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Defining Black Masculinities: Intersectional Analyses of Gender, Race and Sexuality in Caribbean and Latin American Literature, 1955 to Present

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Dawn A. Duke, Major Professor

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Defining Black Masculinities: Intersectional Analyses of Gender, Race and Sexuality in
Caribbean and Latin American Literature, 1955 to Present

A Dissertation Presented for the

Doctor of Philosophy

Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Jerry Eugene Scruggs Jr.
August 2022

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DEDICATION

To my loving wife Jenna and children Anthony and Jazmyne

To my incredible and amazing parents Jerry E. Scruggs Sr. and Patricia N. Scruggs

To my siblings Jessica and William

To my grandmother Jessie Mary Mckissack and my uncle James Cordell Mckissack

To my late best friend Asa Ean Marcel Antonio Williams and many other beautiful humans

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My parents have a warrior DNA. My fight and drive come from them. Mom and Dad gave me the template to success by demonstrating the importance of hard work and sacrifice. Being the first in my family to go to college, they recognized my potential to be a great educator. They supported me emotionally and financially through my first two degrees. They are also great friends and wonderful human beings. I can love so many people because of all the love they have given me over the years. I love you Mom and Dad.

I come from an incredible close-knit family and my siblings are no exception. Thank you sister and brother for the constant encouragement and words of advice. I recall some special moments of optimism during this process when you said that I was a tough S.O.B and that I "had this in the bag". Thanks for always believing in me and hopefully I have provided you with a great example in a big brother.

I have had the pleasure of special friendships over the years. I dedicate many of my academic efforts to fulfilling Asa's legacy. You were my best friend and I know how proud you

would be of me today. Your untimely passing the year before entering my second Master's program in Spanish at UT-Knoxville was a tough pill to swallow. These last few years have started the healing process and your memory and love will continue to inspire me in the future. I give shoutouts to numerous friends and colleagues who have provided great laughs, emotional support and boosts in my morale over the years: Carlos, Deanna, Rob, Ari, Cris, Alex, Collin, Carey, the Olson clan, Luciana, Janelle, Jason, Iván, Bruno, Paulo A., Sarah O., Niko, Gérard, Ángela, Andrea, Matt, Ramón, Andy, Diana, Manny, my European Posse (Andishe, Amin, Ayten, Nouredine, Martin, JB and Lindsey) and too many more to name individually.

Unbeknown to me, my teaching aspirations would start as a 4th grade student. The late great James L. Humphrey instilled the value of Black histories in curricula long before other teachers. At my early age, it was important to have a Black male role model in education. A few years later, I met Mario Friedel as a sixth grader. I fell in love with Spanish at that time and this love grew when he approached me one day and said, "Jerry, you are great at this". Eventually, I met influential people at Middle Tennessee State University: Soraya Nogueira, Patrick Conley, and Oscar Díaz-Ortiz. These three individuals had my back and served their roles as not only outstanding professors and mentors, but also great advocates for students. After working several years as an adjunct professor, I decided to pursue my second Master's degree and subsequent PhD here in Knoxville. I originally had a full assistantship offer at the University of Iowa, but I rejected it because of Luis Cano's words and influence. At my lowest point in the Master's program, Luis singlehandedly acknowledged my great potential and taught me the importance of academic priorities and dedication to my craft in a private email that I have saved. These wise words kept me focused and I stayed in the program as a result. Dawn has been a great mentor since I met her in the Fall of 2012. She has always been supportive of my family and kept a

consistent patience in understanding the difficulty of being a parent in a graduate program of this caliber. Her work ethic is unmatched and it has been an absolute pleasure working alongside her. I feel more than prepared pursuing the job market and the next chapter of my life with my academic profile and credentials under her supervision and mentorship. Solange and Álvaro have been two of my favorite professors at UT. They are very down to earth people and great student advocates. I have enjoyed our conversations and friendship and I appreciate all the guidance and advice in this difficult process. I could not ask for a better dissertation committee. I also give honorable mentions to Óscar Rivera-Rodas and Rhonda McClellan. Thanks to each one of you and all my mentors, past and present.

ABSTRACT

The objective of my dissertation is to define and construct parameters for analyzing the Afro-descendant male experience in four specific texts: *Mi compadre el General Sol* [General Sun, My Brother] (1955), *Adire y el tiempo roto* [Adire and Broken Time] (1967), *Sortilégio II: mistério negro de Zumbi redivivo* [Sorcery 2: Black Mystery of Resurrected Zumbí] (1979), and *Negro: Este color que me queda bonito* [Black: This Color Looks Good on Me] (2013). Black masculinities are distinct and this study sets five parameters: 1) Sexual Prowess, 2) Contentious relationship with the White woman, 3) Violence and Toxic Masculinity, 4) Emotive Numbness, and 5) Generational Traumas. Deriving from the theory of Masculinities and Men's Studies, namely hegemonic masculinity established by R.W. Connell, I build the case for several independent Black masculinities in classic Afro-Latin American literature. Additionally, my study embraces a range of concepts from Frantz Fanon's confrontation with colonial inferiority complexes and Abdias do Nascimento's Quilombismo to intersectionality constructs provided by Kimberlé Crenshaw, Djamila Ribeiro and bell hooks.

In Chapter One, I propose readings of physical and reputational masculinities in protagonist Hilarion Hilarius and assess his character development and liminality in *Mi compadre el General Sol*. In Chapter Two, I contend that the protagonist Julián utilizes a plethora of heteromasculine disguises such as the prominence of military weaponry and performance, ancillary homophobic language, and hegemonic masculinity in relation to females to protect the incoming Castro regime's image and conceal his Black queer identity in *Adire y el tiempo roto*. Using *Sortilégio II* as primary evidence in Chapter Three, I examine and debunk the continuous idiosyncrasies of the racial democracy myth. In Chapter Four, I opine that Benny

cope better with racial trauma eventually but conclude that he remains in denial of the gravity of his trauma's long-lasting effects.

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INTRODUCTION- FIVE PARAMETERS OF AFRO-DESCENDANT MASCULINITIES

Masculinities as an academic focus lead to prominent thinkers such as R.W. Connell, Michael Kimmel, bell hooks, Judith Butler, Lynne Segal, and Nancy Chodorow. According to Connell, the four types of masculinities are: hegemonic, subordinate, marginalized and complicit. Hegemonic masculinity is the most observed and dominant type throughout various cultures and represents traditional modes of behavior in patriarchal societies. Men who express complicit masculinity refuse to challenge hegemonic masculinity, even if they fall in the subordinate or marginalized category. Subordinate masculinities cover men who are categorized as feminine and non-heterosexual. Marginalized masculinities involve non-White men and/or ethnic groups who have different experiences with hierarchy and power. This dissertation's counterargument to Connell's tenets of four masculinities is that she dismisses the intersectional components to Black masculinities and lumps several ethnic groups together. She fails to acknowledge that each minority group deals with trauma differently and reduces Black masculinities to the marginalized category. I agree with her methodology of addressing masculinities as a versatile, non-static framework. Masculinities can and do change situationally and over time, but her theory suggests that various marginalized communities are linked to a similar generational trauma. The Masculinities framework, as a concept, works globally and seems to draw inspiration from the second wave feminism of the 1960's. The value of prioritizing why males think, behave, and perform advances the development of newer scholarship in the field of gender studies. Connell has expanded Masculinities into a viable contribution to gender studies, prioritizing the masculine mind and body without putting down femininity. Nevertheless, Masculinities as an academic framework misses the mark in that local

cultures evolve at a faster rate than the research; furthermore, Connell largely bases Masculinities on Australian local cultures.

Cultural analysis of what constitutes masculinities appears today in close relationship with agendas of sexual and gender diversities. Jafari S. Allen is one of the leading experts that specializes in Black masculinities in the Caribbean and Latin American regions. In the book *¿Venceremos?* (2011), he discusses issues of race, gender, and sexuality in Cuba. He analyzes Black masculinities within the framework of alternative sexualities, emphasizing the quotidian realities in the LGBTQIA+ experience in Havana. Allen discusses sex work for Black queer people in the city during the economic hardships of the Special Period. He elaborates on how intersectional elements of identity are handled in Cuba and this ethnography shows how Afro-Cuban LGBTQIA+ people overcome battles of personal autonomy and confidence in a region that projects simplistic national perceptions about them. The book serves as one of the few examples in Latin America that offers in-depth theoretical arguments about Afro-descendant masculinities. It serves as a great complement to this dissertation's approach to defining Black masculinities, providing detail into the effects of generational trauma.

Notions of sexuality and identity drive are features of this topic. In similar direction, Professor Lynne Segal is an influential theorist in gender studies. Her seminal book *Slow Motion: Changing Masculinities, Changing Men* (1990) argues that masculinity has been neglected and aims to deconstruct traditional masculinities. Segal claims that the White Western male has enjoyed power for centuries and delays attempts that threaten hegemony. She believes that gender theory is pointless without an analysis of social class. *Slow Motion* is a classic text on the development of Masculinities and delves into the understanding of new sexualities and

masculinities, acknowledging the gradual change in men and their potential for change. Segal's book has been criticized as being a product of its time.

The ultra-contemporary nature of this topic is visible in the growing number of recent studies that both dwell on the topic from a universal, broad perspective as well as from perspectives that are regional in nature, driven by more concrete experiential moments in specific times and in specific spaces. *Nuevas Masculinidades* (2000) is an influential collection of essays edited by gender theorists Àngels Carabí and Marta Segarra. The book serves as an overview of Masculinidades and incorporates feminist Western European perspectives in the evolving theories regarding masculinities. It utilizes an intersection of biology, sociology, feminism, cultural studies, and anthropology to rethink traditional approaches to gender and hegemonic dynamics in Men's Studies. Carabí and Segarra argue that men develop into different versions of themselves and debunks Masculinities as a male-only framework but elaborates on its relation to newer waves of feminism. The book is an ideal alternative to the more traditional focuses on masculinities, theorized by R.W. Connell; however, it neglects opportunities to broaden the area of marginalized masculinities as it relates to Afro-descendant people.

A more focused interest emerges in the line of thought associated with Professor Jason Cortés, one of the predominant figures in Caribbean masculinities. He specializes in Latin American/Caribbean literary criticism of narrative prose. Cortés confronts hegemonic relationships in male authorship from queer feminist perspectives in his book *Macho Ethics* (2014). Heteronormativity in literary traditions and the complicity of masculinities in the region are two areas of concern for Cortés. The specific direction of my dissertation research and its primary intention to analyze masculinities in novels explains the incorporation of this professor's theoretical lens. My critique of Cortés is similar to that of most of the scholarship on gender

studies and has to do with an apparent reluctance to analyze and contemplate Afro-descendant masculinities in Latin American and Caribbean writers.

Reiterating, this study argues that Black masculinities are distinct and sets five parameters: 1) Sexual Prowess, 2) Contentious relationship with the White woman, 3) Violence and Toxic Masculinity, 4) Emotive Numbness, and 5) Generational Traumas. The analysis deals with literary Blackness, but these five parameters can be applied to sociological Blackness as well. It is equally important to note that sexual prowess is intertwined with the Afro-descendant male's historical relationship with his centuries-long enslavement in the Americas. The hypersexual aspect of Black males is an act of freedom and a way of reclaiming bodily autonomy. Sexual prowess is a subconscious response to a historical wrong and entails an incremental psychological process that goes beyond coitus. This theoretical aspect of sexual prowess involves a confidence that grows from the reassessment of overall self-value. The Black male must find love for oneself first. Sexual prowess is a response from historical bodily oppression and is indicative of sexual overcompensation as a release. The lingering trauma from the historical denial of sexual expression and sense of humanity leads to an eagerness to have sex. Sexual prowess in Black masculinities behaves toward performance, competition, stamina, and the will to satisfy the ego in coitus apart from reaching orgasm. Subliminally, the satisfaction of the sexual partner(s) is secondary because Black masculinities are specifically tied to the bondage experience. The mindset of fulfilling historically grueling tasks (working on plantations, cutting sugarcane, mining, construction, etc.) seeps into the romantic realm. In this context, sexual performance is subconsciously compared to manual labor, potentially reducing the pleasure aspect of intercourse. The persistence of historic trauma associated with the lack of Black male bodily autonomy increases pressure to become a great lover to one's partner. The

previous sexual deprivation intensifies the ego and neglect's the partner's sexual and emotional needs. Sexual prowess in Afro-descendant males presupposes a sufficient penis size, skill, and a strong physical presence. Sex becomes a sport, and the competition includes oneself and other males. The penis symbolizes a relatively new discovery of power in a post-slavery reality.

The second parameter that this study establishes pertaining to Afro-descendant masculinities is the unique relationship with the White woman. Incongruency, dissension, and curiosity are the main features of this relationship. Historically, the relationship between Black men and White women have been mythicized, especially in the sexual attraction sense. Although Latin American conceptualizations of miscegenation were less rigid compared to the United States, the interracial component of Afro-descendant male/White female relationships was viewed as taboo. The implemented caste system of the Spaniards created boundaries that had racial and socioeconomic implications; accordingly, the asymmetry of this evolving interracial relationship derives from underlying tensions attributed to the stringent level of access to pursue romance. Even with Black men/White women relationships at an all-time high in the Americas, it is unfeasible to avoid postcolonial elements such as racial fetishization. The short-term fetishization benefits both parties in distinct ways, but the focus will stay on the Black male perspective of the relationship. The incentive to establish a relationship with the White woman is a key element in Black masculinities owing to the pursuit of social mobility and power. High social status becomes the goal, and the presumption is that the Afro-descendant male acquires power by his reputation of successfully solidifying a romantic relationship with the White woman. In a slightly different context, I discuss reputational masculinity and its importance in Black masculinities in Chapter 1.

Toxic masculinities, especially the feature of violence, is the third established parameter in Black masculinities. Toxic masculinities reflect overall society, but the glorification of poverty, crime and gang culture augments the normalization of violence. The correlation between violence and poverty cannot be understated. Overcoming poverty by any means necessary, in the words of Frantz Fanon and popularized by Malcolm X, connotes making ends meet or protecting oneself, even through violent measures. Violence is a battle of manhood; if manhood is threatened, violence is likely or inevitable. From the Afro-descendant male's early formation, the pressure to be masculine mounts, particularly in the teenage years. The traditional family unit and the Black church contribute to negative views toward gay people and LGBTQIA+ individuals. In consequence, verbal and physical violence are directed to men deemed effeminate. This extends to condescending and superior attitudes against women. Toxic masculinities promote the reinforcement of traditional gender roles and subscribe to the idea of the woman as provider and caregiver. In this socioeconomic context, Afro-Latin men receive a different set of messaging about coming up in the world. The living situation often does not permit healthy outlooks to adolescence such as great schooling, safe neighborhoods, and worldly experiences. Black men are taught to neglect psychological problems and mental health needs resulting in a propensity for violence. Additionally, Black masculinities are wealth and status-driven; Black men are usually taught that attaining wealth absolves one from other responsibilities considered feminine and less worthy.

Emotive numbness is the fourth parameter in Black masculinities. The primary cause of this feature derives from a task-driven conditioning due to the ancestral experience of slavery. The family unit adopts a hard work ethic that feeds into the previous colonial system; the difference here is that Black people earn money for their labor. The familial attitude expands on

kinship networks that prioritize economic stability. At first glance, achieving economic success may be viewed as a positive, but further consideration demonstrates the legacy of Black masculinities as a symbol of economic productivity induced through the harsh treatment as chattel. The emotional conditioning behind labor produces feelings of inhumanity, operating as a machine. Labor promotes the idea of Black men as bestial, physical beings, designed to toil, and endure pain and suffering. Emotive numbness represents a void for Black men since it encourages the suppression of common emotions such as sadness, jubilation, and depression. Like the effects of toxic masculinities, emotive numbness bottles up negative energy and releases aggression. Hegemonically speaking, expressing emotion is viewed as a sign of femininity. Mental health is not a consideration because financial stability drives emotive numbness. In this mindset, emotions are distractions; expressing vulnerability and investing time in oneself redirects energy away from the family unit's objective to generate capital and work. Slavery, the source of historic trauma for Afro-descendant people, a conservative upbringing, the monotonous capitalist work system, and the carceral state reassure emotive numbness for Black males.

The fifth parameter that defines Black masculinities is the continuation of generational traumas. With respect to the biological trauma argument formulated by psychologist Joy DeGruy, this dissertation disagrees that our trauma appears in the DNA, but rather shares the view that our trauma is sociological. The detrimental effects of colonized minds result from a sense of hopelessness forced upon marginalized groups. Briefly mentioned earlier, it is difficult to break cycles of violence, poverty, and poor education across generations. What are the generational traumas in Afro-descendant masculinities? This study believes that the two determining factors are highly linked: poor psychological health and the false hope to attain

Whiteness (racial and cultural identity conflicts). In addition to a lower quality of life due to generational psychosis, Black males lack role models outside of a sphere of militancy. The common reference point is a hypermasculine figure in the form of the warrior prototype, revolutionaries, and gangsters, prevalent in literary Blackness.

Matching Forces: A Literary Overview of Multiple Masculine Personalities

I now seek to connect the above philosophical constructs with my interpretation of the Black male literary experience, both symbolic and real, as it continues to unfold in the Latin American region and its literature. This proposed connection is by no means tranquil or smooth, rather it needs to remain problematic, even controversial: such a characteristic in literature matches the societal difficulties and challenges when trying to define such subjectivity. It is important to give a panoramic progression of the Afro-descendant male character in Latin American literature because it provides visibility and legitimacy to the value of representations that span over five centuries in the region. Additionally, it demonstrates a strong literary and historical basis in connecting the experiences of Blacks to a long tradition of literature. As early as the 17th century the appearance of Afro-descendant male characterization was present in the writings of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. 19th century literary representations of this character enrich the contemporary development of outward aspects (corporeal depiction) and internal aspects (psychological/intellectual representations). Independence movements occurring in the region and the questioning of the institution of slavery increased the visibility of Black literary representation in the 1800's. Most of this century's literature in Hispanic America involving Afro-male characterization resides in the Romanticism movement. Antislavery rhetoric appears as early as 1816 with Mexican writer José Joaquín Fernández de Lizardi's novel *El Periquillo Sarniento* [The Mangy Parrot] and his subsequent two-act play *El Negro Sensible* [The Sensible

Black] (1825). Cuba constitutes a strong example of Abolitionist literature, spearheaded by *Autobiografía de un esclavo* [Autobiography of a Slave] (1830) by Juan Francisco Manzano. The impact and legacy of *Sab* (1841) by Cuban writer Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda as an abolitionist novel is an undeniable reality; in fact, the Cuban novel was published more than a decade before another significant U.S. abolitionist novel that is sometimes compared to *Sab*: *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) by Harriet Beecher Stowe. *Biografía de un cimarrón* [Biography of a Runaway Slave] (1963), written by Miguel Barnet and Esteban Montejo in collaboration, is included in this 19th century overview because of the first-hand accounts of Esteban immediately before and after Cuba's official abolition of slavery. Nevertheless, Montejo's unique perspectives are not comparable to the lack of independent expressiveness that is encountered in the central Black male (the eponymous slave) in *Francisco: El ingenio o las delicias del campo* [Francisco: The Sugar Mill and the Delights of the Countryside] (1838) by Anselmo Suárez y Romero and *El negro Francisco* [Francisco the Black Man] (1873) by Antonio Zambrana y Vázquez due to the benefits of narrating during the Cuban Revolution.

Directly after the official ending of slavery in countries such as Puerto Rico (1873), Cuba (1886), and Brazil (1888) Black representation remains strictly descriptive and essential in nature. This coincides with societal shifts internationally towards a more positivistic and race-based scientific philosophy with respect to so-called "inferior" races; as a result, stereotyping in anthropology, social sciences, literatures, and arts becomes commonplace. Jose Martí's seminal essay entitled "Nuestra América" [Our America] (1891) expresses a desire to integrate Blacks in Cuban society in the name of progress, independence, and liberalism, but discredits the struggle of Afro-Cubans five years removed from the institution of slavery at the time of publication. Slavery is over, but the menial labor did not cease, and the socioeconomic position of Blacks

remains abysmal. Montejo confirms this idea in *Biografía de un cimarrón* when he states unequivocally, “En esos ingenios después de la abolición siguieron existiendo barrancones” (60). [Slave quarters continued to exist in those sugar plantations after abolition]. Nevertheless, the literature on Afro-descendant males between 1890 and 1935 in Latin America is predominantly in the form of manifestos, essays, and cultural/social studies (anthropology). Essays of this variety encompass the likes of *Los negros brujos* [The Black Sorcerers] (1906) by Fernando Ortiz, José Vasconcelos’s *La raza cósmica* [The Cosmic Race] (1925), Gilberto Freyre’s *Casa-Grande & Senzala* [The Masters and the Slaves] (1933), Monteiro Lobato’s science fiction novel *O negro presidente* [The Black President] (1926) and Fernando Ortiz’s *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar* [Cuban Counterpoint, Tobacco, and Sugar] (1940). These five works portray Blacks in essential and racist ways, arguing biological stances to prove their worth to society, but elaborate how Blacks are substantially differ from Whites and inhibit any discussion of their psychological and intellectual capacity. Continuing the literary approaches towards the Black male subject during the Vanguardism period in Latin America, Alejo Carpentier’s *Écue-Yamba-Ó* [Praised Be To God] (1933) epitomizes the Negrismo movement, representative of predominantly White male Caribbean writers describing the experiences of Afro-descendant people. Writers such as Puerto Rican poet Luis Palés Matos and Cuban poet Emilio Ballagas come to mind. Nicolás Guillen’s poetry collections *Motivos de son* (1930) and *Sóngoro consongo* (1931) are also included in the Negrismo movement. *Écue-Yamba-Ó*, considered the first novel of Negrismo because of the extensive incorporation of rhythmic language associated with Afro-Cuban music and onomatopoeic descriptions in relationship to describing Blackness, contributed to some of the first valorizations of Afro-descendants in Hispanic America on a widespread scale albeit based on exaggerated stereotypes. Anke Birkenmaier views the

representation of the Black male in the novel in these regards, “In Ecue-Yamba-O, the Afro-Cubans have a quasicriminal mentality; they are described with an array of clichés pertaining to Black sensuality, instinct, superstition, etc” (63). One can see from a racist perspective how the Black male is designed to perform manual labor because of his uncanny physical attributes and musculature. Pedro Barreda alludes to this dehumanization in *The Black protagonist in the Cuban novel*, stating, “But from these descriptions one does not get an authentic or distinctive characterization of the individual: Menegildo Cué is not a person; he is a species” (145). Parallel to the Vanguardist literary currents in Hispanic America, a so-called “literature of the land” predominates. Novels such as *Doña Bárbara* [Lady Bárbara] (1929) by Rómulo Gallegos, *Don Goyo* (1933) by Ecuadorian Demetrio Aguilera Malta, *Risaralda* (1935) by Colombian novelist Bernardo Arias Trujillo, *Pobre negro* [Poor Black] (1937) by the aforementioned Venezuelan writer Gallegos and *Cocorí* (1947) by Costa Rican author Joaquín Gutiérrez consistently portray Black and Indigenous characters as vestiges of barbarity and struggling to discover themselves in a modern world. Consistent with the critics and anthropologists such as Freyre and Ortiz, the concerns revolve around the idea of nation-building projects and who are the representative citizens of a given nation.

Afro-Diasporic Influences in Contemporary Latin America

During the first half of the 20th century, there is still a struggle to find independent liberating thought in the central Black male in Latin American narrative apart from Haiti and the Francophone Caribbean. Historically, these regions have produced high levels of sophistication of Afro-descendant literary representation. Writers and their accompanying works that come to mind are Jean Price-Mars’ *Ainsi parla l’oncle* [So spoke the uncle] (1928), Jacques Roumain’s *Gouverneurs de la Rosée* [Masters of the Dew] (1944), Aimé Césaire’s *Cahier d’un retour au*

pays natal [Return to My Native Land] (1939) and Jacques Stéphen Alexis' *Compère Général Soleil* [General Sun My Brother] (1955). Inspired or at the very least associated with the Négritude movement in Francophone countries, these writers made conscious efforts in their poetry and theory to maximize the psychological and intellectual components of their central male characters. Léopold Sédar Senghor (Senegal), Léon Damas (French Guiana), and Aimé Césaire (Martinique) are considered the founding fathers of Négritude. Initiated by *L'Estudiant Noir*'s publications in Paris, France and partly inspired by the Harlem Renaissance, Négritude offered a view into the "Black's man's world" as a thinker, innovator, and philosopher of his own purpose in life and offered an alternative to white colonialism (Jackson 21). As one progresses into the middle parts of the 20th century in Latin America and onward, the evidence of Black consciousness begins to reflect more in the writings and works of Brazilian Abdias do Nascimento, Costa Rican Quince Duncan, Dominican poet Blas Jiménez, and Panamanian Carlos Guillermo Wilson known by his pen name Cubena.

My knowledge and experience with Afro-Latina writers such as Georgina Herrera, Teresa Cárdenas Angulo, and Nancy Morejón has allowed me to reconsider and re-read works such as *Mi compadre el General Sol* and *Sortilégio II* with a multi-faceted, versatile approach that examines not only the individual experience of the Black male subject, but also allows for analysis of female characters' influence on the principal Afro-Latino male in gender specific terms. Delving into the external relationships with feminine literary characters (primarily Black, but sometimes White) enhances the conceptualizations of masculinity (ities) with regards to the male protagonist; thus, intersectionalities of gender, race and social class all become crucial factors in tracing and measuring the evolutionary character development of the Black male. Cristina Alsina and Laura Borràs Castanyer in *Nuevas masculinidades* [New Masculinities]

confirm the danger of analyzing the male figure in isolation when they affirm, “Deconstruir la masculinidad conlleva explicitar el coste y la alienación que viven los hombres en las relaciones con sus congéneres, hombres y mujeres...porque si la masculinidad se construye, también se puede cambiar” (86). [Deconstructing masculinity entails making explicit the cost and alienation that men experience in relationships with their peers, men, and women...because if masculinity is constructed, it can also change]. Advancing the idea of the aforementioned essayists, men and masculinities (Men’s studies) started in the 1970’s and have proven useful in rethinking the historical constructs in terms of neutralizing the historical experience of marginalized groups; furthermore, it cannot be assumed that Afro male characters have a fixed masculinity and follow a white model of masculinity hegemonically. Such a desire of imitative masculinity is not possible due to the idea of overcoming the legacy of slavery and ancestry in addition to the overcoming of oppression historically and contemporarily. The reality of historical oppression alone disconnects any attempt to equate Black masculinity (ities) to White hegemonic masculinity. Sabrina Brancato’s essay in *Nuevas masculinidades* examines gender theorization of renowned author/thinker bell hooks and reveals and underscores the possibility of independent Black masculinities when she affirms:

De hecho no existe un modelo monolítico de masculinidad afroamericana y, aunque el ideal patriarcal haya sido la versión de la masculinidad más valorizada a lo largo del siglo veinte, han existido hombres negros que han elegido estilos de vida alternativos, oponiéndose al statu quo y rechazando una identidad patriarcal ya modelada para inventarse a sí mismos. (110)

[In fact, there is no monolithic model of Afro-American masculinity and, although the patriarchal ideal has been the most valued version of masculinity

throughout the twentieth century, there have been Black men who have chosen alternative lifestyles, opposing the status quo and rejecting an already shaped patriarchal identity to invent themselves].

Négritude theory is paramount in the project's ambitions. Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks/Peau Noire Masques Blancs* (1952) and *The Wretched of the Earth/Les Damnés de la Terre* (1961) will serve as support for the analysis of trauma endured by Afro-Latin protagonists. Fanon argues in *Black Skin, White Masks* that the Black male suffers from an "inferiority complex" due to historical oppression and European colonialism and constantly aspires to be and compares oneself to his White male counterpart (100). Emmanuel in *Sortilégio II* represents a great example of Black men's struggles after attaining high social status in a racist Brazilian society. Fanon's background in psychiatry complements the examination of Benny's traumatic experiences of racism in Puerto Rico and the United States in *Negro: Este color me queda bonito*. Additionally, *Black Skin, White Masks* gives extensive commentary on masculinity and sexuality that enhances Julian's character and masculinity (ies) analysis in *Adire y el tiempo roto*.

Expanding on Fanon's concerns with historical oppression and overcoming for the Black male, Abdias do Nascimento's Quilombismo theory addresses the resistance element present in Emmanuel's realization of self-worth in *Sortilégio II*. Shedding light on Zumbi's legacy, the last king of the Quilombo dos Palmares (17th century), Abdias do Nascimento provides a blueprint for highlighting Emanuel's potential in fighting racial oppression and continuing Zumbi's message in a contemporary context. Quilombismo as defined by Abdias do Nascimento in *O Quilombismo* refers to the protagonism of one's own African history. Per the author, Black women have always been at the heart of African culture within and outside of the continent and

in fact, the survival of Afro-Brazilian culture is owed to the Black woman (75). Quilombismo theory is necessary in order to demonstrate how cultural silencing has affected the Black male character and further underscores how Brazilian white supremacy has attempted to suffocate and inhibit Black cultural expression and art from the establishment of the first Quilombo to contemporary times.

A crucial part of my study is exploring the gendering process of the central Black male character that brings a new approach in Latin American scholarship that tends to signify racial emphasis over gender. In order to enhance Black male humanization, it is inherent to demonstrate consistent equilibrium between racial and gender functionalities, thus capturing maximal characterization. As alluded to earlier in the introduction, internal psychological processing serves to enhance the realness and the salience of the Afro-descendant male. Isabelo Zenon Cruz's 1974 book entitled *Narciso descubre su trasero* [Narcissus discovers his backside] stresses the difficulty in the inversion process about race and nationality. Zenon Cruz lays out one of the biggest dilemmas that faces the Afro-descendant Puerto Rican male when he expresses:

Resumiendo: ni el ritmo, ni la proporción relativa de la población y mucho menos la imagen del isleño justifica la inversión generalizada de “puertorriqueño negro” en “negro puertorriqueño”. Es que no puede haber justificación de una descomunal injusticia. “Contra ella tiene que luchar el puertorriqueño negro; tiene que luchar para que la puertorriqueñidad le sea esencial y no un simple accidente. Al hacerlo no reniega de su negritud, le asigna el lugar que con propiedad le corresponde, y reclama para sí justamente los bienes y valores de la sociedad puertorriqueña que le pertenecen. (24)

[In short: neither the rhythm, nor the relative proportion of the population, and much less the image of the islander justifies the generalized investment of Puerto Rican Black in Black Puerto Rican. There can be no justification for a huge injustice. The Black Puerto Rican must fight against it; he has to fight so that Puerto Ricanness is essential to him and not a simple accident. In doing so, he does not deny his Blackness, he assigns it the place that properly corresponds to him, and he claims the goods and values of Puerto Rican society that belong to him].

The central male character (s) in each of the four books that comprise my dissertation confront the reality that their nation is not automatically assumed to them; in other words, Afro-Latin males constantly have to prove their value to their respective nations and risk losing cultural affinities to African-derived traditions in order to become Cuban, Puerto Rican, Brazilian or Haitian. Following along the lines of Abdias do Nascimento's Quilombismo theory and Isabelo Zenon Cruz's theory of Puertoricanness, Walterio Carbonell's criticism meticulously explains how official Cuban history fails to legitimize the presence and contributions of Afro-Cubans economically, politically, militarily, artistically, intellectually, and culturally. Cuba thrived as a nation for centuries economically due to the exploitation of Black slave labor concerning the lucrative sugar industry. Carbonell argues that the Afro-descendant component of Cuba has contributed the most to the national culture that developed during the slave colonial system (46). Carbonell's theory will be particularly useful in analyzing Julian's experiences in *Adire y el tiempo roto* (1967).

This study underscores the existence of an Afro-descendant male legacy in Latin America that dates to the early 19th century with writers and poets such as Cuban Juan Francisco

Manzano. His work *Autobiografía de un esclavo* (1830) is recognized as the only first-hand account of a slave narrative in Latin America. Other important writers include the Brazilian poet and writer Luis Gama and Cuban poet Gabriel de la Concepción Valdés known as Plácido. Oddly enough, the three writers are part of Latin America's literary canon. One reason why this dissertation features exclusively Afro-Latin American writers is to allow a larger audience within Latin America and the United States to appreciate the extensive literary output of some of this hemisphere's most significant authors. One of Brazil's most important playwrights, Abdias do Nascimento was equally significant in developing his theory of Quilombismo, advocating Pan-Africanism, and exploiting Brazilian white supremacy in society and the arts.

Abdias do Nascimento published his first theatre piece entitled *Sortilégio: Mistério Negro* [Sorcery: Black Mystery] in 1957 in a collection named *Dramas para negros e prólogo para brancos* [Dramas for Blacks and Prologue for Whites]; his last film *Cinema do Preto* [Black Cinema] was produced in 2005. The longevity of his decorated and published career, which includes cinema, theoretical essays and articles, and theatre, makes it next to impossible to overlook his significance in Brazilian/Latin American literature, anthropology, theatre, cultural studies, and philosophy. Thus, the incentive behind the inclusion of four Black male authors from distinct countries is multifold: 1) it connects the Caribbean and Brazil as a geographic and cultural space, 2) it represents a balanced approach that captures Latin America's linguistic diversity and value, 3) it expresses a strong desire to reconsider the literary canon in Latin America, 4) it recognizes and praises the literary and cultural value of Black contemporary writers that continue a literary legacy in Latin American and Caribbean regions that span over three centuries. Furthermore, this study proves that Black male characters are versatile and exude active protagonism in terms of possessing the ability to think, a quality devoid of this literary

figure during most of slavery and continuing in the post-slavery 20th century during the Vanguardism periods of the 1920's and 1930's. This versatility is not limited to differences in socioeconomic status, religion, sexuality, and masculinity, but rather shows a variety of conscious decisions and independent reactions and attitudes about racial discrimination and trauma that each protagonist confronts.

These four books (*Mi compadre el General Sol*, *Adire y el tiempo roto*, *Sortilégio II*, and *Negro: Este color me queda bonito*) share two integral components: 1) all four works question the state of the nation and its attitudes towards the level of inclusiveness and the overall positioning of the Black man in each respective country at local and national levels, 2) each protagonist is involved in amorous relationships with other women which directly affect self-perceptions of racial identities and masculinities (based on the above chronology of the works: Hilarion/Claire-Heureuse, Julián/Cira, Elsa, and Miguel José, Emmanuel/Margarida and Ifigenia, and Benny/Desiré and Deborah). Each book shows a different spectrum of Black male representation that evolves from the heroic/barbaric prototype of the preceding Vanguardism literary periods towards a nuanced psychologically developed characterization. The first novel *Mi compadre el General Sol* is a prime example of the realism genre, but despite its emphasis of external descriptions of characters, the reader witnesses a strong Black male presence and experiences what he (Hilarion) feels and contemplates about the future of Haiti and the economic hardships and societal struggles of Blacks. It is important to view the presentation of the four books as a gradual literary trajectory towards a versatile representation of the Afro-Latin American protagonist. It is appropriate to present Jacques Stéphen Alexis's novel first because it is the most essentialist in its protagonist's representation, but it allows one to see the continuous variants of representation and agency of subsequent characters in the last four books. The

presence and attention given to each character's intellectual and psychological development warrants the inclusion of these books in the study, prioritizing the "whole" of the character, and not just the exteriority of one's physiognomy. Finally, the authors represent a forgotten generation of Black writers, even though their works are contemporary. Brazilian playwright and cinematographer Abdias do Nascimento (1914-2011) had established the theatre company TEN (Teatro Experimental do Negro) in 1944. Haitian writer Jacques Stéphen Alexis (1922-1961) was born eight years after the latter and Cuban novelist Manuel "Manolo" Granados (1930-1998) was born eight years after Alexis. Puerto Rican writer/psychologist Benito Massó Vázquez Jr. (1937-2017) continued the pattern of writers born prior to WWII. The age references are important because they represent an attempt to keep these writers' works visible and serve as a reminder to future generations of the literary contributions of Afro-Latin writers.

The Chapters

Chapter 1 features the Haitian novel *Mi compadre el General Sol* which serves as a significant starting point because it links Francophone and Hispanophone Caribbean histories (Haiti and the Dominican Republic) and demonstrates the inclusiveness of the Caribbean as a region regardless of linguistic differences. The original version of the text will not be used but rather the Casa de las Américas edition published in Spanish. There are a minimum of five editions translated in Spanish, showing the significance of its reception within the region. The novel recalls the horrors of the Parsley Massacre and anti-Haitian sentiment expressed by the Trujillo dictatorship in the Dominican Republic. This chapter will highlight the operations of a man's experiences (Hilarion Hilaris) with specific focus on how he reacts to his treatment in jail and the level of awareness that he exudes in contemplating racism towards himself and his community. The chapter analyzes the implications of Hilarion's race and his political attitude

within the context of what Haiti wants to be as a nation. Allusions and attention to Dominicans' attitudes towards Haitians during the massacre scene are inevitable.

Chapter 2 will be dedicated to delving into Julián's self-perception of difference which entails his race, class, and sexuality in *Adire y el tiempo roto*. His relationship with a prostitute named Cira and his confidant/lover Miguel José will be examined with regards to his masculinity (ites). Additionally, his father Moisés and a Haitian storyteller/mentor by the name of Damián, Cira, and other characters indirectly attempt to influence Julian's manifestations of masculinity and his perceived bisexuality. The book follows the journey of young revolutionary queer protagonist Julián. The book provides insight into the transitory period from the Fulgencio Batista regime to Fidel Castro's takeover of the country. Julián reflects a changing representation of a male protagonist, being a soldier for the counterrevolutionaries during the (assumed Batista era), poor, Black, and sexually distinct. Intersectionality theory will be extremely important in this chapter's analysis.

Chapter 3 investigates protagonist Emmanuel regarding interracial marriage and his exertion of masculinity at the expense of his wife Margarida and his ex-girlfriend Ifigenia. Social status, race, and gender elements will be analyzed in relation to Emmanuel's change in setting. His metamorphosis and rediscovery of his Blackness will be considered because of Margarida and her mother's actions and attitudes that lead up to Ifigenia returning to his life. Additionally, the silencing of Ifigenia's agency is addressed with respect to Emmanuel's social status and his lack of consideration for her. *Sortilégio II: mistério negro de Zumbi redívivo* [Sorcery 2: Black Mystery of Resurrected Zumbí] (1979) written by Brazilian playwright, essayist, and activist Abdias do Nascimento debunks the racial democracy myth perpetuated by Gilberto Freyre's

anthropological study *Casa Grande e Senzala* [The Masters and The Slaves] (1933). The play was read in the original Portuguese edition produced by Paz and Terra publishers.

Chapter 4 explores Benny Massó's autoethnography about his struggle with racial discrimination and failed romantic relationships leading to psychological trauma and angst. His experiences as an Afro-Puerto Rican traveling to the United States, in particular Ohio and New York, alter his attitudes about race immensely. Analysis of his altering feelings due to constant reassessments of his self-worth due to incurred racism from his mother and specific experiences (such as the barbershop and his time spent in college) in his life will be heavily pinpointed. The argument is made that *Negro: Este color me queda bonito* is just as groundbreaking as José Luis González's *El País de Cuatro Pisos* [The Four-Storeyed Country] (1980) due to this book being a first-hand account of an Afro-Puerto Rican male sharing his experiences with racism.

In the Conclusion, reconsideration of the Latin American literary canon is addressed with advocating of an urgent recognition of Black writers in the region and how the future is shaping up for a more diverse representation of the Hispanophone Caribbean literary canon. The scholarship on masculinity is a developing field in Latin America and the conjoining analysis of race and gender is especially a new area, as exemplified by the amount of research conducted in the last five to ten years. Addressing the idea of a representation of multiple masculinities or a consistent singular masculinity with the Afro-descendant protagonist will be examined. The conclusion will determine if there are any limitations or shortcomings of the Black male experience in literature that have not been represented or expressed and if there is a maximal all-encompassing characterization.

CHAPTER ONE: THE MENTAL DECOLONIZATION OF HILARION HILARIUS IN *MI COMPADRE EL GENERAL SOL* (1955)

There are and always will be some who, ashamed of the behavior of their ancestors, try to prove that slavery was not so bad after all, that its evils and its cruelty were the exaggerations of propagandists and not the habitual lot of the slaves. Men will say (and accept) anything in order to foster national pride or soothe a troubled conscience.

-C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*

This chapter will explore Masculinities within an Antillean-Caribbean context in Jacques Stéphen Alexis' novel *Mi compadre el General Sol* (1955). The protagonist, Hilarion Hilarius, exudes both physical masculinity and reputational masculinity, two concepts that I explain later. Even though Communism is mildly attractive to Hilarion, he prioritizes his pursuit of individual maroonage. The protagonist's actions and thoughts embody the overcoming of historical colonization of the Black male body and psyche. Although Hilarion is sympathetic to Haitian communist friends such as cellmate and political activist Pierre Roumel and psychiatrist Jean-Michel, from the protagonist's point of view, Communism reflects French political patterns tied to the elite class. The strongest female figure in *Mi compadre el General Sol*, Claire-Heureuse, will be discussed in relation to the effects of the novel's male-centered focus. The pervasiveness of worker exploitation reaches an apex in Hilarion's migrant experience in the Dominican Republic in the final part of the novel. Furthermore, I differentiate between the use of the word migrant in the context of the Parsley Massacre and how Hilarion seeks to reverse the negative connotation of migrant, a strategy I refer to as expatriate mode.

Confinement and Political Conflict in Haiti

It is imperative to contextualize Haiti's predicament in *Mi compadre el General Sol* when analyzing its volatile political effects on Hilarion. To further explain the protagonist's dilemma,

a connection between author Jacques Stéphen Alexis and his influences should be elaborated. Alexis' father was a diplomat and a writer, setting the tone for his son's literary and political aspirations. Born in 1922 during the U.S. military occupation of Haiti, Alexis experienced the U.S. imperialist grasp on the Caribbean nation. During his teenage years, Dominican president Rafael Leónidas Trujillo created anti-immigrant policies that targeted Haitians, which led to an infamous event known as the Parsley Massacre in 1937. Eventually, Alexis finds inspiration in Communist writers such as Jacques Romain and Négritude writers such as Aimé Césaire and Jean Price-Mars. The exploitation of the Black underclass by the Haitian mulatto elite becomes a prevalent theme in Alexis' writings; this exploitative sentiment is expressed through the struggles of protagonist Hilarion Hilarius.

The opening scene of *Mi compadre el General Sol* highlights the beginning of Hilarion's humanistic embodiment, in his effort to decolonize and reconfigure the Black male. Ironically, the novel explains the protagonist's unique humanism when he robs his neighbor which eventually leads to his incarceration. Author Jacques Stéphen Alexis astutely deconstructs the criminal aspect of Hilarion's burglary. The following scene demonstrates the complexity of Hilarion's mind, and the reader can identify with his humanism, not the act of theft:

El objeto negro era una billetera de cuero. Una billetera, ¡objeto inútil para los necesitados! Estaba repleta de billetes; Hilarion la apretó en su mano. Era una prueba material, una prueba justificadora de su derecho. El derecho de defender su existencia, el derecho de aprovecharse de los aprovechadores. En un segundo había nacido en él toda una filosofía social. Creía comprender perfectamente en qué consistía su moral. (18)

[The Black object was a leather wallet. A wallet, useless object for the poor! It was full of bills; Hilarion squeezed it with his hand. It was a material test, a justified test of his right. The right to defend his existence, the right to take advantage of the rich. In a matter of seconds, an entire social philosophy was born in him. He understood perfectly what his morals consisted of].

The emphasis of the wallet's insignificance dignifies Hilarion by stressing the genuine state of poverty that he experiences and lives. The objectification of the wallet and its contents in comparison to the protagonist's real struggle for survival is a demonstration of class consciousness and accentuates the authenticity of Hilarion's raw humanity. Alexis juxtaposes humanity with criminality- Hilarion is not a petty thief, but a man who is looking for basic subsistence. In this example, the tendency in Latin American literature to debilitate the image of the Black male character is inverted by the author. The reader empathizes with protagonist's characterization irrespective of Hilarion's inclination to steal, owing to his status as a representative of Haiti's underclass. In the introduction of *Mi compadre el General Sol* René Depestre summarizes the decolonizing quality of the novel, writing:

En sus páginas, el lector haitiano, mejor que cualquier otro, se descubre, se explica, aprende a conocerse, se maravilla, se cuchichea las verdades de su cólera y de su sensualidad y de su esperanza en la diversidad de nuestras articulaciones con las realidades y con los sueños más actuales en las dos partes encadenadas de la Isla. (XXIX)

[In his pages, the Haitian reader, better than anyone else, discovers, explains, learns to know, wonders, whispers the truths of his anger and sensuality and his

hope in the diversity of our articulations with the realities and the most current dreams in the two bound parts of the Island].

The theft is a teaching moment for the protagonist as well as the reader. Prior to this part of the novel, there is no suggestion of Hilarion developing a philosophical cosmovision or personal code of ethics. The opening narration presents Hilarion as a raw, primitive character, devoid of profound philosophical engagement. The idealization of the “naked Negro” is prevalent in the start of the novel (Munro 13). Nevertheless, the robbery scene serves as a catalyst to analyze his own sense of worth. Hilarion concludes that he deserves the money because the Haitian elite has attained power by exploiting the Black peasantry. For the reader, the impetuous reaction to judge Hilarion as a petty criminal is halted after considering the implicit narrative moral reasoning of Hilarion’s action. In *Black Literature and Humanism in Latin America* Richard L. Jackson explains the humanistic gaze that is present in *Mi compadre el General Sol*, explaining, “Black literature relates in Latin America, as elsewhere, to the struggle for human dignity, and it teaches readers how to live and how to seek the freedom that should be an automatic quality of one’s life” (120). Thus, through humanizing Hilarion’s decision to steal the wallet (making it relatable to his lived experience), Alexis (re)humanizes Hilarion in two specific ways. First, he discovers a philosophical element that provides a deeper mental understanding of the protagonist. Second, the inversion of the reader’s likelihood to prejudge Hilarion’s character takes place. The lingering baggage of overcoming prejudicial sentiment on the reader’s part can be attributed to a colonial past as Régis Antoine alludes to, expressing, “The psychological oppression or bastardization of the mind, an essential aspect of the colonial experience, dies much harder than the symbolic process of decolonization” (358). As a result, the humane element supersedes a

Black male caricature in the theft passage and Hilarion is fundamentally deracialized in this instance.

The imagery of rawness is a prevalent theme in *Mi compadre el General Sol*. In contrast to the humanistic version of Hilarion's character development in young adulthood, one must gauge the context of the difficulty of overcoming colonization's unpropitious effects starting from childhood. There is minimal background information on Hilarion's family ties and histories. The novel's retrospective references present a specific opportunity to investigate Haiti's unique socioeconomic and racial structure pertaining to the protagonist's personal bout with confronting a precarious, harsh, and menacing upbringing. The exemplification of rawness is apparent in descriptions of nature and Haiti's dire economic and political climate. Marie Ferjuste defines the author's literary style in her column "L'amour des hommes sur terre" [The love of men on earth], "Chez Jacques Stephen Alexis, le réalisme est modérément merveilleux, il est plutôt brutal, cruel" (3). [With Jacques Stéphen Alexis, realism is moderately marvellous, it is quite brutal, cruel]. Initially in the novel leading up to the incarceration scene, prominence is placed on Hilarion's battle-tested physique, reflecting the rawness of his rural surroundings. Martin Munro affirms this connection between man and nature expressing the following, "Taking its cues both from indigenism and romanticism, this novel idealizes rural Haiti, and creates an exoticized noble savage figure, who, it is argued, is born out of the very internal divisions that shape the novel, and the consequent authorial double consciousness" (31). As "romantic" as *Mi compadre el General Sol* appears on the surface as Munro affirms, it is indispensable that one takes the novel's realistic modus operandi into strong consideration. The incremental buildup of Hilarion's overall character development, reminiscent of a Bildungsroman and the inclusion of his daily struggles and his nation's daily trials and

tribulations, directs one's attention to the book's focus on realism. Hilarion's humanism encompasses this realism before any romanticization can take place. The presence of what I refer to as superrealism is denoted in the novel when allusions are made to Hilarion's miserable childhood, "...ese mismo barrio Bois-Verna donde fueron asesinados sus años jóvenes, aniquilados por la innoble esclavitud de niños que practica hipócritamente la burguesía bajo el disfraz de la caridad y del paternalismo" (15). [...that same Bois-Verna neighborhood where his younger years were murdered, destroyed by ignoble child slavery that the bourgeois practices hypocritically under the disguise of charity and paternalism]. To reiterate, understanding Hilarion's disadvantaged childhood requires understanding the Haitian elite's class and racial exploitation permits a re-reading of the subsequent thievery scene. Additionally, the insinuation of the reference to Hilarion's tough upbringing is the bourgeois class's attempt to dehumanize the protagonist, interpreting him through the eyes of the elite. In this instance, the early seeds of the Marxist ideology of *Mi compadre el General Sol* are planted. Pierre-Joseph Proudhon specifically states in his influential work "What is Property?", writing, "Modern industry has converted the little workshop of the patriarchal master into the great factory of the industrial capitalist" (131). Thus, the connotation of *esclavitud* [slavery] in the passage is bifurcated and multi-contextual. From a Marxist standpoint, the term slavery derives from a monetary wage acquisitive struggle and differentiates the elite class from the working class. Interestingly, the utilization of slavery also suggests a specific group affiliation- Afro-descendant children. Bois-Verna, an affluent Victorian-style neighborhood in Port-au-Prince is specifically referenced and serves as a symbolic "big house". This intersectionality of racial and class elements serves as historical witnessing of Haitian society during the U.S. occupation of the country in the first third of the 20th century.

Although the routine of physical punishment and mental abuse occurs in Hilarion's incarceration, his character development increases throughout these traumatic episodes. Stressing the importance of Hilarion's agency from the initial empowerment of his survivalist and humanist philosophical stance apropos the theft of the wallet, *Mi compadre el General Sol* reminds us that although Hilarion recognizes some self-worth, the general attitude towards poor rural Blacks is negative. As one discovers throughout the novel, there are both national and extranational neocolonial mindsets. *Mi compadre el General Sol* denotes the racial and national othering processes committed by neocolonial systems of oppression. Within the Haitian national context, poor Blacks are exploited by the mulatto elite and the disproportionate political gain and large socioeconomic gap benefits the mulatto upper class. To further the point involving political expediency, Sténio Vincent (the active Haitian president during the fictionalized period in the novel) is a mulatto. Both his predecessor (Louis Borno) and his successor (Élie Lescot) were mulattoes although Haiti was and remains a predominantly Black nation. Compounding the U.S. occupation of Haiti (1915-1934) and the neocolonial context of the novel is the presence of Dominican dictator Rafael Trujillo's anti-Communist and anti-Haitian ideology and increased U.S. economic and political influence over the island of Hispaniola. The othering process alluded to earlier involves racial distinction and discrimination perpetuated by the neocolonial mentality upheld by the judicial system. Once Hilarion is captured by the prison guards, the carceral system represents the attempt to invalidate Hilarion's developing philosophical assessment of his self-worth attained after the theft. To debilitate Hilarion both physically and mentally, the prison guards aim at reducing the protagonist to animal status. The condescending attitude towards Hilarion is captured in the following scene:

Las ráfagas de las linternas eléctricas que cruzaban sus fuegos barrían el jardín. El ladrón yacía su fuerza a merced del Orden Establecido. Hasta voces de niños se mezclaron a los gritos de victoria de la jauría. El ojo esquivo del animal vencido giró en la transparencia de sus medios oculares. La mirada blanca y desgarradora de los negros que no pueden más... (19)

[The bursts of the electric lanterns that crossed its fires swept the garden. The thief put aside his force at the mercy of the Established Order. Even children's voices mixed with the victory shouts of the pack of hounds. The aloof eye of the defeated animal spun in the clearness of his middle lenses. The white and heartbreaking glance of Black people who cannot continue any more].

Interestingly, the presence of the Established Order (Orden Establecido) conveys a dual retrospective cynosure. The imagery of the scene evokes a reflection of a traumatizing childhood. The children's voices are symbolic mental voices and express the psychological effects of colonization. Notwithstanding, the second and the most pivotal allusion to the retrospective element of Hilarion's capture scene is the historical allegory of the capturing of a runaway slave. The hounds' reaction reaffirms the neocolonial mentality of the Established Order that undertakes the inverted narrative of animalizing the protagonist. Through the eyes of the Established Order, Hilarion's capture is justified because the exploitative judicial system views him as wild animal, implicitly equating him to the pack of hounds that find him. In reference to Frantz Fanon's ideologies of oppression, Hussein Abdilahi Bulhan proclaims "the oppressed are still chained- physically here, socially there, and psychologically everywhere" (58). One may ask what is the point of focusing on the neocolonial presence of *Mi compadre el General Sol* when this chapter is entitled "The Mental Decolonization of Hilarion Hilarius?" The

idea of overcoming colonization is not spontaneous; it is a lifelong process as confirmed by the novel's labyrinthine protagonist that experiences and deflects colonization's effects. The vacillation between attributed qualities of the protagonist such as defensiveness/vulnerability, semi-consciousness/consciousness and animalization/humanization are dialectical tensions that create a more nuanced complex characterization of Hilarion. Thus, decolonization of the mind requires a confrontation with hierarchies and systems that come at a cost. In his book *Frantz Fanon and the Psychology of Oppression*, Hussein Abdilahi Bulhan warns of one of colonization's harmful effects on Black people, stating, "Prolonged oppression reduces the oppressed into mere individuals without a community or a history, fostering a tendency to privatize a shared victimization" (123). Ironically, later in the novel, Hilarion utilizes the isolative strategy of confinement to his benefit upon encountering his cellmate, Pierre Roumel.

The othered perception of the prison guards regarding Hilarion is ironic when one considers the animalistic behavior and dehumanizing brutal treatment of the protagonist in the context of the jail cell. Once again, the narrative inverts the malevolent perception of Black male criminality and highlights the pervasiveness of the Haitian elite class's corruption and force at the expense of the overwhelmingly majoritarian Black peasantry. Robert Fatton Jr. eloquently states the socio-economic correlation with Haitian micro-geographic division, "The supremacy of Port-au-Prince also implied the privileging of urban classes to the detriment of the rural population. Peasants continued to be excluded from the moral community of *les plus capables*, and they came under a strict policing regime of law and order" (5). Two subsequent scenes further the contextualization of bodily and psychological effects of the jail wardens' brutalization. Suggestive graphic signifiers connote the gravity of Hilarion's lived experience, "Y comenzaron a llover los golpes de todas partes, en medio de una batahola de alegría y de

furor, desde todas las cabezas de la enorme hidra del Orden Establecido” (20). [And they started to rain down the blows in all parts, in the middle of a racket of happiness and rage, from all the heads of the enormous hydra of the Established Order]. The symbolic multiplicity dynamic of the Hydra [hidra] represents a repressive, intricate political and judicial system that literally and figuratively outnumbers Haiti’s underclass. Analogously, the pack of hounds that seizes Hilarion is an extension of the government’s abuse of its citizens; the implication is that members within the same social class fight each other and contribute to the elite’s empowerment. Moreover, the collective authoritarian abuse of the wardens reaffirms Hilarion’s humanity and the monstrosity of neocoloniality. Unquestionably, the preceding abuse scene is one of the more lucid examples of marvelous realism. In his essay, “Du réalisme merveilleux des Haïtiens” [Of Haitian marvelous realism] Jacques Stéphen Alexis encapsulates the contextual meaning of the abuse scene in his fourth tenet describing Marvelous Realism, “4⁰-d’avoir une claire conscience des problèmes précis, concrets actuels et des drames réels que confrontent les masses dans le but de toucher, de cultiver plus profondément et d’entraîner le peuple dans ses luttes” (268). [4⁰- to have a clear awareness of the precise, concrete, and actual problems that confront the masses in order to touch, to cultivate deeper and lead people into their struggles]. As alluded to, the abuse scene is more than physical bodily punishment, but rather encompasses physiopsychological proportions.

It is noteworthy that Hilarion is epileptic. Prior to the capture and abuse scenes, there is no indication that Hilarion was epileptic during his childhood, thus it is safe to conjecture that he developed epileptic seizures and hallucinatory episodes because of mistreatment and traumatic cerebral blows experienced in jail. Like Hilarion experiences, historical accounts confirm that U.S. abolitionist/activist/runaway slave Harriet Tubman suffered debilitating psychological

effects due to head trauma throughout her lifetime because of beatings in her childhood. Although the warden abuse scene may not be an explicit reference to a particular real historical occurrence, it signifies individual and collective resilience by people who are part of Afrodescendant maroonage and resistance in the larger African diaspora. After the apparent semiconscious effects of the blows to the head, Hilarion's reaction to the abuse brings Frantz Fanon's ideology to mind pertaining to the theorization of the inferiority complex. In *Piel Negra, Máscaras Blancas* [Black Skin, White Masks] in reference to Antillean psychological processes, Fanon affirms that the subjugation of Black people coincides with pervasive social conditioning of Eurocentric ideals, "El negro antillano es esclavo de esta imposición cultural. Tras haber sido esclavo del blanco, se autoesclaviza. El negro es, en toda la aceptación de la palabra, una víctima de la civilización blanca" (78). [The Antillean Black is a slave to this cultural imposition. After being a slave of the White man, the Black enslaves oneself. The Black is, in all acceptance of the word, a victim of White civilization]. Considering this stance, cultural vulnerability plays a definite role in the novel directly after Hilarion is severely beaten in his jail cell. Victimization reaches an apotheosis when Hilarion ponders taking his own life:

Los puños cerrados, contraídos; lo dominaba un deseo loco de golpearse la cabeza contra las paredes, hasta quebrársela, hasta que todo ese mecanismo que lo torturaba se detuviera, enmudeciera, se adormeciera; hasta que muriera el sufrimiento junto con la vida. (22)

[The closed fists, tightened; a crazy feeling of striking his head against the walls was donating him, even breaking it, until all that mechanism that was torturing him stopped, fell silent, numbed; until the suffering died together with live].

Arguably, the most psychologically vulnerable moment for Hilarion in the novel, he appears to assume his perpetual victimization, but his state of consciousness is not stable in this instance due to head trauma caused by the wardens. Is this instance of suicidal enticement a result of semiconsciousness or the culmination of lived experiences that have pushed Hilarion to the brink of his life? Fanon argues that racism and the inferiority complex go hand in hand and racial trauma can inhibit an individual's sense of belonging, expressing:

Todo ello les está negado en un entorno racista, por muy culto que sea (o parezca) ese entorno. Y en lo colectivo, deben sufrir la fatalidad de un grupo empujado a ser inferior moral, religiosa y estéticamente; en fin, que no merecen un lugar en el mundo. (VII)

[All of this is denied to them in a racist environment, however cultured that environment may seem. And collectively, they must suffer the fatality of a group pushed to be inferior morally, religiously, and aesthetically; in short, they do not deserve a place in the world].

Nevertheless, the contemplation of committing suicide can be interpreted as a means of resistance to the chaotic, discordant, and despotic rule of the jail wardens which exemplifies the social climate that his U.S. occupied nation endures at the time under Sténio Vincent.

Character Development and Political Consciousness in Hilarion

Hilarion's encounter with Pierre Roumel in Fort Dimanche prison solidifies his character liminality in *Mi compadre el General Sol*. The concept of prison is a political signifier, connoting notoriety and is representative of a liminal boundary, exemplifying individuals who are considered communists and serious challengers to the present neocolonial state of Haiti.

Following bouts of semiconscious episodes due to persistent guard beatings, Hilarion eventually regains consciousness after days of recuperation. After his one-month sentencing to prison in Fort Dimanche after being duped by his representative/informal attorney Mesmin, Hilarion confronts the very prison guard(s) that maltreat him in a revealing juncture of political maroonage. The jail transfer to prison scene marks the first time in the novel that Hilarion has meaningful dialogue spoken from his mouth and not a narrative voice. He overtly delegitimizes the present state of the judicial system in front of the guard(s):

Le repito que no responderé a sus preguntas. Usted no está calificado para interrogarme, se me ha detenido sin orden judicial. Han procedido como gánsteres. No responderé a los canallas como usted. Responderé de mis actos ante las autoridades legales, ante ningún otro, ninguno...Usted ni siquiera es un policía, sino un torturador a sueldo y nada más...Cuando hubo que hacerles frente a los patronos de ustedes, a los norteamericanos, yo no cedí, y no me inclinaré ahora ante los perros. (48-49)

[I repeat that I will not answer your questions. You are not qualified to interrogate me, I have been arrested without a warrant. You all have proceeded like gangsters. I will not respond to scoundrels like you. I will respond to my actions before the legal authorities, before no others, none...You are not even a police officer, but rather a paid torturer...When you had to face your employers, the Americans, I didn't give in, and I will not bow down now to the dogs].

Hilarion's nonconformist attitude is a manifestation of maroonage and is rooted in self-recognition of his humanism. In contrast to the fleeing from the pack of hounds earlier in the novel, which is reminiscent of a historical retrospective maroonage, this instance highlights a

politically conscious act of maroonage within the context of the 20th century Haitian nation. Embedded with this modern state of maroonage is the Francophone Caribbean derived Négritude philosophy. It is important to keep in mind that the legacy of Caribbean maroonage predates Négritude and Communism, both alluded to extensively in *Mi compadre el General Sol*. The book *Aimé Césaire et le monde noir* expands on the humanistic focus of Négritude philosophy, pointing out, “La Négritude est l’introduction de la rehabilitation de la dignité de l’homme noir, mais aussi de l’homme en general” (Ongba and Ntonfo 180). [Négritude is the introduction of the rehabilitation of the Black man’s dignity, but also of the man in general]. Hilarion’s defiance of the guards permits a reverberating reflection of the political/judicial system. Exposing the smoke and mirrors nature of the neocolonial corruptive hierarchy, Hilarion proclaims that the guards are dispensable, possess a false sense of power, and must answer to the primary power-bearers- the North Americans. Robert Fatton Jr. demonstrates the desperate sense of Haitian control delving into the brainchild of the Haitian political hierarchy, expressing, “Armed with military, imbued with an imperial mentality, and convinced of their manifest destiny and racial superiority, the American occupiers expected deference and obedience from the Haitians” (2). Here, Hilarion exposes the proper historical context in which he lives in Haiti during a U.S. occupation. Based on the illegitimacy of the guards’ power, rationalized by the faux-control premise due to Haiti’s semi-colonial status featured in the novel, Hilarion unveils the daintiness of the police’s imagined jurisdiction. Martin Munro further states the ramifications of Haiti’s image because of occupation, “The U.S. occupation essentially laid bare the frailties and vanities of the elite’s view of itself and of Haiti. The indignities of the occupation led to a radical re-evaluation of the elite’s complacently held self-image...” (13-14). Thus, Hilarion’s proclamation discerns a systemic vulnerability of the predominant mulatto-operated judicial system within a

capitalistic ambience. In fact, he opines that the warden is equally victimized in the neocolonial capitalistic experience when he emphatically declares “usted ni siquiera es un policía, sino un torturador a sueldo y nada más” (48). [You are not even a police officer, but rather a paid torturer]. Hilarion exploits the warden’s wage slavery and demonstrates how the police is acquiesced in the judicial system; the signifier of guard equates to essentially the status of worker that has no intrinsic value or power. Sharing this capitalistic critique, The Communist Manifesto links the powerlessness of the worker to the exploitation of the capitalist system, declaring, “He becomes a mere appendage of the machine, of whom only the simplest, most monotonous and easily learned operations are required” (Marx and Engels 131). Interestingly, Hilarion becomes his own power of attorney after Mesmin’s failure to adequately represent his client because of the pressure to make money (another implicit critique of Capitalism), resulting in the extortion of Hilarion in the process.

With the striking critique of the criminal justice system and the colonial state of Haiti, the protagonist overtly distances himself from the stagnant conformity of the jail/prison environs. Specifically, he thinks freely outside of the system and correlates with Hilarion’s desire to decolonize the mind. Speaking as a nonconformist within an aura of individual maroonage and resistance, Hilarion solidifies his liminality and philosophical capacity as a character. Per Fanon’s theorization of identity politics in *Frantz Fanon and the Psychology of Oppression* the following point is advanced, “Recognition is possible only in the presence and confrontation of the other. Thus, recognition by the other confirms one’s self-worth, identity, and even humanity” (Bulhan 103). Hilarion creates his own alternate system of legal jurisprudence when he substantiates the claim that the authorities are executing orders under a foreign occupation. The expressive nomenclatural descriptors to describe the guards such as “gánsteres”, [gangsters]

“torturador” [torturer] and “canallas” [scoundrels] invert the animalistic notion of the Black male concerning criminality, and while reassuring his own interpretation of justice exposes the criminal justice system in which he lives as a tabula rasa of corruption and illegitimacy. Linguistically speaking, the effectiveness of future tense utilization such as “no responderé”, [I will not answer] “responderé” [I will answer], and “no me inclinaré” [I will not bow down] adheres to legal terminology standards as it simultaneously debilitates the legality of his oppressors. The protagonist’s resistance exemplifies a unique pattern in the Afro-descendant experience in the Americas as alluded to by Richard L. Jackson, who connects this mentality to former maroon leaders and their continuous legacies (40). The embracing of maroonage and the post-modern context of Négritude will be examined as one penetrates the symbolic relationship between Hilarion Hilarius and Pierre Roumel. Maroonage’s distinctness is its centrality in maneuvering the act of escaping. In its historical context, maroonage evinced the successful settlement of runaway slaves in Maroon communities (palenques in Hispanophone countries) and accentuated the maintenance of communitarianism. Gabriel Izard Martínez specifies the methodical approach to historical slave resistance and acts of maroonage, declaring, “...la resistencia esclava es un campo muy amplio y variado, que agrupa actos y actitudes muy diversas pero que perseguían un objetivo común, la creación de espacios, tanto físicos como psico-sociales, de libertad” (98). [Slave resistance is a very broad and varied field, that groups together very diverse acts and attitudes but pursued a common goal, the creation of spaces, both physical and psychosocial, of freedom]. Fundamentally, maroonage was a planned and risk-conscious decision that affirmed a point of no return to the oppressive system of slavery. Izard’s citing of spatial boundaries and psychosocial attitudes resonates congruously with the novel because liminality is enhanced in Fort Dimanche prison about Hilarion’s non-conformist

philosophical framework. Ironically, prison connotes an upgrade from the less desirable jail space; Fort Dimanche provides an ideological safe space for Hilarion and Pierre. The inversion of the traditional context of prison results in Hilarion's acquisition of a political consciousness and renewed acquaintanceship with Pierre. Simultaneously, the prison as a liminal space premise is confirmed as previous acquaintanceship transforms into mentorship and Hilarion's paucity of a father figure culminates with his acquired relationship with Pierre.

The decipherment of the revolutionary undertones of *Mi compadre el General Sol* is more conspicuous in Hilarion and Pierre's first series of conversations in Fort Dimanche prison. Prior to Hilarion's re-encounter with Pierre, the protagonist's revolutionary progression is still in preliminary stages as a political and psychological threat. I emphasize re-encounter because one learns of their previous acquaintanceship in conversation when Hilarion affirms, "Yo vivía en casa de los Sigord, al lado de la de usted, en Bois-Verna" (60). [I lived in the Sigord house, next door to yours, in Bois-Verna]. Undeniably, he reveals his non-conformity with the elite's political capitalistic ideology as he transfers to Fort Dimanche, but the idea of revolution changes context when one ponders historical revolution and its interconnection with Haiti's communistic revolution in the confines of the U.S. occupation (1915-1934). The novel's cryptic and labyrinthine nature is less confusing when operating in the mindset and historical consciousness of the Haitian Revolution. After reading C.L.R. James' seminal study *The Black Jacobins*, this essay's ideological lens began to focus more on Hilarion and Pierre's symbolic literary/historical relationship. I discovered and theorized a probable analogy between Touissant L'Ouverture and Pierre Baptiste-Simon. Per historical account, Pierre was Touissant's godfather and primary mentor (James 19). At first glance, the suggestion that Hilarion symbolizes Touissant L'Ouverture may seem preposterous, but a reading of the final section of this chapter entitled

“Hilarion the Expatriate? - Migration and the Death of a Hero” aspires to expand the L’Ouverture theory. Nevertheless, there is a lack of fatherly presence for Hilarion in *Mi compadre el General Sol*. In fact, no allusion or mention of Hilarion’s biological father is encountered throughout the entire novel. Hilarion’s emblematic father is indubitably Pierre Roumel. If one grasps the linguistic codification of Pierre when conversing with Hilarion it is of intrigue to consider the ramifications of what I call literary maroonage. Namely, literary maroonage serves to nullify the restrictive potential of the atmosphere, in this case a prison. The utilization of future tense is revealing when Pierre offers his encouraging words to Hilarion, “...¿Sabes?, te ayudaré cuando salgas, ya verás. Te encontraré trabajo. Trabajarás. Hilarion, ten confianza en ti, ya te las arreglarás, ten confianza” (60). [Listen, I’ll help you out when you leave, you’ll see. I’ll find you work. You will work. Hilarion, have confidence in yourself, you will figure it out, have confidence]. Comparing Hilarion’s language use during the confrontation of the prison guards and Pierre’s linguistic urgency in this scene, the dialogues equally reflect a revolutionary language. Richard L. Jackson solidifies the commanding presence of the Black man’s voice in seminal novels such as Alexis’ *Mi compadre el General Sol*, reflecting that Afro-Hispanic authors provide strong Afro-descendant models presented by Négritude thinkers such as Frantz Fanon, Aimé Césaire, and Leon Damas with their active look, a fighting look, a revolutionary look (53). However, Pierre’s promissory language contrasts with the protagonist in that he reassures Hilarion’s protection and job security; Hilarion reassures his *own* protection. Pierre’s egalitarian demeanor reveals itself with his Communistic philosophy as he fulfills a service for a fellow comrade, from his perspective. Conjointly, “trabajarás” [you will work] serves as a double entendre because work insinuates manual labor, but operating within the parameters of Pierre’s mind, work implies working with and for the spread of Communism.

Nonetheless, the highlighted phrase “ten confianza en ti” [believe in yourself] can be interpreted as an acknowledgment of Hilarion’s ability to think for himself. Adding to the Pierre Baptiste-Simon line of thought that I established earlier, Pierre’s influence on the protagonist is as expressive as a father-son dynamic. The imposing usage of the future tense reflects language that is representative of an ultimatum. Within the context of Hilarion’s sustained liminality and his personality of resistance, the fact that he does not challenge Pierre in this instance validates his amenability towards the only person that he has respected as a male authority.

The non-conformism that Hilarion expresses in his confrontation with the new Communism ideology spreading throughout Haiti has origins in the Cimarrón [maroon]. Confirming figuratively, Hilarion does not want to be a “slave” to the Marxist or Capitalist ideological system. Fanon doubles down on this sentiment in *Piel Negra, Máscaras Blancas* expanding, “Yo, hombre de color, sólo quiero una cosa: que jamás el instrumento domine al hombre. Que cese para siempre la esclavización del hombre por el hombre. Es decir, de mí por otro. Que se me permita descubrir y querer al hombre, donde esté” (92). [I, a Black man, only want one thing: that the instrument never dominates the man. That the enslavement of man by man cease forever. That is to say, me to my fellow man. That I be allowed to discover and love the man , wherever he may be]. The self-disciplined display of maroonage liberates him from any exploitative political system. Hilarion presents an alternative set of ideologies/philosophies, embedded in a resistance to the political-social status quo and consciously decenters Communism’s Eurocentric origin and influence. Per renowned author Richard Wright, he conjectured that humanistic communism is too abstract and not sufficiently based on human feelings and lived experience (Jackson 62). The inapplicability of Communism to the protagonist’s unique positionality (uneducated, rural, Black) is discerned when he poses the

following question to Pierre, “¿Qué quiere decir ser <<comunista>>? –preguntó, desconcertado” (83). [What does it mean to be a communist? - he asked, perplexed]. Hilarion postures a political naiveté concerning familiarity of political jargon. The Hilarion/Pierre juncture signals the genesis of Hilarion’s informal education. Prison unexpectedly provides a platform to challenge ideologies and confinement converts to personal ideological refinement for Hilarion. Despite initial shortcomings in understanding Communism’s tenets, the protagonist’s skepticism and angst generates evidential uneasiness for Roumel. The initial implication of Hilarion’s line of questioning is the prerequisite of being educated; Hilarion contextualizes the failures of the education system in his rural upbringing and reacts from his positionality. Roumel fails to recognize his own privileged positionality, belonging to a higher social class, educated, and a mulatto even if he is associated with a political Communist “minority”. Intelligently, Hilarion identifies the false equivalency that Pierre utilizes when comparing his ostracization as a political prisoner to the protagonist’s incarceration as a petty thief; to put it another way, Roumel is not born into his political class, but rather his social class. Using the same rationale, Hilarion is born into poverty, exploited by society because of a lack of formal education and stigmatized by the elite based on his race and social class.

As *Mi compadre el General Sol* progresses, Communism’s presence expands to several characters associated with Pierre Roumel, notably the psychiatrist Jean-Michel. Equivalent to Roumel’s positionality, Jean-Michel is part of a privileged social class and is mulatto. W.E.B. DuBois’ double consciousness model correlates with the protagonist’s psyche. As he comes to grips with his own humanistic struggles with a distinct positionality of race, social class and lack of formal education, an internal comparison with his peers occurs. Intriguingly, Hilarion contemplates various levels of exploitation taking place within and outside of Haiti’s borders.

The new Lenin-induced Communism in the novel presents itself as the alternative to the Capitalist presence of the U.S. occupation; however, for Hilarion the fresh notion and novel idea of Communism that Roumel and Jean-Michel sells to him is inapplicable to his circumstantiality. Pierre and Jean-Michel promotes that the alternative version of Communism spreading throughout the country considers a non-linear set of human experiences and positionalities. As cited earlier, Richard Wright contends that communism in practice does not coincide with its intended positive effects for marginalized groups (Jackson 62). On the flipside, expanding on Pierre's argument of the supposed practicality of Communism on Hilarion's lived experience, Abigail B. Bakan and Enakshi Dua pursue the establishment of a connection between classic Marxism and the oppression of minority groups when citing the following, "Oppression in Marx can be described to take two distinct forms: (i.) class oppression, and (ii.) the specific oppression of sections of classes, or what we may call special oppression (110). Nonetheless, a contemplative Hilarion entices the idea of submitting to newer Communistic ideals but weighs the disadvantages for his country and for himself, eventually sidestepping Jean-Michel's optimism. The narrative voice/Hilarion's consciousness reveals a profound historical and political knowledge that antithesizes Communism's proposed value to Haiti:

Hablaba de un montón de cosas raras: de dialéctica materialista, de desarrollo desigual del capitalismo, de crisis cíclicas...Trataron de demostrarle que los hombres sencillos no sólo podían llegar a entender esas cosas, sino que hasta morían por ellas. Le hicieron preguntas, discutieron, dieron ejemplos. En fin, podía ser cierto que ese Thaelmann fuera un hombre del tipo de Dessalines, pero esas eran historias alemanas, no de haitianos. (116-117)

[He talked about a lot of strange things: dialectical materialism, unequal development of capitalism, cyclical crisis... They tried to show him that simple men could not only understand those things, but even die for them. They asked him questions, bickered, gave examples. In brief, Thaelmann could be the Dessalines type, but those were German stories, not Haitian ones].

Given the progression of the novel, Hilarion's character liminality is well-established, to the point where he gains the status of a superliminal character. Despite the education gap between the protagonist and Roumel and Jean-Michel, Hilarion demonstrates a transtemporal approach to his maroonage by invoking a Haitian founding father in Dessalines. The reflection is a thought-provoking critique of Jean-Michel's pro-Communism argument and exudes an implicit Négritude through calculated juxtaposition of Haitianess and Europeaness. The utilization of the geography/nationality labels (*alemanas*, *haitianos*) (Germans, Haitians) creatively masks the racial connotations that each space represents.

Hilarion's contemplation argues that Haiti is an established revolutionary space created by Blacks. History is viewed in a futuristic context and presented as the best option to combat Eurocentric ideals, thus Hilarion's stake in his nation's history functions as a transtemporal reality that catapults the application of L'Ouverture's revolutionary fervor to the current neocolonial circumstance. The book *Aimé Césaire et le monde noir* [Aimé Césaire and the Black world] affirms the relationship between Haiti's unique history and Hilarion's transtemporal ideological gaze, presenting, "Le passé et le présent dictent une action pour un avenir meilleur, grâce à l'idéologie de la Négritude" (Ongba and Ntonfo 96). [The past and the present dictate action for a better future, thanks to Négritude ideology]. The protagonist-narrator reminds the reader that "hombres sencillos" [simple men] such as Touissant L'Ouverture and Jean-Jacques

Dessalines led Haiti to the first and only successful slave revolution in the world, obtaining independence. Haitian scholar and Cuban expatriate René Depestre reflects on the significance of the Haitian Revolution, explaining how Black people acquired new self-perceptions and dismantled the stereotypes created by the colonial system (11-12). The emphasis of the maroon [cimarrón] speaks to the fabric of Haiti's existence. Hilarion exposes the internal contradiction in Jean-Michel's communistic approach. As Communism seeks to offset the debilitating U.S. occupation of the country, it simultaneously promotes the idea that European ideology is center. Hilarion's decolonizing frame of reference allows an open-ended critique of neocoloniality's main culprits: the U.S. occupation, the Haitian educated elite class, and the Eurocentricity of Communism's roots. Furthermore, Fort Dimanche prison, Jean-Michel's and Doménica Betances' (later in the novel) homes comprise of Hilarion's informal education, but the very suggestion of "demonstrating that a simple man" can understand Communism's tenets does not convince Hilarion. The protagonist does not correlate Communism's value to his unique positionality. Underlying Hilarion's decolonizing mind and maroonage stance is the influence of Négritude reflected in *Mi compadre el General Sol*. Aimé Césaire vehemently declares what Communism's focus should entail in his influential work *Discurso sobre el colonialismo* [Discourse on Colonialism], exclaiming, "...Que quiero que marxismo y comunismo estén puestos al servicio de los pueblos negros y no los pueblos negros al servicio del marxismo y del comunismo" (82). [I want Marxism and Communism to be at the service of Black people and not Black people at the service of Marxism and Communism]. Césaire's line of questioning coincides with the protagonist's realization of necessitated self-preservation in order to avoid the potential subjugation of Jean-Michel's communistic teachings. Jean-Michel's promotion of Communism, even though he assumes an amelioration of his U.S. occupied society, does not

correspond with the intended adherent in Hilarion. The psychiatrist's ideology represents an addition to the larger neocolonial experience, stressing written Communist doctrine over a more grassroots oral tradition (continuation of maroon legacy and reflecting the triumph of Haitian Revolution) exemplified by Hilarion. Césaire's *Discurso sobre el colonialismo* affirms the restrictions of Communism for Black Antilleans in a powerful fashion, stating:

Pero digo que no habrá jamás variante africana, o malgache, o antillana del comunismo, porque el comunismo francés encuentra más cómodo imponernos la suya...que el anticolonialismo mismo de los comunistas franceses porta todavía los estigmas de este colonialismo que combate. (82)

[I say that there will never be an African, or Malagasy, or Antillean variant of communism, because French communism finds it more suiting to impose its own version on us...the anti-colonialism of the French communists still bears the stigmas of this colonialism that it fights].

This disconnect between the two characters conflicting perspectives is reflected in distinct positionalities such as social class, education level, and microgeographic dichotomy (rurality/urbanity). Utilizing Hilarion's attempt to understand Jean-Michel's point of view(s) via active attendance in night classes about Communism, the effort ultimately fails because of the lack of addressing distinct human experiences. Hilarion critiques the tangible applicability of Communism to his own humanism when he ponders:

Las ideas de Jean-Michel le parecían sueños lejanos, esas cosas que se leen en los libros y que no se encuentran en la vida...¡Un periódico! ¡Para lo que les importaba eso a los trabajadores! ¿Cómo harían para leerlo? Todas esas cosas

resultarían muy hermosas en los libros, ¡pero ellos estaban en Haití, ¡qué diablos!
(249-250)

[Jean-Michel's ideas seemed like distant dreams to him, those things that you read in books and not found in real life...A newspaper! Why would the workers care about that! How would they read it? Those things would be very beautiful in the books, but they were in Haiti, what the hell!].

Jean-Michel's efforts to educate Hilarion are strikingly similar to the colonial education model present in G's experience in George Lamming's *In the Castle of My Skin* (1953). To put it another way, written history is prioritized over the value of oral history and Europeaness is inevitably promoted due to Communism's original European context. C.L.R. James makes an analogy reminiscent of Aimé Césaire's observation of Communism's relationship to Black Antilleans when he declares, "International socialism will need the products of a free Africa far more than the French bourgeoisie needed slavery and the slave trade" (377). Additionally, Hilarion deciphers the contradictory nature of Communism's purpose within a Haitian context by questioning the advantageous social class of its principal proponents.

How effective is Communism's promise to the underclass when members of the elite class are the ones responsible for its promotion? The understanding of Haiti's unique history confirms that its creation was due to armies of former slaves. Jacques Stephen Alexis solidifies the integral presence of Blackness in Haitian consciousness in his influential essay "Du réalisme merveilleux des Haïtiens", "Cependant l'apport que représente la plus grande partie dans la constitution de la culture haïtienne, est l'apport africain... (253). [The contribution that represents the largest part in the composition of Haitian culture, is the African contribution]. Hilarion contends that an Afro-centered focus is lacking in Jean-Michel's instruction of Communism and

that the triumphant Haitian Revolution should be the suitable model to follow. The lack of Communism's appeal to the poor Black underclass in *Mi compadre el General Sol* is attributed to the polarization of social class and education level dynamics. Although Hilarion refuses to openly criticize Jean-Michel (in large part because he does mentor the protagonist and relieves him of his epileptic episodes with medicine) he internalizes a consistent frustration with the psychiatrist's propaganda and concludes with a final condemnation of Communism's shortcomings:

Su sorpresa no tuvo límites al descubrir que detrás de los hombres y las políticas siempre habían existido salvajes luchas de intereses y de castas, marchándolo todo, trastornándolo todo, encendiendo el fuego de las guerras civiles, provocando las traiciones sórdidas, explicando las miserias y las desdichas del pueblo. No se trataba del dolor de los hombres, sino de categorías sociales, clases, todo eso lo había aturcido. (192)

[His surprise knew no bounds when he discovered that behind men and politics there had always been violent conflicts of interest and castes, leaving everything behind, disrupting everything, sparking the fire of civil wars, provoking sordid betrayals, explaining the miseries and misfortunes of the people. It was not about the pain of men, but about social categories, classes, all that had disturbed him].

Hilarion's introspection and retrospection cohere an ideological safe space. Because of self-prioritization of one's individual philosophies, the overcoming of the colonized mind and body is possible. He contemplates the idea of Haiti through his high appraisal of oral histories that foreground the maroon quintessence of Dessalines and L'Ouverture. Keeping in mind that this maroonage predates the communism of the 19th century, it is less challenging to perceive why

Hilarion resists the communistic tenets presented to him. Hilarion taps into the Négritude framework in the aforementioned contemplation where “dolor de los hombres” [the pain of men] is a real human sentiment which underscores a personal struggle that poor Black men face in this specific context of the 1930’s U.S.-occupied Haiti. Césaire’s postulation clearly defines the humanistic approach of Négritude, forwarding, “...le projet de la négritude est plus cultural que politique. Il s’agit, au-delà d’une vision partisane et raciale du monde, d’un humanism actif et concret, à destination de tous les opprimés de la planète” (Ntonfo & Laurent Omgba 69). [The Négritude project is more cultural than political. It goes beyond a partisan and racial vision of the world, an active and concrete humanism, aimed at all the oppressed on the planet]. The racial oppression that Césaire alludes to apropos Bakan’s and Dua’s special oppression and the lack of acknowledgment thereof is precisely why Hilarion does not have a rapport with the political aspirations of Jean-Michel and Pierre Roumel.

The Constraints of Masculinity in *Mi compadre el General Sol*

Arguably, *Mi compadre el General Sol* is devoid of a significant female voice or presence apart from Claire-Heureuse and even this affirmation remains suspended in the air because of the established male-centered focus in the novel. The narrative voice is definitively masculine and mirrors Hilarion’s mindset and comportment. Literary scholar Roberto Strongman reinforces the androcentrism of *Mi compadre el General Sol*, declaring, “...Alexis’ narrative remains primarily a male narrative with Hilarius at the center of the novel’s world” (33). Given the focus of the framework of Masculinities, analyzing the constraints of masculinity is inherent to not only the Hilarion’s liminality, but his humanity as well. I argue here that two distinct types of masculinity are present in Hilarion: physical masculinity and reputational masculinity. I define physical masculinity as a behavior-based approach to utilizing and influencing power via

physical actions and gestures. The result is to establish exerted authority by means of intimidation. The most explicit example of physical masculinity in the novel occurs at the conclusion of the ensuing quarrel between Claire-Heureuse and Hilarion after a store client named Victorine asks for a monetary favor from Claire. Before Victorine leaves the store, Claire attempts to convince her husband that they should loan the money despite the strain that such a loan potentially places on the store's production. The couple's personal financial situation is dire, but as the store clerk and being responsible for money management, Claire decides to assist her client. The caveat in this instance is the power dynamic in Hilarion and Claire's relationship. Although Claire runs the store, she feels obligated to receive permission from her "man". Prominent psychologist and novelist Victoria Sau declares the self-doubt amongst women as evidence of an oppressive patriarchal hegemonic relationship in her essay, "De la facultad de ver al derecho de mirar" [From the ability to see to the right to examine] expressing, "Las mujeres se consideran a sí mismas con más severidad que con la que son consideradas por los propios varones, tratando a sí mismas como a grupo exterior" (33-34). [Women judge themselves harsher than what men consider them as, treating themselves as an outside group]. Nonetheless, in defiance of her husband's (Hilarion) and Mr. Bolté's (storeowner) preservation of heteropatriarchal norms, Claire asserts an active position in her independent decision to advance the loan. Claire clearly exposes the insecurities of the hegemonic masculine paradigm as the following instance in the novel alludes to, "Una bofetada hirió a Claire-Heureuse en pleno rostro, y casi la derriba. Ella lo miró estupefacta. Lo vio unos ojos que no conocía, unos ojos rojos, brillantes, cargados de una determinación que le inspire temor" (254). [A slap struck Claire-Heureuse in the middle of the face, nearly knocking her down. She looked at him

shocked. She saw eyes that she did not recognize, red eyes, bright, laden with a determination that inspires fear]. Hilarion resorts to violence and domestic spousal abuse.

This exemplification of physical masculinity exploits Claire's physical disadvantage; however, since Hilarion reestablishes authority through physical violence it undermines his psychological development. Within the realm of violence, gender studies concur that when male hegemony is threatened, violence is employed as an equalizer, "Si hay un elemento recurrente en la caracterización tipológica del macho, del hombre viril, de la masculinidad imperante, ésta es, sin duda, la fuerza" (Alsina and Borràs Castanyer 92). [If there is a recurring element in the typological characterization of the macho, of the virile man, of the prevailing masculinity, this is undoubtedly force]. The narration validates that Hilarion's blow to Claire is the first documented account of physical abuse committed, represented by the revealing phrase "Lo vio unos ojos que no conocía" [She saw unrecognizable eyes], and interestingly, the quarrel marks the first point of contention between the couple in the novel. The violent demonstration underscores a hypermasculine aggression that subordinates Claire into a receptive role of passivity. Monica A. Payne argues that in the Caribbean, masculine qualities of individualism, autonomy, and rationality are held in greater esteem than feminine qualities of cooperation, dependence, and emotional sensitivity (182). Referenced in my definition of physical masculinity earlier, the utilization of corporeal force as opposed to psychological fortitude delineates the negotiation of power. Irreversible induced fear strips Claire of agency retention because of her husband's abuse. Thus, Hilarion's spontaneous behavior utilizing physical force augments both corporeal and psychological anguish for Claire.

Ironically, as Hilarion's personal overcoming of mental decolonization is occurring in *Mi compadre el General Sol* and his character's liminality increasing, he perpetuates an equally

oppressive colonizing male hegemony at the expense of his wife. The privileging of Hilarion's physical and reputational masculinities are not obtained independently; these masculinities are coercive in nature and involve encroachment of feminine hegemony in Claire's case. Hofstra University sociologist Christine Barrow concurs that, "Gendered identities are not individual and innate, but social, relational and acquired. And, as the theoretical shift to post-modernist and post-structuralist perspectives reveals, they are also multiple and mutable" (343). The protagonist's physical masculinity demonstrates a conscious transfer of power when one considers that Hilarion and Claire possess comparable positionalities, both belonging to the same race and socioeconomic class. Thus, comparable positionalities in Hilarion and Claire's example only amplify the intersectional divergence of gender that much more.

Expanding on the masculine mode of narration in the novel pertinent to the protagonist's physical spousal abuse stemming from the store argument, the commentary following the episode suggests an internal narrative rationalizing Hilarion's violent behavior. Revisiting the prior theft scene in *Mi compadre el General Sol*, Hilarion's premature philosophical formulation rationalizes the action, citing disadvantageous discrimination and treatment of the rural peasantry; however, the justification of overcoming oppression in the theft scene becomes more convoluted when comparing the narrative justification of Hilarion's strike to the middle of Claire's face. The commentary in question arises in the following manner:

Sí, esa bofetada, como todas las anomalías en su Hilarion desde hacía cierto tiempo, eran consecuencia de lo duro de la existencia. A veces sentía que volvían a invadirla sus antiguas aprensiones sobre la enfermedad de Hilarion. ¿Si se volviera loco? Según se decía, le había ocurrido a muchos afectados de la

epilepsia. Desechó rápidamente esos pensamientos. Era evidente que Hilarion estaba casi curado y que las píldoras resultaban eficaces. (257-258)

[Indeed, that slap, like all the defects in her Hilarion for some time, were consequence of the harshness of existence. Sometimes she felt that her old apprehensions about Hilarion's illness would return. Was he losing his mind? It was said that this happened to many epilepsy sufferers. She quickly rejected those thoughts. It was clear that Hilarion was almost cured and that the pills were effective].

This is one of the few instances in which the reader gains perspective into Claire's psyche; nevertheless, the steering of an androcentric narrative voice is forever present. This male-inflected narrative intended to gauge Claire's psychological mode blames Hilarion's violent demonstration on mental instability via epileptic seizures. As discussed in the first part of the chapter, the protagonist's epilepsy is directly from the abuse that he suffers in jail. Alexis' empathy for Hilarion is incongruous, considering that he perpetuates violence against his own wife. Gender theorist Luis Bonino exemplifies how males cope with anger from a behavioral standpoint:

Los varones manifiestan predominantemente su malestar a los modos <<masculinos>> marcados por la Nhg para ellos: el autocontrol, el ocultamiento del malestar, la disociación y proyección emocional, la ira como emoción validada y la negación de la debilidad y la acción como modo expresivo, defensivo y resolutivo prioritario. (59)

[Males predominately show their unease towards masculine ways marked by the hegemonic gender norm: self-control, the concealment of discomfort, dissociation and emotional projection, rage as a validated emotion and the denial of weakness and action as an expressive, defensive, and critical priority].

In this case, physical masculinity (violence) is presented as a normative function of the male configuration. With the evidence of a series of cerebral blows to Hilarion in the jail from the guards, the juxtaposition of Hilarion's single blow to Claire's face seeks to minimize the perception of his "violent side". Educational psychologist Elsa A. Leo-Rhynie documents the masculine gender bias in the context of violence, "Brown and Chevannes (1995) report that both men and women consider that man/woman violence is deserved when a woman does not adequately fulfill her expected role in terms of domestic duties or sexual fidelity (243). The vindication of the protagonist is conspicuous where the narration embeds the excuse of violence declaring, "...eran consecuencias de lo duro de la existencia" (257). [...were consequence of the harshness of existence]. Is Claire's experience as a Black woman any less burdensome than Hilarion's? Undoubtedly, Hilarion suffers from the tools of neocolonialism and oppression, but his acquired physical masculinity is a sponsor of a coequal oppressive system of gender exploitation.

When one considers the discussion of a physical or reputational masculinity, male privileging is an integral part of the equation. Expanding on physical masculinity leads one to understanding the development of other masculinities. One such masculinity that is a derivative form is reputational masculinity. I employ this terminology from the operative word reputation. Reputational masculinity is a form of masculinity that allows reputation to have a "force field effect" and provides many opportunities for mobility of male hegemony. Since reputation places

priority on human perceptions, it is worthwhile to analyze Hilarion's reputation and masculinist ramifications. Christine Barrow theorizes that, "Masculinity is represented by reputation, defined as a complex of values which reflects the congruence of the way a man views himself and the way he is viewed by others" (342). Retrospectively, the jail and prison spaces represent masculinized spaces; Hilarion's adaptability to the harshness of the masculinized environs, in addition to surviving several physical beatings, swells his overall physical masculinity. This aura of overcoming Fort Dimanche's notorious reputation as one of Haiti's most fiendish atmospheres correlates with an exponential expansion of reputational masculinity upon returning to friends and family, due in large part to his enduring physical and psychological trauma; additionally, his ever-growing political association with Roumel as a cellmate solidifies a reputation amongst some of the Communist proponents in the community. In political dialogues with Jean-Michel and other interlocutors Hilarion incorporates a gestured machismo, a subcomponent of physical masculinity, in order to posture power with the body. For example, in moments of political discussion when desired participation shifts to Hilarion (his knowledge of Communist terminology and theory is more limited), he uses a silence tactic and fiercely stares directly in the interlocutor's eyes. This gestured machismo signifies that the interlocutor halt further inquiry, thus solidifying a reputation of non-conformity. Gender theorist Luis Bonino commits on the strategic approach to gestured masculinity, stating that non-speech in itself holds power (62). Additionally, the daring stare grants Hilarion the freedom to protect his true feelings and personal philosophies and eliminates the possibility of demonstrating, potentially overemphasizing his limited education in the presence of the highly educated psychiatrist Jean-Michel.

The most compelling template of the use of reputational masculinity in *Mi compadre el General Sol* involves the protagonist's prevalent inclination of mobility. In other words, the ability to venture outside of the domestic space represents a disparity of movement between Hilarion and Claire. The protagonist, away from the jail, maximizes a reputational masculinity; Claire puts up with her husband's freedom of mobility whereas she becomes confined to the domestic space. Christine Barrow comments on the importance of gendered spatial boundaries by declaring that Caribbean men are irresponsible and have no real place within the home/family and are marginal (343). The revealing look into access to escapism concerning male hegemony commences in the novel:

Para Hilarion la noche era una amiga, una vieja amiga, de siempre, cuya frescura y fraternidad lo habían consolado de los días tristes y sin alegría que habían llenado hasta ese momento su vida. Adoraba la noche... Cuando se separaron, Hilarion, un poco sobrecitado, no resistió la tentación de esa noche de invierno haitiano, cuyos mismos efluvios de frío estaban cargados de tanta primavera. (203-204)

[For Hilarion the night was a friend, an old friend, forever, whose youthfulness and brotherhood had comforted him from sad and joyless days that had filled his life until up that moment. He loved the night... When they left each other Hilarion, a bit overexcited, could not resist the temptation of that Haitian winter night, whose very cold outpours were full of so much spring].

Escapism is a main feature of male hegemony in the love and relationship domain. Male hegemony internalizes adversity to any degree in an argument and the strategic decision to flee from conflict ensues. Without vagueness, Hilarion acts as his own authority to venture into the

night even as Claire struggles with several bouts of morning sickness apropos to pregnancy. The colorful references to sex expose the hypersexual tendencies of the male; the absence of sex in the domestic space is substituted with acting on urges of infidelity. Theorization in Caribbean masculinity contemplates that the measuring of manhood correlates to the level of sexual activity with women, ability to provide financial stability and the prevalence of exercising authority over women and children (Peacocke 201-202). The justification of infidelity comes at the expense of Claire who is unable to fulfill Hilarion's whims. The objectification of Claire as a mechanism of pleasure is apparent in this passage. The contemplation "sin alegría que habían llenado hasta ese momento su vida" [sad and joyless days that had filled his life up until that moment] gives the reader an update into the stage of their relationship and romance life and acknowledges, at least from a male-centered perspective, the decrease in sexual activity during Claire's pregnancy. The second part of the passages alludes to a brotherhood of reputational masculinity because Gabriel, Hilarion's boxer friend, facilitates the access to female pleasure, building the reputation as a successful competitive physical man. When the two men separate in the night, Hilarion privatizes his sexual encounters to protect his reputation as a perceived family man. Reputational masculinity sets a hegemonic foundation that limits the questioning of one's character. The calculated move on Hilarion's part to strand Claire in favor of a night out hanging with the boys appears less abusive to outside perception when if he is simply drinking. On the other hand, he consciously understands that to maintain the socially acceptable escapism this requires keeping his sexual adventures private from his inner circle of friends. The development of a series of attitudes that exclude women from male activity in work and leisure occurrences is rooted in the concept of male separateness (Leo-Rhynie 247). As it is difficult to infer what Claire really feels

about Hilarion leaving home due to lack of textual proof, it is apparent that she exercises minimal influence on his adroit mobility.

In the case of reputational masculinity, Hilarion develops an escapist pattern of exiting the domestic space at will (a reputation of escape), therefore foregoing resistance and lines of questioning from his wife about the possibility of infidelity. Shrewdly, in addition to protecting one's own individual character Hilarion protects the reputation of his marriage through adhering to clandestine relationships with prostitutes. The witness element of his infidelity is significantly diminished because prostitution represents an urbanized underworld that falls outside of the social zone of Hilarion or Claire's inner circles.

Conclusively, the masculine narrativity of *Mi compadre el General Sol* projects the message of reputational masculinity to the reader. The text divulges verosimile attitudes of heterosexualized Black male chauvinism and a pattern of a subordinate representation of females. Reputation of the Afro-Antillean male experience(s) is exemplified in the machista echoing of the hegemonic masculinist contemplation of the protagonist. I referred to gestured machismo earlier and its presence captivates the intimate carnal manifestations of Hilarion. Hilarion's masculinity is represented as normative in the novel and the idea of the objectified woman preponderates:

Hilarion compara ese cuerpo y el alma que de él se desprende con Claire-Heureuse sondeando su corazón para saber si podría haberse enamorado de otra mujer...largos muslos verticales de caminadora. Zétrenne es alta. ¡Ah, qué hermosas son las muchachas de Haití. (144)

[Hilarion compares that body and soul that detaches from him to Claire-Heureuse, probing his heart to see if he could have fallen in love with another woman...long vertical treadmill thighs. Zétrenne is tall. Ah, Haitian girls are beautiful!].

The passage conjoins physical masculinity and reputational masculinity. The narration formulates a corporeal to corporeal dynamic that hegemonizes the masculine mind over feminine bodies. In this example, the reputation is now established for the reader and no doubt remains into Hilarion's female acquisition, ultimately choosing Claire over Zétrenne. I use the term acquisition because it symbolizes value; Hilarion's posturing devalues and dehumanizes the female. The thought is reminiscent of Claire and Hilarion's first encounter in the sea. The buildup of the encounter is minimal and is representative of a love at first sight scenario. Perhaps, lust is the operative definition of the circumstance. The overtly masculine narrative juxtaposes Claire and Zétrenne's attraction level and presupposes that one of the two women will accept his advances. University of Penn literary critic Lydie Moudileno observes the female as objects mentality in Négritude writing, "...reconnaissance de l'homme noir l'autorisait à jeter un regard exotisant et objectifiant sur sa/la femme noire" (25). [...recognition of the Black man allowed him to take an exotic and objectifying look at the Black woman]. Overwhelmingly, Hilarion demonstrates a hegemonic masculinity that reflects a general idea that masculinity takes priority over femininity. This idea is shared with gender normativity theory, "El hombre era y continúa siendo en muchos casos el criterio a partir del cual se mide a la mujer, que se compara respecto de la perfección masculina" (Alsina and Borràs Castanyer 85). [The man was and continues to be in many cases the standard from which the woman is measured, which is compared to male perfection]. Although Hilarion utilizes his male positionality to preserve power, other components of his overall positionality (race, nationality, and socioeconomic class)

will typify challenges in his journey in the Dominican Republic. Accordingly, the constrained optimization of Hilarion's masculine power is more perceptible in racialized and othering settings. The expansion of Hilarion's masculinities ranges from physical and reputational, and even heroic.

The Expatriate, Migrant and Death of a Hero

In this section of the essay, I attempt to redefine and implement an alternative interpretation to the terminologies migrant" and "expatriate" respectively in the third and final part of *Mi compadre el General Sol* that takes place in the Dominican Republic. I will briefly touch on the conclusive message of a moribund Hilarion as a heroic figure. I argue that within the context of the Parsley Massacre, the term migrant symbolizes racialization and the othering of Haitians as much as it represents movement. Hilarion and Claire-Heureuse are constantly reminded that they are migrants, but utilization of the term is intended to insult, exploit and eventually justify the eradication of Haitians from the Dominican Republic. The recent migration from Haiti to the Dominican Republic comes to pass due to economic hardship and the fire destroys the family's material possessions. As a combative measure to mitigate racial otherness, Hilarion cogitates an expatriate mode of being. I distinguish the term expatriate and migrant from their general contexts. An expatriate is not simply a migrant living in another country for a period. My take on expatriate is one that represents privilege, the privilege of establishing oneself in another setting (country). Hilarion understands that minimizing the negative connotation of migrant is crucial in adapting to the larger Dominican community. He employs a strong political consciousness in order to sell his adaptability in a neighboring yet distinct Dominican environs. Oddly, Hilarion relies on the reputation of his affiliation with an elite group of Haitian communists to strengthen an expatriate status transnationally, therefore decreasing the

likelihood of being viewed as a poor Black Haitian migrant. The noteworthy temporary conversion to expatriate mode occurs in the presence of another leader of the Communist movement in the Dominican Republic by the name of Doménica Betances. The dialogue highlights Hilarion's moment to disarrange the rigidity of the heterogeneous imagination of Dominican and Haitian experiences in the wake of Trujillo's fascism:

Aquí no hemos formado aún el Partido...Y tú, ¿perteneceías allí al Partido? – No pertenecía al Partido. –Simpatizante, entonces? –Simpatizante. Se hizo un breve silencio. Ambos se observaban. Hilarion había soltado la palabra de mala gana. ¿Era verdaderamente un simpatizante? Jean-Michel muchas veces le había presentado a camaradas calificándolos con ese vocablo. La implicaba, a sus ojos, una adhesión casi tan completa como la afiliación al Partido. (379)

[Here we have not formed the Party yet...Did you belong to the Party there? - I did not belong to the Party. Are you a sympathizer then? – Sympathizer. There was a brief silence. They both looked at each other. Hilarion had blurted out the word reluctantly. Was he truly a symphathizer? Jean-Michel had introduced him to comrades many times calling them that word. It implied, in his eyes, an adherence almost as complete as membership in the Party].

Hilarion's distancing from a local Haitian geopolitical context allows him to slip a detailed piece of information that was never declared at any point in the novel. The protagonist's accidental revelation of being a Communist sympathizer is risky, but the upside potentiality is a unified group of allies in his new Dominican lived experience under Trujillo.

Uneasy or not, Hilarion's confirmation to Doménica that he has political ties to the likes of Pierre Roumel and Jean-Michel universalizes a nexus of relationships beyond the Haitian border. Despite this evidential affinity with prominent influencers in Communist circles, Hilarion's migrant status trumps his established Communist affiliation, namely his Haitianness. When the two are introduced to one another by Josaphat, Doménica's first inquiry to Hilarion is if he is Haitian or not. The protagonist's dire economic situation is provided as the reason for leaving Haiti in the first place. Postcolonial theorist Martin Munro emphatically states, "The Black Haitian is in perpetual exile, historically alienated in time/place" (17). Doménica meticulously others Hilarion at first glance, assuming he must be Haitian because he is a poor Black man. She performs Trujillista discourse, confirming her own self-conscious privilege of Dominicanness; the mindset brings up memories of the fukú effect/curse that Junot Díaz alludes to in his novel *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*. Dominican theorist and poet Blas Jiménez explains the psychological adversity that Trujillista ideology instills in Dominicans, "...se han dado a la tarea de inculcar en la mente del hombre pueblo la vieja noción de que antihaitianismo es igual a nacionalismo" (21). [...they have taken on the task of instilling in the mind of the common man the old notion that anti-Haitianism equals nationalism]. The optimization of the migrant experience, particularly in the context of Trujillo's stronghold, relies heavily on the consolidation of political strength. Although Communists are outnumbered, there are clandestine allegiances that resist the authoritarian regime. Hilarion's effort to exist in an expatriate mode would allow him to be viewed beyond a worker status; political advantage ensures an established coalition that transcends the country's boundaries. Claiming to be Communist sympathizer serves to mask deficiencies that are attributed to being a Black Haitian migrant. The fact that Doménica admits that the Communist party is still in development in the

Dominican Republic would suggest an increased valuable visibility for Hilarion's expansion of amicable communication resources; after all, does Doménica have possible gain from knowing a person that has strong Communist ties outside the Dominican Republic? Nevertheless, she chooses to protect her Dominicaness and Hilarion and his family are exposed as isolated Haitian migrants. This eventual rejection by Communist allies in the Dominican Republic invalidates the sense of fraternity that Communism sells. Dominican workers that are Communists are protected by nationality whereas Hilarion and Claire's experience in the Dominican Republic underscores the rampant discrimination regarding racial and socioeconomic politics. Furthermore, political affiliation is part of a nation-building mechanism. Even though the decision to identify as an expatriate Communist sympathizer is strictly strategic, Dominican Communists' reluctance to maximize efforts to safeguard Hilarion from incurring racial genocide casts doubt on the solidarity between the economic underclass and Afro-Caribbeanness. Aimé Césaire argues in *Discurso sobre el colonialismo*, "Es un hecho: la nación es un fenómeno burgués" (40). [It is a fact: the nation is a bourgeois phenomenon]. Exacerbated by a sense of national exceptionalism because of Trujillo's political presence, Dominican attitudes toward Haitians amplify the perception that poor Blacks cannot be considered a part of the nation.

The bifurcated migrant and expatriate mode operates in full effect at the commencement of the third part of the novel when Hilarion and Claire enter the Dominican Republic. As alluded to earlier, the protagonist acknowledges his reality as a migrant, but a specific tension arises between the desire to be an expatriate (living abroad as a blended settler) and the connotative language of the meaning of migrant. The two terms are dissimilar because migrant assumes Blackness and poverty in the context of *Mi compadre el General Sol*. Thus, expatriate means to exist in a different geospatial plane, but without strings attached to the implications of one's

positionality. The following narrative sequence stresses the prioritization of the interconnectedness of the migrant experience and expatriate mode:

Esa región resultaba curiosa. Los haitianos continuaban siendo en ella muy haitianos, pensaban siempre en la tierra lejana, pero ya no eran los mismos... Algo se iba anudando aquí, por obra del trabajo, de las canciones, de las alegrías y las penas comunes, algo que terminaría por dotar de un solo corazón y una sola alma a dos pueblos encadenados a la misma servidumbre. (334)

[That region was curious. The Haitians continued to be very Haitian there, they always thought about distant land, but they were the same already... Something was tied together here, through work, songs, joys and sorrows, something that ended up equipping a single heart and a single soul to two people chained to the same servitude].

The bilateral authorial protagonistic narration probes the psyche of a Haitian migrant. This migrant perspective accentuates the presence of a common recent history of U.S. occupation and infiltration of anti-Communism. Providing details about the homogeneity of Haiti and the Dominican Republic, including national cultural tropes such as shared histories in music promotes the uniformity of an island (Hispaniola) as opposed to two separate countries. Notwithstanding, Hilarion's expatriate mode is detailed in this reflection, acting as a subconscious coping mechanism to mask any disadvantages to his migrant experience in the Dominican Republic. Utilizing Fanon's psychoanalytical terminology, the "unconscious collective" operates within the expatriate mode that I have established (Fanon 78). Implicit in the comparative sentiment of the narration is a desirability of acceptance by Dominican society in the concluding statement that refers to the regional homogeneity. The narrative links

colonization resulting in socioeconomic disadvantages as the ultimate common denominator between Haitian and Dominican societies but sidesteps the significant racial disparity between the two nations. Reiterating, the homogeneous linkage is meant to satisfy Hilarion's immediate wants as an acceptable migrant.

In contrast with the initial positive self-perception of the migrant experience offered by the narrative mode, Dominicans construct a line of demarcation based on phenotypical presumption of migrant Haitianness, embedded with racial distinctness and superiority because of Trujillista conceptions of Blackness. Linguistic marking is used as a litmus test to confirm the otherness of Haitians in the novel because to stereotype solely on a racial basis would unintentionally place emphasis on darker Dominicans, convoluting the efforts to clearly distinguish the two groups. Alexis' novel meticulously exemplifies the complexity of racial politics pertaining to questions of nationality. For example, the ambiguous description of massacre victims underscores the common role of Haitians and Dominicans in the act of cultural genocide (Strongman 38). The pharmacy scene that involves Hilarion and his cousin Josaphat demonstrates the psychoracial conceptions of othering techniques used in the Dominican Republic during Trujillo's reign:

Penetraron en la farmacia, seguidos del buen hombre, que resoplaba como una foca. Josaphat pidió un sobre de bicarbonato. ¿Haitianos?- preguntó el hombre al despacharlo. –Sí, somos haitianos- respondió Josaphat. El farmacéutico les preguntó qué habían venido a buscar en la República Dominicana y por qué no se quedaban en casa. Josaphat se encogió de hombros y le volvió la espalda. ¿Qué dice?- quiso saber Hilarion. Josaphat se volvió y le mostró al fondo de la farmacia, un gran retrato en colores en el que aparecía el generalísimo doctor

Rafael Leónida Trujillo y Molina, *Benefactor de la Patria, Salvador del Pueblo*, etc., etc., adornado como un pavo real. Salieron. (336)

[They entered the pharmacy, followed by the good man, who was snorting like a seal. Josaphat asked for a package of baking soda. Haitians? – the man asked. – Yes, we are Haitians. – Josaphat responded. The pharmacist asked them what had they had come to the Dominican Republic for and why they did not stay at home. Josaphat shrugged his shoulders and turned his back. What does he say? – Hilarion wanted to know. Josaphat came over and showed Hilarion the back of the pharmacy, a large color portrait in which the Supreme Dr. Rafael Leónida Trujillo y Molina, Benefactor of the Homeland, Savior of the Nation, etc., etc., ornamented like a peacock].

Although this scene takes place prior to Hilarion's introduction to Doménica Betances, presumably one of his allies, apportioned surveillance accompanies both circumstances. The undeviating interrogation of Haitianness reaffirms the indoctrination of Trujillista nationalism. The pharmacist's surveillance regenerates the angst of Hilarion's migrant status and interestingly, the pharmacist's race is not implicated. The pharmacist is simply referred to as the good man, automatically distinguishing Josaphat and Hilarion as encroachers of his territory.

Repeatedly, micro-geographic features in *Mi compadre el General Sol* are adduced to explain the significance of liminal boundaries, whether they are local, national, or transnational. The pharmacy is indeed a national domain symbolizing the country and the inclusion of "penetraron" [they entered] represents a breach from Trujillista ideology. Roberto Strongman adds perspective on the Trujillista notions of Haitianness, "The idea of the Haitian as intruder and usurper is symptomatic of an ethnocentric view of history which sees the Americas, and

especially the Caribbean, as essentially a Spanish-speaking zone...” (25). Linguistic difference is utilized as a cultural threshold of exclusion, exploiting Haitianness as non-Spanish and foreign. The pharmacist’s interrogation of Hilarion’s nationality arises from Dominican insecurity about notions of Blackness. The comparative nationality element of Trujillista racial superiority sentiment in the Dominican Republic presupposes a gradient of colorism that lumps Haitians as the darker Blacks. Robert Fatton Jr., a theorist dealing with Haitian politics, writes that Dominican racism towards Haitians is deeply rooted in negative perceptions of Blackness and proclaims, “At worst, Haitians were like their African forebearers, inferior human beings, savages, cannibals, gooks and niggers” (3). Nonetheless, the constant inquiry about the nationality of perceived Haitians acknowledges the darker race fallacy of ingrained Trujillista racism and unintentionally accepts the existence of darker Dominicans. Fanon’s inferiority complex paradigm is applicable to Dominican desirability to imagine itself as a European nation in a Hispaniola Caribbean context.

Highly unusual for the hyperrealistic approach of the novel, the pharmacist’s physical description is left unidentified; most importantly, his racial ambiguity is protected as well as Doménica’s and an omnipresent version of Rafael Trujillo himself, as the peacock metaphor suggests in the above scene. Considering Trujillista discourse’s deliberate evasiveness regarding Black self-identification, the pharmacist exploits an unambiguous cultural difference between Haitians and Dominicans- the linguistic juxtaposition of Kréyol and Spanish. In the Casa de las Américas Spanish-language edition of the novel that I use instead of the original French-language edition, Hilarion and Josaphat’s response to the pharmacist’s inquiry into their nationality is spoken in Spanish that is retained in the original French-language version *Mon Compère Général Soleil*. The scene is a pretext to the reenactment of the ensuing Parsley

Massacre, emphasizing Haitian linguistic and racial otherness and reenacting when the sugarcane workers must pronounce “perejil” [parsley] correctly to avoid execution. Promoting Spanish as the superior language is a neocolonizing method that serves Eurocentric interests and posits a masters dictating to the slaves’ mentality, contextualizing the Parsley Massacre. One particular part of the fictionalized Alexis version of the massacre adds a variegated perspective to theorization of racial dynamics and nationality in the Dominican Republic, “-Pelehil, Pelehil, Pelehil...¿Era haitiano o dominicano? El teniente se acercó, le asestó un bayonetazo y lo extendió sobre el suelo, muerto” (398). [Parsley, Parsley, Parsley...Was he Haitian or Dominican? The lieutenant approached, delivered him a bayonet wound and extended him over the ground, dead]. The novel’s query in this instance acquaints the reader about the intricacy of the racialized classification system prevalent during Trujillo’s regime. The dying worker’s last words followed by a critique of the trivial nature of determining nationality suggest that the massacre is motivated by racial preoccupations more than any nationalistic concerns of Trujillista adherents. Coupled with the fact that Trujillo had close Haitian ancestry and that significant segments of Dominicans share Haitian ancestry mesh with Fanon’s thoughts of racial self-identification involving the Black inferiority complex that is alluded to earlier in the chapter. Dominican poet and philosopher Blas Jiménez, a darker Dominican himself, reflects on the extensiveness of what he deems “negrophobia”, arguing that Trujillista sympathizers encouraged illegal cheap labor from Haitian migrants only to exploit said workers after their duties were fulfilled (23). Thus, Hilarion suffers the unfortunate fate as other Dominican and Haitian migrant workers in the massacre, dying at the symbolic juncture of the present-day Dajabón River attempting to return home to Haiti. Hilarion’s effort to humanize his migrant experience

via expatriate mode is unsuccessful vis-à-vis racial otherness perpetuated by Trujillista notions of Blackness.

The protagonist experiences a common neocolonial reality with political corruption, as was the case when he left Haiti in the first place. The moribund Hilarion gives an exhaustive monologue, resembling the construction of the classic portrayal of a Black male hero. The conclusion of the novel foregoes the realist narrative style and optimizes an epic romanticized style. Literary maroonage becomes the instrument of Hilarion's final maneuver in curbing colonization of his mind and body, simulating a L'ouverture-esque caricature. Comparable to similar Black heroes such as Ascensión Lastre in *Juyungo* (1942) and Manuel in *Masters of the Dew* (1944), these figures project the future ambitions for lower class Black communities within a national framework. Conclusively, Alexis' literary maroonage manipulates temporality by reflecting Haiti's established past of strong Black national revolutionaries and leaders and expressing a desire to futurize a glorious period that is led by Black men from the peasantry.

CHAPTER TWO: MULTIFACETED BLACK MALE REPRESENTATIONS IN REVOLUTIONARY CUBA AND THE DIVERGENCE OF RACIAL AND SEXUAL CONVENTIONS IN *ADIRE Y EL TIEMPO ROTO* (1967)

Intersectionality offers a way of mediating the tension between assertions of multiple identities and the ongoing necessity of group politics. While the descriptive project of post-modernism of questioning the ways in which meaning is socially constructed is generally sound, this critique sometimes misreads the meaning of social construction and distorts its political relevance. To say that a category such as race or gender is socially constructed is not to say that category has no significance in our world, on the contrary.

-Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, "Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics and Violence Against Women of Color."

Manuel Granados' novel *Adire y el tiempo roto* (1967) focuses on the eight-year period during which Fidel Castro's revolutionary activities ended the reign of then dictator, Fulgencio Batista. By fictionalizing historical events, including the attack on the Moncada Barracks, the 26th of July Movement, and the botched Bay of Pigs Invasion, author Manuel Granados engages in nostalgia that is characteristic of epic novels that praise the Cuban Revolution. The experimental, achronological, and psychologically induced style of the book (denoted by lucid dream states and stream of consciousness) reflects the cerebral and, at times, neurotic disposition of a man who is presented as a social pariah despite fighting as a *miliciano* [militiaman] against the weakened Batista counterrevolutionaries. This essay contends that the protagonist Julián utilizes a plethora of hetero-masculine disguises, such as military weaponry and performance, ancillary homophobic language, and hegemonic masculinity in relation to women, to protect the image of Fidel Castro's revolutionary driven power structure that he supports, while simultaneously concealing his own Black queer identity. As a parallel to the clandestine operations of Fidel's *milicianos*, Julián employs a militaristic image as a smokescreen that enables him to deviate from the racial and sexual conventions of Cuban national consciousness. Altogether, the novel describes some successes in Cuba after 1959, such as the literacy campaign

that started in the early 1960's, even as it also exposes how the white characters endorse systems in support of a Marxist, colorblind society. The novel *Adire y el tiempo roto* depicts a new Cuba where it is possible for individuals to receive education and escape prostitution; however, the novel simultaneously highlights prevalent racism, homophobia, and the continued reinforcement of hetero-patriarchal family values in Castro's Cuba. The novel is a subversive text that reveals the limitations of the Cuban Revolution in relation to Julián's Afro-queer identity. In this essay, I define Julián as a queer man living on the DL, meaning, "down low", a term that refers to Black men who have sex with both men and women, but present themselves publicly as heterosexual males. Although the slang term DL originally derives from African American vernacular, I apply the term to the larger African diaspora. Julián's Afro-queer identity is silenced, for it is characterized by rejection and a lack of a sense of belonging. Julián's Blackness and poverty do not grant him the same level of access to queer identity that Miguel José enjoys. Furthermore, Julián's presence confirms that a monolithic model of Black masculinity does not exist; instead, he represents a spectrum of alternative masculinities that diverge from the traditional model of hegemonic masculinity.

Most literary criticism of *Adire y el tiempo roto* defines Julián and Miguel José's relationship as platonic; however, I argue that Julián has an erotic relationship with Miguel José despite his failed attempts to establish romantic relationships with several White women. Interracial relationships are prevalent throughout the novel, and the White characters, particularly Cira, Elsa, Eleonora, Miguel José, and Juan, use Julián as a pawn to advance notions of racial superiority. To analyze the narrative, I employ the term "interracial distancing," which is a communicative strategy used by members of a racial group to promote cultural indoctrination, usually in the form of a national narrative. Granados subversively demonstrates

that, in both Batista's and Castro's Cuba, Whites oppose racial justice. Ultimately, *Adire y el tiempo roto* intentionally avoids the outward (physical) essentialization of the Black male character; instead, the novel purposefully accentuates Julián's psychological processes and internal complexities by examining his racial identity and varied sexualities and masculinities, enabling a multidimensional representation of Afro-masculinities.

Manuel Granados' novel *Adire y el tiempo roto* (1967), which is an obscure text from the 21st century, explores the integration of Julián, a vulnerable Black male character, into the Cuban national imaginary. The novel has largely been ignored in Cuba and across the globe; this is largely due to the book's extensive discussion of taboo themes, such as gendered violence, homosexuality, racism, masturbation, and alternative masculinities. When Cuban scholar Zuleica Romay visited the University of Tennessee- Knoxville's campus on April 13, 2017, I asked her why the book has received little attention. She stated that *Adire* was poorly received because it was a dark novel that frequently forced people to participate in uncomfortable conversations about themselves. Surprisingly, Granados' publication circumvented censorship and received an honorable mention in the 1967 Casa de las Américas contest. Considering the limits on artistic freedom at the time the book was published and the government's extensive censorship efforts, it is difficult to understand how this significant, albeit ignored text was published by the government's most prestigious literary organization. Tomás Fernández Robaina concluded in a presentation at the same campus that, on the surface, the use of a Black revolutionary soldier as the protagonist correlated with the Castro regime's representation of the new man; however, the author poignantly unmasked the deeper racist contradictions of the government. Manuel Granados challenged the status quo in Cuba even before he was officially banished from the country in 1991 for signing a document known as the "Carta de los diez" meaning The Letter

from the Ten. The letter, which was signed by ten intellectuals, openly criticized government policy and endorsed the adoption of democratic measures in the context of the imminent collapse of the Soviet Union in that same year. Nevertheless, the government viewed Manuel Granados as a persona non grata years before he was exiled. Granados was a contributor to *Lunes*, the literary section of the defunct *Revolución* newspaper led by Guillermo Cabrera Infante, a famous Cuban writer known for his novel *Tres tigres tristes* (1965). The Cuban government banned *Revolución* because it contained content deemed counterproductive to the revolution. Furthermore, Granados published a collection of poems entitled *El orden presentido* (1962) in *Ediciones El Puente*, an influential publication that was banned in 1965 due to its association with social activism, Black consciousness movements, and queer topics.

To explain the inspiration for this second chapter and the background of the novel's discussion of LGBTQIA topics, it is necessary to include an excerpt from an exchange I had with Tomás Fernández Robaina (Tomasito) on the University of Tennessee, Knoxville campus on September 15, 2015. The discussion specifically addressed Cuba and race relations, attitudes regarding homosexuality, and the state of contemporary novels involving Black protagonists. Our exchange below relates directly to Granados' novel:

Busco una novela cubana que tenga un protagonista negro y gay. ¿Puedes recomendarme un título?

[I am trying to find a Cuban novel that has a Black gay protagonist. Can you recommend a title?]

Te recomiendo una novela que se llama *Adire y el tiempo roto*. El autor es Manuel Granados, un hombre que era negro y gay. Otros libros de él contienen temas que

trata la homosexualidad y el racismo. Otro libro que trata el tema se llama *Hombres sin mujer* por Carlos Montenegro.

[I recommend a novel entitled *Adire y el tiempo roto*. Its author is Manuel Granados, who was a gay Black man. Other books of his deal with theme such as homosexuality and racism. Another book that deals with this topic is *Hombres sin mujer* by Carlos Montenegro].

Tomás, ¿cómo fue la situación para los homosexuales, después de la primera década de la Revolución Cubana?

[Tomás, what was the situation like for gays, during the first decade following the Cuban Revolution?]

La situación fue difícil. ¿Tienes computadora? Todo está documentado. Escribe UMAP Cuba en la búsqueda de Google.

[The situation was tough. Do you have a computer? Everything is documented. Search for UMAP Cuba on Google].

Tomasito's responses regarding the repression of queer identities in the 1960's were relatively short; however, the reference to the Military Units to Aid Production (Unidades Militares de Ayuda a la Producción) [Military Units to Aid Production] (UMAP) is significant because his personal friends and fellow authors, including Walterio Carbonell, were forced to work in these labor camps. The Cuban government used the UMAP to rehabilitate those who held independent or opposing views regarding measures taken by the revolution under the umbrella of national well-being. Many of these victims were dissident intellectuals, people with mental illnesses, and gay men. Tomasito seemed visibly ashamed of the history around the UMAP. We briefly

discussed the Heberto Padilla affair and the enhanced censorship efforts of the National Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba [Unión Nacional de Escritores y Artistas de Cuba] the year after Granados' novel was published. The novel was groundbreaking because it expanded on the intersectional and relational dynamics of Black male representations by addressing issues of gender, race, sexuality, social class, and education level. Arguably, Manuel Granados' most important text, *Adire y el tiempo roto* builds on W.E.B. Du Bois' theorization of double consciousness and Frantz Fanon's inferiority complex paradigm while simultaneously and comprehensively engaging with the present-day framework of intersectionality popularized by Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw. Seymour Menton references the prevalence of psychologically complex characters in Cuban epic novels from the 1960s, including *Adire y el tiempo roto* (42). As the title of this dissertation implies, Julián's psychological and masculine versatility and complexity distinguish *Adire y el tiempo roto* from previously published novels with Afro-Latin protagonists.

Race Relations and Nationalism in *Adire y el tiempo roto*

Adire y el tiempo roto foregrounds the state of race relations in Cuba during the nascent stages of the Cuban Revolution. Although the novel demonstrates that Cuba is racially diverse visually, the conclusion makes clear that racism is not simply a fading vestige of the previous Batista dictatorship, but rather a power force that has continued under new political circumstances. The desire of Afro-Cubans to marry White Cubans and escape their social class is merely one example of the prevalence of the mental effects of historical racism. Interracial distancing is related to the concept of White superiority regardless of gender, and it is a common theme in *Adire y el tiempo roto*. Julián's intimate sexual relationships exclusively involve White counterparts, and, at specific moments in the novel, the antagonists experience shame regarding

their racial insecurities and Blackness. Fanon argues that Black peoples' romantic preferences have been shaped by historical oppression, stating, "It is the racist who creates his inferior" (69). Desires for psychosocial mobility and negative assessments of self-worth explain the protagonist's attraction to White Cubans. I use the term "(psycho)social" due to the novel's attention to Julián's mental well-being and his proclivity to discuss philosophical issues with people who are willing to listen. Julián is a complex character and so are his circumstances. He comes from a poor, uneducated Black family and his dad suffers from a terminal illness. Regardless, he writes poetry, expresses his love for writers such as James Joyce, and hides his closeted homoerotic desires from his parents; however, Julián and his parents share a mutual disapproval for each other. His parents reject his reclusive, alternative lifestyle, and he rejects Blackness. The book regularly gauges the protagonist's racial cogitations regarding his family's desirability. While Julián hangs out with Miguel José in the study as the latter daydreams about classic literature, he reveals his self-deprecating attitude regarding Blackness, stating:

Sueño, sueño, sueño...! ¡Iluso, no soy un príncipe!, mi padre es Moisés, mi madre es Manana, apesta, huele a negra. Aburrido cerré el Hamlet preciosamente empastado y me estiré. Él, embobecido me observaba. (Granados 31)

[Dream, dream, dream..! Dreamer, I am not a prince, my father is Moisés, my mother is Manana, she stinks, smells like a Black. Bored I closed the precious bound Hamlet and I stretched out. He, spellbound was watching me].

In a metafictional twist, Julián interrupts Miguel José's reflections punctuated with literary references and redirects Miguel José's attention to Julián's lived experience as an Afro-Cuban. The protagonist feels immense frustration knowing that he cannot attain Whiteness. Fanon expands on the psyche of the Afro-Caribbean man and the effects of accumulated racial trauma,

writing that the Black Antillean identifies himself with the colonizer and subjectively adopts a White man's attitude (114). Julián juxtaposes the racial aesthetics of Whiteness and Blackness, demonstrating that Whiteness represents desirability and flawlessness, while Blackness represents depravity and destitution. Prior to becoming friends with Damián, who serves as a sage and moral conscience, Julián had minimal engagement with Black characters in the novel. The scene in Miguel José's room illustrates the cultural divide between the two men and exemplifies how Eurocentricism plays a significant role in defining the self-worth of Afro-Cuban people. Commenting on attempts to erase Blackness in Cuba, Zuleica Romay writes that in other parts of the Caribbean with majority Black populations, using the Dominican Republic as an example, historical invisibility equates to a mental whitening (102). Although Julián relates to Miguel José because of societal rejection, family isolation, their love of books and shared sexual interests, they differ ideologically because of social class, race, and their divergent queer identities. Julián's best friend and lover re-adopts an interracial distancing strategy by insinuating that being Black should be avoided at all costs, stating:

Nosotros no tenemos recuerdos, sólo tenemos cosas que estorban porque amarran; tienes miedo aunque no lo digas; yo también, más que tú. Tu miedo se llama atávico, lo sé. ¡Siempre eres un negro! ¿Es que no puedes dejar de serlo?
(Granados 27)

[We do not have memories; we only have things that hinder you because they tie you down; you are fearful even if you don't say it: I also have this fear, more so than you. Your fear is called atavistic, I know this. You are always Black! Can you stop being Black?]

In this passage, Miguel José falsely equates his justified fear of solitude due to a physical handicap with his queer identity and Julián's struggle to gain acceptance and self-worth as an Afro-Cuban following the Cuban Revolution.

Miguel José's stance is representative of the covert racism that treats Blackness as secondary. He exudes an aura that resembles what writer Teju Cole referred to as the White industrial savior complex (Aronson 36). Condescendingly speaking on behalf of the oppressed, Miguel José infringes on Julián's agency and describes his own experience as the universal one. Although Miguel José belongs to the White elite, he feels the need to explain Black oppression. Lourdes Martínez Echazábal comments Miguel José's vested interest in his partner, stating, "Por su parte, Miguel José está fascinado con Julián (aunque no con su mundo)" (87). [For his part, Miguel José is fascinated with Julián although not with his world]. Despite being treated as a social pariah himself due to his homosexuality, Miguel José distinguishes himself from Julián because of racial and socioeconomic advantage and declares Blackness a biological flaw that cannot be undone. Fanon observes a similar sense of entitlement common in propositions of racial superiority, writing, "The White man is sealed in his Whiteness... There is a fact: White men consider themselves superior to Black men" (3). Miguel José's honest, albeit demeaning and casually racist opinion of the Afro-Cuban experience creates an ideological arrogance that was prevalent among wealthy, White Cuban people during Fulgencio Batista's reign. This is not to say that casual racism disappeared under Castro's reign; however, during this time, the concept of racism became conflated with the struggle between social classes. This moment of the novel represents an openly segregated society that exposes upper-class White arrogance. Walterio Carbonell expands on the history of this White, Cuban, upper-class mentality, writing, "Existe una interrelación muy sutil entre la ideología y la conciencia nacional. Una interrelación

muy sutil puesto que la ideología se manifiesta como si fuera la conciencia nacional” (84). [A very subtle interrelation exists between ideology and national consciousness. It is a very subtle interrelation because ideology appears as if it were the national consciousness]. In juxtaposition with the novel’s description of Batista-era racism, Julián’s friend Juan treats racism in Cuba as a fringe element of society, and he draws on Marxist philosophy to emphasize the importance of class struggle and dismisses racial disparities. Because *Adire y el tiempo roto* does not clarify the time in which it is set, one must estimate the year based on historical occurrences. During a conversation with Juan and Julián that presumably takes place after 1959 and during the years of the 26th of July movement, Juan attempts to whiten racial complexities to Julián by equating the class struggle waged by poor guajiros (White farmers) with racism experienced by Black Cubans. Julián contemplates Juan’s insistence on an egalitarian society, stating:

Llegué a comprender ampliamente cuando dijo: Aquí somos iguales, quizás en el pueblo sea un poco distinto, pero aquí si se es guajiro, se es igual. Habrá algún comemierda que por conformarse se ponga a dar camino a eso de la discriminación racial pero sabe que en el fondo somos de la misma cosa. Distintos son los dueños de finca y la guardia rural, esos sí son distintos. (94)

[I came to thoroughly understand it when he said: Here we are equals, maybe in town it’s a little different, but here if you are a Cuban peasant, you are equal.

There will be some ass-kisser that by conforming gives way to racial discrimination, but he knows that deep down that we come from the same thing.

The landowners and the rural police, now those are different indeed].

In this scene, Granados acknowledges and highlights the shortcomings of the priorities of the Cuban Revolution, demonstrating that combatting racism is not part of the government’s agenda.

In contrast, Juan admits to the existence of racism by referencing the rural police's discriminatory tendencies; however, he asserts that within a rural context, all racism is simply an outlier. Linda S. Howe comments on the attitudes of Cubans after the revolution and alludes to the tendency to aestheticize Black culture. In this context, she proposes a Marxist humanist approach to racism by invoking class struggle (75-76). Juan affirms the same hierarchy that he criticizes; by identifying himself with the White peasant victimhood, he discredits Julián's condemnation of widespread racism. In Manuel Granados' essay "Apuntes para una historia del negro en Cuba", he clearly differentiates between the struggle of poor White people and Black socioeconomic disadvantage, writing, "Este blanco lleva consigo la esperanza de que más tarde o más temprano, saldrá de ese estado, esperanza no dada al negro" (139). [This White person has the hope that sooner or later, he or she will escape that condition and this hope is not extended to the Black individual].

The novel anticipates the incompatibility in Cuba between Marxist ideology and Black activism. Julián temporarily decides to ignore further racist incidents as per Juan's advice, but his demeanor changes upon his encounter with Damián, an older Haitian man who alleviates Julián's racial insecurities. Nonetheless, researcher Tomás Fernández Robaina, a relatively prominent defender of the revolution, confirms the shortcomings of the Castro government when he expresses in his book *El Negro en Cuba* that Fidel fueled romantic notions of racism's nonexistence (108). Juan romanticizes the potency of racism, emphasizing structural equality between social classes, while downplaying the possibility of racial tension. He chooses to use explicit language such as *comemierda*, which literally means shit-eater, to denounce racist sentiment, relocating it to the urban areas. Danielle Pilar Cleland clarifies this dismissive attitude, writing, "Anti-racialism is a norm that is communicated by many Cubans but is

superficial and only serves to hide the strong presence of racism and anti-Black sentiment that exist” (102). Julián demonstrates his neurodivergent nature by pretending not to understand Juan’s message. Julián demonstrates his cognitive versatility while listening to Juan trivialize the racism’s effects using emotional sarcasm. The narrative voice hints at this sarcasm by deploying the phrase “llegué a comprender ampliamente...” (94). Julián lures Juan into a deeper discussion about race to solicit his honest opinion on the subject. At various moments in the novel, the protagonist clearly struggles to come to terms with his daily encounters of racism and society’s hostile attitude toward him; however, he possesses sufficient psychological fortitude to cope with quotidian racism. Lourdes Martínez Echazábal alludes to the significance of *Adire y el tiempo roto* and the psychological complexities of its protagonist, writing, “...Es una obra que se aparta de la estética negrista y orientalizante para adentrarse en el mundo psicosocial del hombre negro y descolonizar algunos mitos fabricados sobre él” (91). [...It is a work that moves away from negrista and Eastern aesthetics in order to thoroughly study the psychosocial world of the Black man and decolonize myths that have been fabricated about him]. His shift from a negative, self-deprecating identity to a more racially confident self occurs while he is working on Don Sixto’s farm. An ensuing dialogue commences shortly after Juan’s initial exchange with Julián in the village. The guajiros’ preconceived notions of Blackness highlight Juan’s contradictory monologue regarding racial discourse in Cuba. Even for poor White farmers, their view(s) of Blacks is one of collective social deprecation. The message is clear: Black people are immoral and subhuman. There are several literary junctures in the novel that refer to Black people as animal herds. The narrative voice captures the dehumanizing aspects of racism expressed by all Cubans. The exchange between the guajiros and Julián reveals that the protagonist’s psychological fortitude and racial self-awareness have changed:

-Oye- dijo uno de los guajiros-. ¿Cómo te va con el viejo? –Ahí, ahí- dije por decir. –Ese tipo es chévere, no es como los otros. Habiendo venaos y guineas, le pueden llevar hasta la mujer, no se da cuenta. -¡Oye negro, cuídate tú!- dijo jocosamente el de la pregunta. No hice caso y llegué a la cocina. (95)

[-Listen- one of the guajiros said-. How are things going with the old man? –So, so- I said it just to say it.- This guy is cool, he isn't like the other ones. Being that there are deer and fowl, they can lead him to the woman, he won't realize it. – Listen Black man, take care of yourself!- said the one who was asking the question in a joking manner. I didn't pay any attention and arrived at the kitchen].

Julián's silent witnessing serves as a critique of racism and enhances his psychological well-being. He chooses not to engage with anyone who outwardly expresses such blatant racial ignorance. With each racist episode that he experiences, he becomes more calculated and values himself more. Conscious of the stereotyping of Black male sexuality, he ignores the guajiro's attempt to joke about possibly hooking up with his boss's wife. Julián understands that racism is a complicated system of thought embedded within Cuba's political system that extends beyond the psyche of individual perpetrators.

Julián repeatedly unveils the delusions of messages about racial and socioeconomic egalitarianism delivered by the novel's White characters, and he eventually affirms his *Négritude* at specific moments of the book, subverting the Marxist, colorblind approach that defines the early periods of the Cuban Revolution. Moreover, *Adire y el tiempo roto* uses a meticulous and subversive narrative style to criticize the revolution's inability to adequately address racial inequalities. By situating Julián as an agent of social change, Granados counters diplomatic approaches to racism and asserts that for revolutionary change to occur, *Négritude* must

contribute to the process. Roberto Zurbano confirms Julián's commitment to social change, writing, "El negro Julián, personaje de esta novela- y una especie de alter ego de Granados- se interroga sobre su condición racial y los estereotipos racistas que comparte la sociedad cubana, a pesar de los cambios políticos, sociales y económicos que trajo la Revolución..." (114-115). [The Black man Julián, the character in this novel- who is a kind of alter ego -for Granados, questions his racial condition and the racist stereotypes prevalent in Cuban society, despite the political, social, and economic changes the revolution brought...]. Accordingly, Julián's psychological and philosophical dynamism expand when they confront attempts to silence discussions of racism and calls for Cuban national unity. Julián confronts his friend Roberto with an impassioned comment about the lived realities of Afro-Cubans:

¡Crees que puedo chivatearte!, ¡se nota la duda!, ¡claro, soy negro! ¡No puedo tener derecho al mismo dolor, ni preocupación, no puede dolerme lo que te duele a ti, no puedo ser un héroe en tu guerra. ¡Tengo que ser un casquito, un chivito! ¡Soy lo ultimo entre los hombres! ¿Verdad? ¡Lo último entre los hombres, criado, mozo de campo!... ¿es así? Dilo entonces... ¡grítalo!... ¿Crees que puedo chivatearte? Te equivocas de lleno, no soy de esos. (100)

[You believe that I can blame you!, Doubt shows!, It's simple, I'm Black! I can't have rights to the same pain, nor worry, what hurts you cannot hurt me, I cannot be a hero in your war. I have to be a little helmet, a snitch! I am the last amongst men, servant, field hand!... Isn't it like this? Say it then... Shout it!... You believe that I can blame you? You're completely wrong, I'm not one of them].

Julián warns Roberto about his calm and innocent approach to Cuban national identity and its implication for Black Cubans. The protagonist's plea is a consciousness-raising effort that injects

a passionate sentiment reminiscent of Aimé Césaire's *Cuaderno De Un Retorno Al País Natural* [Notebook of a Return to the Native Land]. To convey this plea, the Négritude poet writes, "...No soy diferente de usted; no haga caso de mi piel negra: me ha tostado el sol" (117). [...I am no different from you; don't pay attention to my Black skin: the sun has toasted me]. Julián questions why his country dismisses his value and acknowledges that the Cuban Revolution has not addressed racism and equality on the human, emotional level. More specifically, Julián refers to a personal revolution that has occurred alongside the nationwide revolution. Yearning for acceptance, he criticizes the emptiness of the promises and the myths regurgitated by the leaders of the newly completed Revolution. Walterio Carbonell comments on the effectiveness of Black activism in Cuba, writing, "Demoler las concepciones ideológicas de la burguesía es hacer Revolución" (20). [Demolishing ideological conceptions of the bourgeoisie is to undertake Revolution]. Upon further review of Julián's rant, he affirms that the revolution's discourse has not addressed its failure to improve the social immobility for Black people. Furthermore, he also criticizes the government's failure to acknowledge the contributions of Afro-Cuban people to the success of the Castro regime. For example, Julián states, "...No puedo ser un héroe en tu guerra" [I cannot be a hero in your war]. This statement signals a significant shift away from official pro-Castro discourse (Howe 100). Moreover, considering that the protagonist fights with the pro-revolutionary guerrilla units, his statement resonates on a deeper level. Nevertheless, the novel provides a pretext for Julián's extreme discontent with the system. He experiences ridicule and cruel mockery from his fellow infantrymen due to his pensive nature and racial otherness.

From Julián's perspective, joining the guerrillas was initially an escape from his family and an opportunity to participate in a political upheaval as significant as the Cuban revolution; however, he internalizes the notion that Blackness, queerness, and nonconformity do not

conform to the ideals of Castro's revolution. Lourdes Martinez Echazábal praises the novel and emphasizes its significance in literature and the African diaspora, stating that it is one of the most ambitious examples of the decolonization of the Black male psyche in Cuban and Afro-Latin American literature (46). Julián's message to Roberto is clear: Black people will not be able to improve their status in society until White people acknowledge that racial discrimination and racial segregation are problems. The protagonist prioritizes racial discourse over egalitarianism; for Julián, racial discourse should be a priority in Cuba's new social landscape, not an idealistic façade of equality rooted solely in class struggle. Commenting on the novel's political impact, Conrad James writes, "In fact, according to Granados, his problems with the regime began with the publication of *Adire*" (95). Julián's didactic conversation with Roberto is an attempt to reclaim ownership of his mind. Interestingly, Julián inverts the meaning of "no soy de esos" [I am not like those people], a phrase used by a *guajiro* in a previous scene. He defines himself as a profound individual, and a person who refuses to succumb to the stereotypes used against him.

The extensive commentary on interracial relationships in *Adire y el tiempo roto* serves as an antithesis to the revolution's claim to have constructed a colorblind Cuban society. Some detractors may argue that interracial desire and intimacy represent cultural progress; however, upon analyzing the volatility and different racial and gendered mentalities in said relationships, it is clear that Granados is questioning the legitimacy of racial harmony in revolutionary Cuba. Toni Morrison's example of comparative power and intersectional power dynamics in relation to race and gender provides a useful context for understanding Julián's struggle to acquire power in the novel. Theorists Carabí and Segarra expand on Morrison's premise, warning, "Para que exista el blanco (superior) es necesaria la existencia del negro (inferior); por este motivo, el racismo pasó a ser considerado <<natural>> y se legitimizó" (21). [In order for the White

(superior) to exist, it is necessary for the Black (inferior) to exist; for this reason, racism started to be considered 'natural' and was legitimized]. An analysis of the relationships between Julián and the White female characters reveals the negative psychological effects that racism has on Black males. Elsa, the protagonist's childhood love, leverages her social class and race to avoid entering a deeper amorous relationship with Julián. Cira, the protagonist's eventual wife and former prostitute turned banker, initially utilizes a similar strategy of avoiding a relationship using interracial distancing strategies. At first, Elsa and Cira view Julián as a Black male body, that is attractive enough to have sex with, but not desirable enough to build a future with:

¿Tú me quieres?- preguntó él. –Sí. Contestó en un murmullo: He cometido el gran error. ¿Por qué lo he dicho, por qué? Qué tonta has sido, Elsa, qué tonta. Si Clotilde imaginaria por un momento lo que está ocurriendo en casa de los negros de enfrente, muere de un colapso. Te quiero familiarmente como si fueras un hermano, hemos hablado poco, pero somos de la misma cuadra. (53)

[Do you love me?- he asked. –Yes. She answered in a murmur. I have made the big mistake. Why have I told him this, why? How dumb of you Elsa, how dumb. If Clotilde imagines for a second what's happening at the Blacks' house across the street, she will go into shock. I love you in a familiar way, as if you were a brother, we've barely spoken, but we are from the same block].

It is important to consider that this scene occurs before Julián forms a relationship with Miguel José. The protagonist falls in love with Elsa, a woman Julián grew up with. This scene confirms the demystification of harmonious interracial love, which is contrary to the government's colorblind agenda. Julián's brief question stands out due to his display of masculine vulnerability.

Throughout the novel, his emotional intensity peaks when he is in the presence of women. In interactions with men, however, he prefers to assume a stoic, didactic stance. He desires Elsa's approval, but her response reveals the marked racial divide embedded in Cuban society. Elsa epitomizes the colonial bourgeois mindset that theorist Walterio Carbonell referred to in his study *Crítica: cómo surgió la cultura nacional*. Throughout the novel, Granados identifies the racial tension that comprise interracial relationships. Elsa has no intention of pursuing a romantic relationship with Julián, and she cites his family's practice of Santería and Blackness as disqualifiers. Her initial contemplation of "He cometido el gran error" [I have made the big mistake] reveals her uncomfortableness with interracial relationships. Elsa's final comment suggests that her friendship with Julián nullifies her racism and classism. Nadine T. Fernandez estimates that 70% of interracial relationships are intraclass relationships (51). Elsa's White privilege and socioeconomic mobility allow her to find another Black man (Antonio Cardoso) who is wealthier. Although she mentions neighborhood togetherness and deemphasizes his class struggle, she views Julián's cultural and racial difference as a marker of his inferiority. Andrea Easley Morris agrees with this assessment, stating, "In the novel, Julián's ultimate rejection by White Cuban women of a higher class is juxtaposed with their sexual desire for him which is influenced by the myth of the hypersexualized Black male" (75). As a dedicated, self-identified Catholic, she avoids choices that she considers too risqué, such as involving herself in Santería. Additionally, she argues that her mother's racist attitude would make it difficult to pursue romance with Julián, and she uses the "we are family" excuse to avoid a romantic relationship with the protagonist. Similar to Elsa, Cira also confirms White women's self-imposing limits of courting Black men when she accentuates the political correctness of perceived racial harmony, stating, "Julián, Julián, no eres un animal macho capaz de ocasionar

una hora de placer, importa un bledo que seas como eres; estoy convencida, si fueras blanco, un chivo u otra cosa cualquiera te amaría igual! ¡Te quiero y nada más!” (13). [Julián, Julián, you are not a male animal capable of producing an hour of pleasure. I could not care less that you are how you are; I am convinced, if you were White, a goat or anything else I would love you unconditionally! I love you and that is that!]. These instances exemplify how White women utilize performance to avoid interracial desires. Elsa perceives a relationship with Julián as not benefitting her class status, and despite her history as a prostitute, Cira struggles to view the protagonist as her equal, displaying an attitude of White supremacy. She stereotypes Black masculinities, insisting that Julián possesses a hard exterior and a bestial interior. Lynne Segal comments on misconceptions of manliness, writing, “...The male look is made to appear active, able to penetrate, and not passive, susceptible to penetration” (88). Cira exploits interracial myths about sex that emphasize Black male pleasure. Despite Cira’s and Elsa’s insistences that their uses of Black male stereotypes are non-racist, they position Whiteness as a social quality that Julián must aspire toward. Observing how Julián continues to be exploited throughout the novel, Conrad James comments, “The Black protagonist, Julián suffers a series of emotional crises that centre as much on his identity as a sex(ed) object as on his identity as a racialized figure” (96). Both women endure lengthy periods of performing love but place limits on this love. Interracial relationships in themselves are not indicative of racial progress; if anything, Elsa’s and Cira’s commentaries further entrench the rigid racial boundaries that overshadow the supposed progress under the Cuban Revolution. The simple solution of declaring that racism does not exist both exacerbates the ignorance of the novel’s White characters concerning racism and affirms an underlying tension; moreover, it simply expands on the restrictive nature of interracial relationships.

Masculine Toxicity: Identity and Power Struggle

The dialogue in *Adire y el tiempo roto* comments on the intersectional themes of masculinities, race, gender, and interracial attraction. Julián's relation to hegemony is complex because he acquires agency and power mainly through his relationships with White women. The protagonist's protective mindset reflects the direct influence of the ideals of White heteropatriarchy. Contemplating the importance of gender roles, he views Miguel José and other women as feminine inferiors. At times, Julián purposefully emphasizes his manhood. This is representative of the Black machismo that Richard L. Jackson refers to in his book *Black Literature and Humanism in Latin America*. R.W. Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity explains many of these misogynist attitudes. In a discussion of hegemonic masculinity, bell hooks postulates that Black men do not fall within the fixed spectrum of masculinities because they can reject model patriarchal identity and constantly reinvent themselves (Brancato 130). Black men are also victims of this system of gender, racial, and sexual oppression despite participating in and performing patriarchal ideas. Black masculinities are alternative forms of masculinity because of Black males' varied experiences with oppression in both the past and present. These realities convey that White men are still privileged and possess a hegemonic advantage over people of other genders, races, and sexual orientations. The preceding statements support the argument that Black men are not included within hegemonic masculinity. Nevertheless, Julián attempts to perform and benefit from White male power. The protagonist perceives his power as a man.

Due to several factors such as his conservative religious upbringing, machismo, revolutionary agenda, and heteromasculine disguising, he adopts a condescending attitude toward women. In some ways, Julián is comparable to Hilarion in *Mi compadre el General Sol*.

They are both Afro-descendent protagonists with significant psychological complexes, namely a hero complex. Julián demonstrates a higher degree of psychological versatility and complexity than Hilarion because of his conflicted sexual and racial identities. Nevertheless, each protagonist grows up in a conservative, impoverished and religious environment. Their respective proximities to poverty and struggles to acquire agency despite racial and socioeconomic exploitation nurture a culture of Black male chauvinism, disproportionately limiting Black female presence. *Adire y el tiempo roto* lacks any significant Black female characters except for Manana, the protagonist's mother. The deliberate omission of Black women reflects Julián's self-hatred. His lack of interest in Black women is epitomized by one of his episodes of reverie, where he states, "No me gustan las negras, nunca me han gustado, son bárbaras, como el ancestro, además no responden al sentido que tengo de la estética. No soy bárbaro...soy un cuerpo etíope con mentalidad aria." (103). [I don't like Black women, they are barbaric, like the ancestor, besides they don't appeal to my aesthetic taste. I am not barbaric...I am an Ethiopian body with an Aryan mentality]. These scathing comments demonstrate a lack of innocence when choosing a partner; therefore, relationships are race, power, and class-driven, which is the antithesis of a colorblind society. Andrea Easley Morris comments that Manuel Granados addresses a multitude of issues left unresolved by the revolution; however, Julián suffers from and reproduces racist and sexist tendencies (72). Additionally, their dismissive attitudes toward women (for example, Hilarion routinely abuses his wife and Julián sleeps around with women) and perceptions of gender roles highlight Black men's experiences of abject poverty, which are heavily influenced by vestiges of patriarchy, slavery, and colonization. In contrast, Julián's daily interactions diverge from Hilarion's because almost all the characters are White, and he must confront this world. Due to his multiple marginalities (Blackness, closeted

queerness, socioeconomic disenfranchisement, etc.), Julián seeks to unearth his identity through feelings of sarcasm, aggression, depression, and pleasure in an improvised manner. I describe this daily battle as a constant rediscovery of Black males' real-time masculinity. That is, faced with systems of oppression, he redefines what it means to be a man by frequently readjusting and compromising his various identities. He diverges from the racial and sexual norms of Cuban society, demonstrating the complexities of masculinities and their situational evolutions in the process. However, the female characters exploit the limitations of Julián's power by directing racist language toward the protagonist and differentiating themselves from him by exploiting social class, race, and gender dynamics. Simultaneously, Julián seeks to protect his image as a revolutionary soldier and his closeted relationship with Miguel José.

Julián's reaction to Eleonora's racist tirade about being a filthy Black highlights the novel's intersectional dynamism and the protagonist's variable masculinities. Like previous comments made by Julián's wife, Cira, Eleonora negatively associates Black people with misery, destitution, and uncleanliness; nevertheless, all the White female characters are sexually attracted to Black men, revitalizing myths about interracial relationships. In the concluding scene, Eleonora confirms Julián's exhaustion with sexual escapism. I contend that for Julián, sex with women is an escape from homosexual oppression; however, this sex becomes increasingly dissatisfying. Julián's neurotic episode described below, where he contemplates killing Eleonora, represents his questioning of female carnal satisfaction and his overall heteromascularity:

Alcé el brazo para golpear el rostro, rajar, humillar, matar y depositar mis excretas en el cuerpo muerto; no pude. ...¿Por qué no fui castrado, antes que nada castrado? Entonces hubiera sido armonioso, perfecto, ¿qué es lo perfecto, cómo perfecto? Loco, loco yo. El mundo existe tanto como mis testes; canta el viento,

habla el agua...No pude completar la frase, no tenia palabras, todo era superior a mí. El miedo. (129)

[I lifted my arm to beat the face, stab, humiliate, kill and deposit my excretions in the dead body; I couldn't...Why wasn't I castrated, castrated before anything else? Then it would have been perfect, harmonious, what is perfection, how is it? Crazy, crazy I am. The world exists just like my testicles; the wind sings, the water speaks...I didn't complete the sentence, I didn't have words, everything was superior to me. The fear].

Julián displays a stark variability in his masculine identities: neurosis, vulnerability, aggression, and fragility. This presents a dilemma for Julián: although, he values his mind and intelligence, as exemplified in his conversations with Roberto and Juan, he also degrades himself because of his objectified, sexed identity in the presence of women. R.W. Connell comments on the socialization of masculine gender roles, writing, “El género es una práctica social que constantemente se refiere a los cuerpos y a los que los cuerpos hacen, pero no es una práctica social reducida al cuerpo” (35). [Gender is a social practice that constantly refers to bodies and refers to what bodies do, but it is not a social practice limited to the body]. Although this novel is a precursor to broader theorizations of masculinities, especially in theorizations regarding Black men, it also attempts to express the limits of Julián’s masculinities. In a dysphemistic manner, Julián expresses hypersexual aggression, suggesting interests in sadomasochism and necrophilia. Although he does not act on these violent urges, he employs tropes associated with toxic masculinity. In contrast, he becomes psychologically dejected and sexually frustrated to the point that he questions why he has a penis. Interestingly, the allusion to castration is not only sexual, but also racial. His negative self-internalizations result from societal rejection. The White

characters discourage his Blackness and his Black family members condemn his queerness. He personalizes the oppression directed toward him, causing him to experience multiple psychotic episodes. Expanding on Toni Morrison's theorization of Julián's power relative to the White female characters, Lynne Segal highlights the protagonist's contemplations of masculine fragility and vulnerability, writing, "For the Black male underclass, like other men denied the usual confirmations of gender superiority, the only mechanisms of dominance available are frequently the mechanisms of self-destruction: internecine violence, sexual coercion and self-hatred" (187). The scene, in which the neurotic Julián contemplates killing Eleonora, captures the racism embedded within the perception of interracial desire. It is in this instance that Julián realizes that he has limited access to hegemonic masculinity and becomes aware of the historical oppression towards Black men pursuing White females. He compromises by accepting his racial and sexual identities to engage in intercourse with White women.

Regarding Teresa Valdés and José Olavarría's examination of masculinities, mentalities regarding gender performances are as equally important as the performances themselves. This essay contends that in Castro's Cuba, few attempts were made to combat homophobia and undo heteropatriarchal values, and the exchange between Manana, Julián's mother, and Elsa verifies society's preoccupation with variable masculinities. Manana and Elsa respond negatively to Julián after Miguel José kills himself. Initially, the women view Miguel José as a positive influence, in the platonic sense, on Julián. However, his subsequent depression and melancholy after Miguel José's stimulates the woman's respective ancillary homophobia. Teresa Valdés and José Olavarría point out how masculinity varies over a lifetime, commenting, "...El significado de la masculinidad no es constante en el curso de toda la vida de un hombre, sino que cambia a medida que crece y madura, al enfrentar diversas situaciones" (12-13). [The significance of

masculinity is not constant in the course of a man's life, but changes as he grows and matures, upon confronting diverse situations]. In the novel, Valdés and Olavarría's premise is validated by the significant shifts in Julián's masculinities. Once a pensive aficionado of reading, he transforms, experiencing several episodes of masturbation and pursuing sexual exploits with various women. Moreover, whereas he had a romantic interest in Elsa as a child, he transitions to closeted homoerotic relationship with Miguel José.

Same-Sex Desire and Afro-Queerness in the Cuban Revolution

In any society, poverty and lack of education often foster ignorance and cultural conservatism, which includes latent homophobia. I use the "latent" to capture the psychological undertones of groups and individuals who harbor homophobic feelings, but seldom express these sentiments due to a lack of queer awareness. Manana, Julián's mother, is from an older generation, and she is a poor Afro-Cuban woman who regularly practices Santería. Due to her heteropatriarchal mindset within the nucleus of the Black family, which is further enhanced by her religious fervor, Julián adopts negative attitudes about queerness. The intersection between religion and homophobia and the upholding of patriarchy are on display when Manana and Elsa participate in gossip surrounding the two men:

¡Manana!, ¿qué cosa tiene Julián? –No sé, Elsitita mía, no sé... Desde que se nos fue Miguel José, ¡que Dios lo tenga en su santa gloria!, está así perdido en un mundo oscuro. Arrugó la frente, tuvo susto y un inexplicable e indefinido presentimiento. El otro día dimos una sesión espiritual y el espíritu guía de mi comadre, dijo que Julián tenía que ponerse duro, porque el joven es un ánima en pena que se lo puede llevar. (49)

[Manana! What's wrong with Julián? –I don't know my little Elsa, I don't know... Ever since Miguel José passed away, may God bless him!, he is lost in a dark world. She furrowed her brow, had a terrible feeling and an inexplicable and uncertain premonition. The other day we had a spiritual session and the spiritual guide of my godmother, said that Julián had to get tough, because the young man is a soul in sorrow that can be taken away].

Elsa and Manana's conversation reinforces the influence of heteropatriarchal norms on the feminine body and mind. I use the term "ancillary", not to mitigate these women's homophobic attitudes, but to clarify their cryptic nature. I interpret this scene as homophobia, disguised as religious delusion. Manana's exclamation "Dios lo tenga en su santa gloria!" [May God bless him!], which refers to Miguel José, reveals her latent homophobia. That is, Miguel José is publicly gay, and Manana's religious reference is a way to single him out. In multiple instances, Manana utilizes the same religious exclamation to address Miguel José's queerness. I equate this with homophobic religious expressions such as praying the gay away and ideas comparing homosexuality to disease. Gay suspicion and surveillance contribute to the women's thought processes. Due to Julián's relationship to Miguel José, his mom fears that her son is gay. Àngels Carabí writes, "La sociedad homofóbica tiene raíces en la vulnerabilidad de la masculinidad tradicional ya que se basa en la represión forzada de lo femenino en el hombre (lo cual) evoca indirectamente la categoría de inferioridad de la mujer" (21). [Homophobic society has its roots in the vulnerability of traditional masculinity since it is founded on the forced repression of the feminine in the man, (which) indirectly represents the inferior category of the woman]. The two women regurgitate traditional notions of masculinity, confirming R.W. Connell's definition, which states, "Masculinidad es, en efecto, definida como nofemineidad" (34). [Masculinity is, in

effect, defined as effeminacy]. Similarly, the protagonist demonstrates his homophobia towards Miguel José, by referring to his partner's queerness as a negative attribute when he converses with Elsa, "Deja a Miguel José, ¡está muerto!- exclamó con violencia, poniéndose a la defensiva. Además era un raro- agregó" (51). [Leave Miguel José alone, he is dead! - he violently exclaimed, going on the defensive. Besides, he was a queer- he added]. Albeit homophobic, calling Miguel José "a queer" in this instance acknowledges a certain proximity to queer experience.

Nevertheless, if he struggles to accept his Blackness why would he accept his queerness? What is Julián's reasoning for bringing up his partner's homosexuality when it is public knowledge? He utilizes homophobia to divert attention away from his own homosexuality. By inserting the term *agregó* [he added], the narrative voice interrupts the homophobic gossip of the community. Sensing a pressure from the community to protect his heteromasculine disguise and increased suspicion that he is gay, he continues to emphasize Miguel José's queerness. Interestingly, he avoids the term *maricón* [sissy], which is used throughout the novel, and never refers directly to Miguel José with this slur. Exacerbated by the overlap of racist and homophobic references, the gossip contributes to the intense marginalization of the protagonist. Ian Lumsden argues, "Exploitation, discrimination, and marginalization of Blacks within a machista society has thus contributed to the emergence of a Black gender identity that publicly appears more machista and homophobic than it may be in private" (51). The reference to Miguel José's sexuality is followed by an exclamation, demonstrating an elevated degree of empathy. He cares about his partner but hides these feelings from the public. This posturing presents Julián as the protector in the relationship; additionally, his binary gender roleplay reflects his heteropatriarchal upbringing.

Contrary to most literacy criticisms of *Adire y el tiempo roto*, I define Julián as a queer person of color, citing his relationship with Miguel José as evidence. Lourdes Martínez Echazábal discusses the strong bond between the two men, but in a non-sexual context, writing, “Quiero indicar que Elsa no fue el primer amor de Julián. De hecho, la primera manifestación de un sentimiento amoroso en la vida de Julián, su primer amor, digámoslo así, fue aquél que se expresa, de forma platónica, cual deseo homosocial por Miguel José y su mundo” (46). [I want to point out that Elsa was not Julián’s first love. In fact, the first representation of a feeling of love in Julián’s life, that is his first love- well, let us put it this way, was that one that was expressed, in platonic form, as homosocial desire for Miguel José and his world]. I deliberately avoid the term bisexual to emphasize the psychological effects of his sexualities. The term queer encompasses the versatility and complexity needed to examine Julián’s multifaceted representation of masculinities and sexualities. Furthermore, Julián represents the alterity of the masculinities of Afro-Latin men, especially in the sexual domain. Julián’s queerness is generally subdued in the novel. Within the parameters of this geopolitical moment in Cuban history, being Afro-descendant and queer presented significant obstacles. Ian Lumsden makes an additional point about queer visibility in Cuba, declaring that even in the 1990’s, no one was “out” in terms of publicly identifying as gay (xxvi). In the 1960’s, homosexuality was still condemned across the entire globe. However, existence of Julián’s Afro-queerness represents the initial struggle for the recognition of alternative identities in a volatile political climate. More importantly, however, his Afro-queerness offers an expanded conceptualization of masculinities. I define Julián as a closeted gay man who performs a dominant heteromasculine identity, and frequently compares himself to Miguel José, who adopts a more public queer identity.

My discussion of Julián's complex sexual intimacy is comparable to African-American DL males who live as heterosexuals publicly but sleep with men secretly. I contend that the restricted nature of Afro-queer identities in *Adire y el tiempo roto* is attributed to negative perceptions of LGBTQ identities during the Cuban Revolution and the pressures of being an Afro-descendant male raised in a conservative household. On the Outsports podcast, British psychologist John Amaechi theorized a hierarchy of oppression, affirming that societies prioritize White queer identities and delegitimize Black queer identities. Even with Damián's friendship and guidance, Julián is advised to *ponerse duro* [be hard] and avoid emotional outbursts. Belonging to the generation of Julián's parents, Damián reinforces heteropatriarchal conceptions of Black men that date back to slavery. Each homoerotic moment in Julián and Miguel José's relationship is presented in euphemistic terms. In one instance, Julián visits Miguel José before he dies and decides to stay the night. Miguel José states “-Oye Julián, ¿te quedas a dormir? –Sí, es tarde; no podría irme. Estallaron dos bombas en la calle Maceo y no quiero encontrarme con algún patrullero... ¿Vamos a hacer café? –Sí, vamos- dijo alegremente Miguel José” (34). [-Listen Julián, are you staying the night? –Yes, it's late; I couldn't leave. Two bombs exploded on Maceo Street and I don't want to run into a patrolman... Are we going to make some coffee? –Yes, come on- Miguel José said happily]. The scene draws a striking contrast between each character's sexuality. Miguel José is portrayed as a beggar; he openly expresses his sexual attraction to Julián, using active descriptors such as “*vamos*” and “*alegremente*” to emphasize his desire to sleep with the protagonist. Miguel José interrogates Julián, asking him if he intends to stay the night. His interrogation creates a sense of desperation. The authorial voice masculinizes the violent external elements of war and authority and feminizes Miguel José's home, which is exemplified by comfort and intimacy.

This description of Julián entering Miguel Jose's domain represents a clash of two worlds: militant/pacifist, DL Black male performing heterosexuality/clearly marked gay White male, and top/bottom (in LGBTQ terms). This moment clearly denotes Miguel José as an out gay man; meanwhile Julián fights with his homosexuality and remains closeted throughout the novel. According to Thomas P. Duffin, studies have found that Black and Latino men who have sex with men are more likely to self-identify as DL than White men, who are three times more likely to identify as bisexual (488). Julián utilizes heteromasculine disguises, in this case a fear of explosions and the police, to justify spending the night without explicitly recognizing the sexual connotations of the situation. Conrad James points out that the novel contains encoded philosophical questions regarding latent homosexuality (93). Interestingly, the linguistic features of the novel underscore a confidence in each character's respective sexualities. Miguel José uses assertive language to signify his open queerness. Conversely, Julián disguises his sexual interest in Miguel José using the double entendre ¿"Vamos a hacer café"? This expression literally means Shall we make coffee?, but this is unlikely the intended meaning in this context. In a sexual context, the expression connotes oral sex. This sexual interpretation is compatible with this essay's assertion that Afro-queer identities were silenced under the repressive political environment that persisted during this period of the Cuban Revolution. In contrast, White, bourgeoisie queer identities, albeit marginalized, were more accepted and visible. As alluded to earlier, the interpolation of the author's personal life into the novel creates an alter ego for Julián (Zurbano 114-115). Considering Manuel Granados' varied sexual interests, the inclusion of Afro-queer identity and its foundational role in the novel is justified. Lourdes Martínez Echazábal clarifies unknown details regarding the author's sexuality, writing:

De sus amores varones- Granados nunca discriminó en el campo de lo erótico- poco se sabe públicamente, ya que transcurrían fuera del dominio público. Su deseo homoerótico, no obstante, era conocido por sus amigos y familiares más allegados. (42)

[Granados never discriminated in the erotic area. Little is known publicly about his male lovers, considering that these encounters were happening outside of the public eye. His homoerotic desire, however, was known by his friends and closest family members].

Adire y el tiempo roto was published before another influential and experimental novel in Latin America that focused on LGBTQ identities, Manuel Puig's *El Beso de la Mujer Araña* [The Kiss of the Spider Woman] in 1976. It is by no coincidence that in both novels the anti-LGBTQ political environment (during both coup d'états in their respective home countries) exacerbates the struggle for queer awareness and recognition of non-normative approaches to hegemonic masculinity. In a groundbreaking gesture, each novel prioritizes the representation of multiple masculinities and sexualities. Argentine Manuel Puig wrote *El Beso de la Mujer Araña* during his exile in Mexico. Puig's psychological and philosophical arguments embodied in the characterization of Molina's cellmate Valentín challenge traditional notions of masculinities and sexualities. Valentín displays a militaristic demeanor at the beginning of *El Beso de la Mujer Araña*, but Molina eventually tames Valentín's sexist and homophobic attitudes. I argue that Valentín resembles a DL male; that is, he identifies as heterosexual, but has a casual sexual relationship while confined in prison. According to Lynne Segal, "There are men who fall in differing categories, being promiscuously heterosexual, but masking passive homosexual orientation" (72). Conversely, Julián presents as a militaristic straight man, even in the company

of Miguel José; however, after his partner dies, he becomes so emotionally vulnerable that his performance of heteromascularity is attacked publicly. Puig similarly creates an alter ego for his other co-protagonist, Molina. Like Miguel José in *Adire y el tiempo roto*, Molina is clearly marked as a gay man. Although the intersection of race and psychology in the context of queerness is absent in Puig's novel, the prevalence of homophobia is undeniable in both novels. Commenting on the homophobic ambience expressed of Granados' works, Conrad James writes, "The narrative depicts a Cuban society that historically has constituted a double bind for Black homosexuals; racial insult has always been added to sexual injury" (98). Thus, the freedom with which Puig develops and the character of Molina contrasts significantly with Granados' queer characterizations of Julián and even Miguel José, who ultimately commits suicide, highlighting the oppression of queer identities during the Cuban Revolution. Julián's queer identity is characterized by denial and fear. Furthermore, he is subject to intersectional marginalization: he is poor, Black, gay, and closeted. Finally, each novel's respective representation of confinement confirms the view that homosexual love and affection should be private. For example, apart from Miguel José's appearance on the rooftop prior to committing suicide (via self-poisoning), Julián and Miguel José are only in each other's company when they are behind closed doors.

This essay places emphasis on the last meeting of Miguel José and Julián because it is the only scene in the novel that portrays same-sex desire and intimacy. In contrast, the novel offers explicit, dysphemistic descriptions of Julián's sex with women. However, gay intimacy -even in intimate settings- is treated in a desultory manner. I argue that the author glosses over explicit descriptions of sex between men in the novel due to government censorship and a suffocating homophobic atmosphere. Jafari S. Allen argues that it is the failure to perform the strict script of masculinity and *hombria*, which remains classed and raced, is scandalous in Cuba, not gay sex

itself (10-11). Although I agree that Julián and Miguel José represent alternative masculinities and challenge the heteropatriarchal norms held by respective families and other characters, the lack of a detailed description of sex in this scene mirrors Julián's unwillingness to accept his homosexuality. It is possible that Julián's sex with women is solely for the purposes of pleasure, but descriptions of heterosexual sex in *Adire y el tiempo roto* do involve kissing or cuddling. Conversely, Julián does not outwardly show affection toward Miguel José. By omitting references to affection and positive sexual expressions, the narrative voice reduces Julián's sex with Miguel José to a single act of fellatio. Lynne Segal explains the significance of sex between men, commenting that men expressing tenderness and affirming the sexuality of their bodies is an attack on conventional masculinity and threatens the governance of the traditional family (Carabí 21). The nebulous and metaphorical description of fellatio and the subsequent psychological effect it has on both men is described in the following passage:

Se acercó y envolvió con la palabra y los ojos terminaron de chirriar los goznes oxidados de la puerta. Ahora podía ver, palparlo en toda su grandeza o pequeñez, en toda su pureza u obscenidad. –Me siento muy solo- volvió a decir, pero yo no estaba ciego, ya no intuía, sabía; tuve miedo, por mí y por Miguel José, y un sentimiento de repugnancia dominó los sentidos. ¿Qué pretendes, Miguel José, ¿qué quieres?... Ahora comprendo- grité-. No pudo ser; no estaba en mí, ¡qué náuseas! Con el mundo pesando en la cabeza me alejé de la casa. Jamás volvería. Desde la calle miré a la azotea del chalet; en lo alto estaba Miguel José con la vista perdida en los dorados resplandores: aquella mañana fue el comienzo. Tiempo tuvo que pasar para que la muerte del amigo, no fuera un tormento en mi existencia. (34-35)

[He approached and swallowed up the word, and the eyes stopped, making the rusty door hinges squeak. Now he was able to see, to feel it in all its grandeur or triviality, in all its purity or obscenity. I feel very alone he began to say, but I was not blind, now I wasn't suspecting, I knew; I got scared, for myself and for Miguel José, and a feeling of disgust dominated my senses. Miguel José, what do you want?... Now I understand I screamed. – It couldn't be; it wasn't in me, how nauseating! With the world weighing on me, I left the house. I would never return. From the street, I looked at the cottage's terrace; high up was a confused Miguel José in the golden moonlight: that morning was the beginning. Time had to pass so that my friend's death, wasn't a torment to my existence].

Initially, the usage of the third person point of view obscures the reader's understanding of who was the recipient of fellatio. Additionally, the third person narrative style captures the authorial caution used to describe queer insecurities under an oppressive political environment.

Previously, Julián mentioned his fear of running into police as a possible warning about the surveillance of same-sex relationships and sexual activity. Additionally, the narrative disguises Julián's homoerotic desires. Sarcastic angst is employed to disguise homoerotic penile desire, juxtaposing a positive descriptor with a negative descriptor.

I conclude that descriptors and euphemistic terms such as "*grandeza*", [greatness] "*pequeñez*", [smallness] "*pureza*", [purity] and "*obscenidad*" [obscenity] are phallic references, used to describe the appearance of Miguel Jose's penis from Julián's perspective. It is significant that Miguel José refuses to be a "bottom" in this instance. In LGBTQ terminology, a bottom refers to the sexual partner who prefers oral sex or is penetrated by the "top." The antithetical element describing Miguel Jose's penis is a representation of Julián's hesitancy to accept his own

queerness. It is reasonable to conclude that Julián views himself as the “top” in the relationship. Julián attempts to preserve his hypermasculine image by rejecting his friend’s request that he perform fellatio. According to the protagonist’s reasoning, to perform oral sex is to be less of a man. Julián refuses to negotiate his perceived hegemony over the psychologically damaged Miguel José because this would break the rules of traditional masculinity as described by Jafari S. Allen. Jeffrey Q. McCune Jr. advances a powerful argument about Afro-queer identities, writing, “While Black men can identify and perform their queer desire (resist/subvert), they can still participate in the rituals of patriarchy (reinforce/accept)” (89). Directly following the use of a third-person omniscient point of view, both men acknowledge their feelings of inner incompleteness; however, Julián does not make this admission until after Miguel José commits suicide. Nevertheless, each character’s concern for their psychological and physical well-being becomes heightened, and they realize the significance of rejection during a time when LGBTQ advocacy and counseling was nonexistent. In fact, there was no LGBTQIA movement until the Stonewall uprising of 1969 in New York City. The protagonist makes a conscious decision to mention his own fear before his partner’s subsequent downfall. The utilization of the first-person highlights Julián’s immense fear of being visibly marked as a gay man. Commenting on the prevalence of Afro-queer sensibilities, Jeffrey Q. McCune Jr. writes, “This understanding of Black gay men as invisible or quiet continued with my collegiate experiences as the predominant gay presence once again were White gay men” (75). After the death of his partner Julián fears that his heterosexual disguise will be exposed. In reaction to Miguel José’s suicide, Julián becomes increasingly concerned with protecting his clandestine queer identity. Relinquishing sexual power to his partner signifies an alteration of his hypermasculine image.

I assert that the protagonist exaggerates his esthetic disgust concerning his partner's penis. The underlying issue at play is the negotiation of power that Miguel José experiments with. Moreover, this negotiation frustrates and threatens Julián's position as a "top" in the relationship. A discussion of the multi-dimensional, complex narrative style of the novel - particularly its simultaneous use of the first and third-person point of view- may illuminate the meaning behind the protagonist's cryptic comments. Like my previous comments on the power and effectiveness of the narrative mode, the sentence "Jamás volvería" [He/I would never return] underscores Granados' complex writing style and Julián's psychological versatility. I interpret this expression as written from both the first and third-person point of view, implying that the protagonist is saying to himself that he will not physically return to Miguel José's home or his memory. This can also be interpreted as meaning that Julián's mind will never be the same, implying psychological damage. A literal third-person interpretation relates to Miguel José's death. Concluding the analysis of the suicide scene, it is noteworthy to mention that Julián emotionally distances himself from his partner by referring to Miguel José as "the" friend as opposed to "my" friend, a more personal anecdote. Julián's usage of the term "friend" represents the restrictions on deeper expressions of intimacy in interracial unions that existed during the First Republic of Cuba and persisted during the earlier stages of Castro's revolution. Julián's emotional avoidance of Miguel José is like Elsa's politically correct reference to the protagonist as a brother and not a lover. Afterwards, he admits that he is psychologically affected, but states that time will heal his emotional wounds. Nevertheless, the protagonist's argument weakens when one considers that the concept of time is fractured during the novel, as the title itself implies. Time is non-linear and chaotic, reflecting the protagonist's unbalanced psychological

state; therefore, his suggestion of time advancing is antithetical to the pattern of the novel's fragmentation.

Finally, I will compare one of the novel's most unique retrospective elements (the scene where Julián visits his partner's house before he poisons himself) and the ambiguous comments left by the dying Julián. Throughout *Adire y el tiempo roto*, the protagonist demonstrates consistent masculine versatility, producing feelings of vulnerability, fragility, militancy, depression, resistance, and homophobia. In direct reference to Miguel José, I interpret Julián's final words as a confirmation of his queerness. He confesses his own sexual frustrations and insecurities living as an unhappy, closeted gay man under the new regime and blames Miguel José for outside speculation regarding his sexuality. The protagonist passionately declares, "Yo, Julián, acabo. Miguel José, quedé roto cuando lo hiciste. ¿Por qué lo hiciste? Abriste la puerta y me regalaste la hostilidad" (11). [I, Julián, am finished. Miguel José, I remained broken when you did it. Why did you do it? You opened the door and gave me hostility]. Characteristic of the protagonist's multifaceted psychological modes of communication, the scene depicts Julián's final words. Julián's death takes place less than eleven pages into the novel, representing his psychological fragmentation and the novel's disjointed and achronological nature. Julián blames Miguel José for damaging him sexually, and I interpret the statement "me quedé roto cuando lo hiciste" as an admission that his partner indeed penetrated him. The moribund Julián contradicts his earlier claim in the novel that he fled the room when Miguel José revealed his penis. However, in retrospect, he makes a conscious decision to go to Miguel José's house that night. Moreover, I interpret two ideas based on the protagonist's deliberate usage of the novel's title "roto": Julián's suffering because of his partner's suicide and his admission of his queer identity, albeit at his chagrin. As alluded to earlier in the essay, Julián continuously isolates himself from

family and peers and expresses gay loneliness. One can argue that when Miguel José dies, Julián dies with him from a psychological standpoint. Furthermore, Julián primarily directs his final words to Miguel José, not the mother of his child and wife, Cira. The protagonist underscores the significance of memory and belonging, referring to his dead partner while dying himself.

CHAPTER THREE: DEBUNKING BRAZIL'S RACIAL DEMOCRACY MYTH IN *SORTILÉGIO II: O RETORNO DO ZUMBÍ REDIVIVO* (1979)

The black body is a central element in the reproduction of inequalities. It's in the overfilled prisons, in the favelas and designated as shelter.

-Marielle Franco, op-ed for *O Globo*.

In this essay, I will analyze Emanuel's internal struggle regarding his Black identity in Abdias do Nascimento's *Sortilégio II: O Retorno do Zumbí redivivo* [Sorcery II: The Return of the Resurrected Zumbi] before his Zumbi metamorphosis. In some sectors of sociology and anthropology, Brazil has acquired the title of racial democracy referring to a perceived absence of racism, premised on extensive racial and cultural diversity and having the largest Afro-descendant population outside of Africa. Large segments of society in and outside of Brazil still promote rhetoric that perpetuates the falsity of racial harmony and coexistence, but *Sortilégio II* dismantles the racial democracy myth through the exploration of racial genocide, police brutality, the assault on Afro-spiritual cosmologies and an in-depth questioning of interracial unions and race relations in general. Originally called a social democracy, observers credit Gilberto Freyre with bringing this ideology to a mainstream level. He published an anthropological book in 1933 called *Casa Grande e Senzala* [The Big House and the Slave Quarters]. The study reflected a mindset that encapsulated the English eugenics movement from the 1880s to the mid-part of the 1930's and coincided with the height of Nazism. At the time of Freyre's publication, there was a preponderance of international thought concerning the undesirables and inferior races. Resultantly, these racist ideologies infiltrated Brazil. Author Kimberly Cleveland establishes that intellectuals and eugenicists fully embraced miscegenation myths and continued to endorse it after European immigration ended in the 1920's, holding the First Brazilian Eugenics Conference in 1929 (23). For example, Monteiro Lobato's sci-fi novel

O Presidente Negro (1926) captures the world of eugenic thought with its explicit promotion of racial separation and its portrayal of the poisoning of the Black presidential candidate. The prevalence of intertwining thought of eugenics and racism influenced prominent writers in other Latin American regions especially during the 1920's. Cuban writer and musicologist Alejo Carpentier wrote his first novel *Écúe-Yamba-O* (1933) during a period of incarceration in the 1920's. *Écúe-Yamba-O* (1933) contains elements of eugenics' influence, particularly the scene when the protagonist Menegildo endures a full body experiment and the prison guards proceed to examine the size of his head and torso. The characterization of Asian, indigenous, and Afro-Latin people in Mexican philosopher José Vasconcelos' essay *La raza cósmica* (1925) falls into negative physiognomic descriptions of these groups, highly influenced by the eugenics movement and scientific racism of the time.

Conversely, Brazil more than ever before, is coming to grips with its racism and racial unrest. Due in large part to only 3% of Black students enrolled in universities in 2000 in a 50% Afro-descendant country, this striking disparity prompted the creation of Brazil's affirmative action programs in 2003 in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo (Stepan). Additionally, the programs passed on the tail end of a groundbreaking conference in South Africa officially known as the 2001 World Conference against Racism or Durban I. In this notable forum, political leaders, activists, and critics discussed the difficulty of combatting racism internationally and reparations from the Trans-Atlantic slave trade, to name a few topics. After the Durban conference in 2001, more light has been shed on the state of Brazil's race relations and the fight for Black consciousness initiatives.

Using *Sortilégio II* as primary evidence, I examine and debunk the continuous idiosyncrasies of the racial democracy myth. Additionally, I will use Freyre's *Casa Grande e*

Senzala to illustrate the inconsistencies in the myth pertinent to the idea of racial harmony and the protagonist's volatile marriage with Margarida. Revisiting the debunking of the racial democracy myth requires a focus on the work of Abdias do Nascimento. One of the most important thinkers of our times (playwright, activist, author), he created TEN (O Teatro Experimental do Negro) [The Black Experimental Theater] in 1944, a platform that gave visibility and created protagonism for aspiring Black writers, playwrights, and actors. An activist at heart, Nascimento recognized the need for affirmative action and generated its discourse three-fourths of a century before current widespread discourse about racial inequality in Brazil. In this sense, the idea of affirmative action is not new to Black consciousness movements. In Amauri Mendes Pereira's and Joselina da Silva's edited book of essays entitled *O Movimento Negro Brasileiro* sociologist Sales Augusto dos Santos sheds light on proposals led by A Convenção Nacional do Negro Brasileiro [The Black Brazilian National Convention]. Dating back to 1945 and 1946, the convention demonstrated Black political leader's desires to make affirmative action official to amend the Constitution; three of the six main proposals of the Convention are stated as follows:

2) Que se torne material de lei, na forma de crime de lesa-pátria, o preconceito de cor e raça.

[That becomes law, in the form of crime against the state, the prejudice of color and race].

3) Que se torne matéria de lei penal o crime praticado nas bases do preceito acima, tanto nas empresas de caráter particular como nas sociedades civis e nas instituições de ordem pública e particular.

[That the crime committed in the bases of the above precept, be made a matter of criminal law, both in private enterprises and in civil societies and institutions of public and private order].

4) Enquanto não for tornado gratuito o ensino em todos os graus, sejam admitidos brasileiros negros, como pensionistas do Estado, em todos nos estabelecimentos militares. (128)

[As long as the education in all degrees is not free, Black Brazilians are admitted as state pensioners, in all private and official establishments of secondary and higher education of the country, including in military establishments].

The fourth declaration of the six clearly states an objective to install affirmative action in the Brazilian government and recognizing that Blacks specifically should be allowed free education at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels; this includes a specific presence in all phases of the military. Additionally, A Convenção Nacional do Negro Brasileiro, driven by arguably the most recognizable Afro-Brazilian philosopher's political aspirations (I am referring to Abdias do Nascimento- at the time he was thirty-four years old), understood that reparations from slavery were never allocated to Blacks in Brazil following the official abolition of slavery in 1888 (Pitanga 32). Unfortunately, their proposals to position affirmative action policies into law were denied vehemently, ironically by the progressive Partido Comunista do Brasil (PCB) [Communist Party of Brazil] led by Luís Carlos Prestes (dos Santos 129). The Convention's efforts did not result in a complete loss because these earlier manifestations of fighting for social justice and against racism led to expansive Black consciousness movements in the 1970's.

Brazil, the last country in the Americas to abolish slavery, deliberately encouraged massive European and Middle Eastern immigration to curb the Afro-descendant majority at the turn of the 20th century, eventually achieving the goal of a White majority by the 1950's. Abdias do Nascimento refers to this process as a component of racial genocide towards the Black person in his book *Mixture or Massacre*, ensuring the Afro-descendant's disappearance and forcing miscegenation in the form of social lynching (8). Nascimento's construction of Quilombismo and theorization of Blackness in Brazilian society slowly evolved into widespread public discourse over the years, accelerating after the backlash caused by the Centenary celebrations of 1988. Promoted as a celebration of Brazil's abolition of slavery by the national government, members of the Brazilian Black Movement rejected and continue to reject May 13th as a national holiday and instead recognize November 20th as the National Day of Black Consciousness in honor of Zumbí (Pitanga 38). *Sortilégio II* expands on Quilombismo, a philosophy created by Abdias do Nascimento, by defining Black resistance historically and contemporarily, and transforming the historical legacy of the African diaspora into a modern-day liberation movement for oppressed Afro-descendant people. Art historian Kimberly L. Cleveland expands on this legacy by stating the presence of a re-Africanization movement which inspired a broader interest in Candomblé spearheaded by the Movimento Negro Unificado (United Black Movement) (6). The title of the theatre piece refers to Zumbí, the last king of Palmares, a well-known quilombo. Furthermore, the theatre piece exploits the danger of colorism and white supremacist thought in Brazil. The poignantly written *Sortilégio II* demonstrates the sectional gaze in Brazilian society, where Black people live in constant oppression more representative of a police state than a racial democracy. In terms of racial diversity based on physical geography, it can be argued that Brazil is a segregated country. For instance, in Southern Brazil that includes

states such as Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul, people of White European descent (Italian, German and Polish) are predominant in presence. The legal territorialization of states known as Amazonia is home to a vast majority of Brazil's indigenous population. Due to the degree of slave importation in Northeastern states such as Bahia, Pernambuco, and Sergipe, many of these states consist of Afro-Brazilians, pardos, and indigenous descendants. Additionally, the Brazilian population is aware of these apparent ethnocultural differences based on geography.

The Double Standards of Gender and Race: Familial Ties and Social Experiences Revealed in *Sortilégio II*

Sortilégio II is not just the protagonist Emanuel's story, but the story of Afro-descendant people told from their perspectives. Researcher Dawn Duke declares, "The strategy that has ensured the perpetuation of Quilombismo has been Nascimento's clear vision that this is a collective and not an individual struggle" (41). As stated in Chapter 2, I argue that Black masculinities are variable, but Black male perpetuations of hegemonic masculinity in particular settings coincide with the exploitation and denigration of Black females as well. Feminist theorist and writer bell hooks does not dismiss female exploitation in the book *We Real Cool*, but she emphasizes the precarious position of the seemingly confident Black male figure. She proclaims, "Black males often exist in a prison of the mind unable to find their way out... all males learn a role that restricts and confines" (x). Her comments define the conundrum in exploring the complexity of Black masculinities and their relationship to the patriarchal power structure. Following Djamila Ribeiro's conclusion about hegemony, hooks agrees that Black men are subjected to the same limitations of access to power as their female counterparts. Although the Négritude of *Sortilégio II* is unquestioned, the expansion of alternative masculinities is discouraged because heroic and physical masculinities are the main attributes

that best describe Emanuel. Occasionally, the descriptions of the protagonist in the theatre piece lend themselves to stereotypical depictions of the strong Black male body, built to endure pain and punishment. Abdias do Nascimento proclaims in his book *O Negro Revoltado*, “Carnaval, macumba, futebol e gafieira: eis o resumo da área consentida ao protagonismo do negro” (35). [Carnival, macumba, soccer and gafieira: here is the summary of the area that allows protagonism of the Black man]. Emanuel’s protagonism deviates from previously held stereotypes involving Afro-Brazilian male characterization and his relation to entertainment and sports. Dr. Emanuel represents a significant paradigm shift, considering the acquisition of the highest level of education during a military dictatorship. This reflects the versatility in character development and personality promoted by Abdias do Nascimento’s art; however, the variance of Emanuel’s social class compared to the other three characters does not alter the fact that he fits the image of Frantz Fanon’s description of the inferiority complex. Arguably more than the other protagonists in this dissertation, Emanuel explicitly thrives to ascend the socioeconomic ladder and mirror perceived Whiteness at all costs. He undergoes significant character development that elevates into high levels of active protagonism.

The clash of gendering processes in the play is strong and intricate; there is a considerable Black female presence with the three-featured Filhas do Santo. As a multiple point of view characterization, As Filhas perform as both witnesses and storytellers, adding narrative versatility to the play. Their personalities create a cultural liaison to readers and spectators in a unique Afro-Brazilian spiritual context. As Filhas do Santo [Candomblé priestesses] derive from Afro-Brazilian spiritual systems, particularly the Bantu-derived religion known as Macumba. These Afro-descendant cosmologies survived the Middle Passage including Santería (Chapter II) and Vodou (Chapter 1). As Filhas do Santo witness all the characters’ actions while participating

as characters themselves in the play; they consistently challenge the protagonist's subconscious thoughts and provide much needed feminine voicing that serves to compensate for Ifigênia's lack of agency. Kimberly L. Cleveland states, "For Nascimento, the Candomblé orixás were very much present in all aspects of contemporary life in Africa and across the Diaspora and were not restricted to the spiritual realm" (48). Contrary to Elisa Larkin Nascimento, renowned literary critic and theorist, I argue, that Ifigênia (the protagonist's ex-girlfriend) has very little agency in *Sortilégio II*. Apart from a few brief snippets of active dialogue regarding her Afro-Brazilian womanhood, which I will analyze later, Ifigênia is strictly a supporting character due to the significant attention attributed to Emanuel. His masculinist and condescending attitudes towards his ex-girlfriend only contribute to her marginalization in society. The protagonist feels the need to control Ifigênia and once it is convenient, she is there for him as an accessory when his marriage to Margarida begins to collapse. During much of the play, Emanuel views Ifigênia as a prostitute, not a life partner. Interestingly, at the beginning of *Sortilégio II*, the prostitute label is stated next to Ifigênia and not Margarida (do Nascimento 38). Notwithstanding, both women are interpreted through the optic of the heterosexualized Black masculine mind, describing a set of behaviors that prioritize the visibility of mainly physical masculinity. I defined physical masculinity in Chapter 1 as a behavior-based mechanism that utilizes violence, physical force, or intimidation to exert power. Hilarion and Emanuel employ different methods of physical masculinity to Claire-Heureuse and Ifigênia respectively. Hilarion uses physical violence to acquire power whereas Emanuel taps into physical masculinity through emotional blackmail. This characterization discourages the examination of the character's personal raw emotions and sexuality, aspects generally associated with non-heterosexual descriptions. I affirm this term based on the consistent heroic masculinity tropes present in the preceding two chapters. JJ Bola

recalls some of the heroic masculinity traits that include a gradual progression from a highly emotional childhood to a repressed stoicism by adulthood (12). The consistency between young adulthood and the subsequent emotional repression aligns with the personality traits of the protagonists in this dissertation. Black masculinities feel immense pressure to disguise emotions, which are perceived as vulnerabilities. *Mi compadre el General Sol* (1955), *Adire y el tiempo roto* (1967), *Sortilégio II: mistério negro de Zumbi redivivo* (1979) , and *Negro: Este color que me queda bonito* (2013) share a prevalent pattern of a Black male chauvinistic style of writing, acknowledging the existence of women, but relegating their value to only corporeal needs.

Sortilégio II, despite its best efforts as a sequel to modify insufficiencies in the representation of Ifigênia in particular, continues a limited and minimal potentiality of her agency. Intentional or not, the sequel clarifies the conundrum involving the negative negotiation of power at the expense of the Black woman. Writer Dawn Duke argues, “...podemos afirmar que a complexidade das relações raciais históricas entre negros e brancos, e entre homens e mulheres de ambas as raças, tem ajudado a dificultar o acesso direto a essa subjetividade específica de mulher negra brasileira por meio do texto” (11). [...We can confirm that the complexity of historical racial relations between Blacks and Whites, and between men and women of both races, has helped to hinder the direct access to this specific subjectivity of Black Brazilian women through literature]. In the protagonist’s attempt to acquire power, Emanuel models hegemonic masculinity throughout the play via three performative roles that I utilize to analogize the protagonist. He fluctuates between three prevalent roles concerning his ex-girlfriend: the father figure, the pimp and the hero. The three literary archetypes signify a hegemonic position in the text in relation to Ifigênia. I contend that the pimp role carries a certain degree of nuance because the pimp’s power changes with time. The pimp constantly competes

with other pimps, so his power fluctuates. The instability of the pimp's role increases, at the very least in Emanuel's case, when the thought of other men threatening his ego. Sex worker advocate Evelina Giobbe proclaims that pimps control women through access to privilege, but function as father figures simultaneously (47). One conversation between Emanuel and Ifigênia demonstrates the protagonist's pimp performative inclination to body shame and victim blame when he suggests:

EMANUEL. Já observou como os brancos olham para você? Têm sempre um ar de donos...de proprietários. Trata-se de algo assentado na consciência deles. Nem se dão ao trabalho de um autoexame. Basta a um branco desejar uma negra, e pronto: deita em seguida com ela. (75)

EMANUEL. [Have you ever noticed how White men look at you? They always have this air of owners. Of proprietors. It's something settled in their conscience. They don't even bother to think about it. All a White man does is want a Black woman and that's it: he sleeps with her right away].

The protagonist redirects blame to White male society, ironically the same hegemonic relationship that he mimics in his goal to retain Ifigênia's trust; subsequently he discourages her from exploring a serious relationship. Emanuel performs an authoritative role, solidifying a relational dynamic with Ifigênia based on instilling guilt about Black female beauty. Marked as a prostitute at the introduction of characters of the play, Emanuel wants to limit her interactions with other men even more. Operating under the pimp-prostitute analogy that this essay proposes, an important attribute of the pimp complex that functions within the context of this theatre piece is the insecurity over the prostitute's power. Judith Butler references this male vulnerability stating, "The radical dependency of the masculine subject on the female Other suddenly exposes

his autonomy as illusory” (vii). The possibility of Ifigênia seeing other men to explore her future relationship options poses a threat to Emanuel’s security in his ability to control her in light of recognizing his own failing marriage with Margarida. The protagonist is not a traditional pimp in the monetary sense but operates as an emotional pimp that controls Ifigênia’s choices, making her solely dependent on him for emotional and sexual needs. Evelina Giobbe detail’s Ben Reitman’s study on pimps and points out their erratic behavior towards prostitutes by opining, “...they relieve all of their pent-up disgust and bitterness” (35). Giobbe’s observation confirms the pimp’s heightened awareness of false security. The constant state of neurosis brings us back to Frantz Fanon’s discussion about colonialism’s harsh effects on Black men. He references the search for agency in stating, “Whenever he is in the presence of someone else, there is always the question of worth and merit” (186). Fanon’s comments express more doubt over a mere ego insecurity and illustrate the racial implications caused by historic trauma.

The protagonist assumes the role of the father in a strict conservative family household sense in relation to his daughter. Emanuel’s performative role of the father figure alerts Ifigênia about the historical link between White male sexual interest as a slave master and the sexually exploited Black female. Invoking the word “proprietário” [owner], the protagonist insists on deflecting his stakes in power over his ex by pointing out White male hegemony as the only threat to her well-being. Ifigênia’s successful exploration of partners from a different race threatens Emanuel’s own insecurities regarding interracial love. He reinforces a historical, patrilineal trajectory that dictates familial structuring. Additionally, Ifigênia’s dream to be a samba dancer further jeopardizes Emanuel’s parental complex. At this juncture of Emanuel’s life (pre-Zumbi metamorphic state), he personifies an indoctrinated, educated Black man influenced by the desire to maintain a high societal status via cultural whitening. Although Ifigênia is the

speaker, the following scene not only exemplifies his combativeness in parental mode, but also underscores his desperation to uphold White cultural norms:

IFIGÊNIA. Como, outra coisa! Não discutimos o assunto tantas vezes antes? E a conclusão não foi sempre: ballet clássico? Você não me queria misturada aos sambas de morro ou de gafieira. Me proibiu frequentar os terreiros e aprender a dançar o ritmo dos pombos sagrados... (73-74)

IFIGÊNIA. [What do you mean, something else! How many times have we been through this? And hasn't the decision always been classical ballet? You didn't want me mixed up with samba in the favela, or the gafieira here in town. You wouldn't let me go to the terreiros and learn to dance the rhythms of the sacred pontos].

The protagonist promotes the Euro-derived ballet as a means of controlling her sexuality and disparages the Afro-derived samba. In the aforementioned passage Ifigênia's use of the phrases "não discutimos" and the "me proibiu" rebuttal deserve attention. The sarcastic "não discutimos" comment conveys her frustration with the overprotective boyfriend and his abuse of power concerning not only her lifestyle, but also bodily expression. She unveils that she had no say in dancing ballet and exposes Emanuel's psycho-manipulative tactics when she expresses "me proibiu" [you forbade me] (74). This essay points to the fact that the pimp-prostitute dynamic fosters the environment of the protagonist's abuse of power and male aggression. Additionally, as two orphaned Black characters in the play, (in the sense that there is no reference point to either character's parents), this reality leaves behind a vacuum in which the patriarchy blossoms. Critics state that classic ballet follows a strict code of conduct, and renowned gender theorist Judith Butler expands on the lack of female body emancipation when

writing, “The association of the body with the female works along magical relations of reciprocity whereby the female sex becomes restricted to its body, and the male body, fully disavowed, becomes paradoxically, the incorporeal instrument of an ostensibly radical freedom” (11-12). Ballet juxtaposes the liberating nature of the less formulaic approach of samba. The following exchange between Emanuel and Ifigênia offers a rare glimpse of a world demonstrating the clash between Blackness, gender and power before the pre-Me Too Movement:

EMANUEL. Você acabou de contar sua vergonhosa história com o tal José Roberto. Bancou a ingênuu...a seduzida...

IFIGÊNIA. Banquei, não: fui seduzida. Eu também já fui donzela, ora essa! (93)

EMANUEL. [You had just told your ridiculous story about José Roberto. You acted naïve; you played the seduced little girl...]

IFIGÊNIA. [I was not playing a part. I was seduced. I was once a virgin too, for Christ’s sake].

The protagonist attempts to limit Ifigênia’s voice as a means of deflecting the toxicity of the consistent male aggression towards the Black female. In her book *The Will to Change* bell hooks explains that, “Patriarchy requires male dominance by any means necessary, hence it supports, promotes, and condones sexist violence” (34). Defending José Roberto, the name of a pimp associated with Ifigênia, is a way of protecting Emanuel’s justification of power within the patriarchal system that he desires to benefit from. Djamila Ribeiro writes in her book *O Que É Lugar de Fala* “...mulheres negras, por serem nem brancas e nem homens, ocupam um lugar muito difícil na sociedade supremacista branca por serem um espécie de carência dupla, a

antítese de branquitude e masculinidade” (39). [...Black women, being neither White nor men, occupy a very difficult place in White supremacist society because they are a kind of double deficiency, the antithesis of Whiteness and masculinity]. The protagonist’s comments suggest that Afro-descendant women are lascivious, disregarding their family and right to self-defense of psychological and bodily harm. On the other hand, White women are viewed as standard-bearers of innocence worthy of surveillance and masculine protection. Writer Débora Almeida, in *A Escritora Afro-Brasileira*, explores the perceived social benefit granted to White women declaring that they have considerably more agency and power in every imaginable situation compared to Black women (127). Ifigênia’s forceful response confirms an apparent rape or at the very least a sexual assault. Although she does not use the term rape, I interpret the use of the term seduction as a less threatening descriptor to a broad readership; also, one must consider the sensibility level of the male author in this instance. I argued earlier that Ifigênia has a lack of agency, disagreeing with Elisa Larkin Nascimento’s observation of a strong discourse on Ifigênia’s agency in *Sortilégio II*. This minor snippet of verbal exchange offers some potentiality in her psychological complexity, but aside from the previously interpreted scene about the samba and ballet disagreement with Emanuel, she remains relatively absent in the play. Attempting to reduce her objectification by the protagonist, Ifigênia reaffirms her humanity declaring that she is a woman vulnerable to aggressive male sexual urges. Interestingly, she confronts the label of the promiscuous Black female even as she is paradoxically named a prostitute at the play’s onset.

In the case of the Black woman and the White man in Brazil it is common to have sexual relations, but it is seldom the case that marriage is achieved. Even being together in public or expressing intimacy is considered taboo. Does this sound like a racial democracy? One can make

a comparison between Ifigenia in *Sortilégio II* and Ariana's daughter in *Racism in a Racial Democracy* when ethnographer France Winddance Twine describes the following scenario:

Ariana fears that her dark-skinned daughter, a preta, will be perceived as a prostitute, or, at best, a mistress, if she appears in public with a White man. She suggests that in Vasalia dark-skinned Afro-Brazilian women are not typically considered the legitimate social partners of White men, despite the public discourse of *mestiçagem*. When I asked Ariana if she knew of any middle-class Whites married to Afro-Brazilians, she began laughing at me. (94)

The unfortunate aspect of this example is that a Black woman can have a White husband but runs the risk of being labeled as a mistress or even a prostitute. Nowadays, there is much more conversation about interracial relationships and whitening in Brazil, but there remains a tendency to grant favoritism to the honor of the White woman. Sarah Ohmer cites Brazilian anthropologist Lélia González in her essay, mentioning that the violence against Black women is connected to a symbolic system that codifies them as inferior and poor, from a racial and ethnic perspective (42). The negative perception of the Afro-Brazilian woman persists as a problem that can be attributed to the pervasiveness of White supremacist ideals. The stigmatization of sexuality in unmarried women continues in Brazilian culture and this applies as a disadvantage for Ifigenia being a Black woman. Writer Cristiane Sobral states in the book *A Escritora Afro-Brasileira: ativismo e arte literária* that the Black woman's image remains non-existent in cinema, and she considers her representation oversexualized and eroticized excessively (51). The sexual actions of Ifigenia and Margarida emphasize this double standard. Ifigenia is automatically confronted with battling the image as a prostitute whereas Margarida masks a possible licentious image by marrying Emanuel. Emanuel does not realize that his wife has had sexual relations before the

marriage and assumes her virginity. In *Sortilégio da Cor*, Elisa Larkin Nascimento delves into the quandary of the lack of honor for the Black woman, affirming, "...é que a virginidade perdida a deixa "acessível" ao casamento, até com um negro, para salvar a honra. Assim, todavia, Margarida tem a sua honra protegida. À mulher negra essa proteção é negada" (339). [It is the case that lost virginity makes her accessible to marriage, even with a Black man, to save honor. Nevertheless, Margarida has her honor protected]. Emanuel truly loves Ifigenia, but he attempts so desperately to conform to White Brazilian society that he saves Ifigenia as a backup plan. Ifigenia exists as nothing more than a theatric sacrifice; her destiny lies in Emanuel's hands and hands of the men that she serves.

Prominent literary critic and president of Ipeafro Elisa Larkin Nascimento disagrees with my assessment of Ifigênia's role in the play. She concludes that Ifigênia establishes considerable agency, citing the substantial changes from *Sortilégio I (Mistério Negro)* to *Sortilégio II (O Retorno do Zumbí)*. She explains in *The Sorcery of Color*, "The African-descendant woman now acts not only as the agent of the hero's salvation but also as a protagonist and leader of the community benefited by the sacrifice and by the ritual drama itself (225). Larkin Nascimento's statement refers to the theatre directions of the final scene. Ifigênia finalizes Ogun's invocation:

Ifigênia põe a coroa de Ogun na cabeça e empunha lança. O coro, as Filhas e a Iyalorixá saudam Ogunhiê! E se atiram de comprido ao chão, batendo a cabeça no solo em sinal de reverência e obediência. Seguem-se momentos de silêncio absoluto. Depois Ifigênia levanta a espada num gesto enfático de comando gritando forte Ogunhiê! O ponto de Ogun se eleva e se transforma num ritmo triunfal e heróico. (139-140)

[Ifigênia places Ogun's crown on her head and grabs a spear. The choirs, the Filhas do Santo and the Iyalorixá greet hail to Ogun! And they fling themselves to the ground, striking their head on the ground in a sign of reverence and obedience. Afterwards there are moments of complete silence. Then Ifigênia raises the sword in an emphatic gesture of command forcefully shouting hail to Ogun! Ogun's ponto rises and transforms into a triumphant and heroic rhythm].

Ifigênia's secondary character status remains unchanged at the play's conclusion, even given the special consideration of her successful execution of the ritual. Her supposed protagonism that the critic asserts, concludes in an act of obedience to save humanity. Ogun is a warrior orisha and represents overt masculine attributes. The play provides no insight into her potentiality and the future remains in limbo after serving as an accomplice in Margarida's murder and sidelining her ambitions for the protagonist's sake. Although the ending is less tense than *Mi compadre el General Sol*, Ifigênia exudes selflessness and loses her lover in the process. Claire-Heureuse and Ifigênia become poverty-stricken and lonesome at the conclusion of both works. Kimberlé Crenshaw asserts, "These problems of exclusion cannot be solved simply by including Black women within an already established analytical structure" (140). Conclusively, *Sortilégio II* misses an opportunity to expand on Black female agency and reinforces male prioritization.

In accordance with this criticism, the sequel of the play represents a stark contrast between the first version and second versions due to the enhanced Camdomblé iconography and Yoruba cosmological interest. Even so, the character's functions and dialogues remain the same. Without these additional ritualistic elements that hinge on the protagonist's Zumbí transformation at the end, the plays are identical. Nascimento explains that the author acquired a rejuvenated interest in Yoruba spirituality after a visit to Nigeria as a professor in 1976 to 1977

(208). Nonetheless, I affirm that Ifigênia sustains no protagonism or agency throughout the play; Nascimento contradicts her concluding claim by stating, “These characters are not developed with great depth as individuals, although Efigênia’s personality comes through as a strong one” (218). Indubitably, *Sortilégio II* stands as a male-centered discourse; the female dynamism and advocacy stay in the spiritual realm with the Filhas do Santo. Distinguished author Cristiane Sobral responds to the legitimacy of Ifigênia’s agency and reiterates the fact that she serves as a tool to forward Emanuel’s agenda in a recent talk at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville.

Before proceeding to the analysis of the subsequent scenes of the couple’s wedding and Margarida’s death, some contradictions and falsities of Gilberto Freyre’s study *Casa-Grande & Senzala* must be explored in order to give proper context. The study’s inclusion is appropriate considering the perpetuation of Brazilian racial harmony since its inception in 1933. As a point of juxtaposition, this dissertation expands on the psychological aspects of the central Black male figure and the parameters of Black masculinities whereas Freyre proposes positive eugenics. The play’s inclusion of abortion and interracial marriage directly confronts the racial democracy myth popularized by the sociologist.

On the surface, *Casa-Grande* embellishes the positivity of race relations in Brazil, but further analysis discovers a deceptive ideology intended to promote racial genocide. Freyre begins the study by explaining the colonial economic structure and the industry of sugar and slavery. Afterwards he provides extensive detail into Portuguese male relationships with indigenous and Black women and, details the accounts of sexual abuse in the process. The racist discourse augments in his discussion of miscegenation. For example, Freyre deflects his personal prejudice by using the U.S.’s Jim Crow system as a point of comparison, “E veio-me à lembrança frase de um livro de viajante americano que acabara de ler sobre o Brasil: the fearfully

mongrel aspect of most of the population. A miscigenação resultava naquilo” (31). [The phrase from an American traveler’s guide that I had just read about Brazil came to mind...Miscegenation resulted in this]. This racist ideology materializes in the wedding scene when Margarida’s mother rejects her daughter’s marriage. The relevance of *Casa Grande’s* influence in Brazilian society is indisputable because Margarida’s decision to abort multiple offspring ensues from eugenics influences from a previous era. *Sortilégio II* underscores the contradictions of Freyre’s romantic assertions about race relations. The play highlights prevalent dualities: Catholicism/Candomblé, Ifigênia/Margarida, offspring murder/spousal murder, and Black survival/White supremacy. Further analysis of *Casa Grande* confirms the startling relationship between *Sortilégio II* as Freyre asserts, “Com relação ao Brasil, que o diga o ditado: Branca para casar, mulata para f...., negra para trabalhar...ao lado do convencionalismo social da superioridade da mulher branca e da inferioridade da preta...” (72). [With relation to Brazil, the saying goes: White woman to marry, mulatta woman for intercourse, Black woman to work...alongside the social conviviality of the White woman’s superiority and the Black woman’s inferiority].

In the play, Emanuel attempts to negate his Blackness via marriage with his White wife Margarida, but this decision is not immune to social obstacles. During the wedding, Margarida’s mom vehemently expresses her disapproval of Emanuel as a human and her daughter’s spouse:

FILHA DE SANTO II. (encarando invisíveis convidados) Por que olham tão admirados?... Nunca assistiram um casamento?

FILHA I. Igual a este, nunca. Casamento de branca com preto? Onde já se viu?

FILHA III. (gritando) Sumam-se fantasmas de magia branca. (Vira-se para as Filhas) Viram a cara de mãe da noiva? Da sogra de Emanuel? Nem tristeza, nem alegria... Só o horror... o espanto diante do irremediável... (olhando as próprias mãos vazias, procura na cena) E o buquê? Onde está o buquê de lírios? Onde estão aqueles malditos lírios?

VOZ DA MÃE DE MARGARIDA. (lança uma maldição cujas palavras quase não se distinguem) Malditos são vocês... e sua raça negra. Amaldiçoados estão para sempre. Desde os tempos da Bíblia!...

EMANUEL. Na cerimônia do meu casamento! (grita) Vergonha!

FILHA DE SANTO III. (dirigindo-se às Filhas I e II) Vergonha! Tirem depressa essa cara branca da morte. (ambas tiram)

EMANUEL. Tanta humilhação sufoca, derrota um cristão. Se ao menos houvesse um trago de bebida... (64-66)

FILHA DE SANTO II. [facing invisible guests: Why do you look so shocked? Haven't you ever seen a wedding before?]

FILHA DE SANTO I. [Not like this one, I have not. White woman marrying a Black man? Where have you seen that before?]

FILHA DE SANTO III. [Vanish, ghosts of white magic! Turning to the other Filhas de Santo. Did you see the bride's mother's face? Emanuel's mother-in-law? No sadness, no happiness, just horror. Panic in the face of the irreparable.]

She looks at her empty hands, searches the set. The bouquet, where is the bouquet of lilies? Where are those damned lilies?]

VOICE OF MARGARIDA'S MOTHER. [uttering a curse whose words are almost unrecognizable, distorted with rage: Damn you, and your Black race. You are cursed forever; you have been since Biblical times].

EMANUEL. [At my wedding ceremony! Shouts. Shame!]

FILHA DE SANTO III. [to Filhas de Santo I and II : Shame! Take off those deathly white faces, quick. Both take off their masks].

The Filhas de Santo denote a prevalent social pattern in Brazilian society, the disproportionate percentage of interracial marriages between Blacks and Whites. When Filha II says, “Por que olham tão admirados” [Why do you all seem so shocked?] I interpret this as a conversation between the Iyalorixá and a rhetorical question in jest to the reader/spectator of the play. In her book *Racismo no Brasil* Lilia Moritz Schwarcz speaks on the tendencies of married couples, concluding that most Brazilians marry within the same race and social class (62). In particular, Filha I's reaction implies that a specific intention lies in Margarida's actions. Why does she want to marry a Black man? Djamila Ribeiro's observation clarifies the social hierarchy in Emanuel and Margarida's relationship warning, “É muito importante perceber que homens negros são vítimas do racismo e, inclusive, estão abaixo das mulheres brancas na pirâmide social” (40). [It is very important to realize that Black men are victims of racism and are even below White women on the social pyramid]. As Filhas challenge the discourse that entails Margarida's decision because when she marries Emanuel, she runs the risk of having offspring that will invert the whitening process. Shortly before the author writes *Sortilégio II* a study conducted by sociologist

Octavio Ianni revealed that 89% of non-Black Brazilians would not marry a Black nor approve a similar marriage involving a friend, brother or sister (do Nascimento 63). Nevertheless, for Emanuel, to embrace the opportunity of having kids with Margarida is one of the more common tendencies of educated Black men in Brazil- to whiten. The same sentiment is expressed in *Black Skin, White Masks* when Frantz Fanon affirms, “For the Black man there is only one destiny. And it is White” (4). Prior to Emanuel’s successful metamorphosis, aided by the power of the Orixás, he believes that marriage with Margarida will empower him enough to escape oppression. The protagonist exudes several displays of self-hate. In the book *O Sortilégio da Cor*, Elisa Larkin Nascimento explains Emanuel’s dilemma, “Católico, o advogado Emanuel é um homem que seguiu os padrões da vida ocidental, vivendo plenamente o que Ferreira identifica no processo de construção da identidade como estágio da submissão” (334). [Being Catholic, the lawyer Emanuel is a man who followed the standards of Western life, living fully what Ferreira identifies in the process of identity construction as the submission stage]. Emanuel desires to create a model of Whiteness and social mobility for himself, but this aim for power comes at the expense of Ifigênia as he exploits her loyalty for personal gain and uses her as a backup plan to a declining marriage. Filha III’s observation dismantles the racial democracy myth and unmask negative White Brazilian prejudices regarding interracial love. Furthermore, the attention placed on Margarida’s mother dismisses gender exceptions as it pertains to notions of racism. Surprisingly, Margarida’s mother avoids questioning Margarida’s reasons for marrying a Black man, solidifying the theme of White feminine innocence. Conversely, from her point of view, Emanuel stains this innocence, invoking biblical justification of the protagonist’s supposed racial inferiority.

The Fight Against the Myth of Racial Democracy and its Implications for Representations of Blackness in *Sortilégio II: Mistério Negro De Zumbi Redivivo*

Emanuel uses indoctrination tactics that Blacks need to conform to Roman Catholicism. Interestingly, the wedding scene alludes to Ham's curse, expressed by the anger of Margarida's mother. She expresses that Afro-descendant people represent powerless beings and exude fatalism. The protagonist's and his mother-in-law's sentiments reflect the duality of race relations in Brazil, a Black voice encapsulating self-hate and a White voice projecting racial supremacy. His expression signifies the extent of whitewashing present. Emanuel employs the civilization and barbarism dichotomy, pleading Blacks to cut ties with African customs and cosmologies. Abdias do Nascimento writes about the added pressure placed on Black people, emphasizing, "Monstruosa máquina ironicamente designada democracia racial que só concede aos negros um único privilégio: aquele de se tornarem brancos, por dentro e por fora" (93). [Monstruous machine ironically called racial democracy that only grants Blacks a single privilege: that of becoming White, inside and out]. He internalizes differences from other Blacks based on social class, education, and religion. Not surprisingly, Emanuel shares the features of another Fanon-like figure in Julián from the previous chapter. It shows the psychological damage derived from the idea of empire and conquest. Cameroonian philosopher Marcien Towa expands on the ideology of European imperialism which claims that the Black man is a non-man, has no philosophy and can be trained like a domesticated animal (27). The colonized adopts the colonizer's mentality but fails to capitalize off the former's power, as indicated by the monologue:

EMANUEL. É por isso que essa negrada não vai para a frente... Tantos séculos no meio da civilização e o que adiantou? Ainda acreditando em feitiçaria...

praticando macumba... culto animista! Evocando deuses selvagens... Deuses! Por acaso serão deuses essa coisa que baixa nesses negros boçais? ...Deuses! (58)

EMANUEL. [This is why these Blacks do not get anywhere... All these centuries in the middle of civilization, and what good has it done? Still believe in witchcraft... practice Macumba... animalistic cults! Evoking savage gods... Gods! As if you could call those gods, that thing that comes onto those stupid niggers?... Gods!]

In this scene, the protagonist's attitude is condescending and racist. He disassociates with his Blackness, denigrating Afro-descendant ancestries and spiritualities. Asserting the influence of Roman Catholicism, Emanuel imitates Euro-Christian ideology, alluding to the savagery/civilization dichotomy. Cristiane Sobral explains the fostering of the protagonist's mentality, forwarding that indoctrination about the inferiority of Blackness begins in the classroom based on Eurocentric models (51). In this instance, Emanuel views Blacks collectively as regressive and primitive. This characterization of the protagonist aligns with Fanon's notion of wearing the White mask (19). Additionally, the promotion of cultural genocide is prevalent and Elisa Larkin Nascimento adds, "Racial democracy in Brazil continues to denote the oppression of Blacks, the degradation and proscription of their cultural values...rich and poor alike" (46). Emanuel questions why Blacks have not adapted and adopted the White man's ways.

Aesthetic Whiteness, an original term that I coined in a previous essay, is the attempt by Black Brazilians to emphasize White ancestry, or in this case Euro-Brazilian cultural norms such as the preference of Roman Catholicism, to distinguish oneself from other Afro-descendant people. However, simply adopting White male patriarchal programming does not equate being White. According to Brazilian sociologist Oracy Nogueira rooted racism in Brazil revolves

around bias based on physical marking and appearance (DaMatta 24-25). In these instances, one must distinguish class and race. For example, although many Whites live alongside Blacks in the favelas of the larger cities particularly, this reality does not change an individual's race. Under the same rationalization of the race/class dichotomy, Edson Nascimento (colloquially known as Pelé) does not become White simply because he is a wealthy Brazilian. As alluded to in Twine's book, Carmen, a light-skinned Afro-Brazilian, demonstrates how the one rich man in her town Vasalia is called Pelé (105). Pelé is not the man's real name, only a pseudonym simply because he is rich and Black, thus the footballer himself (Pelé) is viewed as a rich Black archetype. Commentators, especially in the media, who claim that Pelé can be engaged in the same conversation as being White fail to recognize that the racial democracy myth is employed in an erroneous application of Pelé's race. Abdias do Nascimento affirms in his book *Brazil: Mixture or Massacre*:

Sports, presented as avenues that are open to the protagonism of Black athletes in Brazil and promoted as testaments to racial diversity and inclusion in the name of "racial democracy" involve systematic prejudice and racial discrimination; in Mario Filho's book *O Negro no Futebol Brasileiro* he highlights the struggles of gaining acceptance amongst the football community. (84)

No anthropologist or social scientist would ever affirm that Edson Nascimento (Pelé) who was born and raised in Brazil's slums is considered anything besides an Afro-Brazilian. Attempts to whiten Pelé by the media due to his legendary status as a humanitarian and arguably being the most recognized footballer in history are invalid. Similarly, Emanuel falls captive to the prevalence of whitening ideologies, still active in the Brazilian landscape.

Abdias do Nascimento, the late playwright that promoted Pan-Africanism in Brazil and developed a unique theory known as Quilombismo demonstrates the constant mistreatment and abuse by White Catholic society in Brazil regarding African rituals in *Sortilégio II*. In the upcoming scene, Emanuel flees to the terreiro. The police customarily raid the holy temples. He gets a wakeup call upon witnessing the violence committed against macumba practitioners. Researchers Rosângela Fonseca do Nascimento and Alexandre de Oliveira Fernandes capture the essence of the following scene involving condemnation of African-based religions, stating, “A obra apresenta a problemática das religiões de matriz Africana que sempre enfrentaram preconceitos, com os candomblés sendo fichados na polícia, fechados, invadidos e até proibidos” (7). [The work demonstrates the problems of African religions that have always faced prejudice, with candomblés being registered with the police, closed, invaded and even prohibited]. Although a practicing Catholic, he becomes a part of this community by default because the military police view the protagonist as part of the Black collective, a group he denigrated previously. Even though Emanuel lacks an emotional attachment to the terreiro and the surrounding community, he undergoes the harsh treatment of the police. This scenario exemplifies W.E.B. Du Bois’ idea of double consciousness. Having the benefit of being educated, Emanuel managed to avoid these marked spaces of resistance. Nevertheless, he realizes how society views him when placed in a poverty-stricken setting with other Black people. Djamila Ribeiro, who is part of Blogueiras Negras (Black Women Bloggers) a social media network comprised of Afro-Brazilian women activists who discuss gender inequality, race and Black consciousness vehemently states on a telecast of The Stream on Al-Jazeera English that “police and law enforcement officers are easily able to identify Blacks, incarcerate and discriminate against us at unprecedented rates.” The protagonist Emanuel illustrates daily

struggles for worshippers who do not conform to Catholicism and reveals the unjust perspective of the police in reference to Afro-Brazilian religions:

EMANUEL. Neste caso o terreiro é aqui mesmo! (preocupado) Que azar! Como é que vim parar num lugar como este? Isto aqui é perigoso... Que imprudência! A polícia costuma dar batidas nos terreiros... Prendem tambores sagrados... os crentes... até as mães de santo... (57)

[That means the terreiro is right here!] (worried) (What lousy luck! But how did I end up in a place like this? This place is dangerous. What lousy judgment! The police are always raiding these places. They seize the sacred drums, arrest the worshippers... even priests and Iyalorixas...]

Emanuel suspects that the authorities will find him even though he is not a practitioner of Candomblé, but due to his vulnerable position in society just for being Black and for being surrounded by a community that practices exclusive Afro-Brazilian religions such as Quimbanda, Candomblé, and Umbanda. Femi Ojo-Ade summarizes the significance of these cosmologies by stating, “Power to fight against the oppressor was obtained from the deities (Ogun, Sango, Esu, Yemanjá, among others) whose characteristics were adapted to the particular needs of Afro Brazil” (239). Although Emanuel speaks in a condescending tone towards African rituals throughout much of *Sortilégio II*, he knows that these African communities that practice Candomblé do not threaten the police, but rather express their beliefs in a clandestine environment. The protagonist realizes (even though he is Catholic) that the police’s actions violate the rights of the Afro-Brazilian communities by breaching their holy temples [terreiros]. In the essay *Brazil, Mixture or Massacre*, Abdias do Nascimento demonstrates the important role of the terreiros, explaining, “Constituting the source of African cultural resistance and the cradle

of Afro-Brazilian art, the Candomblés have had to seek refuge from police violence in hidden places of difficult access” (108). Candomblé communities cannot enjoy freedom of expression without harassment because the authorities treat them as illegal entities. These communities are the nucleus of Afro-Brazilian artistic expression and represent a threat to Eurocentric dominant thought, predominantly Catholicism’s hegemony and policing of Afro-Brazilian religions. Emanuel’s abrupt shift in mentality underscores the limited capacity of the mask when confronted with less than ideal environmental factors. He no longer views himself and other Afro-descendant people through the eyes of the oppressor in this example. Ironically, he realizes that portraying all Blacks as the problem mirrors the same lens through which society judges him. His acknowledgment of police brutality towards the terreiros and the macumba practitioners demonstrates the undeniable evidence of the Brazilian police state that upholds White supremacy and subdues Afro-Brazilian religions. Even though he negatively internalizes a correlation between danger and Blackness in a condescending manner, he sheds light on the suppression of macumba and other Afro-spiritual cosmologies. Selfishly, he worries more about his safety than the well-being of the terreiros. Emanuel’s presence in the terreiros causes vulnerability, and he fears the authorities view him as guilty by association. *Sortilégio II* develops in such a manner that effectively and deliberately deconstructs the racial democracy myth.

Afro-diasporic communities share common experiences as it pertains to the theme of police brutality and oppression. Because of clear implications from race, gender and class exploitation, the protagonist describes a classic example of racial profiling in the upcoming scene when he clashes with the police. In one of the instances, Margarida accompanies Emanuel when the police confront him. Margarida’s voice and input are silenced and the addition of the interracial couple dynamic during a military dictatorship augments the precariousness of

Emanuel's well-being. Additionally, the polarization of race relations during this time period and the presence of a militarized racist police force contributes to enhanced surveillance in the protagonist's mind. Although Emanuel insinuates that he has grown from his experiences with police brutality, fleeing in the clandestine *terreiros* on mountainsides is his choice of escape (refuge), invoking the historical imagery and symbolism of the *quilombo*. Abdias insists that *quilombo* is the center of discourse of resistance and offers shelter and protection from the harshness of outside reality (Duke 39). The protagonist offers some insight into the harshness of the police state:

EMANUEL. Desta vez não me pegam. Não sou mais aquele estudante idiota que vocês meteram no carro forte. Aos bofetões. Preso por quê? Ah! O carro não podia regressar vazio à delegacia. Me racharam a cabeça a socos e cassetetes. Me obrigaram a cumprir sentença por crimes que jamais cometi ou pensei cometer. Não matei. Não roubei. (57)

EMANUEL. [This time you will not get me. I'm not that idiot student you threw in the paddy-wagon anymore. And beat up. Arrested for what? Of course, the car could not go back to the stationhouse empty, yes? You broke my head open with cuffs and clubs. You made me do time for crimes I never committed or thought of committing. I did not kill anyone. I did not rob anyone].

Although fictional, Emanuel's multiple beatings at the hands of the police place emphasis on the suffering and exploitation of predominantly Black men, not just in Brazil. Anthropologists James Holston and Teresa Caldeira cite the continuous violence and crime by private security guards and military police at disproportionate rates against Black men well after twenty years of a military dictatorship (Roth-Gordon 171-172). This stands as evidence that wealth and

socioeconomic status do not ensure preferential treatment for the protagonist. Whatever privilege Emanuel feels from his status diminishes because of constant police brutality. Emanuel, a product of Western thought, performs self-deprecating acts that degrade his Afro-Brazilianness initially. The police beatings are a wake-up call to action, not that he deserved them, but rather the author utilizes as a vivid way to express what all Afro-descendant people experience: oppression without regards to any privilege. Oppression is a universal common denominator with Afro-descendant communities diasporically. When discussing the scenes involving police brutality, racism towards the Black man, although not limited to a Brazil-specific context, is a focal point of *Sortilégio II*.

The themes of caution and surveillance prevail in *Sortilégio II*. The fear of Afro-descendant males from law enforcers dates to the beginnings of nation-building itself in the Americas. Researchers Alejandro Fernández Calderón and Liván Soto González in the book *Masculinidad* explain that people suffer from fear of the Black man syndrome, a mental disorder that lasts until present times (88). Using this study as evidence alone, one witnesses Hilarion's debilitating abuse in a Haitian jail in *Mi compadre el General Sol*, Julián's experiences of racism with patrol units in *Adire y el tiempo roto* and Jafari S. Allen's testimonies to racial profiling at the Havana malecón in his book *¡Venceremos?* *Sortilégio II* documents these continuous oppressions and easily tears down the racial democracy myth in the process, showing the need even in the 21st century, to seek maroonage. In this case, maroonage means assuring Emanuel's safety at all costs. Emanuel alludes to this place of refuge when he states, "Preciso dar o fora enquanto é tempo. Ir para bem longe..." (59). [I must leave while there's time. Get far away]. The protagonist remains in constant flight throughout the play and fears his surroundings; ironically, he finds himself at the macumba terreiros that are subjected to police raids. The surveillance of

Black men serves the purpose to invisibilize. Notwithstanding, the non-practicing aspect of Emanuel's profession as an attorney further invisibilizes him. He is essentially stripped from his social status.

Margarida's openness to declare her lack of intention to procreate with Emanuel is a turning point in the drama because it reiterates the fallacies of the racial democracy and more importantly reveals what Margarida's incentive to marrying Dr. Emanuel is in the first place. Margarida decides to take matters in her own hands and Professor Niyi Afolabi directly references the turning point in the declining marriage:

Nascimento frustrates Dr. Emanuel by making him go through several rites of passage that will ultimately bring him into full consciousness of his own Black identity, with particular emphasis on such issues as police brutality and the fact that Margarida does not want any mixed offspring- just the convenient warmth and intimacy of a Black body. And this is where the racial democracy thesis falls apart. Margarida repeatedly kills the potential biracial offspring through self-inflicted abortions (202).

Abortion, within the context of an interracial relationship/marriage in *Sortilégio II*, reveals a lot about the functionalities of racism in Brazil and the precarious state of race relations in general. Margarida's actions raise the issue of colorism, fearing that her children will be viewed as too dark. It is easy to condemn Margarida and affirm that she aborts her child, calling her morality into question, but what do these multiple abortions confirm about racism and Black genocide in Brazil? These actions reflect societal angst and hate towards Afro-descendant people. The author's focus on this issue warrants further criticism into the intentions of White Brazilians and the dynamic of intimate relations with Black people. Emanuel's socioeconomic status and

education level still fall short of Margarida's expectations in a spouse. Classic theorists and sociologists in Brazil commonly made the claim, dating back to the 1950's, that money whitens in Brazil. These dated claims have since been debunked, especially by S. Soares, who was one of the first researchers to emphasize that discrimination against Blacks strengthens amongst those with higher incomes and socioeconomic statuses (Moraes da Silva and Reis 58). To further the point of Emanuel's discrimination, especially amid a military dictatorship in the 1970's, one must contemplate the racial presence of the work environment considering the protagonist's profession of attorney. Who would be his co-workers? Dr. Emanuel, an Afro-Brazilian attorney is a significant shift in literary protagonist paradigms that rarely feature a Black man with this level of education and psychological development. Furthermore, it counters the reality of many Afro-Brazilian men and women today that usually serve as waiters/waitresses or other menial jobs (Roth-Gordon 29). Particularly, in smaller towns in Brazil, it is customary to see Blacks working jobs in this capacity. They frequently serve middle-class to upper-class privileged White Brazilians. According to social scientist Carlos Moore, "O parâmetro internacional de mensuração de renda (GINI) revela que, no mundo, o Brasil é o oitavo país em desigualdade social" (75). [The international income measurement parameter (GINI) reveals that, in the world, Brazil is the eighth country in social inequality]. These realities shatter the myth of racial democracy, depicting Brazil as a racial mirage that sells romantic imagery regarding its cultural and racial diversity.

The relationship between Emanuel and Margarida exists as no more than an illusion, and a matter of convenience. She wants the benefit of sex, but without the possible consequences of a Black child. In concrete terms, Margarida fulfills her fantasy of having an educated Black man and simultaneously, benefitting and retaining her Whiteness. Under the same token, Emanuel

benefits from having a White wife, but suffers police brutality and the disadvantage of not being able to escape his Blackness. The Afro-Brazilian man's identity is still not fixed or decided, "He represents the Black race, whose conflicts of syncretism, raised by the traumas of survival, should not be allowed to compromise Black cultural affirmations" (Harrison 170). Although some present-day Black Brazilians have racial identity struggles, in Emanuel's unique situation, social class has considerable influence in his identity complex, "...the Negroes' inferiority complex is particularly intensified among the most educated, who must struggle with it unceasingly" (Fanon 14). In summary, level of education and social position offer no immunity to racial discrimination, and Emanuel finds no alternative in his search to escape his Blackness.

Emanuel eventually learns to accept himself as a Black man, but only after Margarida dies. This essay remains skeptical as to what extent the protagonist accepts his Blackness. Even in the metamorphosed Zumbi-state Emanuel shows favoritism towards the ideology of *mestiçagem* (race-mixing for the purpose of approximating Whiteness) and his descriptors in one of the play's final scenes demonstrate continuous racial conflict and contradiction. Doris J. Turner summarizes the conclusion, "Dr. Emanuel is destined to die at midnight, not for having just strangled his White wife, but for his transgressions against his African heritage: he has mocked Exu, he has forgotten the African gods, and he has dishonored Obatalá, the Creator" (42). Upon discovering the series of abortions performed by Margarida, he subsequently kills her. He justifies the homicide as a way of combatting racism and offsetting what Abdias do Nascimento refers to as the genocide of the Black man. The inability to witness his unborn child's potential perturbs Emanuel. The following scene emphasizes the antithetical aspects of Emanuel and Margarida's relationship and his own psychological racial preoccupations prior to

entering his metamorphic state. To be clear, the metamorphic state represents the cleansing of his previous White supremacist ideologies and a new gained self-respect and pride in his Blackness:

EMANUEL. Margarida muito convencida que eu estava fascinado pela brancura dela! Uma honra para mim ser chifrado por uma loura. Branca azeda idiota. Tanta presunção e nem percebia que eu simulava... procedia como pessoa educada, ouviu? Como mulher você nunca significou nada para mim. Olha: que, tinha nojo era eu. Aquelas coxas amarelecidas que nem círio de velório me reviravam o estômago. Seu cheiro? Horrível! O pior: teus seios mortos de carne de peixe. E o nosso filho... lembra-se? Outro equívoco... novo engano de sua parte. Você o matou para se desferrar da minha cor, não foi? Mas ele era também seu sangue. Isto você deixou de levar em conta. Que eu não poderia amar uma criatura que tinha a marca de tudo aquilo que me humilhou... me renegou. Desejei um filho de face bem negra. Escuridão de noite profunda... olhos parecendo um universo sem estrelas... Cabelos duros, indomáveis... Pernas talhadas em bronze... punhos de aço... para esmagar a hipocrisia do mundo branco... (122)

EMANUEL. [Margarida was quite convinced that I was fascinated with her Whiteness! An honor for me to be betrayed by a blonde. Sour White idiot. All that pretense and she never even noticed I was the one who was pretending. Acting like a well brought-up boy, yes? As a woman, you never meant anything to me. Look: I was the one who was nauseated. Those thighs, yellow as candles at a funeral turned my stomach. And your smell? It was horrible! And worse: your dead fish-flesh breasts. Remember our son? Wrong again... one more mistake on your side. You killed him to get back at my color, right. But he was also yours.

You forgot to take that into account. I couldn't have loved a creature that carried the mark of all that had debased me, humiliated me, mocked me... rejected me. I wanted a son with a deep Black face. Darkness of the deepest night. Eyes like a starless universe. Wiry hair, untamable. Legs sculpted in bronze. Steel fists, to smash the White world's hypocrisy].

In my interpretation, the reference to his unborn child's Black face and subsequently the allusion to his bronze legs point out societal tendencies to visualize a person's blackness primarily. By default, the protagonist's unborn child is Afro-descendant and would have identified as such if still alive. Emanuel's reference to his child's Black face and bronze legs is reminiscent of an image by Cuban artist Arístides Hernández Guerrero, professionally known as ARES, which I showed in a class presentation about Latin American colorism and racism. In the image, the sword cuts at the darkest parts of the arm guided by the white hand. The lighter areas of the arm are unharmed but are part of the same arm. From an aesthetic point of view, Emanuel continues to favor the mulatto look over a dark or Black phenotype even in his metamorphic/reawakening state. Jennifer Roth-Gordon comments within the context of *Sortilégio II*, "The dictatorship fiercely protected national deeds of mestiçagem (race mixture) and racial tolerance through acts of censorship" (46). Like Nicolás Guillén's tone of yearning in the poem "El apellido" [Last Name] when he questions the origins of his African name instead of his adopted slave name, Emanuel contemplates his unborn child's appearance, but most importantly his potential in advocating social change for Black people. However, this dream is not fulfilled. Granted the political circumstances at the time compounded with Margarida and Emanuel's racial friction, it is very unlikely that their relationship survives anyway. Carlos Moore recognizes the varied mentality in racial dynamics stating, "...a dita política de democracia racial produziu dois Brasis

que não se encontram: un branco e outro, enveredados em duas lógicas contrárias e fortemente racializadas de desenvolvimento antagônico” (73). [...the so-called racial democracy produced two Brazils that do not converge: one White and the Black, engaged in two opposing and strongly racialized logics of antagonistic development]. This essay opines that Emanuel’s anti-White activism is exaggerated, but his masculinist tendencies resurface in the above passage. The scene generates discourse involving accusations of anti-racist racism due to the distancing of oneself as an appendage of White cultural norms (Ojo-Ade 9). He utilizes continued chauvinistic language with Margarida in this instance whereas he previously slut shames his ex-girlfriend, now re-ignited partner for life Ifigênia. On the contrary, he desexualizes Margarida and suggests an incompatibility with his sexual prowess. Butler comments, “Within a language pervasively masculinist, a phallogocentric language, women constitute the unrepresentable” (9). He actively interprets woman as a signifier for body and object. Emanuel exudes heroic and physical masculinities in his recreation of his unborn child’s physical appearance. Regarding the protagonist’s metamorphosed warrior state, Denilson Lima Santos concludes, “Su símbolo es su cabello siempre peinado con la forma del órgano sexual masculino, y en una de sus manos lleva un palo diseñado a la manera del pene” (36). [Its symbol is its hair always combed in the shape of the male sexual organ, and in one of its hands it carries a stick designed in the manner of the penis]. At times, the quality of the mythicized Afro-descendant male is inadvertently compromised by accepting the superiority of Whiteness (Ojo-Ade 218). Like Jacques Stéphen Alexis’ use of heroic masculinity in the final depictions of Hilarion dying at the Massacre River in *Mi compadre el General Sol*, Abdias do Nascimento incorporates a romanticized monologue via Emanuel as a means of escapism from psychological suffering due to the abortions. The monologue also represents a desire to escape oppression. Continuing the warrior-like description

of his unborn son, Emanuel uses the bronze and steel descriptors as a reference to mestiçagem [miscegenation]. The intersectionality connection that Emanuel employs between genetics, abortion and morality illuminates his frustrations with cultural genocide, therefore justifying his murder of Margarida. He essentially equates his child's death to the death of Brazil's Black population through racial genocide. The protagonist insists on highlighting the spectacle of his marriage with Margarida, revealing after the fact that the two lacked chemistry and intimacy, and further splintering the racial democracy myth.

**CHAPTER FOUR: TRAUMATIC REALITIES AND DECORATIVE MASCULINITY IN
NEGRO: ESTE COLOR QUE ME QUEDA BONITO: AUTOETNOGRAFÍA Y MEMORIAS
DE MIS VIVENCIAS Y PROCESO DE SANACIÓN COMO HOMBRE NEGRO (2013)**

I am Black; I am in total fusion with the world, in sympathetic affinity with the earth, losing my id in the heart of the cosmos—and the White man, however intelligent he may be, is incapable of understanding Louis Armstrong or songs from the Congo. I am Black, not because of a curse, but because my skin has been able to capture all the cosmic effluvia. I am truly a drop of sun under the earth.

-Frantz Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks

Negro: este color que me queda bonito (2013) is a book that resembles the storytelling testimonio genre in Latin America but is best described as experiential or reflective writing. The keyword in the subtitle is sanación because the author makes it clear that there is no cure for racial trauma; the process involves overcoming through a plethora of healing and therapeutic measures that include but are not limited to: yoga, meditation, Eastern philosophies, and biblical teachings. Combined with Benny's background in psychology, he utilizes the aforementioned methods to combat internalized racism that researcher Ana Zapata-Calle describes as "endorracismo" (184). The evidence of psychological trauma induced by racism is prevalent in Puerto Rican society as well as other parts of the Caribbean and Latin America. Benny's book will be the focal point of this chapter, but I will also incorporate theoretical approaches from philosopher Isabelo Zenón Cruz's work *Narciso descubre su trasero* (1973). Additionally, *Negro: este color que me queda bonito* serves as a counternarrative to the critically acclaimed study entitled *El País de Cuatro Pisos* (1980) by José Luis González. González's book highlights the cultural dynamics of the Puerto Rican imaginary and various contributions from the Taínos,

Afro-descendants and Europeans. Conversely, Massó Jr.'s autoethnography is a first-hand account of an Afro-Puerto Rican man describing his experiences of racism, the first of its kind in the U.S. commonwealth. Ana Zapata Calle establishes the book's significance and novelty, informing that *Negro* is the first autobiographical work written by a Puerto Rican that revives a Black man's experience who has lived on the Island and the United States (186). The title of Benny's book is noteworthy because it is borrowed from a Puerto Rican reggaetón artist Tego Calderón. Calderón, an Afro-Puerto Rican, pays homage to the visibility of African heritage on the island in the song "Chango Blanco"; Benny praises Calderón's description of Blackness in the song. Conversely, I disagree with the protagonist that he accepts his Blackness at the conclusion of the book. By his own admission, he states that it takes forty-eight years to accept himself due to childhood trauma.

Generational Attitudes of Afro-Puerto Ricanness

Benny's adolescence coincides with the passing of the 1954 landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision that begins the process of desegregation of U.S. public schools. He moves to New York the following year. I left reading the book not confiding in Benny's self-acceptance as a proud Black man. He appropriates the phrase from Tego Calderón's song, but without conviction. For me, the title of the book is not a revolutionary statement (as it suggests) about personal overcoming, but an aesthetic choice that fits with his personalized narrative about how he yearns to embrace his Blackness. On the contrary, the book is groundbreaking due to the uniqueness of a first-hand account of an Afro-descendant person telling one's own story about facing racism in Puerto Rico. More than this, the reader receives a transgeographic perspective from his differing experiences in Puerto Rico, 'El Barrio' in the Bronx and Berea, Ohio. The connection between the historical traumas of the Middle Passage

and Benny's personal trauma are made. Like the message conveyed in *Sortilégio II*, oppression is not individual struggle, but a collective one for Black people. Published in 2013, Benny concentrates his story on his first forty-eight years of life, describing neighborhood bullying and discrimination as an Afro-Puerto Rican kid to his first time living away from home with family in The Bronx. The protagonist constantly reminds the reader that despite his unconditional love for his mom, he admits that her apologetic attitudes towards Whites contributed to a confused racial identity and subsequent mental trauma. Although the primary focus of this chapter deals with the protagonist's trials and tribulations with racism, Benny's use of decorative masculinity reestablishes a patriarchal protection that serves to self-humanize by sidestepping racism's dehumanizing effects. Benny employs a plethora of influences to overcome and contain his trauma because of racism: yoga, meditation, Bible study and prayer, Buddhism, etc.; however, with this dissertation's focus on masculinities it is imperative to analyze behaviors and attitudes that attempt to recuperate the protagonist's perceived loss of manhood and psychological competence.

The book encompasses many genres, but is primarily a form of experiential writing, reminiscent of the testimonio. The testimonio genre in Latin America commonly features a person from a lower socioeconomic status and emphasizes oral histories. A memoir is too simplistic in this context as a testimonio is not duplicable and contains unique voices to tell that individual's history. The testimonio genre grew in the 1960's and includes works such as *Golpeando la memoria* (2005), *Me llamo Rigoberta Menchú y así me nació la conciencia* (1983), *Reyita, sencillamente* (1997), *Biografía de un cimarrón* (1966) and *Diário de Bitita* (1982). Testimonios are accepted as non-fiction works although claims and experiences may be subject to skepticism of the author's verisimilitude, just like Massó Jr.'s book. Massó's testimonial style

narrating differs from testimonios in the Caribbean such as the co-authored *Golpeando la memoria* (Beating the memory) (2005) by Georgina Herrera and Daisy Rubiera Castillo and *Reyita* (1997) by Daisy Rubiera Castillo and María de los Reyes Castillo Bueno (Reyita). The testimonios narrate personal histories and detail struggles as Afro-Cuban women. *Negro* contains instances of metanarrative accounts that seemingly validate the book's credibility. *Golpeando* and *Reyita* allow copious open interpretations of historical occurrences. For instance, Reyita conveniently states that the former Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista was a childhood friend while discussing the political ambience. Additionally, she insists that she met Benny Moré, one of Cuba's most popular musicians in her generation. Conversely, Benny's writing has a meticulous and strict presentation, exuding angst and lacking the carefree nature of the alluded Cuban testimonios. Another striking difference is the author's choice to exclude explicit historical accounts in Puerto Rico. Alan West-Durán explains that intellectuals directly before Benny's generation such as Tomás Blanco, Pedro Albizu Campos and Antonio S. Pedreira confronted U.S. cultural influence in Puerto Rico, but relegated discussions of race in favor of nationalism (50). Instead, he places hyperfocused attention on affairs and events, relevant to his experiences in the coterminous United States.

When one mentions the Puerto Rican landscape, the topic of race and racial identity is minimally discussed, especially in familial situations. Race discourse remains a topic of taboo; traditionally, countries in Latin America perpetuate ideologies of mestizaje and mulataje, conscious efforts to promote a figure in a nation's iconography when confronting issues of race and nation-building. Using Perú as an example, the indigenous person is accepted a central part of the racial and cultural fabric of the country, but nonetheless society exploits the symbolism of the indigenous person in a more contemporary nuanced form of a caste system. The emphasis of

cultural and racial hybridity promotes these whitening ideologies, although branded as national diversity. Exclusions of voices such as Benito Massó Jr. in the literary canon and national imaginary reinforce racism and prioritization of non-Afro Latinx people in Puerto Rican society. Although strained race relations, including covert and overt racism are commonplace in Puerto Rico, its reputation as a multiracial society shields these negative perceptions outside of the island. Furthermore, U.S. society gravitates towards defining nationality as a racial marker; this attitude emphasizes linguistic difference, but largely disregards racial heterogeneity. Accordingly, in this scenario a Brazilian is a person from Brazil regardless of race, ignoring signifiers such as indigenous Brazilian, Afro-Brazilian or Asian-Brazilian.

Benny borrows the title of his book from a verse from Tego Calderón's song "Chango Blanco" (White Monkey) from his 2006 album *The Underdog/El Subestimado*. The song is part of the salsa genre, even though his primary genre is reggaeton. I find it interesting that Benny takes inspiration from an artist that resonates so deeply with younger Puerto Ricans. Calderón's art contains explicit elements of Afro-Puerto Rican culture, a departure even within a reggaeton genre that has a substantial number of Afro-descendant artists. I remain skeptical of the protagonist's embracing of his Blackness even at the book's conclusion. Tego's presence is significant in terms of a Black representation because there is a limited presence of commercial Black reggaeton artists now, especially from Puerto Rico. The predominant artists in the global genre of reggaeton include the likes of Maluma, J Balvín, Bad Bunny and Daddy Yankee, all non-Black Latin reggaeton artists. Calderón represented a much needed conduit of Afro-Puerto Rican culture at a time of limited visibility in the 2000's reggaeton scene. Nonetheless, Calderón's positive assertion of Black pride in the song comes across as an ardent declaration of

psychological self-awareness. Unintimidated, he represents a newer generation of Afro-Puerto Rican identity, and the song captures the vivacious nature of reassured humanity:

Yo me quiero,

me quiero quedar negrito,

nací con este coloooo,

y es que me queda bonito, bonito...

Nací con este sabor

Y mi color de negrito

Nací con este sabor

Y nací con este dolor en el alma

[I love myself,

I want to stay Black

I was born with this color,

And it's beautiful on me, beautiful...

I was born with this flavor

And my black color

I was born with this flavor

And I was born with pain in my soul]

The core of the song reveals Tego's confidence and pride, denoted by the pronounced use of first person present and preterite tenses. In the two stanzas, he alludes to the natural beauty of his Blackness. The lyrics represent a person who accepts their humanity wholeheartedly.

Undoubtedly, Benny cites the song verbatim as he aspires to be this type of self-embracing individual. The significant distinction between Calderón's "Chango Blanco" and Benny's *Negro* is the symmetrical structure of personal messaging. The song strikes a noticeable balance between pride and struggle, as exemplified by the two stanzas. The line "Y nací con este dolor en el alma" [And I was born with this pain in my soul] acknowledges the adversity in the Black experience and the larger Diaspora. Researcher Zuleica Romay details Tego's sentiment in *Cepos de la Memoria* [Memory Traps] explaining, "Los descendientes americanos de la sufrida diáspora africana hemos (re)construido una identidad cultural que incorpora la restauración contemporánea del secuestro africano, la tortura transatlántica y la esclavización del sujeto diaspórico..." (137). [American descendants of the long-suffering African diaspora have reconstructed a cultural identity that incorporates the contemporary restoration of the African kidnapping, TransAtlantic torture, and the enslavement of the diasporic subject]. The line serves as homage to ancestral ties to Africa and the fight for survival. Calderón advances the positive value of the Black experience and utilizes an unapologetic approach in addressing racial and ethnic self-worth. Contrarily, Massó Jr. addresses Blackness through the lens of White normativity. The essence of the song is celebratory and dynamic; the book's embracing of Blackness is perfunctory. To illustrate this point, I refer to a moment in *Negro* when the protagonist is a self-declared proud Black man and then abruptly changes his demeanor in tense situations. Benny's racial insecurities come to the surface, and he treats his wife Debbie as a White savior, confessing, "Debo admitir que en parte tenía razón, pues muchas veces Debbie me

ha servido de carta de representación. Tenerla a mi lado en lugares públicos me ha permitido, en ocasiones, sentirme cómodo y seguro de no ser discriminado o rechazado” (184). [I have to admit that she was partially right because Debbie has served as my proxy on many occasions. Having her by my side in public places has allowed me, at times, to feel comfortable and safe from being discriminated against or rejected]. The reaction leads credence to an adherence to a White savior complex. He states throughout the book that there is no cure for his trauma and insists on considering himself a healed man. This passage demonstrates that the protagonist continues to project a desirability and dependence based on the construction of Whiteness. Admittedly, Benny’s veneration of “Chango Blanco” is a way to relate to a younger generation of people who are more secure in their African ancestry, but he uses the moment as a deflection from an inner traumatic self. The polarization of the book’s tone and the song’s message is the most discernible when Benny directly references “Chango Blanco’s” content. His affirmation as a proud Black man during his commentary about the song contradicts his actual lived experience when he reflects:

En cierta medida, la letra de la canción me describe muy bien, pues quise ser blanco, cuando en realidad soy negro...”Yo me puse a pintar un chango de blanco”, canta “El Abayarde”. Pero con los golpes del discrimen, el rechazo y las humillaciones, fui despertando y concienciándome de mi verdadera realidad e identidad, y con esfuerzo propio me fui restaurando hasta llegar a aceptar que el color con el que nací “me queda bonito...yo me quiero, me quiero quedar negrito...”, insiste Tego...Sin embargo, aunque en este momento de mi vida puedo afirmar el orgullo que siento de ser negro, quiero aclarar que desde la perspectiva social, no es fácil serlo. (196)

[To a certain extent, the lyrics describe me very well, because I wanted to be White, when I was really Black...I began to paint myself as a white monkey, “The Fire Ant” sings. But with the setbacks of discrimination, rejection and humiliations, I was waking up and becoming aware of my true reality and identity, and with my own effort I was repairing even to the point of accepting my natural color, “it remains beautiful...I love myself, I want to stay Black, Tego insists...Nevertheless, although in the point of my life I declare the pride that I feel being a Black man, I want to clarify from a social perspective, that it is not easy being Black].

Undeniably, the song resonates with the protagonist’s sensibilities; however, I opine that he simply adopts the attitudes of his influences, whether it is a book, psychologist, or in this case a famous reggaeton artist. He performs pro-Blackness as a self-defense tool to combat his ongoing trauma. To understand Benny’s mindset, it is imperative to distinguish the theoretical frameworks of Frantz Fanon and Isabelo Zenón Cruz. The characterization of Fanon’s classic neurotic personality consists of an Afro-descendant person that has an inferiority complex and actively performs Whiteness. Except for Hilarion, the other three central characters possess a so-called desire to be White trait. Admittedly, Benny grows from a previous naiveté of understanding race relations to an active confrontation of systemic racism. Despite this, he remains in a psychological state of flux. To summarize, Benny is a product of his generation, and his writing reflects a personal struggle that avoids the seriousness of racism in Puerto Rico. The issue of interracial marriage, as demonstrated earlier with the passage about his wife Debbie, also adds complexity to Benny’s assertion of a liberated mindset. Zenón Cruz’s ideological focus on centering Blackness falls on another part of the spectrum of identities. Zenón Cruz’s influential

book *Narciso descubre su trasero* [Narcissus discovers his backside] (1974) relates to Black subjectivity in a Puerto Rican specific context. Alan West-Durán expresses that *Narciso* was controversial because it meticulously exposed the hypocrisies about race in Puerto Rico (54). The series of essays focus less on diagnosing psychological complexes in relation to racial identities but provides a panoramic overview of Blackness and how Black identities function on a national scale, approximate to Walterio Carbonell's book *Crítica: Cómo surgió la cultura nacional* [Criticism: How the national culture emerged] (1961) of national consciousness in Cuba. Benny's appropriation of the song is an acknowledgment that he relates to the racial identity messaging put forth by Tego Calderón. After reading the autoethnography on at least five different occasions, I unanimously conclude that the protagonist's influences shape his self-perception and solidify his progress in overcoming trauma. When he introduces a topic, he injects accompanying theory to support his personal experiences and claims. At times, the book reads like a research project. His extensive background in psychology overlaps a vested interest in his own trauma.

Various Origins of Afro-descendant Trauma

Pertaining specifically to the fifth parameter of Black masculinities, the protagonist displays several episodes of racial psychosis. The effects of generational trauma appear in self-perceptions of racial identity throughout the book. The persistent psychosis, that Benny claims has lasted for forty-seven years, aligns with Julián's negative self-perceptions of Blackness. The protagonist's attitude encapsulates the influence of White supremacist beliefs. The comparison with a White male hegemonic model exemplifies Frantz Fanon's assertion of the Black man's quest in seeking White desirability in *Black Skin, White Masks*. Benny reveals a key obstacle in

Black masculinities and the pressure to approximate his identity to Whiteness, whether it is attainable or not, expressing:

...ahora comprendo que el pensamiento que tenía en mi mente- y que propiciaba aquella actitud racista en mí- era que no me quería relacionar con los estudiantes negros, para no ser identificado como uno de ellos. Ya iba entendiendo que los negros americanos eran repudiados por los blancos y yo no quería pagar ese precio, así que tenía que distanciarme de ellos, sobre todo en el colegio, para que los blancos no me fueran a confundir con un moreno” (90).

[...now I understand that the thinking that I used to have in my mind- that fostered that particular racist attitude in me- was due to the fact that I didn't want to be identified as one of them. I was already realizing that Black Americans were repudiated by Whites and I did not want to pay that price, so I had to distance myself from them, especially at school, so that the Whites would not mistake me for a Black person].

Comparatively, Benny's attitude emulates the intersectional racial ambiguity presented in Alexis's reenacted account of the Parsley Massacre in Chapter 1. In Chapter 1, nationalistic ties and race in *Mi compadre el General Sol* recreate preconceived notions of Blackness based on geographic variance. From the Dominican perspective in the novel, the Haitian is presented as the darker Afro-descendant and the new intruder although the massacre scene highlights that Dominicans and Haitians alike are indistinguishable and both groups are murdered in the sugarcane fields. In Benny's ethnography, he establishes a similar preconception and stereotyping of otherness towards non- Puerto Rican Blacks based on linguistic difference. As

alluded to in Alexis's novel, differing modes of the Haitian pronunciation of the word "perejil" [parsley] is used as a way for Dominicans to carry out genocide. Similarly, the protagonist in *Negro: Este color me queda bonito* juxtaposes his perceived racial ambiguity with a clearly defined group of African Americans. Zenón Cruz observes the prevalence of multi-faceted discrimination against Black Puerto Ricans pointing out, "El discrimen contra el puertorriqueño negro no se limita al ámbito nativo; se manifiesta contra él en el exilio por negro y por puertorriqueño" (128). [Discrimination against the Black Puerto Rican is not limited to the Island; it protests him in exile for being Black and Puerto Rican]. This flashback is reminiscent of W.E.B. DuBois' concept of double consciousness. Benny's attitude demonstrates the prevalence of racial identity struggles that Afro-descendant people confront, especially in childhood years. Ana Zapata-Calle pinpoints this thought process further by explaining, "Desde esta complejidad psicológica, el narrador acepta sus comportamientos discriminatorios en relación a cuestiones de raza, género y clase cuando actúa como hombre blanco racista y patriarcal de clase media alta" (188). [From this psychological complexity, the narrator accepts his discriminatory behaviors in relation to questions of race, gender, and class when he acts like a racist and patriarchal upper middle class White man]. The genesis of Benny's multi-tiered psychological pressure to conform to Whiteness starts with the encouragement of his mother, his home environment. Compounded with a darker complexion and visible Blackness, the protagonist's attempt to White-pass fails. As a teenager, Benny equates being White as being a person; at the time, his mindset was to distance his proximity to Blackness. Gender theorist Michele Wallace summarizes the psychological processes that lead to a perpetuity of Afro-descendant traumatic realities when she expresses:

Nevertheless, as long as there are White people who want to be White, it seems probable to me that there will also be Black people who want to be “White” or, more to the point, Black people who don’t want to be “Black” or “other”. As for wanting to be “Black”, this has always been played out as a more heterogeneous phenomenon. (27)

Benny’s declaration assumes that he has evolved from a previous self-hating of Blackness. The initial clause of the comment serves to convince the reader and himself that he is devoid of an inferiority complex. Why does the protagonist feel obliged to express that he has overcome his childhood trauma? Contradictorily, Benny admits that he represses his Blackness after the barbershop incidents for forty more years (92). Given the overwhelming evidence of the protagonist’s racial trauma, the assertion of attributed value to his Blackness must be met with skepticism.

Benny establishes a direct link between the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and its subsequent psychological effects on Afro-diasporic communities in the Americas. He ascertains the doubts of self-confidence and dignity and underscores the weight of psychological restraints imposed on Black people because of chattel slavery. Notably, Benny implies that DNA, in this case genetic memory, transfers from generation to generation based on his readings of Dr. Joy DeGruy’s research on the relationship between biology and trauma. He appears to promote Afro-descendent trauma as sociological and biological when he describes his family origins, expressing:

“Fue de la primera generación de mis ancestros que salió de África y que llegó a la Hacienda Aurora, en el poblado de Guayama, que heredé mi condición de racismo internalizado, que se fue propagando como un legado generacional o

trauma histórico hasta llegar a mis padres, quienes a nivel inconsciente me transmitieron ese pensamiento de inferioridad, falta de dignidad y de autoestima” (47).

[It was from the first generation of my ancestors that left Africa and arrived at Hacienda Aurora, in the town of Guayama, that I inherited my condition of internalized racism, which spread as a generational legacy or historical trauma until it reached my parents, who at the unconscious level transmitted to me that thought of inferiority, lack of dignity and self-esteem].

Sociologist Ron Eyerman alludes to the protagonist’s view on the effects of a devastating event such as the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade expressing, “The notion of cultural trauma implies that direct experience is not a necessary condition for the appearance of trauma” (71). Benny conveys a two-tiered mixed message in the closing of the passage when he brings up his parent’s continuation of this cultural trauma. He reinforces the biological transfer of genetic traumatic memory and his parents branch from the previous generations who suffered a damaged psychological state due to systemic oppression inducing self-hate. His argument using Freudian theory correlates with Smelser’s observation of Freud specifying that childhood trauma translates into long-term psychological effects due to lack of full brain development (33). On the contrary, Benny’s assertion of his parents’ unconscious transmission of self-hate into his childhood raises questions of authenticity. Initially, he attributes his internalized racism to parental grooming, particularly his mother’s preoccupation with good manners and decorum. In other words, the more her child behaves well, the more likely he is to be accepted by Whites. Benny’s mother Consuelo made conscious and concerted efforts to downplay his Blackness due to societal attitudes towards race. He confirms this parental awareness stating, “Al igual que mi padre, ella

también era consciente de lo que implicaba ser negra en el tiempo y en la sociedad en la que le tocó vivir...” (61). [Like my father, she was also aware of what it meant to be Black in the time and in the society in which she lived...]. Inadvertently, the protagonist correlates the struggle of accepting his Blackness with a diminished sense of manhood. I contend this point because Benny often compares himself to his father but blames his mother for damaging him psychologically. He depicts his father Benito Sr. as a strong-willed disciplinarian who was highly calculated and understood that he was a Black man. Clearly defining Benito Sr. as the patriarch and fulfilling the financial needs of the family, this representation denotes a strong masculinity. The awareness of his racial identity factors into this equation as well. Conversely, Benny’s proximity to his mother and his racial denial and insecurity highlights fragilities in masculinity from the protagonist’s point of view. In opposition of the genetic trauma theory that the protagonist employs in the autoethnography, he contradicts himself at the conclusion when he speaks of his four daughters. Benny implies generational variability when comparing his experience of racial trauma with his children noting, “En resumen, mis hijas, a pesar de ser negras como yo, aparentemente están exentas de la condición de racismo internalizado al nivel que yo lo he vivido” (200). [In conclusion, my daughters, despite being Black like me, are apparently exempt from internalized racism at the level at which I have lived it]. This scenario counters the protagonist’s genetic trauma theory by suggesting that socioeconomic opportunities affect the extent of an individual’s discrimination.

At the heart of the protagonist’s angst and long-lasting racial trauma are the demoralizing episodes of discrimination that took place in Berea, Ohio when Benny was attending Baldwin-Wallace College. A few crucial variables exacerbate the racial tension in these moments. The mid-1950’s mark the genesis of the modern-day Civil Rights movement in the United States.

Benny's Puertorricanness does not ameliorate his susceptibility to racism, even in a Northern state like Ohio. For example, Jim Crow laws were just as prevalent in the North as the South, and in some instances, issues such as public-school integration took longer to implement in the so-called North. Moreover, the protagonist's enrollment in college immediately follows the backdrop of the landmark *Brown vs. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision of 1954 that established the process of desegregating public schools in the United States. Three events comprise of the protagonist's most enduring traumatic episodes: barbershop refusals to cut his hair, the stewardess's refusal to serve Benny a drink, and the denial to rent an apartment to Benny and Desiré. The following scene characterizes the degree to which traumatic experiences specifically shape Afro-masculine self-perceptions of racism's link to social mobility. The landlord denies Benny and Desiré entry to the apartment as a Black married couple. Considering his views on Blackness in his early adulthood, it is hard to access the amount of damage inflicted upon the protagonist in his later years, attributable to racist incidents such as the following:

Por fin llegamos a Berea, como a las 6:00 de la tarde, en un taxi que se detuvo frente a la casa de dos pisos que indicaba la dirección que yo tenía. El apartamento que alquilamos por teléfono estaba ubicado en un segundo piso, mientras que los dueños vivían en el primero. Toqué a la puerta del primer piso, saludé a la señora que abrió y me identifiqué por mi nombre. La señora, visiblemente sorprendida y algo molesta, me respondió de mala gana: -But we were expecting an Italian couple! Sorry, the apartment has been rented.- Y prácticamente me tiró la puerta en la cara (112).

[We finally arrived to Berea, around 6PM in the evening, in a taxi that stopped in front of the two-story house that matched the address that I had. The apartment

that we rented by phone was located on the second floor, while the owners lived on the first. I knocked on the door of the first floor, greeted the lady that opened it and told her my name. The lady, visibly surprised and somewhat bothered, and responded to me reluctantly: (But we were expecting an Italian couple! Sorry the apartment has being rented- And practically shut the door in my face].

Benny debunks the imagery of the benevolent North moniker that is often juxtaposed by the perceived harsher South. Berea, Ohio, ground zero site of the protagonist's racial angst and trauma represents a universal Jim-Crow system in the United States that predates the landmark Loving v. Virginia Supreme Court decision of 1967 that legalized interracial marriage. In this instance, the lady specifies an ethnicity to discredit any accusation of racism towards her and justifies the action of expecting the imaginary Italian couple. Prior to the traumatic episodes of Benny's experiences in the barbershop, he distinguished himself from non-Puerto Rican Blacks, as if assuming a difference in treatment based on his Puertorricanness. Contrary to his overwhelmingly positive experience in New York City under the protection of his family unit in the Barrio, the change in microgeographics in the Mid-West away from family disrupts this temporary harmony. Benny's barbershop experiences in Ohio dismantle the psychological façade of his access to White privilege.

Due to the suppressed element of racial discussion in Benny's household in Puerto Rico, the visceral nature of strained race relations in Ohio comes as a surprise to him. He expresses a negative internalization of Blackness, after reaching the conclusion that he is viewed as any other Black American. Writer Alan West-Durán states that the awareness of U.S. racial attitudes towards Puerto Ricans has been consistent since the 1898 colonization of the island (50). The realization is not one of positive affirmation, but rather disappointment. In this regards, Benny's

trauma begins in his early childhood, years before the highly emphasized barbershop episodes that dominate the trauma discourse in the book. Joy DeGruy exclaims in the book *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome* that:

If one traumatic experience can result in distorted attitudes, dysfunctional behaviors and unwanted consequences, this pattern is magnified exponentially when a person repeatedly experiences severe trauma, and it is much worse when the traumas are caused by human beings (71).

Therefore, based on DeGruy's assessment, previous episodes of racism will trigger subsequent occurrences. In Benny's case, that racial bullying that he experiences because of his hair texture and skin color during his childhood lingers into adulthood. In the book's introduction Benny states, "Abandoné el proyecto por unos largos meses, debido a lo hiriente que me resultaba escribir lo que había vivido y sufrido durante los primeros 48 años de mi vida" (9). [I gave up on the project for a few long months, due to how hurtful it was to write what I had lived and suffered during the first 48 years of my life]. Following the racial and cultural identity crises with preceding protagonists Julián and Emanuel, Benny's self-degradation represents the most extreme on the spectrum. Each case of psychosis involves individual levels of emotional, sexual, and racial distress. For instance, in juxtaposition of Emanuel, who seeks socioeconomic status by marrying Margarida, but never denying his Blackness (although he initially denigrates Macumba practitioners), Benny assumes an overt superiority over Blacks in the conterminous United States. Due to the lack of Jim Crow style segregation in Puerto Rico and the protagonist's avoidance of discussing overall societal race relations on the Island, he constantly reignites the myth of Whiteness until the Ohio experience contradicts this thought process. Benny's identification as "un trapo de negro" elicits childhood reverberations of embarrassment, a

sentiment generated by his parent's negative programming and equally traumatic episodes of neighborhood bullying. Unwillingly, the protagonist capitulates under immense pressure and begins to come to grips with his racial identification, writing, "Esa experiencia de rechazo y desprecio que sufrí en las primeras dos barberías que visité fue muy humillante para mí y me confirmó que yo definitivamente era negro. No un negro puertorriqueño, sino un trapo de negro y punto" (91). [That experience of rejection and contempt that I suffered in the first two barbershops that I visited was very humiliating for me and confirmed that I was definitely Black. Not a Puerto Rican Black, but a Black person period]. Thus, the othering of Puertricanness initially helps the protagonist settle into the move to Queens, New York because Benny successfully deemphasizes his Blackness with a solid family structure in El Barrio. Nevertheless, the change of scenery to his Baldwin-Wallace College days in Berea, Ohio enhances his racial otherness as a Black person who quickly loses a Puerto Rican national identity when confronted with the racial ambience of the 1950's Civil Rights era.

Like Benny's bout of discrimination when the landlord denies the apartment to him and Desiré amid the Civil Rights movement of the late 1950's, I experienced a direct act of racial discrimination involving an apartment rental, although it occurred in a different historic context. My situation involved a one-year stay in Getafe, Spain beginning in September of 2005. I was accepted as a Cultural Language Assistant via the U.S. Embassy of Washington D.C. teaching English to elementary kids. Prior to the trip, I was told that housing would be provided to me, but this was not the case. Nevertheless, I assumed that finding an apartment would be a relatively simple task. I psychologically downplayed or ignored the possibility of racist treatment upon arriving in Spain. I assumed a more positive experience in Getafe due to positive experiences in a previous Barcelona trip in 2000. Erroneously, I failed to consider that in

Barcelona I was an unassuming tourist with a group of predominately White Americans. Comparatively, the combination of Benny's positive experiences at Baldwin-Wallace College with foreign exchange students and his living situation with extended family in the Bronx provide temporary moments of relief to daily discrimination. In 2005, I intended on living and working in Spain for a full year. This never happened because I could not endure the constant barrage of daily racism over a two-week period. When I arrived at Barajas Airport in Madrid with an associate and collected luggage, we caught a taxi. In the taxi, the driver asked me specifically where I was from, ignoring the presence of my Salvadorian associate. Subsequently, the taxi driver asked me, "¿Eres moro?" [Are you a Moor?] I was unaware of the cultural context of this word directed at me at the time, but later found out that it was racial and religious derogatory word, signaling that I was an outsider and posed a threat to Spanish national interests due to increased terrorism throughout the country. Relevant to the scene with Benny and Desiré, when I searched for housing that September of 2005, I was consistently told that no housing was available even though the ad in the local newspaper suggested the opposite. Considering the backdrop of the racial tension during the Jim-Crow era in the United States during the 1950's/1960's and the discouragement of Black intimacy, Benny's trauma is more enhanced and problematic in this context. Indubitably, the historicism of the protagonist's quotidian bouts with racism raises the severity of his trauma in comparison with my own experiences in Spain. I want to reiterate that it is the essay's contention that racial-induced trauma is real but sociological, not genetically transmitted as concluded by Benny's reading of Dr. Joy DeGruy's research. By Benny's own admission, he states that his traumatic experiences purportedly transmitted by his ancestors were absent in his daughters (200).

Benny's Decorative Masculinity

In this essay, I define and coin the term decorative masculinity as a conscious attempt to manipulate one's image to decrease suspicion of hegemonic acquisition. Decorative masculinity differs from reputational masculinity in that the latter does not attempt to conceal use of power, but rather outwardly establishes a pattern of abuse of power based on reputation. Decorative masculinity seeks to benefit the individual by establishing a positive image and a seemingly innocent approach to recognizing inflictions of damage on another individual(s); similar to derivative forms of hegemonic masculinity such as physical and reputational, decorative masculinity exploits vulnerabilities by targeting perceived character flaws in individuals. The protagonists in the preceding chapters have set precedence to the developed idea of variable Black masculinities in this dissertation; however, Benny differs in ways that may be less conspicuous to the reader regarding the control of his image and exertion of power. How does Benny express decorative masculinity and what is he hiding? One example of Benny's calculated approach to manipulating his image occurs when he justifies his infidelity as an out, continuing, "Desiré y yo realmente nunca rompimos nuestra relación emocional. A pesar de todas mis infidelidades, siempre estuvimos conectados" (138). [Desiré and I never really broke our emotional relationship. In spite of all of my infidelities, we were always connecte. The manner in which he admits to cheating on his wife is manipulative. He minimizes Desiré's distress by insinuating that she continued to love him after his various episodes of infidelity. He generalizes infidelity to protect his benevolent image portrayed in *Negro*. Understandably, Benny focuses attention on his trauma in the book, but he avoids culpability in causing trauma to the women in his previous relationships. Wallace asserts that the relationship appropriately characterizes a sexual hatred fueled by a deliberate ignorance towards Black women (26). Moreover, Benny sets a deceptive tone in the introduction through an elaboration of sympathetic gestures about his

respect for women and gay people. He recognizes the struggles of other marginalized groups, including his own, but he mimics a pattern of hegemonic masculinity to assure his own protection. More profound than a simplistic goody two shoes characterization, Benny carefully manipulates a male-centered narrative that exhibits and confirms a consistent although surreptitious, chauvinistic language and behavior towards other women's pursuit of agency and self-expression. For instance, Benny brings up personality aspects about various women in his previous amorous relationships, describing women as ferocious and feisty. As expressed by the preceding works and the exploration of Black masculinities, Benny Massó Jr. is no exception to variable constraints of masculinity within the Afro- Latin literary realm. In accordance with the upbringing of fellow Afro-descendant heroic figures in Latin American and Caribbean literature, Benny grows up in an environment that fosters a culture of machismo and paternalism. This lifestyle finds common ground, especially in the case of Julián and Benny, in which both characters come from deeply religious families that uphold traditional values and gender roles. His father Benito Sr. advances a strict code of discipline and manifests a lack of emotive qualities. As a result, the protagonist's mother Consuelo adheres to the obedient wife motif and is often confined to the domestic space. These conditions set the foundation of his childhood. As documented especially with Julián's various modes of masculinity throughout stages of his life, Benny masks his paternalistic elements of masculinity until early adulthood. The pretext of Benny's decorative masculinity is the continuous suffering of racial trauma. I stated earlier that his ability to balance various modes of masculinity is not present during his childhood and he grows into these attitudes post-adolescence. Hilarion, Julián, Emanuel and Benny experience various degrees of traumatic experiences involving racial discrimination, but Benny is the least essentialist of the characters.

At first glance, *Negro* presents compelling instances of Benny's traumas, but further behavioral analysis exposes his womanizing tendencies and other ulterior motives. Given the author's extensive background in psychology, he understands the importance of establishing a reputation as an affectionate, understanding individual. This reputation potentially lulls the reader into a complacency of Benny's actions, since he controls the narrative and expresses vulnerability. The author is a person of his generation although he attempts to coalesce his unique positionality with gays and women. His antithetical style of writing is psychological and manipulative; one clear example of Benny's chauvinism describes the fallout between the protagonist and his first wife Desiré:

Tengo que admitir que ella me gustaba. Era alta, de mi misma estatura- unos cinco pies y ocho pulgadas-, atractiva, vestía muy elegante, tenía el don de la conversación y la verdad es que disfrutaba mucho estar con ella. Pero le tenía miedo a su energía de guapetona de barrio. Tenía una actitud agresiva y desafiante que manifestaba cuando no le gustaba algo. En algunos momentos llegué a pensar que utilizaba cocaína, por la energía que demostraba. (169-170)

[I have to admit that I was starting to like her. She was tall, around my height- five feet eight inches-, attractive, dressed elegantly, had the gift of gab and truth be told I enjoyed being with her a lot. But I was afraid of her electric energy. She had an aggressive and daring attitude that appeared when she did not like something. At times, I thought that she used cocaine, because of the energy that she demonstrated].

In other words, he attempts to subdue feminine voicing and agency. In many regards, one can witness a similar caricature in Benny, Hilarion, Julián and Emanuel. The four protagonists converge in their attitudes towards self-preservation despite their noticeable differences in socioeconomic, educational, and masculine variabilities. Conversely, Benny does not fulfill the warrior prototype established in the previous three chapters. Uniquely, he makes sympathetic declarations towards women, gay people, and other marginalized groups as a way of self-reflecting his potential vulnerabilities in access to social capital. Apart from some introductory paragraphs, Benny's narrative consists of motifs of the heterosexualized black male figure and his mentality varies only sporadically with the previous protagonists in this study. *Negro: Este color que me queda bonito*, although published in 2013, contains a corpus of events that predominantly span the mid-1950's to the 1980's, correlating with the chronological publication period of *Mi compadre el General Sol* (1955), *Adire y el tiempo roto* (1967) and *Sortilégio II: O Retorno do Zumbi redivivo* (1979).

CONCLUSION: CONFRONTING TODAY'S CANON AND POLITICAL PRESENCE OF BLACK MALE AUTHORSHIP IN LATIN AMERICA

In conclusion, I bring forward a discussion about the social and political impact of contemporary Black male authorship in Latin America, considering the specific texts in this dissertation. Additionally, I examine the constraints of Black masculinities and confirm whether continuous limitations persist in the characterization of protagonists. The male-centered discourse provides a unique opportunity to transmit marginalized voices and educate through knowledge and wisdom. Afro-Latin American literature guides readers without filter and remains devoid of mainstream depictions and stereotypes of experiences. The featured texts of this dissertation reflect the versatility in how Black men perform various modes of masculinity. The social commentaries of *Mi compadre el General Sol*, *Adire y el tiempo roto*, *Sortilégio II: O Retorno do Zumbí redivivo* and *Negro: Este color que me queda bonito* elucidate the geopolitical climate of today's world. I conclude that *Mi compadre el General Sol* (1955), *Adire y el tiempo roto* (1967), *Sortilégio II* (1979) and *Negro: Este color que me queda bonito* (2013) are prophetic and political texts that contextualize and unveil specific realities that affect Black people such as state-sanctioned violence and homicide, accumulated quotidian trauma, and questioning of one's value in society. Taking into consideration the cathartic moment of worldwide protests over the

murder of George Floyd and the recognition of systemic injustices against Afro-descendant people, the embedded value of our literature is an understatement. How much traction will occur within university humanities departments post-Marielle Franco and George Floyd in connection with the inclusion of more Afro-centered texts on book lists, required readings and curricula for students? Researchers Kenton Ramsby and Howard Ramsby II argue that Afro-descendant fiction remains underpromoted and less susceptible to consumption during times of national distress (179). Despite the relevance towards social issues and literary realism of the examined works of this dissertation in contemporary Latin American and Caribbean studies, as it stands the reception of Black authors remains poor in Latin American publishing houses and commercially Afro-Latin literature is rarely (if at all) present in large bookstores and platforms such as Barnes & Noble and Amazon. The trend in the largest international bookstores surrounding Latin American and Spanish-language literature is to export and feature works from Boom and post-Boom writers such as Mario Vargas Llosa, Gabriel Garcia Márquez, Julio Cortázar and Isabel Allende. To further illustrate my skepticism about the possibility of broader inclusion of Afro-Latin literature in humanities departments after the international wave of antiracist sentiment after George Floyd's murder, desired texts follow a prevalent pattern of highlighting overwhelming White male authors. The underrepresentation of Black professors in the humanities and the underappreciation of Black literary prowess have contributed to a vacancy of Afro-Caribbean and Afro-Latin American texts in graduate level courses and required reading lists. Professor Joan Lipman Brown addresses the absence of Black authors in the Spanish-speaking literary canon highlighting that out of 14,686 works deemed canonical only one Afro-descendant author (Nicolás Guillén) is included on a Master's or PhD required reading list up until 2008 (64). The works included in this dissertation highlight the discrepancies in

departmental priorities of blatant exclusion and recognition of Black authorship and a rich literary tradition that spans four centuries. One perplexing detail about Professor Brown's observation about the lone work of Guillén's inclusion is the large presence of Blacks, especially in the Caribbean region. Equally disturbing is the fact that no Black women authors were included on the list. Moreover, under the umbrella of Latin American literature, the continuous exclusion of literary contributions from non-Spanish speaking countries creates unnecessary geopolitical literary hierarchies based on language. This dissertation promotes an urgent message to rethinking the effects of colonialism and racism in gauging the perceptions of countries in geographic adjacency. Countries like Suriname are rarely mentioned in the context of the broader Latin American landscape. Haiti, the first Black republic in the world and first Caribbean nation to gain independence, has produced literary giants such as Jacques Roumain, Edwidge Danticat, Frankétienne, Jacques Stéphen Alexis and Évelyne Trouillot; however, many graduate students would struggle to name a single author in the country. For example, I selected the four works in the dissertation due to the maximal expression of Black male narrativity without considering the literary proximities to the so-called canon, but interestingly the Haitian novel *Mi compadre el General Sol* (1955) is universally recognized as a national novel and an integral part of the country's history. Despite its continued popularity in the Caribbean, with three different translations in Spanish alone, university departments largely ignore the contributions of Afro-Latin literature and politics. The Cuban novel *Adire y el tiempo roto* (1967) remains an unknown novel in the literary world even though it earned an honorable mention at the Casa de las Américas contest and earned the praise of the Argentine writer Julio Cortázar. *Sortilégio II: O Retorno do Zumbí redivivo* (1979), a sequel to *Sortilégio* (1957) explained Abdias do Nascimento's Quilombismo philosophy in literary form, but the author's activist and political

work overshadowed his contributions as a playwright. *Negro: Este color que me queda bonito* (2013) authored by Benito Massó Jr. is the first book that confronts systemic racism in Puerto Rico from a personal account. Despite this uniqueness and novelty, *Negro* finds itself on the extreme peripheries of the Latin American and Caribbean literary scene. I bring up these examples to accentuate the lack of recognition given to Black authorship in academia. This study proves that the diversity of Black male experiences and perspectives in literature is more all-encompassing when Black men are the authors of these experiences. Furthermore, some of the highlighted protagonists in my study such as Julián, Dr. Emanuel, and Hilarion are more than literary characters since they also function as philosophers and thinkers that problematize racial dilemmas and psychological processes that highlight extraliterary societal realities beyond mere creative fictional works. I made a conscious decision to utilize Afro-descendant Latin American and Caribbean writers whose works mirror their professional and literary commitment to developing complex and intelligent male central characters. These authors provide a literary corpus that signifies a trajectory towards active Black male protagonism reflective of independent Latin American literature that prioritizes psychological processes.

While the historical trajectory of enslavement and questionable liberation is solidly entrenched in history, the same cannot be said about Black masculinities. Much of my future skepticism about the literary expansion of Black masculinities pertains to a question I posed in Chapter 3. Will Afro-descendant literary representations break away from tropes such as heroic masculinity and heterosexualized imaginations of Blackness? There has been indication of a shift in the Afro-Latin dynamism of variegated protagonism. Junot Díaz's Pulitzer Prize-winning *Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007) comes to mind. The book featured a nerdy Afro-Dominican protagonist with a strong interest in sci-fi and reading. Nevertheless, I struggle to find

a large sample size of newer novels that cover the area of Black masculinities in Latin America. As a matter of fact, my research efforts have resulted in zero results of current literary production in Latin America from Black male writers. I managed to find two novels by Afro-Latin male writers published in Spanish in the last twenty years. Costa Rica's prolific writer Quince Duncan (b. 1940) wrote *A Message From Rosa* in 2014 and Dominican poet Mateo Morrison (b. 1946) wrote his first novel entitled *Un Silencio que Camina* in 2007.

As a researcher of the topic of Black masculinities in contemporary Latin American and Caribbean literature, I continue to face difficulty pinning down and evaluating the five parameters of Afro-descendant masculinities that I proposed in the introduction. I attribute this to the lack of access to prominent publishing houses that are willing to promote issues of Afro-descendant identities and masculinities in Latin America/Caribbean and in the Spanish language. Currently, there is considerable interest in the English-language market and Afro-diasporic writers. Some of these newer writers, relatively speaking, include the aforementioned Junot Díaz, Charles Rice-González, Daniel José Older, and Torrey Maldonado; however, each of these authors publish in English and are U.S. based writers with Afro-Hispanic ancestries. Charles Rice-González's book *Chulito: A Novel* (2011) explores the life of Afro-queer protagonist surviving the harsh life of New York City and the local LGBTQ+ experience. To conclude, I believe that newer writers will continue to question and challenge the abusive and sometimes problematic nature of Afro-descendant masculinities, as exemplified in the choice of books in the dissertation. Nevertheless, I believe that emotive numbness, generational traumas, violence and toxic masculinities, and sexual prowess will remain universal factors in determining the psychological overcoming of Black men in the future. The contentious relationship with the White woman will have the least impact on Afro-descendant masculinities in years to come due

to a rejuvenated sense of Afro-American pride and acknowledgment of self-worth, and a minimized focus on the heterosexualized component of masculinities in general.

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VITA

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