



## Translating Blackness

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# Translating *Blackness*

## Dominicans Negotiating Race and Belonging

LORGIA GARCÍA-PEÑA

During November 2012, more than 2 million Dominicans living in a dozen cities across the globe took to the streets to peacefully protest a series of austerity measures imposed by the newly elected president, Danilo Medina.<sup>1</sup> Residing in the US South at the time, away from any Dominican enclave, I could not help but glue myself to Facebook and Twitter in the hopes of participating, if only virtually, in what many believed to be the beginning of the “Dominican Spring”: the transnational, youth-led peaceful revolution that was sure to bring about the changes that Dominicans, including those of us in the Diaspora, had been dreaming of our entire lives. But just like other social movements of the decade (such as Dreamers, Occupy, and the Arab Spring), the Dominican Peaceful Revolution came to a stagnant halt after a few months of intensity—partly due to lack of leadership, and partly to the silencing and repression imposed by the Dominican state.

In my effort to stay connected to what seemed the most exciting event in the history of my generation, I looked at every single photograph, listened to speeches, and combed through all—even the minimally relevant—news articles that circulated on the web. It was in this laborious obsession that I came across one picture that was disseminated briefly on Facebook around

Thanksgiving 2012. The photo showed a man of deep brown complexion—*moreno claro*, he would be called in Dominican Republic—holding a sign that read: “Obama, no nos ignores, nosotros también somos negros” (Obama, don’t ignore us, we too are black).<sup>2</sup> Taken in Milan, Italy during one of the smallest and less publicized of the many marches and protests that took place during the short-lived “Dominican Spring,” the photo raises a series of questions.<sup>3</sup> Why did this man, presumably a Dominican immigrant residing in Italy, write a slogan mentioning Obama to protest Dominican state exploitation of the working people? And what did race have to do with this?

The complexity of Dominican racialization, as Torres-Saillant has argued, is precisely linked to the fact that “the black as a socio-logically differentiated segment of the population does not exist in the Dominican imagination.”<sup>4</sup> What does exist is a series of social injustices and inequalities that are very much the result of the economic exploitation of the majority of the population, which is black and mulatto, by international corporations and the local government. So why then did the Italian-Dominican protester summon race to talk about class? Moreover, why did he choose to invoke Barack Obama over, let’s say, Nelson Mandela, to address what at first sight seems to be a struggle for democracy and equality?

One of the most intriguing particularities of the photograph is the diction of the slogan. The poster uses the Spanish adjective *negro* (black), which in the Dominican Republic is more often used to describe objects than people, over the Dominican vernacular

*prieto* or *moreno* commonly employed to describe a person's skin color. Undoubtedly, the *black* Italian-Dominican protester understood the need to translate the oppression of Dominican workers and migrants into a *lingua franca* that would allow him to establish a dialogue with his host nation as well as with the rest of the Western world. The man in Milan's performance of blackness, I argue, derives from an awareness of "black" as a product of US cultural, political and economic imposition in the world. Therefore, to be black in the world—that is, to have access to the discourse of social dissent that can result in one's positionality as an interlocutor of power and history—it is necessary to enter blackness as theorized and mediated by the US empire. Obama's election in 2008 further solidified blackness as a global category that is very much part of the US liberal and capitalist project around the world. Or, as Cornell West stated in one of his many controversial remarks, "Obama has become the black face of American Imperialism."<sup>5</sup> As enunciated in the photo, *negro* is thus a literal rather than a semantic translation of US American (politicized and commodified) Blackness.

This essay traces the *vaivén* (coming and going) of Dominican blackness, engaging the movements, translations, and negotiations of racial ideology across markets and nations, to better understand the contradictions that have led to multiple scholarly and cultural misreadings of Dominican racialization. Jorge Duany, analyzing Puerto Rican transnational experiences, argues that the Puerto Rican nation is one in constant *vaivén*, for it negotiates identity and nationalism through local and global politics.<sup>6</sup> Drawing from

Duany I argue Dominican blackness must also be understood in terms of movement—as a *vaivén*—that is, as a trans-local concept very much linked to historical, cultural and political continuities.

As articulated after the Civil War, US blackness became an important tool in the project of US imperial expansion over Hispaniola, adding to the already complicated conceptualizations of race and nation(s) that marked the birth of the two republics inhabiting the island. Dominican blackness is thus related to the complicated *vaivén* of peoples and ideas that shaped and sustained the economic and political expansion of the US Empire over Latin America after the Civil War. Furthermore, the present reality of Dominican migration, which has led more than 10 percent of the overall Dominican population to move to the United States continues to transform how blackness is imagined, understood and performed by Dominicans at home and abroad.

## Overcoming Blackness

Dominican blackness is an embodied concept that is performed, and inscribed on the flesh of national subjects through social processes that are very much linked to the political and economic realities of the nation in its relationship to the history and persistence presence of colonial (Spain) and imperial (US) impositions. Analyzed outside of the complicated historical context that engendered it, blackness in the Dominican Republic can become a slippery concept. The critic of Dominican blackness, therefore, runs the risk of staying on the surface and missing the point. To avoid following in

such “colonizing trick,” to borrow from David Kazanjian, the critic must understand that the task of translating blackness is intrinsically linked to Dominican ethnic identity and to the island’s economic and political negotiations with the United States and Europe.<sup>7</sup>

Within the first three decades of Spanish colonization, the native population of Hispaniola was reduced to 11,000.<sup>8</sup> Such destruction resulted mainly from the hardships of the mining industry for which the indigenous people had become the main source of forced labor. As early as 1520, African slaves were brought to Santo Domingo to replace the disappearing native Taíno workforce, beginning what would become the largest and most important economic exchange of the modern world: the African slave trade. Ginetta Candelario argues that this development had a significant impact on how people in the colony organized and imagined themselves along racial lines, because racial systems frequently shifted due to the short duration of the sugar plantation economy and to the occupation of the western part of the island by French colonizers.<sup>9</sup>

But as early as 1608, the Spanish colony of Santo Domingo began to see what some historians have called a “de facto emancipation.”<sup>10</sup> Looking for fortune in the richer lands of New Spain (now Mexico and the US southwest), many Spanish colonizers abandoned Santo Domingo from which much gold, silver, and richness had been extracted. The wealthy *colonos* sailed to new territories, leaving behind a few sugar plantations and scattered communities of cattle ranchers and farmers who survived through commerce and contraband with

French and Dutch seamen, pirates, and explorers beginning to take interest in the region.

To control the growth of the illegal market and contraband in the colony Governor Antonio de Osorio, following an order from King Felipe III, ordered residents to abandon the northwest lands and to relocate closer to the city of Santo Domingo, where illegal exports could be controlled. Known as the *Devastaciones de Osorio* (1605–6), this period resulted in the speedy economic decline of Santo Domingo and in the increased discontent among the island’s cattle ranchers and middle-class residents.<sup>11</sup> Fearing rebellion and secession, Spain sent troops to protect its colonial interests—a fact that contributed to widespread armed rebellion of whites, wealthy mulattoes, and slaves. Unable to defeat the Spanish army, white and rich mulatto rebels migrated to other islands, while slave and poor mulattoes took to the mountains, leaving the majority of the northwestern plains de-populated.<sup>12</sup> Eventually, the French would gain control over these lands, converting western Santo Domingo into one of the richest colonies of the Caribbean with one of the largest slave populations in the New World.

Among the many unintended consequences of the *Devastaciones* was the freedom (either by release or rebellion) of nearly 60 percent of the population of African slaves working in the cattle industry of northwestern Santo Domingo, and the subsequent increased *mestizaje* among blacks, Indians, and poor whites who took to the *montes* (wilderness) in armed resistance, never to return to their homes.<sup>13</sup> Writing in 1857, Pedro Francisco Bonó argues that free

blacks and mulattoes who escaped to the mountains during the *Devastaciones* gradually began to understand themselves as different from black slaves of neighboring Saint Domingue.<sup>14</sup> These free mixed-race communities eventually started to use other names and descriptions to assert their difference from both the European colonizers and the African slaves. Interesting terms such as *blancos de la tierra* (whites of the land) and *moreno oscuro* (dark brown) emerged as a result of this socioeconomic phenomenon.<sup>15</sup>

Historians of the language differ in their opinions of the genealogy and chronology of the various terms that eventually came to replace *negro* in Santo Domingo and of those invented to depict the various gradations of skin color among descendants of slaves. What does seem evident is that though colonial Dominicans eventually stopped using the term “black” to describe their epidermis, they were aware of the racial hierarchies and the legal implications of their skin color in the context of colonial Santo Domingo. Or to use Moya Pons’ diction, “they knew they were black”; however, colonial Dominicans of color understood their blackness as a condition that, though oppressive and disadvantageous, was not equal to slavery.<sup>16</sup> More importantly, they understood themselves as natives of, and belonging to, the land of Santo Domingo and not solely as descendants of African slaves.

In the aftermath of the *Devastaciones*, slavery came to be perceived as something that could be overcome through miscegenation. Lighter skin allowed for freedom and the possibility of escalating the socioeconomic ladder. Despite their aspirations to *mulataje*, I would argue that colonial Dominicans of the

seventeenth century also understood they were ethnically black; that is, that they were partly descendants of African slaves. This awareness inspired communities of free Dominicans of color to aid runaway slaves from both sides of the island for almost two centuries.<sup>17</sup> The notion of “overcoming blackness” became a simple strategy for fighting colonial oppression and slavery in seventeenth-century Santo Domingo.

After Dominican independence from Haiti in 1844, the strategy for avoiding the social and legal costs of blackness were slowly transformed. Facing the need to negotiate US imperial demands and nationalist goals, republican writers drafted a series of contradictory ideologies that ultimately mistranslated popular understandings of race into a form of *indigenismo* that erased blackness from the national rhetoric.<sup>18</sup> What survived of the original idea was a distorted notion of “bettering one’s race” that was devoid of the historical meaning that had allowed runaway slaves and mulattoes of seventeenth-century Santo Domingo to resist slavery and exploitation. Progressively, as Candelario argues, the term “black” became associated with the idea of slavery, and so mixed people of color in Santo Domingo began to imagine themselves as other than black.<sup>19</sup>

The early republic *indigenista* narrative was further complicated as the Dominican nation grappled with its own borders and its place in a US-dominated hemisphere. As Sybille Fisher argues, Haiti had been constructed and imagined as a black—not a racially mixed—nation.<sup>20</sup> The United States, on the other hand, had managed to obtain independence while maintaining a slave

economy. For both nations, Haiti and the United States, blackness was an important political category in the definition of the national project. As I argue elsewhere, the formation of Dominican national identity was mediated through the nation's relationship to its geographical (Haiti) and psychological (US) borders. Thus, in order to assert its independence from Haiti, and to obtain the favor of the United States, the Dominican Republic needed to be decidedly non-black.<sup>21</sup>

Within this historical framework, the word "negro" or black was perpetually erased from Dominican racial vocabulary. To be black became equated to foreignness (Haiti) and not belonging, perpetuating a system of what Balibar has called "racism without race."<sup>22</sup> At the hands of the powerful Trujillo dictatorship (1930–61), this ideology of racism without race was converted into action: school curricula were standardized to reproduce a version of the nation's history that was shaped by Hispanophile intellectuals and therefore promoted anti-Haitian ideology and xenophobia; Afro-Dominican religious and cultural practices were persecuted and banned; and in the most vicious example of xenophobia, Afro-Dominicans and ethnic Haitians were viciously massacred.<sup>23</sup> Though in the twentieth century Dominicans continue to imagine themselves as non-white (non-European), being black—that is, admitting one's relationship to colonial oppression and slavery—became incompatible with being Dominican.

### The *Vaivén* of Blackness

In the previous section we established that for Dominicans in the colonial and early republic

years, the term *negro* carried the signifier of exclusion, for it was legally and historically linked to slavery and foreignness. I now turn my attention to an examination of the *vaivén* of blackness that came to sustain *dominicidad* as an ethno-racial category inhabiting a liminal border between US imperial imagination and colonial ideology.

The history of US black liberation is very much intertwined with the history of Hispaniola's independence projects. The site for the emergence of two black- and mulattoled republics (Haiti in 1804 and the Dominican Republic in 1821), Hispaniola became an international locus for black resistance and liberation as well as the object of fear for Europe and the United States.<sup>24</sup> At the very beginning of the Haitian Revolution thousands of French planters fled from the island, taking refuge in the United States and many taking slaves with them.<sup>25</sup> By 1792, more than 200 white Saint-Domingue families had moved to Philadelphia.<sup>26</sup> Following the fall of Cap Français in 1793, the number of refugees increased daily, to a rate of 10,000 per day. Most went to the United States in the hopes of continuing to participate in a slave-driven economy.<sup>27</sup>

With these figures in mind, we could reasonably argue that migration from Saint-Domingue influenced early abolitionist efforts and black insurgency in the nineteenth-century United States. An example can be found in the Gabriel Conspiracy (1800), a plan by enslaved African American slaves to attack Richmond and destroy slavery in Virginia and which "Frenchmen" allegedly orchestrated.<sup>28</sup> Another example is the famous Vesey Plot of Charleston (1822), in which the accused mentioned the Haitian

Revolution as their inspiration for insurgency.<sup>29</sup> In addition to inspiring armed resistance, the Santo Domingo Revolutions also impacted early articulations of US black political thought. Nineteenth-century African American scholars such as Holly, Douglass, and Delany, as well as early twentieth-century thinkers like W.E.B. Du Bois and Arturo Schomburg, located in the Santo Domingo slave rebellions the spirit of liberty and freedom needed to fight for the equality of races.<sup>30</sup> Holly would eventually join the emigration efforts that led many black Americans to Liberia, but it was Hispaniola, not Africa, he found to be the ideal destination for southern black émigrés. Between 1823 and 1898, as many as 20,000 black Americans emigrated to the southern part of Cap Haïtien and to the Bay of Samaná, eventually forming communities and influencing the culture and history of both nations of Hispaniola.<sup>31</sup>

During the second half of the nineteenth century, blackness was an important category in the definition of the United States' destiny. A nation that was built at the expense of black people's freedom now had to figure out a way to redefine itself as multiracial, facing its great crime and finding ways to deal with the trauma of slavery. In this atmosphere—which coincides with the progression of the Manifest Destiny, and the growth of the "White Man's Burden" ideology in Washington—US discourse of blackness (which, as established above, emerged in dialogue with Hispaniola) begins to travel to Hispaniola through political and cultural imperialism. The US government made several attempts to annex the Dominican Republic after its independence from Haiti (1854, 1866, and

1868). The annexation efforts responded to the United States' desire to acquire a naval base in the Caribbean to strengthen its political and economic power in the region.

Frederick Douglass, who joined the Republican Party and participated amply in the imperial project, was appointed to the Commission of Inquiry for the Annexation of Santo Domingo, in 1871.<sup>32</sup> Douglass, an ex-slave and great defendant of racial equality, actively participated in a project that would end the sovereignty of a nation ruled by African descendants. Reconciling his desire for equality and justice and his idea of a cohesive nation, Douglass got behind Manifest Destiny. He believed that in order for the black race to move forward, it needed the support and strength of a strong nation and its leaders. Viewing the Dominican Republic as crippled by *caudillismo*, Douglass believed that "Santo Domingo could not survive on its own" but could be great as part of the Great United States Empire.<sup>33</sup> Some critics of Douglass find his position naïve and overly optimistic. Others consider him a sellout to "Big Money" and Washington. Whatever Douglass' true intentions were regarding the annexation of Santo Domingo, his understanding of blackness is intriguing. Douglass never may have encountered a Dominican person who identified as black, given the sociolinguistic context of the term. Yet it is clear that for Douglass, Dominicans were indeed black, a fact that decidedly impacted his mission and presence on Dominican soil.

Douglass believed Santo Domingo would be a refuge for African American professionals and scholars seeking to escape the oppression of the post-Civil War United States to develop their full potential as humans: "This is a place

where the man can simply be man regardless of his skin color. Where he can be free to think, and to lead.”<sup>34</sup> But Douglass was not the first American to describe the Dominican people as a non-black racial Other. The 1845 US commission in charge of assessing Dominicans’ ability to self-govern found Dominicans to be “neither black nor white.”<sup>35</sup> Assuaging public anxiety surrounding the potential emergence of another black nation, both commissions (in 1845 led by white American diplomat John Hogan and in 1875 by Douglass) insisted on the difference of Dominican blackness as a positive category offering potential for the country’s progress, in contrast with neighboring (black) Haiti.

Though Douglass found Dominican racial mixtures promising, particularly as compared to Haiti, we should note that he also found Dominicans to be generally uncivil and in need of much guidance and teaching. Consciously or not, Douglass, the voice of black thought in US politics of the late nineteenth century, established US blackness as an authority for determining the racial, political, and cultural implications of blackness in Hispaniola, a legacy that continues to date.<sup>36</sup> If white Americans like Hogan were endowed with the power to govern and instruct young nations, black Americans, Douglass’ actions seem to suggest, had the burden of teaching other blacks how to be black, civil, and free. In this framework, which would be expanded to the rest of the Hispanic Caribbean after the Spanish American War, we can find the roots of the complicated *vaivén* of Dominican blackness as a theory that is very much intertwined with the economic and political ambitions of expansionist

post-Civil War United States, a process that has continued to grow and shape the internal and external constructions of Dominican blackness.

By the time Frederick Douglass visited the Dominican Republic in 1875, Caribbean thinkers such as Gregorio Luperón, Jose Martí, and Ramón Emeterio Betances had begun to grapple with the political articulation of race that could ensure the sustenance of the national project while serving as the basis for an egalitarian international community. Imagining a *Confederación Antillana* (Caribbean Federation) of democratic actors, the patriots and fathers of the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, and Cuba had been preoccupied with the threat that the United States posed to their independence projects. As imagined by Luperón, Betances and Martí, the nation could only exist in the unity of all races without discrimination or hierarchy. Racism and racial segregation corresponded to a colonial imagination. To be racist, therefore, meant to be a colonizer. While the nation as imagined by these thinkers was charged with the protection of its subjects, citizens, in exchange, were asked to give up their race and become part of the nation. In this model, nation supersedes race. To claim one’s race would constitute treachery, an unpatriotic gesture reminiscent of colonialism.

Martí, Betances, and Luperón were at the forefront of the struggle for emancipation and racial integration in the Hispanic Caribbean. Recognizing the threat that US expansion posed for the region, they understood the importance of strengthening unity among the peoples of their nation to guarantee the longevity of the independence

project. Recent history had proven that the fragility of race could result in loss of liberty, as had happened repeatedly in the case of Santo Domingo. Though there are not many sources on the Dominican intellectual reaction to Frederick Douglass' support of the annexation, Luperón's 1875 editorial published in *El Porvenir*, "A los Dominicanos y a mis amigos Todos," seems to suggest that he recognized the dangers of potential "foreign" projects in de-stabilizing national unity. Thus, he reminds his compatriots and friends of their need to be "loyal to our Fatherland, and our freedom over any other promising prize."<sup>37</sup> Though Luperón was friends with Douglass and welcomed him in the Puerto Plata political circle during his visits, he disagreed with Douglass' political ambitions and vision for the island. His article thus reminds Dominicans of the potential danger foreign voices, even those representing amicable forces, posed for the sovereignty of the young nation.

To return to the man in Milan and my original question: What does race have to do with the austerity measures and taxation of the working Dominican people in 2012? The study of race has dominated the bulk of academic work about Dominicans at home and in the diaspora. US and European scholarship has focused largely on border relations, on anti-Haitian discourse, and on what some regard as Dominican "black denial," often juxtaposed with an assumed Haitian embrace of blackness.<sup>38</sup> On the other hand, contemporary Dominican and Dominican American scholarship has focused on the influence of diasporic intellectual, cultural, and political interventions on island ideologies of race and gender. One could say that

diasporic intellectuals and cultural producers have been seeking to deconstruct the colonial imagination that informed the division of Haiti and the Dominican Republic in the nineteenth century and that influenced the racist discourse dominating twentieth-century Dominican political ideology.

In what is now a famous quote, historian Frank Moya Pons argued that in the United States, Dominicans "realize they are black."<sup>39</sup> Critiquing this provocative idea, Torres-Saillant argues that Dominicans in the United States are confronted with new forms of racism and are therefore forced to make ethnic alliances with other racialized minorities.<sup>40</sup> Though I find Moya Pons' analysis simplistic, I would concede that in the diaspora many Dominicans are indeed confronted with a different type of discrimination than the one they face at home. In the United States, it is not just class, but also skin tone, hair texture, accent, education, level of cultural assimilation, and ability to participate in the purchase of cultural commodities that define one's race. Thus, confronted with a US racialization that is very much linked to the open wound of slavery and Jim Crow as foundational experiences of the nation, US diasporic Dominicans find that blackness provides a language for confronting their new place in their host nation while interpellating the historical oppression back home. It is not then that Dominicans "find out they are black" when they migrate to the United States, as Moya Pons suggested, but rather, that in the United States Dominicans find a political language from which to articulate their own experience of racialization, oppression, disenfranchisement, and silencing—a process that allows them to build alliances

with other oppressed communities around the world.

In his book *Afrodominicano por elección, negro por nacimiento*, race scholar Blas Jiménez calls for the literal translation of *dominicanidad* to the internationally recognizable label “black” and for the embracing of the prefix “Afro” as a strategy to dialogue with the common histories that have engendered black experience in the Americas.<sup>41</sup> As if responding to Jiménez’s call to action, the slogan “we too are black” chosen by the man in Milan, serves as a signifier from which to theorize and historicize *dominicanidad* in terms that could be understood, validated, and accepted by a large transnational audience. Further, it locates the Dominican experience in relation to the United States, serving as a reminder of the two nations’ intricate histories of unequal relationship.

The man in Milan understood that the adjective “*negro/black*” possesses a certain transnational value that the ethnic identification “Dominican” or the Spanish semantic translations “*prieto/moreno*” do not. The man in Milan recognized *negro* to be a powerful artifact for political contestation as well as a global signifier of economic oppression and disenfranchisement. For most people in the world, “black,” just like *dominicano*, is equated with poor. Unlike *dominicano*, however, “black” is historically and culturally situated in the world. One can argue that “black” as a cultural and political category is visible and, to inflect Gayatri Spivak, can indeed speak.

The notion of race as a social construct has been widely accepted in scholarly conversations for several decades now, to the extent that the phrase has become academic

cliché. The meaning of race as a social construct, however, is not always clear, as the phrase does not account for the empirical experience of subjects negotiating racial identity in an increasingly transnational world. In other words, the “social construction of race” does not provide a solution to institutionalized racism, white supremacy, and the everyday life struggles faced by racialized peoples of the world. The “social construction of race” does not account for the *vaivén* of blackness, but that theoretical phrase assumes blackness to be locally contained within its construction.

In his engagement of blackness, the man in Milan is both interpellating and contradicting *dominicanidad* for *negro*, attempting to contest oppression through a theorization of blackness that is very much contaminated by the imperial structures sustaining (black) Dominican oppression. The alternative, however, is the continued silencing of Dominican economic exploitation by the state and international corporations and the racialization of the immigrant subject as an Other without history. The man in Milan, like many of us in the diaspora, has chosen blackness, hoping to find in it a language that would bring the racial justice and equality the majority of Dominicans have been fighting for over several centuries.

## Notes

1. The 2012 Fiscal Reform Law 253-12 introduced by Medina in the late fall and popularized as “el paquetazo” (the blow) sought to alleviate the fiscal crisis affecting the nation by an overarching increase of taxes and the imposition of new

taxation on items traditionally exempt, such as food, baby formula and medication.

2. I have made many attempts to locate the photograph; however, as of the moment in which this article was completed, I have been unsuccessful.

3. La Multitud. Twitter post, November 20, 2012. <https://twitter.com/LaMultitud/status/269475754692190208>.

4. Silvio Torres-Saillant, *Introduction to Dominican Blackness* (New York: CUNY Dominican Studies Institute, City College of New York, 1999), 25.

5. Cornell West, *Black Prophetic Power* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2014).

6. Jorge Duany, *The Puerto Rican Nation on the Move: Identities on the Island and in the United States* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), vii.

7. David Kazanjian, *The Colonizing Trick: National Culture and Imperial Citizenship in Early America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003).

8. Ginetta Candelario, *Black Behind the Ears: Dominican Racial Identity from Museums to Beauty Shops* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007), 13.

9. Candelario, *Black Behind the Ears*, 37.

10. See Frank Moya Pons, *El Pasado Dominicano* (Santo Domingo: Editoria Corripia, 1986), and Richard Lee Turits, *The Foundations of Despotism: Peasants, the Trujillo Regime, and Modernity in Dominican History* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003).

11. There were many causes of the *Devastaciones*. Firstly, there were economic causes. Spain was trying to maintain a monopoly on commerce with the colonies and contraband affected this plan. On the other hand, Spain understood contraband as a source of economic power for its enemies.

12. One of the most important of these rebellions was the one led by mulatto cattle rancher

Hernando Montero in La Yaguana in 1606, known as the Guaba Rebellion.

13. Antonio Sánchez Valverde, *Ensayos* (Santo Domingo: Ediciones de la Fundación Corripio, 1988), 46.

14. Pedro Francisco Bonó Papers, 1857; Emilio Rodríguez Demorizzi Collection, Santo Domingo.

15. Moya Pons, *El Pasado Dominicano*, 8.

16. Frank Moya Pons, *Manual de historia de la República Dominicana* (Santo Domingo: Caribbean, 2000), 25.

17. The constant preoccupation regarding the potential alliance of the races appears in the scarce documents of the years following the *Devastaciones*. The sentiment becomes evident in seventeenth-century legislation, including the Code Noir.

18. *Indigenismo* was a social and literary movement in Latin America that began during the second half of the nineteenth century and continued to develop throughout early- and mid-twentieth-century literature. *Indigenismo* sought to highlight the cultures and histories of the Native populations through the narration of indigenous pre-colonial past. In the Dominican Republic, Manuel de Jesus Galvan's novel *Enriquillo* (1879) was the most important *indigenista* novel of the nineteenth century alongside the poetic work of Salome Ureña and Félix María del Monte.

19. Candelario, *Black Behind the Ears*, 23.

20. Sibylle Fischer, *Modernity Disavowed: Haiti and the Cultures of Slavery in the Age of Revolution* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 164.

21. Lorgia García Peña, *Contradicting the Archive: Bodies, Nations and the Narration of Dominicanidad* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, forthcoming).

22. Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Maurice Wallerstein, *Race, nation, classe: Les identités ambiguës* (Paris: Editions La Découverte, 1988), 34.

23. In 1937, more than 15,000 people, mostly black Dominicans and Haitians, living in the north-west borderlands were massacred following an

order by Trujillo. Over the last 20 years, this event has gained significant international attention, becoming a locus for analyzing Dominican-Haitian border relations in light of race and ethnicity. See Turits, *The Foundations of Despotism*; Eugenio Matibag, *Haitian-Dominican Counterpoint: Nation, State, and Race on Hispaniola* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); and Bernardo Vega, *Trujillo y Haití*, 2 vols (Santo Domingo: Fundación Cultural Dominicana, 1988, 1995).

24. Fischer, *Modernity Disavowed*, 17.

25. Mary Treudley, "The United States and Santo Domingo, 1789–1866," *Journal of Race Development* 7 (July 1916): 112.

26. Monroe Fordham, "Nineteenth Century Black Thought in the United States: Some Influence of the Santo Domingo Revolution," *Journal of Black Studies* 6 (1975): 116.

27. Treudley, "United States and Santo Domingo," 112, 113.

28. *Ibid.*

29. Fordham, "Nineteenth Century Black Thought," 175.

30. *Ibid.*, 120.

31. *Ibid.*

32. Frederick Douglass, *The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass* (1881; repr., Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2003), 410.

33. Daniel Brantley, "Black Diplomacy and Frederick Douglass' Caribbean Experiences, 1871 and 1889–1891: The Untold History," *Phylon* 45, no. 3 (1984): 203.

34. Douglass, *Life and Times*, 398.

35. Sumner Welles, *Naboth's Vineyard: The Dominican Republic (1844–1924)* (1928; repr., Mamaroneck, NY: Paul P. Appel, 1966), 77–8.

36. In his 2012 PBS documentary, Henry Louis Gates, Jr. avows Dominicans' black denial. After observing passersby in the busy Calle El Conde in Santo Domingo, the scholar expressed his disapproval of Dominican racial constructions, insisting that in the United States "all these people would be black." In contrast, Gates presented Haiti as a source of black authenticity and African pride in the Americas, and as a victim of what he perceived to be Dominican racial prejudice.

37. Gregorio Luperón, *Escritos de Gregorio Luperón* (Santo Domingo: Editora Nacional, 1935), 164.

38. This dichotomy is found in the works of Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Michelle Wucker, Ernesto Sagas, David Howard, and others.

39. Frank Moya Pons, "Dominican National Identity and Return Migration," in *Migration and Caribbean Cultural Identity: Selected Papers from Conference Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Center* (Gainesville: Center for Latin American Studies, University of Florida, 1982), 33.

40. Silvio Torres-Saillant, "The Tribulations of Blackness: Stages in Dominican Racial Identity," *Latin American Perspectives* 25, no. 3 (May 1998): 5.

41. Blas R. Jiménez, *Afrodominicano por elección, negro por nacimiento: Seudoensayos* (Santo Domingo: Editora Manatí, 2008), 114.

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