

Peru in Black and White: Racial Formations in the Twentieth-Century Peruvian Novel

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Table of Contents

Chapter	Page
Introduction	1
1. Muddled Whiteness and Fading Blackness: Monstrous <i>Mestizaje</i> in the Works of Enrique López Albújar	23
2. (Mis)Representations of Blackness during the Latin-American Boom	54
3. Racial Recipes: Incorporation as Metaphor of Racial Formation.....	94
4. Texts of Transition: Afro-Peruvian Literary Agency in the Early Twenty-First Century.....	128
Conclusions	166
Notes.....	170
Works Cited	185

Introduction

In Peru, despite a growing push for racial *mestizaje*, or racial mixing, as the unifier of national identity, notions of citizenship and national identity of this nation state largely maintain previous conceptualizations of race and ethnicity. As a result, communities of ethnic and racial backgrounds that do not fit within the Eurocentric framework of official culture are marginalized, even erased, from the public sphere and national consciousness. Literary productions mirror this phenomenon during the crucially transitional period between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Peru and Latin America. The rhetoric of biological and cultural white superiority and normativity in Peruvian literature is constructed in opposition to the rhetorical inferiority of racialized “others.” This rhetorical construct in fact reveals the inherent instability of race in Peru. Nonetheless, the effects of racial and racist constructs were, and remain, palpable in terms of literary visibility and access to sociopolitical power in Peru. Still, a burgeoning fictional literature on the black presence invites critical analysis of the racial formations of both whiteness and blackness—specifically, of how these two notions are both oppositional and relational. My study has two principal aims: 1) to investigate how notions of racial difference are built interdependently, meaning that dominant identities are also affected (positively and negatively) in their own discourses of racial difference and 2) to examine how racial formations and racial projects in Peru have impacted the presence of a black representation within twentieth-century works of literature.

Race in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Latin America

The idea of race in Latin America, largely formulated throughout the nineteenth century, has been highly paradoxical in nature: the blatantly heterogeneous demographics of Latin American countries were simultaneously undermined and distorted by their respective white elite in order to better follow European social models and racial norms.¹ In their introduction to *The Idea of Race*, Robert Bernasconi and Tommy L. Lott summarize how “race in the biological sense may be largely a scientific myth but has provided the basis on which social relations governed by a European perspective have been globally structured” (xv). In this way, these two writers reveal the tangible effects of racialized ideologies on the lived realities of individuals on a global scale, drawing attention to the relational quality between different ideological constructs of race. Modern racial dynamics, as evidenced through the advent of the notion of distinct “races” during the period of the Enlightenment in Western Europe, reveal the interdependent aspects involved in the formation and sedimentation of contemporary racialized identities. During the burgeoning colonization of the Americas, these ideological constructs traversed the Atlantic. Amidst the nineteenth-century political movements for Latin American Independence, ideas and theories about race were restructured, resulting in notions of who could claim citizenship and personhood, along with their subsequent rights in the new republics.

With François Bernier’s first grouping of differing phenotypical characteristics into distinct, human “races,” the biological connotation of race became, and remains, a contested attribute in the scientific and social categorization of culturally and geographically distinct peoples. Immanuel Kant’s “Of the Different Races” (1777) provided one of the first consequential attempts to provide a categorization of human phenotypical differences into distinct “races,” each characterized by certain, inherent characteristics and dispositions. Kant’s detailed description of four principal races of humans incorporated the pseudo-scientific notion

of bodily humors and their effect on human appearance and disposition. “Whiteness” would serve as the model of perfection and strength. Other human phenotypes would thereafter and perform be measured *in relation* and *in contrast to* whiteness.² Therefore, all other body types/phenotypes were to become *derivations* and *degradations* of the foundational notion of whiteness. The progression of thinking that saw whiteness as the origin of humanity, thereby conceptualizing darker skin tones as an aberration or degeneration from such origins, continued throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, contributing to the growing importance of scientific racialism within various fields of academic, social, and political thought.

The foregoing European theorists on race and social relations are by no means an exhaustive representation of the amount of racial discourse that was produced throughout Europe during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Rather, they serve as examples of how early European thinkers began to conceptualize race, creating identities and meaning out of perceived, phenotypic differences. As those meanings became further tied into sociopolitical power dynamics, the idea of race gained ideological footing, eventually traversing the Atlantic and entering into Latin American consciousness. Throughout Latin America, as a whole, the trends and manifestations of racialized thinking have been both fluid and intimately connected with those of European social and racial thought.³

Regardless of their influence in colonial America, European notions of white, racial superiority presented a problem for many of the white American-born elites who realized that their own existence and societies were a result of racial mixing and that any “pure” notion of race in their burgeoning nations would not be feasible. As a result, countries like Brazil, Argentina, and Cuba tended to ignore European condemnations of racial mixing, instead opting to focus on the “whitening” of their respective populations through miscegenation and the

encouragement of European immigration (Graham 3). The “whitening” process was considered the most approximate manner in which to maintain notions of white racial superiority while also realizing that there could be no “true” whiteness as European and North American theorists attempted to establish. In “Racial Ideas and Social Policy in Brazil, 1870-1940,” Thomas Skidmore concurs by revealing the ways in which “whitening” was synonymous with “improvement” and “advancement,” even for Brazilian abolitionists (9). The interesting aspect of this idea of “whitening” is the implied superiority and glorification of phenotypical and cultural whiteness.

The increasing interest in establishing a scientific explanation for somatic differences occurred in conjunction with attributing mental and spiritual characteristics to those differences, creating the notion of “civilized” or “advanced” races versus “barbarous” or “backwards” races. Constructing meaning in conjunction with somatic differences allowed the perception of the inherent superiority of whiteness, leading to the belief that with racial admixture, whiteness would dominate and ultimately erase the influence of the “other” masses. As Richard Graham notes, those Latin American theorists and proponents of “whitening” “simply ignored the fact that such a process must inevitably imply a ‘darkening’ of some” (3).

Interestingly enough, whitening works in parallel with the idea of cultural and physical *mestizaje*. According to Marilyn Grace Miller’s definition, *mestizaje* signifies “the genetic and cultural admixture produced by the encounters or ‘disencounters’ . . . between Europeans, the Africans who accompanied them to and in the New World, indigenous groups, and various others who arrived in the Americas from regions such as Asia” (1). The mixture of these various peoples was ultimately seen as a move in a more positive direction that would help dismantle the legacy of power dynamics based on racial and ethnic discrimination (3-4). Simón Bolívar, the

famous Venezuelan military and political leader who helped lead Latin America in its struggle for independence from Spain's colonial control, reflected on various occasions how the new American population was no longer representative of a homogenous past, but rather a people situated *between* European and indigenous cultures (60). Key Cuban philosopher and writer, José Martí, shared similar sentiments with respect to the racial composition of his native country, noting how the rise of the mestizo in Latin America was a boon to the image of a powerful and autonomous region in the face of United States expansionism (qtd. in Miller 12). The resulting national and regional *mestizaje* projects seem to advocate the mixing of its various racialized elements while implicitly maintaining the belief that this racial mixing would phenotypically and culturally “whiten” the non-European and non-white elements of the national body, reflecting long-held beliefs about white racial superiority and the inheritance of positive characteristics believed to inhere in whiteness.

However, despite the many national projects that *rhetorically* focused on the exaltation of a shared indigenous history in order to create a sense of national unity, the lived realities of non-white populations continued to reflect racial discrimination and sociopolitical prejudices (Miller 4). In addition, the goal of *mestizaje*, embodied in the progeny of culturally diverse unions, created new racial categories, identities that were placed along and in between the borders of established racial norms. Miller contends, “the mestizo was frequently converted into an essential racial type who possessed specific traits that were alternately positive or negative, thus casting him and his counterparts (the mestiza, the mulatto, the mulatta, etc..) as either villains or heroes in the drama of identity” (7). In sum, *mestizaje*, as it was conceived in Latin America, ultimately served as a type of “lip-service” in terms of racial formation within Latin America: superficially, it provided a process through which burgeoning nations could be unified, while

providing a sense of legitimacy to the longstanding physical and cultural mixing evidenced in Latin America. In practice, however, *mestizaje* implicitly placed whiteness as its end goal, marginalizing those indigenous and black populations who were “left behind” in the process.

Mestizaje as a common goal throughout Latin America also encouraged the “whitening” of their populations via the importation of European immigrants. Theoretically, the influx of European immigrants would contribute to the fashioning of a whiter nation, while also providing a source of cheaper labor in the face of the increasing pro-abolition sentiment in both Europe and the Americas during the nineteenth century. Economic considerations aside, the notion of increasing the white element of various Latin American nations was not without those critics who carried *intra-racial* biases within their concept of whiteness. In Argentina, educator and politician Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, like many of his contemporaries, saw whiteness as the “guiding light” of civilization, thereby placing black populations and, to a greater extent, indigenous populations on the periphery of importance regarding the future of the country. However, Sarmiento saw differences *within* the groups of white, European immigrants who were arriving in Argentina, going as far to denounce the arrival and settlement of Spaniards and other “Latins” to the country, holding them as examples of peoples who “lacked the faculties for self-government and democracy that, he thought, belonged to the superior Anglo-Saxons” (Helg 40). As a result of this perceived detrimental influence of non-Anglo-Saxon immigrants on his native Argentina, Sarmiento’s ideas of whitening went against dominant theories of white superiority, as he believed these “lesser whites” would eventually be assumed into the popular masses, suggesting a preoccupation with the “darkening” of the country’s future.

Furthermore, European immigration did not achieve the results that many of the Argentine elite had expected. With the influx of various national and ethnic groups from Europe

came the introduction and solidification of political ideas such as socialism and anarchism that threatened the balance of power between the American-born, white elite and the masses. In addition, various groups of immigrants mobilized themselves into groups and associations that were defined by national or cultural origin, thereby obstructing national unification ideals. This heightened the perception of intra-racial differences of whiteness by Argentina's elites, and resulted in a spectrum-like consideration of whiteness, whereby Italian and Spanish immigrants might be considered "whiter" than Russian Jews (Helg 46). Conversely, Italian immigrants might be portrayed as unassimilable to Argentinian white society, as Gabriela Nouzeilles outlines in her *Ficciones somáticas*.

Solidifying Racial Formations in Nineteenth-Century Republican Peru

Throughout post-independence Peru, identity representation and its intimate relations with power dynamics and racial and ethnic rhetorics of difference has been a site of continual tension, debate, and conflict. James Higgins argues in "El racismo en la literatura peruana" (2003) that the system of domination in Peru "ha exacerbado las divisiones étnicas y culturales; ha estorbado la cohesión social, que en una sociedad heterogénea sólo se puede lograr mediante la aceptación colectiva de la diversidad; y ha impedido el desarrollo de una conciencia compartida de identidad nacional" (159). Such tense relationships persist within contemporary racial dynamics in Peru, despite Peru's heterogeneous ethnic and racial makeup comprised of European, indigenous, African, and Asian cultural influences.

Because my study focuses on the white and black, or Afro-Peruvian, binary as represented through literature, it is important to note the historical presence and discursive absence of black people and culture within the history of Peru. In his introduction to *Escribir la*

identidad: creación cultural y negritud en el Perú, M'bare N'Gom does just that, noting how “en el Perú, el africano y sus descendientes fueron protagonistas activos en casi todas las fases de la Historia Nacional: desde la llegada de los españoles hasta la conformación de la nación y, más tarde, de lo que algunos estudiosos han acordado en llamar la ‘posnación’” (19). At the same time, N'Gom, in agreement with authors such as Milagros Carazas (2011; 35-44), Tanya Maria Golash-Boza (2011; 60-72), Humberto Rodríguez Pastor (2008; 15-38), and Marcel Velázquez Castro (2005; 49-57), draws attention to the “erasure” or “invisibility” of black peoples and culture throughout Peru’s national history, pointing out:

a lo largo de la historia unos esfuerzos sistemáticos y puntuales de borrar al afrodescendiente de la historiografía nacional del Perú. Ese discurso de exclusión formaba parte de un proyecto de construcción de la nacionalidad peruana que se apoyaba en una visión eurocéntrica de la modernidad prevalente en muchas de las jóvenes naciones hispanoamericanas en el siglo XIX. Y eso a pesar de que se invocara el mestizaje como uno de los rasgos definitorios de la nacionalidad (19).

What has been the motivation for this “white-washing” of Peruvian national history? In what ways did Peru’s Independence contribute to the relegation and suppression of Afro-Peruvian identity consciousness and claims of national belonging?

Peru’s nineteenth-century struggle for independence and its subsequent attempt to create a united national body formed the backdrop to the racial differentiation project between the white elite and the enslaved and freed black population. According to Velázquez Castro, the nineteenth century was the period in which the racial boundaries between white and black Peruvians were delineated, effectively making black Peruvians the “Other” during this historical period, which began to witness the integration of *indigenous* people and culture within the larger national

identity (19).⁴ Of utmost importance are the real effects these discursive borders had on black communities within Peru. Population records suggest that the number of black people recorded in Peru decreased substantially both during and after national Independence (Velázquez Castro 49). Possible factors for this decrease are varied: increasing international pressure regarding abolition, the legislative and physical struggle for national independence, the effects of *mestizaje* and hypergamy, the juridical actions taken by black slaves against the institution of slavery itself, the negative rate of natural increase, and, interestingly, the role of “ethnic shame” and the disavowal of one’s cultural or biological heritage or background (52). This final possible explanation reflects how racialized thinking successfully blurred the presence of blacks in Peru. The attribution of negative characteristics to one’s perceived racial background left psychological wounds on black communities, leading to the cover-up, or “masking,” of black heritage in order to ascend the racial hierarchy.

The notion of blackness within the Peruvian context has emerged largely from its perception as difference from the “norm” which, as mentioned earlier, has become the foundation from which whiteness is conceptualized. Velázquez Castro discusses the etymology of the Spanish word *negro* (black), noting how “la palabra «denigrar» [denigrate] deriva de «negro» y esto nos revela cómo en una operación conceptual destinada a producir desprecio y rechazo, late, incrustada, la figura del negro” (57). Frantz Fanon, in his seminal work *Black Skin, White Masks*, discusses how the image of blackness has been historically associated with the negative side of the human psyche, particularly how the Western consciousness has linked blackness with evil, sin, misery, death, war, and hunger (157). Such negative attributes of phenotypic darkness are even reflected within Andean mythology: “Ccallac Pacha Tuta o Tutayacpacha alude al tiempo del principio o de las tinieblas caracterizadas por el caos, desorden

y ausencia de civilización. Por ello, los esclavos de los españoles eran denominados Tutayquiris” (Velázquez Castro 58). This is particularly interesting in that pre-colonial, Andean beliefs regarding blackness/darkness in allegorical terms were later extended to encompass darker phenotypes in order to perpetuate a racial project of domination. Blacks, unlike Peruvian Indians, could not be integrated into the national body, their existence deemed antithetical to progress, civilization, and order. As Henry Louis Gates, Jr. explored in his PBS series, *Black in Latin America*, Peru’s racial history has been marked by its “Black grandma in the closet,” a generational concealment of black familial and cultural connections throughout the nation’s history (“Black Grandma”). In this way, despite the obvious influence and role of black Peruvian culture and history have had on the larger Peruvian national imaginary, black existence has been relegated to the background of Peruvian national identity. Black Peruvian presence, then, experiences a large-scale process of racial invisibilization.

This process of “forgetting” the Afro-Peruvian presence coincides with Golash-Boza’s assertion that the racial projects in Peru prioritized whiteness over other ethnic and racial groups in early republican Peru due to the perceived “Indian problem.” This sentiment arose in response to the large indigenous population, Peru’s majority demographic, that was left largely segregated and uneducated in the wake of national independence (62). For the mostly white Peruvian elite, this population threatened the desired social cohesion of the emerging nation. This perceived threat became solidified following Peru’s defeat in the War of the Pacific against Chile (1879-1883), in which many elites came to believe that Peru might not have lost had their indigenous population been truly assimilated into the national body. As a result, the notion of education as a means through which cultural assimilation could be achieved became a top priority within Peru’s nation-building project. In “Are Mestizos Hybrids: The Conceptual Politics of Andean

Identities,” Marisol de la Cadena discusses how during the early twentieth-century, education programs were targeted at rural indigenous and mestizo populations in order to “civilize the countryside and improve their lives by incorporating them into the national community” (Cadena 271). The education of these populations was a state project that sought to culturally convert Peru’s *indio* into the seemingly “whiter” *mestizo*, permitting the simultaneous absorption of an indigenous socio-historical past while reinforcing hegemonic valorizations of white superiority. Fernando Rosas asserts that:

The Indians formed no part of the nation. At most one could view them as ‘proto-Peruvians,’ individuals who only after a long process of ‘redemption,’ in which the fundamental part was played by time itself, could they come to be citizens. The citizens who formed the nation which they created were the *criollos* and the mestizos, while those who were excluded were the black slaves and the Indians, over whom the citizens must exercise guardianship” (167).

The concerted effort to “civilize” the Indian effectively eclipsed the presence of blackness, as the latter populations were effectively deemed irredeemable as potential protagonists within the new nation (Golash-Boza 63).

What is interesting about the different approaches taken by the white/mestizo elite regarding indigenous and black populations in Peru is the contrast constructed between phenotypic and cultural *mestizaje* and assimilation. Whereas indigenous populations were, to an extent, allowed to culturally and visibly mix into the national body via education programs and interracial reproduction, black populations were left in the periphery specifically due to their darker skin complexions. As a result, education programs and reproductive mixing proved ineffective in bringing the sociocultural situation of Afro-Peruvians to the forefront of the vision

of a united, national body. However, the progeny of white and black relationships, historically referred to as *mulatos*, were more visible in the national imaginary, particularly as social and literary protagonists, as well as the objects of affection by white/mestizo men and women (Castro 65). The (mis)representation and disregard of black existence in Peru came to mirror that of many Latin American countries during the nineteenth century, one that suggests a myth of the “disappearing *negro*.”

Racial Representation and Twentieth-Century Peruvian Literature

Peru’s racial dynamics have greatly affected the representation, or lack thereof, of black Peruvians, both within the narratives written and the amount of publications produced by writers of black, African descent. From the end of the nineteenth century, and continuing throughout the twentieth century, some of Peru’s most notable literary works appeared through the lens of *indigenismo*, a literary movement that intended to bring the political and social situation of Peru’s indigenous population into the purview of a shared, or at least contemporaneous, national reality. Superficially this reflected the intent of white and mestizo elites to revive and propagate the notion of a shared, indigenous past. Yet this idea relied on an imaginary history that was largely based upon racialized characteristics of indigeneity, as created by the elite in order to maintain a discourse of national mestizaje. In other words, elite political and academic actors could rhetorically fuse white *criollo* and indigenous cultures, despite the history of racist ideology that had truly kept them as separate and unequal entities.

These tensions were both ethnic and economic in nature. In this way, *indigenismo* reflected two different iterations at the turn of the twentieth century: political *indigenismo* and literary *indigenismo*. According to Mirko Lauer, political *indigenismo* involved a metonymic

relationship between the indigenous and the peasant, while in literary *indigenismo*, the indigenous is a metonym for the autochthonous (qtd. in Archibald 53). Antonio Cornejo Polar's interrogation of literary *indigenismo*, in "La novella indigenista: un género contradictorio," substantiates the "double-edged sword" of *indigenismo*, specifically: 1) the genre's preoccupation with crisis, as inspired by encounters between rural, indigenous populations and white, urban ideals of modernization; 2) the tendency of *indigenista* writers to narrate from an "outside" or exterior perspective (read white, *criollo* perspective) in order to legitimize the marginalized, indigenous experience; 3) and the influence of ethnic and historical stereotypes which both cast pre-colonial indigenous history as idyllic yet contrary to what was considered worthy of novelistic narrative (61-63). The political and literary aspects of *indigenismo* reveal the paradoxical nature of racial rhetoric in early nineteenth-century Peru, of which Francisco José López Alfonso comments:

el indio pasó a representar no sólo una amenaza (aunque fuese más bien una baladronada), sino también un importante ingrediente de la modernidad. En buena medida ajenos a los hechos, estos contingentes humanos que sistemáticamente habían sido olvidados, que no desempeñaban casi papel alguno en la formación de la nacionalidad y de sus instituciones, devenían ahora el Perú auténtico (o una importante porción de él), el nuevo Perú (15).

Indigenous Peruvians, both real and literary, reflected both a problem and a necessity for a more unified national identity and for the advancement of Peru into the modern world.

Unfortunately, this paradoxical inclusivity did not hold true for Peruvians of African descent. Though the first literary works by Afro-Latinx Americans written in Spanish emerged from Peru, the systematic erasure and distortion of Afro-Peruvian culture often eclipse the

impact of such works (N’Gom 26).⁵ The lack of published Afro-Peruvian writers and their works, and of realistic, “flesh and bone” representations of Afro-Peruvians within published works themselves, mark the twentieth century. N’Gom argues that such voids reflect the cultural hegemony of contemporary Peru. The discourse of power within Peru reflects a one-sided and dogmatic system that does not engage with the “subaltern” system, resulting in “un espacio secuestrado y marcado por la alteridad histórica, política y cultural donde los grupos minoritarios (política y económicamente hablando) carecen de un marco de expresión adecuado y democrático, lo cual los convierte en sujetos periféricos y sin voz dentro del contexto del discurso oficial de la Nación” (21). When black characters have appeared in published works, their representation has been limited to stereotyped notions of hypersexuality, primitivism, monstrousness, irrationality, and rebelliousness (Velázquez Castro 65).

This fact highlights the need to acknowledge and analyze the literary contributions of a largely ignored and oppressed segment within Peruvian national culture. As Velázquez Castro points out:

podemos afirmar que el complejo y sostenido discurso de las élites sobre los afrodescendientes—en el campo de la literatura y el político-jurídico—demostró notable eficiencia en la tarea de irradiar prejuicios y prácticas discriminatorias que fluyen desde la vida social y regresan a ella reproduciendo y fortaleciendo las desigualdades. El éxito de este bombardeo de imágenes se puede medir en la casi inexistencia de imaginarios que se rebelen o resistan esta política de los significantes; incluso podemos constatar que en muchos casos la voz y el razonamiento del subalterno están atrapados en la red de significantes de la élite porque muchos de ellos han interiorizado la mirada hegemónica (73).

My purpose is to shed light on how the absence and representation of Afro-Peruvians writers, their works, and their depictions throughout Peruvian literature involve an interdependent system of valorization that cannot be analyzed within an isolated notion of “racial characterization.” Rather it must be analyzed through the lens of racial formations, i.e., how historically- and socially-produced differences have created an unstable racial hierarchy, resulting in the marginalization and oppression of cultural groups that diverge from the normalized, hegemonic notion of whiteness.

Theoretical and Methodological Considerations

With early twentieth-century philosophers such as African-American theorist and writer, Alain Locke, the changing social milieu and the growing ideological influence of black thinkers accompanied the emerging conceptualization of race as a socially-constructed mechanism that was tied with physiological markers in order to condone and perpetuate systematic oppression. In “The Concept of Race as Applied to Social Change” (1924) Locke comments that:

The best consensus of opinion then seems to be that race is a fact in the social or ethnic sense, that it has been very erroneously associated with race in the physical sense and is therefore not scientifically commensurate with factors or conditions which explain or have produced physical race characters and differentiation, that it has a vital and significant relation to social culture, and that it must be explained in terms of social and historical causes such as have caused similar differentiations of culture-type as pertain in lesser degree between nations, tribes, classes, and even family strains (93).

Locke’s comments point to the limited and inadequate conceptualization of race and racialized cultural differences as solely dependent on biological and/or somatic theories. The fact is, the

perceived cultural differences between individuals and groups rely on the amalgamation of various sociopolitical and historical factors, many of which have been shaped and distorted by the same theories grounded in physiology and biology that contributed to the initial ascendance of scientific racism during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Conceptualizing race in terms of social rhetoric and culturally-constructed narratives, or “projects,” provides a foundation for the notion of “racial formations,” as proposed by Michael Omi and Howard Winant in their work, *Racial Formations in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1980s*. According to their theories, racial formations are based on the historical relationships between various human groups or communities, where emerging, racialized categories receive meanings that determine the racial ordering of these groups, along with the organization and assignment of physical resources (56). Many attribute the origin of the racial projects that would shape the sociopolitical landscape of the Americas to the arrival of European colonizers in the Americas, where their encounters and confrontations with the indigenous inhabitants put into question their prevailing beliefs of humankind’s origins and their self-perceptions with respect to these new “Others” (Omi and Winant 61).

However, various theorists chart the origins of American racial distinctions, with its accompanying hierarchies and perceived attributes, in the sixteenth century (see Foucault, Mignolo, and Quijano).⁶ Walter Mignolo notes how the Christian belief in the cursed nature of Noah’s son, Ham, the connection between the word *Ham* and “black,” and the notion that Ham’s descendants later occupied the areas of northern Africa and the Middle East (areas later connected with Muslim populations), had an enormous impact in the perception of the undesirability and oppositional nature of somatic blackness to imperial, Christian Europe. In addition, Mignolo finds this religious conceptualization of racial difference to have a secular

analogue, namely the growing impact of capitalist economics and its need for an exploitable labor force and expropriated land (1738).

The assignation of moral and social values to phenotypically-defined groups propelled much of the racial discourse in the Americas from the European perspective, one that became more and more preoccupied with the political subjugation and economic exploitation of “different” populations. In other words, European attempts to achieve economic domination created the necessity to justify their harsh treatment of “Othered” populations, namely the enslaved Africans and the exploited indigenous peoples. This justification arose from the implementation of a discursive system of differences that assigned hegemonic value according to phenotypic and cultural characteristics. And yet, as Locke asserts, “Race accounts for a great many of the specific elements of the cultural heredity, and the sense of race may itself be regarded as one of the operative factors in culture since it determines the stressed values which become the conscious symbols and tradition of the culture” (95).

In other words, despite its mythological origins and rhetorical application, race as a concept remains an important factor in cultural identity due in part to the way in which cultural characteristics have become linked to racialized categorization of humanity. This difficult balancing act between race and culture informs part of the motivation for this present proposal, particularly as I wish to analyze how whiteness and blackness are expressed through twentieth-century literary production in Peru, not as entirely distinct and separate entities, but as situational and relational concepts.

Though the current study will center on the influence of the African diaspora within the Peruvian literary sphere, the formation of whiteness is indispensable to the exploration of Afro-Peruvian identities and cultural productions during the twentieth century. The historical racial

formation project by European colonizers discussed earlier became a means through which to create and maintain social and political hierarchies of power and domination. In *Look, a White!: Philosophical Essays on Whiteness* (2012), George Yancy asserts that in calling themselves “white,” European descendants engaged in a process that:

was egomaniacal and thanatological; it was a process of self-naming that functioned to ‘justify’ through racial myth making, the actions of whites in their quest to dominate those ‘backward’ and ‘inferior’ others. This process of self-naming was *not* a gift but a manifestation of white messianic imperialism (7).

Of utmost importance is that the construction of white/European identities *depends* on its perceived distinction from the “Other.” Without the Other, the imperialist ideology that undergirds the myth of whiteness would lack a foundation, a point of departure, with which it could contrast itself. Once again, Yancy suggests that whiteness, as a racial construct, consists of a confluence of power relations that place it in positions of power and advantage against the subjugation of the Other (“Fragments” 6). Sociopolitical consequences of such rhetoric for “Othered” populations include the unequal distribution of resources, disproportionate economic opportunities, and a lack of sociopolitical influence.

The reality of whiteness, as a social and racial category, is one that becomes more palpable to those who do not identify as part of this group than to those who do. In other words, the concept of whiteness, historically and ideologically, has had stronger implications and consequences for the experienced realities of “non-white” groups. As Sara Ahmed affirms, “It has become commonplace for whiteness to be represented as invisible, as the unseen or the unmarked, as non-colour, the absent presence or hidden referent, against which all other colours are measured as forms of deviance” (par. 1). In this way, whiteness becomes normative; those

who self-identify as white, this identity does not represent merely one of the myriad perspectives and lived experiences, but rather the true and representative existence against which others are compared, valorized and, ultimately, dismissed. The idea that whiteness represents a predetermined value of existence is problematic, considering evidence that better situates whiteness as a historically and ideologically constructed form of *mestizaje*. The ideology that surrounds whiteness reveals a racialized formation where its building blocks and constitutive processes emerge out its tangled relationship with “Othered” individuals and communities. This racialization process that births whiteness simultaneously allows a hybridized notion of whiteness, which counters the numerous proponents of white supremacy who equate whiteness with “racial purity” (Muteba Rahier 42).

Marilyn Frye, in her critique of white feminists and her assertion of their desire to achieve equality with (white) men, sustains that racism is a determining factor in the desire to control the reproductive power of women insofar as such control assures the continuity of a pure, white population (qtd. in Alcoff 210).⁷ Though the role of white feminists goes beyond the scope of this analysis, Frye’s attention to the notion of racial purity is of utmost importance. Considering the aforementioned dependent nature of whiteness on the oppositional relationship between it and “Othered” racial identities, is it possible to consider whiteness as a wholly “pure” and homogenous identity/category if its very existence depends on its contrast to other cultural identities? The instability of a “pure” racial category of whiteness (or blackness, for that matter) seems to suggest an ideology much closer to that of *mestizaje*. By implying that racial categories are all forms of a kind of rhetorical *mestizaje*, I do not wish to diminish the palpable effects of distinct racial and cultural consciousnesses, but rather to problematize the idea of racial purity and to destabilize the unacknowledged and invisible normativity of whiteness with respect to

other racialized identities. In short, I wish to reduce the perceived distance between white and black racialized identities while demonstrating that, as Mike Hill states, “the distance implicit in presumptive white purity is false, and covers an occluded racial proximity” (qtd. in Yancy, *Look* 3).⁸

Chapter Overviews

The first chapter, entitled “Muddled Whiteness and Fading Blackness: Monstrous *Mestizaje* in the works of Enrique López Albújar,” will look to the *indigenista* bent of said author and works such as *Cuentos andinos* (1920), noting how the author’s own experiences with indigenous communities inform his at times paradoxical representation of Peruvian Indians. At the same time, this chapter will explore how López Albújar was one of the first authors who attempted to realistically represent indigenous characters (Prieto 147). From *Cuentos andinos* (1920), I will transition into a more in-depth discussion of *Matalaché* (1928), one of the first Peruvian novels to feature a black protagonist, although written by an author who did not self-identify as Afro-Peruvian. Comparing the indigenist *Cuentos andinos* with the arguably *negrista* writing of *Matalaché* will provide the backdrop for exploring the notion of “muddled whiteness,” or the idea that the assumption of moral and physical “purity” of whiteness is unstable due to its dependence on the assumed moral and physical “baseness” of darkness (i.e., blackness). My principal aim here is to analyze the dynamics between whiteness and blackness in the Peruvian national consciousness, their inevitable interdependence, and the López Albújar’s subtle destabilization of hegemonic racial norms of the early twentieth century.

The second chapter, “(Mis)Representations of Blackness during the Latin-American Boom,” will focus on the ways in which non-Afro-Peruvians characterized blackness and Afro-

Peruvians in canonical works written during the later 1950s through the 1970s. Mario Vargas Llosa's *Conversación en la catedral* (1969), will serve as the bases of analysis for exploring how 1) *indigenista* tropes and concerns overshadow and, at times, "soften," the social issues that plague Afro-Peruvian populations; 2) the characterization and inclusion of black characters is primarily secondary in nature, merely duplicating the official history that relegates Afro-Peruvians to the farthest periphery of the national consciousness. The most salient feature of my analysis of this canonical work is a demonstration of how whiteness is necessarily constructed in conjunction with indigeneity and blackness, even in the alleged absence of these "Others."

In "Racial Recipes: Incorporation as Metaphor of Racial Formation," I analyze the increasing presence, agency, and representation of Afro-Peruvian culture and people in Gregorio Martínez's *Crónica de músicos y diablos* (1991). The heightened representation of Afro-Peruvian lived experiences, linguistic variations, and characters with depth reflect a changing cultural milieu within Peru during the second half of the twentieth-century. Afro-Peruvian people and culture were becoming more visible as a result of the cultural revival championed significantly by the artistic, musical, and performative efforts of siblings Nicomedes and Victoria Santa Cruz. This Afro-Peruvian consciousness-raising saw the transcription of Afro-Peruvian oral poetry into printed text, the unearthing of West African musical roots within the national dances, and a reclamation and affirmation of the Afro-Peruvian presence within Peru. As social perceptions changed, so did those within the literary arena. Martínez utilizes Afro-Peruvian characters and, through them, focuses on family and relational dynamics of Afro-Peruvian communities along the Pacific coast. Having been informed by his own life and cultural experiences within an Afro-Peruvian community, Martínez's text seeks to revise the dehistoricized position of black Peruvians, placing their contributions at the fore. Moreover, I

will analyze Martínez's representation of intra-national senses of belonging and identity that arise within Afro-Peruvian communities despite, and because of, Peru's ultimately exclusionary national identity project. Part of his strategy involves the employment of a "gastronomic imaginary," using food and the act of consumption as metaphors in the construction of racial and national formations in Peru.

The final chapter, "Texts of Transition: Afro-Peruvian Literary Agency in the early Twenty-First Century" will explore Lucía Charún-Illescas' *Malambo* (2001), the first novel published by a self-identified, Afro-Peruvian woman. I have chosen this work due to its relative, yet diminishing, invisibility within the current body of Peruvian literary criticism, and in hopes of advancing this relatively small body of research. I will also highlight strategies, namely African cosmologies, the exploration of place and space as racial formations, and the mapping of racial difference onto the physical body, utilized by the author to formulate conceptualizations of race and ethnicity that are distinct from those that continue to perpetuate white superiority and the marginalization of the "Other" in contemporary Peruvian society.

Chapter 1: Muddled Whiteness and Fading Blackness: Monstrous *Mestizaje* in the works of Enrique López Albújar

Understanding and evaluating the narrative work of Peruvian author, Enrique López Albújar (1872-1966), requires a consideration of how his work coincides and reflects the shifting sociopolitical landscape of Peru during the transitional period between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. López Albújar's literary output dialogues with that of various prominent social and political figures and movements within Peru's changing national identity of the early twentieth century. In fact, two of López Albújar's major works, *Cuentos andinos* (1920) and *Matalaché* (1928), can be viewed as interrogations of much of the sociopolitical critique that surged in the transitional years after the War of the Pacific (1879-1883). However, it is the latter work that stands out as an examination of the simultaneous presence and absence of Afro-Peruvian culture and history within Peru's larger, national imaginary. *Matalaché*, then, becomes a literary indictment of a pervasive negativity and marginalization regarding Afro-descendent representation within popular, Peruvian culture. Nevertheless, in order to trace *Matalaché's* influence within Peruvian consciousness, we must first situate López Albújar within the social and political milieu of Peru at the turn of the twentieth century, particularly in how his works represent the interaction between the surging prominence of literary *indigenismo* and *negrismo* literature of the late nineteenth century. To this end, I will first examine the sociopolitical events that sparked simultaneous changes in the political leadership of Peru and the interrogation of Peruvian identity. Continuing from those factors, I will briefly discuss the key actors involved in Peru's changing identity and how their work, influenced a great deal by European literary and political movements, inspired great changes in Peruvian literary aesthetics. Finally, I will analyze

López Albújar's *Matalaché* and the ways in which this work dialogues with and counters popular social movements and sentiments of early twentieth-century Peru. I will also examine the various aesthetic features and literary devices of the text that simultaneously accentuate and relegate the figure of the Afro-Peruvian, emphasizing the complex relationship many white and *mestizo* authors had towards the Afro-descendent element of their country.

In 1879, Peru, allied with Bolivia, became involved in a large-scale military conflict with Chile, which would prove to be the largest and bloodiest armed conflict since Peru's Independence in 1821. Presently referred to as the War of the Pacific, tensions between the three countries arose from initial territorial and economic concerns between Chile and Bolivia. In the years leading up to the outbreak of war, the desert area of Atacama became a much sought-after area, due to the presence of profitable nitrate deposits found in its soil. Until 1879, both Peru and Bolivia claimed areas of this desert, much of which was contested by Chile and the Nitrate Company of Antofagasta, a business venture headed by a British and Chilean partnership. After Bolivia imposed a tax on nitrate exports by Chilean companies from the region, Chile saw this move as a violation of previous contracts between the two countries and refused to pay. These actions snowballed into an embargo by Bolivia on Chile's exports, prompting Chile's military to mobilize and occupy the Bay of Antofagasta, which resulted in Bolivia's declaration of war against Chile. A previous treaty of alliance signed by Peru with Bolivia assured their involvement in the conflict. Poor military organization, economic hardships brought on by the crumbling dependence on Peru's *guano* deposits, and weak political leadership marked Peru's inability to successfully combat Chile, leading to the occupation of Lima in 1881. It was not until 1883 that Peru's then military leader, Colonel Miguel Iglesias, was able to put an end to the war by agreeing to the Treaty of Ancón, an agreement that granted Chile ownership of the Tarapacá

region of the contested lands, as well as further concessions regarding the profits from guano and nitrate deposits.⁹

The subsequent governments and their attempts at rebuilding Peru's broken economy and restructuring its national identity would be one of the principal causes of political transition within Peru's leadership between 1886-1919. In addition, Peru's defeat in the War of the Pacific would initiate changes within white elite discourse regarding the social position, role, and visibility of its indigenous populations within Peru as a nation. As James Higgins notes, "el desastre de la Guerra del Pacífico (1879-1883) impulsó a los intelectuales peruanos a hacer una revalorización agónica de todo aspecto de la vida nacional [.]" (142). It was during this period that the legacy of Nicolás Piérola would take hold. Formerly the President of Peru between 1879-1881, Nicolás Piérola returned to depose Andrés A. Cáceres in 1895. A member of the Civilista Party, Piérola focused on the populist element of Peruvian politics, pausing state control by Peru's military, as had been the norm under Cáceres. His installment of a democratic government after the militarism of Cáceres, along with economic and political reforms, created the roughly thirty-year period of national recovery and economic progress commonly referred to as the Aristocratic Republic.¹⁰ Though positive in terms of rebuilding Peru's war-weary economy and sense of national identity, Piérola and his followers' system of government perpetuated economic and political control by the land-owning and elite classes. In response to this period of oligarchic rule, the labor classes also developed new, more left-leaning, social ideologies and movements in response to the growing concern of, what was seen as, abuses and economic mismanagement committed by Peru's elites.

Much of the criticism aimed at Peru's oligarchic leadership became embodied by Peruvian intellectual figure, Manuel González Prada (1844-1918). Noted for his anarchist bent

and scathing critiques of Peru's sociopolitical climate, González Prada became one of the most outspoken public intellectuals who hoped to rethink and restructure the oligarchic basis of Peruvian government, but also the bases of Peruvian national identity. For González Prada, the weaknesses of Peruvian society lie in both the perpetual fight for power amongst Peru's elite since the country's Independence, as well as the failure to incorporate its indigenous population, the majority of the region's inhabitants, into Peruvian society as active and educated members of the body politic. Much of González Prada's writings reflect a scathing indictment of Peru's aristocratic leadership, particularly that of Piérola and the Civilista Party. What's more, González Prada's essay, "Nuestros Indios" provides some of the clearest charges against the subordination of Peru's indigenous majority due to alleged racial differences. González Prada questions the pseudoscientific racial categorizations and racist ideology of French social psychologist, Gustave Le Bon, affirming that the centuries of oppression and exploitation experienced by Peru's indigenous masses have resulted in their disillusionment of belonging to the Peruvian national body. In addition, Peru's indigenous communities experience(d) a deterioration of sociopolitical power due to exploitative economic tactics, generations of physical and psychological abuse, and less socioeconomic mobility due to inadequate access to education. Challenging popular notions of natural or biological differences, which included the supposed inferiority and "primitiveness" of indigenous, black, and Asian cultures as compared to Anglo-Saxon culture, González Prada's essay invites the reader to consider how those left out of Peru's oligarchic power structure, including the indigenous masses and educated *criollos* and *mestizos*, alike, are equally positioned to still serve the interests of those wealthy elite in power.

Despite his apparent support of the incorporation of Peru's largely ignored and exploited indigenous majority, it must be noted that González Prada's views on the sociocultural

importance and influence of Peru's black and Asian populations seemed much more in line with popular, stereotyped rhetoric regarding Afro-descendent and Asian cultures that pervaded much of Latin American social thought of the early twentieth century.¹¹ This is not to say that racist rhetoric was necessarily explicit in the writings of González Prada, however the lack of consideration given particularly to the social conditions (and existence) of Afro-Peruvian communities, especially given the prominence of *mestizaje* ideology during the nineteenth century, is telling. One of his speeches, "Los partidos y la unión nacional" (1898) later included in his collection of essays *Horas de lucha* (1908), reveals this tendency to "forget" the black element of Peru's sociocultural body:

Cuando se recuerda que en el Perú casi todos los hombres de algún valor intelectual fueron indios, cholos o zambos, cuando se ve que los poquísimos descendientes de la nobleza castellana engendran tipos de inversión sexual y raquitismo, cuando nadie hallaría mucha diferencia entre el ángulo facial de un gorila y el de un antiguo marqués limeño, no hay para qué aducir más pruebas contra la inferioridad de las razas. Se debe, sí, contrastar que desde los primeros albores de la Conquista, los *blancos* hicieron del indio una *raza sociológica*, o más bien, una *casta ínfima* de donde siguen extrayendo el buey de las haciendas, el topo de las minas y la carnaza de los cuarteles. (209-10)

Here, González Prada's focus on the figure of the Peruvian Indian eclipses that of other marginalized groups within the nation's borders. There is no mention of how Afro-descendent or Asian communities factor into his view of Peruvian intellectuals. It is also interesting here how González Prada's vehement opposition to Peru's elite infiltrates his words in the form of blatantly prejudiced rhetoric against Peru's white elite, comparing their features to that of animals, while suggesting that descendants of Spanish nobility are prone to sexual perversions.

Interestingly, these attributes seem reminiscent of those commonly attributed to African and Afro-descendent groups by racist ideologies of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. González Prada uses his social construction of race to invert the normative narrative of equating negative attributes to phenotypic and cultural distance from whiteness, to one where both phenotype and class, in this case the white elite, become linked to what González Prada considers the true source of Peru's social and moral decadence and inferiority. For him, class seems to provide the better explanation for Peru's economic woes, as well as for the construction and sedimentation of the mythology of biological racial differences between white and indigenous Peruvians.¹²

González Prada's work anticipates the leftist ideologies that would become prevalent in the midst of Piérola's Aristocratic Republic. Two notable figures of such movements included APRA-party founder, Victor Raúl Haya de la Torre and Peruvian Communist Party founder, José Carlos Mariátegui.¹³ The rise in prominence of both Haya de la Torre and Mariátegui reflect the changing sentiments of Peru's citizens, particularly with regard to the incorporation and sociopolitical representation of Peru's long-ostracized indigenous populations. As Francisco José López Alfonso affirms, "Ambos señalaron que el cultivo de la tierra, labor tradicional y habitual en el indio, ocupaba a la gran mayoría de la población y que su primacía en la vida económica era enorme." Similarly, their solutions involved the return of lands controlled by the exploitative *gamonales* and *latifundistas*, with a transition to a modernized agrarian system that reflected the pre-colonial Incan economic structure (17). Mariátegui's crucial collection of essays, *7 ensayos de interpretación de la realidad peruana* (1928), draws upon Marxist ideology to interrogate and analyze various facets of the Peruvian landscape, including the country's economic evolution, the social issues regarding the treatment and marginalization of Peru's indigenous population, the intersections of religion, education, and economics, the impact of regionalism, and leading

trends in Peruvian literature. In addition, the author sees technological modernization and education as not only a way in which to combat the unequal class relations between Peru's land-owning elite and the indigenous majority, but also to combat the legacy of Spanish colonization and the feudal existence that marked the lives of Peru's indigenous population.

The focus of Mariátegui's *7 ensayos* involved discussing and interpreting the sociopolitical and economic situation of early twentieth-century Peru through the lens of historical materialism, revealing the ways in which for him, Peru's various social and economic woes were tied into the interactions of three, distinct economic systems: the seemingly "socialist" community system employed by pre-Conquest, Incan culture and still visible in some, rural indigenous populations, a feudal system, and a bourgeois economy. His concern for the indigenous population arose from what he considered an interruption of the more collective sense of community shared by the Incas at the time of Spanish Conquest by a feudal and abusive economic order, expressed in Peru through *gamonalismo* and *latifundismo*, which have maintained the indigenous sector as a marginalized and exploited class.¹⁴ For Mariátegui, the loss of lands, labor rights, and basic human rights experienced by the Peruvian Indian, was not predicated solely on supposed ethnic, educational, religious, or moral differences, but rather on the exploitative nature of the feudal system and the growing importance of international, capitalist ventures. As a result, Mariátegui did not see how vindication of indigenous personhood and national belonging could come from forces *outside* of the indigenous communities. For too long, outside interests had created nothing but disruption and oppression within Peru's majority. On the contrary, Mariátegui believed those capable of inciting societal changes to benefit these groups would have to be the indigenous communities themselves.

Mariátegui's belief in the positive benefits of modernization on Peru's autochthonous peoples is also reflected in his views concerning the state of early twentieth-century Peruvian literature. Noted Peruvian scholar, Antonio Cornejo Polar, comments how the literary sphere came to be closely associated with the problem of establishing a Peruvian national identity: "[Los] temas de lo nacional y de la literatura nacional no se plantearon en función de la índole heterogénea de la realidad y cultura del país, pero dentro de algún proyecto que pudiera significar...la trasmutación de lo heteróclito en homogéneo, de lo múltiple en único y hasta de los conflictos en armonía" ("La novela" 50). Equating the autochthonous with the future of the nation reflects Mariátegui's partiality for the *vanguardista* literary movement. As Vicky Unruh explains, the *vanguardista* movement called for a more intimate connection between art and reality, particularly the social involvement on the part of artists and intellectuals (60). Ultimately, Mariátegui aimed to place the image of the indigenous as the figurehead of national progress, shaking off the reigns of nineteenth-century, aesthetic modes to create forms of literary production unique to Peru's sociopolitical landscape. Interestingly, Mariátegui's sociopolitical opposition to Spain and its colonial connection to Peru did not seem to affect his belief in the transformative and self-reflective potential of European, avant-garde aesthetics.

However, it must be noted that Mariátegui's focus on the representation of Peru's indigenous population would perpetuate the marginalization and indifference towards the black element in Peru. Scholar of Afro-Peruvian literature and culture, Milagros Carazas, notes how "[Mariátegui] fundamenta que el indigenismo es un intento de reivindicar lo autóctono expresado por el indio; mientras que el negro y el mulato al representar lo importado y lo colonial no pueden ser de interés para 'nuestra literatura.' Se deduce entonces que sería impensable la producción del negrismo y, menos aún, de una literatura negra o afroperuana" (*Estudios* 41). As

Mariátegui seems to regard Afro-descendent Peruvians as representative of Peru's colonial past, their representation within the nature's literature, for him, proves insignificant and antithetical to the uplift of Peru's indigenous population as the future of Peruvian national identity. However, as Roland Forgues suggests in his essay "Mariátegui y lo negro: antecedentes de un malentendido," Mariátegui's view of Peru's black communities seems to transition from one that adheres to the racist ideologies perpetuated throughout Latin America regarding Afro-descendent populations, to one that suggests a hesitant acceptance of the socioeconomic plight endured by blacks at the hands of white, Western capitalism. Forgues explains that before his transformative journey to Europe between 1919 and 1923, Mariátegui's journalistic treatment of black Peruvians reflects the widely circulated racist dichotomy of civilization and barbarity, as well as scientific positivism, both propagated by Argentinian writer and politician, Domingo Sarmiento (156).¹⁵ However, Mariátegui's own words in *7 ensayos* suggest that long after his exposure to Marxism and his subsequent viewing of Peruvian society through the lens of class, more so than race, the specter of essentialist thinking pervaded his representation of blackness:

El aporte del negro, venido como esclavo, casi como mercadería, aparece más nulo y negativo aún. El negro trajo su sensualidad, su superstición, su primitivismo. No estaba en condiciones de contribuir a la creación de una cultura, sino más bien de estorbarla con el crudo y viviente influjo de su barbarie. (342)

For Forgues, statements such as these do not suggest a *conscious* perpetuation of racist thought, but rather the influence of the sociopolitical context in which Mariátegui found himself. Forgues notes that in the year prior to his death, Mariátegui expresses a sort of solidarity with all of humanity in his article "Occidente y el problema de los negros" (1929) in which he explores the capitalist exploitation of blacks (163). Nevertheless, it must be noted that Mariátegui's

consideration of Peru's black element is marked largely by silence and neglect. It is in these silences of Peru's most notable thinkers where Enrique López Albújar's *Matalaché* will shed light on a largely marginalized part of its national history and identity. In doing so, his focus on those voices at the periphery of Peruvian society will question the roots of whiteness, blackness, and race in general within the national imaginary.

Enrique López Albújar and *Indigenismo*.

Born on December 23, 1872, Enrique López Albújar spent most of his formative years in his birthplace of Chiclayo, and later, the northern city of Piura. It would be in Lima where López Albújar would further his studies, pursuing a law degree and becoming very active in journalism. Interestingly, it would be his journalistic and literary endeavors that would repeatedly cause him legal trouble, due to the often-polemic nature of the former, and the erotic nature of the latter (Dawe and Taylor 248). Upon receiving his law degree in 1904, López Albújar returned to Piura where he founded and edited the weekly publication of *El amigo del pueblo*, which again evidenced López Albújar's critique of various aspects of Peruvian society, particularly the influence of the Church and exploitative land-owning practices. In 1917, López Albújar's appointment as a trial court judge by then President José Pardo would prove to be a turning point in López Albújar's literary trajectory.

While serving as a court judge in rural regions of Peru such as Huánuco, Piura, Lambayeque, Tumbes, Tacna, and Moquegua, López Albújar used his experiences as a judge working within indigenous communities as his "blueprint" for the content and structure of his later works. In other words, his interactions with the various indigenous communities he encountered provided him with a more intimate perspective of rural, indigenous lives and

cultures. This humanizing view of native Peruvians would be key in his work, especially in its relation to other texts that sought to illuminate the plight of Peru's indigenous peoples. As his formative years occur concurrently with the *indigenista* literary and sociopolitical movements, his first major work *Cuentos andinos* (1920) has been regarded as one of the first, true representations of this literary trend. The difference in style and treatment of indigenous life and culture can be seen with a comparison of *Cuentos andinos* with Clorinda Matto de Turner's *Aves sin nido* (1889). The latter novel, long considered one of the first Peruvian narratives to directly address and denounce the living and working conditions of rural indigenous communities, presents strong denouncements of the suffering of Peru's indigenous communities, while also portraying indigenous people as individuals with feelings and personalities.¹⁶ However, as James Higgins explains, Matto de Turner's nineteenth-century text seems to incorporate literary indigenous representatives as a sort of propaganda tool, used by modern-minded elites in their conflict with Peru's conservative *latifundistas*, two opposing factions within Peru's oligarchy; the indigenous figure becomes marginalized from the center of the novel's focus. Efrain Kristal notes how *las élites modernizantes* made pawns of indigenous Peruvians "ya que la denuncia de la opresión de los campesinos andinos era una manera de atacar la economía precapitalista de la sierra, mientras que el llamado a su liberación de la servidumbre semifeudal servía la causa del proyecto modernizante, pues el desarrollo industrial requería una mano de obra libre" (qtd. in Higgins, *Historia* 146).¹⁷ Arguably, *Aves sin nido* might be better considered a bridge between *indianista* and *indigenista* literary styles.¹⁸

Cuentos andinos differs in this respect, due to the fact that López Albújar's representation of the native Peruvian relies less on the notion of social critique and more on the realistic representation of indigenous life and culture. Higgins confirms that:

lo más novedoso de los *Cuentos andinos...* es que el indio deja de ser un estereotipo y por primera vez está retratado de modo convincente como ser humano. Lejos de corresponder a la imagen tradicional del indio servil, sus personajes indígenas tienen un espíritu orgulloso e independiente que disimulan detrás de una máscara de sumisión en su trato con blancos y mestizos y se caracterizan por su sentido de justicia, su amor a la tierra y a la comunidad, y su apego a sus creencias mágico-religiosas y a las leyes y costumbres ancestrales. (*Historia* 198)

However, Priscilla Archibald notes that much like Matto de Turner, López Albújar's representations of Peruvian Indians reflect much of the racist attitudes and stereotypes of the early twentieth century, a legacy of the racism articulated and cultivated by other writers and intellectuals of the nineteenth century (54). Though his experience as a judge within indigenous communities gave him a closer perspective of rural, indigenous life, his injection of Western law into the narratives of his "realistic" representations of indigenous life belie the *indigenista* bent of his work. Archibald explains how López Albújar attempts to *extend* literary universality to the Peruvian Indian through a complex and, at times, contradictory process of highlighting racialized notions of criminality and revealing the equalizing power of Western law:

A fundamental irony underlies his work, since, through the *imposition* or *implementation* of regional or indigenous laws, which, by virtue of the repetition of this very act, assume the character of a universal legal gesture rather than culturally distinct discourse, the cultural difference which so fascinates López Albújar and drives his narrative also drives a process of westernization. As gestures the implementation of law repeated in his stories are conflated with his own gestures as regional judge. (59)

In other words, López Albújar's focus on the legal ramifications of indigenous strategies of rebellion, implemented from both within and without the indigenous community, creates a narrative of universality through the power of the law itself.

This universalization of Peru's indigenous people by López Albújar relates to the modernization process desired by Mariátegui, both attempting to somehow "approach" the indigenous experience through literature and, in that way, exposing the humanity that has been excluded from *criollo* constructions of national identity. Whereas Mariátegui's method involves the merging of socialist tenets with *indigenismo* to achieve a form of "indigenismo vanguardista," López Albújar converges both indigenous and Western notions of justice and law (Cornejo Polar 19). This is illuminating on two fronts: 1) both Mariátegui and López Albújar, despite their experiences with and affirmations of indigenous life, remain external to the lived indigenous experience, their writings revealing their *perceived* ability to write for and about the indigenous experience, despite their upper class, mestizo backgrounds; 2) their attempts to bring the indigenous population into the "national fold" would mean a necessary assimilation on the part of Peru's autochthonous communities and a subsequent alteration of their own cultural and ethnic senses of being and belonging within their communities. As Archibald notes, the racist discourse of turn of the twentieth-century Peru lingers within López Albújar's writing, notably in his attempt to control and subsequently destroy the indigenous body. She explains that, "[a] majority of the stories in *Cuentos andinos* describe indigenous difference through an identification with the body" (59). She notes that the violence enacted against the indigenous body in *Cuentos andinos*, is "an acknowledgment of cultural difference or indigenous agency, something he is consequently compelled to erase" (60). In other words, racist distinctions and apprehensions remain prevalent in the supposed universalizing project employed by López

Albújar in this “first” exemplar of literary *indigenismo*. As we will see, the preoccupation and interrogation of racial distinctions will remain integral to the dramatic structure of his later work, *Matalaché*. It is in this concern for the difference and implied threat of Othered bodies that will inform the following analysis.

Matalaché: Against the Vanguard

The plot of López Albújar’s *Matalaché* (1928) revolves around a soap factory and plantation called “La Tina” located in Piura, Peru in 1816. The factory, owned by Don Juan Francisco de los Ríos, becomes the site of a forbidden love affair between his visiting daughter, María Luz, and a biracial slave, José Manuel, popularly and derisively referred to as “Matalaché” due to the chants made by other slaves in recognition of his forced paternal role in the “couplings” arranged by slave-owners for their female slaves. The two fall in love, but both realize the impossibility of acting out their sentiments until María Luz devises a plan with the help of her servant, Casilda, which results in the two lovers sleeping together. María Luz becomes pregnant, precipitating a swift and violent reaction from her father, Don Juan Francisco, who orders his slaves to throw José Manuel into one of the soap vats, killing him.

According to biographical notes that appear in one edition of López Albújar’s *Matalaché*, the first publication of this novel was subtitled “novela retaguardista.” The novel, published in Piura in 1928, appeared during the height of the influence of European, literary avant-garde aesthetics and ideology. As we shall see, López Albújar’s usage of “retaguardista” seems to represent a deliberate opposition to the avant-garde movement. The principal questions here are: 1) why the opposition? and 2) what aesthetic or literary purpose does López Albújar attempt to achieve with such an appellation?

To begin, it is necessary to define how the avant-garde, or *vanguardismo*, was expressed in Peru during the early twentieth century. Yasmín López Lenci offers a succinct interpretation of this cultural movement when she suggests:

...entender a la vanguardia peruana como un laboratorio discursivo, no como producto o realización final sino como complejo proceso de resemantización de líneas estéticas de la modernidad occidental a través de una encrucijada de discursos plurales, heterogéneos y divergentes que se agruparán fundamentalmente bajo un sustrato común: el del rechazo del discurso colonial, la apropiación transcultural y la búsqueda de parámetros que asocien ‘nación’ y ‘modernidad.’ (144)

This literary and intellectual trend in Peru, despite its roots in the avant-garde movement in Europe, did not perfectly reflect the movement’s development within the European context (Zevallos-Aguilar 185). In other words, the avant-garde movement in Peru specifically reflects the sociocultural problems of said nation, particularly with respect to the reformative efforts by intellectual figures like Mariátegui to incorporate the autochthonous as the base of Peruvian identity. As mentioned above, these efforts by Mariátegui attempt a convergence of the indigenous with what he perceived as the redemptive and progressive capabilities of socialism, ultimately permitting Peru to move forward with a unified and modernized populace. In this way, the avant-garde movement, with its openness to new forms and aesthetics, provided the ideological armature necessary to link autochthonous cultures with a new sense of nation, one that now wished to break from its colonial past.

Mariátegui’s treatment of the avant-garde serves as a point of contrast for the seemingly more “cautious” approach taken by López Albújar. Despite the influence of racist ideology in his writing, López Albújar seems hesitant to embrace the avant-garde tendency to reject the past,

particularly when the Peruvian social imaginary remains plagued by a legacy of injustices and representative absences that has yet to be resolved. His “retaguardista” stance in *Matalaché* asserts his refusal to commit to looking forward to the future without first looking to the past, to the problematic history Peru has had with its indigenous and black populations. Mariátegui and López Albújar diverge in their consideration of blackness and the role of *mestizaje* within the social imaginary of Peru. In the case of Mariátegui, as Unruh indicates, “the new peruanidad was to be created out of the interaction of the international and the modern with the autochthonous and the traditional...Mariátegui was insisting on the importance of the European intellectual and aesthetic trends for developing Latin American art and thought” (60). For Mariátegui, then, the restructuring of Peruvian identity depended on a cultural melding of the European and the indigenous (Forgues 155, Unruh 60). His failure to consider Peru’s black element within his conceptualization of Peru’s social and cultural future, while maintaining the seemingly contradictory focus on European aesthetic modes seem to both be factors in López Albújar’s “retaguardista” perspective.

The self-described “novela retaguardista” is key in that it suggests an ideological rebellion against the popularity and influence of the avant-garde movement in Peru. In this way, López Albújar attempts to bring attention less to nuanced aesthetic strategies, and more to the potential social and ideological import of the content of *Matalaché* in reconsidering the necessity of looking to the past for solutions to present issues. One of these issues, the question of race and racial difference, particularly within the context of white and black Peruvians, is more readily treated within the “retaguardista” style of *Matalaché*. Whereas the avant-garde perspective would consider racism and discrimination as issues of the past, problems that no longer exist within Peru’s social landscape, “left behind” during the days of slavery, the “retaguardista” point

of view allows an analysis of the present by seeing how it is guided and influenced by the past. In a letter written by López Albújar to Mariátegui in 1928, the former confirms his interest in race within Peru:

Y dentro de este propósito está el estudio sicológico de la cuestión afroperuana, digna de estudiarse por nuestros hombres de arte y ciencia. Hagámosle con esto dúo al indigenismo. Frente al indio, pongamos al negro, al zambo, al cholo, al mestizo en una palabra. Si el indio es la base de nuestra población, el mestizo es la base de nuestra nacionalidad. (qtd. in Forgues 154)¹⁹

In contrast with the beliefs of Mariátegui, which involve the improvement of the indigenous through European literary aesthetics and ideological modes, López Albújar implies a need to focus on an integral sector of Peruvian society, one that has been conveniently and purposefully forgotten and marginalized during the vanguardist transition of the early twentieth century: the black element.

López Albújar incorporates Peru's black presence through his conceptualization of the *mestizo*, subsequently "darkening" the whitening process implied through Mariátegui's Europeanizing project. With *Matalaché*, considering the trajectory of its plot, the setting within Peru's pre-abolition past, and its plot revolving around the issue of race, it is evident that the author calls attention to the past in an immediate and direct manner, illuminating what the avant-garde attempts to reject. His act of categorizing the novel as "retaguardista" suggest an attempt to "mark" his own novel, distancing it from the surge of vanguardist works. In this way, one can step back, observe the historical panorama of Peru, and reexamine the actual social problems of the nation at the time against the legacy of racialist ideologies of the nineteenth century. The "novela retaguardista," then, allows for a rejection of "normativized" narratives; its ability to

“look back” into the past provides an interrogation of the intersections of history, ideologies of race, and the lived, unequal realities of whiteness and blackness within Peru.

Questioning the Normativity of Whiteness

Within *Matalaché* itself, one is able to explore various aspects that question the normativity of the white experience, in addition to problematizing the concept of whiteness. Within the narration itself, the reader notices that the white characters of the novel, possibly blinded by their relative status in relation to the enslaved black characters that surround them, do not realize the reality of their own existence. In one conversation, while José Manuel (“Matalaché”) explains to another slave his reasons for not joining a possible slave rebellion, he himself insinuates that there exists a similarity between the white masters and the black slaves: “Lo que pienso hacer tendré que hacerla con los otros, con los mismos que hoy nos oprimen y maltratan, mal que nos pese. Y es porque ellos son también esclavos como nosotros, pero tienen la cabeza más preparada para hacer mejor las cosas” (58). The fact that José Manuel represents a mixed-race perspective and subsequently repositions whiteness until it becomes equated with blackness, is both interesting and surprising. In his statement, whiteness and blackness are provided equal footing, allowing a comparison of the two, something that is not possible given the normativized relationship between white humanity and black inhumanity. This repositioning of whiteness reflects López Albújar’s retaguardista intentions in two ways: the reevaluation of whiteness by a mixed-race slave represents a voice from the past whose relevance to López Albújar’s contemporaneous racial discourse challenges the vanguardist tendency against connecting the past with the possibility of progress; the equalization of whiteness and blackness problematizes assumptions of some vanguardist thinkers, like Mariátegui, who believed the

black element to be pre-modern, incompatible with the constitution of a new Peruvian identity (*la peruaniidad*) (Forgues 155).

Continuing in this retaguardista approach, we find that López Albújar, through José Manuel, rejects the vanguardist preoccupation with external, read European, modes as a means to advance Peruvian society. What's more, López Albújar suggests that the figure or representation of the European affects the definition and treatment of whiteness within Peru. José Manuel, conversing with an older, respected slave, ño Parcemón, remarks the following in regards to white Peruvians:

Al decirle a usted los blancos, me he referido a esos que son a la vez amos y esclavos como nosotros. ¿Qué se ha creído usted? En estas tierras hay también blancos que son esclavos...Es que esos andan por las ciudades, tienen casas y tierras, y se codean con los otros, y hasta cruzan con ellos su sangre y su linaje. Pero como los unos son mestizos y los otros, aunque blancos por sus cuatro costados, tienen la tacha de haber nacido aquí, no se les deja meter la mano en todas las cosas de los godos. Porque aquí, ño Parcemón, no hay más hombres libres que los godos. (70)

Again, we see a reevaluation of whiteness from the perspective of an *Othered* character.

However, in this instance there is a critique of the notion of whiteness, revealing it to be a fragmented entity, rather than one of purity and wholeness. Through José Manuel, López Albújar questions purely biological or genetic considerations of race (“hasta cruzan con ellos su sangre;” “como los unos son mestizos”) by noting geographical gradations considered in the treatment of whiteness (“aunque blancos...tienen la tacha de haber nacido aquí”). These gradations are even noticed by José Manuel who, despite his inferior positioning relative to his white masters, realizes that Peruvian-born white people are not as white as the Goths, read Europeans. In this

way, there is a disconnect between the reality lived and experienced by white Peruvians and that of the true sociocultural relationship between their existence and broader (read global) perceptions of race and power.

Later in that same conversation, ño Parcemón, confused by José Manuel's assertion of white Peruvians' enslaved status, asks how, if white Peruvians are slaves, who are the enslavers? José Manuel responds:

-La fuerza, el brazo de un hombre que ha podido más que ellos y que vive a muchos miles de leguas de aquí. Es el amo de todos los de acá. Debajo de él están todos los demás hombres, sus vasallos, en gradas. Cuando él quiere, los de más arriba bajan y los de más abajo suben; pero sin llegar hasta donde él, por supuesto. Y en esta gradería no estamos nosotros, los negros, sino más abajo todavía. (68)

The obvious allusion here refers to the colonial power wielded by Europeans over Peru's inhabitants before Peru's Independence in 1824. Besides economic power, López Albújar emphasizes how the European influence carried with it a racial power through which Peru's white *criollos* became "less than white."²⁰ The revelation of multiple whitenesses problematizes historical whiteness in Peru. In other words, López Albújar's strategy of discussing the instability of whiteness, either through the *mestizo* voice of José Manuel, a representation himself of the complexity of racial representation through his questioning the fixity of race, or through the contrast between European and Peruvian whiteness, illustrates his attempt to reconsider the assumed purity and fixity of whiteness.

Gothic Whiteness

Considering López Albújar's use of the past to address contemporaneous sociocultural issues, it is interesting how he employs literary Gothic elements as a strategy in this endeavor. Gothic elements are incorporated into the fold of the story's argument, and alternatively, are modified to provide reinterpretations of racial dynamics within Peru's colonial past. In this way, Gothicism serves as one of López Albújar's aesthetic tools, which he uses to analyze the dynamics between whiteness and blackness. Key events of the text are, at times, represented in a shocking and violent manner. This "shock" effect highlights their symbolic importance within the context of the novel and recalls the alternative, yet insightful, interpretations of sociocultural issues during the Vanguardist period permitted by Gothicism and Naturalism. To delve deeper into López Albújar's application of Gothic aesthetics to his work, we must consider the following: 1) What constitutes Gothic literature and aesthetics? 2) How does the Gothic relate to the question of race? 3) How do these Gothic characteristics inform López Albújar's racial and literary project within *Matalaché*?

Literary Gothicism, as a genre, has a highly ambiguous and unstable definition. According to Fred Botting and Tabish Khair, the Gothic has an ambivalent relationship to time and place and can be described as a writing of excess and transgression (qtd. in Khair 5).²¹ Teresa Goddu insists that the Gothic is composed of various literary elements, all of which converge to transgress and oppose boundaries invoked by reasoning. Such elements include "haunted houses, evil villains, ghosts, gloomy landscapes, madness, terror, suspense, [and] horror" (*Gothic*, Goddu 5). The lack of a stable definition of literary Gothicism is also revealed by regional distinctions. Goddu describes how the American Gothic, read the Gothic of the United States, is defined in opposition to the English Gothic, taking shape more from its divergence rather than adherence to the aforementioned characteristics.²² As a result, the

American Gothic modifies the traits of the English Gothic in order to better represent the American experience. Goddu affirms that although the above traits are common to Gothic elements in English works, within the American context “the ‘incidents of Indian hostility, and the perils of the western wilderness, are far more suitable” (*Gothic*, Goddu 4). It is in this exchange and modification of traditional Gothic figures, representations, and settings that López Albújar crafts a *negrista* novel with a Gothic sensibility.

The extension of traditional, English Gothicism within the American context also acknowledges links between nineteenth century American racial discourse and the Gothic, one that illuminates the proximity of social opposites and the resulting terror or shock that ensues from this awareness. According to H. L. Malchow:

the gothic as a literary genre may be defined by characteristics that resonate strongly with important aspects of the nineteenth-century literature of racial prejudice, imperial exploration, and sensational anthropology: themes and images meant to shock and terrify, and a style ground in technique of suspense and threat... [Other] elements, such as highly stereotyped characters and an insistence on readable signs of depravity and the demonic concealed in physiognomy, dress, and mannerism are strikingly apt. (5)

In this way, racialized discourse of the nineteenth century found its expression of threat from the Other, terror of racial impurity, and shock at sexual and racial impropriety, through the Gothic aesthetics of the supernatural, the transgressive, and the abnormal.

Another aspect of literary Gothicism worth noting is its appeal to López Albújar’s “retaguardista” position. Khari explains that “even as the Gothic was offered primarily as an antidote to the coldness of Enlightenment Reason — thus going *back beyond* cultivated rationality to the early basis of humanity in ‘emotions’... — it was enabled by the very progress

and rationality that it decried or critiqued” (5, emphasis added). Taking these two considerations of the Gothic into account with regards to *Matalaché*, the Gothic elements of the novel suggest a desire to express fear. But a fear of what? Within the American context, the traditional images representative of the English Gothic (the monstrous, the supernatural, dark castles, etc.) become images of the unknown, the unrecognized, and the misunderstood. These images come to reflect the flesh and bone presences that invoke fear in the white American psyche: the racialized Other. As writer Ruth Bienstock Anolik confirms, “Gothic fear is relocated onto the figure of the racial and social Other, the Other who replaces the supernatural ghost or grotesque monster as the code of mystery and danger, becoming, ultimately, as horrifying, threatening and unknowable as the typical Gothic manifestation” (2). As I will discuss later, the figure of the Other, embodied by enslaved, black bodies of “La Tina,” transforms into a threat, into a monster, approaching its peak of terror with the sexual and racial transgression enacted between the white body of María Luz and the black body of José Manuel.

To clarify, I am not suggesting *Matalaché* is a wholly Gothic novel, but rather pointing out the use of Gothic elements by López Albújar to upset normativized racial formations. As previously noted, the Gothic allows a transposing of the monstrous onto the figure of the racial Other, including Peruvian Indians and Afro-Peruvians. In this way, the Gothic also perpetuates cultural and racial fears regarding the trespass between the racialized binaries of purity/impurity, civilization/barbarity, and morality/immorality. Malchow notes:

Both the gothic novel and racist discourse manipulate deeply buried anxieties, both dwell on the chaos beyond natural and rational boundaries and massage a deep, often unconscious and sexual, fear of contamination, both present the threatened destruction of

the simple and pure by the poisonously exotic, by anarchic forces of passion and appetite, carnal lust and blood lust. (5)

Within *Matalaché*, the apprehensions and anxieties mentioned by Malchow are apparent from the very beginning of the novel, particularly as represented by two white *criollo* characters, Don Baltazar Rejón de Meneses and Don Juan Francisco de los Ríos. The dialogue between these two powerful men, which begins the novel, involves the news of “las barrabasadas de Brown en el Callao,” a situation involving a pirate who, after setting sail from the port of Callao, has to fight with the authorities in order to escape capture (Albújar 7). Don Rejón expresses his displeasure upon hearing of these events, saying “Me desgrada enteramente [la situación]. Porque tras de [ella] hay como un secreto regocijo: el que siente el esclavo frente a los males de su señor. Y usted sabe, porque ya hemos hablado de ello alguna vez, cuánto me repugna todo lo que trasciende a pujos de rebeldía” (Albújar 8). Here, Don Rejón de Meneses is fearful of the possible impact Brown’s rebellious behavior will provoke in the consciousness of those enslaved and otherwise oppressed by the dominant class; Don Rejón automatically links the possibility of slave rebellion to the violence of Brown’s behavior. In this way, the association between the violence of Brown and possible violence of the slaves converges into the specter of the threatening Other; the slaves, therefore, become a gothic trope of horror and suspense.

Despite the perpetuation of racialized fear and apprehension, we must also consider the ways in which López Albújar employs the Gothic to subvert traditional racial roles and assumptions and rewrite racial norms. In the process, López Albújar reforms whiteness to the point in which it ceases to represent purity, morality, and civilization, and becomes the monstrous and barbaric. It seems that this strategy of inverting assigned (normative) racial roles reflects what Goddu refers to as “haunting back,” a process in which writers and authors who

themselves form part of historically marginalized groups, use Gothic elements to turn the tables on historically racial or essentialist literary conventions (“Vampire” 138).²³ Though it seems López Albújar did not self-identify as Afro-Peruvian, the strategy utilized here appears to attempt the same function. The transposition of whiteness with blackness serves to highlight López Albújar’s trajectory towards the end of the novel, where he attempts to “rematerialize the ghosts” of Peru’s past so that Peru’s black element might be acknowledged and incorporated in the present.²⁴

López Albújar allows for a shifting, a fluidity between the established boundaries between whiteness, blackness, and *mestizaje*. The most intriguing aspect of these transpositions is the representation of José Manuel, a mixed-race slave whose role as the protagonist, as well as his characterization as an emotional, thinking man, reflects an attempt to humanize his otherwise Othered body. The fact that he is of mixed race implies a transgression and Otherness in and of itself. As he does not fit or “belong” neatly to the race or class of his masters nor his fellow slaves, he is unique and alone within his Otherness. His humanistic representation, notably distinct from the animalistic representation of the other black slaves, seems to be the method by which López Albújar explores the *mestizo* identity. This is a problematic approach to representing the psychological condition of a racially-mixed individual, yet it reflects the popular notion of the time that racial admixture resulted in the whitening, read as the humanization, of subsequent generations. In her discussion regarding *mestizo* identity, Alcoff notes that:

Without a social recognition of mixed identity, the mixed race person is told to choose one or another perspective. This creates not only alienation, but the sensation of having a mode of being which is an incessant, unrecoverable lack, an unsurpassable inferiority, or simply an unintelligible mess. This blocks the possibility of self-knowledge. (279).

To combat this lack of “self-knowledge,” López Albújar seems to characterize José Manuel as a *man* who searches for his identity. In this way, the representation of José Manuel attempts to surpass the stigma of Gothic representation.

The ending of *Matalaché* portrays a key moment in López Albújar’s inversion and subsequent deconstruction of the traditional binaries of blackness/Gothic Other and whiteness/benevolence. After discovering that his daughter is pregnant with the baby of José Manuel, Don Juan Francisco undergoes an extreme change, evidenced by his physical description:

Dos surcos profundos les partían el entrecejo, imprimiéndole a su rostro una dureza implacable y cruel. Sus ojos de azul desvanecido parecían mirar por encima de los muros de la sala un punto lejano, algo que relejaba en sus pupilas resplandores de un incendio diabólico. (Albújar 162)

The narration notes his shadowed face, due to not shaving, his sudden aged appearance, and the deformation of his facial features. His actions and mannerism invoke fear and terror among his servants. The narrator indicates “que en esas veinticuatro horas aquel hombre se había *deshumanizado* y todo lo que fluía en él tenía una tal radiación de dolor y fiereza que *sobrecogía* al que miraba” (163, emphasis added). Don Juan Francisco, who from the beginning of the text seemed to represent the normative representation of a white *criollo* man with socioeconomic resources and influence, is now imbued with the features of the Gothic Other; what was once representative of normative, male whiteness is transformed into the monstrous, the uncanny, the uncivilized. In this way, the instability of whiteness is made apparent. His transformation destabilizes any possible notion of racial purity or fixity. Whiteness becomes blurry, mixed with the tropes and characteristics traditionally associated with Otherness.

The reformation of whiteness into the Gothic Other (as represented through Don Juan Francisco) reaches its peak with the final scene of the text. José Manuel, receiving the worst of Don Juan Francisco's ire, observes the monstrous transformation, exclaiming, “—Ya ve usted, don Juan, como no es preciso ser negro para ser una bestia. ¿Quién es aquí la bestia usted o yo?” (López Albújar 165). Here, José Manuel realizes how Don Juan Francisco's behavior has twisted his perceptions of racialized norms regarding white morality and/or civilized behavior. The racial demarcations are no longer distinct and there is a sense that the characteristics traditionally attributed to whiteness and blackness are now crumbling, leaving behind two equalized groups. This equalization process becomes apparent later in the same dialogue mentioned above:

[Don Juan] —¡Cállate, esclavo vil!

[José Manuel] — ¡Esclavo! El esclavo es usted don Juan, que se deja arrastrar por la soberbia, como el demonio. Así son todos ustedes los blancos. (165)

José Manuel exclamation suggests a change in self-perceived social and moral standing, as he positions whiteness and slave on the same plane of value; the relations of power have changed, giving José Manuel the authority to make claims and denouncements of his oppressor. His remarks acknowledge the possibility of the enslavement of whiteness, not by an external force, but rather by its own adherence an unequal social system based on unbalanced power relations. The scene ends with the violent and cruel murder of José Manuel where, under the order of Don Juan Francisco, the other slaves throw José Manuel into a churning soap vat. It is a horrifying end for José Manuel, but one that is emotionally shared by the other slaves who experience a “loca sensación de pavor” upon hearing his cries of anguish (166). The transformation is now complete: whiteness has become the monstrous Other, the Gothic Other.

White Double Consciousness: Psychological Considerations of Mestizo Whiteness

With respect to Alcoff's aforementioned assertion regarding mestizo identity, there remain similarities between her characterization of the unintelligible confusion experienced by people of mixed (mestizo) backgrounds and the behavior and personality types expressed through the white characters of *Matalaché*. The psychological distress of these characters reflects their questioning and reevaluation of their true social positions; the confusion and interior battles expressed through their own thoughts reveals the instability, and subsequent fragmentation, of the concept of whiteness. For this reason, the ideology that forms and supports whiteness resembles more closely a *mestizo* conceptualization, in that there is a sense of insecurity of the fixity of identity.

The idea that the white psyche, as portrayed in *Matalaché*, serves as evidence of the mestizo whiteness can be explored through the concept of double consciousness, proposed and popularized by author and activist, W. E. B. DuBois. In his seminal text, *The Souls of Black Folk*, DuBois describes double consciousness as "this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity" (9). Although this concept originally described black subjectivity within the socio-historical context of the United States, Alcoff proposes another application of this idea, one that explains the weak foundation of white, racial identity. Alcoff believes that white double consciousness requires "an ever-present acknowledgment of the historical legacy of white identity constructions in the persistent structures of inequality and exploitation" (223). Therefore, self-examination of one's white identity within the social and cultural structures of society would necessarily mean confronting how histories of enacting exploitative and oppressive forms of domination have resulted in the modern-day privileges afforded to

whiteness; the existence of whiteness therefore hinges upon its unequal positioning in relation to that of identities of color.

López Albújar's writing characterizes its white characters with the ability to reflect upon their agency, at times realizing that their actions are not completely dictated by their individual wills. The doubts that arise from their own reflections signal a disconnect from the blind acceptance of their white privilege during colonial society. A notable example from *Matalaché* occurs in the beginning of the work, after a description of "La Tina" and how it fell into the hands of Don Juan Francisco. Given that the acquisition of the factory included the transfer of "capital negro" (black slaves and servants), the narrator reveals some of Don Juan Francisco's thoughts regarding the treatment of his slaves. In this scene, Don Juan laments the bestial treatment that the slaves receive from their masters, detesting the idea of the forced coupling between slaves for the reproduction and continuation of their workforce. He comments, "esto no puede seguir así. Hay que levantar un poco su condición de hombres...hasta en los animales la elección es un atributo del instinto reproductor. ¡Por qué, pues, no dejar a mis esclavos en plena libertad de reproducirse? ¡Por qué intervenir, como los demás amos, en un acto que sólo les incumbe a ellos!" (López Albújar 17). This series of thoughts reflects a reexamination and remorse of the complicity of whiteness in the animalistic existence of the slaves.

The narrator, in reference to an arrangement between Don Juan and Don Rejón de Meneses to couple Don Rejón's slave, Rita, with José Manuel, reveals that "mas a pesar de estos dignificadores pensamientos, el amo y señor de La Tina [don Juan Francisco] no había sabido aquella tarde...cerrarle el paso a la vieja y hedionda costumbre. Y es que en el fondo de esta actitud había surgido de repente un interés" (López Albújar 18). There is a sudden change in Don Juan's train of thought: at first, Don Juan is reflecting on the historic impact of slave owners

(representatives of white normativity) on the lived realities of black slaves, humanizing the latter's plight by acknowledging their inability to control their own sexuality; then, his thoughts return to the satisfaction of their arrangement, since this deal will give him ownership of Rita, who would be dedicated to caring for María Luz. The change is inspired by this "interés" that arises in the back of his thoughts. There is a sense that this "interés" represents the expectation, or the normativity, of whiteness; although Don Juan tries to resist and avoid the hegemonic participation in certain social practices, there is this social pressure in the back of his mind, a voice, that seduces him into following the norms of behavior expected of white slave-owners. More than anything, this interior battle indicates an insecurity in Don Juan's whiteness.

Another moment in which Don Juan demonstrates this fragmentation occurs after seeing two female slaves, Rita and Casilda, on the patio, when "se sintiera ofendido, con la presencia de las mozas y al mismo tiempo, compadecido de verlas esquivar el rostro avergonzada y huir como una liebre, no pudo menos que arrepentirse de su condescendencia. En la almona su arrepentimiento fue mayor y tuvo hasta vergüenzas de sí mismo" (López Albújar 21). The contrast between the simultaneous offense and compassion that he experiences upon seeing the two women, again demonstrates a rejection of his conditioning as a white, male slave-owner. There is also an element of mental suffering expressed in these moments of interior conflict. This suffering reflects the internalization of his hegemonic participation which, at times, seems to clash with his own will. His anguish indicates a similarity between his feelings and what Alcoff affirms occurs with mestizo identity: "A self that is internally heterogeneous beyond repair or resolution becomes a candidate for pathology in a society where the integration of self is taken to be necessary for mental health" (268). According to Alcoff, mestizo people are not able to avoid their fragmented interior state which does not conform to norms of purity, integrity, and

coherence (Alcoff 268). From this, we could say that the representation of white psychology in *Matalaché* suggests its interpretation as a mixed, or mestizo, entity. This fits well with Alcoff's discussion of the promotion and benefits of heterogeneity within Latin America during the Spain's imperialist expansion. In South America, colonizers practiced a manner of assimilation where "two or more identities are each altered as result of juxtaposition and interrelationship" (Alcoff 273). Whiteness, from a historic perspective, cannot be a completely pure entity. The problem arises when this realization is confronted with the racial project of whiteness, all powerful in relation to other racialized groups, which requires hegemonic participation in its realization. Therefore, its composition consists of a heterogeneous strategy within established racial formations, akin to what occurs with mestizo identity.

Chapter 2: (Mis)Representations of Blackness during the Latin-American Boom

The narrative texts of Mario Vargas Llosa are representative of some of the most renowned works to come out of the Latin American Literary Boom of the mid-twentieth century. Winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2010, Vargas Llosa's literary and technical style is marked by its narrative complexity, its focus on Peru's urban life and the use of multiple voices to portray the various perspectives of Peruvian social life. In addition, Vargas Llosa is intimately tied to the political milieu in which he writes, often reflecting Peru's political situation as the backdrop of his novels while simultaneously criticizing Peruvian politics and key figures through the development of his narratives. This is particularly salient in his "total" novel, *Conversación en la Catedral* (1969). Set alternately against the historical backdrop of the military dictatorship of General Manuel A. Odría and the later presidency of Fernando Belaúnde Terry, *Conversación* explores the sociopolitical relationships and intersections of a host of Peruvian characters, all framed within a four-hour conversation between a dispirited journalist of wealthy origins and his family's former chauffeur.

Though critics have pointed to *Conversación en la Catedral*'s intricate portrayal of its characters, its labyrinthine narrative technique, and the "totalizing" effect created through its cacophony of interwoven voices, the depiction of race within this text has been explored only marginally. Initially departing from the fact that the novel is structured as a conversation between a privileged, white character (Santiago) and an exploited, yet passive, black character (Ambrosio), I believe that a critical reading of Vargas Llosa's treatment of race within this text at once reveals the racial inequalities of Peruvian society and Vargas Llosa's own problematic relationship with race. The investigation that follows will analyze: 1) the sociopolitical and

literary background of Peru that informs Vargas Llosa's writing in *Conversación en La Catedral*; 2) how the very structure of this novel is indicative of how race continues to tinge social and economic relationships within Peruvian society; 3) the intersections of race, economics, and power as portrayed by three of the novel's protagonists; 4) and how race and sexuality converge and overlap within the Vargas Llosa's national and textual imaginary.

Sociopolitical Antecedents to *Conversación en La Catedral*

The treatment of race and its representation within twentieth-century Peruvian literature becomes heavily influenced by the changing political and cultural milieu of the nation after 1930. Up until this point, the government of Augusto B. Leguía's second term had progressed in destabilizing the power structure dominated by the oligarchic and aristocratic classes in Peru, while simultaneously attempting to strengthen and modernize Peru as a nation. While much of the economic and social changes that occurred during Leguía's 11-year dictatorship, commonly referred to as the *Oncenio*, favored Peru's growing middle and upper-middle classes, it would be Leguía's policies that allowed for greater Peruvian dependence on U.S capital and the devastation brought on by the Great Depression that would create the conditions necessary to foment the first populist, political movements in the ensuing decades. Beginning in 1919, and following the rippling consequences of World War I, Leguía's dictatorship was marked by an increasing U.S presence in Peruvian politics and economics. U.S companies dominated many of Peru's major exports, including sugar. In addition, political issues that were distinctly Peruvian in nature, such as the final resolution of the Tacna-Arica territorial dispute between Chile and Peru, ended up being arbitrated and resolved through the intervention of John J. Pershing, a U.S general who served as a "neutral" arbiter during this resolution. As Daniel Masterson notes, "in

the end, divisions within the armed forces, national trauma over the eventual settlement of the Tacna Arica controversy, and the economic blow of the Great Depression delivered the final shocks...that would end...the Leguía dictatorship in August 1930” (116).

An important aspect of Leguía’s regime and its legacy includes the beginning of official political *indigenismo*, which acknowledged the importance and presence of Peru’s indigenous populations on a national scale. While Leguía’s administration is responsible for a variety of political actions that appeared to bring Peru’s majority to the forefront of political attention, the actual motivations reflected Leguía’s intention to *assimilate* Peru’s indigenous populations into normativized *criollo* culture (Klarén 247). Political and national changes made during Leguía’s administration included: modifying Peru’s Constitution in 1920, which officially recognized indigenous communities as members of Peruvian society; the creation of an Office for Indigenous Affairs (*Sección de Asuntos Indígenas*), also in 1920; and the founding of a national holiday that celebrated indigenous culture, calling it *El Día del Indio*. Despite these efforts, the increasing frustration of the indigenous peasantry, manifested by tense rebellions and protests in rural Peru, had the adverse effect of giving Leguía’s government reason to back down from their alleged *indigenista* ideals. As a result, the Leguía regime’s support of *indigenista* policies amounted to little more than rhetorical and superficial support of proto-*indigenista* political movements, leading to the gradual return of socioeconomic control and hegemony to regional *gamonales*.

The failure to make effective changes to the lived realities of Peruvian Indians would cause sociopolitical ripples on the Peruvian national landscape throughout the rest of the twentieth century, revealing the increasing political power and presence of Peru’s indigenous communities. From the end of Leguía’s administration in 1930 to the military coup led by Juan

Velasco Alvarado in 1968, the indigenous population increasingly became the target demographic for electoral campaigns, as well as becoming the basis for socioeconomic policy reforms. As it was Leguía's regime that would give form to many of the ideological and social divisions that had arisen after the War of the Pacific, many of the subsequent leaders of the country would find that the concerns of the indigenous population were intimately related to the changing political climate of Peru.

One such division arose with the rise of the American Popular Revolutionary Alliance party (*Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana*), founded and ideologically lead by Victor Raúl Haya de la Torre. This party began as the center-left-leaning, anti-imperialist (read anti-US imperialism), political opposition to the oligarchic power structure of Peru in the mid 1920s. The party owes its origins to Haya de la Torre's mobilization of Peru's university students towards improving workers' rights and educational possibilities. It was Haya de la Torre that developed and implemented the idea of *universidades populares* (popular universities), classes and schools led by university students that provided much needed educational resources to workers, while also forging cooperative ties between students and workers and lending strength to what would become one of the longest lasting political parties in Peru. As Steve Stein notes, "it was from among this group of university student-professors of the Universidad Popular that the nucleus of Aprista party leadership later emerged" (136). However, as the party grew in strength due to those disenchanted with the government's mismanagement of the country's economy, as well as the handling of the Tacna Arica territory controversy in 1929, so did political and social tensions. Between 1930 and 1948, Peru experienced four unstable transitions in government, marked by increasing economic dependence on United States capital, the consequences of both the Great Depression and the outbreak of World War II, corrupt government dealings, and the ideological

ebb and flow of increasingly influential APRA party. Haya's APRA movement, having gained influence with the working class, yet struggled through much of its early existence to attain legal status and recognition from post-Leguía governments. This was due, in part, to the increasing radicalization of APRA and its eventual fragmentation into different ideological trajectories. Historian Peter Klarén explains that although APRA represented a “classic urban-oriented populist political phenomenon” in comparison with other movements in Latin America, from World War II on the APRA party experienced “political and ideological revisionism” (295-6). Masterson reveals how during José Luis Bustamante y Rivero's government from 1945-1948, APRA had three factions: “the increasingly compromised and politically opportunistic leadership, the loyal but confused rank and file, and the militant Apristas who despaired as they watched the opportunity for meaningful reform slip away” (143). The increasingly drastic and violent methods employed by the more militant sectors of APRA rapidly incurred the ire of Peru's military factions, leading to the coup and dictatorship led by Colonel Manuel A. Odría from 1948-1956.

Odría's dictatorship, from the outset, was tinged by the military *caudillismo* that had marked earlier regimes led by Peru's military forces.²⁵ Supported by the Peru's waning oligarchic right, Odría's rise to power came amidst mounting fears of radicalized behavior from APRA forces. Before the “formal” elections of 1950, Odría implemented the Internal Security Law in 1949, effectively granting his government extensive search-and-seizure powers and suspending the habeas corpus rights for those suspected of political crimes (301). During this same year, Odría established the ministry of Labor and Indian Affairs, cognizant of the need to win favor among the primarily APRA-led working class. As Odría was vehemently opposed to the APRA party, these measures ensured his victory in the 1950 elections by suppressing

political opposition. Meanwhile, his political campaign focused its attention on Peru's urban poor and migrant populations living in and around urban centers. Just as APRA's body was comprised of populist dynamics and rhetoric aimed primarily at Peru's working class and labor unions, Odría channeled "assistance and favors...to these [urban communities] in order to incorporate them into the state and to forge a loyal political clientele for his increasingly authoritarian rule" (301). Despite guiding Peru through difficult economic times during the Korean War and advancing public works initiatives in Peru, Odría's regime became increasingly restrictive of civil liberties, political freedom, and the press. The added mismanagement of Peru's finances would also lead to accusations of corruption, which would never truly be investigated due to an agreement made between his regime and that of his successor, Manuel Prado. In this way, Odría was never held fully accountable for the social and political corruption that occurred during his reign.

Peruvian Literature in the mid-Twentieth Century

The portrayal of black and indigenous characters within *Conversación* must be examined within the context of changing ideas of national belonging that were in constant fluctuation in Peru during the early half of the twentieth century. In the preceding chapter of this study, I highlighted how the work of Enrique López Albújar was indicative of the enthusiastic, experimental, and cautious approach made by few Peruvian authors of the early twentieth century regarding the treatment and representation of Peru's marginalized indigenous and black cultures. Between 1930 and 1960, that hesitant approach transitioned into a flowering of literary output that focused on the representation of these bodies as part of, or rather, incorporated into, the national imaginary. This is not to suggest that said representation by authors external to

indigenous and black lived experiences is wholly positive, nor historically or culturally accurate or truly representative. However, I do suggest that the very inclusion of these voices, these lives and their adherent plights, becomes increasingly visible throughout this period. This is evidenced by a growing focus on marginalized experiences within Peru and the increasing amount of literary criticism that begins to take seriously the relative dearth of literature representative of Peru's historical Others and its accompanying criticism.

This literary shift occurs most prominently with the surge of *indigenista* and *regionalista*, or *criollista*, literature in Latin America during the early twentieth century.²⁶ Some of Peru's most notable literary works appear through the lens of *indigenismo*, a literary movement that intended to bring the political and social situation of Peru's indigenous population into the purview of a shared national reality through a focus on indigenous characters and their lives. Superficially this reflected the intent of elites to revive and propagate the notion of a shared, indigenous past. Yet this idea relied on an imaginary history that was largely based upon racialized characteristics of indigeneity, as created by the white elite in order to maintain the notion of national mestizaje, which in reality was a project in national whitening. In other words, elite political and academic actors could rhetorically fuse white and indigenous cultures, despite the history of racist ideology that had truly kept them as separate and unequal entities, in order to suggest collective national unity through an indigenous past. Though many literary scholars attribute beginning of the *indigenista* tradition with the publication of Peruvian writer, Clorinda Matto de Turner's *Aves de nido* in 1889, it is possible to situate possible precursors to this work. Literary scholar René Prieto reveals Narciso Aréstegui's *El Padre Horán* (1848) as well as Ladislao Graña's *Sé bueno y serás feliz* (1860) as two works that both predate Matto de Turner's seminal novel, while also taking on the issues socioeconomic exploitation and oppression of

Peru's indigenous laborers.²⁷ Though these works portray the harsh realities of indigenous life in Peru at the turn of the century, the depictions of indigenous characters and bodies becomes enveloped in many of the racialized trappings that characterized earlier *indianista* literature, at times depending on romanticized and/or stereotyped portrayals to convey their reformist intentions. This is to be expected, as these writers were not, themselves, self-identified Peruvian Indians, nor were they personally or intimately connected with indigenous lives and communities, as would be some subsequent *indigenista* writers who would rise to prominence in the 1930s.

Literary scholar Tomás Escajadillo defines three literary trends based on the figure of Latin American indigenous peoples: *indianismo*, *indigenismo*, and *neoindigenismo*. The *indianista* group is dominated by writers whose depictions of the indigenous figure are laden with idealized notions of the “noble Indian,” a portrayal that highlights the romanticized and picturesque considerations of indigenous culture throughout the nineteenth century.²⁸ It is in the *indigenista* tradition that Peruvian writers such as Ciro Alegría and José María Arguedas continued the protests regarding the exploitative treatment of Peruvian Indians initially voiced by earlier intellectuals such as Manuel González Prada, Luis Eduardo Valcárcel, José Uriel García, and José Carlos Mariátegui. In works such as Alegría's *Los perros hambrientos* (1939) and Arguedas's *Yawar Fiesta* (1941), the exploitation of indigenous labor, unjust economic dealings by land owners and corporative entities, and the encroachment of national modernization into the traditional customs and lives of indigenous communities underscore the importance of providing more depth to indigenous characterization within the Peruvian novel.

However, the depictions of indigenous life portrayed by these writers remains problematic. As celebrated Peruvian literary critic, Antonio Cornejo Polar, notes, *indigenista*

literature has the quality of being a genre that is at once negated in its very creation, due to the external perspective from which the interior lives of Peruvian Indians are allegedly represented by authors outside of indigenous lived experiences. Cornejo Polar explains:

La perspectiva exterior es la condición de existencia de la novela indigenista.

Curiosamente el curso histórico del indigenismo se puede explicar como un tenaz y permanente esfuerzo por borrar esta condición, ocultándola, o tratando, por muchos caminos, de superarla. En este sentido es una literatura que se niega a sí misma, oscureciendo su base heterogénea, y se imagina, más bien, como lo que no puede llegar a ser, como novela indígena (62).

In other words, Cornejo Polar underscores the distinction between *indigenista* writing, works written outside indigenous experiences, and what would be *indigenous (indígena)* writing, works written from within and about lived indigenous experiences. This distinction is important in that it shows the ideological and cultural confrontations involved in the production of *indigenista* literature. Cornejo Polar continues to explain in his chapter "La novela indigenista: un género contradictorio" how the *indigenista* authors employ a mythical and utopic representation of the indigenous not to express the present lives of Peruvian Indians, but to highlight the present degradation of indigenous culture as a result of European conquest and Peruvian-born *criollo* exploitation and oppression. This process has the double purpose of allowing for the tension and conflict needed in the construction of the novel while effectively erasing any possibility of an accurate portrayal of indigenous life in the present; the idyllic indigenous past does not provide the tension around which to construct a novel, however it provides a base with which to compare the present plight of Peruvian Indians and further the external and patronizing perspective of white *criollo* authorship.

Though Cornejo Polar extends this observation only as far as the *indigenista* literary genre, I contend that this exterior perspective occurs with respect to other historically marginalized groups, specifically Peruvians of African descent. As Milagros Carazas notes, until about the 1960s, Afro-Peruvian literature was considered *negrista* in nature as it was primarily written by writers who did not self-identify as Afro-descendent. Authorship of literature detailing Afro-descendent experiences became represented by “escritores representativos del criollismo que han registrado en sus obras al personaje negro como subalterno cargado de estereotipos racistas” (*Estudios* 76). This writing from the outside effectively secured a one-sided and limited perspective of Afro-Peruvian being and culture which propagated the continuing notion of their dwindling presence within the national consciousness.

These comparisons become particularly prominent in local and national census information obtained during the early twentieth century. Between the 1940s and 1960s, the figure of the Afro-Peruvian continues its “disappearing” act from the national consciousness, appearing intermittently within literature as supporting characters, while reports and provincial and district census information regarding the black population indicate a dwindling demographic presence within the nation.²⁹ However, this narrative proves problematic in that the increasing invisibility of black Peruvians results from a variety of factors that began between the nineteenth century, particularly with the declining importation of African slaves beginning around 1818, through the official abolition of slavery in 1854 (Rodríguez Pastor 29). Peruvian scholar Marcel Velázquez Castro notes how the effects of the wars for Independence, increasing abolitionist pressure and eventual abolition, increasing practices of hypergamy as a result of the whitening rhetoric implied in *mestizaje* discourses, negative rates of natural increase, and “ethnic shame,” or the negation of one’s own African heritage, are all possible factors in the sharp decline in the

reported demographic information of blacks in Peru (52). However, it must be noted that the Afro-Peruvian populations are consistently viewed relative to Peru's indigenous majority, in terms of both numbers and cultural significance. David Sulmont and Juan Carlos Callirgos note that during the nineteenth century white Peruvians consistently perceived Afro-Peruvians as "racially degraded, with instinctive tendencies toward excess, laziness, and dissolute habits," while their smaller population "relegated them to a less important place in the [national] imagination" (133).

This narrative that suggested an increasingly absent Afro-Peruvian population is particularly pronounced in the distinctions between the urban and rural dimensions of Peru's demographics. Peru is commonly divided in terms of three geospatial regions: the coast, the sierra, and the jungle. Within the coastal region, further distinction is typically suggested when comparing the capital of Lima with other less populous coastal cities, regions, and districts, such as Chiclayo, Chincha, Nazca, and the surrounding areas within the Lima province. For black Peruvians, these geographic dimensions are significant in that the concentrations of Afro-Peruvian populations have primarily been in the aforementioned coastal cities and regions. Effectively eclipsed by the presence of Lima, itself imagined as the center of Peruvian *criollo* culture and politics as well as representative of urban living, the demographics of those communities has been historically underrepresented and misreported.

In addition, the fluidity of race in Peru also affects the reported demographics of Afro-Peruvians. Explaining this phenomenon within early twentieth-century Lima, Susan Carol Stokes notes how turn-of-the-century census information in Lima relied much more on the surveyed individual's self-identification in terms of ethnicity and race, leading to an increase of individuals considering themselves *mestizo* when, historically, they may have been considered

negro or *mulato* by others (183). According to Stokes, the key to explaining both the steep decrease of the black population from the middle of the seventeenth century to the beginning of the twentieth has much to do with the growing fluidity of racial self-identification. In a census conducted in 1931 in Lima, she notes that the social clout given to both whiteness and *mestizaje* (arguably two sides of the same coin) resulted in enormous gains in reported *blancos* and *mestizos*. During this same year, however, a surprising spike in the population of black *Limeños* occurred, possibly due to an influx of Afro-Peruvians from the coastal areas in which Afro-Peruvian culture was more prominent, such as Chincha and Cañete. If that were the case, as Stokes suggests, their self-identification as *negro/a* would have paradoxically challenged the myth of invisible or disappearing black Peruvians (188). Nevertheless, the rhetoric of national *mestizaje* was strong during the thirties, as by the time the next national census was conducted in 1940, the reported black population within the city of Lima went from composing 3% of the total population in 1931 to about 1.66% in 1940 (Velázquez Castro 53).

Race and Narrative Structure in *Conversación*

The political history of Peru, particularly that between Odría's dictatorship and Belaúnde's presidency, would prove important in Vargas Llosa's *Conversación*, in that this text would shed light on how the political milieu of these two periods affected all sectors of Peruvian society and, ultimately, served as the inspiration for the novel itself. In the Prologue of the text, Vargas Llosa writes of his perception of Peruvian society during Odría's *ochenio*, or eight-year regime:

En esos ocho años, en una sociedad embotellada, en la que estaban prohibidos los partidos y las actividades cívicas, la prensa censurada, había numerosos presos políticos y

centenares de exiliados, los peruanos de mi generación pasamos de niños a jóvenes, y de jóvenes a hombres. Todavía peor que los crímenes y atropellos que el régimen cometía con impunidad era la profunda corrupción que, desde el centro del poder, irradiaba hacia todos los sectores e instituciones, envileciendo la vida entera (9).³⁰

With this in mind, Efraín Kristal notes how *Conversación* becomes less centered on the sociopolitical consequences of Odría as an individual, and more reflective of Vargas Llosa's own, earlier Marxist views on the corruptive nature of capitalism; the system and not the individual is what creates Peru's brand of sociopolitical corruption (42). Vargas Llosa's expressed sense of jadedness and cynicism is apparent from the opening lines of *Conversación*, particularly in the second sentence of the novel when the narrator expresses a recurring thought of the protagonist, Santiago: "¿En qué momento se había jodido el Perú?" (17).³¹

This pessimistic line of questioning serves as a key leitmotif of the novel, perpetually interrogating the causes of the sociopolitical morass in which Vargas Llosa regarded Peru as a whole. Simultaneously, this perspective provides a totalizing narrative of how corrupt politics creates a cycle of purgatory and debasement for all levels and classes of society. Incredibly, Vargas Llosa aptly navigates the various social levels of Peruvian society through a host of characters, both primary and secondary in nature, who gradually come to represent individuals, groups, and ideologies present and prevalent during the Odría regime. However, for the purposes of this chapter, I will focus on *how* Vargas Llosa depicts some of these main characters, not solely *what* they represent. Though the presence or absence of Peru's historical Others in literature clearly reflects the society's views on race and racial ideologies, it is the construction and portrayal of those Others, when present, that is truly telling.

One of the key elements that must be noted from the outset is the, at times, dizzying structure of the novel. As mentioned above, the overarching framework of the novel is established within the conversation between Santiago, a journalist and son of a wealthy businessman, and Ambrosio, the former chauffeur of Santiago's family. After a chance meeting at a dog pound, the two recognize one another and proceed to "La Catedral," a locale marked by its reputation as a bar and brothel for the poor. Though the conversation takes place over the course of four hours, their conversation serves as the unifying element that ties together a myriad of other stories, flashbacks, and conversations over the course of 15 years (approximately between 1948 and 1963). Little by little, their conversation opens the door to sort of collective memory, fragmented by a variety of perspectives that reveal how political corruption, socioeconomic exploitation, and the fluidity of morality intersect within what Vargas Llosa envisions as a degraded and crumbling society.

The fragmentation of the narrative is a key element to both the unfolding of the plot, as well as to understanding Vargas Llosa's pessimistic view of Peruvian society. Sabine Schlickers explains how:

la fragmentación se encuentra en todos los niveles del discurso: en la estructura narrativa, en la representación del espacio y del tiempo, del discurso del narrador y de los personajes. La fragmentación narrativa corresponde a la percepción que es siempre fragmentada, o sea selectiva, discontinua y asociativa. (187)

Fragmentation, then, serves to draw upon the relation between the disjointed pieces of human existence in order to depict a more *total* representation of human reality. This is an element largely associated with Vargas Llosa's writing style: the appropriation of reality to represent the totality of lived, human realities. Regarding the representation of human totality, Schlickers

notes that “la totalidad humana es compacta, imprevisible, caótica y por lo tanto imperfecta. En *Conversación...*, esta imperfección se presenta solamente en el plano de la historia, es decir en las vidas y mentes de los personajes ‘jodidos’.” The characters, separated from any sense of wholeness by their own fragmented histories and psyches, provide the pieces with which Vargas Llosa constructs his vision of a shattered Peruvian society.

The racial dynamics of Vargas Llosa’s writing are apparent from the introduction of this overarching conversation, notably in the description of both Santiago, the white editorialist, and Ambrosio, the black dogcatcher. Initially, we see Santiago as a disillusioned journalist who regards himself in much the same way that he regards Peru in general: “screwed up.” Vargas Llosa portrays Santiago with a sense of moral and mental fragmentation by routinely including questions or affirmations in the second-person directed at “Zavalita,” a nickname of Santiago, in reference to a third-person reference to Santiago himself. This technique gives insight into the disintegrated psyche of the increasingly disenchanting, white class, in which Vargas Llosa himself can be included.

Santiago can be viewed as a failure from a social perspective, being the son of a wealthy businessman who has married someone “inferior” to his social status and writes editorials for a local newspaper. Jean Franco suggests that the miserable depiction of both Santiago and Peru as a whole reflect:

un símbolo poderoso de una sociedad que absorbe a toda rebelión, que convierte a los jóvenes en fracasados o conformistas...Se suprime el escándalo, se engaña al público, la estabilidad de la clase dominante queda asegurada [y] dentro de un ambiente totalmente corrompido, la realización individual queda sin sentido” (766-7).

The portrayal of Santiago coincides with that of Peru, linking his thoughts about himself with the thoughts on Peru expressed by Vargas Llosa himself in the Prologue; the disarray of Peruvian society expresses itself through Santiago's disillusionment. Peru's social stagnation results from the opposing forces of governmental corruption, the instability of class, and the individual's desire for self-actualization.

Promptly, we see the first ostensible example of racialized discourse within the text. Upon returning home from work, Santiago encounters his wife, Ana, who while crying over her dog that has been taken by the local dogcatchers, tinges her lament with racial qualifiers: "—Me lo arrancharon de las manos... Unos negros asquerosos, amor. Lo metieron al camión. Se lo robaron, se lo robaron." Through Ana, we see a description of the men who took her dog in primarily racialized terms. The use of the qualifier "asquerosos" highlights her repulsion by these black men who have committed this perceived crime. In an analysis of how racialized language has developed with respect to Peruvians of African descent throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Carazas explains how nineteenth-century stereotypes of black men, which inevitably carry over into the twentieth century, include that of the bad worker, the delinquent, the bandit, and the untrustworthy (*Estudios* 62). Ana is angered by what has happened, yet also repulsed by the perpetrators themselves; their blackness becomes equated with aversion and delinquency.

Explaining to Santiago what happened, she continues to assert that the men who took the dog were "unos bandidos, unos negros con caras de forajidos." Santiago expresses his disbelief at the abrupt nature of the dogcatchers' actions, implicitly linking the behavior with their perceived race when he states, "qué tal raza, voy a armar un lío" (21-22). From these first few pages of *Conversación*, then, we notice a difference in how white and black subjects are

portrayed. Santiago becomes representative of Peru, reflecting Vargas Llosa's evaluation of Peruvian society: disillusioned, degraded, and backwards. Amidst this already negative conceptualization of Peruvian society, however, Ana's language suggests further moral and aesthetic degradation, associating racialized blackness with criminality and disgust. The perceived racial hierarchy between herself and the dogcatchers establishes a sense of relative, racial superiority.

Upon arrival at the dog shelter, the narrator describes what Santiago sees: "Un gran canchón rodeado de un muro ruin de adobes color caca –el color de Lima, piensa, el color del Perú–, flanqueado por chozas que, a lo lejos, se van mezclando y espesando hasta convertirse en un laberinto de esteras, cañas, tejas, calaminas" (23). This description of the shelter and the surrounding area again reflects Vargas Llosa's pessimistic view of Peru. However, this microcosm now acquires the added dimension of being compared to excrement, in both color and value. Again, the narrator evinces a degree of revulsion and disgust upon comparing the physical space of the black dog-catchers with scatological imagery. Such imagery continues when Santiago finds his dog, Batuquito, in one of the cages and has him released. Batuquito, described by an employee of the shelter as the "blanquiñoso ese," evacuates itself once it is released back to Santiago. Pancras, an employee commonly referred to by the narrator as a *zambo*, laughs, "–Siempre se cagan...Su manera de decir estamos contentos de salir de la prisión" (25).³² Pancras's sardonic and detached evaluation of the dogs' suffering suggests a level of moral decline that surpasses that which the narrator describes in regards to Santiago. This moment allows for two interpretations. On the one hand, there is yet another connection between excrement and the sordid portrayal of both the dog shelter and the (black) people who work there, suggesting an association between racialized blackness, debasement, and sadism. On the

other hand, this statement sets up parallels between the white dog, Batuquito, and its white owner, Santiago, which are apparent only after reading further into the text and understanding Santiago's background.

In his youth, Santiago enjoyed a fairly comfortable upbringing due to his father's status as a wealthy businessman. However, because he wished to free himself from his parents' prescriptive desires for his education and career, Santiago chose to attend a college of his choosing, had a brief and failed involvement in Communist politics, later distanced himself from his family in an attempt to find his own way, and ends up working for the local newspaper, *La Crónica*. Just as Batuquito literally defecates himself, Santiago has figuratively "defecated himself" during his life with each of his decisions, successively lowering his social and economic status. Much like Batuquito, Santiago's happiness upon "freeing himself" from his parents' "prison" leads to his own social downfall. Taken together, both interpretations suggest the widespread demoralization of Peruvian society, with black Peruvians still occupying the lowest rung of the moral (and social) ladder. Though literary critic, Efraín Kristal suggests that the depiction of national ruin and the destruction of the individual characters' lives are one in the same, the differences illustrated between white and black characters compels me to disagree (37). The *zambo* dogcatcher, as well as the other black employees of the shelter, including Ambrosio, are all depicted as dismally as the place in which they work. The author seems to depict Peru as different levels of a social nightmare, with white urbanites reflecting Peruvian society through psychological trauma, while Peru's racialized Others are the physical, moral, and psychological embodiments of Peru's social decline.

After realizing that one of the shelter's workers is Ambrosio, the former chauffeur of his family, the two decide to catch up over drinks. Ambrosio suggests a local bar where he typically

eats called, La Catedral, which he describes as “uno de pobres.” It is here where the two will talk over the course of four hours, then part ways under somewhat tense circumstances. La Catedral itself is an important site, particularly when viewed through a racial lens. Upon arrival, the narrator describes La Catedral with the following:

Un camión cargado de cajones oculta la puerta de La Catedral. Adentro, bajo el techo de calamina, se apiña en bancas y mesas toscas una rumorosa muchedumbre voraz. Dos chinos en mangas de camisa vigilan desde el mostrador las caras cobrizas, las angulosas facciones que mastican y beben, y un serranito extraviado en un roto mandil distribuye sopas humeantes, botellas, fuentes de arroz. (29)

The mention of the race of the various patrons within La Catedral, a purposeful nod to the racial diversity of Peru, also aligns these racialized Others with the rather lowly depiction of La Catedral and its clientele. The description specifically points to two Chinese individuals, presumably the proprietors of the establishment given their watchful stance over the patrons; a “serranito” who waits on the patrons while wearing a shabby apron; and finally, the general description of the “copper-colored” faces of the rest of the crowd.³³

In addition to the people, the narrator describes an establishment marked by its squalid character:

Huele a sudor, ají y cebolla, a orines y basura acumulada, y la música de la radiola se mezcla a la voz plural, a rugidos de motores y bocinazos, y llega a los oídos deformada y espesa. Rostros chamuscados, pómulos salientes, ojos adormecidos por la rutina o la indolencia vagabundean entre las mesas, forman racimos junto al mostrador, obstruyen la entrada. (31)

Much like the aforementioned dog shelter, non-white figures are depicted alongside places of physical and aesthetic ruin. In addition, the first sentence mentions a truck loaded with “cajones,” or crates, blocking the doorway to La Catedral. Vargas Llosa’s use of the word “cajones” to describe this scene is interesting in that “cajones” are also popular, and national, musical instruments historically associated with Afro-Peruvian culture and musical expression. If this connection is intentional, and given the more negative attitudes seemingly held towards Afro-Peruvians within this first chapter of the text, it could imply an added element of connecting blackness with the “Otherness” embodied by, and within, La Catedral; the “cajones” seem to serve almost as a symbolic Otherness that signals what lies within the establishment.

Within the remaining pages of the first chapter of the first book of the text, the conversation between Santiago and Ambrosio occurs over the course of four hours. Vargas Llosa skillfully leaves out the content of the conversation, instead creating a “time-lapse” effect, during which the narrator describes the physical states and appearance of both speakers as they drink and converse. Once they come to the end, the two depart together, yet part ways under puzzling circumstances: Ambrosio becomes increasingly uncomfortable as Santiago presses him for information regarding a painful event in the past involving the latter’s father and someone called La Musa (Hortensia). With this, Vargas Llosa establishes the narrative tether to which the gradual revelations of the text adhere.

What is interesting is that this dialogue between an upper class white male and a lower class black male suggests an equalizing effect in terms of race. Santiago’s willful fall from social grace, Ambrosio’s simultaneous existence as both corrupted and corruptor, and the unfolding of the narrative within the heterogeneous microcosm of La Catedral, all combine to create a reality that attempts to totally encompass and represent Peruvian society as a whole. Within La

Catedral, social and economic barriers break down and blend together, implying the unifying “Peruvianess” of all of the patrons, and therefore, citizens. However, through the narrative lens provided by Vargas Llosa, this unified sense of national belonging becomes pervaded by shared social demoralization and political corruption; all are equal in their moral and social decline.³⁴

Race, Economics, and Power

The equal footing of ruin attributed to all sectors of Peruvian society, and therefore to all characters within *Conversación*, does not elide the racial particularities of their representation within the text. Though all are simultaneously corruptors and victims of corruption, there appears to be a gradation of demoralization that coincides with the racial and socioeconomic markers attributed to each character. In this section, I will focus on three characters, each representing a distinct racial and socioeconomic category or strata: Cayo Bermúdez, Don Fermín, and Ambrosio.

Cayo Bermúdez is the head of the secret enforcement sector of Odría’s regime who ascends to power by strategically, and ruthlessly, orchestrating and suppressing sociopolitical movements and dealings, typically resorting to intimidation and brute force to comply with the needs and demands of the regime. He is described as a *cholo*, implying he is marked by phenotypical markers attributed to indigenous descent.³⁵ Despite his crucial role as the major force behind maintaining the repressive regime of Odría, he is racialized numerous times, notably from the perspective of wealthy, white, business and political partners. One of them, Don Fermín, is the wealthy father of Santiago and has amassed his wealth through corrupt business and political dealings, many times working alongside Cayo Bermúdez. The former also secretly engages in a sexual relationship with Ambrosio and becomes known in criminal circles as “Bola

de Oro.” As discussed above, Ambrosio is the black, former chauffeur for Santiago’s family with whom Santiago speaks in La Catedral. Before becoming the chauffeur for Don Fermín, he was also the chauffeur, lackey, and childhood acquaintance of Cayo Bermúdez. All three are tied together by business, political, and personal relationships; the majority of their private lives is a mystery to the reader, and only gradually revealed as the plot progresses. What is apparent is that as each occupies a different rung on the social and racial ladder, their level of decline (and even suffering) corresponds with their relative raciality within the Peruvian context. The following will explore the ways in which race seems to compound the effects of social and moral decline experienced by Peruvian society in the mid-twentieth century.

The text reveals Cayo Bermúdez’s origins early within Book One of the text, showing his early associations with Ambrosio, as well as his being the son of a fairly well-off figure in Chíncha, Peru, “el Buitre.” After being tapped by General Espina to serve as one of Odría’s right-hand men, Cayo gradually becomes a powerful, manipulative, and dangerous figure, whose role in perpetuating corruption is apparent: from leading the repressive censorship tactics and intimidation against Aprista and Communist groups to his role in the financial and psychological downfall of Hortensia (La Musa), his lover whom he amply supported before leaving her in ruin once he left Peru to escape retribution for his wrongdoing.

The intersections of economics and money initially reveal themselves in the figure of Cayo’s father, el Buitre, and his rise to local economic and political power within Chíncha. Ambrosio relates to an implied Don Fermín about how his childhood friendship changed with Cayo in tandem with the increasing political and economic prestige of el Buitre:

Y con la plata el Buitre se volvió importante, don, hasta fue alcalde de Chíncha y se lo vio con tongo en la plaza de Armas, en los desfiles de Fiestas Patrias. Y se llenó de

humos. Le dio porque su hijo se pusiera siempre zapatos y no se juntara con morenos. De chicos ellos [Ambrosio y Cayo] jugaban fútbol, rodaban fruta en las huertas, Ambrosio se metía a su casa y al Buitre no le importaba. Cuando se volvieron platudos, en cambio, lo botaban y a don Cayo lo reñían si lo pescaban con él. ¿Su sirviente? Qué va, don, su amigo, pero sólo cuando eran de este tamaño. (63)

El Buitre's rise to local prominence gives rise to a race consciousness that expresses itself through the enforcement of segregation of his family from *morenos* like Ambrosio. Here, race and socioeconomic status are conflated, the implication being that el Buitre realizes that there is a relationship between economic status and perceived racial belonging; he then endeavors to fashion a social image consistent with his growing economic success.

El Buitre's actions end Cayo and Ambrosio's childhood friendship. The dissolution of their friendship is a consequence of the intersection of race and class within the Peruvian context. This is consistent with Juan Carlos Callirgos's assessment of race and economics, in which he states, "en la sociedad peruana existe una identificación entre raza y clase, por lo que clasificar a un individuo dentro de un grupo racial significa también clasificarlo socioeconómica y culturalmente" (167). The depiction of Cayo's own indigenous ethnic background highlights the nature in which money and therefore class indicate the fluidity of race, particularly in the *whitening* effect that higher economic status has on Cayo's raciality. However, Cayo does not seem to internalize these ideas to the extent in which his father does, as the former later marries the daughter of a poor milk vendor, whose lower social class results in Cayo's disinheritance from his father's estate. Cayo's wife, Rosa, is also depicted as becoming "progressively Indian" in appearance as time passes; Ambrosio comments to Don Fermín that "es verdad que la Rosa se puso idiota y se llenó de lunares" (80). In other words, despite Cayo's own indigenous

background, Rosa's appearance gradually perceived as more indigenous, read increasingly non-white as their socioeconomic status declines. Her "indigenization," along with her and Cayo's rather squalid living conditions prior to his being tapped to work for Odría's regime, again combine socioeconomic status with race, suggesting a causal relationship between increasing poverty and perceived racial decline.

Cayo's perceived raciality of being a *cholo* complicates his high social and political standing in the eyes of higher class, wealthier figures; race and class inform his relationships with other upper class characters within *Conversación*. The most salient examples occur during his interactions with Don Fermín. Don Fermín, unbeknownst to Cayo, comes from humble beginnings, however he manages to climb the social ladder through corrupt business dealings and political favoritism. Because of his accumulated wealth and relative social prestige, Don Fermín is one of the few characters of Vargas Llosa's society that manages to escape consequences for his misdeeds. He is also one of the more explicitly racist characters of the text, continually lamenting the *cholización* of Liman society.

During one discussion between himself and Cayo regarding the positives and negatives of Santiago's attending San Marcos University rather than Pontifical Catholic University of Peru, Don Fermín's racist attitude towards indigenous people reveals itself:

—[Cayo] Pero vea, si yo tuviera un hijo, creo que preferiría mandarlo a San Marcos. Hay mucho indeseable [los apristas, los comunistas], pero es más universidad ¿no cree?

—No es porque en San Marcos se politiqua —dijo don Fermín, con aire distraído—.

Además, ha perdido categoría, ya no es como antes. Ahora es una cholería infecta, qué clase de relaciones va a tener el flaco ahí.

Él [Cayo] lo miró sin decir nada y lo vio pestañear y bajar la vista, confundido.

—No es que yo tenga nada contra los cholos —te diste cuenta, hijo de puta—, todo lo contrario, siempre he sido muy democrático. Lo que quiero es que Santiago tenga el porvenir que se merece. Y en este país, todo es cuestión de relaciones, usted sabe. (325)

Whereas Cayo's critique of the two universities focuses more on the political and academic advantages of San Marcos over the other university, Don Fermín's evaluation has to do with the racial demographics of the student population. The narrator's description of Fermín's "distracted air" while mentioning the *cholería infecta* that constituted San Marcos University suggests the internalization, and even unconscious affirmation, of his inferior consideration of indigenous people; Don Fermín's racist attitude towards indigenous people distracts him from the social niceties and conventions that would have otherwise guided a professional encounter between himself and Cayo. For him, the indigenous make-up of the university would not provide the upward social mobility and opportunities that would be afforded by the higher class, white student population of the Catholic University. It is only under the accusing glare of Cayo that Don Fermín tries to qualify his statements by separating race from class and social opportunities. However, he ends up maintaining his belief that Santiago's socioeconomic future depends on his distancing himself from indigenous influences that, for him, are associated with socioeconomic decline and ruin.

Upon concluding his business with Don Fermín, Cayo departs in his car with Ambrosio, who is his chauffeur at this point in the narrative. Apparently, the obviously racist remarks of Don Fermín have affected him as he ruminates to himself while staring at the back of Ambrosio's neck:

...el puta [Don Fermín] no quería que su hijo se junte con cholos, no querría que le contagiaran malos modales. Por eso invitaría a su casa a tipos como Arévalo o Landa,

hasta a los gringos que llamaba patanes, a todos pero *no a él*. Se rió, sacó una pastilla del bolsillo y se llenó la boca de saliva: no querría que le contagies malos modales a su mujer, a sus hijos. (338, *emphasis added*)

Don Fermín's hypocritical stance in regards to his openly anti-U.S. American remarks and subsequent hospitable treatment of them stands out in Cayo's mind as evidence of Don Fermín's ardent anti-indigenous beliefs. Cayo is well aware that Don Fermín's behavior with his *Othered* business partners is purely an act that serves only to further mutual business and social benefit.

What seems more incredulous in the mind of Cayo is the moral and social superiority in which Don Fermín regards himself and his family in relationship to those of indigenous descent. Though it has not been revealed explicitly at this point in the text, Cayo's laughter and the somewhat sarcastic tone of this thoughts hint to his knowledge of Don Fermín's secret sexual relationship with Ambrosio, as well as his thorough awareness of Don Fermín's underhanded and corrupt business and political manipulations. What's more, the internalization of his racial positioning within Peruvian society seems to express itself here. These reflections occur to him while his eyes "se fijaban en la nuca de Ambrosio," who is driving in front of him. I argue that Ambrosio's blackness aids Cayo in confronting his own racialized being, as he realizes that despite the financial and sociopolitical power he gains in his own ascent, without the racial currency afforded by whiteness, with its prescribed characteristics of respect and social mobility, he remains as marginalized as his black chauffeur. His relative mobility to Ambrosio is yet limited by his inability to access the level of respect and dignity afforded to other nefarious, yet white, political figures (Arévalo, Lando) and to the "gringos" that Fermín himself had previously referred to as "añados," "medio salvajes," and "patanes." Cayo realizes that it is his indigeneity

that distances him from Don Fermín; his awareness of the moral ambiguity of all parties involved allows him to extract racial difference as the determinant for differential treatment.

As the plot unravels through fragments of conversations, flashbacks, and allusions, Ambrosio experiences the brunt of corruption and decline as it plays out through Peruvian politics and social attitudes. His depressing portrayal in the beginning of the novel, while reminiscent of that of Santiago and other minor characters, is the result of a life of psychological, physical and moral turmoil. Adversity from racial and economic barriers informs many of Ambrosio's decisions; those same barriers seem to be the causal factors for Ambrosio's willful participation in his own sabotage. His role within Vargas Llosa's total vision of Peru within *Conversación* simultaneously mirrors and contrasts with that of his social foil, Santiago. The internalization of social expectations and subsequent participation in his own demise reveal how Ambrosio's mind, body, and spirit are subjected to and broken down by the whims of economic expediency, the white sexual gaze, and respectability politics.

As mentioned above, Ambrosio's racialized blackness positions him as occupying the lowest rung of the social ladder. Yet his physical appearance becomes indicative of how Peru's ills negatively impact his lived experiences. Santiago describes Ambrosio's appearance and physical condition during their conversation: bluish eyelids, beating nostrils reminiscent of someone drowning or exhausted, fits of excessive coughing, gray-haired, a halting and defeated voice; a generally "collapsed" body, aged, dehumanized, and diseased (31-2).³⁶ Of the three figures discussed in this section, Ambrosio's physical condition seems to be the most detailed and that which is most indicative (or reflective) of his moral and psychological deterioration. In addition, it is Ambrosio's physical body which seems to be a focal point of the various points of the text in which he is a key protagonist. Arguably, Ambrosio's black body becomes the

representation of complete degradation: social and moral decline and now physical destruction. In other words, Vargas Llosa depiction of Ambrosio's decrepit and exploited body seems to suggest the ways that his physical blackness compounds the social and moral ruin of Peru as a whole, the effect of which expresses itself through Ambrosio's physical appearance and condition.

Towards the end of the text, yet before the climactic event of Hortensia's murder, the narrator details the sexual advances and encounters between Ambrosio and the prostitute, Queta, who gradually becomes a friend and lover to Hortensia after the two were acquainted due to Cayo's voyeuristic desires. During Ambrosio's visits to the brothel where Queta works, the narration seems to align with Queta's perspective, providing intimate details of both Ambrosio's physical appearance, as well as the notable effect his presence and physicality have on the other employees and patrons of the brothel. When he first appears at the brothel looking for Queta, he is shunned by other workers due to the knowledge that the brothel's owner, Ivonne, does not permit black patrons. However, the bartender Robertito, recognizes that Ambrosio is Cayo's assassin and wishes to ask Ivonne himself if he should leave, to which Martha, one of the workers in the brothel, responds, "Sácalo sea quien sea...Esto se va a desprestigiar. Sácalo" (640). Here it is notable that despite his professional link to the powerful and dangerous Cayo Bermúdez, as well as the commercial foundation of the brothel itself, Ambrosio's perceived blackness precludes his physical presence within the brothel, as much as his right to participate in its activities. Martha's notion that Ambrosio's physical presence is enough to "desprestigiar" the establishment also assigns an inferior value to blackness. However, Queta does not seem to be of the same opinion regarding race, as she does proceed to engage in a sexual relationship with Ambrosio over the course of two years.

It is during this relationship that Queta discovers Ambrosio's sexual relationship with Don Fermín, of which she expresses disgust, primarily due to Ambrosio's seemingly servile passivity to the sexual whims of Don Fermín. During one encounter with Ambrosio, Queta tells him how Don Fermín manipulated him into submitting willingly to his desires: “[Don Fermín se] dio cuenta que te morirías de miedo...[que] no harías nada, que contigo podía hacer lo que quería...Tenías miedo porque eres un servil...[porque] él es blanco y tú no, porque él es rico y tú no. Porque estás acostumbrado a que hagan contigo lo que quieran” (695). Carazas affirms how Ambrosio's life-long internalization of racial prejudice and economic hardship has reduced him to a racialized stereotype, marked by servility, passivity, and an inferiority complex that makes him believe that his relationship with Don Fermín is one of mutual human compassion (“Desear o discriminar”). In addition, Ambrosio's life has been surrounded by the threat and actualization of physical violence: his father threatened him with a knife during their first meeting; while working for Cayo Bermúdez, he is enlisted to carry out murders; his relationship with Don Fermín is the impetus for his decision to murder Hortensia, seeing her financial exploitation of his benefactor as a greater evil than ending her life.

This combination of submissiveness and violence represented by Ambrosio reflects the prevailing stereotypes about Afro-descendent men that arose during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Marcel Velázquez Castro notes how during the nineteenth century in Latin America, and specifically within Peru, the dominant social groups used normalized and gendered characteristics in tandem with race in order to destabilize and further subjugate enslaved Afro-descendants, particularly black men; while “masculine” characteristics were linked to prestige and strength, “feminine” characteristics were connected with weakness, passivity, and inferiority. Due to its connection with social status and privilege, Velázquez Castro states that “la condición

masculina... estaría en una situación de valoración superior porque está correlacionada con las estructuras relevantes que otorgan estatus en los diferentes dominios de la sociedad” (64). In this way, servility and passivity were considered “feminine” qualities which, when attributed to Afro-Peruvian slaves, conveyed upon them inferior status. Conversely, Velázquez Castro argues that black slaves were simultaneously feared due to a social preoccupation with the physical body of black people, attributing seemingly supernatural properties to slaves regarding physical and sexual prowess. Within the twentieth-century context, these divergent perceptions seem to play out in the representation of Ambrosio within *Conversación* as he is marked by both submission and physical violence. These two aspects become conflated within the character of Ambrosio due to his manipulation into committing acts of violence in the service of his social superiors represented by Cayo Bermúdez and Don Fermín. Ambrosio, therefore, becomes a modern-day slave-figure whose existence is driven by the utility of his body by other, socially dominant forces.

Throughout the fragmented depiction of the relationship between Ambrosio and Don Fermín, Vargas Llosa does seem to maintain the binary connections between white dominance and black passivity. It is Don Fermín who initiates the sexual relationship between himself and Ambrosio, the latter acquiescing out of a misplaced sense of respect or duty for the former; Ambrosio’s body is not his own, but rather becomes compensation for the “genteel” consideration with which Don Fermín seems to treat him. Ambrosio’s murder of Hortensia is the result of his devotion to Don Fermín, essentially committing this unsolicited service to save the businessman from the exploitation of a prostitute. Even Ambrosio’s relationship with Amalia, who served as maid for both the Zavala family and Hortensia (La Musa), is carried out in secret, as Ambrosio is afraid of how this relationship might affect Don Fermín. It is fear of and the

willing participation in socially-constructed boundaries that keep Ambrosio tethered to the lowest social and moral rung. Unlike Cayo Bermúdez and Don Fermín, his mind, morality, and body are affected by his lower social status, itself a symptom of Ambrosio's racialized existence.

The Mestizaje of Sexuality and Gender

The valorization of race, and its attendant representation through *Conversación*, does not occur in isolation of other socially-perceived/constructed factors of identity and personhood. On the contrary, Vargas Llosa's portrayal of ethnically and phenotypically diverse characters reveals the intersections of gender and sexuality with race that seem to both perpetuate and question normalized notions of racial and sexual identity. Vargas Llosa's aim of recreating the whole of Peruvian experience within the novel explains this somewhat ambivalent position the author seems to hold regarding an outright critique of racial and sexual norms in Peruvian society, focusing more on the ubiquitous social and political corruption of all the characters portrayed. Still, the combination of narrative techniques and imagery employed by Vargas Llosa suggests a definitive connection between race, gender, and sexuality, specifically how characteristics socially-linked with the aforementioned concepts compound the perceptions of one another within the public consciousness.

Departing from Marilyn Grace Miller's conceptualization of *mestizaje* as the "genetic and cultural admixture produced by the encounters or 'dis-encounters'... between Europeans, the Africans who accompanied them to and in the New World, indigenous groups, and various others who arrived in the Americas from regions such as Asia," I suggest utilizing a model of *mestizaje* that incorporates how normalized notions of gender and sexuality inform, are informed by, and complicate racial perceptions. Feminist scholars such as bell hooks, Patricia Hill Collins,

Henrietta Moore, and Anne McClintock have explored various models for exploring such an idea, alternately placing more or less emphasis on the racial, gender, sexual, or class dynamics of the interactions between these factors. McClintock articulates the basis for such a model by affirming “race, class and gender are not distinct realms of experience, existing in splendid isolation from each other; nor can they simply be yoked together retrospectively like armatures of Lego. Rather they come into existence *in and through* relation to each other –if in contradictory and conflictual ways” (5). An example of this intertwining of race, gender, and sexuality has been explored above with respect to the complicated portrayal of the “amorous” relationship between Ambrosio and Don Fermín and its racialized power dynamics. However, I argue that two of the principal women characters, the prostitute Queta and the maid Amalia, embody the convergence of these facets of identity in specific ways: the relationship between their lower social status, profession, and their depicted phenotypical otherness; and their association with sexual desire and objectification through their roles in the sexual imaginary of upper class figures. In consideration of these factors, Queta and Amalia are transformed into symbols of racial and sexual transgression and taboo.

Amalia and Queta’s racial identities seem to be largely ambiguous, eclipsed by the emphasis of their social status and profession. Although Carazas describes Amalia as “una joven afroperuana,” elsewhere within the text itself she is referred to as *cholita*, *cholita blanca* and *negra consentida* (“Desear o discriminar”). The label of *chola* (or *cholita*) is a term of fluid and highly contextual meanings within Peruvian national consciousness. In his 1980 effort to empirically describe the state of transition in which Peru found itself at the time, sociological scholar Aníbal Quijano has described the term *cholo/a* as changing from referring to ethnic origins and phenotypical markers during Peru’s colonial past, to the more contemporary sense of

the term that refers more to the cultural mixture between indigenous and *mestizo* communities. According to Quijano, both indigenous cultures and more westernized, white cultures have affected each other throughout their historical interactions. The result is the contemporary ambivalent nature of racial/ethnic identifications that have given rise to the growing identification of Peruvians with the *cholo/a* sociocultural grouping (58, 63). César A. Ángeles Caballero, another Peruvian scholar, defines *cholo* as a term that refers “genéricamente al mestizo, es decir, la mezcla étnica del aborígen peruano en sus diversas variantes étnicas de costa, sierra y selva” (19).³⁷ Vargas Llosa, himself, seems to agree with the cultural, rather than racial, significance of the term, attributing to it a fluidity that is relative and dependent on social and economic factors:

Blanco y cholo son términos que quieren decir más cosas que raza o etnia: ellos sitúan a la persona social y económicamente, y estos factores son muchas veces los determinantes de la clasificación. Esta es flexible y cambiante, supeditada a las circunstancias y a los vaivenes de los destinos particulares. Siempre se es blanco o cholo de alguien. (*El pez* 11)

Given these notions of *cholo/a* as *mestizo/mestizaje*, Carazas assertion that Amalia is “una joven afroperuana” seems based more upon Amalia’s portrayed class and social standing within the text, possibly conceived as appearing with phenotypical, physical traits commonly associated with those of African descent while immersed within *choloified*, Peruvian culture. The portrayal of her racial identity, then, more accurately reflects the ambiguity/ambivalence of conceptualizations of race in Peru. Still, her perceived blackness may be suggested in other ways, including her amorous connections with black, male characters (Ambrosio, Trinidad) and her simultaneous erasure and ubiquity throughout the novel.

Amalia's work as a "sirvienta" or house maid/servant designates her lower socioeconomic status and her lower position within the gendered, social hierarchy; her portrayal, then, reflects the overlapping systems of oppression and subjugation that connect race, gender, and sexuality. Given the ambiguity of her racial representation within the text, the way in which she is perceived is reflected in how others who occupy higher rungs of the social ladder treat her. Within the second chapter of the novel, Amalia's character is introduced as both the maid of the Zavala family (Santiago, Don Fermín) and as an object of sexual desire for Santiago and his friend, Popeye. In an attempt to comply with the expectations suggested to him by his older brother, Chispas, Santiago and Popeye endeavor to lose their virginity by planning to drug an unsuspecting partner with the drug, yohimbine. Due to her proximity and attractiveness, Amalia becomes the target for their exploits. The two drug her drink after calling her to Santiago's room, dance with her, and attempt to take advantage of her. However, they are interrupted by the return of Santiago's parents, Don Fermín and Zoila. Amalia is subsequently fired, as Zoila is suspicious of Amalia's intentions after seeing her in the room with Santiago.

Our initial encounter with Amalia already casts her in a target position of social and sexual domination by upper-class, male agents; her lower social standing as a servant guarantees a level of security from repercussions for Santiago and Popeye, while Amalia suffers a professional penalty due to Zoila's adherence to gendered and racialized codes of moral propriety. Peter Wade might explain Zoila's reaction as indicative of the way in which "images of sexual propriety and immorality constitute whiteness and blackness and provide a mechanism whereby both racial hierarchy (white over black) and sex/gender hierarchy (men over women, hetero over homo) are enacted" (25). However, Amalia's status does not change much after this experience. She is provided another job by Don Fermín at one of his factories, only to later

become a maid for Hortensia, then finally as the wife of Ambrosio, caring for her daughter within their home.

Ultimately, Amalia experiences no socioeconomic mobility. Like Ambrosio, she remains at the bottom, no matter to whom she is connected or for whom she works. In addition, her professional trajectory is largely managed by male agents: she is employed initially within Don Fermín's home, later within one of his factories; her employment with Hortensia is coordinated by Ambrosio's connection with Cayo Bermúdez; finally, she cares for her daughter while depending on Ambrosio's tenuous employment in Pucallpa.

The overlapping effects of race and gender on the figure of Amalia are suggested through a variety of images that connect Amalia's racialized existence with her gendered experience and treatment. One element that seems particularly salient in this process is the use of yohimbine (*yobimbina*) by Santiago and Popeye to seduce Amalia. Yohimbine (*yobimbina*) is a chemical extracted from the Yohimbe tree indigenous to western and central regions of Africa. It has traditionally been used as an aphrodisiac and as a potential treatment for sexual dysfunction. Vargas Llosa's employment of this particular substance provides an interesting symbol onto which race, gender, and sexuality converge: *yobimbina*, the name itself derived from possibly Bantu origins in west Africa, combines the popular conceptualizations of black sexuality, popularly-held in the racial imaginary, with Popeye and Santiago's own expectations of the performance of white masculinity through the sexual domination and exploitation of *Othered* brown and black women. In other words, Santiago and Popeye, as representatives of upper-class, male whiteness, must affirm themselves as such *through*, and *relative to*, the exploitation of lower-class, female blackness, utilizing the mythological and supernatural properties associated with *yobimbina* as a means to satisfy their sexual desires.

It is through *yobimbina* that we see another connection between Amalia's racialized being with that of the more ostensibly black Ambrosio, who is also surreptitiously given the substance by Don Fermín during their sexual encounters in an attempt to sexually arouse Ambrosio and relieve both of their anxieties regarding their socially taboo relationship (712). In this way, both father and son (Don Fermín and Santiago) take advantage of their racial and gendered privileges by abusing the most vulnerable figures within their purview. Both Amalia and Ambrosio, then, are connected by their perceived raciality and *otherness*, as well as their femininity and passivity, all the while serving as figures of sexual desire and exploitation by representatives of the upper-class.

As mentioned above, the figure of Queta is described primarily through her professional reputation as a prostitute, noted for her employment in an upscale brothel through which she eventually meets and forms professional and personal relationships with Cayo Bermúdez, Ambrosio, Hortensia, and Amalia. However, these relationships are dominated by her sexuality. What's more, while Queta is described as being comparatively darker-complexioned relative to other figures, her appearance is typically described *in contrast to* other characters in the scene; her phenotypical characteristics are made more apparent in relation to her sexual partners. For example, after Cayo Bermúdez meets Queta, he arranges for her to meet and subsequently engage sexually with his mistress, Hortensia. The two become friends and willing, sexual partners, while Cayo plans events for government officials and business leaders in which Hortensia and Queta would provide voyeuristic and sexual entertainment for guests. However, for Cayo Bermúdez, Queta serves as a contrasting figure in both his sexual fantasies and voyeuristic realities.

During a political gathering in Cajamarca in which Senator Heredia speaks to supporters of the Odría regime about a visit by the President, Cayo Bermúdez complies with his professional duties while simultaneously fantasizing about the Senator's wife engaging sexually with Queta. In Vargas Llosa's style of interweaving narratives, perspectives, and realms of thought, the political speech and the fantasy appear to occur concomitantly, with scenes of the speech and the idealized sexual encounter running into one another. This narrative choice by Vargas Llosa also seems to mimic the overlapping dynamics of race, gender, and sexuality, as Cayo's sexual thoughts are permeated with the sexualized nature of raciality. Before the speech, Cayo receives a drink from Senator Heredia, and his thought immediately focus upon the image of the Senator's wife: "tan distinguida, tan blanca, esas manos tan cuidadas, esos modales de mujer acostumbrada a mandar" (*Conversación* 364). Immediately, the image of Queta comes to mind as, for him, Queta is "tan morena, tan tosca, tan vulgar, tan acostumbrada a servir." For Cayo, the contrast of Queta's comparatively darker appearance, less-refined manners, and perceived servility with the whiter, distinguished, and apparently more domineering image of Senator Arévalo's wife suggests that Cayo's sexual arousal and desire interact with popular characteristics attributed to racial/phenotypical differences.

As the fantasy develops, Cayo further idealizes Queta as a servant of Heredia's wife. The descriptions within the fantasy depict Heredia's wife as "white," "perfect," and "elegant," while Queta appears as "vulgar," "dark," and "rough" (372). Heredia's whiteness and power versus Queta's relative darkness and servility reveals the ways in which Cayo reflects the enduring legacies of both colonial and postcolonial notions of racial difference. In other words, Cayo's position of power opens the realm of possibilities within his own imagination, allowing him to manipulate popular dichotomies of man/woman, heterosexual/homosexual, and white/black in

order to pursue transgressive ideations that contribute to his sexual arousal. Wade elaborates that in the process of *othering*, “[though] the other is defined as different and inferior and thus as actually or potentially dangerous and threatening, the other may also be seen as mysteriously attractive, fascinating and powerful” (37). The narration’s focus on the contrast in skin complexion of the two women suggests an arousal at the transgressive thought of being present during an interracial, sexual encounter between the two women. Furthermore, his ideation indicates a psychological need to project himself as the orchestrator of this encounter within the fantasy, maintaining control or power over the interaction between the women. This imagined self-projection as both voyeur and orchestrator becomes better understood later in the text when we discover that Cayo is impotent, and for that reason, voyeurism is how he satisfies himself sexually.

The fantasy discussed above is later carried out in reality, again at the behest of Cayo, but through the physical bodies of Hortensia and Queta. In this scene, again described in detail, Cayo arranges an encounter between the two, watches with intensity and, later attempts to join. It is here that his sexual impotence becomes apparent, as he both fails to perform sexually and is rejected by the engaged couple. The narration seems to reflect the thoughts of Cayo, particularly as the depicted complexions of the two women seem to add to his arousal. The narrator alternates between the body of Queta to that of Hortensia, describing how their two bodies relate to and seem to construct one another in the reflections of the various mirrors placed along the walls and ceiling of the bedroom. The resulting images strikingly compare the different bodies and put the racialized representation of these women on display:

Ya estaban desnudas y [Cayo] vio a Queta, arrodillada, dejándose caer blandamente sobre Hortensia hasta cubrirla casi enteramente con su gran cuerpo moreno, pero saltando del

techo al cubrecama al clóset todavía alcanzaba a divisarla fragmentada bajo la sólida sombra tendida sobre ella: un pedazo de nalga blanca, un pecho blanco, un pie blanquísimo, unos talones, y sus cabellos negros entre los alborotado rojizos de Queta, que había empezado a mecerse. (*Conversación 407*)

The narrator's description suggests that through Cayo's eyes, Queta is viewed as a solid shadow, eclipsing Hortensia's white body. It is only in the various angled reflections of the mirrors around the bedroom that Hortensia's whiteness is visible. One could say that Queta's dark body (read blackness) fragments and dismembers Hortensia's white body (read whiteness); the disembodied white parts of Hortensia's body are highlighted against the integral shadow of Queta's body. One way of interpreting this image is to see Queta's body as symbolic of the perceived degeneration of Peruvian society from the perspective of upper-class white Peruvians: Queta further corrupts the social (read white) body while also being integral to Cayo's performance of white, masculine control and expression of masculine, sexual identity. Another interpretation is that Queta's *Othered* body allows Cayo's expression of masculine, sexual identity, as her historical *otherness* and association with libertine sexuality (via both race and profession) becomes coupled with the objectified whiteness he truly desires (Heredia's wife and Hortensia). Like the fantasized scene above with Senator Heredia's wife, Cayo's sexual arousal seems to depend on the figure of a white, female body, and its visual and perceptual contradistinction with the darker body of Queta. Peruvian feminist writer, Fátima Valdivia del Rio, affirms that "desde la primera vez que un esclavo africano pisó suelo americano hasta la actualidad, el cuerpo de la mujer negra siempre ha simbolizado dentro del imaginario social lo mismo: accesibilidad, voluptuosidad, sensualidad, libertad" (74). In this way, Queta's body remains a constant for Cayo's sexual imaginary as she is sexuality incarnate, providing a

gateway to access seemingly inaccessible or privileged white, female sexuality and simultaneously transgress it through his voyeurism of the performance of interracial, homosexual sexuality.

Chapter 3: Racial Recipes: Incorporation as Metaphor of Racial Formation

The second half of the twentieth century serves as the stage upon which the presence and cultural significance of Afro-Peruvians would begin to emerge, take form, and develop within the public and mainstream spheres of Peru's national consciousness. As discussed in earlier chapters, Afro-descendent Peruvians were consistently present within both colonial and postcolonial/Republican imaginaries, their presence reflective of the, at one time, large demographic of perceived and self-identified African peoples; this gradually declined after the abolition of slavery, due to popularized ideals of *mestizaje*, and the increasing "invisibilization" of black groups relative to the growing sentiments towards vindicating Peru's indigenous population during the turn of the nineteenth century. In this way, Afro-Peruvians were ever present, yet conveniently silenced, politically and socially, by the dominant white classes. Cultural contributions by Afro-Peruvians, including their influences on Peru's national musical, artistic, and culinary identity, were common, superficially acknowledged and normalized as representations of *peruanidad*. Meanwhile, Afro-Peruvian populations, much like those of the indigenous majority, remained socially, economically, and politically oppressed, their voices effectively silenced, ignored, co-opted, and misrepresented by white actors. However, it would be during the changing sociopolitical and cultural landscape of the 1960s and 1970s that Peru would witness the emergence of Afro-Peruvian culture on the national scene produced either by Afro-Peruvians themselves or by authors with geographic, familial, or generational connections to predominantly Afro-Peruvian communities. Though centered principally around music and dance forms that connected black Peruvians with their African histories, as well as burgeoning Afro-diasporic cultural movements that were happening contemporaneously within the

Caribbean and Brazil, this revival also had a profound effect on the content, forms, and production of poetry and narrative literature.

This chapter will serve to interrogate how the Afro-Peruvian cultural revival that takes place during the sociopolitical climate of the 1960s and 1970s in Peru unveils the various ideological tools and practices with which Peruvians of African descent sought to reclaim and affirm a sense of collective cultural and ethnic identity. The revival both articulated and connected black Peruvian cultural practices with the developments of black Diasporic cultural movements throughout the Americas, including the Civil Rights Movement and Black Power movements within the United States and Afro-Brazilian culture as expressed through dance, music, and religious practices. Within the Peruvian context, though the Afro-Peruvian presence was affirmed primarily through musical and poetic expression, this led to an increasing utilization of narrative and poetic literature to explore, disseminate, and make visible social and economic issues pertinent to Afro-Peruvian culture and history. This surge in Afro-Peruvian cultural production results in changes to the structure, content, and overall access to the literary creations of Afro-Peruvians, this latter point referencing the peripheral capacity of Afro-Peruvian writers and poets to independently publish or have their work published by major publishing houses (N’Gom 29). In addition, while Afro-Peruvian music, dance, and oral poetry becomes associated with and based in the urban setting of Lima, it is from rural and coastal areas where the literary vindication of Afro-Peruvians is most strongly represented. Writers such as José Campos Dávila (San Luis de Cañete), Antonio Gálvez Ronceros (Chincha), and Gregorio Martínez (Coyungo), all of whom originate from coastal areas outside of Lima that have been composed, historically, of fairly large populations of self-identified Afro-Peruvian communities, constitute some of the more critiqued, and therefore visible, writers of Afro-Peruvian narrative

literature. It is during the second half of the twentieth century that these writers produced works focusing on Afro-Peruvian experiences, musical and artistic practices, and linguistic characteristics.

For the purpose of this analysis, I will focus on Gregorio Martínez's *Crónica de músicos y diablos* (1991). This work is indicative of the growing literary presence of Afro-Peruvians after a musical and folkloric revival that begins during the late 1950s and into the 1960s. What's more, these texts are written by an author who acknowledges their Afro-Peruvian geographical roots, identity, and cultural belonging, while providing narratives for Afro-Peruvian characters that reveal a certain ideological and cultural proximity to the lived experiences of a marginalized and exploited minority population. The analysis that follows will interrogate Martínez's focus on the revisionist historical fiction of *Crónica de músicos y diablos*. However, the brunt of this investigation will focus on how Martínez's work attempts to represent Afro-Peruvian perspectives from an interior position, using the nuanced details of Afro-Peruvian communities, history, and family structures to better portray the lived histories of people that have been largely de-historicized. To do this, Martínez appeals to both individualist and collectivist notions of community, invoking food and gastronomic metaphors as a means by which to interrogate the formation of race, racial positioning and interracial relations. The following will first explore the historical context in which the Afro-Peruvian cultural revival took place. The latter portion of the chapter will provide analyses of Martínez's *Crónica de músicos y diablos* (1991) based primarily on the representation of intra-national notions of belonging within an attempted homogenous sense of Peruvian national identity, and the utilization of gastronomy as metaphor in the construction of race in Peru.

Historical Context of Peru 1955-1975

The history of Peru is marked by changes in the formation and concretization of national consciousness, an important notion particularly for Latin American countries that sought to define their own identity upon freeing themselves from European colonialism. This has been a continual process from the beginning of the nineteenth-century until the present day. As history has progressed, we see how as power changes hands between one group or another, the factors of race, notions of morality, economics, and politics present themselves alternately and, many times, in conjunction with one another, as key foundations for such transitions of power. In the previous chapter, the analysis of the literary production of Mario Vargas Llosa was centered around the historical and political context of Manuel Odría's *ochenio* dictatorship, a socially repressive regime that was fraught with corruption allegations, financial mismanagement, and continual suppressive measures taken against political opponents. Odría's regime would have lasting political consequences. The *caudillo*-tinged administration focused on mobilizing the urban poor (read *limeño* poor) in order to counter the growing presence of the APRA movement, yet continued to ignore many of the socioeconomic issues plaguing the rural, and primarily southern, indigenous peasantry, who found themselves competing with the modernization of agricultural centers in the northern sierra regions. In addition, Peru's increasing economic dealings with external markets, including the U.S., as well as subsidized food policies of the state under Odría, led to increasing hardships for many rural agricultural workers (Klarén 311). As a result, there was a steady increase of widespread protests and uprisings throughout the country that would, in turn, place increasing political pressure on the various political contenders who, representative of different ends of the political spectrum, would eventually have to make agrarian and labor reforms their top priority. With the end of Odría's regime, these main contenders

included Manuel Prado, former Peruvian president who returned from exile in order to run in the election of 1956, and Odría himself. Perhaps taking into account the growing unrest among Peru's working class, Prado struck a deal with APRA leadership, vowing to allow APRA to be legalized as a political party and promising Haya de la Torre's eligibility to run in the 1962 elections in exchange for their support. Coupled with a separate deal with Odría, asking for his support on the condition that Prado would not investigate Odría's regime for corruption charges, Prado's win of Peru's presidency was cemented.

Despite relative economic growth and stability under Prado's administration, the plight of the southern and rural agricultural workers persisted. While the urban middle class experienced economic growth due to increasing industrialization and the heavy influence of foreign capital within the nation, rural, lower-class laborers continued to struggle against the modernizing trend of the more urban sectors of the country. In response, protests and uprisings led by rural, primarily indigenous, groups grew in intensity, resulting in the invasions of various *haciendas*, or estates, and the development of *sindicatos*, or "peasant federations" (Masterson 157). These *sindicatos* proved effective in mobilizing the rural peasantry, particularly as the various regional entities began to join forces. Such is the case with the *Federación de Trabajadores Campesinos de La Convención y Lares* (FTC), a federation of *sindicatos* from the regions just north of the city of Cusco, such as La Convención and Lares, as well as Cusco itself that, by 1960, was comprised of more than 130 *sindicatos* and 11,000 peasant workers. Through coordinated labor strikes and the refusal of the tenant workers and farmers to pay their rent for their allotted land parcels, the FTC, along with the leadership of activist, Hugo Blanco, the *sindicatos* were able to regain control of some of their lands, while also bringing to the fore the need for substantial agrarian reforms. Such mobilizations and protests were noticed by Prado's administration,

however much of the government's response resulted in amounting to little more than lip-service on their part. Despite creating a commission in 1956 that was to investigate and propose possible agrarian reform measures, the release of its 1959 report detailing how agrarian reform could be possible only with considerable remunerative measures provided to landowners had little to no impact on actual action taken by the government to address the concerns of the rural southern peasantry (Klarén 383).

An interesting aspect of this continued neglect of the needs of the rural peasantry is the increasing involvement of the military in the sociopolitical well-being of Peru. As a result of Odría's suspect administration, much of the military began to utilize the relative stability of the country under Prado to approach the idea of national defense in terms of education, training, and professionalization, rather than the traditional reactionary or defensive politics associated with the military's role within the nation. Organizations such as the *Centro de Altos Estudios Militares* (CAEM) were created by the military in order to better train personnel in the socioeconomic and political issues that affected the internal security of the country, particularly the underdevelopment of the nation's rural and sierra regions and its effect on the escalating tensions between Peru's rural agricultural workers, wealthy landowners, and the steadily modernizing urban middle class. Peter Klarén reveals that within professionalized military institutions such as the CAEM, students studied courses in sociology, agricultural development, economics, banking, climatology, statistics, and theories in nation building and development (384). Such instruction had the dual purpose of allowing greater involvement by the military in the progress of the nation, while also preserving the institution of the armed forces within Peru despite having gained a reputation of corruption, *caudillismo*, and right-wing politics during Odría's regime. The leftward transition of the military's ideology, as well as their increasing

involvement in the development of the country, would be key in the events that would unfold during the elections of 1962 at the end of Prado's tenure as president.

In 1962, at the end of Prado's dictatorship, there were three main contenders, each representing the ideological shifts taking place across the various social sectors of the Peruvian landscape: on the far right, former president Manuel Odría represented the populist appeal garnered during his regime with his *Unión Nacional Odrísta*; increasingly right-leaning during its negotiated coexistence with Prado's administration was the APRA party led by Victor Haya de la Torre; to the center-left, Fernando Belaúnde Terry, an architect who established the *Acción Popular* party, which based itself on a nationalist and technocratic platform. The results of the election demonstrated a nearly equal split between all three candidates, each one receiving about a third of the total votes. While Haya de la Torre did end up with a majority of the total votes, he did not receive more than the constitutionally mandated 33.33% of the total votes required to win the presidency. The decision of the presidency now rested with Congress, whose primarily APRA-backed members effectively obstructed the chances of both Belaúnde and Odría. Although both candidates attempted to broker a deal with Haya de la Torre in order to share power in the new administration, only Odría was able to do so. The repeated cooperation between the far right and the APRA party seems to have been the last straw for the armed forces, who could not envision effective agrarian reforms and social modernization under another Odría-led regime.

As a result, Peru's various branches of the military came together for an "institutional" coup, obstructing the possibility of Haya de la Torre's presidency and allowing the establishment of a temporary government until elections could again take place the following year. This year-long government signaled the military's opposition to APRA's increasingly right stance under

the leadership of Haya de la Torre, but perhaps more significantly, the importance of agrarian reform within the public consciousness and necessity for the government to make meaningful and lasting changes. Unfortunately, though well-intentioned, much of the military-initiated reforms made little significance due to both the short term of the coup's rule, as well as the obstructionist tactics of Odría's followers and the APRA-led Congress. However, the focus on agrarian reform would be the issue that would allow for Belaúnde to win the majority vote in the elections of 1963, an outcome that was widely seen as favorable by the military, yet contrary to the objectives of the more conservative Congress. This opposition would prove to be disastrous as massive reform efforts promised by Belaúnde would be stymied by the conservative majority in Congress.

Although reform was the primary issue of Belaúnde's presidency, the failure of his administration to secure lands back into the hands of farm workers and the rural peasantry inspired increased unrest by the agrarian sector and other groups who embraced more leftist politics, including university students and the majority indigenous population. Since the end of Odría's regime and its repression of civil liberties, the radicalization of the Left grew in intensity, with university student mobilizations being one of its primary expressions. The cooperation between student, agrarian, military, and indigenous groups fostered even greater discord between the Left and Belaúnde's administration, leading to yet another military coup led by General Juan Velasco Alvarado in 1968. By this point, the military's leftist and nationalistic stance took up the cause of resolving the underdevelopment of the country, lessening Peru's dependence on foreign interest and capital, and addressing the deepening socioeconomic inequalities between the classes.

During this seven-year dictatorship, commonly referred to as the *Gobierno Revolucionario de la Fuerza Armada* (GRFA), Velasco Alvarado's regime implemented reforms that wrested power and lands away from the agrarian elite and landowners, transferring them to the peasant workers and their families. Although the long-term socioeconomic effects for the majority of those exploited by the *hacienda* system were negligible, reformist policies such as the Decreto Ley 17716 of 1969 effectively ended the *hacienda* system, which had profited from the labor of primarily indigenous, peasant workers for much of the country's history. As Klarén notes:

De este modo la reforma, que redistribuyó alrededor de una tercera parte de las tierras cultivables del país, benefició a entre una cuarta y una tercera parte de la fuerza laboral rural, pero excluyó al resto. Es más, dado que la reforma agraria constituyó una reforma únicamente *dentro* del sector agrícola, que se caracterizaba por su baja productividad, y no una transferencia de recursos a este sector desde el sector moderno, su impacto global fue limitado: probablemente menos del uno por ciento del ingreso nacional total. (432)

In addition, the GRFA expanded the control of the State over Peru's economy, replacing the influence of foreign companies on the economic development of the country. As a result, state-run companies like Petroperú and Mineroperú appeared and the State doubled its contribution to its gross domestic product. The transition from depending on foreign influence was most pronounced with the straining of the relationship between Peru and the United States, as the regime's nationalistic direction dampened the U.S.'s military and economic objectives within the country at the same time that Peru was forging and intensifying diplomatic and military relationships with Italy, West Germany, and, most significantly, the Soviet Union.

The Afro-Peruvian Cultural Revival

It would be during the second half of the twentieth century that Peruvians of African descent would begin to assert their presence within the mainstream, Peruvian consciousness by developing existing, yet increasingly obscure cultural practices, into artistic forms that would highlight Afro-Peruvian identity on a national scale. At the same time, some of the pioneers of this movement would inform their expression using the cultural phenomena of other regions of the African diaspora, as well as the derivation of new, or unique cultural artifacts from “ancestral memory,” in order to restructure and create new forms of musical, poetic, and spiritual expression that serve to foster a sense of belonging in a nation that has perpetually marginalized and ignored its black population.³⁸ While the majority of the revival has been heavily associated with music, dance, and poetic performance, this period between the late 1950’s and the 1970’s would serve as the catalyst for increased literary production both about, and created by, Afro-Peruvian subjects and issues.

The most prominent proponents of revitalizing and making visible the sociocultural contributions of the Afro-Peruvian community were various members of the *limeño* Santa Cruz family, most notably, siblings Victoria Santa Cruz and Nicomedes Santa Cruz. Commonly thought of as black aristocracy, despite their middle-class origins, the siblings and their descendants would prove pivotal in expressing revived, and even reinterpreted, forms of traditionally Afro-Peruvian forms of artistic expression, as well as modifying said traditions into new expressions that would serve as the foundational sources for later generations of Afro-Peruvian artists. Victoria Santa Cruz’s forte would be the development and cultivation of Afro-Peruvian dance, particularly through her use of “ancestral memory.” With this process, Victoria Santa Cruz believed that her being of African descent allowed her body to serve as a channel

through which lost steps, movements, and gestures of dances commonly performed by members of the Afro-Peruvian population could be “remembered” and restored; dances thought once lost, such as the *landó* were reborn through the body and teachings of Victoria Santa Cruz.³⁹ As a result, dances traditionally and popularly associated with African slaves and their descendants, such as the *landó* and the *zamahueca*, found new life through Victoria Santa Cruz’s development of performance groups like Teatro y Danzas Negras del Perú and subsequent public dance and theatrical performances.

Nicomedes Santa Cruz would remain a key figure in the literary and poetic realm of Peruvian culture, particularly through his role of popularizing the poetic form of the *décima* and gradually incorporating social and cultural critiques within the words of his poetic performances. The *décima* genre, passed from Spain to the Americas during the Conquest and ever more popular in Latin America as time progressed, was a popular spectacle performed at public events, weddings, and parties that typically showcased the poetic prowess of two competing poets. Traditionally *decimistas* composed lyrics *a lo divino* or *a lo humano*, however as the genre became regarded less as a “cultured” endeavor and ever more popular among the working classes, the content of the *décimas* became more varied (Feldman, *Black Rhythms* 88). Martha Ojeda describes this transformation of the *décima*, noting how the form was initially used as a strategy of Christian catechism for indigenous and black populations which gradually transformed into a method of denouncing colonial abuses and injustices (“Nicomedes” 136). The poet takes the transformative nature of the *décima* a step further, simultaneously protesting social, national, and political issues as they affect the Afro-Peruvian population while making the Afro-Peruvian presence visible by combining neologisms and Afro-Peruvian expressions and vocabulary into his works.

The extent of Nicomedes Santa Cruz's cultural import is not limited to poetry, as his work extended to journalism, theater production, musicology, radio broadcasting, and essays. Though his contributions to poetry and the oral *décimista* tradition are beyond the scope of this project, his other cultural endeavors were instrumental in the discovery, reconstruction, and archiving of Afro-Peruvian folkloric practices and musical and performative traditions. Notably, his journalistic and broadcast output provided visibility and voice to the racism and marginalization of Afro-Peruvians for a larger, national audience. His ability to reach a wider audience was bolstered in part by the nationalization of mass media that occurred during Velasco Alvarado's regime in the early 1970s. Nicomedes Santa Cruz's concern over the plight of Peru's marginalized populations and desire for reforms at the state level coincided with the revolutionary aspirations of Velasco Alvarado's government, affording the former with state support for his cultural and artistic endeavors. During this time, his access to popular newspapers and publications, as well as the creative control over his own output, provided him a platform by which to research, compile, and disseminate a host of articles detailing the influence of Afro-Peruvian culture on everything from philosophy to sports. Most importantly, in this way Nicomedes Santa Cruz was able to publicly comment on and denounce acts of discrimination and racism.

Unfortunately, the support granted to him by the state would be short-lived, as the end of Velasco Alvarado's control over the Revolutionary Government in 1975 also signaled an end to the government's backing of his artistic endeavors (Ojeda, "Nicomedes" 123). The wresting of power from Velasco Alvarado by his general and successor, Francisco Morales Bermúdez, resulted in an ideological shift from the left-leaning Velasco Alvarado, leading to the loss of state support for artistic endeavors as well as a deepening economic crisis caused by inflation during

Velasco Alvarado's leadership. Though his essay and journalistic production continued, Nicomedes Santa Cruz continued such endeavors in Spain, where he continued to promote Afro-Peruvian customs and folkloric traditions.

The ideas of "ancestral memory" by Victoria Santa and of learned poetry through oral and generational transmission by Nicomedes Santa Cruz as methodologies to recreate and develop Afro-Peruvian cultural expressions has been met with criticism. Specifically, the investigative work of the historical origins and trajectory of Afro-Peruvian dances, movements, ways of life, and symbolism relies primarily upon anecdotal, essentialist, and subjective notions of what constituted *afroperuanidad* in the past, and how its evolution is expressed today. The Santa Cruz siblings founded their revived versions of Afro-Peruvian dance, music, and poetics on an amalgamation of cultural shards that survived mostly in Pacific coastal communities of large black populations, filling in the gaps with what the Santa Cruz siblings felt was an inner ability to "remember" the pieces of their history that had been lost and/or stolen as a result of the marginalization and invisibilization of Afro-Peruvians.

Regarding Victoria Santa Cruz's approach to remembering lost Afro-Peruvian rhythms and movements, Heidi Carolyn Feldman comments on how Victoria Santa Cruz believed in the "inherent knowledge" of rhythm that lies, sometimes dormant, within the bodies and minds of black peoples (*Black Rhythms* 68). Feldman continues to point out that many contemporary critics, such as Kwame Appiah and Paul Gilroy, hesitate to endorse the essentialist notions that such beliefs hold. She herself points out that "the beauty and the danger of the idea of ancestral memory is that it deftly disables criticism in the same way devout religious belief can never be 'wrong'" (69). From an academic point of analysis, the concept of "ancestral memory" appeals to essentialism and not to race or culture as being socially constructed phenomena. However, the

academic viewpoint would effectively reject and disempower Victoria Santa Cruz's ability to claim *afroperuanidad* on her own terms and disrupt the possibility of an active, and albeit unconventional, path to finding oneself and one's history.⁴⁰ It must be noted that Victoria Santa Cruz's method of tapping into what she felt as an inherent connection with African rhythms resulted in the evolution of racial identity claimed by self-identified Afro-Peruvians, not to mention a growing visibility of Afro-Peruvian (re)constructions of musical performance and practices (Feldman, "Strategies" 55). Feldman notes how despite the presence of scholarly study on collective memory, the absence of "ancestral memory" in these studies is telling.

In addition, the various influences of other Diasporic cultural expressions throughout the Americas, including the Black Power Movement in the United States, the influence of Afro-Cuban cultural traditions, and the syncretic development of Afro-Brazilian religious and performative practice, all provided what the Santa Cruz siblings regarded as observable and verifiable support for their reconstructions of and contributions to Afro-Peruvian traditions and culture. Feldman describes the siblings' looking to Diasporic sites like Cuba and Brazil to inform their own racial and cultural identity as being representative of her conceptualization of Peru as site along what she refers to as the "black Pacific."

The idea of the black Pacific expands upon Paul Gilroy's idea of the black Atlantic, where the shared experiences of the Middle Passage and slavery connect the heterogeneous black cultures of Africa, the Americas, and Europe and provide a "counterculture of modernity" (15). Whereas the black Atlantic is located in the interwoven histories between regions bordering the Atlantic, Feldman notes that such connections between Afro-descendant people of the Pacific coast and their African past have been historically tenuous with ostensibly less preservation of cultural practices and memory viewed as culturally African ("Black Pacific" 207). As a result,

Feldman suggests that for Afro-Peruvian revivalists like the Santa Cruz siblings, the black Atlantic became the most proximate source of culturally-African memory; the black Atlantic became the center from which cultural memory and practices flowed to the black Pacific's periphery. The spectre of essentialism is, again, very apparent with this process. In the Peruvian sociohistorical context, however, the emphasis of Afro-Peruvian revivalists was to assert and build upon their historical and actual presence in the country. Much of the direct cultural and ancestral connections to ethnic and cultural roots in Africa had been obscured physically by a lack of documentation and practically by the effects of ideologies of whitening and *mestizaje*. Thus, it would be the cultural expressions of Afro-Cuban and Afro-Brazilian performers and scholars that would form the foundation from which figures like the Santa Cruz siblings would trace their own identities, affirming a sense of continuity in their African heritage in an attempt to assuage the "anxiety of double consciousness" (208). Though these expressions may not accurately document African history in Peru, Feldman asserts that the resultant cultural creations "mobilized real ideas about diasporic identity and ancestry for Afro-Peruvians struggling with double consciousness on the criollo coast" (223).

Imagined Nations: Constructing Sub-Nations during the pre-Republican Era of Peru

In *Crónica de músicos y diablos* (1991) de Gregorio Martínez, the author uses the socio-historic backdrop of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to give voice to the lives and experiences of Afro-Peruvians. Though self-identified groups of African-descent are perceived less within Peruvian public consciousness, as well as demographically less populous than black populations within neighboring countries such as Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela and Brazil,

such groups do indeed exist as self-identified identities and have contributed greatly to Peru's national identity, or, *peruanidad*.

With this novel, Gregorio Martínez focuses on distinct, historical groups of Afro-Peruvians: *cimarrones*, slaves, and free blacks. The entire novel alternates, chapter by chapter, between events involving both slaves and *cimarrones*, as well as the history and travels of a family of Afro-Peruvian musicians. The chapters that deal with *cimarrones* occur within the first half of the novel, while those detailing the lives of slaves and free black Peruvians continue in the second half. The distinction that Martínez makes between the various Afro-Peruvian groups is important here as Martínez seems to challenge the narrative of homogeneity perceived with respect to Afro-Peruvians by the homogenization process that occurs through the nation-building project in Peru. Peruvian scholar Humberto Vargas Salgado notes that “en el Perú se mezclan y entrecruzan factores etnosociales y etnobiológicos o racistas; lo que hace más compleja y polémica nuestra realidad sociocultural” (14). Being a country in which ethnic and racial definitions and categories are both abundant and, at times, ill-defined, Peru might be better considered in terms of identities constructed upon criteria based on national identity or belonging.

The intersections of Peru's diversity of ethnic and racialized identities lead to highly contextual interpretations of *peruanidad*, effectively creating the possibility of basing *peruanidad* on national and civic criteria, rather than racial or ethnic characteristics. However, the process of establishing a cohesive national identity requires a discourse of sociocultural and political homogenization, which Peruvian history has proven difficult due to the effects of racial and ethnic discrimination, exploitation, and disenfranchisement. Despite social projects that aimed to construct a cohesive national consciousness by selectively incorporating and

homogenizing the diversity of racial and ethnic identities of Peru, those attempts resulted in the formation of various “sub-nations” within the nation itself. Specifically, the revival and dissemination of Afro-Peruvian cultural practices during the middle of the twentieth century serves as evidence of the formation of sub-national identities and their interactions with the dominant, mainstream national consciousness.

Before Peru’s national independence in 1821, there was no consolidated concept of *peruanidad*, or “Peruvianess,” due mostly to the relationship and influence endured during Spanish colonization. The sociopolitical sphere was marked by a variety of opinions regarding the political direction of the country, with some fighting for independence and others for the maintenance of the monarchy (Blanchard 5). With the changes that coincided with the arrival of the liberation discourses of Argentinian leader José de San Martín in 1821 and Venezuelan figure Simón Bolívar in 1823, the tendency towards national independence of the country reflected more the interests of outside influences rather than an ideological accord of Peruvians themselves. Peter Blanchard confirms that Peru’s road to Independence revealed a certain reticence towards the stark ideological changes that would accompany such a transition (6). Even with independence from Spanish control, black populations could not play a decisive role in the direction of the country, due in part to the various legislative acts that afforded them better treatment under the law while maintaining them within a coercive system of labor (8). Meanwhile the Peruvian white elite, maintained control over the trajectory of the nation’s formation.

In his study of Afro-Peruvian representation within Peruvian historical discourse, Marcel Velázquez Castro comments on the national project directed primarily by white actors:

El discurso criollo carga con la terrible paradoja de fundar imaginariamente la homogeneidad en una sociedad heterogénea, de anclar significados nacionales desde una identidad precaria, de construir un pasado colectivo cuando ellos querían olvidar o negar sus desventuras en el orden colonial. (27)

The construction of a homogenous Peruvian identity, then, is demolished at inception, particularly seeing as how its formation depended on the creation of a cohesive national imaginary that was not mired in the colonial trappings that constituted the now dominant, white culture and also ignored the heterogeneous make-up of the emerging nation. In this way, national heterogeneity coincides with the “synthetic” approach through which Diego von Vacano analyses race within the Latin American context. According to him, a “synthetic paradigm” of race is “a mode of thinking about the phenomenon of race and its tributaries in a way that eludes fixed, rigid notions and tends to incorporate those which are mixed and fluid” (16). This synthetic paradigm considers the multiple national identities that emerge during the Republican transition during the nineteenth century and how they construct, destabilize, and relate to one another. The advantages of this paradigm allow a consideration of the fluidity of racial constructions, demonstrating how “the high-modern construction of the nation-state is facilitated by the use of race as a way to unify identity and create a common sense of citizenship [,] ...for specific nationalities were constructed out of the process in which race was a pivotal mode of regulation of identity, membership, and citizenship” (von Vacano 18).

The relative lack of agency of Peru’s marginalized populations upon the direction of the country led to the formation of other identities within the largely normalized, mainstream identity of Peru. For black populations, such identities emerged through the creation of separate communities and sociocultural groups of *palenques* and *cofradías*. Such groups serve as tangible

examples of how Afro-Peruvian populations during the nineteenth century could form mutually beneficial communities within the larger national context that rejected and marginalized them. The *cofradías*, or associations, began as a system through which to convert slaves to Christianity, basing its practices on the religious praise and worship of a Catholic saint. In the fifteenth century, the *cofradías* served to instill resignation and obedience of social superiors in black slaves under the guise of Christian values and virtues (Aguirre 104). For that reason, Catholicism became a major tool for large-scale conversion and reformation of slave and free black populations. However, Carlos Aguirre notes that “las cofradías se convertirían en un importante vehículo de socialización y solidaridad para los esclavos y negros libres...[Aunque] en teoría estaban estructuradas en función de su adscripción a un santo o virgen,...en la práctica las cofradías de negros se organizaron claramente en función de las divisiones étnicas al interior de las poblaciones negras (*Breve historia* 105-7). Though slaves were brought from various geographic regions of the African continent, as well as diverse ethnic affiliations, the *cofradías* allowed an opportunity for slaves to reestablish the ethnic identifications to which they belonged before being uprooted to the Americas (Espinoza 256).

The *palenques* also constituted a form of community that permitted the development of a distinct Afro-Peruvian identity. These communities were formed and separated from urban centers by *cimarrones*, black individuals who had escaped slavery. Aguirre describes *palenques* as “comunidades semi-autónomas y militarizadas” that were formed in order to “construir una comunidad auto-subsistente, fundamentalmente agrícola, y regida por principios jerárquicos en los que la religión y la etnicidad africanas jugaban un papel central” (145-16).⁴¹ The existence of these autonomous communities implies a non-cohesive and certainly non-homogenous sense of national identity, as much as for those who maintained sociocultural dominance as those who

suffered marginalization. The influence of *palenques* and maronnage in general is very important within Peru's historical context, as Milagros Carazas explains: "el cimarronaje es una forma de resistencia activa que no es bien vista ni entendida por las autoridades coloniales, y que atenta contra lo establecido...es considerado una amenaza para el sistema, porque es un ser no sometido al orden colonial: permanece en libertad, tiene un desmesurado goce, practica su propia moral y costumbre, y ejerce un gobierno autónomo" (*Estudios* 133-4).

Reflecting the reality of autonomous communities and identities within a proposed unified, national imaginary, such communities are also represented through literature. The formation of *cimarrón* communities illustrates the theories of Benedict Anderson regarding imagined communities and their connection with nation-building. According to Anderson, a community is based upon the shared conceptualization of said community by its members; the community's membership determines the perceived bonds and communal relationships between the individual members (6). The community is, therefore, imagined, in that its formation is largely determined by the shared experiences and expectations of the collectivity of individual members. In this way, the sense of community embodied within *cofradías* and *palenques* reflects Anderson's notion of imagined communities. This focus on the imagined character of collective identity, along with the "sub-nations" of Afro-Peruvian communities that emerge during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, implies that the national narrative largely depends on social power dynamics, where those who control economic and political resources effectively direct the social roles and relative value of those who are subject to that control. In other words, the social imaginary of the Peruvian nation becomes more representative of the hegemonic interests of the dominant class than of socioeconomic realities.

Physical and Ideological Consumption

With *Crónica de músicos y diablos* (1991), Martínez explores the intimate connections between representations of food, the act of eating, and gastronomy in general with the simultaneous construction and destabilization of the various Peruvian national identities. Food and the act of eating are intrinsic parts of human existence, so it is not surprising that food and its consumption appear in literature. When one considers how food, its preparation, and its consumption become symbols of national gastronomy and culinary practices, how these practices become normalized and modified by the citizenry, and how gastronomy has the potential to reflect the sociocultural and moral dynamics of a nation, the connections between food and national identity become important points of analysis. With this novel, I will discuss how the production of the “eatable,” the various representations and interpretations of appetite and its conflation with sexuality, and the metaphors that surround the portrayal of the physical body in gastronomical terms relate to the various national identities that constitute the developing national consciousness of Peru between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Although social interactions and relationships might depend on the sociopolitical imaginary, the concretization of such abstract concepts into tangible effects can be explored and analyzed in the social role of food. Though many may consider food as merely a collection of substances that are physically ingested for physiological development and sustenance, various thinkers propose other evaluations of the social, psychological, and symbolic importance of this necessary aspect of life. Roland Barthes suggests that though food consists of products that are evaluated through statistics or nutritional studies, it also represents “a system of communication, a body of images, a protocol of usages, situations, and behavior” (24). According to Barthes, food transmits information and expresses different meanings in a variety of contexts:

“Substances, techniques of preparation, habits, all become part of a system of differences in signification; and as soon as this happens, we have communication by way of food.” This semiotic conceptualization of food and its communicative role unveils its connections with the sociopolitical and national imaginaries in that meaning is given to food through a process of assigning value to relative differences, similar to how national constructions depend upon intercultural differences in order to establish and justify the hegemonic power of one group over another. Food and its variety, much like the variety among the various groups that constitute the Peruvian citizenry, becomes representative and reflective of the racial, moral, and political attitudes of the ever-fluid national imaginary of Peru.

To pursue this line of investigation, I utilize various ideas proposed by scholar Kyla Wazana Tompkins in her book *Racial Indigestion: Eating Bodies in the 19th Century* (2012). In this text, Tompkins analyzes the intersections between food and the act of eating, racial formations, and the constructions of national identity in the United States during the nineteenth century. The author suggests that the evolution of the United States’ national identity depended largely on the evolution of the nation’s gastronomy and eating practices, creating narratives that fostered the formation of a nation that corresponded with popular ideals of well-being.

The notion that food, and its representation, can have an impact on the formation of national identity is essential in understanding what some authors like Martínez do through literature. Similar to what Tompkins explains regarding food and eating within the United States, for Peru “eating threatened the foundational fantasy of a contained autonomous self [because] eating transcended the gap between self and other, blurring the line between subject and object as food turned into tissue, muscle, and nerve and then provided the energy that drives them all” (3). Within *Crónica de músicos y diablos* there are various instances where the defining lines

between consumer and consumed become blurry or inverted, affirming Tompkins's view of how the act of eating threatens the self-contained self. Specifically, this tension of incorporation presents a metaphor of the social and racial relations within Peru's colonial past. The normalized distinctions between Peru's ethnic and cultural groups are tenuous, resulting from a constructed reality based upon imagined differences. Martínez's novel also connects with Tompkins's ideas regarding the literary representation of the black body and how it vacillated between rejection, complete abjection, and internalization marked by the figure of the consumed black body (8). Regarding *Crónica*, I see this process play out in the concept of "sexual appetite," where there appears a blatant moral rejection of black sexuality alongside the portrayal of the physical incorporation of the black body and this subsequent conversion into a sexual necessity (Martínez 41).

Keeping in mind the aforementioned theoretical frameworks of Anderson, von Vacano, Barthes, and Tompkins, the analysis that continues below will explore how a kind of "gastronomic imaginary" plays a part in the Martínez's literary representation of national and cultural narratives. In this way, I will discuss the effects of food on the formation of Peruvian identity, as well as an analysis of the conflicting relationships between homogenized national identity and sub-national identities. It is necessary to take into account that the existence of heterogeneous national and cultural identities emerge as a result of resistance by slaves, *cimarrones*, and free Afro-Peruvians to homogenizing narratives, as well as the simultaneous incorporation and rejection of the Afro-Peruvian element within national discourse, directed primarily by the upper, *criollo* classes.

A Gastronomic Imaginary within *Crónica de músicos y diablos*

One of the most notable aspects of Martínez's *Crónica* is *how* gastronomy figures into the revisionist history that Martínez proposes within the novel. By portraying poor, Afro-Peruvian alongside historic events in Peru's past, Carazas notes "que esta novela de Martínez propone una relectura cuestionadora y paródica del pasado histórico (la época colonial y la República) y construye una innovadora imagen del sujeto afroperuano al afirmar su identidad" (*Estudios* 131). The text itself, by its structure and narrative content, serves as a challenge to the normalized and accepted narrative of Peru's history. Similarly, Martínez incorporates a gastronomic imaginary to explore and criticize the national discourse regarding history and sociocultural relations within the country.

In the first chapter of the section of the novel entitled "Esclavos y cimarrones," the setting of the plot is established as taking place during the colonial period in Peru, yet represented through the perspective of *cimarrones*. The chapter opens within a *palenque* in Huachipa, a distinct region near the city of Lima. When describing the black occupants of the *palenque*, Martínez's descriptions initially appear insensitive or indicative of racist and stereotyped imaginings of black Peruvians. The narrator describes the *cimarrón* population as "aquella mentada mala simiente, negra y amarga, engendro perverso de la bilis del demonio, que no albergaba en el corazón de piedra ninguna virtud (Martínez 39). Carazas believes that such descriptions are actually intended to invoke humor and sarcasm, that "no pueden tomarse en serio [porque] provocan hilaridad" (*Estudios* 136). In this way, Martínez's use of exaggerated and intense language regarding the *cimarrones* subtly mocks the white perspective that would describe them in such terms, perhaps highlighting how salient these characterizations of black populations are within the white Peruvian imaginary. It is the narrator's metaphorical description of *cimarrones* as the products of demonic bile that contributes to the representation of Afro-

Peruvians in gastronomic terms, literally transforming them into “gastric” beings birthed within the bowels of a demon. Tompkins’s notion of the black body as consumed or ingested figure is applicable within this context. Given how the freedom of the *cimarrones* implies escape from servitude, from the revisionist perspective of Martínez, the system of slavery represents the demonic bowels, while the *cimarrones* represent the scatological or emetic products of such a system.

The negative affect such characterizations invoke would have made sense within the colonial context of the novel’s setting, particularly in terms of the brigandage associated with *cimarronaje* during that time (Aguirre, *Breve historia* 137). The novel confirms this assertion when it reveals:

los tales cimarrones sin freno ni escrúpulos, cebados por el desbarajuste del libre albedrío, vivían no sólo en la holganza del libertinaje... sino que se dedicaban con esmerado ahínco a la torcida causa de la rapiña, especialmente contra los hacendados más prósperos de los alrededores de la llamada Ciudad de los Reyes. (Martínez 40)

Though *cimarrones* are characterized in a derisive manner, these descriptions reflect the perceptions of the Spanish and Peruvian-born white populations regarding *cimarrones* and blacks in general during the colonial period. The incorporation of these negative, yet dominant, perceptions provides a base upon which to juxtapose Martínez’s focus on re-viewing Peruvian history from Afro-Peruvian viewpoints.

The process of representing populations in terms of physical consumption or ingestion is not limited only to Afro-Peruvians, but also occurs with respect to dominant white figures. Carazas mentions that “los españoles aparecen descritos de manera burlesca y degradadora, con defectos físicos y vicios morales” (*Estudios* 136). One scene of *Crónica* makes a point of not

evading the description of violence exhibited by *cimarrón* bandits against surrounding landowners and former slave masters, describing them through imagery of consumption:

A veces el maltrato resultaba tan grave y sin misericordia, Señor, que los sujetos del brutal maltrato se quedaban muertos en el camino . . . así como le ocurrió . . . al encumbrado encomendero don Mariano Jesús de Ocharán, que cuando lo encontraron tirado en el camino ya era cadáver y hasta estaba convertido en carroña, porque había ocurrido que después que los cimarrones lo estropearon salvajemente, entonces habían bajado del cielo los coscontes cabeza colorada, en parvada hórrida, y empezaron a picotearle el mero culo, a sacarle por ahí la bazofia como a cualquier res muerta de aventazón. (40)

The scene effectively describes the dead landowners with images that invoke disgust, specifically the images of decomposition (*la carroña y los coscontes*), degradation and defecation (*el culo*), and waste (*la bazofia*). In doing this, Martínez seems to equalize the terms with which black/white, poor/rich, and oppressed/oppressor are defined, recasting the negative imagery typically associated with black populations onto that of the white body, converting it too into a consumable object. In other words, Martínez reveals the possibility of dehumanizing the white body within popular imagery in the same manner that has historically occurred with the black body.

Notably, the body of Don Mariano Jesús de Ocharán is consumed by *coscontes cabeza colorada*, or red-headed vultures, depicting the white body as consumable and inverting the typical dynamics of eat (white) or be eaten (black). Martínez's dehumanization of both white and black bodies and their subsequent conversion into gastronomic images reveals the simultaneous existence of both narratives within the Peruvian imaginary. These perspectives are bolstered by

the concomitant depiction of violence of *cimarrón* banditry and the dehumanizing conditions of colonial slavery. Yet the internal code of morality within the *cimarrón* community remains at odds with that of the normalized, increasingly nationalized morality of the dominant classes, revealing the early fracturing of Peruvian national identity.

In addition to the comparisons between a gastronomic imaginary and sociocultural dynamics, there also appears to exist a fusion of appetite, sexual desire, and morality. Tompkins discusses the intersections between sex and eating, stating:

sex, as an act that threatens the myth of racial purity, always haunts eating... In the libidinal economy in which the body stands for the house and house stands for the body, the mouth...is the space within which the porous and eroticized boundaries between the races are both traced and erased. (100)

According to Velázquez Castro, the fear of racial transgressions through sexual contact is a notable feature of the Peruvian social imaginary, even though there existed concurrent fascination with the body of the slave, perceived as a space of seduction, shock, and anguish against the possible sexual potency of this Othered body (65). Again, the parallel processes of disgust/rejection and desire/acceptance occur regarding the black body.

Within *Crónica*, this process is apparent with the violent rape committed by a group of *cimarrón* bandits against Doña María Isabel Saldívar de Osambela, wife of *limeño* landowner, Don Antonio de Osambela. According to the text, the rape committed by the group of bandits left Doña Isabel with the incurable vice of “infinite burning,” implying her sexual appetite remained constant and could not be sated. The text reads:

[Don Antonio] tuvo que resignarse a la desgracia y...tenía que buscarle a su mujer garañones que tuviesen las gónadas lustrosas y bien rayadas, si era posible con tinta

china, y, como complemento imprescindible, que se manejasen una buena trompa de cochino con un solo hueco y de calibre aventajado; pero además, el susodicho elegido por sus dones naturales debía poseer especial destreza en el arte cenagoso del camaleo y un sostenido empuje de chanco alunado a la hora del agárrate Catalina. (41-42)

The portrayed increase in Doña María's sexual appetite coincides with Velázquez Castro's assertion regarding the mythology of black male sexuality and the subsequent sexual "contamination" of white women by the former, both processes historically prevalent within white Peruvian imaginaries.

However, Martínez's narrator challenges the exaggerated mythology of black male sexuality, shifting the attention to Doña María's sexuality:

la duda si aquella ardencia desaforada no habría sido, desde el principio, la índole natural de doña María que ahora, gracias a la tropelía carnal de los cimarrones, ella podía satisfacer a sus anchas, sin tener que sujetar su deseo caudaloso con las trabas estériles de la bendita decencia. (43)

Taking into account what Velázquez Castro states with respect to popular Peruvian perceptions about the black body and its double role as seducer and terrorizer, the narrator's imposition of doubt concerning Doña María's sexual proclivities changes the focus from black male sexuality to white female sexuality. In other words, Martínez seems to correlate the two, revealing where race intersects with gender and unveils the subordinated position of both. If indeed Doña María's increased sexual libido is a repressed feature of her being, then it could not be a result of some fantastical force passed from black male body to white female body, but rather it is the initial, violent, and popularly-held notion of crossing racial and sexual boundaries that allows Doña María to express her sexual desires without reproach.

The violent nature of this racial and sexual transgression of boundaries, however, does reinforce the mythology of terror surrounding the black body, while simultaneously propagating the hypersexualized image of black masculinity. As Pablo Macera indicates, “la posición de la mujer en la sociedad colonial fue la de sujeto complementario y subordinado. Su representación... implicaba siempre una visión que combinaba el desprecio y el temor (qtd. in Velázquez Castro 66). The suggestion that Doña María’s sexual behavior could be an intrinsic, yet socially-hindered, personality trait reflects the fear of women’s sexual agency and an interrogation of social, gendered, and racial norms. As Velázquez Castro contends, “en la mentalidad hegemónica del período que estudiamos, el esclavo como la mujer ocupan el lugar del *otro*, esto es el espacio sobre el cual ejerce su poder el varón libre (amo o esposo)” (65).

As far as the combination of food imagery with sexuality, Martínez describes the sexual proclivities of Doña María that result from her sexual assault committed by the *cimarrones*. In addition, the descriptions of her sexual preferences include references to the notion of ingestion or consumption, as well as her own transformation into an edible object:

[A la doña María] le encantaba abandonarse desnuda...y abrir las piernas sin el mínimo pudor para que se le ventilara la fruta... Tan sólo con la mirada para no romper el encanto de la situación, pedía que...probaron de introducirle cadenciosamente en el túnel meloso, luego de atentárselo con los dedos y de pasarle la lengua...peras de agua, magos de chupar, las uvas del racimo que mentaba el aeda celeste Javier Solugeren y así, por lo consiguiente, cuanta cosa estuviese a disposición y al alcance del brazo en el momento del desenfreno...Se deshacía a la hora que la ensalivaban de pies a cabeza como si ella en persona fuese caramelo de coco. Entonces clamaba que la embarrasen con manteca, con cera de abeja, con dulce de guayaba, con melaza de caña, con licor de menta, con

mantequilla de cacao, con merengue sentimental, y que enseguida la lamieran ávidamente como a una golosina. (42).

This scene, like the rotting cadaver of Don Mariano mentioned above, transforms a member of the upper class into an edible artefact, surrounding them with other food images as well. Being covered in consumable substances and her desire to be “tasted” and eaten like candy, Doña María experiences the same gastronomic dehumanization as Don Mariano’s body and the *cimarrones* constituted of demonic bile. Distinct from the image of Don Mariano’s cadaver, however, the gastronomic association between whiteness and sexuality in this case has more to do with the attempt to question normalized narratives of the black, lascivious male and the white, decent woman. Doña María’s depicted desire to be consumed is portrayed alongside her desire to consume, to physically receive food in place of the phallus to satisfy her sexual appetite: she at once wants to “eat” and be “eaten.” In this way, the sexual act between her and the presumably black men with whom she was coupled by her husband, suggests a consumption of her partners as well. The sex act itself comes to reflect a type of consumption, an internalization of the Other from which she can satisfy her sexual desires.

As the process of racial formations affects those shaped by dominant narratives as well as those who create them, the interactions of race, sex, and gender also question the notion of the “good,” (read Christian) white male. Doña María’s husband, Don Antonio, is described as a good, Christian man, yet he participates in the sexual transgression of his wife outside the boundaries of marriage. Despite “resigning himself to disgrace,” Don Antonio seeks out potential sexual partners for his wife, realizing that he cannot satisfy her, himself, sexually. Once again, the fear of black male sexuality is highly visible here, particularly in that Don Antonio believes his wife’s sexual congress with black males to be disgraceful, yet unavoidable due to his

perceptions of black male sexual potency. Inadvertently, Don Antonio appears to affirm that his own sexuality, as a white male, is somehow diminished when compared to that of black men; Doña María's once repressed sexual agency now also trumps that of Don Antonio, further complicating the sexual dynamics and order of Martínez's portrayal of nineteenth-century Peru. Just as Don Antonio and Doña María reveal the internal conflict of their relation to both racial and sexual blackness, so too is this evident on the national scale, where there exists a necessity to include the black element, and a simultaneous rejection and contempt for said inclusion.

The metaphoric conversion of human flesh into comestible imagery is similarly notable with respect to black women's bodies. In the second chapter, military forces from Lima begin to combat the banditry of the *cimarrones*, led by general Don Martin Zamora. In one instance, the *cimarrones* had captured prisoners from these military forces. The text states that these soldiers "habían caído en la cautividad, atrapados con el señuelo infalible de la carne cruda" (70). This "raw flesh," or even "raw meat," refers to two attractive black women who were strategically placed along the path to the *palenque* of Huachipa in order to tempt soldiers who neared the community. Immediately we see a comparison of the women with food and sexual appetite, appearing as bait like the worm used to lure in a hungry fish. What's more, the women are depicted as gathering wild tomatillos during this façade, surrounding themselves with appetizing food and adding to their tempting appearance. The scene continues as follows:

Ellas permanecían entregadas al empeño de aquel supuesto quehacer, y la fruta, bañada en miel, exhibía su pernicioso delicia como si dicho matorral inhóspito fuera el paraíso terrenal de Adán y Eva. Entonces la tentación desató al lobo de la lascivia y media docena de soldados de la expedición punitiva, que vieron aquel manjar perdido en el monte de goce, cayeron igual que moscas en el cenagoso panal de miel. (70).

The implications for gastronomic imagery are numerous here. One is the repeated comparisons of parts of the female body with fruit, a trend that Martínez continues for both black and white female bodies. Another implication is the sexual appetite that the black women incite within the white soldiers. The mythology of black women, particularly enslaved black women during the nineteenth century, includes the notion that “ellas son objeto privilegiado del deseo sexual del varón de los sectores dominantes” (68). The soldiers see the women’s bodies and, in keeping with the social norms of the colonial era in Peru, believe they are free to satisfy their sexual desires through their black bodies. However, the attraction of the *fruta melada*, or the honeyed fruit that is represented by the black women in this scene, results in the soldiers’ capture. Their imprisonment provides an apt metaphor for the hypocrisy of Peruvian national discourse, where the conflicting extremes of attraction to and repulsion from the black body create perpetual instability within the *criollo* classes, ultimately leading to their own social and moral demise.

The representation of slaves in this novel is characterized primarily by the circumstances that surround one of the primary characters, Miguelillo Avilés. Miguelillo initially forms part of a group of slaves bought by Doña Epifanía, owner of the Cahuachi estate. The Cahuachi estate is composed of a house-estate, a ranch, a cotton plantation, and vineyards. Carazas notes that during the grape harvest, the Doña Epifanía’s Cahuachi estate barely produced *cachina*, a type of liquor produced from grapes that is consumed during the Carnival festivities (*Estudios* 137). The production, or lack there-of, of *cachina* becomes a preoccupation for Miguelillo, who believes that “la cachina podía ser casi como la divina gloria; pero se notaba, sin equívoco, que le faltaba cuerpo y, por lo consiguiente, también espíritu” (167). Miguelillo’s sentiments regarding the *cachina* are interesting in that they simultaneously personify the *cachina* and reflect the degraded lives of the slaves themselves. For him, *cachina* has a “weak body and waning spirit,” a fitting

description of Miguelillo's own condition as a slave during the early decades of the Republic. However, much like the hope and ability to thrive embodied by the autonomous *palenques*, Miguelillo believes that "del caldo de uvas también se podía elaborar un aguardiente mucho mejor que aquel calamaco infame que en otros lugares sacaban de la cañadulce" (168). Here, Miguelillo's hopes for a better way of extracting the greatest potential from *cachina* mirror those of an imagined better social condition that would foster the potential of blacks in Peru. The parallels made between the producible and consumable *cachina*, the economies of forced labor of African slaves and the "consumption" of that labor are made more salient by the narrator's reference to the "calamaco infame" that other plantations extracted from sugar cane. Seeing as how sugar cane was a major industry within neighboring Brazil and throughout the Caribbean, it is possible Martínez invokes the image of sugar cane to compare Miguelillo's vision of somehow ameliorating the lives of black Peruvians in order to avoid the rate of consumption of black bodies and their labor that continued in those sugar-producing regions.

Led by his own ambition, Miguelillo formulates a process by which he is able to produce a strong liquor that would later be called *pisco*, an alcoholic drink that would gain great importance within the national consciousness of Peru (Carazas, *Estudios* 137). His production of *pisco* grows in importance and, despite the financial backing of his master Doña Epifanía, Miguelillo's agency and ability to direct his own life becomes more apparent. Near the end of the novel, Miguelillo decides to "quedarse en la hacienda y desenvolverse en los oficios que más conoce, de manera que termina por influenciar la naciente república con sus valores, costumbres y cultura" (137). In other words, as Carazas asserts, "la novela de Martínez propone que el esclavo contribuye al inicio de la industria de la de la destilería en Nasca, aporte que lo integra a la historia del país" (*Estudios* 137). Miguelillo's depicted contribution to the national

gastronomy of Peru makes him part of the national narrative, according to Martínez, allowing a possible reinterpretation of the official account of Peruvian history. However, Miguelillo's success can also be seen as resulting from the consumption of the black body, as the process of *pisco* distillation is a product of his arduous labor, while still being supported by Doña Epifanía. It must be noted that Miguelillo gains fame and success *within* the system of slavery which meant that those of the dominant class ultimately reaped the most benefits from the forced work of black slaves.

Chapter 4: Texts of Transition: Afro-Peruvian Literary Agency in the early Twenty-First Century

The last twenty years of the twentieth century in Peru has resulted in significant cultural shifts regarding Afro-Peruvian presence and visibility within Peru's national consciousness. The majority of these changes have resulted from the increase of grassroots mobilization efforts of Afro-Peruvian communities, as well as greater acknowledgement and support of Afro-Peruvian cultural contributions to the larger, national conceptualization of *peruanidad*. With the affirming poetic, musical, and choreographic productions of the Santa Cruz family (Nicomedes and Victoria) preeminent within both Afro-Peruvian communities and white communities during the sixties and seventies, the scope of opportunities available to Afro-Peruvians expanded in the subsequent decades. Some of this expansion can be attributed to political changes instituted by the Revolutionary Government of the Armed Forces, led by General Juan Velasco Alvarado. During his tenure as President, General Alvarado sought to increase nationalist sentiment and appreciation for the historically under-represented cultures of indigenous and Afro-Peruvian communities of Peru. The Santa Cruz siblings were two highly-visible representatives of the effectiveness of these efforts, reaching a wider, national audience with the political support of the State; their popularization of *décima* poetic stylings and affirmation of black heritage and identity gave rise to popular interest in Afro-Peruvian culture. Peruvian authors such as Gregorio Martínez and Antonio Galvez Ronceros placed Afro-Peruvian characters, linguistic features, issues of historical and present marginalization, and realistic cultural features at the forefront of literary production.⁴²

In addition, self-identifying Afro-Peruvian authors and poets began producing literary output that provided a new, wider audience for the historically oral poetic styles of Afro-Peruvian communities. In addition to the aforementioned Santa Cruz family, poets and writers such as Juan Urcariegui Garcia, Álvaro Morales Charún, Máximo Torres Moreno, and Ernesto López Soto produced original, written poetic works more widely available to a national audience. Meanwhile, authors like José Campos Dávila and Delia Zamudio recorded testimonials that revealed accounts of the obstacles and joys experienced by black authors within Peru's borders. Afro-Peruvian musicians such as Susana Baca, Caitro Soto, and Eva Ayllón, since the seventies, have achieved both national and international acclaim for their work in representing traditional, Afro-Peruvian styles and advancing the Afro-Peruvian presence within the global black Diaspora.

This is not to say however, that such sociocultural and artistic shifts have been wholly positive, adequate, or complete. As history has shown, the legacies of colonialism and slavery leave enduring consequences on the social dynamics within national landscapes, creating lingering prejudices and psychological and ideological hierarchies. This fact has not eluded Peru. As Peruvian scholar Marcel Velázquez Castro explains, “[somos] una sociedad poscolonial producto de un violento, desigual y jerárquico cruce de múltiples comunidades[.]...Ni el criollismo ni el indigenismo, los dos movimientos ideológicos más significativos de los últimos ciento cincuenta años, fueron capaces de construir una nación que articule nuestra heterogénea y multicultural sociedad” (28). Despite the strides made by Afro-Peruvians in various spheres of Peru's national consciousness, the enduring repercussions of *mestizaje* ideology, racist stereotypes, and political underrepresentation have perpetuated the “invisibilization” of Afro-Peruvians, effectively diminishing the importance of state intervention in redressing the issues of

these historically marginalized communities. The invisibility of said communities has been exacerbated and, at times, propagated by the volatile political and social hemispheres of Peru during the last twenty years of the twentieth century. With Juan Velasco Alvarado's initiation of the Revolutionary Government of the Armed Forces in 1969, the guerrilla uprisings of the Shining Path, the Tupac Ámaru Revolutionary Movement, and the corruption-laden presidency of Alberto Fujimori during the 1990s, Peruvian sociopolitical volatility effectively drew attention away from Peru's most vulnerable populations.

This chapter will detail the ways in which the final two decades of the twentieth century prove crucial to the growing, yet largely stifled number of acknowledged Afro-Peruvian activists, artists, athletes, and writers whose work and accomplishments contribute towards making their communities more visible on the national scale. Although much of their work has been, at times, eclipsed by broader, sociopolitical concerns, the end of the twentieth century can be seen as a fertile period for the strengthening of unity amongst those who self-identify as Afro-Peruvians and, as a result, a more cohesive and concentrated movement towards vindicating the Afro-Peruvian community within Peru's national consciousness. The development of social organizations and political mobilizations among Afro-Peruvian groups also provided a means by which discriminatory practices, performative stereotypes, and discourses of invisibility are challenged. The growing Afro-Peruvian consciousness also finds its voice through literature, through both poetry and Afro-Peruvian themes in narrative works.

It would be in the early twenty-first century in which a true literary milestone would be achieved: the publication of *Malambo* (2001) by Lucia Charún-Illescas, the first novel published by a self-identified, Afro-Peruvian, woman author. The significance of this text cannot be understated: Charún-Illescas succeeds in publishing a novel that successfully acknowledges and

explores Afro-Peruvian history and culture; her self-identification as an Afro-Peruvian woman provides a critical, intersectional perspective informed by her experience as a woman and her proximity to Afro-Peruvian culture that signals a major change from previous authors who wrote from positions culturally apart from the communities that served as their subject material. In addition, the literary criticism garnered by the text has attracted national and international attention, which has lent an unprecedented level of visibility to Afro-Peruvian strategies for literary, cultural, and historical preservation. The focus of the analysis for the text itself will center on the connections of race, space, and place, and how those intersections echo Afro-Peruvian historical and current obstacles. I explore here how geographic places, social and discursive spaces, and racial dynamics interact and directly impact the lived lives of black Peruvians within the city of Lima and its neighboring communities. Charún-Illescas's use of culturally-reflective vocabulary and linguistic styles, religious iconography and symbolism, and a revisionist bent that vindicates the role of black Peruvians in Peru's national culture, provide the axes upon which space, place, and race converge in *Malambo* to represent a nuanced analysis of the most vulnerable communities of Peru's past and present.

Ebb and Flow of Afro-Peruvian Visibility

With the Military Revolution of Peru, led by Juan Velasco Alvarado, Peru's sociocultural context shifted towards a more ostensible acknowledgement of the Afro-Peruvian presence. This shift was due in large part to the efforts and cultural contributions of the Santa Cruz siblings (Victoria and Nicomedes) and their family, the rise in prominence of authors like Gregorio Martínez and Antonio Galvez Ronceros, and the concurrent cultural movements within Afro-diaspora communities throughout the Americas, namely the Civil Rights and Black Power

Movements in the United States and Afro-Brazilian movements, like the Movimento Negro Unificado Contra a Discriminação Racial. However, the strengthening of leftist guerrilla movements like the Sendero Luminoso (The Shining Path) and the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement during the 1970s and 1980s again thrust the social and cultural needs of a long-neglected community to the side, as the post-military government led by Fernando Belaúnde Terry, and later Alan García, confronted terrorism against a backdrop of social and economic instability. If the violence of these insurgent groups caused instability and strife amongst Peru's populace, the impact was felt two-fold by Peru's black communities in that their struggle for a more substantive solution to their long-ignored economic and educational needs would be drowned out by national political unrest.

This is not to say that there would not be movements, social and political actions taken by Afro-Peruvians themselves, sometimes in conjunction with other marginalized communities within Peru's borders. In an analysis of Peru's co-optation, or lack thereof, of black political mobilizations for the advancement of hegemonic, multiculturalist state policies and ideologies, Shane Greene discusses how despite the emergence of various political and social movements that arose during the last two decades of the twentieth century, any meaningful political or social action has been minimal, with the Peruvian state often opting to not capitalize on the strides of Afro-Peruvian activists due to continued dismissal of Afro-Peruvian needs and a willing disavowal of Afro-Peruvian political or legal capital ("Does Still" 152). One of the first activist organizations, founded in 1986 as the *Movimiento Negro Francisco Congo* (later changed to the *Movimiento Nacional Afroperuano Francisco Congo*), began as a mobilization of Afro-Peruvian intellectuals who sought to expand upon the black cultural revival of the sixties and seventies to

include political and legal changes that could significantly improve the lives of Afro-Peruvian communities (153).

Greene notes how at various points during its history the MNAFC inspired, and attempted to join forces with, other burgeoning social movements like the *Asociación Negra de Defensa y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos* (ASONEDH), the *Centro de Desarrollo Étnico* (CEDET), *LUNDU Centro de Estudios y Promoción Afroperuanos*, and later, the state-run entity of the *Instituto Nacional de Desarrollo de los Pueblos Andinos, Amazónicos y Afroperunos* (INDEPA).⁴³ The latter institution is representative of attempts by the Peruvian government to include Peru's long forgotten and marginalized communities. However, as Greene deftly explains, such institutions and accompanying actions commonly included Afro-Peruvians as an afterthought, focusing instead, and still necessarily, on the plight of Peru's indigenous majority.

The dismissal of Afro-Peruvian social or political import is evident from the beginnings of INDEPA. Originally, "the 'A' in INDEPA's acronym was originally intended for Andeans and Amazonians, and *explicitly not* for Afro-Peruvians...Including Afro-Peruvians in the multicultural initiative never crossed anyone's mind. In fact, one must assume that they were intentionally excluded" (Greene "Does Still" 159). Despite the common goals of addressing and alleviating the systemic racism faced by Afro-Peruvians at the cultural, legal, educational, and political levels, concrete benefits would be few and minimally effective. Greene points out that factors that have led to the minimal progress of these movements is due in small part to internal conflicts within and between the organizations themselves, and in large part to lack of interest or concern by Peru's state entities of the issues raised by Afro-Peruvian activists; for representatives of the Peruvian state, Afro-Peruvian issues were not important enough to address,

nor did Afro-Peruvians represent enough social or political clout to be used to further the nation's symbolic and rhetorical gestures of multiculturalism, vindication, or inclusion.

Alluded to above, Afro-Peruvian communities have historically found themselves informally competing with forms of redress afforded to Peru's indigenous populations, often being "overlooked" during the government's more multiculturalist solutions to historical wrongs and persistent economic exploitation. Greene comments how "the recent multicultural policies taking place in Peru...make it clear that the long-standing *problema del indio* (Indian problem) historically overshadows black politics in Peru" ("Doest Still" 166). It must also be noted that this cultural focus on Peru's Andean image has eclipsed Peru's ethnic minorities, including Afro-Peruvians and Asian-Peruvians, such as the Nikkei communities comprised of Japanese immigrants and their descendants. Greene continues by noting how, unlike what has happened with black Peruvian populations, Peru's indigenous populations have been co-opted symbolically, becoming the symbol of national identity and being assumed as the de facto historical and cultural origins of *all* Peruvians. Meanwhile, very much similar to the situation of black Peruvians, the real needs and concerns of Peru's indigenous communities are largely ignored or only symbolically resolved. This selective and oscillating process of "making (in)visible" clarifies the relatively stagnant nature of Afro-Peruvian sociopolitical gains in Peru: national action has not been taken to assist, benefit or vindicate black Peruvians in a real-world sense because (1) external economic or developmental interests or influences have not necessitated such actions and/or (2) the inclusion of Afro-Peruvians' concerns or needs are assumed as included under the nation's multicultural initiatives or as concomitant with the concerns and needs of the indigenous populations. Organizations originally founded as activist or

developmental organizations, such as INDEPA, can be considered fairly innocuous as vehicles of concrete or material change in Peru.

The state's disinterest in concrete redresses of historical abuses, unequal educational and professional opportunities and outcomes, and the casual racism of everyday interactions coincided with Peru's tumultuous end of the twentieth century, marked by the Shining Path (*Sendero Luminoso*) insurgencies through the 1980s and 1990s, and the corruption that came to be associated with the Peruvian government under Alberto Fujimori. Though the rise and fall of the Shining Path will not be covered in great detail here, it is necessary to comment on how its presence and actions stifled the few gains being made by black Peruvians on the national stage in terms of socioeconomic redress, as well as the role that individual Afro-Peruvians played in the consolidation of political ideologies and optics that would affect how Alberto Fujimori's regime would engage in its abusive and authoritarian tactics in its struggle against the Shining Path. Regarding the hampering of Afro-Peruvian gains in visibility, the Shining Path insurgency that began in 1980 turned much of the government's resources towards combating this subversive threat, as the socialist bent of the Shining Path attracted the attention and support of a variety of populations who were both dispossessed of power and resources by the neoliberal policies of the government or disenchanted with the historical and actual actions of both local and national political actors (Soifer, 145).

Whereas the conflict is typically characterized in restrictive binaries such as left-wing vs. right-wing, socialism vs. capitalism, and poor vs. wealthy (or at least middle class), the intersections of race, gender, class, and politics were much more complex and much more prominent than has been noted in subsequent studies of the long "Dirty War" between the Peruvian State and the Shining Path insurgents. A particularly important figure during this

conflict is that of María Elena Moyano, an Afro-Peruvian, community activist and organizer whose commitment to non-violence and denunciation of the violent tactics employed by both the Shining Path and Fujimori led to her brutal assassination at the hands of the former in 1992. Despite her work for the poorer populations of Peru, particularly her hometown of Villa El Salvador, her perspective and life has been used to further the sociopolitical agendas of the extreme ends of the ideological spectrum. In his analysis of how the memory is influenced by the “spin” or perspective of a writer’s ideology, Daniel Cozart confirms that “the memory of Moyano’s life and traumatic death has been manipulated through the perspectives of the Fujimori right-wing government, the Shining Path, feminists, and the poor” (121). This results in the transformation of Moyano’s life into a symbolic and political tool, an image and example that could be employed by those who championed the causes of the poor and understood the plight of the poor, yet justified violent ends as a means for securing material change. Equally, those on the political right, who denounced the violence of the left-wing insurgents upon activists of the poor like Moyano, would still espouse neoliberal policies that would be detrimental to all of Peru’s citizenry in the long-run.

The imbuelement of María Elena Moyano’s memory with differing political agendas and social valences is not unlike what Peru’s indigenous communities have experienced during their long history of marginalization and appropriation, their history, culture, and image coopted by state institutions to project a national, indigenous (read Incan) history. Interestingly enough, Moyano’s memory was not initially utilized as much for her identity as an Afro-Peruvian woman, but rather more explicitly for her role as an advocate for the poor, humanist social change, and resources for mothers and their children (Greene, “Does Still” 162).⁴⁴ Given the economic obstacles faced by Afro-Peruvians, the work of Moyano portrays an understanding of

the intersections of socioeconomic outcomes and race, particularly as it applies for Peru's historically marginalized ethnic groups. Historically speaking, Afro-Peruvians have been socioeconomically disadvantaged in comparison to their white/mestizo peers in terms of professional opportunities, social mobility, and educational access, resulting in a "color line" in the division of labor (Stokes, 198). The job opportunities that would result frequently for Afro-Peruvians tended to be less elite, less socially prestigious, and less financially lucrative than those accessible to Peru's white and mestizo groups (197). This trend continued through the 1980's during the majority of Moyano's activism and community engagement, and even into the twenty-first century, with studies showing that darker skin color and self-identification as a historically marginalized ethnicity (indigenous or black) correspond to social stagnation and socioeconomic disadvantages (Sulmont and Callirgos, 168).

It would be after her death that her legacy would be appropriated by her own sister, congresswoman Martha Moyano Delgado, who justified her pro-Fujimori stance through the memory of the murder of her sister by the Shining Path. Neither the factors nor the intersections of race and gender would be highlighted or implemented by Moyano Delgado until after the Peruvian state's largely superficial multiculturalist trajectory began to surge under the post-Fujimori administrations of Alejandro Toledo and Alan García. Moyano Delgado's public self-identification with the Afro-Peruvian community cautiously emerged alongside Peru's symbolic redresses of historical wrongs, again challenging the more humanist legacy that her sister championed. Still, Moyano Delgado's use of racialized memory and racial identity as a tool cannot be fully condemned, as her progression through Peruvian politics as an Afro-Peruvian politician takes place during a time in which Afro-Peruvian communities and culture had been eclipsed, moved to the periphery of sociopolitical concern, in the shadow of the Sendero

Luminoso insurgency. After the defeat of Sendero Luminoso by the Fujimori administration, her connection with the Afro-Peruvian community was supported by her push for the recognition of Afro-Peruvian cultural influence and figures within the Peruvian state.

Bolstered by the embrace of a multiculturalist rhetoric in recognizing Peru as a multi-ethnic state, a few of her important initiatives have garnered national attention and implementation: in 2006, legislation was passed to create Afro-Peruvian Culture Day, celebrated on June 4th, the birthday of renowned folklorist, poet, and cultural figure Nicomedes Santa Cruz; and in 2009, a resolution was passed that offered a formal apology to the Afro-Peruvian community for historic exclusion and racism (Greene “Does Still” 164). Despite seemingly strong visual steps forward in the visibility of Afro-Peruvians, the socioeconomic hurdles and political exclusion faced by their communities are rarely addressed in the political arena, including in the committees of which Moyano Delgado forms part in Peru’s Congress. Many of her attempts to advocate on behalf of Afro-Peruvian issues have been ignored or dismissed, alternately to attend to the needs of Peru’s various indigenous communities or out of an outright dismissal or refusal to entertain the need to act on the behalf of Afro-Peruvians (Greene, “Todos somos” 292).⁴⁵

The foundational work of Afro-Peruvian advocates and activists throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries has been paramount to increasing the Peruvian government’s involvement in the recognition of black communities and the obstacles they face on daily basis. However, it is the continued marginalization, inaction, and lack of substantive involvement by said government that perpetuates less educational opportunities, socioeconomic mobility and professional opportunities for Afro-Peruvians well into the current twenty-first century. Charún-Illescas’s *Malambo* is a testament to the continuing struggle of Afro-Peruvians, particularly

Afro-Peruvian women, for equal treatment and consideration on a national level. The physical publication of the text as the first novel published by a self-identifying Afro-Peruvian woman author, appearing at the beginning of the twenty-first century, is very telling when considering the cultural and national impact of the contributions of Afro-Peruvian musicians, artists, and poets, as well as the growing appearance of Afro-Peruvian characters in Peruvian literature, throughout the twentieth century.

Instead of focusing on the present-day milieu in which black people of Peru find themselves, Charún-Illescas instead builds her novel upon Peru's colonial history; the setting providing a fertile ground for a reinterpretation of said history through the voices and perspectives of black protagonists and the author herself. Though much of the story arc revolves around a black, male protagonist, the driving force behind the novel is the presence of black women and their connections and interactions with other characters and spaces, particularly the transformations that their presences enact upon masculine-dominated spaces; their actions and motivations provide a new focal point in the revisioning of Peru's colonial past. Elements of the setting also become characters of the novel whose symbolic significance connects people (both real and fictional) with socio-politically charged places (Malambo, Lima) in Peru. The web of interactions between racially-marked Peruvians and the valences that have become historically and socially tied to urban and marginal space in Peru allow for an exploration of how sites like Malambo and Lima can be read as anatomical maps: simultaneously separate bodies and parts of a corporeal whole that reveal how racially-charged spaces are generated, both in Peru's colonial past and in its rhetorically multicultural present. The following analysis will dissect Charún-Illescas's use of geographic, communal, and corporeal sites as interrogations of racial and

sociopolitical valences in Peru's colonial past and how such intersections provide commentary on Peru's modern-day racial climate.

Spatial Formation in *Malambo*

Martha Ojeda notes how historical novels of Latin America tend to detail aspects of official history while questioning that version of history from the perspectives of those lived experiences that have been colored by their historical relegation at the margins of society (139). *Malambo* is no exception. The novel challenges the idea of history being written by the victor or the dominant culture by privileging the perspectives and actions of Peru's marginalized communities. Despite the novel's focus on black communities, Charún-Illescas does not ignore the historical negotiations of survival that exist between said community, the marginalized indigenous majority, and religious minorities such as those of the Jewish faith. This change in perspective allows for a reinterpretation and reassessment of Peru's history, an overhaul of popularly-held notions about the significance of historical and social events that constitute Peru as a nation. In doing so, Charún-Illescas challenges official accounts and brings the "invisibilized" experiences of Afro-Peruvians during the colonial past to the fore.

What's more, Charún-Illescas's novel re-centers the locus of cultural importance from the physical and cultural space of Lima to that of Malambo, a neighboring community of black peoples. Lima, through colonial and modern times has been viewed as the center of Peruvian social and cultural life. Communities that existed on the borders of Lima, for example, San Lázaro, the historical parish of the Malambo community, were regarded as exterior and culturally inferior to the grandeur of the "City of the Kings." Malambo, itself was a real community of black and indigenous peoples that existed along the shores of the Rímac River

(Romero 169). The Malambo community is known for being a town of slaves and freed individuals who, much like the characters of Charún-Illescas's novel, developed a community that worked together to achieve independence and re-form the identities that had been fragmented and stolen during Peru's involvement in the slave trade (Panfichi, 141-42). Those areas on the outskirts comprised what Martha Ojeda refers to as "cartographies of marginalization," in that these communities reflected the colonial dynamics of race and class in geographic terms (129). Each region of Peru becomes sectioned off and associated with a sociocultural value, colored by colonial discourses of racial and economic hierarchies of power.

In his analysis of how slaves were able to employ writing to negotiate their social and symbolic position in Peruvian society, José Ramón Jouve Martín describes how during the mid-seventeenth century, Lima's urban layout was employed by colonial elites to carve Peru's urban center of Lima into areas linked to class, social status, and race:

Como otros asentamientos levantados por los españoles en América, la ciudad de los Reyes [Lima] fue fundada en torno a una plaza central alrededor de la cual se situaron las instituciones civiles y religiosas más importantes de la colonia. A partir de dicha plaza se proyectaron el resto de calles e intersecciones de la ciudad.... Las cuadras inmediatamente adyacentes a la plaza fueron ocupadas por los principales miembros de la élite colonial, mientras que los individuos de condición más humilde – y entre ellos negros, indios y mestizo – ocuparon los límites del incipiente casco urbano, dedicados fundamentalmente a labores agrícolas y de servicio a los europeos radicados en el centro. (25-26)

Jouve Martín continues, noting how as the city's population expanded, particularly with the under-acknowledged near-majority of the black population relative to Spanish colonists, these

areas defined hierarchically by racial and ethnic difference expanded as well, creating new spaces farther from city's center that remained only loosely associated with Peru's colonial elite, due to the daily interactions that were now necessary due to the crowding city. However, the periphery of the city center would still be comprised of primarily black and indigenous peoples, resulting in new communities alongside, or on the other side, of the bordering Rímac River (26). The Rímac River, then, provided a physical demarcation within the Peru as a place, dividing socially-defined spaces of difference based on phenotypic and economic markers. The waterway, which literally carves its way between historical Lima and Malambo, serves as simultaneous divider and point of connection between the two places. As Cecilia Galzio confirms, the Rímac acts as a topographical divider that exposes the cultural and ideological binaries represented by both places (299).⁴⁶ At the same time, though an Afro-Peruvian community like Malambo might be regarded as the periphery in relation to the urban center of Lima, Charún-Illescas's re-centers Malambo to the fore and reveals a space that is re-appropriated and restructured to foster cultural practices and a communal identity for freed, enslaved, and *cimarrón* black people (Ojeda, 132).

Writing against the representation of places of cultural blackness as sites of decadence, poverty, and relative-inferiority, Charún-Illescas illustrates how black communities encapsulate a spectrum of lived experiences and strategies for black cultural survival.⁴⁷ In other words, the author explores the bad with the good, the oppressive and squalid conditions of Malambo alongside the communal, affirmative, and optimistic aspects that make Malambo a cohesive space of black social resilience and radical opposition to the oppressive dynamics of slavery and white sociopolitical control.⁴⁸ As Galzio remarks, "...en Malambo la esclavitud se transfigura en libertad a través de la recuperación de la memoria cultural y del consciente dominio de la propia peculiaridad" (301). It is through the place of Malambo that black Peruvians' capacity for self-

realization and agency can be fostered through the communal relationships of its residents within, and their marginalized, yet inevitably connected existence with that of the dominant forces without.⁴⁹ This geographic place of historic roots, for Charún-Illescas, is a literary space of re-appropriation and resistance, a unique space where the author is able to recreate lost and marginalized voices and reinterpret a culturally-informed, Afro-Peruvian history and identity (Ojeda 132).

Malambo becomes more than just a community, it is a living space personified by its relative location to Lima, its topographical features, and its day-to-day “interactions” with its residents. As mentioned above, Malambo’s peripheral nature next to, yet apart from Lima, provides a physical mapping of the racial dynamics of colonial-era Peru; just as the various peoples and cultures of Malambo and Lima interact, so too does a personified Malambo along Lima’s periphery. Malambo is represented as a living space that interacts with its people within its boundaries, as well as with those who live in Lima’s urban center. The role of the Rímac is introduced in anthropomorphic terms: “In Malambo, the Rímac proudly rubs elbows with the freedmen, the *cimarrones*, and the smuggled slaves who listen to it with suspicion but learn to understand its knack of speech” (2004, 4). The river’s capacity to “speak” affords it an important role, namely as a means of communication between black peoples both within and outside of Malambo (the broader city center of Lima). The text describes how the Rímac’s waters are channeled through Lima via canals and pipes, becoming slimmer and contorted, yet never ceasing to “gossip” or “whisper” the happenings that occur throughout the region.⁵⁰

The river, nicknamed the “Talking River” becomes a character in the text, performing the role of messenger or intermediary between the protagonists; the messages it conveys and its role in conveying them proves to be integral to the progression of the plot. Yet it is of utmost

importance to the black population of Malambo, where it serves a communal link between the people of various ethnic, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds that were historically compounded into and represented by the singular notion of *lo africano*, or *africanness*. The psychological and communal work of creating and maintaining ties that connected black peoples with their ethnic or geographic origins is well-documented in Peru's historiography, as well as in the text with the mention of the *cofradías*, or brotherhoods established for mutual assistance among slaves and freedmen, and the various African ethnic groups mentioned by name through the text (e.g., Angolas, Carabalíes, Congos, Lucumíes, Mandingas, Minas). In the text, the river represents connection, both interpersonal, communal, and spiritual. Various characters on more than one occasion interact with the Rímac: receiving reports of the failing health of a politician's ailing wife, hearing news of upcoming slave auctions to be held nearby, and refusing to speak aloud for fear of being betrayed by the river's gossip (27, 88, 159).

The river's waters communicate information about and between the living, but also connect the living, physical world with the spiritual realm. The novel's protagonist, Tomasón Ballumbrosio, recalls a famous drummer named Bernabé who had been executed and mutilated for poisoning his master. However, Tomasón continues to hear Bernabé's amputated hands make the drums "speak" and "groan," implying Bernabé's skill in using musical rhythms as a form of communication. The messages encoded within were then repeated by the Rímac in the form of songs, to be interpreted by those within the living black community of Malambo (88). Charún-Illescas invokes the use of playing drums as a form of communication alongside the active role the river plays in the minds of the people of Malambo to emphasize the Rímac's role as a living medium by which the community, beyond the limits of time and space, transmits and shares information.

The personification of the Rímac River contributes to the notion of Malambo as a *place* that transforms into a living *space*, an area that derives its significance and importance from the people who reside there and their concomitant interactions. Scholar Michel de Certeau suggests that places become spaces and acquire symbolic and experienced significance through the everyday movements, actions, and interactions of the people who populate them (98). The Rímac River, as a geographical feature of nature, becomes imbued with both with symbolic and spatial meaning, serving as a dividing force employed by Lima's elite to delineate racial and economic sectors, as well as a uniting force among Lima's black population in its perception as a communicative network and connection to ancestral beliefs and traditions. It is within this tension between two very different cultural perspectives that the Rímac becomes a living character in the novel. There are instances of white characters who are hesitant to speak aloud for fear of being overheard and becoming another of the river's rumors, and African slaves who are unable to discern the river's "accent" after being brought to Peru (77,159).

Building upon Certeau's assertion regarding how a space is created by the people who interact with specific places, Charún-Illescas seems to take this notion a step further highlighting the supernaturally interactive role the Rímac plays in the everyday lives of the residents of metropolitan Lima. Scholar Aida Heredia details how *Malambo* begins with a symbolic depiction of the Spanish conquest of the Americas alongside the creation myths of Yoruba cosmology, linking black peoples residing in the colonized Americas through "this transatlantic memory...as an episteme whose powerful dynamic illuminates the life of black individuals in a world dominated by the ideology of white superiority" (80). The Rímac, as an active, "living" participant within the text seems to reveal a dual purpose by Charún-Illescas: the elevation of African religious beliefs and practices in contrast to Peru's historical obliteration of Afro-

Peruvian history and traditions, and the employment of African cosmologies, with their attention to the connectedness of the physical and spiritual worlds, as the foundation through which black peoples of Peru form strategies for living and surviving in a hierarchical and oppressive society. In other words, the physical Rímac river plays multiple roles in the text, alternately dividing and connecting Malambo with Lima's urban center, and serving as a communal connection of the Diasporic population in Malambo. It's role in the novel is also an active and spiritual one that provides a connection between the physical and the spiritual, the living with the ancestral, and the present with the past.⁵¹ Much like Yoruba creation mythologies, the Rímac takes on a divine, almost omnipresent role as it witnesses the lives of the residents, participates and interferes in the affairs of its surrounding people, and provides a constant connection between the physical, lived present, and the spiritual, ancestral past.

The creation of space and its representation as a fluid, at times, living, construct presents itself through the various strategies for physical, emotional, and spiritual survival that are employed by both black and brown characters that reside in or interact with Malambo as a place of unity. The novel's protagonist, Tomasón, is renowned in both white and black social spheres as a talented artist, frequently commissioned to paint religious paintings for his former master, the marquis Ballumbrosio, and the African *cofradías* (brotherhoods). After escaping slavery and physical bonds of his former master, he escapes to Malambo.

The home he inhabits becomes a space of survival and resistance, notably through the medium of *polvillo prieto*, or dark dust, that covers every inch of his residence. However, the dust becomes a tool of artistic expression for Tomasón, as it is incorporated into works of art painted along the walls of his home, typically reflecting his dreams and syncretic representations of Yoruba and Catholic cosmologies. The dust is a feature of the home, producing tangible

effects on visitors. Upon his first meeting of Francisco Parra and his daughter, Pancha, who would later become Tomásón's adopted ward, the dust becomes a supporting character in their acquaintance:

Tomásón increases the flame in the oil lamp, which enlarges Pancha's shadow on the walls and antiquated ceiling. The dark dust teases the girl from each corner, flirting with her nose which suddenly sparkles in front of the double smile of her surprised eyes. And Tomásón? He loves every minute of it! Thrilled and happy that the girl is pleased with the humble miracle that coats every rag, every flake of wall, every dish and every painting of a prudish saint (23).

Here, though dust is commonly regarded as fragments of something once useful, Tomásón repurposes this dark dust and creates with it works of art. Continuing with the idea of the spiritual or divine becoming imbued to natural features, the dust also takes on its own brilliance and creates a home that becomes alive in the imagination of its visitors. I would argue that the dark dust of Tomásón's home symbolically reflects the lives of the dark-skinned people who inhabit Malambo: this community is inhabited by people who have been used and fragmented, pieces of their histories, cultures, and memories, who together are able to transform said community into a site of beauty, belonging, shared identity, and resistance.

In her critique of Charún-Illescas's use of Yoruba imagery and cosmology as tropes to highlight African histories, Heredia asserts that this strategy ultimately maintains the dominant, hegemonic Catholic ideology as the principal unifying construct among black peoples in Malambo. For Heredia, the author uses the dark dust to "manipulate sacred expressions of Yoruba imagination in order to embellish her fictional writing" (81). Her critique, however, focuses on the stylistic use of Yoruba cosmology throughout the novel, rather than its potentially

political or liberatory significance for black Peruvians as a whole. I would contend that the incorporation of a dark medium in the reproduction and, more importantly, the modification of religious iconographies by Tomasón disturbs the status quo of Catholic hegemony in colonial Peru. Tomasón's infuses Yoruba traditions and imagery into his commissioned paintings, providing a syncretic manifestation of both Yoruba and Catholic ideologies. Heredia concurs with this evaluation, yet asserts that this syncretism of Catholic and Yoruba imagery functions to promote a sense of "unity," principally driven by Catholic notions of unity through the image of Christ. The calls for black unity within the novel are chiefly undergirded by a Christian sense of reconciliation between different ethnicities and race, where Christian ideology plays the principal role of uniting the various ethnic and national backgrounds of Peru's populace, while the depiction of Yoruba cosmology is invoked to promote a "utopian conceptualization of freedom for black individuals." In this way, black Peruvians remained physically enslaved, yet spiritually free. (84). Though I concur with Heredia's assessment of Yoruba cosmology being used aesthetically, rather than for political and social vindication, I find that the strength of Charún-Illescas employment of Yoruba traditions and imagery is in its subtle usurpation of Catholic imagery and ideology in the psyches of individual black characters within the novel.

On the whole, the novel suggests a repositioning of perspective, of who is able to tell the story of Peru's colonial past. Contrary to Heredia's reading of the text, the novel is not an attempt to propose that enslaved and free black Peruvians of colonial Peru incorporated ancestral memory into a syncretic tradition with Catholicism for the purpose of mobilizing the masses towards political and legal freedom. Instead, the syncretism between Catholic and Yoruba traditions functions, as Chantell Smith Limerick affirms:

...as a valorization of the origins of cultural practices no longer associated with Africanness. [Lucía Charún-Illescas] represents them as a way to reconnect with a way of life from which black people were violently separated, as well as a way to figure black culture as a part of Peruvian national identity at large” (170).

I would argue that the contradictions noted by Heredia regarding the preeminence of the Catholic tradition against that of the protagonists’ Yoruba origins serve to depict the tensions inherent in one’s psychic struggle between interior and exterior, largely hegemonic, forces.

If anything, the depiction of Catholicism as a unifying element between the various black groups in seventeenth-century Peru provides the social space upon which black Peruvian creative and spiritual energies intertwine and produce new, syncretic forms of identity, belonging, and resistance. As Limerick notes, Tomásón’s painting of a black Crucified Christ, a reference by Charún-Illescas to the historical and present *Señor de los Milagros*, an image of the Christ figure on the walls of a Liman *cofradía*, holds symbolic and religious importance to the black members of the Malambo community, being a figure that is represented simultaneously as black and divine in the Catholic sense. What is key here is that Tomásón’s original inspiration for painting the syncretic figure was the visit by the spirit of recently departed friend, Juanillo Alarcón, who asked Tomásón why he had not yet painted a figure from the Yoruba traditions, one which would recall the pantheon of deities that reigned in the minds of Peru’s black population.⁵² This “call to action” from the spiritual world inspires Tomásón to imbue his painting with black skin, with the intention of connecting black Peruvians with their ancestral, religious, and ethnic histories.

Regarding the actual *Señor de los Milagros* in Lima, Aldo Panfichi writes of the African origins of the painting and its gradual incorporation into Peruvian national identity and consciousness. He confirms that the *Señor de los Milagros* has inspired “un culto religioso de

origen negro, que paulatinamente se institucionaliza y gana otros grupos étnicos y sociales, hasta convertirse en el mayor culto religioso del país (144). Like her character, Tomasón, Charún-Illescas has reconnected present-day symbols and images with their cosmological and historical origins, reflecting the ability of syncretism to be wielded as a tool in making that which has been made invisible, visible.

Corporeal Mapping of Peruvian Racial Projects

As detailed above, the formations of symbolic and physical spaces are literally and figuratively colored by race: the Rímac River signifies a simultaneous connector and divider between the white cultural sphere of Lima and the black and indigenous cultural communities of Malambo. Between those differing spaces are bridges of interaction, mutual influence, appropriation, and blending, performed in varying capacities by the personified attributes linked to the river itself. However, in a more tangible sense, these crossings between these different, yet connected cultural worlds might better be analyzed through the cross-cultural and intersecting identities of *Malambo*, as well as the symbolic valences these interactions carry when considering the mutual development of racialized identities and conceptualizations of racial difference. Beyond the phenotypical differences that have historically been used to mark racialized and gendered bodies, including skin complexion, size and shape of various body parts, and hair type, *Malambo* explores how the cultural load of these differences are, at times, physically demarcated on the flesh by adversarial forces; Charún-Illescas uses the bodies of her characters, both white and black, as canvasses upon which the consequences of racism and marginalization can be mapped.

To explore this, the focus turns to the characters that inhabit shared spaces with, or enter the space of, Manuel De la Piedra, a wealthy businessman of Portuguese-descent who quickly self-identifies as a Liman *criollo* by virtue of his successful business dealings and ownership of a boarding house within the city's center. Before delving into the mapping of marginalizing processes on the physical body, it is necessary to explore the construction of De la Piedra's persona and ethnic identity, which will have the most direct effects on the sense of corporeal wholeness and cultural belonging of a number of the novel's most prominent characters.

The novel presents De la Piedra as one of the more notable foils to Tomasón Ballumbrosio's protagonist role, acting as an example of white economic and social dominance, corruption, and exploitation of marginalized bodies and populations: his first appearance in the novel reveals his contempt for the changing attitudes regarding the African Slave Trade, preferring the success of his profits over the growing resistance to the then-legal status of slavery (38); when dealing with business partners, like the prominent miller, Jerónimo Melgarejo, his business acumen tends to rely heavily on social and religious unrest, manipulation, the misfortune of competitors, and illegal dealings (39, 80); though planning to marry a widow, Catalina Ronceros, to gain control her inherited property, he continues a sexual relationship with Altagracia Maravillas, an enslaved house servant; he frequently bribes his other house servant, Candelaria Lobatón, to leave the house on errands in order to give him and Altagracia privacy, as well as guarantee that Altagracia's enslaved husband, Nazario Briche, the silent and mysterious chauffeur of De la Piedra, has not returned to catch them in the act.

For all intents and purposes, De la Piedra becomes the embodiment of the possible abuses of power and dominance that accompany the assumption of a *criollo* identity. The word "assumption" is key here, as the name and identity of De la Piedra are *fashioned*, creations of his

own design upon arrival in Lima.⁵³ Here we see a marked distinction between current conceptualizations of *race*, as opposed to colonial considerations of one's *casta*. In her analysis of African and indigenous communities in the northern regions of Peru, Rachel O'Toole notes an important distinction between *casta* and race during Peru's colonial period, noting how:

Casta did the work of race. Casta articulated a colonial construction of difference and differential power relations. In this way, casta worked like race when Spanish colonial officials and slaveholders constructed and reconstructed categories to separate Andeans and Africans from each other and from Spaniards (164).

De la Piedra, then, is able to capitalize on both the networking related to his prowess as a businessman, as well as his Portuguese (read European) origins in order to claim both common cultural connections with Lima's Spanish and *criollo* upper class, while distinguishing himself from Peru's historically marginalized groups. In fact, the text itself confirms that De la Piedra's initial commercialization and sale of gall stones he had packed with him upon his arrival in Lima allowed him to "baptize" himself anew within Lima (37). De la Piedra's "rebirth" harkens back to one of the original conceptualizations of the term *criollo* which is "most likely derived from a Latin root...*creare*, to make, to create, that is, something new" and which gradually came to "designate not only slaves of African descent but also settlers of European ancestry born in the Americas" (Bauer and Mazzoti 3-4).

It is important to note that De la Piedra's story of self-styled transformation from mysterious outsider to prominent Liman *criollo* is placed alongside, but in contradistinction to, the active anti-Semitism and anti-blackness he himself expresses during his first appearances in the novel. In an analysis of Felipe Pardo y Aliaga's *Frutos de la educación*, Ruth Hill traces the origins of nineteenth-century Peruvian negrophobia and judeophobia into Peru's colonial past,

precisely during the seventeenth-century setting of *Malambo*.⁵⁴ Hill affirms that the figures of black and Jewish agents provided a source of fear and anxiety in the minds of Peru's elite *criollos*, notably due to the majority held by the black population in Lima during the colonial period, as well as stereotypes of "foreign" or "outside" Jewish agents perpetuating economic disenfranchisement upon those deemed "national" or "native" (270).

De la Piedra participates in outward expressions, or performances, of his fashioned *criollo* identity as a way to further define and distance his existence in contrast to that of black Peruvians; if we read *criollo* as *whiteness*, the reciprocal nature of De la Piedra's personal racial formation is evident. In other words, De la Piedra must build a public persona that visibly demarcates and affirms his whiteness, with its concomitant associations of economic advancement and hegemonic dominance, accomplished through his participation in anti-black and anti-Semitic behavior to display adherence to social, legal, and moral codes. This is interesting, considering De la Piedra's personal life is rife with the exact opposite of this public identity: De la Piedra maintains a sexual relationship with an enslaved woman, Altagracia, actively pursues Tomasón's adopted ward, Pancha Parra, and, unbeknownst to him, has fathered a mixed-race child, who we learn is the now-adult slave, Guararé, with an unnamed and barely-remembered woman from his youth spent in Panama.⁵⁵ The separation between the public and private spheres is an important factor in maintaining a certain status amongst Lima's elite classes. As the text progresses, the blending of these two spheres is what leads to the gradual ruin of both De la Piedra and the other characters that become mired in his hegemonic manipulations.

What is interesting about Miguel de la Piedra's personage is the destabilizing effect his hegemonic enactment and performance of whiteness has on those around him. In turn, his corruption of power and attempts to maintain the racist and unequal status quo results in his

gradual poisoning, the perpetrator implicated as his chauffeur, Nazario, leading to his progressive memory loss and general mental decline that jeopardizes his decision-making skills in the economic sphere. The four characters who reside with him, three of whom are enslaved and one who rents one of his rooms, all experience some form of bodily disfigurement or change that marks them as different, damaged, or fragmented. Much like the lines drawn on a map, these disfigurements create a notable separation that both defines and sets them apart from their cultural and gendered “bodies” or groups; beyond historically-held ethno-racial and gendered differences, these wounds and disfigurements have a multiplying “othering” effect on these characters, making them more marginal, and seemingly inhuman, within their social, cultural, and gendered communities. What follows will be a discussion of how the infliction of change upon the bodies of Candelaria, Nazario, and Altagracia implies a topographical reading of the physical body, one in which these individuals become fragmented, dehumanized, and labeled by the lines/borders of power and difference that are reflected in the scars, brandings and mutilations inflicted upon their bodies.

The first of the characters, Candelaria Lobotón, arguably connects the majority of the characters within the novel, despite having a somewhat shorter “active” role within the text. Candelaria, described as “an aged and crippled cook who burned even the measliest broth,” is one of the two domestic slaves acquired by De la Piedra upon purchasing his house after his initial business success in Lima (37). Her first description in the novel reveals the importance of the wholeness of body, especially regarding black, enslaved bodies in colonial Peru; her crippled body has already set her apart, as different from and “less than” more able-bodied slaves. As the text continues, we learn that Candelaria’s physical impairments were inflicted due to the intersections of her identity as a black, able-bodied woman.

In one scene, Candelaria relates to Altagracia the origin of a handkerchief of golden coins she has hidden in De la Piedra's house. The money is revealed as compensation from an old master who routinely took advantage of her sexually. Candelaria details how once discovered by the same master's wife, the latter took the coins and ordered Nazario to whip her:

Nazario has pure bitterness and not blood in his veins...And he hit me from his soul with the same whip that they use on the horse when he gets wild or just like a mule. And afterwards, he followed word for word what that woman ordered. He locked me in the stocks...When I came out, I could no longer walk as God would have us. The stock and the beating ruined me for life. I became useless, but I don't care anymore (46).

The act of crippling Candelaria results from a confluence of patriarchal and racial dominance and sexual appropriation, as represented by the actions of the former master, his wife, and Nazario. Candelaria's body becomes the surface in which the intersection of whiteness and patriarchal norms is sketched, resulting in life-long, debilitating consequences for Candelaria. Her former master used money to presumably assuage his moral guilt of being unfaithful to his wife, attempting to both buy her silence and complicity in the act.

The actions of the master's wife suggest a more nuanced assessment of the power dynamics at play: within colonial Peru's patriarchal context, her status as a white criollo or European woman places her as still inferior to that of her husband, while allowing her a superior status over Peru's racially marginalized populations, represented here via Nazario and Candelaria. Nazario seems to perpetuate both of these hegemonic factors upon Candelaria's body, inflicting harm and disfigurement through a brutality that suggests how the compounding effect the racial and gendered performances of the master and his wife mold his psyche and subsequently, Candelaria's body. In her own words, she becomes "useless" and uncaring,

placing more value upon her guarded money than questions of morality or righteousness.⁵⁶ Her regard for personal, monetary gain is evidenced by her complicity in De la Piedra's dalliances with Altagracia. In exchange for assuring that Nazario, Altagracia's "husband," is away from the house when needed and for preparing Altagracia for De la Piedra's "siestas," Candelaria receives payment, which she promptly hides away in a secret place in a wall in the kitchen.

The personal corruption by monetary gain that Candelaria evinces in life follows her into the afterlife. Candelaria's presence after her physical death continues to affect the lives of those she resided with, namely Altagracia. A variety of minor disturbances in the house are attributed to the restless spirit of Candelaria, who Altagracia believes cannot rest because of her hidden wealth somewhere in the house (49). When Altagracia ultimately finds Candelaria's stash of coins, her arm is severely damaged by a falling grinding stone in the fulling mill of the kitchen, an event attributed to the late Candelaria's spirit. As in life, Candelaria's perspective in death seems to perpetuate the unequal racial dynamics experienced by enslaved black women such as herself. When living, she is complicit in De la Piedra's sexual exploitation of Altagracia, despite being exploited herself for monetary gain in her youth; in death, she disfigures Altagracia's arm, despite the debilitating injuries she received as punishment from her former master's wife, at the hands of Nazario. Candelaria's actions in life and in death simultaneously reflect and perpetuate generationally transmitted racial and gendered violence, both of which are physically inscribed simultaneously on the bodies of enslaved, black women.

As mentioned above, Candelaria's physical impairments are the direct result of the violence perpetuated by patriarchal hegemony: one exercised by Candelaria's white, male master, and the other by her black, enslaved counterpart, Nazario. The history of Nazario is outlined simplistically in the text: a previous farm-hand and mine digger whose temperament

resulted in being resold various times until becoming a “bargain” for De la Piedra (42).

However, it is the description of his physical appearance that best reveals the mapping of Peruvian racial power dynamics upon the bodies of black slaves: “His bare spot showed green like a watermelon’s shine. The poisoning caused by the mercury from Huancavelica robbed him of bluish facial hair.” (42). Despite the rather colorful depiction of Nazario, the colors described invoke a sense of unnaturalness or uncanniness with respect to the body. His skin is greenish and compared to the skin of a watermelon, a fruit that would later become a trope associated with stereotyped perceptions of laziness, frivolity, and incivility of black cultures during the nineteenth century. The addition of this green hue implies sickness, the presence of a malady that is abnormal and different; the color green indicates that Nazario is not whole and that some factor has disturbed his wholeness. This could be the mercury poisoning that is mentioned, which the narrator implicates in the lack of the natural growth of “bluish” facial hair.⁵⁷

Conversely, it is the lack of “bluish” facial hair and the presence of a greenish hue to the skin that seems to fill in the societal and racial lines that have been drawn by colonial Peruvian hegemony in the map of Nazario’s life. The most obvious allusion to this fact is in the literal description of how “the whip drew a map of welts on his back, and on his chest a flower.” (42) Charún-Illescas likens the literal wounds inflicted upon Nazario’s body throughout his life of enslavement to cartographical features, the welts on his back providing the definite markers of the violent whims of previous slave masters. In addition, the dried wounds on his chest are compared to a flower, a seemingly cruel comparison considering the two images being compared. However, the flower here is like the compass rose of a map, orienting the reader both to the violence that has been perpetuated on Nazario and indicating the origin of the violence he himself continues to perpetrate. For these reasons, Nazario is both a product of violence and one

who continues to inflict it upon others, passing along the map of pain that has been etched into his skin upon others.

This perpetuation of violence extends to white and black characters alike, initially with the crippling of Candelaria, and later the physical and emotional revenge he enacts upon De la Piedra. When Nazario discovers that Altagracia is pregnant with De la Piedra's child, he expresses his distress to Chema, De la Piedra's student-boarder, but composes himself and states, "I've thought about it more, Don Chema. I have to leave things the way they are. I'll know what to do" (210). Nazario's description of "the way things are" reveals both his prior knowledge of De la Piedra's sexual exploitation of Altagracia, with the added factor of her resultant pregnancy. In fact, the novel implicates Nazario as the culprit of De la Piedra's slow poisoning by *paica* plant, which Chema describes as "a plant that grows in the Sierra... its flowers can cause irreversible damage" (206). Though De la Piedra initially believes Altagracia may be involved in the poisoning, at the suggestion of Chema that it could be Nazario, De la Piedra realizes how his behavior with Altagracia would give Nazario plenty of motive.

The more pointed revenge enacted by Nazario takes place towards the end of the novel. Though Chema had been entrusted with a piece of blue silk that had been given to him by Guararé, the slave who came to Lima in search of his merchant father who sold the same silk, Chema gave the silk to Nazario when the former was longer able to carry out his task of helping Guararé locate his father. Nazario, realizing De la Piedra's past as a silk merchant and considering Guararé self-identified as mixed-race, deduced that De la Piedra was the biological father of Guararé. This fact is revealed after Guararé breaks into De la Piedra's house in search of Chema. When discovered, De la Piedra believes he is a thief, has Nazario tie him up, and proceeds to savagely beat him, resulting in Guararé's death. Though Nazario knew he was not a

thief and figured that he was the slave who had enlisted Chema to help him, he silently allowed De la Piedra to kill his own son.

De la Piedra does not find out about his biological relationship to the man he has killed until his final conversation with Chema, when he hears about the blue silk that Guararé possessed. When he asks Chema for the silk, the novel describes the great emotional toll the gravity of his actions now play on his mind:

De la Piedra can feel it smooth and transparent between his fingers. It is the same fine silk of the mosquito net that hung above his bed. He slowly slid it from one hand to the other and did not notice that he shed a tear. He could touch and control the sky-blue color, but he could not quite grab hold of the memory that came to him upon seeing it and it filled him with a sudden sadness (210-11)

Nazario's violence is a direct result of a lifetime of physical, psychological, and emotional abuse. In the end, his perpetuation of said violence reveals a web of connections that bridge legacies of pain inspired by racial violence and sexual exploitation. Though Nazario silently allows De la Piedra to kill his own son, this violence sacrifices the life of Guararé, whose very existence depended upon the patriarchal sanctioning of sexual exploitation of his enslaved mother at the hands of De la Piedra.

Continuing with the violence that accompanies the interplay of racial power dynamics and sexual exploitation, the role of Altagracia Maravillas cannot be understated. Altagracia is revealed as a domestic slave, purchased by De la Piedra as the intended wife for Nazario and a replacement for Candelaria, yet quickly becomes an object of sexual desire and gratification of De la Piedra. After her purchase, De la Piedra "assesses" Altagracia's body while she is ironing, dehumanizing her by describing objectifying her body in gastronomic terms:

Because of the suffocating heat from the ironing, Altagracia unmistakably smelled like the dense smoke of a wood fire, and like stews cooked slowly in a copper saucepan. The master gently passed his pinkish hand over her sweating cheek and then, very slowly, began to smell her fingers one by one. His tongue let him know the flavor of her face. Altagracia Maravillas was a tender chicken. Sweet-corn water. He recalled the aroma of cumin and garlic in the distance. She tasted like mouthfuls of impossible seasonings. It couldn't be true (43).

De la Piedra's comparison of Altagracia's body to food, taste, and consumption connects racialized associations of sexuality that existed in Colonial Peru with the power hierarchies symbolized by food production, preparation, and the act of consumption. In her analysis of the representation of hypersexualization in *Malambo*, Chandra Talpade Mohanty writes of this scene how, to De la Piedra, "el cuerpo de la mujer es un manjar que no se puede despreciar; debe ser devorado y poseído" (151). The sexual objectification of Altagracia's body occurs to the extent that her very being is regarded as an object for complete consumption; his arousal by Altagracia is all-encompassing, as it is simultaneously a physiological need akin to hunger and a sexual desire.

The conversion of Altagracia's body into an object to be consumed reflects a historical tendency to rhetorically distance enslaved black women from notions of honor, rationality, and self-governance, instead associating their bodies with (hyper)sexuality, sensuality, and promiscuity, and taken advantage of by the purveyors of such fantasies, the masters themselves (Arrelucea Barrantes, *Replanteando* 39). At the same time, Altagracia's described gratification from her encounters with De la Piedra unveils a symbiotic, albeit unequal, relationship in which the two enjoy mutual sexual pleasure and relative stability with one another. Also benefitting

from this relationship is Candelaria, who receives payment from De la Piedra to ensure Nazario is kept away from the house during his and Altagracia's encounters. Talpade Mohanty notes, "Altagracia...utiliza su cuerpo como un artefacto de resistencia en contra de la dominación impuesta. Este cuerpo le posibilita negociar con su amo...y conseguir una serie de beneficios" (150). Though problematic in its reliance on sexualized stereotypes of black womanhood, the dehumanization of Altagracia can be seen as refashioned by her own sexual agency as a tool for survival and stability; she lives in relative comfort alongside De la Piedra so long as she is a willing, and able-bodied, participant in their sexual encounters.⁵⁸

Though her status as an enslaved black woman carries with it the combination of the stereotypes of hypersexuality and objectification, Altagracia ultimately reappropriates these imposed identities and wields them as a source of pleasure and survival. Though her body is externally controlled by patriarchal figures of both races, the narrator reveals that Altagracia's use of sexuality and a heightened interiority allows her the ability to become pregnant or not:

"Altagracia had decided that the baby would only be hers. It would not be Nazario's, or the master's, because it was thanks to her that ordinary and empty form took life. She knew how to capture and absorb it into her body...She held it. She prevented the current from carrying it away; she guided it to that open flower. If it grows, it will be only hers.

Despite the incorporation of elements of magical realism to describe Altagracia's supernatural ability to control her interior physiology, it is her psychological claim to her own body that is key in this scene.⁵⁹ Here, Altagracia stakes ownership of herself and her ability to produce life on her terms; her rejection of either De la Piedra or Nazario's role in the pregnancy diminishes their role in the reproductive act. This decisive act of agency illustrates an active attempt at (re)constructing an identity that has been violently fragmented by various forms of racial and

gendered violence. However, it is notable that the physiological control she displays seems to be limited to bodily processes linked to the sexual act. Continuing, we will see that the wholeness of Altagracia's physical body is, at times, beyond her control. The treatment she receives from others will depend on her being viewed as a complete body, ultimately revealing the deleterious effects of racial and gendered violence.

Altagracia's body becomes an artefact which, once marred, uncovers the extent to which she is objectified and expendable in the eyes of De la Piedra. After Candelaria's death, Altagracia finds Candelaria's accumulated stash of coins, a portion of which had been earned for her complicity in (and encouragement of) De la Piedra and Altagracia's affairs. While counting the coins, her arm is severely injured after a large, grinding stone falls on her, an event attributed to the restless spirit of the recently departed Candelaria. The condition of the arm worsens to the point of affecting Altagracia's work; more importantly, the arm affects her attractiveness to De la Piedra. It must also be noted that shortly thereafter, much to the chagrin of Nazario, Altagracia discovers she is pregnant with De la Piedra's child. These two bodily changes reveal De la Piedra's true concern regarding Altagracia. He does not love her, nor does his concern for her extend past his sexual attraction to her.

In one scene, while being visited and having her failing arm tended to by Pancha and her curative herbs, Altagracia reveals to De la Piedra that she is pregnant, yet lies to him by saying that he is not the father. Once Altagracia refuses to admit to De la Piedra being the father, he almost immediately loses interest in the baby and returns to the other part of Altagracia that worries him, her arm. When Pancha answers that the arm is not improving, De la Piedra states "Then don't keep wasting time with prayers and herbs. The illness is very advanced. It will poison her whole body and I'll lose the 'piece.' I can't afford that luxury, especially now that

Altagracia has begun to give me offspring. It's better to have a damaged slave than a dead slave! I'll notify a surgeon to come amputate her arm" (157-8). De la Piedra's callous response places his objectification of Altagracia on full display. He refers to her as "the piece" (from the Spanish, *pieza*), comparing her to merchandise, speaking of her in the third-person, as if she were absent, and diminishing her presence to a diminutive and fragmented abstraction. His preoccupation is of losing the whole body, for fear of not being able to capitalize on her ability to produce children, which could translate to more human chattel to sell and more profit for him in the long-run. The use of words like "offspring" and "damaged" and "slave" reflects his disregard for the humanity of the enslaved woman with whom he has maintained a sexual relationship for a number of years.

The scene continues with the voiced support of the amputation by Catalina Ronceros, a widow whose engagement to De la Piedra is more for mutual economic and social benefit rather than affection. Ronceros enters the scene confirming that "If there's no cure, then they should cut off that arm. What good is it?" (162). Her equally indifferent tone regarding the possible amputation is owed to Catalina's earlier discovery of the affair between De la Piedra and Altagracia. Though Catalina and Altagracia do not have a previous relationship, nor much interaction before this scene, Catalina's social position as a white, upper-class, woman affords her a similar sense of superiority to that of De la Piedra regarding the dehumanized treatment of black Peruvians and their bodies. This echoes the aforementioned wielding of whiteness by the wife of Candelaria's former master, who used her racial and social position to enact violence upon, and ultimately disfigure, Candelaria's body. Similar to Candelaria's perpetuation of racial and gendered patterns of violent even in the afterlife, Catalina aims to damage and distort Altagracia's body as revenge for the deceptive actions of a white, male figure. Here, she assumes

De la Piedra's dehumanized representation of Altagracia and views her as an amalgamation of parts, only retaining value and utility so long as the majority of the whole body can be used (read consumed).

Although Altagracia's body could have borne the permanent fragmentation of her body, despite her illusory relationship with De la Piedra, ultimately the herbal treatments provided by Pancha save her arm. Still, Altagracia's body has been transformed into a physical intersection that connects every character, living or dead, within the text. Altagracia seems to represent a figure through which legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw's notion of intersectionality is particularly salient. Crenshaw's framework of intersectionality analyzes the unequal effects of racialized and gendered social practices, as co-constructed or interwoven phenomena, on women of color (Crenshaw, "Mapping" 2). Though the mapping metaphor might represent Altagracia as a type of corporeal crossroads where race, gender, class, and place converge, a better metaphor might be Altagracia as the embodiment of a map itself: she is constantly being redrawn and recast alongside interlocking, racial and gendered practices and ideas of dehumanization and exploitation that inform her social status and very existence.

Rather than reinforcing the imagery of black women's bodies serving as "static" sites for the convergence of separate racial and gendered practices, scholar Priya Kandaswamy supports "seeing these intersections as cuts that completely fracture the imagined singularity of these structures" (27). This imagery reflects the physical scarring, violation, and fragmentation of black bodies that result from the combined, oppressive structures of race and gender.

Altagracia's body is consumed and controlled by the white and black male figures of De la Piedra and Nazario and fragmented and exploited by the white and black female figures of Catalina Ronceros and Candelaria. This is not to say that she does not find solace in her status as

a black woman in Lima, nor that the effects of race and gender are always negative for Altagracia. It is her sibling connection with Venancio that keeps her connected with the Malambo community, as well as provides her with the possibility of having her freedom purchased. In Tomasón, she finds wisdom, connections with local *cofradías*, and spiritual knowledge of a shared pre-colonial ancestry. With Pancha, Altagracia finds a healer and a symbol of independence. It is Pancha whose traditional knowledge of herbs saves Altagracia's arm from amputation. Pancha's rejection of De la Piedra's sexual advances and her rejection of Venancio's desire to marry her, reveal strategies of resistance possible by black women hitherto unrealized by other black women in Altagracia's life, namely Candelaria.

Conclusions

The publication of Lucía Charún-Illescas's *Malambo* marks a turning point in the literary representation of the cultural and historical experiences of Peruvian blacks and the publication and advocacy of Afro-Peruvian writers, artists, and scholars. Writers such as Gregorio Martínez, Antonio Galvez Ronceros, and author-activists such as José Campos Dávila and Delia Zamudio, have continued to influence the fields of literature, education, and labor rights through their legacies as visible and prominent Afro-Peruvians. The great majority of “ground-work” for the national recognition and development of Afro-Peruvians as a community is accomplished by activists and organizers whose work has created spaces for self-identifying Afro-Peruvians to advocate for the redress of the systemic marginalization of said community. As mentioned above, groups like LUNDU, CEDET, ASONEDH, MNAFC, and to a lesser extent, INDEPA, have employed the arts, education, law, community organization, and politics in order to secure greater visibility of the needs of the Afro-Peruvian community. Though the creation of some of these organizations and initiatives follows the publication of Charún-Illescas's *Malambo*, their educational and advocacy work is indicative of the “rebound” of Afro-Peruvian culture in the wake of governmental corruption and national violence and a reflection of the cultural milieu in which Charún-Illescas was able to publish this ground-breaking work.

Leaders such as Monica Carrillo, the founder of the organization LUNDU (2000), encourages projects that aim to foster positive affirmation of one's *afroperuanidad* (“afroperuvianess”), but also public health programs, education campaigns, the use of visual and literary arts as a vehicle for economic development and visibility, and a continued focus on how gender intersects with race and class. In her own words, Carrillo comments on some of the

difficulties of starting and maintaining an organization like LUNDU, highlighting how the socioeconomic and professional disparities of Afro-Peruvians, when compared to their white counterparts, correlates with less investment on their behalf by external investors and less initial political and economic capital of its members. Carrillo connects the current socioeconomic and political obstacles of Afro-Peruvians to their historical roots, namely the lack of accumulated wealth and its generational inheritance and how discrimination continues to affect educational, and therefore, economic outcomes (323). LUNDU's focus on education is extremely important given the correlations found between skin color and education levels in Peru: studies have found that as one's skin tone becomes darker and as racial self-identification alternates from white, indigenous, or black, the level of educational attainment steadily decreases (Telles and Steele, 2012, Telles et al., 2015, Castro et al., 2012). The role that gender plays is tantamount to Carrillo's perspective and community work, as her experiences with racism, sexism, and violence towards the bodies of black women (including her own) motivates her continued involvement in rural communities in the Yapatera region of northern Perú. Carrillo employs the knowledge of how black women's bodies are racialized and subsequently dehumanized as a principal motivator for her efforts. Much like María Elena Moyano, her community work with poor communities, and her final assassination and desecration at the hands of the Shining Path, Carrillo's experiences and work continue to highlight how Peru's patriarchal and discriminatory social structures contribute to the manipulation and destruction of black women's bodies.

The work of CEDET focuses on educational programs, the research and archiving of Afro-Peruvian history and culture, and the development of leadership skills among Afro-Peruvian youth to prepare them for social and political involvement. Founded in 1999, the group has succeeded in forming a notable presence due to its multiple publications that highlight

pertinent issues to the Afro-Peruvian community: the publication and criticism of Afro-Peruvian literature and music, updated considerations of Afro-Peruvian contributions to Peruvian history and culture, analyses of representations of blacks in the media, intersections of gender and class for Afro-Peruvian women, and current issues that affect the livelihoods and socioeconomic outcomes of these communities. In addition, the organization serves a public advocacy function, disseminating important national and local news that affects Afro-Peruvian communities, promoting works by scholars, artists, and writers, and formally speaking out against acts of racism, discrimination, and human rights violations. Perhaps most importantly, CEDET's function as an archiving and publishing entity of Afro-Peruvian social and historical information has been indispensable in the research for this very study. Over the last decade, CEDET has published a number of texts that delve into Afro-Peruvian history, current sociopolitical issues affecting said communities, literary criticism, and anthologies of Afro-Peruvian literary works that have ranged from poetry, short stories, testimonials, essays, and transcribed *décimas*.

One of the most important initiatives that CEDET helped propose and publicize on a national scale was the inclusion of an ethnic self-identification variable in Peru's National Census of 2017. This self-assessment of ethnic identification and affiliation had not been included in a national census before, while the ethnic/racial variable had not been included in the last forty years of the census's administration. The organization organized a campaign of Afro-Peruvian awareness in order to mobilize those who self-identify as Afro-Peruvian to affirm their cultural identity through the National Census administered by Peru's Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática (INEI). CEDET publicized their support of the inclusion of these variables on their website, confirming their objectives included: 1) promoting Afro-Peruvian self-identification and pride in the histories and cultural contributions of black peoples in Peru;

2) generating support for the inclusion of ethnic self-identification variables on the census itself and 3) encouraging self-identifying Afro-Peruvian populations to affirm their identity through the National Census to visibilize and affirm the black presence in Peru (“Proyecto Piloto”). These efforts proved fruitful, as the results of the census revealed that approximately 3.57% of Peruvians (roughly 828, 841 Peruvians) self-identified as black (“El 30% de peruanos”). These recent statistics provide two important factors to consider: a sizeable, and previously thought non-existent (read invisible), proportion of Peru’s populace self-identifies as black and, as Afro-Peruvian advocacy groups like CEDET and LUNDU assert, that percentage could actually be higher, yet underreported due to the discrimination and racism that tends to hinder one’s open embrace of *afroperuanidad*.

As this study has shown, the formation of racial and ethnic difference in Peru has hinged upon the balances of cultural and sociopolitical power within the nation. With the beginning of the twentieth century, the national consciousness moved to vindicate, yet ultimately re-appropriate, the image and cultural import of Peru’s oppressed, indigenous majority, prioritizing the needs of Peru’s historically maligned indigenous communities, yet effectively overshadowing the marginalized lives of Afro-Peruvians. Through art, music, and literature, the representation of Afro-Peruvians remained alive, albeit stereotyped, appropriated, and largely misrepresented. It would not be until the mid-twentieth century that the coupling of various civil rights and cultural movements of the African Diaspora along with Peru’s own resurgence and embrace of uniquely Afro-Peruvian poetry, music, and dance that distinctly Afro-Peruvian perspectives would approach the Peruvian consciousness on a national level.

Notes

¹ For the purposes of this research, I will use the term “black” to refer to people of African descent, or perceived as such, in their literary representation. Similarly, I will employ the term “white” to refer to those who self-identified as European descendant, either by birth or by genealogical connections. The use of both “black” and “white” is not to diminish the role of ethnic self-identification of any group, however for the purposes of this research, self-identified ethnic differences are not particularly salient. I will also employ the term *mestizo* to refer to individuals of mixed European and indigenous ancestry. The term *criollo* was also a common appellation used in reference American-born individuals of European descent, particularly in the claiming of citizenship, land rights, personhood, and cultural connection to the larger, imperialist projects of white sociopolitical dominance in the Americas. However, the use of the terms “black” and “white” will serve to differentiate Peruvian-born, figures of African and European and descent from multi-ethnic figures who were alternately referred to as *criollo* within the Peruvian imaginary due to socioeconomic status or racial intermixing. For more on the various semantic iterations of the term *criollo* in Peru, see Feldman, *Black Rhythms* 19, 267n2.

² Kant uses the notion of bodily humors to suggest a relationship between inherent characteristics of human bodies and subsequent appearance/disposition: “Perhaps the hydrochloric acid, or the phosphoric acid, or the volatile alkaline content of the exporting vessels of the skin, were, in this way, reflected red, or black, or yellow, in the iron particles in the reticulum. Among whites, however, these acids and the volatiles alkaline content are not reflected at all because the iron in the bodily juices has been dissolved, thereby demonstrating both the perfect mixing of these juices and the strength of this human stock in comparison to the others” (“Of the Different” 19).

³ Though by today's standards their racial ideologies are considered largely outdated and wholly misguided, the influence of the following thinkers and their works cannot be understated in terms of global impact, particularly in their use as justification for racial and social discrimination within the American sociopolitical context of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752-1840): *On the Natural Variety of Mankind* (1775); Arthur de Gobineau (1816-1882): *Essay on the Inequality of Human Races* (1853-55); G.W.F. Hegel (1779-1831): *Philosophy of Nature* (1830).

⁴ “Si el siglo XX es, a decir a Basadre, el período en el que la intelectualidad peruana toma conciencia del indio y de la cultura indígena; nosotros podemos afirmar que el siglo XIX es el período en el que los letrados y pensadores sociales radicalizan su conciencia de la diferencia con los esclavos y los afroperuanos. El *otro* histórico de la cultura peruana (el indígena) está relegado a un segundo plano durante todo este período; los discursos de las élites, principalmente hasta 1789, se mantienen atentos al esclavo y a los afrodescendientes que habitaban mayoritariamente en el principal centro de producción letrada de la época y sus zonas periféricas; por todo ello, quedan instaurados como el *otro* principal de esta etapa histórica” (19).

⁵ N'Gom considers Úrsula de Jesús (1604-1666), an Afro-Peruvian seventeenth-century mystic, to be the writer of one of the first, published, literary works by a black in Latin America. For more information about her work, *Diario espiritual* [Spiritual Diary], see Nancy E. Van Deusen's *The Souls of Purgatory: The Spiritual Diary of a Seventeenth-century Afro-Peruvian Mystic, Ursula de Jesús* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2004).

⁶ See Foucault, Michel. *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. 1966. New York, Routledge, 2002. Also see Quijano, Aníbal. Questioning “Race.” *Socialism and Democracy*, vol. 21, no. 1, 2007, pp. 45-53.

⁷ Frye, Marilyn. *The Politics of Reality: Essays in Feminist Theory*. Crossing Press, 1983. Also see by the same author: *Willful Virgin: Essays in Feminism*. Freedom, CA: Crossing Press, 1992. Print.

⁸Hill, Mike. *After Whiteness: Unmasking an American Majority*. New York: New York University Press, 2004. Print.

⁹ Bolivia's fight with Chile would not end until 1884 with the Treaty of Valparaiso, a resolution that ceded Bolivia's Antofagasta region to Chile along with the economic benefits gained from its natural resources.

¹⁰ The Aristocratic Republic (*La República Aristócrata*) was so called due to the succession of oligarchic elite that served as presidents of the state after Peru's defeat in the War of the Pacific. Basadre describes the Aristocratic Republic: "Belonging to this party are the large urban landlords, the large-land owning producers of sugar and cotton, the prosperous men of business, the lawyers with influential practices, the doctors with the most famous clientele, the university professors, in short, a large portion of the men who have done well in life" (qtd. in Rosas 197). This period lasted until the *coup d'état* by Augusto B. Leguía 1919, which began a period of reformist-policies that aimed to modernize Peru's economy through stronger financial ties with the United States, while also coinciding with an increased focus on, and subsequent appropriation of, Peru's indigenous past (and present).

¹¹ For González Prada, Luis Alberto Sánchez explains how "el indio no representa una raza biológica sino una raza social, pues depende de su estado económico. Sin embargo, tocante al chino y aun al negro, las opiniones de Prada fueron más tradicionales[.]" (332). More evidence of González Prada's problematic consideration of the black Peruvian presence in Peru can be

found in his essays “Los partidos y la unión nacional” (1898) and, especially, “Nuestra aristocracia.” (1904).

¹² As stated in the prior quotation, González Prada suggests that the *idea* or representation of the Peruvian Indian was created by the normative acceptance of indigenous representation as produced by Peru’s white elite, therefore allowing the latter to maintain economic and social control over the former for further financial gain.

¹³ González Prada remarks, “donde las haciendas de las costas suman cuatro o cinco mil fanegadas, donde las estancias de la sierra miden treinta y hasta cincuenta leguas, la nación tiene que dividirse en señores y siervos” (7).

¹⁴ *Gamonalismo* refers to system of combined land control and political power, typically dominated by land-owners of European descent who would then exploit their respective local indigenous populations. Guillermo Nugent describes the system as “un régimen que, en torno a la figura del hacendado omnipotente, generaba una serie de prácticas que involucraban por sobre todo las maneras benevolentes y despóticas de ejercer la autoridad tutelary” (88). In a similar vein, *latinfundismo* involved the creation of large estates, often controlled by a single entity. These large parcels of land, along with the lack of good stewardship in relation to surrounding agricultural projects, would result in inefficient land and resource usage, as well as what Mariátegui would call an “organización semifeudal” that hindered the economic possibilities of Peru’s indigenous populations (25).

¹⁵ Sarmiento, Domingo Faustino, and Roberto Yahni. *Facundo: Civilización Y Barbarie*. Cátedra, 2017.

¹⁶ René Prieto discusses how, despite popular belief, *Aves sin nido* (1889) is not the first novel that promotes a focus on the humanity of the Peruvian Indian. Peruvian writer Narciso Aréstegui

wrote *El Padre Horán* in 1848, preceding Matto de Turner's work by little over 40 years. Prieto mentions how Aréstegui's text differs from the more *indianista* works of his period in that "the Peruvian author strongly advocates a protected labor force and hopes for a fully employed society that is justly remunerated for its efforts and will, in turn, participate in the cycle of production and consumption which bolsters agriculture, commerce, and national progress" (141).

¹⁷ Prieto might agree with the notion that *Aves sin nido* (1889) belies an oligarchic agenda on Matto de Turner's part, especially due to the prejudices, classist preconceptions, and naturalist tendencies of her work. Prieto mentions how *Aves sin nido*: 1) does not provide *collective* solutions to the "Indian problem," suggesting that the majority of Peruvian Indians are destined for ruin; 2) suggests that the elite characters of her novel have a moral predisposition to ruthless and exploitative behavior; 3) and that the solution to the woes of the indigenous population will arise from Western assimilation through education" (145).

¹⁸ Regarding *indianista* literature and its idealization of indigeneity, Prieto remarks how the Independence of Latin America during the nineteenth century from Spanish rule prompted authors to look to autochthonous cultures in efforts to forge new national and cultural identities. However, due to the stark differences between the plight of contemporary indigenous life and that of the idealized representation of Indian culture and communities, *indianista* writers tend to "exalt the values of the indigenous cultures and decry the unmaking of their contemporaries, an attitude which translates as an insensitivity to the present in their works of literature" (140).

¹⁹ See also: Mariátegui, José Carlos. *Mariátegui total*. Vol. 1. Lima: Editorial Amauta, 1994. 1896. Print.

²⁰ Implied within this observation is a critique of Mariátegui and the vanguardist movement's desire to incorporate European aesthetics for the advancement of Peruvian society. Interestingly,

Mariátegui himself was against the colonial ties between Peru and Europe. Unruh reveals that although Mariátegui believed European aesthetics and ideas were necessary to the development of Peruvian identity, he simultaneously rejected the cultural hegemony and colonial ties with Spain, which in his opinion, persisted at that time (60-2).

²¹ Botting, Fred. *Gothic*. 1996. New York: Routledge, 1999. Print.

²² I expand the characteristics of Goddu's "American Gothic" in order to describe the Gothic elements within *Matalaché's* Latin American context. Considering the historical similarities of colonialism and colonialist racial discourse, I suggest that both North and South Americas represent regions where writers such as López Albújar must modify English Gothic themes and modes to their American context, transforming those aesthetics to reflect their own sociocultural contexts.

²³ In "Vampire Gothic," Goddu also mentions various instances within modern film where whiteness is represented alongside the monstrous and the horrific, reflecting a critique and subsequent displacement of the normativized connections typically attributed to black and indigenous Others (133-35).

²⁴ Goddu states "the gothic is able to rematerialize the ghosts of America's racial history and enable African-American writers to haunt back" (*Gothic* 132).

²⁵ *Caudillismo* refers to a system of sociopolitical domination headed by an aggressive and charismatic leader (*caudillo*). The structure was that of the paternalistic *caudillo* leading subordinate forces in an uneven relationship of power based on obedience and submission.

²⁶ *Regionalismo*, or *regionalist* literature, referred to by various names, including "*novela de la tierra*," "*criollismo*" and "*la novela telúrica*," involves the depiction of Nature as a primary character that embodies a necessary component of various national identities. Notably, *criollista*

novels such as Ricardo Güiraldes's *Don Segunda Sombra*, Rómulo Gallegos's *Doña Bárbara*, and José Eustasio Rivera's *La vorágine*, Nature is envisioned as an entity that interacts, positively and negatively, with its human counterparts. See Carlos J. Alonso's "The *criollista* novel."

²⁷ René Prieto notes that Matto de Turner's work reflects some of the prejudices, classist preconceptions, and naturalist tendencies of her time, specifically in that *Aves sin nido*: 1) does not provide *collective* solutions to the "Indian problem," suggesting that the majority of Peruvian Indians are destined for ruin; 2) suggests that the elite characters of her novel have a moral predisposition to ruthless and exploitative behavior; 3) and that the solution to the woes of the indigenous population will arise from Western assimilation through education" (145).

²⁸ See Prieto (139-40).

²⁹ Heidi Carolyn Feldman discusses the how the lack of objective measures and methodologies, along with the inconstant technical care given to census evaluations, particularly with regards to black populations in Peru, have created unreliable statistics with respect to Afro-Peruvian demographics. She explains:

Published estimates of Peru's black population vary in the absence of scientific measures and/or agreement about what constitutes "blackness" in Peru. The 1940 Peruvian census designated Afro [-] Peruvians as 0.47 percent of the population (quoted in Glave 1995, 15), and in 2010, the CIA's World Factbook stated that 3 percent of Peru's population was "black, Japanese, Chinese, and other" (World Factbook 2010). Yet, in 1995 José Luciano and Humberto Rodríguez Pastor described the Afro-Peruvian population as an estimated 6 to 10 percent of the population (Luciano and Rodríguez Pastor 1995, 271), and in 2002, Peru's Commission on Andean, Amazonian, and Afro-Peruvian Peoples

(CONAPA) estimated the Afro-Peruvian population to be 3 million, or 13.5 percent of the country's total population (Congreso de la República, Comisión de Amazonía, Asuntos Indígenas y Afroperuanos 2002, 4). The commission criticized the lack of ethnic data in the national census for its role in the continued social invisibility and sublimation of Afro-Peruvians[.] (“Strategies” 43)

³⁰ “In those eight years, in a stifled society, in which political parties and civic activities were prohibited, the press was censored, and there existed numerous political prisoners and hundreds of exiles, Peruvians of my generation grew from boys to youths, from youths to men. Still worse than the crimes and abuses committed with impunity by the regime was the profound corruption that, from the nucleus of power, irradiated to all sectors and institutions, debasing all aspects of life as we knew it” (9).

³¹ “At what point had Peru screwed itself?” (17).

³² According to Fernando Romero, *zambo* has historically referred to a person of black and indigenous ancestry (278).

³³ The use of “serranito” in this description alludes to one having origins in the mountainous Sierra region of Peru. In this way, the author points to the character's perceived indigeneity, as the Sierra region of Peru is commonly considered the geographical area with the highest population of indigenous Peruvian communities.

³⁴ This evaluation becomes more and more apparent with introduction of characters like Cayo Bermúdez, Amalia, and Don Fermín, who will be discussed in more detail in the section “Race, Economics, and Power.”

³⁵ The term *cholo*, like many words with racial connotations, has seen a variety of definitions in its use in the Peruvian social context. *Cholo* can refer to a person of mixed European and

indigenous ancestry, an indigenous person who originates from the coastal or mountainous areas of Peru, or be used as term of endearment. Within the Peruvian context, it can also carry economic and/or racial undertones, at times associating indigenous people with lower economic status or with cultural assimilation. See Quijano, A. *Dominación y cultura: lo cholo y el conflicto cultural en el Perú*. 1 ed. Lima, Perú, Mosca Azul Editores, 1980.

³⁶ “...las bolsas de sus párpados son azuladas, las ventanillas de su nariz laten como si hubiera corrido, como si se ahogara, y después de cada trago escupe, mira nostálgico las moscas, escucha, sonríe o se entristece o confunde y sus ojos, a ratos, parecen enfurecerse o asustarse o irse; a ratos tiene accesos de tos. Hay canas entre sus pelos crespos...[su] voz le llega titubeante, temerosa, se pierde, cautelosa, implorante, vuelve, respetuosa o ansiosa o compungida, siempre vencida.... No sólo se había desmoronado, envejecido, embrutecido; a lo mejor andaba tísico también. Mil veces más jodido que Carlito o que tú, Zavalita” (31-2).

³⁷ Ángeles Caballero goes on to state that *cholo* is a fundamental aspect of Peruvian identity and nationality, or *peruanidad*. This qualification is important in that it reflects the ambivalence of Peruvian identity in regards to the simultaneous appropriation of a collectivized indigenous historical narrative as part of a *mestizo/criollo* national identity and marginalization of the needs and lived experiences of contemporary indigenous communities.

³⁸ “Ancestral memory” refers to a process through which Afro-Peruvian performer, poet, and activist, Victoria Santa Cruz, professed to recover and restyle the rhythms, music, and body movements that would come to represent “Afro-Peruvianess,” or *afroperuanidad*. Victoria Santa Cruz describes this process:

What is ancestry? Is it a memory? And if so, what is it trying to make us remember?...

The popular and cultural manifestations, rooted in Africa, which I inherited and later

accepted as ancestral vocation, created a certain disposition toward rhythm, which over the years has turned itself into a new technique, ‘the discovery and development of rhythmic sense.’ (qtd. in Feldman 66)

Heidi Carolyn Feldman notes that this process, though regarded by various scholars as essentialist and supportive of biological determinist ideology, has not received the kind of serious critical attention that has been garnered by notions of collective memory. Moreover, Feldman suggests that Victoria Santa Cruz utilized this concept of “ancestral memory” as a tool with which to counter the mainstream narratives of criollo elite socialization.

³⁹ “Although Victoria Santa Cruz is unanimously credited with having rescued the *landó*’s choreography from obscurity, Afro-Peruvian musicians and scholars disagree about whether or not the choreography performed as *landó* since the revival is the one she re-created [;] ... no recorded or visual documentation is readily available, yet the re-created choreographies (and the processes that inspired them) live on as new ‘originals’ in popular memory and contemporary performance” (Feldman, *Black Rhythms* 74).

⁴⁰ See Appiah, Kwame. *In My Father’s House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture*. New York: Oxford UP, 1992. and Gilroy, Paul. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1993. And Gilroy, Paul. *Against Race: Imagining Political Culture beyond the Color Line*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 2000.

⁴¹ Aguirre explains how *palenques* did not continue as solely black communities: “Conforme avanzaba el siglo XVIII, sin embargo, los palenques empezaban a cobijar una población mucho más heterogénea, que incluía esclavos, negros libres, mestizos, indios y otros” (147).

⁴²The tenuous boundaries of ethnicity, racial self-identification, and racial subjectivity are evident in the considerations of Gregorio Martínez and Antonio Galvez Ronceros as

representative of Afro-Peruvian writing; their narratives focus on Afro-Peruvian subjects, culture, and perspective. As this chapter and other scholars signal, Lucia Charún-Illescas is considered to be Peru's first Afro-Peruvian novelist, reflecting not only Afro-Peruvian subject matter in her writing, but also contributing an intimate point of view that springs from the author's own cultural experiences from within Afro-Peruvian communities. These experiences have been greatly affected by Charún-Illescas perceived, phenotypical blackness. The knowledge base that seems to inform Martínez and Ronceros's cultural knowledge base regarding *afroperuanidad* appears to rely more on the communities of their upbringing and familial histories rather than self-affirmed identity or phenotypic discrimination.

⁴³ *Asociación Negra de Defensa y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos* (ASONEDH) (asonedhperu.org), the *Centro de Desarrollo Étnico* (CEDET) (cedetperu.org), *LUNDU Centro de Estudios y Promoción Afroperuanos* (lundu.org.pe), and later, the state-run entity of the *Instituto Nacional de Desarrollo de los Pueblos Andinos, Amazónicos y Afroperunos* (INDEPA).

⁴⁴ Shane Greene describes María Elena Moyano's trajectory as feminist during his discussion of how Martha Moyano Delgado (María Elena's sister) utilized the memory of her sister in order to achieve political favor from poor communities like Villa El Salvador. However, Daniel Cozart reveals that María Elena's discourse advocated more for broader, basic human rights. The label of "feminist" was not one to which Moyano explicitly adhered, yet her actions are arguably feminist in nature (120).

⁴⁵ Greene: "I have several impressions of the committee as a result of having read and analyzed its work from 2004 to 2008 with regard to Afro-Peruvians. The first is that despite the passage of the Afro-Peruvian Culture Day act in 2006, Afro-Peruvian issues are in fact rarely discussed. Although indigenous community and environmental issues are the mainstay of the committee,

the issue of blackness typically only comes up when Moyano Delgado brings it up. And more often than not, when she does so, it provokes no real debate or even a complete unwillingness to engage with the issue. In other words, the basic strategy of the other Congress members is simply to ignore blackness as an issue” (“Todos somos” 292).

⁴⁶ “Lima y Malambo, pues; a partir de la duplicidad del espacio se delinear las oposiciones binarias: blanco/negro; rico/pobre; poderoso/humilde; mansión/choza; catedral/iglesita; tiempo cultural/tiempo natural” (Galzio, 299).

⁴⁷ Examples of the sordid representation of blackness, black peoples, and their communities is evidenced by various texts analyzed for the purposes of this project, namely *Conversación en la Catedral* by Mario Vargas Llosa and Enrique López Albújar’s *Matalaché*.

⁴⁸ Malambo is described in the text as being located on the “wrong bank” of the Rímac River, placing it as relatively inferior to Lima, and establishing the conflictive existence of this community within colonial Peru. Martha Ojeda notes that Malambo “abriga los barracones donde se realizan la subasta de esclavos (opresión) y por otro lado, representa el espacio, por excelencia, de la libertad y la Resistencia de múltiples cimarrones (liberación)” (“De la Ciudad” 130).

⁴⁹ Galzio reflects upon the ways in which, despite presenting the normalized dynamic of freedom (Lima)/slavery (Malambo), Charún-Illescas’s writing reveals a counter-representation of this dynamic, in which “Lima, dónde la riqueza es unidad de medida universal y criterio de juicio absoluto; donde quien vive o transita por su territorio se corrompe y envilece, se propone como espacio disfórico, estado negativo y condición de pérdida interior” (300).

⁵⁰ The Rímac River’s introduction details its divisive function in the geographic and racial layout of Lima and its surrounding neighborhoods, while still serving as a point of connection for all in

the region. After detailing the passage of the Rímac's waters through pipes, canals, and waterways in Lima, the narrator mentions how as the water flows through the fountain of Lima's Playa Mayor, "He who stops to contemplate its bubbling cannot evade the gossiping of the Talking River" (4).

⁵¹ Heredia notes a reference in the text to Malambo as a place of "asiento y reparo" for black peoples, where "asiento y reparo" "capture the dialectical relation between the domination of colonial authorities (forcefully settling blacks in marginal areas) and the restoration of the human spirit of blacks in their resistance to such domination. It is from this meaning of Malambo as *sitio de reparo* that Yoruba myths affirm a primordial state of freedom in the lives of these men and women before they were bought and sold as slaves" (81).

⁵² The character Juanillo Alarcón, during his spiritual visit to Tomasón, asks him, "No le parece a usted que estaría bueno invocar a Elegguá para que nos dé coraje y paciencia con lumber de camino, y que oggún nos reponga de las fuerzas frente a tanto maltrato? ... ¿Cuándo me va a pintar algún santo que no sea de la parte ontraria? Mi gremio siempre quiso pedirle que nos trajese un Changó que supiera oïrnos, que hablase nuestro idioma. ¿Y qué tal si usted empieza con una buena Yemana, celestita, brilladora, aunque de table o de carton nomás? (21-22).

⁵³ "If one pays attention to the rumors of the Rímac, ten years ago an anonymous De la Piedra strolled through the port of Callao general stores with no more luggage than a rolled bundle and three long jute sacks... Though the universal ignorance that surrounded his familial and geographic origins was vox populi – none of the Limeños believed him in the least – few cared or paid much attention, much less went through the effort to expose him. However, at one time or another, solemnly, free of any affected pomp, and without batting an eye, he began to introduce himself as "Manuel De la Piedra" or simply "De la Piedra" (36-37).

⁵⁴ Evidence of De la Piedra's ambivalence to the plight of the slaves he sells can be found during his conversation with Jerónimo Melgarejo in his opening scene (38-39). In addition, this first dialogue reveals the shared concerns of both De la Piedra and Melgarejo regarding the presence of Jewish "heretics" within Lima, the work of the Catholic Church to arrest and torture the Jewish populace during the enforcement of the auto-da-fé, and a preview to De la Piedra's own anti-Semitic associations between Jewish people and economic dominance.

⁵⁵ This last point is revealed in the text with the unraveling of the story of Guararé Pizarro, a mixed-race slave who arrives in Lima in search of a father he has never met, yet about whom he only knows his profession (merchant) and retains a sole memento of his existence in the form of a piece of blue silk (the same silk brought carried by De la Piedra upon his arrival in Lima). A more detailed analysis of Guararé's role and significance within *Malambo*, specifically the mapping of racial dynamics upon his body and identity, will follow in the analysis above.

⁵⁶ The characterization of Candelaria's actions and morality is not meant to cast any personal assessment of her character, as portrayed in the novel. The representation of Candelaria's actions is reasonable and seemingly necessary, given the dehumanizing practice of slavery and the practices and mental negotiations that must have been necessary to survival during its predominance.

⁵⁷ I do not think that Lucia Charún-Illescas's use of the term "bluish" to describe the facial hair that Nazario lacks is meant in a literal sense here. As Nazario is portrayed as an older man, the presence of greying or whitening hair would not be uncommon. However, I assert that the bluish tint described seems to be much more of a descriptive tool employed by Charún-Illescas to enhance and emphasize the deleterious effects of Nazario's earlier work as a slave in a mine,

using an unnatural color for human hair to highlight the unnatural effects of Nazario's enslavement on his physical and mental development.

⁵⁸ Chandra Talpade Mohanty problematizes Altagracia's use of sexuality for personal gain as antithetical to a nuanced or empowering representation of black womanhood in *Malambo*. She explains: "[El] narrador modeliza al personaje Altagracia Maravillas como el objeto de deseo del sujeto blanco. es asía que la esclava es presentada como un individuo exuberante, sensual y provocativo. La imagen que se brinda de esta mujer convalida el estereotipo de fijar al negro relacionado con la lubricidad (en este caso, como un objeto de palcer y lujeria). Ahora bien, la esclava, a lo largo del recorrido narrativo, no se resiste a tal definición; por el contrario, la confirma y la alimenta, al entregarse de buena gana al amo y sacando provecho del asunto" (152). The scholar ultimately interprets Altagracia's representation as negative in its reinforcement of hypersexualized stereotypes of black women.

⁵⁹ Elements of Magical realism (el realismo mágico, lo real maravilloso) are ubiquitous in *Malambo*, particularly when dealing with the lived experiences of its black characters. Quince Duncan, Afro-Ecuadorian writer and critic, considers *Malambo* an example of "afrorrealismo," an obvious reference to the concept of Magical realism. He proposes the text qualifies as such due to the its adherence to the following tenets: "(1) restitución de la voz africana; (2) esfuerzo por revivir la memoria simbólica africana; (3) reafirmación de la comunidad ancestral; (4) reconstrucción de una perspectiva narrative intracéntrica; (5) búsqueda y proclamación activa de la identidad" (qtd. in Martín-Ogunsola, 343). However, various critics point to the incorporation of said elements by authors who are Othered themselves, as a perpetuation of marking Othered populations' cultural norms and lived experiences as irrational, mythologized, and essentialist in their representation (Talpade Mohanty, 167; Giyatri Spivak, 1990).

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