C., August 1998.

55 "Identity", exhibit videotape, *Black Mosaic*, Anacostia Museum.

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Maricela Medina was even more emphatic: "I'm still Dominican but there is no question in my mind that I am African. Of African descent. I describe myself as a black Hispanic woman." Francia Almarante put it succinctly: "I am black, but that's not all I am."[56] For these Dominican women, their physical appearance and the reception it inspired by both white and black Washington is only part of their reality. The other part is formed by their social relations, which continue to be primarily among Hispanics.

Illustration 6-3: The Ontario Theatre, Spanish-language film screenings, 1970s.



Source: *Black Mosaic* archive.

Medina, for example, attended Howard University and went on to become a member of its History faculty. She has been a member of Howard, and the African American community it encompasses, for three decades. Nonetheless, as she explained "Howard changed my life, my outlook. But my social outlet was in the Hispanic

56 Interview, Francia Almarante by Author, Washington, D.C., July 1998.

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community." When she left the Howard faculty to establish her own insurance agency, it was Hispanics who came to be heavily represented among Medina's clientele.

Francia similarly, found herself working alongside African Americans and servicing very many African American clients, but continues to organize her social life primarily in the Latino community. She lives in Mount Pleasant, attends Spanish mass, and attends Latin dances. Nonetheless, after several years working with African Americans, and especially as her English language proficiency increased, she began increasingly to socialize in that community as well.

> Despite the fact that I worked there, I just worked. I didn't have any other contact, nothing. As I went entering a little bit, conversing and leaving behind the friends I had years earlier, that's when I began to familiarize myself with Americans. I began to make friends with the girls. I used to go to birthday parties, they'd invite me to their Thanksgiving, and so I'd be increasingly well. I'm very grateful to them, they showed me a lot of things I didn't know.

Illustration 6-4: Francia in front of her shop in Mount Pleasant, 1998.

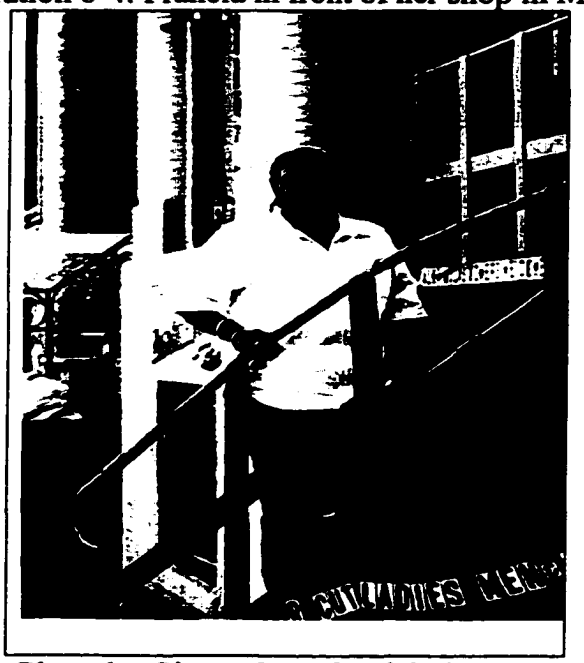


Photo by Ginetta E.B. Candelario.

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Her African American co-workers shared their professional knowledge and skills, their food ways, and their English language skills, each of which facilitated Francia's entrepreneurial success as a hairdresser in D.C. While her clients include many Latinas women, African American women predominate. Ultimately, however, Francia opened her beauty shops in Mount Pleasant, where she lives, with Latina partners and employees.

Similarly, Ramberto Toruella, who now works in the District of Columbia Office of Human Resources, feels himself connected to D.C. larger "Latin" community despite the cultural and ethno-racial shifts in that community.

> It's different now in that with the influx of Salvadorans and Central Americans from the wars down there, from Nicaragua and so forth and the Latinos that are coming in, this is different. I know I'm part of the Old Guard by being on the Latino Civil Rights Center and the Wilson Center and staying in Adams Morgan instead of moving out of the city into the suburbs where they've started to actually lose their Latino roots. But I'm staying in. I want to bridge that gap. I want to bridge it. And I'm learning a lot about Salvadorans that I just didn't know. I'm working with them and around them all the time and I know there are a lot of derogatory remarks made about Salvadorans but just like anybody else, there's good and bad.

In other words, the Latino "Old Guard" is the group that is an established presence in Latino social and political institutions founded in the early 1970s. Many of those folks, as Ramberto alludes, have attained a degree of economic success and have moved out of Adams Morgan and into the suburbs of Maryland and Virginia. The new Latino community is as foreign to the Old Guard as to African Americans. Yet, while many of my respondents noted the racial tensions that exist between African Americans, Afro-Latinos and Central Americans, they also spoke of professional, social and kinship ties with the Central American community.

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Daniel Bueno has been married for more than three decades to a Salvadorian woman, Coco to whom he credits his professional success. Maricela Medina has a *comadrazco* relationship with a Salvadorian couple, and counts many Salvadorans among her clients. Francia Almarante's current beauty shop partner is Central American, as are many of her clients. A question for future research will be whether the presence of and increasing social and political relations with other Latino community will influence Dominican identity in Washington, D.C.

For Dominicans who came of age in D.C. during the 1950s and 1960s, black racial identity was a gendered public identity while their ethnic identities as Latinos, and specifically as Dominicans, was centered on and developed through the home, family life, and social gatherings with other Latinos. Dominican women were shielded from anti-black racism both through their Spanish language use and because of their position in the labor force and in their communities. As domestic laborers, they were confined to individual homes for the majority of the workday. Although as immigrant women of color engaged in menial domestic labor they were structurally subjected to gendered, racialized, classed and sexualized inequities,[57] they were nonetheless comparatively shielded from more physical assertions of racism.

As Dominican women, they socialized in each other's homes, and continued to socialize their daughters into the traditional division between "house" and "street." Like many Latin American communities, Dominican culture holds that good girls and women

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[57] Elsa M. Chaney and Mary Garcia Castro, eds., Muchachas No More: Domestic Workers in Latin America and the Caribbean, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989.

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organize their lives in and around their homes.[58] Men and boys, by contrast, are defined as "*de la calle*" or "of the street." While the exigencies of economic need might force women out of the home to work, all other activities are centered there. Moreover, their constant contact and dialogue with older Dominican women in home settings facilitated their assimilation of Spanish, Dominican food ways, Dominican music, Dominican domestic arts and Dominican religious practices. Thus, Carmen Quander, for example, remained in her home cooking, cleaning, sewing, and so forth with her mother and her mother's friends. Maricela Medina lived at home while a student at Howard and went to campus only for classes. Francia Almarante left the Moroccan Embassy where her mother was a domestic only to attend classes at the Americanization School, and later at the D.C. Beauty Academy. Dominican boys, such as Ramberto Toruella, who traveled in their mother's social and work circles, were likewise shielded.

By contrast, Dominican adolescent males and men who organized their social and work lives in the street were far more exposed to anti-black racism. Daniel Bueno, for example, arrived in the United States in 1964 at the age of sixteen. He went to work immediately. Many of his co-workers were African American men who socialized Daniel into the rule of race in Washington. He explained:

> I was an Afro Latino teenager. The word "afro" wasn't used. We were still divided into two races, black and white. When we spoke Spanish in the 1960s, people would be surprised that we could speak Spanish, and we were surprised that there were so many people of color in this country because we were under the impression that they didn't exist, that here

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[58] Mario Bonetti, "*Causas Culturales de la Prostitución en Santo Domingo,*" *Seminario sobre la Prostitución*, 39-52, Dominican Republic: Asociación ProBienestar de la Familia, 1983 and Isis Duarte, "Household Workers in the Dominican Republic: A Question for the Feminist Movement," in Elsa M. Chaney and Mary Garcia Castro, eds., Muchachas No More: Domestic Workers in Latin America and the Caribbean, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989, pp. 197-220.

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> everyone was white. I experienced racism, minor, of course. I went to a restaurant in Alexandria where they didn't let me sit down in 1964. I worked for RCI, where they painted cars and they sent me to Alexandria to drop off some cars, and when it was lunchtime, you had to eat across the street. I didn't know English, I was in a group of blacks, and when we went to the restaurant I went in, sat down and asked for my food. The owner came and told me that I couldn't eat there. And the guy who was with me told me, "No, ours has to be carry out." So, in Alexandria, in the 1960s, in the early '60s and maybe in the late '60s, you still couldn't eat in certain restaurants. You know this is a country of racists where thirty years ago black couldn't walk the streets and if we were on buses we had to sit in the back. I didn't come to that. Papa had problems with that. Racism, even if you don't want to believe it exists, it lives in the United States because it hasn't been that long since it was outlawed. Sometimes you get a complex over it because you don't know if you're black, you know you speak Spanish, that you don't know English...it was very confusing. It took me time to adjust.

Although Daniel arrived when the Civil Rights Movement was in full swing and was not subjected to segregated public accommodations, transportation (as his father had) and education, he did experience U.S. anti-black racism first hand. The son of *Ingleses* Daniel had never experienced what he considered racism in the Dominican Republic; it was in the United States that he "sometimes [got] a complex" over his racial status. Bueno sustained an intact Dominican ethnic identity as he came of age, due in large measure to his continuing involvement in Dominican politics. He also understands himself to be a "black" man in terms of his physical appearance, but considers that more a descriptive, than a substantive categorization.

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Illustration 6-5: Daniel Bueno at work, circa 1990.



Source: *Black Mosaic* archive.

Ramberto Toruella, by contrast, went through what he called his "black phase" once he became an adolescent and went "out into the streets."

> I just went black. I went and started living in the streets. I was partying. I was playing basketball. I became street-wise. I was working at a shoeshine shop. I had a steady job. I was a short order cook. I started working when I was fourteen years old and I stayed on the streets. And then I went to the service at 19, as soon as I graduated from high school. I joined the military. Two weeks after I graduated I joined the service. In '63. I graduated in June of '63 from high school. Street black. I was black. And when I was in the service it became worse because they sent me down south. Mind you, all I ever knew was D.C. and a couple of times my mom took us up to New York. We went to New York three or four times. So all I ever knew was D.C. I knew nothing else. Born and raised in the city and I didn't know anything else. Then at nineteen I joined the military to get away and see the world. They sent me to San Antonio, Texas. They sent me to Montgomery, Alabama, and they sent to me to Greenville, Mississippi. This was all in 1963 before the Civil Rights Act. In Greenville, Mississippi, I got put in jail. I got into a bar fight. I went into a bar and asked for a beer and the bartender said, "No colored here." And I said I'm Dominican and they said, "You're a fucking nigger." (Laughter)

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Again, both his work and his social life exposed him to the sort of racist violence his sister Carmen was shielded from. Whether playing basketball or partying, cooking, shining shoes or training for the Vietnam War, Ramberto was reminded forcibly time and again that he was "a fucking nigger", Dominican or otherwise.[59] It is not surprising, then, that Ramberto "went black" for nearly two decades. He adopted an African American identity, attended a historically black university and refused to speak Spanish. It was not until 1988 when he visited the Dominican Republic for the first time and "saw all these people who looked like" him that he re-claimed a Dominican identity. Now, as he put it, "I'm all about Latin again."

Conclusion:

It is precisely because the Dominican community in D.C. is a small community with origins in West Indian and African-American communities in the Dominican Republic, operating in a segregated Southern city, and the midst of a large, economically and politically diverse African American community, that these Dominicans identify as black nearly twice as often as Dominicans in New York City. As Hector Corporan put it "I didn't have a choice." The lack of a large Dominican community, Hector explained, "creates a discontinuity of all the racial classifications that we use in Santo Domingo, which has been transplanted in New York City, but here that disappears."[60] It is sociologically noteworthy that they continue to sustain an identity as Dominicans, or

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[59] This echoes the experiences of Afro-Puerto Rican men in the U.S. documented by Thomas, 1969 and Willie Perdomo, "Nigger-Reecan Blues" in Roberto Santiago, ed. Boricuas: Influential Puerto Rican Writings – An Anthology, New York: Ballantine Books, 1995, pp. 91-92.

[60] Interview, Hector Corporan by Author, Washington, D.C., 1998.

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more universally, as Latina/os. In that regard, the story told by *Black Mosaic's* Dominican participants should be considered an important chapter in Dominican history.

As I indicated earlier, Dominicans in D.C. are world travelers in both sociological and phenomenological terms. They have transgressed national, racial, cultural, geographic, ideological and social borders. The ambiguity of their identity narratives highlights the routes the have traveled across and within those borders. If for some observers Dominican ambiguity is difficult to grasp and equivocal, for the Dominicans I interviewed in Washington, it is consistent with their travel routes. We turn next to Dominicans in New York City.

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Chapter Seven,
"Of Roots and Race": Dominican Hair Culture, Dominican Identity

> *As organic matter produced by physiological processes, human hair seems to be a natural aspect of the body. Yet hair is never a straightforward biological fact, because it is almost always groomed, prepared, cut, concealed and generally worked upon by human hands. Such practices socialize hair, making it the medium of significant statements about self and society and the codes of value that bind them, or do not.*[1]

> *To claim to be a Hispanic is to make some claim about the ways in which one's specific Latin American ethnic heritage is made concrete within the general culture of the United States....The fact that Hispanics can be of any "race" suggest that* what *you think and even* who *you think you are is determined by more than who you look like.*[2]

The race concept contains notions of beauty at its heart. The denomination of Europeans as Caucasians, a term coined by Blumenbach, references the Caucus Mountains, from whence "the most beautiful people" originated. Caucasian and beautiful are synonymous. By extension, Negroid and Mongoloid are by definition ugly. The gendered dimension to this, of course, is the sexualization of both race and beauty via female embodiment and the "metaphorization" of female bodies.[3]

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[1] Kobena Mercer, "Black Hair/Style Politics," in Welcome to the Jungle: New Positions in Black Cultural Studies, New York: Routledge, 1994, pp. 100-101.

[2] Torres, p. 156-166.

[3] Nandini Bhattacharya, Reading the Splendid Body: Gender and Consumerism in Eighteenth-Century British Writing on India, Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1998.

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The history of Sara Bartmann, the Hotentot Venus, aptly illustrates this inter-referentiality. Bartmann was said to have a *vagina dentata*, literally a vagina with teeth capable of consuming intrepid penises. One of Curvier's most frustrated endeavors was attempting to examine Bartmann's vagina while she was alive. Although under captivity and displayed as a spectacle, Bartmann was able to assert that minimal degree of privacy while she was alive. Ultimately, Curvier performed a posthumous autopsy, dissecting, describing and later displaying her genitals at the Paris Museum.[4] The claim that Bartmann had teeth in her vagina reflects not only a generalized and historical European masculinist fear of and loathing of the female body and genitalia, epitomized in the ancients and contemporary works alike. (Recall, for example, that Aristotle speculated at length on the nature and cosmological meaning of female anatomy, initiating a discursive and scientific model that informed the evolution of misogynistic European political, economic, cultural, philosophic and medical theory, history, and policy.) It also formed part of an evolving fetishization of African bodies as uncivilized in their consumptive practices. If male African bodies are construed as actually or potentially cannibalistic in their oral practices, female African bodies are doubly consumptive. Bhattacharya notes:

> In the case of African women, the ethnographers' stress upon the Africans' imbricated orality, physicality, and carnality becomes even more abundantly clear. African women are perceived as the voracious, carnal epitomes of a culture already imagined as excessively oral and sexual....In fact, some observers thought that among African women, abandoned eroticism and promiscuity had actually led to the evolution of anomalous or hypertophied physical features....[5]

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[4] Anne Fausto-Sterling, "Gender, Race and Nation: The Comparative Anatomy of 'Hottentot' Women in Europe, 1815-1817," in Jennifer Terry and Jacqueline Urla, eds., Deviant Bodies: Critical Perspectives on Difference in Science and Popular Culture, Bloomington: Indiana University Press,1995.

[5] Bhattacharya, 1998, p. 27.

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Similarly, physical features that are common to many African and African diaspora communities, such as broad hips and fleshy, protuberant buttocks, are pathologized in medical and literature. Women with such characteristics are said to suffer from lowerdosis, swayback, or steatogypia, each considered a medical condition. While there is no one African standard of beauty, "an African woman with generous hips, broad backside and medium height, not too tall or too short and pleasingly plump" is often considered beautiful.[6] By contrast, Euro-centric models of beauty have frequently emphasized long legs, narrow hips and small, child-like buttocks. Interestingly, the exception to that standard occurred during the Victorian era, when bustles came into fashion. That this was also precisely the period during which colonial incursions into Africa, the rise of the imperial museum and proliferation of world's fairs occurred is not coincidental, as Renee Green's collage "Hottentot Venus" points out. As Shohat and Stam note:

> The collage evokes a hierarchy of power. The man looking evokes Cuvier, the scientist who measured the Hottentot Venus. By fragmenting the African woman's buttocks, Green exaggerates what for the White scientists was already exaggerated. Juxtaposing this image with a fragmented depiction of a White woman whose fashionably hooped skirt also shapes artificially outsized buttocks, she implies that both the African and the European woman have been constructed for masculinist pleasures: one as the acme of coy virginal beauty, adorned with flowers and delicately held fan; the other, naked, imagined as an exemplum of gross corporality supposedly to be looked at without pleasure, only for the sake of the austere discipline of science.[7]

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[6] Keith Richburg, "In the Eye of the Beholder," The Washington Post, December 2, 1991, p. A12. Richburg considers reactions to the selection of a fair skinned, thin and tall Kenya woman to represent Kenya in the 1991 Miss Universe Pageant.

[7] Shohat and Stam, p. 323.

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Science, of course, is at the heart of both race and beauty, each discipline informing and reflecting back the other through its technologies and discourses, acting often on and through sexualized and gendered female bodies.

Dominican women are lay anthropologists, employing the sort of reading of the body utilized by, for example, Franz Boas. Boas was often called as an expert witness in legal cases in which the determination of a person's "race" was required. In one instance, he was asked to determine whether a "golden-haired blonde with beautiful gray eyes and regular features" married to a prominent Detroit doctor was passing for white. (Her husband was suing her for divorce based on his belief that she was.) Boas concluded that the woman was not Black, explaining "If this woman has any of the characteristics of the Negro race it would be easy to find them....One characteristic that is regarded as reliable is the hair. You can tell by a microscopic examination of a cross section of hair to what race that person belongs."[8] Microscopic examinations, it seems, can also be made without benefit of a microscope.

Bodies are racially coded in distinct, referential, and ultimately arbitrary ways in any given historical and cultural context.[9] Race is a biological fiction that nonetheless has been institutionalized into a social fact through particular cultural practices. In a community that strives for *blanqueamiento* race for Dominican women assumes immediate importance as a personal bodily, social and cultural attribute.

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[8] Boas in Rooks, p.14.

[9] Sander L. Gilman, Making The Body Beautiful: A Cultural History Of Aesthetic Surgery, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999; Stephen Jay Gould, The Mismeasure Of Man, New York: Norton, 1981; Ashley Montagu, Man's Most Dangerous Myth: The Fallacy of Race, Cleveland:World Publishing Co.,1964.

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In the United States, non-African American women rarely have the opportunity to interact with African American women as they are coming of age, particularly around beauty regimes. Consequently, they do not experience first-hand the variety of hair textures in the African Diaspora in terms of touching, washing, or styling "black hair" or seeing media depictions of black hair care. African American women, conversely, are constantly exposed to non-African-Diaspora hair care and hair texture through a variety of media: dolls, television, cinematic and print media representations, and through observing first hand white women's hair ministrations throughout the day. In other words, currently women with non-African diaspora hair textures spend a great deal of time throughout the day grooming their hair --- brushing it, tying it up, loosening it, washing it, drying it, or otherwise fussing with it. By contrast, African diaspora hair, once styled retains its set, and is typically washed about once a week at home or in the salon. Thus, many non-African Diaspora women simply do not know what "black hair" feels like, how it is maintained, what products are used, and what beauty practices are employed.

For many white women, it is not until they reach college that they are exposed to black women in close quarters. A commonly cited experience is that of the white peer who asks to touch the black undergraduate's hair, thus exposing her segregated upbringing, the novelty of African Diaspora hair textures, the racial distinctiveness of black women, and ultimately, her own racialized aesthetic privilege. Black women often

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recount the impact and significance of these encounters, while white women seem surprised at the hostility with which their seemingly innocent desire to touch is met.[10]

Beauty shops in the United States originated as and continue to be socially segregated spaces, in practice if not by law.[11] Schroder, for example, relates the story of the disruptive effect of a new hire's "ethnic clientele" in the implicitly (if not explicitly) white racialized "atmosphere existing in the salon".[12] African Americans and Anglo Americans alike hesitate to frequent each other's shops, although from the mid-1980s a series of individual and legal challenges to those social norms have occurred.[13]

Dominican women, conversely, do not experience this brand of racial segregation. Simply stated, Dominican families are comprised by people with a variety of hair textures, facial features, and skin tones, girls and young women are allowed "hands on" exposure to a range of hair textures throughout their lives. Consequently, girls and young women are allowed "hands on" exposure to a range of hair textures throughout their

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[10] Lorene Cary, Black Ice, New York: Knopf, 1991; Ruth Frankenberg, White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993.

[11] Julie Willet, Making Waves: Race, Gender, And The Hairdressing Industry In The Twentieth Century, Ph.D. Dissertation, University Of Missouri – Columbia,1996.

[12] David Schroder, Engagement in the Mirror: Hairdressers and Their Work, San Franciso: R & E Research Associations, Inc., 1978, p. 193

[13] Willi M. Coleman, "Among the Things That Use to Be," in Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology, Barbara Smith, ed., New York: Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, 1983, pp. 221-222; Abby Goodnough, "Refused a Haircut, an Official in Stamford Closes a Salon," New York Times, March 20, 1995, p. B5; Willet 1996.

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lives. For example Fannie, [14] a manicurist at Salon Lamadas, utilized one hair care regime at home suited to her mother's and her own fine, lank hair.

A native of Barahona, Fannie migrated to New York City while still in high school with hopes of attending college here. Tall and heavyset, she favors light colors and soft materials.[15] She is white-skinned and somewhat freckled. Fannie's hair is a natural strawberry blonde and hangs nearly to her waist. As she came of age and began to socialize with her cousins, whose hair care regimes included roller sets, relaxers and toobies, she became versed in those methods as well. As she recalls:

> We would all go to the beach together, in Barahona, there are a lot of beaches. And when we would come back from the beach, I would return with my hair dry and straight, you know? And then, they would come with their hair, you know, curly. You know, bad hair that is relaxed? That when it comes into contact with sea waters it comes, you know, Dominican hair, black women's hair? And they would say to me, "Oh! You're all set to go dancing, but not me. Come on then, and get to work fixing my hair too." And so I, in order to hurry up and for us to all get ready at the same time, I wanted to help. And that's how I started practicing. "Let me set your hair." "Here, fix my hair." You know? Between ourselves, girls to the end, getting together. The family is very large.

Fannie's story highlights several facts that will be explored in this section. Responding to the question of how she came to work in a beauty shop, she explained that her first experiences with Dominican beauty culture occurred in the context of her family, which is "very large" and very diverse. It was in participating in her cousin's hair care regimes

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[14] All names have been changed in the interests of confidentiality.

[15] The physical descriptions that follow reflect the author's subjective assessment. During my interviews with salon staff, I asked each woman to describe the others in order to gauge the relative uniformity or variability in descriptors and racialized terminology. Thus, my descriptions here do not include facial features. That data will be presented and considered ahead.

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that she learned and began to practice setting hair. Further, her cousins marshaled her assistance in caring for their hair, evidently undaunted by her personal unfamiliarity with their hair texture. In helping to care for each other's hair, a spirit of feminine intimacy – "between [themselves], girls to the end" -- was developed and sustained. Finally, although she herself is Dominican and has fine, lank hair, light eyes and freckled white skin, Fannie equates "Dominican hair" with "black women's hair" and "bad hair that is relaxed." It is her cousins, in other words, who "typify" Dominican women's hair culture.

Illustration 7-1: Kathy and her cousins, Santo Domingo.



Source: Kathy

Similarly, Dominican mothers and daughters often have dissimilar hair textures, and mothers have to care for and style their daughter's hair. Doris, for example, never used curlers herself, but she had to set her daughter's hair:

> I myself haven't used them yet. It was out of necessity, out of necessity that I learned. I'd put them and they'd come out more or less, with lots of pins and things like that...I saw at the salon how they did it and I more or less, in my mind I had an idea of how they were done and I did them and they didn't come out too badly. Because you know, it's very difficult to get them to come out as nice as they do.

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Again, although Doris herself hadn't and still doesn't use curlers because she has thin, lank hair, her daughters have thick, curly hair which "needed" to be set. Since Doris' own sisters also had hair they didn't set in rollers, she had to learn how to do roller sets at the salon. What this indicates is that the salons she frequented, Dominican salons in the Dominican Republic and in New York City, catered to clients with hair like hers, as well as clients who used roller sets. In other words, unlike U.S. shops, Dominican beauty shops cater to Dominican women of various hair textures within the same shop. Further, the work done in the shops, as Doris points out, is "very difficult" and requires a degree of skill. Finally, as with Fannie and her cousins at home, the beauty shop helped to socialize Doris, and later her children, into Dominican beauty culture.

Salon Lamadas Clients:

Salon Lamadas, like most neighborhood salons, has a core of clients who frequent the shop regularly, usually once a week. Thirty of those regulars were approached for interviews. Fifteen agreed. Although this is not a statistically representative sample, neither in size nor in selection, they are a diverse group in terms of current age, age at migration, generation of migration, residency status, labor force participation rates, professional status, educational attainment levels, Spanish and English language proficiency, marital status, household composition and physical appearance.

Respondents ranged in age from twenty-three to sixty one. The median age was thirty-two, while the average age was thirty-six. Six of the fifteen were mothers with young children who did not currently participate in the labor force. All six, however, had participated in the labor force for various periods of time in the five years preceding the interview. They generally worked in the manufacturing sector. Three of the six currently

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receive AFDC. The other three were married, either legally or common-law, to men who were in the paid labor force. Seven of the fifteen women were in the paid labor force. They were employed in a variety of sectors: one flight attendant, one primary school teacher, one actor/model, one real estate agent, one child care worker, one factory worker, and one food vendor. Finally, one of the clients is the well-to-do wife of prominent New York City attorney. The mother of five grown children, although she is not currently in the labor force, she was employed for twenty years as a legal secretary.

Six of the fifteen are married, five legally, one common-law. Two are divorced. One is widowed. Six are single. Twelve have children, ranging in age from eighteen months to thirty-five years old. Among the women who have children, the average number of children is two. None of the clients indicated a lesbian or bi-sexual identity to me, although that does not mean none were lesbian or bi-sexual. One of the younger respondents frequented New York City nightclubs, including, as she mentioned, *La Escuelita*, a popular Latino gay club in Greenwich Village.[16] Nonetheless, in terms of their explicit sexuality, all indicated heterosexual identities, including the respondent who attended *La Escuelita*.

Only one of the women interviewed was born in the United States. Three migrated below the age of six. Two migrated as pre-adolescents. Three migrated as

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[16] For an examination of *La Escuelita* see Manuel Guzmán, "'Pa' La Escuelita y por la Orillita': A Journey Through the Contested Terrains of the Nation and Sexual Orientation," in Frances Negrón-Muntañer and Ramón Grosfoguel, eds., Puerto Rican Jam: Rethinking Colonialism and Nationalism, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997, pp. 209-230. For a brief discussion of Latina heterosexism and lesbian and bi-sexual identity, see Olivia Espín, "Cultural and Historical Influences on Sexuality in Hispanic/Latin Women: Implications for Psychotherapy," in Margaret Andersen and Patricia Hill Collins, Race, Class, and Gender: An Anthology, 2nd edition, Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Press, 1995, pp. 423-428.

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adolescents between fourteen and eighteen years old. The remainder migrated as young women in their twenties. Thus, five of the fifteen could be considered part of the "1.5 generation," in that although they were born abroad, they came of age in the United States. Those who migrated as adolescents and young women are considered first generation.

In terms of decade of migration, four of the fourteen migrants arrived during the 1990s. Six arrived in the 1980s, while two arrived in the 1970s. Two arrived during the 1960s. Average length of time in the United States was fifteen years. All of the respondents arrived or were born in New York City. All have resided in New York City for several years during their lives. Currently, three live in the Bronx, one in Brooklyn, and six are in Manhattan. Four currently reside in New Jersey, another in Rockland County, New York.

All the respondents are proficient in Spanish. Six are fully bilingual. Two are somewhat fluent in English. Seven are Spanish monolingual. Thirteen of the respondents were high school graduates, six in the Dominican Republic, seven in the United States. Two had completed grammar school in the Dominican Republic, but have only a year or two of high school education. One had a two-year college degree, from an U.S. college. Five have a college degree, one from a Dominican university, four from an U.S. university. One has a master's degree from an U.S. university. In other words, the respondents are fairly well educated, and have been exposed to the United States educational system.

Finally, in terms of socio-economic origin, seven of the fifteen were born into agricultural families in the Dominican Republic. Two had parents who were

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professionals in the Dominican Republic, while six had parents who were blue-collar workers there. In this country, of those who migrated as children with parents employed in the United States, nine of the children's parents are or had been blue-collar workers. Only two had parents who are or had been white-collar professionals in the United States. One woman's parents were business owners in New York City. When asked to self-identify in terms of their current class status, eight identified as "middle class", three identified as upper middle class. All three of those identifying as upper middle class owned homes, two in New Jersey, one in Rockland County. Four, including all three AFDC recipients, identified as "poor."[17]

In terms of their appearance, an effort was made to approach women of various skin tones, hair textures, and facial features. I believe the final set of respondents is fairly diverse in physical appearance. Two have lank blonde-hair, thin features, light skin and light eyes. Four are medium-toned, with regular features, and thick but not relaxed black hair. Five are brown skinned, with both thin and medium features, and hair that is relaxed. One is white skinned, with broad features and hair that is relaxed. Four are dark-skinned, with medium to broad features, and hair that is relaxed.

Kathy (pictured above as a child with her cousins) is a twenty-two year old mother of a toddler. A stay-at-home mother, she has been married for three years. Her husband is a livery car driver. She lives with her husband, son and mother in an upper Harlem housing project. Spanish monolingual, she migrated to the United States while still in high school. Although she hoped to graduate here, she dropped out instead and

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[17] For a consideration of Dominican understandings of their class status in the United States, see Grasmuck and Pessar, 1991; and Fischkin,1997.

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was married. She has attended Salon Lamadas for four years and is Alma's client. She is petite, with long, waist-length blonde hair, hazel eyes and regular features.

Aleida is a twenty-five year old third-grade teacher in Washington Heights. A graduate of Fordham University, she recently completed her masters in education. Born in the United States to a Dominican mother and a Salvadoran father, she is of average height, and as she describes it "somewhat plump." She is olive-skinned, with long black hair and dark eyes. Her parents own several franchise restaurants in New York and New Jersey. Consequently, they keep an apartment in Washington Heights and own a home in central New Jersey. She is currently single, a weekly client of Nilda's.

Francia is a single mother of two who migrated alone from Puerto Plata eight years ago. She is currently receiving AFDC and living in a Bronx housing project. Petite, thin, light-skinned and blue-eyed, she wears her thick hair died blonde and in a chin-length cut. Although money is tight, she manages to visit Salon Lamadas once a month so that Maria can trim and deep condition her hair.

Paulina is a married, thirty-two-year-old mother of two young girls, ages seven and five. A native of Santo Domingo, she migrated as a teenager to the Bronx, where she continues to reside with her husband, who is a contractor, and her children. Tall, brown-skinned, and plump, she takes meticulous care of her hair. A regular client of Chucha's for over ten years, she visits Salon Lamadas at least once a week. She is an active participant in the salon's social activities, including baptisms, birthdays, and holiday parties.

Similarly, Astor has been having her hair done by Chucha for a decade and is also quite involved in Salon Lamadas' social activities. A petite and plump forty-two year old

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woman, she wears her black hair relaxed and shoulder length. She is brown-skinned and freckled, and favors sportswear. She migrated as a teenager from San Pedro de Macoris with her family. Married for twenty-five years to a West Indian man from Costa Rica, she has two adult boys and lives in Rockland County, New York. A successful real estate agent, she often visits the salon with Bertha who first introduced her to Chucha.

Bertha is in her mid-forties, tan-skinned and tall. She has had her thin black hair done by Chucha for nearly fifteen years. The daughter of upper class Dominican hotel owners, she migrated as a young child to the United States. She attended private schools throughout her childhood, and subsequently graduated from a private college in New York City. Divorced once, she is currently married to the partner of the law firm she worked at for nearly two decades. She has five children from both marriages, lives well in an exclusive New Jersey suburb, is always well coifed and immaculately dressed.

Anilka is a single mother of two receiving public assistance and living in Washington Heights. Like Francia, she visits the salon steadily but infrequently, averaging one visit every six weeks. She has her chin-length hair relaxed, set and styled by Nilda, although she has also worn it curly in the past. She migrated as an adolescent from a small town outside the Capital, and worked in a series of factories before having her sons. Dark brown-skinned, with full lips and a medium nose, she is trim and neat.

Anilka's friend Tania, migrated recently from San Jose de las Matas. Tall, tan-skinned and "chunky" as she put it, she has her hair relaxed regularly by Maria. She lives alone in a rented room and cares all week for a Puerto Rican child in Washington Heights. She has few friends in New York, and visits the salon as often as her small salary allows for.

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Tanany was born in Santo Domingo and migrated as a young child with her parents. She was raised in Washington Heights, where as a twenty-six-year-old she still lives. Of average height, brown-skinned, and with full lips and medium nose, she is slim and fashionable. A flight attendant, she wears her hair relaxed, close to head and short. Divorced, she has a four-year old daughter who lives with her former mother-in-law. She has been going to Nilda for about three years. She frequently visits the salon throughout the week and is an active participant in the salon's social events and festivities.

Charity, who currently lives in a New Jersey suburb with her boyfriend and his family, migrated to the United States from Puerto Plata as a child. She attended grammar school, high school and graduated from college in Queens. She is a thin, curvaceous twenty-two-year old model and actor who wears her relaxed black hair in shoulder-length layers. Brown-skinned and thin featured, she is a frequent guest star on "The Cosby Show." She has her hair done weekly by Maria, whom she's been seeing for six years.

Antonia migrated to New York as married woman with three children from Santiago. A former bank professional, following her divorce she was forced to work in factories. Her children returned to Santiago, while she continues to work here to provide them with private school education, country club memberships and the standard accoutrements of upper middle class life in Santiago. Petite, olive-skinned, and with even, medium features, she is an attractive forty year old with thick, wavy shoulder length hair. She lives with her brother, a chemist, in Perth Amboy, New Jersey and currently works at a carton factory.

Eliza is a thirty-six year old married mother of three living on Manhattan's Upper West Side. Petite and plump, she is tan-skinned, thin-featured and wears her tightly

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curled, reddish, chin-length hair in a variety of styles. A regular client of Nilda's for seven years, she is a weekly and sometimes twice-weekly customer. She participates actively in the Salon's festivities and social events.

At sixty-two, Nana is the oldest of the respondents. She migrated as a single adult mother of one from La Romana. For two decades she worked in restaurants, factories and custodial services until she was disabled on the job. Currently she cooks and delivers meals to local business owners and employees, including Salon Lamadas staff, in Washington Heights were she's lived since her arrival in the 1970s. A petite, loquacious woman, she has her short hair died blonde and relaxed by Chucha, whom she's known for eighteen years.

Doris is the next oldest respondent at forty-eight. The mother of three children ranging in age from ten to twenty-five, she is a devout Seventh Day Adventist, she has lived in Williamsburg, Brooklyn since 1974 when she migrated from Puerto Plata to join her husband. Tall, heavy-set, fair-skinned, and light-eyed, she wears her fine blond hair short. She has had her cut by Maria every six weeks for eight years.

Finally, Doris' niece Nurka lives in the Bronx and is the widowed mother of a four-year old boy. Nurka migrated from Puerto Plata as a teenager with her siblings. She finished high school in Washington Heights and went on to get a degree from Bronx Community College. Petite, tan-skinned, with a small nose and full lips, she wears her thick black shoulder-length hair in layers. Although she is currently a stay-at-home mother, she worked as an administrative assistant for nearly a decade prior to her husband's death from cancer.

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Beauty culture:

The Dominican salon acts as a socializing agent. Salon use is a rite of passage into women's community. It is at the salon that girls learn to transform their bodies – through hair care, waxing, manicuring, pedicuring, facials, etc. – into socially valued and culturally specific displays of femininity. Many of my respondents recalled visiting beauty shops as children with their mothers. Charity, for example, recounts:

> I used to go always with my mother to this shop in Flushing, where I grew up. She would go all the time and I'd go with her. I must have been real little because I remember being like "Wow" and "Ooo" about everything. They all looked glamorous to me. (Laughs) She still goes there, and it was the first shop I used myself. I still go there sometimes just to catch up on the neighborhood gossip.

As Charity explains, for young girls with their mothers, the shop seems "glamorous" and adult, and therefore awe-inspiring. Further, like Chastity, it was often at the mother's shop that young women first experienced beauty shop culture. Generally, speaking, however, they themselves did not become beauty shop clients until they were about fifteen years old. That fifteen is the age when Latin American girls of means are introduced into society, and when Latin American girls generally are socially considered "women", is not coincidental.[18] Kathy recalled her first salon visit:

> Aha, the first time I went to a shop I was already like fifteen years old. And it was to have my hair trimmed a little. But I already wanted to get out of the ponytails and buns already. And so I went to a neighbor who had a shop in her house and I had my hair washed, trimmed and set. Oh, I looked so pretty.

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[18] On Latin American coming out parties, or "quinces", see Elizabeth King, Quinceañera: Celebrating Fifteen, New York: Dutton, 1998.

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Others recalled first visiting a beauty shop in preparation for their migration to the United States, a moment which also marked their transition from girlhood to adolescence for some.

Nurka, for example, recalled that before migrating when she was fourteen, her mother took her and her sisters to a beauty shop in town.

> Look, it was to come here. Exactly. Yes. (Chuckles) I had never gone to a salon. I always, I had two pony tails like this, and that was it. But I went. When we were coming here, mommy went to pick us up. And she took the three of us to the salon. I think my brother also had a haircut. And it was, we were in the country, and mommy took us to the east, to Bayaguana, the place was called. She took us there to have us all have our hair cut. They trimmed our hair, they washed our hair and it was "Oh!" Everyone, "Oh! What pretty hair! Oh, how pretty!" (Laughs) And that was true, yes of course. I remember it as if it were today, yes.

Illustration 7-2: Nurka and her siblings just before migrating to New York City.



Source: Nurka.

For Nurka, the transition from childhood to adulthood was marked as much by the change from pigtails to hair done at the shop, as by the move to New York. Her transformation into young womanhood is socially recognized by people who acclaim her

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"pretty hair", now loose and womanish. The repeated refrain of how pretty they looked after their first beauty shop visit also marks the transition from innocent childhood to sexual young womanhood. All of the respondents raised in the Dominican Republic, and several who were raised here, recalled that the loosening of their hair from ponytails and moños (buns) marked the transition from childhood to young womanhood.

Like Nurka, Chastity remembers her grandmother styling her hair into pigtails and later *moños* for neatness and ease of care. So long as mothers and grandmothers were responsible for their children's hair, these were the preferred styles.

Illustration 7-3:
Chastity at age four.



Source: Chastity.

As Nana explained,

> Look, I hated those buns. It was three buns, one here, one here, and one here. My grandmother used to make them with a piece of string. And the other children used to make fun of them saying like *"Tin marín de dos pingó, cucara macara titire fué."* (Nonsensical children's rhyme). I used to tear them (the buns) apart when I was walking to school. So then, when I became a little bigger, my grandmother told me that I was already old enough to take care of my hair myself. And that was such a joy for me! Oh! I started wearing curlers and styling my hair well.

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The transition of hair care from one's caretaker's hands into one's own, thus, paralleled the increasing responsibility for one's own body and self. That femininity of that body and self is understood in racialized terms.

Hair Race-ing:

The work of the salon, the transformation of Dominican women's hair into racially acceptable signs, hinges their sense of self and beauty on certain norms and models. For Dominicans, hair is the principle bodily signifier of race, followed by facial features, skin color and lastly, ancestry. Hair and its role as race signifier among Dominicans dated back to at least the late eighteenth century.[19]

Time and again, when asked about the historic antecedents of contemporary Dominicans, my respondents struggled to understand my question, as the following exchange illustrates:

Ginetta: Who were the descendents of Africans today in Santo Domingo?

Aleida: I don't know what you're asking?

Ginetta: There were African slaves in Santo Domingo.

Aleida: There were Africans in Santo Domingo?

Ginetta: Slaves. Who are their descendents today?

Aleida: Just like if you had married, if you were a Dominican and you married one of these Africans, you mean, and had their kids?

Ginetta: No, I mean, there were slaves in Santo Domingo and it was Africans who were enslaved from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century. Who are their descents today?

Aleida: The kids that they had.

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[19] Moureau de Saint- Méry, p. 95.

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Ginetta: And who are they?

Aleida: Well, I guess they're Dominicans. They're in the Dominican Republic but I don't, never, this is the first time that I hear that they were. Because my family never talked about the Africans in the Dominican Republic. They never spoke to me about those slaves. But I'm sure their masters have had kids with these slaves. Because they enslaved women also, African American women. And they used them and they get pregnant and they have these kids. And those are the descendants, the kids that they had from their masters and from women or men around the Dominican Republic. But I've never seen a child here. I've taught for almost three years and a child who's father was African American and mother was Dominican, I've yet to see.

Here, my respondent a second-generation Dominican woman graduated from Fordham University who teaches third grade in Washington Heights has some knowledge of slavery and the African diaspora, but only as it pertains to the United States. She attempts to extrapolate this knowledge in the course of our discussion onto the Dominican context, but ultimately she does not. It is African Americans, not Dominicans who have slave ancestors in her narrative. She begins to reason that the Africans in Santo Domingo must be the ancestors of current Dominicans along with the white masters, but at the last moment slips back into the United States' context. It is the children of African American and Dominican parentage that have African slave ancestors from the father's lineage, and such a union, "she's yet to see." This respondent, by the way, later mentioned that her maternal great-grandmother was Haitian. Given that Haitians are constructed as African and black, Aleida's inability to make the necessary linkage between her ancestry and African history in Santo Domingo is notable.

Among first generation Dominicans I interviewed, the response was similar. Alma is a hairdresser at Salon Lamadas. She is in her late thirties, tan-skinned, thin, and tall. She wears her dark brown hair short in a layered bob. A native of La Vega, she moved to

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the Capital when she married and raised her children there. When her youngest daughter was of school age, she migrated to New York City. During our interview, I asked her about African history in Santo Domingo.

Ginetta: What did your family tell you about the Africans in Santo Domingo?

Alma: They just told me that the Haitians were very bad. They were bad people.

Ginetta: And the Africans?

Alma: And to them, when they spoke about the Haitians, that was the Africans. They put Haitians for *negro* or *Africano*, but they never mentioned the Africans.

Ginetta: Do you have African ancestors?

Alma: No.

This discursive and cognitive move, equating African with "Haitian", but not with "Dominican", and denying African ancestry was replicated in nearly every single one of the twenty three interviews I conducted in New York City.

Given that Dominicans are endowed with many of the physical signs they attribute blackness to, and that they draw a distinction between blackness and hispanicity, how do they discern who is "Hispanic"[20] and who is not? Hairstyle books offered an invaluable window into how Dominicans read bodies racially. The books were employed in formal and informal settings. Formal responses were elicited during interviews with salon clients. In addition, on several occasions, when the shop was quiet and there were no clients, I opened the books and asked the staff, individually and collectively for their opinions of the hairstyles and models depicted.

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[20] The term "*hispano* (Hispanic)" was almost universally utilized interchangeably with Latino. It was the more prevalent term, however, and will be used here when

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The core questions guiding the elicitation were: Who do Dominican women consider beautiful? Is the norm closer or further from whiteness or blackness? How are "Hispanic looks" conceptualized? What is the relationship between aesthetic preferences and social status? While a sample of eighteen respondents is not a statistically valid one, the results resonate with larger, historical indications of Dominican notions of beauty and race, as well as with my ethnographic findings in the beauty shop.

At Lamadas, of the thirteen hairstyles books referred to by customers when selecting a hairstyle, ten were of white models and hairstyles. Three of the books feature African American women. Chucha, Salon Lamadas owner-operator, purchased all the books available at the salon. Chucha is an attractive and stylish forty-something year old woman from the Capital of the Dominican Republic. She is tall, has a medium build, is olive-skinned, and has thick shoulder-length shag-cut hair died medium blonde. Chucha has brown eyes and wears glasses for reading or doing detail work, although on occasion she wears blue contacts throughout the day as part of her "look." One afternoon I approached owner-operator Chucha with one of the three African American hairstyles book and asked her about the styles it contained.

Chucha: I just bought that book. I bought it because my clients have to locate themselves in the hair they have.

Ginetta: How so?

Chucha: Why, Dominican women don't want to see that book. They ask for the white women's book, they want their manes long and soft like yours.

Ginetta: Why?

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paraphrasing or quoting others. "Latina/o" will be used when it is the author's descriptive.

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Chucha: It's because of racism. It's just that we don't even know what race we are. That if we're white, that if we're black, *indio*, or what....I don't want to know about blacks so I don't have to be fucking around with kinks. Look, I came out like one of my aunts and that was suffering in my house in order to lower my kinks. The Dominican woman wants her soft mane, long hair. I bought that book now so they can start to locate themselves well. They don't want to see that book. They ask for the white women's book, the one for good hair like yours. Look, I have a client who brings me a three-year-old girl so I can blow dry her hair. You know what that is? Three years old. And in the end, when she gets home and starts playing her hair stands on end again. (laughs) The latest was that she wanted her to have her hair set. That little girl sat under the dryer better than some big ones, reading her magazine. Do you think that's right? That's suffering. It's not fair. I tell her, "Leave her with her curly hair, put a ribbon in it and leave it!" But no, they want their soft manes.

That Chucha's purchase was recent and geared toward pointing her clients out to themselves and given that the book features women of the African diaspora, the selves Chucha is pointing Dominican women to are black. But, it is an image rejected by her clients, who "don't want to see that book." Instead, they "ask for the white women's book". Attributing the desire for long and soft hair to racism and to racial confusion, Chucha reiterates the equation of blackness with kinky, difficult hair that results from failed blanqueamiento. As she indicates by tracing her own "*greñas* (kinks)" to her aunt, blackness is errant and betrays. It leads to "suffering."

Interestingly Chucha depersonalizes her own suffering and hairstyle, referring instead to "Dominican women," her clients and her family's suffering. The ambiguity Chucha expresses as a woman whose own hair was treated as a cause of sorrow in her childhood and as a stylist who actively participates in the very system she condemns typifies the paradox of Dominican beauty culture. She is critical of her clients choosing the white book, subjecting their three-year-olds to "suffering" under the dryer, and preferring "long manes". She relishes the resiliency and unruliness of a child's kinky

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hair that refuses to relax. Yet, she an active agent of the very system she criticizes. Further, she is subjected to it herself, even as an adult.

The texture of Chucha's hair was variously presented as "*pelo macho* (macho hair)," "*pelo durito* (slightly hard hair)" and "*pelo fuerte* (strong hair)" by her staff, and as "*greñas* (kinks)" and "*pasas que hay que bajarlas* (these raisins that have to be tamed)" by herself. Much like the customers who pretend not to notice the waiter's gaff in order to support his role,[21] Lamadas' staff politely overlook and accommodate Chucha's hair texture, both through their grooming of her hair, and through their softened descriptions of it. This variability in classification reflects several semiotic systems at once, and will be discussed ahead in greater detail. Chucha herself is ambiguous about her hair, as the following selection from my field notes indicates.

> Chucha and Leticia attended a Sebastian hair product seminar in New Jersey today. The topic was how to use a new color product. Chucha sat down and recounted the details of her experience to Maria: "They don't work on bad heads there. It's all for good hair, like hers (pointing to me) and yours (Maria)." I asked why not and whether they had ever asked for a different kind of hair on the dummies. Again Chucha responded: "There it is! Our job is to adapt straight hair, good hair products, to ours. I was dying laughing, thinking about the surprise they'd experience if my hair got wet!" she laughed. "If my hair got wet!"

The "they" Chucha refers to are the Anglo-American producers, marketers, and beauty culturalists at Sebastian. Chucha's laughter and pleasure in relating the story indicate to me awareness on her part of her corporate host's ignorance. Water would return her hair to its natural, tightly curled state. Her looks, she recognizes with relish, are deceiving. So it seems that on some level Chucha is well aware that she is transforming

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[21] Erving Goffman, The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life, Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1959.

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herself racially when she does her hair. The question is what is she transforming into? I argue that it is not a desire for whiteness that guides Dominican women's hair culture. Instead, it is an ideal notion of what it means to "look Hispanic."

Illustration 7-4: Salon Lamadas staff at Maria's baby shower, 1998.



Source: Maria.

When asked for their opinions of the appearance of women depicted in an African American braiding book, Salon Lamadas' staff was vehemently derogatory in their commentary. Nilda is a hairdresser from Dajabon, a small town on the Dominican-Haitian border. She is thirty-two years old, petite, and exudes toughness. Tan-skinned, she wears her coarse hair dyed red long, just past her shoulders. Maria is Alma's sister-

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in-law. She was a self-employed hairdresser in Santiago and continues to be an independent operator who rents a chair at Chucha's salon. Short and plump usually, she was seven months pregnant when I first arrived at the shop. She is the darkest-skinned of the stylists, but by just a shade or two. She wears her straight brown hair in a modified, chin-length bob. Nené, the facialist, was also in her third trimester of pregnancy when I first arrived at the shop. A native of the Capital, she is of medium height, big-boned and light-skinned. She wears her thick, relaxed black hair shoulder-length and slightly layered. Leonora was the manicurist when I first entered the shop. Although she is forty-two, she looks closer to thirty-two. She is of medium-height, brown-skinned, trim and curvaceous. Her relaxed black hair is chin length, and she wears it in an assortment of styles. Finally, Flor, a Santiago native, is the shop's shampooer, receptionist, maid and all-around assistant. She is petite, brown-skinned, and trim. Her chin-length relaxed black hair is styled in a page-boy bob. A former nurse, she migrated to New York just two years ago and almost immediately began working at the shop.

At one point a debate ensued over whether the woman depicted in one of the hairstyles books and who Chucha had previously described as having "*una cara de arroz con habichuelas* (a rice-and-beans face)" was Latina or African American. Nilda, Maria and Flor felt that she was; Nené, Alma and Leonora disagreed, particularly Nené who felt that she was definitively black.

Nené: Her features are rough, ordinary – black muzzle, big mouth, fat nose.

Nilda: Blacks are dirty and they smell. Hispanics are easy to spot!
(Turning to me)You have something Hispanic.

Ginetta: What?

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Nilda: Your nose. Fannie is white with good hair but her features are rough black ones.

Leonora: It's just that black shows.

Nilda: Black is not the color of the skin. Really pretty, really fine. The white person has black behind the ears.

In this exchange, several things become apparent. First, those who "look" Hispanic could easily be African American, and vice versa. Second, "blackness" is discerned through a sometimes contradictory, but cohesive, system of bodily signs: hair, skin, nose, and mouth. When these features are "black" they are perceived to be animalistic and crude, as the terms "rough" and "muzzle", and the attribution of filth and odor indicate. Yet, they are also common, if base, among Dominicans as the term "ordinary" implies. At the same time, an intermediate category – "Hispanic" – is deployed to contain the fluid middle between black and white. Ancestry, even if not discernible through skin color and facial features, is immutable. Thus, my nose indicates my African ancestry to them. But, as the repeated references to my "good" hair as signifier of whiteness indicate, ancestry does not determine current identity. Finally, the continuing currency of the one-hundred-year-old term is striking.

"Black women are confusing but the hair lets you know":

Simply stated, Dominican women consider women they perceive to be "Hispanic"[22], and specifically "Dominican", as most beautiful. "Hispanic" is often synonymous with "Dominican." Both terms are taken to mean "a middle term," "a mixture of black and white," an intermediate category. "Hispanic" looks are accordingly

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[22] Here the term "Hispanic" is used when it is a translation of the Spanish term "*hispana*." The term Latina is used when it is my voice speaking in the text.

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those that contain elements from each constitutive "race". A total of thirty images of women were color copied from the four most popular of the white hairstyles book at Salon Lamadas and from the African American hairstyles books were utilized.[23] The images were divided into three groupings by hair length – short, medium, and long – with half of each group being drawn from either the white or African American books. My respondents were shown one hair length grouping at a time and were asked the following questions for each grouping:

1. Which of these women do you consider prettiest?
   ¿Cual de estas mujeres tu consideras la mas bonita?
2. What makes her pretty?
   ¿Que la hace lucir bonita?
3. Which of these women do you consider least pretty?
   ¿Cual de estas mujeres tu consideras la menos bonita?
4. What makes her the least pretty?
   ¿Que la hace lucir menos bonita?
5. Do any of these women look Latina to you?
   ¿Algunas de estas mujeres te lucen hispanas?
6. (If yes) Which ones?
   ¿Cuales?
7. What makes these women look Latina?
   ¿Que las hace lucir hispanas?
8. Which of these women looks like she'd make the best business partner?
   ¿Cual de estas mujeres te luce como que seria una buena socias?
9. What makes her look like she'd make a good business partner?
   ¿Que la hace lucir como buena socia?
10. Which of these women looks like she'd make the worst business partner?
    ¿Cual de estas mujeres te luce como que no seria una buena socias?
11. What makes her look like she'd make a good business partner?
    ¿Que la hace lucir como que no seria una buena socia?
12. Which of these women would you be most likely to vote for?
    ¿Por cual de estas mujeres tu estarias mas dispuesta votar?
13. What makes her look like she'd make a good candidate?
    ¿Que la hace lucir como una buena candidata?
14. Which of these women would you be least likely to vote for?
    ¿Por cual de estas mujeres tu estarias menos dispuesta votar?
15. What makes her look like she'd make a bad candidate?

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[23] Although the books were not explicitly racially classified they were referred to this way by the salon clients.

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¿Que la hace lucir como una mala candidata?

All the responses were weighed equally. Nine of thirty women depicted were selected as prettiest three times or more. The nine prettiest were ranked according to how frequently they were selected. Three of the depicted women were each considered prettiest by nearly half of my respondents. Similarly, twenty-one of the thirty women were perceived to "look Hispanic" by at least one respondent. The more often a given woman was perceived to look Hispanic the higher her "looks Latina ratio". Of the twenty-one women perceived to "look Hispanic", thirteen were selected three or more times by the respondents.

Thus, the woman selected most often as looking Hispanic, is also the one most often selected as prettiest. Indeed, the top three "prettiest" women were all thought to look Latina. The top eight of the nine women selected as prettiest were thought to look Latina by twenty percent of the respondents. Only the ninth woman of those selected as prettiest was a blonde-haired, white-skinned woman who was universally declared to "not look Latina." Still, it is noteworthy that seven of the nine prettiest women were light skinned and had "good hair".

Illustration 7-5: Top Nine Prettiest Women, in order of ranking, with "Looks Latina" Frequency

Prettiest					
					
Looks Latina Frequency	13:13	7:13	6:13	3:13	5:13

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Prettiest					
Looks Latina Frequency	5:13	11:13	3:13	0:13	

Image Sources: Before and After: American Beauté, Vol. II, Freehold, NJ: Dennis Bernard, Inc.; Family Album III, Auburn, MA: Worcester Reading Company; Family Images, Vol. 2, Auburn, MA: Worcester Reading Company; Ultra World of Hair Fashion, Auburn, MA: Worcester Reading Company.

At the same time, there were no "white" women among the women perceived as "least pretty." Instead, as the "Looks Hispanic Ratio" indicates, the women considered "least pretty" were those African diaspora women furthest away from the most "Hispanic" looking woman.

Illustration 7-6: Perceived Prettiness with Looks Latina Ratio

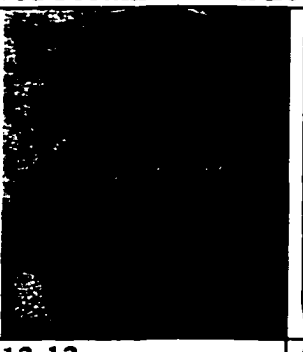
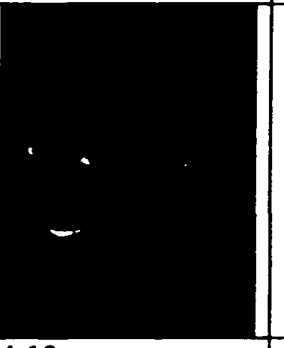
Prettiest			
Looks Latina Ratio	13:13	7:13	6:13
Least Pretty			
Looks Latina Ratio	4:13	4:13	1:13

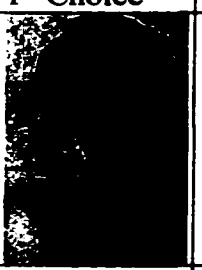
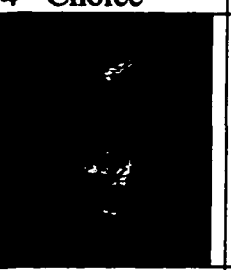
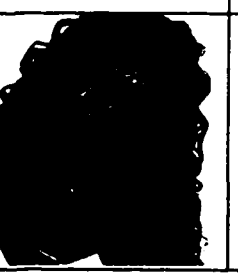
Image Sources: Before and After: American Beauté, Vol. II, Freehold, NJ: Dennis Bernard, Inc.; Family Album III, Auburn, MA: Worcester Reading Company; Family

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Images, Vol. 2, Auburn, MA: Worcester Reading Company; Ultra World of Hair Fashion, Auburn, MA: Worcester Reading Company.

Since the "Looks Hispanic" category included women in nearly equal proportion from both the white and black hairstyle books, there does not seem to be a preference for "pure" or "European" whiteness. Rather, as they indicated in their interviews, each of the women perceived by my respondents to look Latina was selected because her face and/or hair were perceived to indicate some degree of both African and European ancestry. Thus, those thought not to evidence any degree of mixed ancestry, were also those thought to "Not Look Latina."

Illustration 7-7: "Looks Latina," In order of frequency selected, and with Prettiest Ranking

	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice	4th Choice	5th Choice
Top Five					
Prettiest Ranking	#1 of 9		#7 of 9		
Second Five					
Prettiest Ranking			#2 of 9		
Third Five					

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Prettiest Ranking	#3 of 9		#5 of 9	#6 of 9	
Fourth Five					
Prettiest Ranking				#8 of 9	#4 of 9

Image Sources: Before and After: American Beauté, Vol. II, Freehold, NJ: Dennis Bernard, Inc.; Family Album III, Auburn, MA: Worcester Reading Company; Family Images, Vol. 2, Auburn, MA: Worcester Reading Company; Ultra World of Hair Fashion, Auburn, MA: Worcester Reading Company.

The question remains however: How do contemporary Dominican women and girls look at pictures of African American women who look like them and yet distance themselves from this similarity? What is taking place when women at the salon identify with the women in the white hair styles book, and distance themselves adamantly from those in the African American hairstyles book? Does this do psychic violence? I argue that it does not necessarily, *to the extent that Dominicans identify as "Hispanic" and consider those who evidence a degree of mixture to "look Hispanic."* Thus, if one were to be guided simply by the fact that Dominican women at Salon Lamadas preferred to look at the white hairstyles book, it could easily be concluded that Dominican women prefer "white" looks. Table 7-1, for example, illustrates the preference for images selected from the "white" book, and the concomitant rejection of images from the "black" book.

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Table 7-1: Binding of "Most Attractive" and "Least Attractive" Images

"Most Attractive"	**Percent**
Images Selected from "white" hairstyle book	65%
Images Selected from "black" hairstyle book	35%
"Least Attractive"	100%
Images Selected from "white" hairstyle book	29%
Images Selected from "black" hairstyle book	71%

However, the symbolic and literal binding of the images into one of two choices – black or white – reflects U.S. dichotomization of race. There are no "Latina" or "Hispanic" hairstyle books. Once the images are considered outside of the context of their bindings, however, as they were by Salon Lamadas' clients during the photo elicitation interviews, it becomes clear once again that the preference is not for U.S. whiteness, but for "Hispanic" or mixed looks. In other words, it is neither the white book nor the black book *per se* that Salon Lamadas' clients prefer or reject. It is the images contained in each book that they consider to approximate or not a "Hispanic" ideal, an ideal defined as containing elements from both blackness and whiteness where Dominicans are concerned, and more generally of indicating identifiable mestizaje.

Table 7-2: Perceived Ethnicity/Race and Perceived Prettiness by Hairstyle Book Bindings

	White Book			**Black Book**		
Attributes:	**Perceived to be Latina**	**Perceived to be "White"**	**Perceived to be "Black"**	**Perceived to be Latina**	**Perceived to be "White"**	**Perceived to be "Black"**
Prettiest	92%	8%	0	100%	0	0
Least Pretty	71%	29%	0	83%	0	17%

Thus, nearly all of the women selected from the "white" book, and one hundred percent of the women selected from the "black" book as attractive were also thought to look Hispanic. And while neither of the two women from the "black" book who were considered to be unequivocally black were considered among the prettiest, only one of

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the two women considered unequivocally non-Hispanic whites was among the prettiest. None of the top three choices as the prettiest of the women was perceived as Anglo. The top choice was considered unequivocally Latina, while the second and third choices were "probably" Latina and "possibly Latina, possibly Black" respectively.

Again, although Anglo white women were not considered prettiest, they were also less likely to be categorized as "least pretty." All three of top three choices for "least pretty" were perceived as closer to blackness and further from Latina-ness. What's more, those perceived to be whiter Latinas were more heavily represented among the top nine prettiest women. Most interesting, however, was the assessment of the appearance of the woman selected both as most Latina looking and prettiest.

The top choice in both the "Looks Latina" and "Prettiest" categories has almost stereotypically Latina looks. Clara Rodriguez has noted the media representation of "Latin Looks" in the United States consists of skin that is "slightly tan, with dark hair and eyes"[24] a reasonable description of the top choice in this study. That said, it is important to note that half of the twenty women my respondents perceived to look Latina were drawn from the African American hairstyles book and had features that they considered to connote a degree of ancestral blackness. Further, it was also those women that my respondents selected as looking "typically" Dominican.

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[24] Rodriguez, 1997, p. 1.

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Illustration 7-8: "Looks Dominican"



Image Sources: Before and After: American Beauté, Vol. II, Freehold, NJ: Dennis Bernard, Inc.; Family Album III, Auburn, MA: Worcester Reading Company; Family Images, Vol. 2, Auburn, MA: Worcester Reading Company; Ultra World of Hair Fashion, Auburn, MA: Worcester Reading Company.

"Looking Dominican" as noted above, evidently means having more visible African ancestry, while looking Latina is more generally about mixedness. Thus, discerning who is simply "black" and who is "Dominican" is aided not only by signs of mixture – lighter skin, looser hair, thinner features -- but by reference to hair culture because as Lamadas' client Paulina explained, "black women are confusing, but the hair lets you know." It is the lack of "naturalness" in sculpted and obviously processed hairstyles that Dominican women point to as disconcerting, and as distinguishing Dominican hair culture from African American hair culture.

Dominican women place great emphasis on hair that appears "healthy, natural and loose." As Nuris put it:

> The difference between here and there, black women here, they use a lot of grease, their hair looks, it doesn't look as loose as Dominican women's. Dominican women don't use it that way, they wear their hair processed, but the hair looks healthy, it stays well, very pretty the hair, the hair always looks healthy....I think the difference is like to look more natural. To look more, like, for the hair to look looser. That's it.

In other words, the extensive technology, time and effort employed to make the hair "loose and manageable" must not show. Indeed, it is precisely the emphasis on

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naturalness that signifies the racial iconography of Dominican hair culture. In this way, Dominican whiteness subverts U.S. Anglo-centric white supremacy based on the "one drop of blood rule" where "one drop" of African "blood" makes one black.[25]

Illustration 7-9: Does Not Look Latina, with Prettiest Ranking



9:9

Image Sources: Before and After: American Beauté, Vol. II, Freehold, NJ: Dennis Bernard, Inc.; Family Album III, Auburn, MA: Worcester Reading Company; Family Images, Vol. 2, Auburn, MA: Worcester Reading Company; Ultra World of Hair Fashion, Auburn, MA: Worcester Reading Company.

There is a stated preference for *pelo bueno*, and awareness that good hair endows one with certain privileges. As Fannie put it:

> [My cousins would tell me] that I always had an advantage. "You always have an advantage. When you arrive from the beach, you hair is all set." They always wanted to have my hair. Always, you know...."Why didn't God give me your hair?" But they know that it's because of the mixture of races that I have also. Perhaps if dad had married a Dominican woman, not so much Dominican, because we are mestizos, but a person with bad hair, I too would have had it like that. But they always, about my hair, there wasn't any egoism. Never, never.

As Fannie's narrative indicates, there is a pervasive discourse emphasizing the racially mixed nature of Dominicanness. There is also an aesthetic preference for bodies that are "*termino medio*," the middle term, particularly as this is symbolized by hair.

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[25] Davis, 1991; Harris, 1964.

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Furthermore, straight hair is worn for formal social events, clean paid labor and occasions where prettiness is required. Conversely, curly hair is equated with sports and recreation, parks and beaches, and dirty work. Straight hair is equated with upper class pursuits, while curly hair is connected to middling and lower class ones. Indeed, curly hair is *inappropriate* for certain social activities, while straight hair is inappropriate for others. Alma explained:

> And so if one is always used to being in salons and having one's hair done, one always likes one's hair straightened, one never likes to go about, because in order to do curly hair, that is for going to sit in a park, for going to the beach, to go to that. But it's not for going to a restaurant, for going to a party where one wants to look pretty. For that you do an updo, you do dead hair.

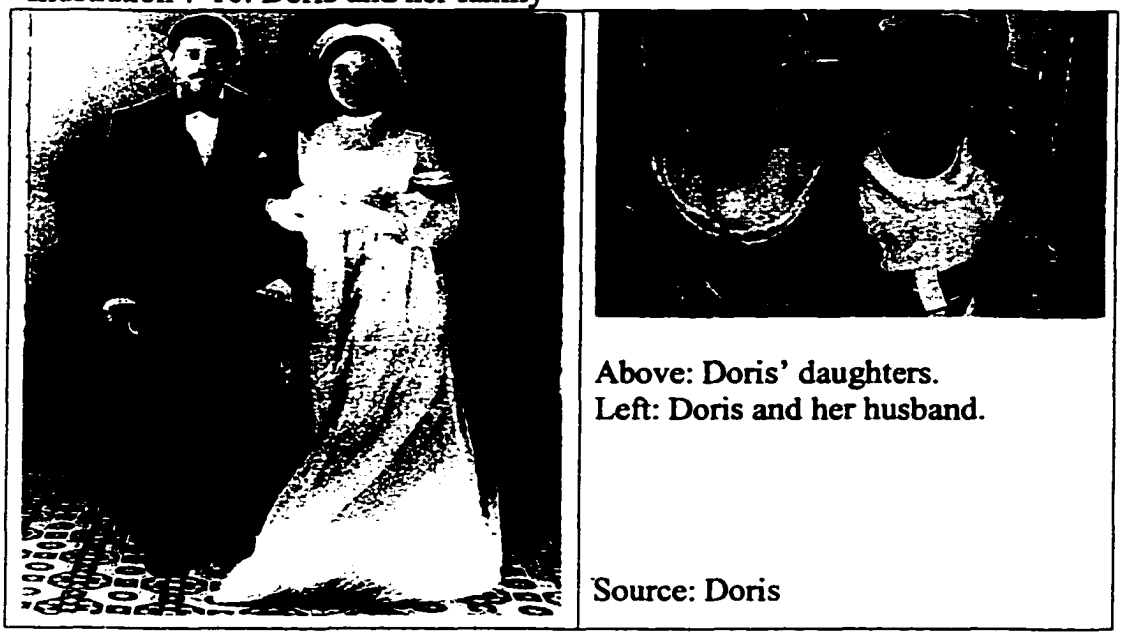
If class mediates race for Dominicans, as has often been argued, then by implication, excessive degrees of blackness in hair do not correlate with social and economic status. The goal is not Nordic or Aryan whiteness, but whiteness that is more an approximation of indigenous looks as those are popularly understood: straight haired, tan skinned, aquiline featured.

This is reflected in the ambiguity that exists around *pelo bueno*. For example, while *pelo bueno* is usually defined in positive terms, it is also called *pelo muerto* (dead hair) and *pelo lambio* (limp hair), and hair can be as each of the hairdressers mentioned, "too good". Be that as it may, however, the ambivalence is more discursive than practical. Although perms for curling *pelo muerto* are taught in Dominican cosmetology programs and are known to exist, they are rarely, if ever performed. I never once, in the six months I was at the shop, saw a perm performed. Indeed, when I inquired into where the perm rollers, lotions and papers were kept, it took nearly five minutes for them to be located, as no one could remember where they had been stored.

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Similarly, while light skin is generally valorized, white skin in and of itself is insufficient, and skin that is too white is considered unsightly. As Chucha put it: "There are blacks who have pretty faces. And there are whites who have ugly faces." Nonetheless, the fact that each of these possibilities is constructed as exceptional points to the standard equation of whiteness and blackness with beauty and ugliness, respectively. Consider the following exchange between Doris, a white skinned, straight-haired Dominican woman married to a brown skinned, curly-haired Dominican man, and me, a similarly white-skinned, straight-haired Dominican woman. Recall that Doris is the woman who learned to set her daughters' hair by observing stylists at her salon.

Illustration 7-10: Doris and her family



Above: Doris' daughters.
Left: Doris and her husband.

Source: Doris

Ginetta: Tell me something. You've just told me that we value hair a lot and color less, in the sense that if hair is "good" you are placed in the white category. What happens in the case of someone who is very light but has "bad hair"?

Dolores: No, that one is on the black side because it's just that the *jabao* in Santo Domingo is white with bad hair, really tight hair. Well that one is on the black side because I myself say "If my daughters had turned out *jabá*, it's better that they would have turned out brown,

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> with their hair like that, *trigueño*." Because I didn't want my daughters to come out white with tight hair. No. For me, better *trigueña*. They're prettier. I've always said that. All three of my children are *trigueños*.

Ginetta: Why? What makes them prettier?

Dolores: Well, their color. Because for me, someone white, an ugly, ordinary white person, looks worse than a brown one, a black one who doesn't, who really is black. If they're white like that, the way there are some white, those white people, white, white, fine, they look exaggeratedly white like that. They don't look good. To me, they're not attractive. I prefer someone of color.

Of color, but not black. In other words, the mestiza/mulata, the embodiment of the Taina/o icon displayed at the Dominican museum, in the Dominican beauty pageant, in the Dominican media and in Dominican history books.

Several of the younger Salon Lamadas clients, both second and one and one half generation, indicated experimenting with "Spanish" and "black" identities when coming of age as a result of pressure from peers in each group. Tanany, for example, who is brown-skinned with hair that she now relaxes and wears short, recounted that in high school she adopted a black identity.

> So, I was going through my black phase. Having to do nothing about Dominicans. I didn't know what to be. So we're like "Okay, black." So we started dressing, the sneakers. I never wore shoes. I never wore a dress. Everything is sneakers and boots and bigger the pants. I mean I was wearing like a size 33 and I was thinner than what I am now. And now I'm a 27. So, these pants were huge. And the earrings and the chains.

For Tanany, and for her best friend who was Puerto Rican and who accompanied her in experimenting with a black identity, being black meant wearing certain clothing and accessories. It signified, further, a rejection of Dominican identity defined as "not black." That she ultimately "returned" to a Dominican identity did not for her indicate a

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rejection of blackness. Rather, it was a translation of blackness into Dominican terms. While among Dominicans, she is "*una india oscura*" (a dark Indian), because she can also negotiate non-Dominican codes that define her as black, or at least, "not white."

Currently employed as a flight attendant, she travels to Europe and the Caribbean regularly, and she continues to live in Washington Heights. Consequently, she frequently interacts with Dominicans, Europeans, African Americans, and Anglo-Americans. These interactions lead her to conclude that identity is situational.

> The whites are afraid of us, the Spanish and the blacks. I'm not going to say afraid, I'm just going to say it's different the way you talk. The way you express yourself. It's not the same the way I talk in the salon to the way I talk when I'm around my friends at work. It's not that I have two personalities but it's just different. Because you have to sometime come down to people's level. And I do that very well. Or go up to their level. (laughter) That's how I see it...Where I work, it's like I'm considered different...they don't know what I am. "Is she black? Is she Spanish?" They don't know. But I see sometimes that they would rather deal with me than with my African American coworkers or I have a lot of Africans that work there. Other races. And then the whites....I mean if there's no one else. But if there's a white girl, the customers feel more comfortable. I don't know what it is, they just feel more comfortable. It's happened to me a lot of times. Blacks just call me light-skinned. That's because I have curly hair and they think that I'm black.

If as an adolescent it was Tanany who didn't know "what she was", as an adult it is others who are unsure of her racial status. Fluent in several idioms, both linguistic and semiotic, Tanany wryly notes the difficulty both whites and blacks have translating her identity intelligibly. She understands that relative to whites in the United States, both "the Spanish and the blacks" are not white, and thus, considered black to some degree. At the same time, she considers herself distinct from African Americans who just "call her light skinned" and thus erase her Dominican identity. Finally, she also engages other

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Dominicans, here reference in terms of the salon, for which she also has to adopt a particular code or "way of talking."

Illustration 7-11: Most and Least Businesslike

Most Businesslike	Least Businesslike
	

Image Sources: Before and After: American Beauté, Vol. II, Freehold, NJ: Dennis Bernard, Inc.; Family Album III, Auburn, MA: Worcester Reading Company; Family Images, Vol. 2, Auburn, MA: Worcester Reading Company; Ultra World of Hair Fashion, Auburn, MA: Worcester Reading Company.

In terms of the relationship between perceived personality attributes and appearances, my respondents most frequent choices for best and worst potential business partners indicate the gap between hispanophile and negrophobic rhetoric, and actual practices. Nearly half of the women selected by my respondents as the "best potential partners" were from the "black" hairstyle book. The woman most frequently selected by more than half of the respondents as the "best potential partner" was also from the hairstyle book. When asked why, respondents such as Tania replied "because she looks very professional and charming." While the woman selected as the least attractive potential business partner was also from the "black" hairstyle book, she is notably lighter skinned and has looser hair. Again she was assessed based on her "unprofessional"

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appearance, due primarily to her hairstyle and her dress, which were "too sexy" as Aleida put it.

Similarly, the women selected as the ones my respondents were most likely to vote for were fairly evenly split between the white and the black hairstyle book images. Nonetheless, both of the women selected most frequently as best potential candidates were selected from the white hairstyle book images. When asked to comment on the attributes that gave a positive political leadership impression, many responded as Paulina did: "*Porque lucen serias.*" ("Because they look serious.") To "be serious" in Dominican cultural terms has both social and political connotations. Krohn-Hansen explains:

> A basic concept is that of the person as *serio* (or, if used as about women, *seria*), that is, serious. To claim that a man [sic] isn't serious is to imply that he is shameless. Used of men, the label *sinvergüenza*, or shameless, most often connotes "wrongdoer" or "thief". Bosch and his followers consistently argue that the other political parties – in particular, that of Balaguer – are in the hands of men who lack seriousness or are *sinvergüenzas*, or shameless. This discourse is a powerful one because it mobilizes key concepts used frequently in everyday life in all sectors of society; in saying that the other parties' leaders "rob" the state, this discourse (the *Boschista* discourse) attempts to deprive them of any legitmacy.[26]

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[26] Krohn-Hansen, p. 119.

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Table 7-3: Perceived Personality Attributes and Appearances

Attribute:	Percent
Most Businesslike	
"white"	56%
"black"	44%
Least Businesslike	
"white"	26%
"black"	74%
Would Vote For	
"white"	56%
"black"	44%
Would Not Vote For	
"white"	46%
"black"	54%

While one of the two best candidates (on the right) was also among the top nine of those perceived to be Latina, the other was among those least often perceived as to be Latina. Further, both of the two women perceived as the worst candidates were also perceived to be Latina. One (on the right) was among those selected as "typically" Dominican. The other was frequently perceived to be "Puerto Rican looking" as Essie put it. This is significant in light of Dominican and Puerto Rican political relations in New York City, as well as in light of the decidedly masculine nature of Dominican politics in the City and on the island.

Illustration 7-12: Best and Worst Potential Candidates



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Least Likely to Vote For		

Image Sources: Before and After: American Beauté, Vol. II, Freehold, NJ: Dennis Bernard, Inc.; Family Album III, Auburn, MA: Worcester Reading Company; Family Images, Vol. 2, Auburn, MA: Worcester Reading Company; Ultra World of Hair Fashion, Auburn, MA: Worcester Reading Company.

Perceived class status was also a factor in their assessment. Both of the women selected as best potential candidates were perceived to be "*de categoria*" or "upper class", while the worst potential candidates were perceived to be "*de montón*" due principally to their hairstyles and attire.

Baby Hairs: Racialized Reproduction

The presence of babies – the staff's and mine – inspired discussions over hair texture and color. After Nenita's birth, Leticia said several times that her concern was always over the baby's gender and size, not over her hair or color: "*que fuera hembra, hermosa y gorda, mas nada me importa. Puede tener el caco mas malo que el diablo.*" ("That she be a girl, beautiful and fat, nothing else matters to me. She can have a head worse than the devil's.") The disavowal itself, of course, reiterates the importance of hair, as does the equation of "bad hair", blackness and the devil. In addition, strangers and friends alike often commented directly on the quality of Nenita's hair texture and the tone of her skin. Nene's landlady, Miguelina, for example, was present when Nenita was brought home from the hospital. Upon seeing the baby, Miguelina turned to Alma, who had accompanied them home and said in a cooing baby voice: "*Alma, tu vas a tener que*

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hacerme derrizado, Alma." ("Alma, you're going to have to relax my hair, Alma.") Alma responded in turn, "*No señora, sera un permanente que me van hacer, yo tengo el pelo bueno.*" ("No ma'am, it'll be a perm that I'll be getting, I have good hair.")

Later that day a spontaneous discussion regarding the baby's father's hair texture ensued. Debated was whether Alex's hair is *pelo malo* or not. Ultimately a consensus wasn't reached on what kind of hair Alex has, due in large measure to the fact that he wears it closely cropped. Chucha seemed to have the last word on the matter.

> Alex has good hair that's wavy. Bad hair is hair that breaks. There's good hair and bad hair, there's limp hair – like you Leticia and Maria – curly hair, kinky hair, curly hair. People are mistaken. Bad hair is simply hair that breaks.

Here Chucha is defining hair in terms of relative ease of care and is rejecting as mistaken the racialized categorization of hair. Nonetheless, the use of the negative term "bad" rather than say, delicate (which conveys the meaning Chucha insisted on above) implies that it is not simply the manageability of the hair that is being assessed. It is also its nearness to blackness.

Jackie, a young client, made explicit the relationship between reproduction, race and aesthetics. Sitting next to my infant son Christian and me, she asked if I was Dominican. I replied that I was.

Jackie: You don't look Dominican.

Ginetta: Why not?

Jackie: Because of your hair.

Ginetta: How so?

Jackie: *Porque es tan lacio, tan fino, tan bueno.* (Because its so soft, so fine, so good.)

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Ginetta: *¿Y los dominicanos no somos asi?* (And we Dominicans aren't like that?)

Jackie: No. *Tenemos el pelo malo, pelo duro.* (We have bad hair, hard hair.)

Ginetta: What makes *pelo bueno* (good hair)?

Jackie: That it's easy to take care of. That you don't have to work so hard. That it's pretty. I'm very racist. I don't want to know about blacks.

Ginetta: Which blacks?

Jackie: *Ninguno. Porque a mi no me gusta ese pelo tan duro. Yo quiero tener un bebe asi como el tuyo, rubio y blanco. Aunque no debo ser asi teniendo raza Haitiana yo, pero* anyway*....A mi me han confudido por India, Arabe de Morueco.* (None. Because I don't like hard hair. I want to have a baby like yours, blonde and white. Although I shouldn't be like that since I have Haitian race myself, but anyway...I've been mistaken for Indian, Arab, Moroccan.)

As this exchange indicates, there is an enormous amount of ambiguity around the question of race and reproduction. First, given the connection between fine hair and whiteness, the assertion that Dominicans don't have fine hair means that they are not white. Second, Jackie's insistence that Dominicans have "bad hair, hard hair" together with her later equation of bad hair with blackness, indicates that Dominicans must be black. Yet blackness can be reproduced away. While Jackie herself is not quite white – indicated by her sense that she "shouldn't be racist" because she has "Haitian race" herself – she claims a degree of distance from blackness because she's been "confused for Indian, Arab, Morrocan."

Further, she desires full whiteness for her children – defined not by virtue of their ancestry, which would unalterably include her Haitian ancestors, but by virtue of their white skin and blonde hair, which are within reach. Thus, she doesn't "want to know about blacks." After all, she asked at the end of our conversation, "who wants to be struggling with kinks?"

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Similarly, when Maria's baby was born, once again the conversation turned to race.

Ginetta: *¿Y como le fue a Maria?* (How did it go for Maria?)

Chucha: *Bien.* (Fine)

Ginetta: *¿Que tuvo?* (What did she have?)

Chucha: *Una hembra de ocho libras y media. Ya ella sabia que iba ser hembra.* (An eight and a half pound girl. She already knew that it was going to be a girl.)

Alma: *Ella es una blanca rosada.* (She's a pink white girl.)

Nene: *La de Maria es blanca, blanca.* (Maria's is white, white.)

Alma: *Esa niña puso a Maria negrecita.* (That baby girl made Maria really black.)

Leonora: *Ya se esta curando. Ya se esta poniendo blanca, se le bajaron los piez. Esta bien....Esa niña se parece a Frank. Va ser fina.* (She's getting better. She's getting white already, her feet went down. She's o.k....That girl looks like Frank. She's going to be fine.)

Alma: *Pobre Stefani.* (Poor Stefani.)

Nana: *Esa niña es aspera. ¿A quien salio tan aspera?* (That girl is rough. Who'd she come out so rough like?)

Alma: *No se. La pobre. Tiene esa cara tan ancha.* (I don't know. The poor thing. She's got such a wide face.)

Nene: *Pero la baby va ser linda. Esa va ser la niña bonita.* (But the baby is going to be pretty. She's going the pretty girl.)

As this exchange indicates, the baby's color is offered without prodding. Nene, whose own baby is olive skinned, with softly curled hair notes that Maria's baby is "really" white. Alma reminds those present that Maria too is "really" white, and that her previously dark skin was pregnancy related. Leonora responds consolingly that Maria is "getting better" because her skin is becoming white again, as if dark skin were an illness.

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She then offers that the baby looks like her father, who is "fine featured". Alma then pities her niece, Stefani, whom now looks blacker compared to the baby. The "poor thing" has a wide face and "coarse" features. The baby, conversely, "will be darling girl" of the family because she is "pretty" and white.

Torres-Saillant points out that there is a distance between Dominican's "rhetorical negrophobia" and racially tolerant action. At the same time, however, the perniciousness of rhetorical negrophobia and the sort of reproductive genocide implied by efforts to "improve the race" lay precisely in its seeming distance from explicitly physical violence. Once again, photo elicitation proved instructive. Respondents were shown images of men selected from Salon Lamadas' hairstyle books and were asked to select the men they found most and least attractive physically, most and least suited to marriage, most and least attractive as reproductive partners.[27] Because nearly all of the men pictured wore their hair short, the respondents were shown one grouping of twenty. They were asked the same questions about the men as about the women. Additionally, they were asked:

1. Which of these men strikes you as most marriageable?
   ¿Cuale de estos hombres te luce como un buen marido?
2. What makes him look potential husband?
   ¿Que lo hace lucier como un buen marido?
3. Which of these men strikes you as least marriageable?
   ¿Cuale de estos hombres no te luce como un buen marido?

---

[27] The heteronormative bias of this line of questioning is clear. It is possible, and probably likely, that one or more of my respondents were lesbian or bi-sexual. These questions presume that the respondents are heterosexually inclined, a potentially problematic assumption is any are not, particularly in terms of ranking attractiveness. However, I assume that whether or not the respondents were in fact heterosexual (and all presented themselves as such) they would be able to assess the relative attractiveness of the men presented to them. In terms of reproduction, in the case of the respondents who already had children, further, I felt comfortable asking the question because whether or not they were heterosexual, they had already made some reproductive choices. For those who were childless, I assumed that they would understand the question primarily in reproductive terms, rather than sexual ones.

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4. What makes him look like a bad potential husband?
   ¿Que lo hace lucier como un buen marido?
5. Which of these men strikes you as good for having children with?
   ¿Cuale de estos hombres te luce bien para tener hijos con el?
6. What makes him look good for having children with?
   ¿Que lo hace lucier como que seria bueno tener hijos con el?
7. Which of these men strikes you as not good for having children with?
   ¿Cuale de estos hombres no te luce bien para tener hijos con el?
8. What makes him look good for having children with?
   ¿Que lo hace lucier que no seria bueno tener hijos con el?

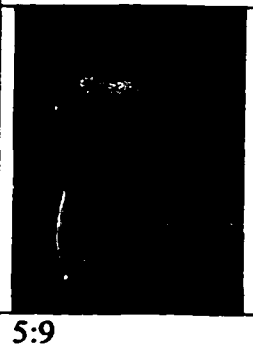
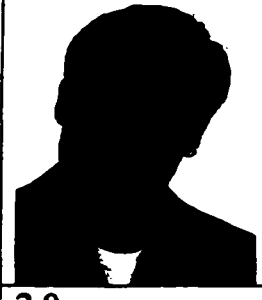
Table 7-4: Physical and Personal Attributes, by Perceptions of Ethnicity

Descriptors: Attributes:	**Perceived to be Latino**	**Perceived to be White**	**Perceived to be Black**
Most Attractive	94%	6%	0%
Least Attractive	0	50%	50%
Most Marriageable	100%	0%	0%
Least Marriageable	40%	0%	60%
Would Bear Children	100%	0%	0%
Would Not Bear Children	67%	0%	33%
Most Businesslike	100%	0%	0%
Least Businesslike	40%	60%	0%
Most Likely to Vote For	100%	0%	0%
Least Likely to Vote For	0	60%	40%

Like the women, when considered independent of their bindings, the men selected as most attractive were also those men perceived to be "Hispanic." Two white men, one considered possibly Hispanic and the other probably white were selected as the first and second most attractive and as best for having children with. The men considered least attractive included the two men were also the men considered to not "look Hispanic" at all, one perceived to be black, the other perceived to be white. The most attractive men, in other words, were not necessarily the men perceived to be potentially better husbands.

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Illustration 7-13: Attributes, Men, With Looks Latino Ratio

	1st Choice	2nd Choice
Most Attractive		
Looks Latino Ratio	5:9	2:9
Least Attractive		
Looks Latino Ratio	1:9	
Best For Having Children		
Looks Latino Ratio	5:9	2:9
Worst For Having Children		
Looks Latino Ratio	1:9	

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Most Marriageable		
Looks Latino Ratio	4:9	
Least Marriageable		
Looks Latino Ratio	7:9	

Image Sources: Before and After: American Beauté, Vol. II, Freehold, NJ: Dennis Bernard, Inc.; Family Album III, Auburn, MA: Worcester Reading Company; Family Images, Vol. 2, Auburn, MA: Worcester Reading Company; Ultra World of Hair Fashion, Auburn, MA: Worcester Reading Company.

Marriageability was based on the perceived Hispanicity, maturity and economic well-being of the men. In their marked preference for "Hispanic" men as marriage partners, my respondents choices echoed larger demographic patterns of endogamy among Dominicans in New York City. According to Gilbertson, Fitzpatrick and Yang, in 1991, 54.8% of first generation Dominican women's marriages in New York City were to Dominican men. An additional 39.8% married other "Hispanics". In other words, nearly ninety-five percent of Dominican women's marriages in New York City were to "Hispanics" of some nationality or another. The rates for the second-generation Dominican women's marriages in New York City were surprisingly similar. Forty eight percent married Dominican men, and an additional 27.7% married other "Hispanics."

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Altogether, then, nearly eighty-six percent of second generation Dominican women's marriages in New York City were to "Hispanics."[28]

Other factors assessed were the appearance of labor force participation based on attire and hairstyle. The man with the thick gold chain, for example, was perceived as potentially involved in illicit activities, and was therefore deemed an unsuitable husband. By contrast, the men wearing suits or neat and casual attire were perceived to be "more serious." Thus, while the least marriageable man was also one who was perceived to look very "Hispanic", it was his youthful appearance that made him an unsuitable candidate.

Lighter men were clearly preferred as reproductive partners, by more than two to one, and one hundred percent of the men selected as least suitable for bearing children were selected from the black book, although sixty seven percent of those were also perceived to be Latino. On the other hand, one hundred percent of the black men selected as most marriageable were also perceived to be Hispanic. Of those perceived to be least marriageable, forty percent were perceived to be Latino, while the remaining sixty percent were perceived to be non-Latino Blacks. None of those perceived as least marriageable were white. Similarly, none of those rejected as potential reproductive partners were white.

A 1995 poll of twelve hundred people in the Dominican Republic reported that the majority of those polled (fifty-six percent) did not care about the skin color of a relative's potential spouse. At the same time, fifty-one percent said they would mind a relative's marrying a Haitian. Dore Cabral, who reported the poll's results in *Rumbo* magazine, concluded, "the study indicates that the Dominican population's rejection of

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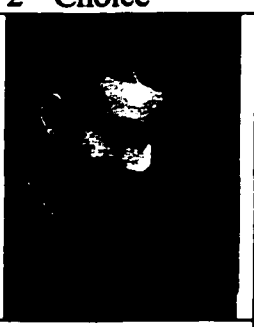
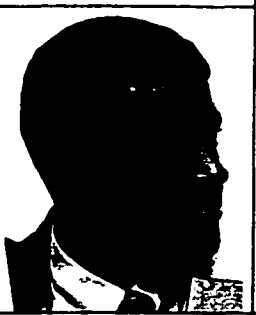
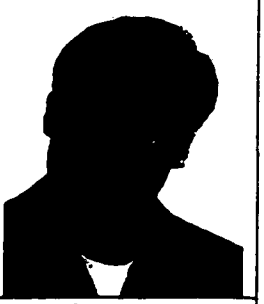
[28] Gilbertson, Fitzpatrick, Yang, p. 449.

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its neighbors is more for their condition of being Haitian (generally synonymous with poor and 'backwards') than for being predominantly black."[29]

Salon Lamadas clients considered a man who was possibly Latino, possibly African American as the most businesslike, followed by one who was possibly Latino, possibly white. This would indicate that in matters of professionalism, dress and perceived demeanor matter most. They selected non-Hispanic white men as less businesslike in their appearance and as less viable political candidates, again because of their dress and demeanor. Neither the long, layered hair worn by the blond man presented below, nor the short twists worn by an African American man connoted professionalism to these respondents. Antonia's comment with reference to the group's top choice for most businesslike "*Asi como este hay muchos en Santo Domingo*" ("There are a lot of men like this in Santo Domingo") was echoed by several respondents and indicates that dark businessmen are not an anomaly, although economic success and professionalism are most often associated with whiteness.

Illustration 7-14: "Look Latino", Men, With Most Attractive Ratio

1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice	4th Choice
			
			#2 of 3
5th Choice	6th Choice	7th Choice	

[29] Carlos Dore Cabral, "*La poblacion dominicana mas antihaitiana que racista,*" Rumbo, May 3, 1995, pp. 8-12.

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#1 of 3

Image Sources: Before and After: American Beauté, Vol. II, Freehold, NJ: Dennis Bernard, Inc.; Family Album III, Auburn, MA: Worcester Reading Company; Family Images, Vol. 2, Auburn, MA: Worcester Reading Company; Ultra World of Hair Fashion, Auburn, MA: Worcester Reading Company.

Illustration 7-15: "Do Not Look Latino", Men



Image Sources: Before and After: American Beauté, Vol. II, Freehold, NJ: Dennis Bernard, Inc.; Family Album III, Auburn, MA: Worcester Reading Company; Family Images, Vol. 2, Auburn, MA: Worcester Reading Company; Ultra World of Hair Fashion, Auburn, MA: Worcester Reading Company.

Hispanic looks for men, as for women, were those that indicated a degree of "mixture". Thus, the group's top choice in the "Looks Hispanic" category was a man who most approximated the universal American notion of what a Latino looks like: medium toned skin, dark wavy hair, regular features and a mustache. The subsequent selections were considered by the respondents as representative of *"el prototipo dominicano"* (the Dominican prototype). Again, as with the women, these men were all drawn from the African American hairstyle book, and have more visible African ancestry. Of those, one had been selected as most marriageable and another as businesslike and politically viable. By contrast, none of the women selected as looking

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"typically" Dominican were among those perceived to be the prettiest, nor were they selected as businesslike or viable candidates for political office.

Illustration 7-16: "Looks Dominican"



Image Sources: Before and After: American Beauté, Vol. II, Freehold, NJ: Dennis Bernard, Inc.; Family Album III, Auburn, MA: Worcester Reading Company; Family Images, Vol. 2, Auburn, MA: Worcester Reading Company; Ultra World of Hair Fashion, Auburn, MA: Worcester Reading Company.

What then, of the children? In the United States studies have been conducted on the racial identity of African American children since the 1950s. The most famous of these, conducted by Kenneth and Mamie Clark, utilized dolls to determine whether black children attributed more positive physical and social characteristics to whites than to blacks due to racist conditioning and social settings. The Clarks found a significant preference for white physical attributes among black school children and interpreted this as indicative of racial self-hatred.[30] Other studies have contradicted the Clark's findings based on a consideration of the rise of Black is beautiful ideologies and cultural practices

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30 Kenneth Clark and Mamie Clark, "Racial Identification and Preference in Negro Children," in Guy E. Swanson, Theodore M. Newcomb, and Eugene L. Hartley, eds. Readings in Social Psychology, Prepared for the Committee on the Teaching of Social Psychology of the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, New York: Henry Holt & Company, Inc., 1947, pp. 169-178.

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among African American families and institutions.[31] The doll study and its intellectual progeny have been most thoroughly and convincingly critiqued by William E. Cross, Jr. on the grounds of methodological and theoretical flaws.[32] Apparently unaware of this critique, Ashindi Maxton, a master's candidate in Anthropology at Vassar, undertook a similar study in the Dominican Republic.[33] Maxton spent four months in La Joya, a middle- to lower class neighborhood of Santiago[34] and replicated the Clarke's doll test with sixty-two kindergarten and first grade school children from that neighborhood. She concluded, "the children were intentionally deluding themselves" because the majority classified themselves as white in response to her questions. Although Maxton repeatedly stresses the importance of not applying an U.S. interpretive paradigm to the Dominican context, she nonetheless does so. The dolls she used, although meant to represent three "different races" – white, black and "*indio*" or mulatto – were identical in all regards *except skin color*. Thus, the fundamental methodological and theoretical issues aside, the study was flawed in its cultural assumptions.

As I have argued above, skin color is not the primary determinant of racial identification or identity in Dominican settings. Hair is. Since the dolls all had the same

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[31] See for example Joseph Hraba and Geoffrey Grant, "Black is Beautiful: A Reexamination of Racial Preference and Identification," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, vol. 16, no. 3, 1970, pp. 398-402 and John Williams and Kenneth Morland, Race, Color and the Young Child, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1976.

[32] William E. Cross, Jr., Shades of Black: Diversity in African American Identity, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991.

[33] Ashindi Maxton, "Race Consciousness in Children in the Dominican Republic," Thesis in Africana Studies, Vassar College, Poughkepsie, New York, 1996.

[34] Anángela Molina, Lucy Resumil, Amire Dabas, "*La economía en el sector La Joya*," Santiago, DR: PUCMM, 1995 as reported in Maxton.

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hair texture (which Maxton does not describe in her report, so we do not know what it is), the children were being asked to make a primary assessment based on a model that privileged a secondary race marker. Maxton's interpretation, in other words, is flawed due to lack of sufficient cultural knowledge.

While studies of Dominican children's ethno-racial identity development are clearly needed, they must be undertaken in a methodologically, theoretically and culturally sophisticated manner.[35] Additionally, they must consider how parents perceive the physical and personality traits of their children. Parental perception is sure to have a formidable impact on children's self-perception. In that spirit, I asked my respondents to respond to images of little girls selected from both the white and the black hairstyle books.

Once again, there was a marked preference for children perceived to be Hispanic. This time, however, the children chosen as most attractive were markedly dark skinned, broader featured and wore more typically afro-diaspora hair styles than the adults ranked similarly. Children drawn from the white book were only half as likely to be selected as most attractive as those drawn from the black book. Similarly, the "most intelligent" and "most likely to be successful" selections were almost entirely drawn from the black book images. At the same time, those perceived to be "least intelligent" were as likely to have come from the white book as from the black one.

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[35] My study did not include children primarily due to logistical reasons – lack of time, financial resources and appropriate early childhood research training. I encourage other scholars to pursue this area of inquiry.

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Illustration 7-17: Girls, ranked by attributes

	Attractive	Intelligent	Likely to Succeed
Most			
Least			

The child selected as most attractive had her hair styled in small buns similar to those worn by children in Santo Domingo. Not suprisingly, she was perceived by all my respondents to "look Dominican". The child selected as most intelligent was perceived as possibly African American, again because of her hairstyle. Nonetheless, as Tanany put it, she had an "intelligent face." Similarly, the little girl selected as most likely to succeed was perceived to have a combination of good looks and personality. By contrast, the three children selected as least attractive, least intelligent and least likely to succeed were described as "too bland" and "too advanced" (that is, too sexualized) for their age and elicited negative responses. How do we account for these results in light of the negative comments and assessments made of each other's children in the shop described above?

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Table 7-5: Perceived Attributes of Children

Descriptors	White Book	Black Book
Looks Latina	27%	73%
Most Attractive	29%	71%
Least Attractive	43%	57%
Most Intelligent	8%	92%
Least Intelligent	43%	57%

Like Torres-Saillant, I would argue that while Dominican women might discursively engage in negrophobia, their actual responses to the children in their lives are far more ambiguous. If their responses to the children depicted in these images is any indication, I would conclude that while these Dominican women hold themselves to a standard of attractiveness that valorizes hispanicity, they are tolerant of a greater distance from that norm in men and female children. Men can compensate for their looks through their access to social, economic or political capital. Female children, according to my respondents, are not held to those standards as children. Once they approach womanhood, however, they are socialized into the prevailing aesthetic norm.

Conclusion:

The importance of hair as the defining marker highlights the centrality of beauty practices. Hair, after all, is an alterable sign. Hair that is racially compromising can be mitigated with care and styling. Skin color and facial features, conversely, are less pliant or not as easily altered. Confronted with the U.S. model of pure whiteness that valorizes lank, light hair, white skin, light eyes, thin and narrow-hipped bodies, the Dominican staff and clients at Salon Lamadas continue to prefer a whiteness that indicates mixture. That "Hispanic" is preferred over both the Anglo and African American somatic norm images of the host society attests to resistance to acculturation and the insistence on an alternative, "other" space.

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In stretching the bounds of whiteness in the United States to accommodate and include their definition and understanding of it, Dominican women's hair culture stands in sharp contrast to African American hair culture. When Chucha notes that the job of the Dominican hair stylist is to "adopt white products to our hair", she is pointing to precisely that alternative understanding of whiteness. African Americans, by contrast, have developed their own, unique system of hair care and hair care products, at times in opposition to, at times parallel to, and at times simply oblivious of the Anglo somatic norm image. For Hoetink it is "illogical" that African Americans "despite [their] adoption of the whole [white] preference pattern, nevertheless place [themselves] at the top of the [aesthetic] preferences list" as a study of St. Louis African American's aesthetic preferences found.[36]

What Hoetink overlooks and what therefore makes African American's self-valuation "illogical" in the context of white supremacy, is that segregation forced African Americans to create their own social, economic and aesthetic spaces. Thus, straightening their hair, for example, is not necessarily, nor simply a "white wish" on the part of African Americans. Rather, as Mercer points out, it is often simply a means to an explicitly "black" hairstyle. For example, certain sculpted hairstyles require processed "black" hair for their construction. The explicit artificiality of hair sculpting stands in sharp contrast to naturalness on the European model, indicated not only by "hair that moves", but by "natural" styles such as afros and dread locks.[37]

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[36] Hoetink, 1985, p. 160.

[37] Mercer, 1994.

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In a recent video documentary featuring Madame C.J. Walker, several former Walker agents and customers emphasized that Black women cared for their hair with Walker products and methods not in order to look white, but "to be beautiful".[38] They repeatedly stressed African American women's desire to be beautiful and pretty in their own right, noting that Walker didn't sell straighteners nor relaxers, and that she emphatically disallowed the use of the words themselves in her advertisements and sales pitches.[39] The question for Dominican women is whether it is possible similarly to engage beauty practice outside of the patriarchal imperatives of *blanqueamiento*.

While plastic surgery and beauty rituals undertaken by African Americans have often been criticized as indicative of self-hatred or white emulation, similar actions by whites have been dismissed as individualized, non-racial pursuit of beauty, as if beauty were not implicitly racial from the start. For example, an Allure magazine article considering "The Politics of Black Beauty" presents the standard reaction:

> "Plastic surgery on black people points to the overall inability of African-American women to feel comfortable in this society," says Brenda Wade, a clinical psychologist in San Francisco. "Sure, white people do it, too, but they aren't doing it to make themselves look like [someone from] another race."[40]

While it may be true that some women of color may be emulating or pursing negrophobic white standards of beauty, it is equally true that white women are doing so as well. In other words, white people undergoing plastic surgery, perms, tanning, etc., are in fact "doing it to make themselves look like [someone from] another race." They are

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38 Nelson, 1987.

39 Rooks, 1996.

40 Rebecca Johnson, "The Politics of Black Beauty," Allure, June 1991, p. 28.

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attempting to make themselves look white *as that is defined in any given historical moment*. Sander Gilman's Pursuing Beauty to Cure the Soul examines precisely the artificiality and unattainability of normative whiteness. Europeans themselves don't "look white" unless they can successfully replicate the norm of their era.

Given that contemporary Dominican beauty practices require alteration, consumption and production of ephemeral goods and services, expenditure of limited financial and temporal resources, and denigration of blackness, can beauty be ambiguous? In the context of white supremacist and heteronormative patriarchy, beauty is a form of cultural capital that can be exchanged for symbolic and economic capital.[41] Furthermore, the semiotic system negotiated by and through Dominican hair culture repeatedly proves itself to be ambiguous. Although beauty regimes requires ugliness to reside somewhere, and that somewhere is other women, usually women defined as black, women defined as "Hispanic" also includes women defined as black in the United States.

Who is black in the Dominican context of New York City is mediated by the historic relationship between Haiti and the Dominican Republic, the current relationship between Dominicans and African Americans, and the continually mutual constituitiveness of beauty and race. Racial identity is enacted through racialized reproduction practices and beauty practices. Beauty is a scale, a continuum of some kind, whether hierarchical or linear. The absence of beauty, culminating in ugliness, carries the threat of derision, expulsion and even violence. For this reason, the ambiguity of

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[41] Pierre Bourdieu, Distinction: A Social Critique of The Judgement Of Taste, Translated by Richard Nice, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984.

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Dominican hair culture situates Dominican ethno-racial formations at the cross-roads of multiple systems of stratification and meaning.

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Conclusion
Situating Ambiguity

> *If people can be close or remote from one another in many ways, it is the compresence of characteristics of closeness and remoteness along any of those dimensions – the very dissonance embodied in the dualism – that makes the position of strangers socially problematic in all times and places. When those who should be close, in any sense of the term, are actually close, and those who should be distant are distant, everyone "in his place". When those who should be distant are close, however, the inevitable result is a degree of tension and anxiety which necessitates some special kind of response.* [1]

Recently, Dominican identity has been the subject of recent articles in both The New York Times and The Washington Post.[2] In each the question of where Dominicans fit in the United States' race and ethnicity systems and ideology is raised. Each describes Dominican transformations from immigrant ethnics to racialized minorities. Each quotes young people who experiment with an African American identity, only to return to Dominicanness "in the end". Yet to their credit, each refrains from assuring readers that Dominican identity will be fixed enough to categorize comfortably. [3]

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[1] Donald Nathan Levine, The Flight from Ambiguity: Essays in Social and Cultural Theory, Chicago: University of Chicago, 1985.

[2] Gabriel Escobar, "Dominicans Face Assimilation in Black and White," The Washington Post, May 14, 1999, p. A03.

[3] A recent exception was the focus on a Dominican undercover narcotics officer in the Hamilton Heights district of Upper Manhattan. Detective Johnny Gonzalez was categorized as "black" in the first paragraphs of the article, while another Latino officer of unidentified national origin is classified as "white". It is only in the later half of the article that Detective Gonzalez' ethno-racial flexibility is dwelled upon, and then only in relationship to his job. This article is part of a larger New York Times series on "How Race is Lived in America". Unlike every one of the earlier pieces, however, it does not

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Jorge Duany's study of Dominican identity in New York offered that Dominican identity is formed through a transnational community "characterized by a constant flow of people in both directions, a dual sense of identity, ambivalent attachments to two nations, and a far-flung network of kinship and friendship ties across state frontiers."[4] Similarly, Luis Guarnizo postulates Dominican "binationalism" arguing that the United States and the Dominican Republic comprise "a single (unevenly developed) sociocultural, economic, and political field" across which Dominicans operate."[5] I agree with the utility of considering the United States and the Dominican Republic together, and with transnationalism's general assertion that "transnational migrants develop divided loyalties, create imaginary communities in the receiving countries, and participate actively in both their host and home societies." I would add, however, that Dominicans operate in several theatres at once within each society, and that the "sociocultural, economic, and political" fields are neither singular nor even.

The problem with the way both transnationalism and binationalism formulations have been applied to the Dominican case is that they assume two integrated and internally undifferentiated nation states – a Dominican one and a U.S. one – between which

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profile the way in which a parallel (white) individual's experience is marked by race. This is an interesting departure, and leads me to wonder Detective Gonzalez was felt to parallel himself several times over – "black", African American, Dominican, and Hispanic. Michael Winerip, "Why Harlem Drug Cops Don't Discuss Race," New York Times, July 9, 2000.

4 Duany, 1994, p.2.

5 Luis E. Guarnizo, "Los *Dominicanyorks*: The Making of a Binational Society," Annals, AAPSS, no. 533, May 1994, p. 84, as quoted in Silvio Torres-Saillant, "Diasporic Disquisitions: Dominicanists, Transnationalism, and the Community," Dominican Studies Working Paper Series, vol. 1, 2000, Dominican Studies Institute, City College of New York, p. 8.

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Dominican nationals shuttle physically, culturally, politically and psychologically. This dichotomization erases the negotiations Dominicans undertake inside each nation state, neither one of which is in fact homogenous. Dominicans in the Dominican Republic and in the United States alike must grapple with flowing in multiple -- rather than two -- directions, they negotiate various ethno-racial identities in each national formation, and they have ambiguous attachments to several communities.

Identity is situationally bound. A given individual, group or community can experience and understand itself in complex, complimentary or contradictory ways at any particular historic or biographic moment. Both U.S. and Dominican society are stratified in multiple ideological and material ways – by race, by ethnicity, by gender, class, sexuality, and able-bodiedness, *inter alia*. Those lines of stratification can and often do criss-cross given bodies – whether collective or individual -- in such a way as to multiply the effect of each exponentially some times, at other times to cancel each other out, and still other times to highlight the relative salience of one over the others. This work has mapped the ways in which a given grouping – "Dominicans" – and its members have negotiated those phenomena individually, collectively, institutionally, politically, and culturally across time and place.

I have argued that Dominican identity formations must be understood in their proper contexts – historic, geo-political, ideological, cultural and theoretical. Historically, Dominican identities have developed in reference to colonialism, post-colonial nation state building, and imperialism, their attendant ideologies and their class, race, gender and sexuality structures and practices. The first murmurs of a specifically Dominican identity began in the socio-racial interactions between the Creole elite and the

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Afro-Hispanics of the Spanish part of Santo Domingo. These groups became increasingly intertwined politically, socially and culturally during the Spanish colonial period. Spanish Colonial policy devastated the economy of Santo Domingo and impoverished the small Creole community in the seventeenth century. Creole poverty taken together with the particularities of cattle-ranching and domestic slavery in the Spanish part of Santo Domingo, created a large, relatively integrated mulatto class which came to consider itself "the whites of the land."

Situating Dominican racial identity formations in their proper temporal and spatial contexts provides useful theoretical insights into the nature of race and ethnicity in the Americas. United States' theories of racial ascription would hold that Dominicans don't have much of a choice when it comes to their racial categorization because they are often visibly of African descent. Latin American theories, conversely, have emphasized hybridity and the fluidity of race, but only within the Latin American territory. Both formulations prove insufficient for understanding the Dominican case.

Haiti was (and continues to be) of central importance in the development of Dominican ethno-racial identity on the island. As the first Black Republic in the Americas, Haiti posed a great threat to white supremacist nation states in the Western hemisphere. Repeatedly threatened by native whites and by the French empire, and shunned by slave owning states throughout the Americas, revolutionary Haitians felt behooved to extend the Black Republican model into the Spanish part of Santo Domingo. During the twenty-two year period of Haitian rule, Spanish Creoles chaffed under black rule, while the impoverished mulatto and black masses generally supported the Black Republicans who had ended their enslavement.

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Independence minded Creoles, most notably the "father of the Republic", Juan Pablo Duarte, fashioned a liberal vision of an independent Dominican state that integrated the colored masses while differentiating them from black Haitians by extolling their hispanicity, their allegiance to Catholicism and their (relative) whiteness. The United States government and capitalist elite colluded with the white supremacist Dominican elite in presenting the Dominican Republic as the most "Hispanic, Catholic and White" of (Latin) American nations against the Haitian Other. Whether they were official U.S. government commissions sent to examine the country as a potential colony, capital entrepreneurs or wealthy travelers, U.S. observers almost universally presented Haiti and Haitians as primitive, dirty, animalistic, black and ugly. Dominicans and the Dominican Republic, by contrast, were presented as modern, clean, courtly, white and generally attractive.

These understandings of both nations on Hispaniola supported U.S. imperialism in each. U.S. political and economic intervention in Haiti was justified ideologically because it was a backward country in need of (capitalist and white supremacist) enlightenment. The Dominican Republic, although represented as superior to Haiti, could only benefit from further infusions of Anglo industriousness, whether in the form of individual colonists, military governance, customs receivership, or tourism. Dominican identity negotiated the fraught space between Anglo-dominant notions of white supremacy that defined mixture as degeneration and the political economic positioning of Afro-Hispanic Dominicans as "the whites of the land." That negotiation found its apogee and institutionalization during the thirty-year dictatorship of Rafael Leonidas Trujillo.

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Trujillo embodied the confluence of Dominican and U.S. militarism, anti-Haitianism, white supremacy and masculinist nation building. Trained and effectively empowered by the U.S. Marine occupation forces, Trujillo ruled over the Dominican Republic for thirty years as supreme patriarch. He courted U.S. support by aggressively pursuing and displaying modernity in the Dominican Republic. Dominican land, industry and bodies were brought under the control of the Trujilloist Dominican state, both through what Althusser has termed repressive state apparatus and ideological state apparatus.[6] Through a military policy of anti-Haitian genocide and a cultural policy that extolled hispanicity and institutionalized indigenist racial identifications, Trujillo defined modern Dominican identity as *not black*, not feminine, not communist and not queer.

Trujillo's legacy continues to be institutionalized in the permanent display of El Museo del Hombre Dominicano. An exemplary ideological state apparatus, the Museo is a state funded institution that displays and propagates a heavily indigenist Dominican national identity at the expense of a sorely needed full historicization and exploration of the African roots of the nation. It is an institution at once reliant upon female bodies and dismissive of them. The Smithsonian Institution has colluded with and actively supported the Museo's indigenist project, most notably through the use of stolen Taino artifacts.

Recently, however, the Smithsonian's approach to Dominican identity has shifted from indigenist to Afro-centric. The Anacostia Museum's *Black Mosaic* exhibit situated Dominican identity in the context of a U.S. centered notion of blackness. *Black Mosaic* presented Dominicans who recognize and for the most part celebrate their African

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6 Althusser, 1971.

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ancestry. What *Black Mosaic* did not explore fully enough was the particularly Dominican understanding of that African ancestry. Dominican ethno-racial identity in Washington, D.C. operates at the crossroads between black racial identity and Hispanic ethnicity. In doing so, it challenges and calls into question Anglo, African and Latin American understandings of each.

Similarly, Dominican hair culture in the context of Santo Domingo operates as an ideological state apparatus that works in tandem with the Museo, the educational system and the tourism industry to promote an indigenist hispanicity. In New York City, however, Dominican hair culture challenges United States' institutional state apparatus that naturalize whiteness and blackness based on hypodescent. If having loose, "manageable" hair in Santo Domingo is inherently about assimilation of the racialized and masculinist principles of Dominican modernity, in New York City having that hair is about affirming a positive ethno-racial sense of self in the face of racism. The pursuit of "Hispanic" looks in Santo Domingo re-affirms the state's white supremacy; in New York City, "looking Hispanic" for Dominican women means displaying a mixed heritage.

Again, situating Dominican ambiguity in the appropriate spatial and political context is necessary. The use of the term "Hispanic" in Spanish by Dominicans in New York is an engagement with both the historic hispanophile identity institutionalized by the Dominican state and elite, and with the white supremacist foundations of the United States' racial state.[7] For Dominicans to say in Spanish that one is "Hispanic" is both to establish a connection to a European linguistic and cultural legacy, and to recognize

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[7] Omi and Winant, 1994.

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subordinate ethno-racial status based on that same hispanicity in the United States.[8] In this tense negotiation of multiple historical contexts and codes, United States' notions of both whiteness and blackness are subverted. Of course, merely subverting whiteness and blackness is not liberating, for the concept of race as an organizing principle remains intact. The bounds of the categories are altered, but their hierarchical systematization is not. Blackness continues unabashedly to be equated with ugliness.

Harry Hoetink discerned the connection between beauty and race in his coining of the term "somatic norm image" to displace "race" as an explanatory concept. Somatic norm image is defined as "the complex of physical (somatic) characteristics that are accepted by a group as its norm and ideal. Norm, because it is used to measure aesthetic appreciation; ideal, because usually no individual ever in fact embodies the somatic norm image of his group."[9] Hoetink astutely notes that the somatic norm image of whiteness in Latin America is distinctive from the somatic norm image of whiteness in North America.

Specifically, the "Iberian variant" of whiteness that defines the region's somatic norm image is darker-skinned and darker-featured than the more Nordic somatic norm image of the United States. Hoetink attributes this darker whiteness to both pre-colonial contact and mixture in Spain and Portugal between native Europeans, conquering Moors, immigrant Jews, and imported North African slaves, and to colonial contact with both indigenous and African women. Further, the expansion of social and legal whiteness to include intermediate individuals (mestizos and mulattos) who approximated

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[8] Oboler, 1995.

[9] Hoetink, 1967, p. 120.

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phenotypically the somatic norm image is distinctive from the closed nature of hypo-descent based whiteness in the United States. Thus, in Latin America if one "looks" white – and the range of somatic whiteness is fairly extensive – then one "is" white for all intents and purposes. "The somatic norm image of Latin American whites is 'darker' than that of the North-West European American, so much so that certain somatic categories of the coloured group may be regarded by the Latin American (Iberian) whites as white and as being 'within the fold'; though they would not be accepted as white by those dominated by the North-West European somatic norm image." Thus, lineage, appearance and perception must coincide in the United States for inclusion into whiteness.

However, as argued earlier in this work, lineage is not entirely unimportant in Latin American conceptions of an individual's current socio-racial status. A modified version of hypo-descent does in fact operate when those individuals whose whiteness is contestable claim whiteness as the basis for power. Termed "prejudice of origin" by Hoetink, the reference to one's non-European ancestors usually arises as he notes "in quarrels" and will in that context "prevail over 'prejudice of the mark.'" Quarrels, of course, are those moments where power is negotiated and authority is determined. That ancestral whiteness supercedes current whiteness indicates the salience of biological race.

The gendered dimensions of both race and beauty are often unremarked, as are the bodily practices that contain and define the somatic norm image, although he does make reference to the colonial era efforts at skin-lightening of both indigenous women on Hispaniola and Iberian women in Europe.

> ...as early as the fifteenth century some Venetian envoys remarked that Spanish and Portuguese women of the aristocracy "painted their faces a

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> white and red tint", thus "rendering their skin, which is a trifle swarthy – which is, indeed quite swarthy – more fair and rosy, being persuaded that all swarthy-skinned women are ugly....According to sixteenth century journals the Indian women of Santo Domingo subjected themselves to painful treatments with vegetable mixtures in order to bleach their skins, so as to be more attractive in the eyes of *conquistadores*.[10]

That neither European nor indigenous women were white enough in their respective contexts, and that they both utilized cosmetics to attain the idealized whiteness, illustrates the performativity of race, gender and beauty.

Furthermore, because Dominicans understand hair to be the principal marker of race, the mutual referentiality of hair, class, race and sex becomes clear. Thinking through a gendered Dominican ethno-racial formations helps one recognize that "race" is marked differently on given bodies, in given spaces at given moments. As Linda Alcoff put it: "appearances appear differently across cultural contexts."[11] The job for the analyst of Dominican ethno-racial identity formations is to situate Dominican looks and looking in context.

Dominicans have rejected, ignored and played with their relationship to blackness, whiteness and hispanicity. In this way, they have treated race, ethnically. At the same time, they have understood that for Latinos, ethnicity is racialized. They have positioned themselves on the various shores of the racial and ethnic divide that characterizes this nation. And they have taken their perspectives to the Dominican Republic and influenced understandings there.[12] As importantly, they have forced Anglo Americans, African Americans and Latino/as alike to examine their assumptions about

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10 Hoetink, 1967, p. 171 and p. 182.

11 Alcoff, pp. 257-278.

12 See Torres-Saillant, 1999.

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racial categorization, ethnic identity and nationality, and about whether what is "visible" is "real" outside any given cultural context.

In his study of how second generation Haitians become Black American in Evanston, Illinois, Tekle Mariam Woldemikael argues that "the 'caste' system between the races is maintained and reproduced, despite challenges from immigrants who come from different cultural and historical backgrounds and who have not internalized the American racial identity and cultural system."[13] Like many Dominican immigrants, first generation Haitians emphasize their national and cultural identity, signaling their distinctiveness from U.S. African Americans. Their children, however, find themselves assimilating into the U.S. system of race that places them in the African American or "Black" category. "Without exception," Woldemikael asserts, "Haitians are identified on the basis of race and incorporated into the existing racial categories."[14]

I have argued that because they are Spanish-speaking Latin American immigrants and/or U.S. Latinos, Dominicans who could identify as African American or "Black" can also and often do identify as "Hispanic" or "Latina/o". "Census data indicate a shift away from bi-polar racial identification categories toward a third, Hispanic race option."[15] A similar racialized ethnic category based on cultural affiliation and political economic positioning is not available to Haitians because neither French ethnicity nor French language use in the United States is politicized or understood to signify minority status.

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[13] Tekle Mariam Woldemikael, Becoming Black American: Haitians and American Institutions in Evanston, Illinois, New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1989, p. 169.

[14] Ibid., p. 169.

[15] Levitt and Gomez, p. 2.

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Rather, it is the quintessential signifier of Europeanness, whiteness, cosmopolitanism and good taste in the Bourdeian sense.[16] Black bodies that speak French in the United States context breach the relationship between signifier (French language use) and signified (European/white/civilized) in an irretrievable way.[17] Heritage Spanish language use[18], on the other hand, marks one as "Hispanic,"[19] a category that is understood to be intermediary between black and white.

Isar Pilar Godreau has noted that Puerto Ricans engage in what she has termed "slippery semantics" in their simultaneous reproduction of and challenges to "Hispanophile and nationalistic preferences for *blanqueamiento*." Godreau defines slippery semantics as "a process whereby people constantly shift racial terms when they are lauding people they consider black, using one term in one sentence, another term in another sentence, and so forth."[20] Rather than being merely euphemisms or synonyms, the slippage between the terms "contain the problematic racial nuances of Hispanofilia as a nation-building strategy."[21] The Dominicans who participated in this study similarly utilized a variety of terms to describe ethno-racial identities. In their case, however, nation-building was only one of several identity formation concerns.

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16 Bourdieau, 1984.

17 Although many Haitians speak Kryol rather than or in addition to French, I would argue that its linguistic proximity to French is sufficient to sustain this analysis.

18 By this I mean contact with and knowledge of Spanish through family and community heritage, rather than Spanish acquired as a second or "foreign" language.

19 Lippi-Greene, 1997.

20 Isar P. Godreau, "Confronting the Panic: Troublesome Hispanics," A paper presented at the Latin American Studies Association meeting, March 16-19, 2000, Miami, Florida, p. 2.

21 Ibid., p. 2.

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I have argued that Dominican identity formation and displays draw upon, create and have the potential to influence the multiple semiotic systems that organize group identity formations.[22] That Dominicans have equated whiteness both with "*lo indio*" and "lo Hispano" and blackness with "Haitian" reflects the multiple semiotic systems of race they have historically negotiated. Operating in the context of Latin American, U.S. framed Anglo- and African-American and Latino notions of race, Dominicans engage in a sort of racial "code switching" in which both Spanish and English, Dominican Republic and United States' race systems are engaged, subverted and sustained at various historical and biographical moments.

Linguistics scholars have determined that bilinguals, whether new, emerging or established, often engage in "code switching".

> Code-switching is the use of two languages simultaneously or interchangeably (Valdes-Fallis, 1977). It implies some degree of competence in the two languages even if bilingual fluency is not yet stable. Code-switching may be used to achieve two things: (a) fill a linguistic/conceptual gap, or (b) for other multiple communicative purposes (Gysels, 1992). While in some places and cases code switching is the exception, in many multilingual and bilingual communities it is and should be seen as the norm (Swigart, 1992; Goyvaerts & Zembele, 1992). It appears that where code-switching is the norm it is perceived as fluid, unmarked, and uneventful, and where it is the exception it will be perceived as marked, purposeful, emphasis-oriented, and strange. [23]

If we understand expressions of identity as both linguistic and performative, then the conceptual insights code switching provides are manifold. I have argued that both groups

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[22] For an interesting discussion of this in another community see Daniel A. Segal, "'Race' and 'colour' in pre-independence Trinidad and Tobago," in Kevin A. Yelvington, ed., Trinidad Ethnicity, Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1993, pp.81-115.

[23] Luisa Duran, "Toward A Better Understanding Of Code Switching And Interlanguage In Bilinguality: Implications For Bilingual Instruction", The Journal of Educational Issues of Language Minority Students, v.14, Winter 1994, p. 71.

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of people defined as and who define themselves as "Dominican", and the Dominican nation state evidence "some degree of competence" linguistically and materially in negotiating various identity systems.

Dominican identity in the Dominican Republic is no more fixed than it is in the United States. Rather, it varies across region, ethnicity, class, gender, political context and time. As in the code-switching that occurs across languages Dominicans negotiate at the national level among "Dominican", "Hispanic", "Latino", and "Latin American" identities, and among "white", "black", "*indio*", "*mestizo*" and other intermediate categories which fit and intermix quite uneasily with the "national" categories.

> In general terms, code-switching introduces socio-cultural information in context, which is retrievable through conversational inference (Gumperz 1982). At the level of social organization, code choice patterns have been argued to: reflect social structure, specifically class-structural positions (Gal 1987; Hill 1985; McClure and McClure 1988), and changing interethnic relationships (Heller 1982; Woolard 1983b); signal group membership, in particular local identification (Blom and Gumperz 1972, Gumperz 1982), ethnicity (Gumperz 1982; Mitchell-Kernan 1972), and gender (Gal 1978); be correlated with group roles of leadership and subordination (Calsamiglia and Tusón 1980); channel 'the speaker's claim to a social status' (Gal 1979:171); constitute a socio-functional 'style' (Gumperz 1964), a culturally specific 'mode of speaking' (Poplack 1980), or an 'unmarked choice' among multilinguals (Scotton 1988); manage the speaker's 'ambiguous' or dual group identification (Heller 1982, 1983; Scotton 1976, 1983, 1988); and, in general, 'invoke' (Irvine 1979) social identities in discourse, such as official personae vs. private identities (Alvarez Cáccamo 1989a, to appear; Blom and Gumperz 1972, Irvine 1979, 1982)....Finally, at the superstructural level, code choices may symbolize ideology (Mitchell-Kernan 1972), the community's 'cultural philosophy and value system' (Albert 1972), and political ideologies and positions (Alvarez Cáccamo 1989a, to appear).[24]

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[4] Celso Alvarez-Cáccamo, "Rethinking Conversational Code-Switching: Codes, Speech Varieties, And Contextualization," Proceedings of the Sixteenth Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society, February 16-19, 1990. General Session and Parasession on The Legacy of Grice, Berkeley: Berkeley Linguistics Society, pp. 3-4.

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Dominican ethno-racial identity formations and expressions exemplify each of these code-switching meanings. The fluidity of Dominican race categorizations is reflected in the mutually referential relationship between numerous race categories and markers and other stratification systems (i.e. nation, class and gender). Dominican ethno-racial identity and membership in the Dominican Nation State is defined against the nation's Other – Haitians -- whether real, imagined, officially, actively or discursively constructed. Yet Haitians are very much a part of *Dominicanidad*, as much because of their central role in the development of a Dominican State and its imagined community, as because of their actual presence in the Dominican Republic, in Dominican families and in Dominican heritage for more than two centuries.[25] Thus, while official identities are anti-Haitian, private ones are far more ambiguous.

Thus, in the course of a single interview, a Spanish monolingual Dominican woman in New York describes herself as *dominicana* (Dominican), *blanca* (white), *hispana* (Hispanic), *latina* (Latina), *ordinaria* (ordinary – i.e. black featured), *elegante* (elegant – i.e. upper class), and *mezclada* (mixed). Her niece, a fluent bilingual, similarly deploys various referents to locate herself in the ethno-racial landscape: *dominicana* (Dominican), *trigueña* (wheaty), *india* (indian), *fina* (fine featured), *hispana* (Hispanic), Black, light-skinned, and Latina. Each of these operates together with the others to create a more complete picture of the selves understood by my respondents to constitute their ethno-racial identities. Generally these terms were both descriptive and categorical. As

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[25] At the time of the June 1991 Expulsion Order there were 245,000 Haitians and an estimated 100,000 Dominico-Haitians in the Dominican Republic. Currently, it is estimated that there are 500,000 Haitians and Dominico-Haitians in the Dominican

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descriptives they reflect my respondents' self-perception; there is, it turns out, no definitive definition of the descriptive "*trigueña*" for example. Rather, "*trigueña*" contains individuals who range from brown skinned to "wheaty" skinned, from thin featured to broad featured, and from coarse haired to curly haired to lank haired. The same could be said of "*india*", "*mesclada*", "*latina*" and "*hispana*". Since categories rely upon consistency, where descriptive inconsistency or fluidity exists, categories and categorization likewise becomes ambiguous.

Again, code-switching theory is helpful to our understanding of situated identities. Writing of code-switchers, linguist Laura Duran notes that:

> Because they are neither fish nor fowl we may see them solely as alingualism, semilingualism, interference, confusion, or fossilization instead of as new and alternative forms created by cognitive/conceptual synthesis of two languages. Whether code switching is used to fill a gap or if it is a conscious desire to mix the two languages to create new forms, the language created in most code-switches has internal linguistic consistency and validity for the learner's deep structure.[26]

Instead of simply understanding Dominican ethno-racial identity formations and expressions as "delusional"[27], "mistaken"[28], or "negrophobic"[29], I would argue that their deep structure is ambiguous.[30] This might seem rather a banal conclusion. However, if

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Republic. Andre Corten and Isis Duarte, "Five Hundred Thousand Haitians in the Dominican Republic," Latin American Perspectives, Vol.22, June 1, 1995, pp. 94-110.

[26] Duran, p. 73.

[27] Rout, 1976.

[28] Maxton, 1996; Sagas, 1997.

[29] Torres-Saillant, 1999.

[30] Here I must note the influence of Lévi-Strauss upon this line of thinking. The use of linguistics as a model for understanding social structures was most fully developed by Lévi-Strauss in his **. Unlike Lévi-Strauss, however, I am not arguing that Dominican ambiguity reflects a universal structure of the unconscious.

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we consider the meaning of ambiguity in the formation of ethno-racial identities it becomes far more interesting an observation.

Others such as Paul Austerlitz have argued that Dominicans, like the Haitians Herskovits studied in the 1930's[31], suffer from "'socialized ambivalence' regarding national and racial identity."[32] "Socialized ambivalence" in the Dominican case Austerlitz examines refers to the schism between the "African-derived aesthetic" of Merengue and "the prevailing Hispanophilism" of the Dominican State and elite. [33] Ambivalence is characterized by "a simultaneous desire to say or do two opposite things."[34] The underlying assumption would seem to be that African and Hispanic are "two opposite things".

Merton and Barber similarly write of "sociological ambivalence" or the "incompatible normative expectations incorporated into a *single* role of a *single* social status."[35] The fundamental cause of sociological ambivalence is an internally contradictory social structure. Although discursively, ideologically and institutionally "African" and "Hispanic" have been constructed as oppositional, at the level of identity practices such as hair culture and language use, however, African and Hispanic are much

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31 Melville Herskovits, Life in a Haitian Valley, New York: Knopf, 1937, pp. 295-296.

32 Austerlitz, p. 149.

33 Ibid., p. 149.

34 Random House Webster's College Dictionary, New York: Random House, 1991, p. 43.

35 Robert K. Merton and Elinor Barber, "Sociological Ambivalence" in Lewis A. Coser and Bernard Rosenberg, eds., Sociological Theory: A Book of Readings, 4th ed., New York: Macmillan, 1976, p. 543.

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more confluent and ambiguous. To be ambiguous is to have "several possible meanings or interpretations."[36] Ambiguity, in other words, allows for semiotic mastery.

Writing about ambiguity in Trinidad, Khan observes that research on Caribbean ethnic and racial identities has long documented multiplicity and intermediacy as an organizing principle of identity formation:

> An important issue to emerge from this literature was that the so-called intermediate categories – that is, combinations lying between the extremes of "black" and "white" – signal important questions about the nature of ambiguity and the significance of the relationship between appearance (phenotype) and background in social relations, and more broadly, between social identity and social stratification, and ultimately between ideology and power.[37]

I would add a third and fourth element to Khan's "relationship between appearance (phenotype) and background": perception and equivocation. In this work I have applied social phenomenology to discern the gaps between official Dominican identity narratives and displays, political ideology, and the social world through which Dominicans create a "cultural philosophy and value system"[38] based on the ambiguity of their self- and other-perception.

Conceptually, ambiguity can be understood as both elusive meaning and systematic multiplicity.[39] Elusive meaning is indeterminate and signals arbitrary identity

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[36] Random House Webster's College Dictionary, New York: Random House, 1991, p. 43.

[37] Aisha Kan, "What is `Spanish'?: Ambiguity and `mixed' ethnicity in Trinidad," in Kevin A. Yelvington, ed., Trinidad Ethnicity, Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1993, pp. 180-207.

[38] Schutz, 1967.

[39] My thanks to my colleague at Smith College, Harold Skulsky, who helped me work through these thoughts.

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choices. Post-structuralism and its methodology, deconstruction, exemplify this line of analysis. While I agree with post-structuralism's general critique of essentialism and postulation that "there are competing claims for affiliation that cannot be reduced to epiphenomena,"[40] the elision of power relations and their systematizations is problematic. The "claims for affiliation" one is subject to are not random, nor are one's responses to those claims.

By contrast, systematic multiplicity of meaning is conditioned by a defining mechanism. It is a strategic response to power and its structures. It is the later conceptualization of ambiguity that holds in my analysis. The question is "Why is ambiguity invoked in the first place?" The answer lies in the various forms of reward that derive from ambiguity. The object of repressive state apparatus and ideological state apparatus in the both the Dominican Republic and the United States, Dominicans deploy ambiguity as a strategic response.

Ambiguity defines Dominican hair culture in New York City, for example, in its practices, discourses and political outcomes. Looking "Hispanic" and perceiving "Hispanicity" that includes African heritage is strategically ambiguous in that it shifts the boundaries of existing ethno-racial categories and understandings in the United States. It is an attempt to distance Dominicans from negative constructions of blackness and their attendant institutionalizations – for example political disenfranchisement, occupational segregation, and State violence at the hands of the police and in the welfare system, *inter*

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[40] Robin Cohen, Frontiers of Identity: The British and the Others, London: Longman, 1994, p. 205.

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alia. Ambiguity, in other words, breaches the connection between signifiers and signified so central to the maintenance of ideological state apparatus.

Ambiguity is present in Dominican participation in the Anacostia's *Black Mosaic* and in Dominican identities in Washington, D.C. And it conditions Dominican-Haitian-United States' relations. In these later two arenas, equivocation is also at play. Dominican identities are equivocal in Washington, D.C. and in geo-politics in that they are contingent upon the interpretation of their observers. What African Americans in D.C. and Anglo American governing structures perceive is to some extent beyond the control of the perceived (in this case Dominicans) although they may attempt to influence those perceptions in what they understand to be their best political, economic and ideological interests in a given moment and place. If there is any consistent thread to those interests, it has been the insistence on being in the world on terms as much of their own choosing as possible, as I hope I have shown here.

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