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Institute of Latin American Studies
School of Advanced Study
University of London

Blacks, Coloureds and National Identity in Nineteenth-Century Latin America

Edited by
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compromised by the duration of the institution of slavery, plantation society and the negative social perceptions associated with race and ethnicity.

Two different approaches to the formation of African-derived identities draw on the complex formation of *cubanidad*. Jonathan Curry-Machado identifies outsiders who were complicit with the leaders and participants in the 1840s liberation and independence movements. Some British officials, who were suspected of supplying arms to Cuban abolitionists, aimed to track down and to free kidnapped slaves from other British islands who were technically British and were therefore free under British law. In so doing, their espousal of freedom set precedents that were also endorsed by free British black subjects and by skilled British workers, among whom were immigrant British machinists hired to work on the large sugar estates. Whereas the legal status of slavery in Cuba impeded British abolitionist efforts, Curry-Machado argues that the working class identity among British subjects engaged in the Cuban labour environment bridged racial divides 'that existed between slaves and free workers; blacks and whites'. For him, their presence contributed to easing the boundaries between slavery and freedom. For Jean Stubbs, the social and political activities of free coloureds that she also terms 'free browns' are vital to the understanding of *cubanidad*. Stubbs focuses on Cuba's Mother of Independence, Mariana Grajales Cuello, who, faced with the deaths of her husband and several sons during the Independence struggles, selflessly rallied women, children and men to pursue the struggles for freedom despite colonial persecution and repression.

Nancy Priscilla Naro's chapter concludes the collection with an evaluation of the arguments and positions that informed the gradual process from slavery to free labour. Early proposals at the time of Brazilian Independence are revisited by abolitionists during the course of the transition process that was finalised with the passage of the Golden Law Decree that ended chattel slavery on 13 May 1888. Naro distinguishes between abolitionist agendas and abolitionism, focusing on the positions of Brazil's out-standing abolitionists, the contributions of civil society and the actions of slaves in bringing about emancipation. She suggests, however, that Brazilian elites discounted educational, technical and social reforms to incorporate the poor and the illiterate and, in so doing, marginalised black cultural, religious and political identities from the mainstream of post-emancipation Brazilian society.

CHAPTER 1

Race, National Identity and the Idea of Value on the Island of Hispaniola

Lauren Derby*

*Ayer español nací
a la tarde fui francés
a la noche etíope fui
hoy dicen que soy inglés
no sé qué será de mí*

Yesterday I was born Spanish,
In the afternoon I was French,
At night I was African,
Today they say I am English,
I don't know what will happen to me.

Juan Vásquez, priest, Santiago
at the turn of the nineteenth century

This chapter explores how the bounds of identity, community and even nationality can be fashioned through exchange. As Marshall Sahlins has said, friends make gifts, but gifts can also make friends. However, it is also true that the exchange of commodities can make foes. Interestingly, in eighteenth century Spanish, '*dar jabón*', or to give soap, was

* Much of the research used in this chapter I found in the David Nicholls Collection at Regent's Park College, Oxford University, in 2000. As such, I wish to dedicate it to a person who inspired all those who work on the history of Hispaniola with his rigorous and careful attention to sources, David Nicholls. I would like to thank Sue Mills, Gillian Nicholls and the Nicholls Collection trustees for entrusting me with free access to this rich collection of Haitian and Dominican historical sources before it had even been properly catalogued. And thanks to Alan Knight for his hospitality while I was a research associate of St Antony's College, Oxford University. This essay was presented at the Conference on Blacks in Nineteenth-Century Latin America at the Institute of Latin American Studies, University of London, 26 May 2000. My thanks to the audience, and most especially Franklin Knight, for very useful critical comments and suggestions that have helped me to refine the essay, as well as to Juan Guisti Cordero and Jason McGraw for indicating to me some key sources on Caribbean piracy, and Raymundo González for his seminal work on the *montero* and its centrality within the colonial economy of Santo Domingo.

a colloquialism for conquer, as if subjection was inextricably tied to accepting prestation and the resultant form of indebtedness this implied.¹ This link between exchange and subjugation is thus silently present in the very boundary defining the two nations of Hispaniola island, since *dar jabón* was the eponymous term for Dajabón, the Spanish town on the bank of the Massacre river that has been the official frontier separation of the two nations since the colonial period.²

But what of soap? How and why was soap — a seemingly innocent product — linked with subjection? One of the first commodities, soap in the nineteenth century was a key icon of empire, inextricably linked to the civilising mission, intended to uplift native races through training them in metropolitan habits of hygiene.³ In the seventeenth century, however, soap was both a necessity and a luxury; a commodity that was frequently a gift by virtue of its utility and convenience. Like money, soap crossed borders, since it was itself a medium of conversion from dirty to clean and from commodity to gift.⁴ In the border markets of Dajabón, soap, like sugar, tobacco, and at times slaves and debt servants, may also have served as an occasional medium of currency, given both the ubiquity of barter and the scarcity of specie as Spanish and French, buccaneers and hunters, haggled over hides, tallow, wood, vegetables and meat in this New World frontier zone.⁵ But more likely, given the scarcity of manufactured goods on the northern frontier of Hispaniola and thus the exogenous and cosmopolitan value accrued to soap as a result, it may have been a commodity used as a gift to establish alliances and rank in this contraband zone where pirates, not states, ruled.⁶ In the words of James Clifford, identity should be seen as constantly in flux, as 'a nexus of relations and transactions actively engaging a subject'.⁷ Exchanges of everyday items as common as soap,

1 Daniel Lescallier, 'Itinerario de un viaje por la parte española de la isla de Santo Domingo en 1764,' in Emilio Rodríguez Demorizi (ed.), *Relaciones geográficas de Santo Domingo* (Santo Domingo, 1970), p. 114; Nicholas Thomas, *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture, and Colonialism in the Pacific* (Cambridge, MA, 1991), p. 15.

2 For other suggestions on the origins of the name Dajabón see <http://usuarios.lycos.es/dajabon/historia.htm>.

3 Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Context* (New York, 1995), p. 208.

4 Michael O'Malley, 'Specie and Species: Race and the Money Question in Nineteenth Century America,' *American Historical Review*, vol. 99, no. 2 (April 1994), p. 392.

5 John Esquemeling, *The Buccaneers of America: A True Account of the Most Remarkable Assaults Committed of Late Years Upon the Coast of the West Indies by the Buccaneers of Jamaica and Tortuga, Both English and French* (London [1684–5], 1924), p. 48, on the planting of tobacco for trading purposes.

6 See chapter 1 of Thomas, *Entangled Objects*, for a discussion of when commodities become gifts. In Thomas' terms, one could say that the exchange of soap may have thus exemplified a kind of 'gift situation' (p. 28).

7 James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge, MA, 1988), p. 344.

then, clearly played a part in establishing emergent notions of difference and deference along the Haitian–Dominican frontier.

This chapter considers the relationship between race and national identity in the Dominican Republic. The Dominican literature situates the Haitian Occupation of the Dominican Republic (1822–44) at the centre of any explanation of how race and national identity came to be defined as one and the same, an event which was the climax of a series of nineteenth-century interventions, just after the Haitian Revolution by Toussaint Louverture and Jean-Jacques Dessalines, and in 1856 under Faustin Soulouque. In this view, after two decades of domination Haiti quite naturally became national enemy and *un-alter ego*. The period of Haitian domination thus serves to explain how anti-Haitianism became the key idiom of official nationalist discourse and popular alibi for blackness in a country in which the majority is black or mulatto. After this event, Dominicans defined themselves in contraposition to Haiti; as Spanish and not French, as Creole or *indio*, and patently not Black. Slavery belonged to Haiti, not the Dominican Republic, where colonial poverty minimised slave purchase, slave imports were terminated exceptionally early, and slave relations were benign and paternalistic, which enabled the formation of a 'racial democracy'.⁸ Certainly, any discussion of nineteenth-century Dominican history must account for the change wrought by the Haitian Occupation since it is the key feature making the Dominican path to republicanism unique in the Latin American context. While the rest of South and Central America gained independence in the 1820s from Spain, only the Dominican Republic gained independence from Haiti. Moreover, it was the resultant feeling of vulnerability of having been successfully conquered by this more militarily powerful neighbour that made almost all successive Dominican regimes court annexation to a stronger power — Spain or the United States — so as to protect the eastern portion of Hispaniola from further Haitian or other imperial designs.⁹

Clearly the Haitian occupation was one factor in forging a racialised sense of national identity and what Silvio Torres Saillant has termed

8 While there are any number of twentieth-century Dominican exponents of this idea, such as the politician and sociologist Juan Bosch, it was not an uncommon position among nineteenth-century liberals, such as Pedro Bonó, who described the Dominican Republic as having produced a new race or 'raza nueva'; see his essay, 'Congreso extra-parlamentario,' in Emilio Rodríguez Demorizi (ed.), *Papeles de Pedro F. Bonó. Para la historia de ideas políticas en Santo Domingo* (Santo Domingo, 1964), pp. 352–99. For more on Bonó, see Raymundo González, *Bonó, un intelectual de los pobres* (Santo Domingo, 1994).

9 Detlev Julio K. Peukert, 'Anhecho de dependencia: Las ofertas de anexión de la República Dominicana a los Estados Unidos en el Siglo XIX,' *Jahrbuch für Geschichte von Staat, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Lateinamerikas*, vol. 23 (1986), p. 315. See also Mukien Adriana Sang, *Buenaventura Báez: el candillo del sur (1844–1878)* (Santo Domingo, 1991), pp. 113–46; and William Javier Nelson, *Almost a Territory: America's Attempt to Annex the Dominican Republic* (Newark, 1990).

'negrophobia'.¹⁰ The American Commissioner in Santo Domingo in 1849 related that Haitian domination had made things black so anathema that a black Dominican could make the paradoxical proclamation that '*soy negro pero negro blanco*' or '*aunque tengo el cutis negro mi corazón es blanco*' ('I am black but white black,' or 'even though I have black skin my heart is white').¹¹ And in 1871 Dominicans were even able to persuade US senators against their own racial common sense that in the Dominican race mixture, as opposed to elsewhere, white blood predominated over black.¹² Yet I wish to argue that this identity developed for reasons quite different to those maintained in Dominican nationalist historiography.¹³ A focus on the Haitian Occupation serves to naturalise anti-Haitianism, as if all nations have enemies, and former colonial powers are frequent favourites; or as Sander Gilman has argued, all selves (even national ones) require an other.¹⁴ I will argue, however, that the period of Haitian domination was less constitutive than corroborative, and that to account fully for the image of Haiti one must return to the seventeenth century, when the meanings of the community that would eventually become Haiti were first defined in relation to an emerging popular proto-Dominican creole identity through inter-island trade.¹⁵ In the Dominican case, creolisa-

- 10 Silvio Torres Saillant, 'Creolness or Blackness? A Dominican Dilemma,' *Plantation Society in the Americas*, vol. V, no. 1 (Spring 1998), Special Issue: 'Who/What is Creole?' edited by James Arnold.
- 11 Sumner Welles, *Naboth's Vineyard*, cited in David Nicholls, *From Dessalines to Duvalier: Race, Colour and National Independence in Haiti* (New Brunswick, 1996), p. 80. David Howard notes that Dominicans today refer to 'negro negro' and 'blanco blanco' as defining parameters of the status economy; see David John Howard, 'Colouring the Nation: Race and Ethnicity in the Dominican Republic,' DPhil Thesis, Oxford University (1997), p. 136.
- 12 *Report of the Commission of Inquiry to Santo Domingo* (Washington, DC, 1871), p. 13.
- 13 Key texts include: Joaquín Balaguer, *La isla al revés: Haití y el destino dominicano*, 6th edition (Santo Domingo, 1990); Manuel Arturo Peña Battle, *Ensayos históricos* (Santo Domingo, 1989). For the contextualisation of Peña Battle and Balaguer's thought, see Michiel Baud, 'Manuel Arturo Peña Battle y Joaquín Balaguer y la identidad nacional dominicana,' in Raymundo González et al. (eds.), *Política, identidad y pensamiento social en la República Dominicana. Siglos XIX y XX* (Madrid, 1999), pp. 153–180; and Raymundo González, 'Peña Battle y su concepto histórico de la nación dominicana,' *Anuario de Estudios Americanos*, vol. XLVIII (1991), pp. 585–631.
- 14 Sander Gilman, 'Introduction: What are Stereotypes and Why Use Texts to Study Them?' in Gilman, *Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race and Madness* (Ithaca, 1985), pp. 15–35.
- 15 Most of the work on Creole identity formation in Latin America has focused on elite factions, which frequently used popular symbols such as miraculous virgins or peasant iconography to legitimate their claim to authority vis-à-vis the Spanish 'gachupines.' The Dominican case is different because by the eighteenth century the Spanish were so scarce that they were barely even a social category, and elites were so poor that they were hardly elite. For more on elite creole formation in Puerto Rico, see the insightful essay by Francisco Scarano, 'The *Jibaro* Masquerade and the Subaltern Politics of Creole Identity Formation in Puerto Rico, 1745–1823,' in *American Historical Review*, vol. 101, no. 5 (December 1996), pp. 1398–1431. On popular black Creole identity as

tion was both contentious and homogenising,¹⁶ as it served both to unify Dominicans of all hues and castes and to set things Haitian apart. While anti-Haitianism is frequently taken as flat racism, it was only beginning in the late nineteenth century with the rise of modern corporate plantations staffed by Haitian and West Indian labour that anti-Haitianism devolved into a feeling of racial superiority, as a new pattern of ethnic labour segmentation emerged which made Haitians appear absolutely degraded in Dominican eyes through their relation to an utterly servile labour form — cane cutting — associated with slavery.¹⁷ Previous to this, anti-Haitianism was essentially a defensive fear of Haitian potency — military as well as religious and economic.

Anti-Haitianism is not the only story of race in the Dominican Republic. Analyses of Dominican racial ideology have tended to focus on anti-Haitianism, a style of racialised nationalism that structures Dominicans in segmentary opposition to Haitians.¹⁸ In this Manichean construct Dominicans are white because Haitians are black, a contrast which has inspired a cluster of related metaphoric contrasts (purity vs. pollution, etc.).¹⁹ However, even if Dominicans have effectively denationalised blackness by exporting it to the other side of the island, the story of race does not end

- Afro-Creole: Power, Opposition and Play in the Caribbean* (Ithaca, 1997). The classic text on the emergence of Creole identity in Mexico is, of course, Jacques Lafaye, *Quetzalcóatl and Guadalupe: The Formation of Mexican National Consciousness, 1531–1813* (Chicago, 1968). I am using the terms Dominican and Haitian here for lack of anything more accurate since this was a transitional moment in between colonial and Creole identity, when pirates, buccaners and contrabandists — all in effect anti-nationalists — were very important within both the French and Spanish speaking populations of Hispaniola. I would say, however, that in the seventeenth century the Haitian community was predominantly constituted of buccaners and corsairs, and the Dominican community was more settled, and thus by comparison the process of creolisation (thus the development of a protonational identity) was more advanced in the Spanish colony.
- 16 In contrast to Nigel Bolland, 'Creolization and Creole Societies,' in Alistair Hennessy (ed.), *Intellectuals in the Twentieth-Century Caribbean* (Basingstoke, 1992), pp. 50–79.
- 17 Michiel Baud, "'Constitutionally White": The Forging of a National Identity in the Dominican Republic,' in Gert Oostindie (ed.), *Ethnicity in the Caribbean* (London, 1996), p. 131. Aviva Chomsky also argues that Haitian immigration to the sugar industry in Cuba had a clearly derogatory impact on race relations there; see her essay, "'Barbados or Canada?" Race, Immigration, and Nation in Early-Twentieth-Century Cuba,' *Hispanic American Historical Review*, vol. 80, no. 3 (August, 2000), pp. 415–62.
- 18 It is the fact that anti-Haitianism is really nationalism that enables Dominicans who see themselves as patriotic to claim that they are anti-Haitian and not racist.
- 19 Particularly in the contemporary period for the Partido Reformista Social Cristiano; see Joaquín Balaguer, *La isla al revés*. For more on the 1937 Haitian massacre, see R. Derby and R. Turits, 'Historias de terror y los terrores de la historia: La masacre haitiana de 1937 en la República Dominicana,' *Estudios Sociales*, vol. 26, no. 92 (1993), pp. 65–76. For more on official anti-Haitianism, see M. Fennema and T. Lowenthal, *Construcción de raza y nación en la República Dominicana* (Santo Domingo, 1987); and Pedro L. San Miguel, *La isla imaginada: historia, identidad, y utopía en la Española* (Santo Domingo/San Juan, 1997).

there.²⁰ Indeed, even if Dominicans as a nation define themselves as 'constitutionally white',²¹ I would argue that as an ethnos Dominicans do see themselves as mixed-race *mestizo* or *criollo*, which stands in for black in this context.²² Creole identity is invoked when Dominicans refer to being '*blanco de la tierra*' (whites of the land) or *indio*, labels that may have evolved from the colonial distinction between African-born slaves or *congos*, as opposed to Creole slaves, or those born in the new world.²³

Black and white are what the structuralists would term binary oppositions that define the overarching framework of Dominican racial distinctions, but the unmarked yet subtly graded terrain in between is rich with meaning, even if it is not perceived as a social category per se, and thus remains for the most part invisible.²⁴ Yet true blackness and whiteness are

20 : I am contrasting the Dominican Republic's exclusionary approach to blackness with Cuba's inclusionary approach; see Robin D. Moore, *Nationalizing Blackness: Africanism and Artistic Revolution in Havana, 1920-1940* (Pittsburgh, 1997). I am also distinguishing between anti-Haitianism as a form of racialised nationalism and attitudes towards colour within the Dominican community.

21 See Baud, 'Constitutionally White'.

22 Here I am diverging from Ronald Stutzman's compelling essay on *mestizaje* in Ecuador, where apparently 'ethnic identity [is exchanged] for membership in the nation-state', see Stutzman, 'El Mestizaje: An All-Inclusive Ideology of Exclusion,' in Norman E. Whitten (ed.), *Cultural Transformations and Ethnicity in Modern Ecuador* (Urbana, 1981), pp. 45-94. Dominicans patently do not use the term '*mestizo*' or '*mulatto*' to describe themselves (Howard, 'Colouring the Nation', pp. 137, 71), however, deploying '*indio*' (i.e. *criollo*) instead. This is how poor Dominicans can identify the Dominican nation as white, while claiming simultaneously that they are *indio* or Creole mixed-race.

23 For evidence of the use of '*blanco de la tierra*' during the Haitian Occupation, see Jonathan Brown, *The History and Present Condition of Santo Domingo*, Source Books on Haiti no. 8 (London, 1972 [1837]), vol. II, p. 286. Pennema and Lowenthal claim that the term *indio* was used by African slaves who fled enslavement from the French part of the island during the eighteenth century, although it could alternatively represent a feature common throughout the Americas whereupon maroons took refuge within frontier indian communities, and then adopted indigenous identities since they were appealingly autochthonous, and hence legitimate, as opposed to African slavery. Moreau de St Mery notes during his visit to the Spanish side of the island, however, that by the eighteenth century a kind of *indio* masquerade had developed, whereupon many Creoles with indian features were making much of their purported indian descent (cf. Scarano, 'Jibaro Masquerade,' M.L.E. Moreau de St Mery, *Descripción de la parte española de Santo Domingo*, translated by C. Armando Rodríguez (Ciudad Trujillo, 1944), p. 95). And into the nineteenth century, Creole women filed their teeth to a point, considering it beautiful, which may have been a Taíno practice (William Walton, *Present State of the Spanish Colonies, Including a Particular Report of Hispaniola* [London, 1810], p. 371). In contemporary usage, most informants I questioned who referred to themselves as having an 'indio' identity did not mean a genealogical connection to an indian past, but rather that their skin was brown. This is why the use of the term *indio* I would say implies a tacit recognition of a mulatto or Creole ethnicity.

24 Edmund Leach, 'Anthropological Aspects of Language. Animal Categories and Verbal Abuse,' in E.H. Lenneberg (ed.), *New Directions in the Study of Language* (Cambridge, MA, 1964); Marshall Sahlins, 'La Pensée Bourgeoise: Western Society as Culture,' *Culture and Practical Reason* (Chicago, 1976), pp. 166-204, and Ferdinand de

seen as residing outside the nation, in Haiti and Europe/US Creole identity is perceived as brown — a composite of white and black 'lines' or personae that become salient in different contexts.²⁵ In *mestizo* cultures, the fact that there are multiple criteria for race-marking enables one to redefine one's racial identity in different contexts; thus, as self or person, in private or public. This is why mulatto Dominican dictator Rafael Trujillo, for example, was able to assert that he was a Spaniard, and a Haitian, on different occasions since both of these were legitimate lines of descent in his case. It also means that one may claim one racial marker as superordinate over others (such as lineage over phenotype) as when one respondent stated, 'My parents are Spanish so even though I look like a *mulatta*, I am definitely *blanca*.'²⁶

Just as civilisation was the mother of barbarism, the defining feature of Caribbean society, the sugar plantation, spawned its obverse, a frontier society of runaways, vagrants and half-castes who did not live within colonial society but rather in opposition to it in the refuge of the mountains, the depopulated coasts and the sea.²⁷ And it was here that a truly Creole society was founded in the sense of a novel social identity and culture that saw itself as autonomous from the metropole. As Antonio Benítez-Rojo has argued, it was the cattle economy and resultant contraband trade that emerged in the latter sixteenth century along the north coast of Hispaniola as the first wave of sugar *ingenios* and mines decayed that gave birth to a novel sense of community, one that was patently non-elite and even more expressly non-colonial.²⁸ This community was based on hide production, but it was also squarely a part of Gilroy's 'Black Atlantic' since it was deeply linked to the thriving maritime smuggling economy and the triangle trade.²⁹ In the eighteenth century, this illicit subculture became the basis of French settler identity in Hispaniola, emerging within the very interstices of Spanish mercantile restriction which imposed draconian measures to first quash, and when this was unsuccessful, tax these vibrant trade networks with Cuba, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, Curaçao, the Turcos and Caicos islands, France, Germany, the United States and most especially Haiti. These smugglers were

25 The notion of 'line' is from Erving Goffman, 'On Face-Work,' *Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face-to-Face Behavior* (New York, 1967), pp. 5-46; see also Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York, 1959).

26 Howard, 'Colouring the Nation,' p. 76.

27 Silvio R. Duncan Baretta and John Markoff, 'Civilization and Barbarism: Cattle Frontiers in Latin America,' *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 20, no. 4 (October 1978), pp. 587-620.

28 Antonio Benítez-Rojo, *The Repeating Island: The Caribbean and Postmodern Perspective*, translated by John Maraniss (Durham, NC, 1992), pp. 43-55.

29 Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA, 1993). For more on black seamen and their networks of communication during this period, see Julius Sherrard Scott III, 'The Common Wind: Currents of Afro-American Communication in the Era of the Haitian Revolution,' PhD thesis, Duke University (1986).

so successful that they soon cornered the market in specie, bullion, and luxury commerce, as merchants sought to avoid high taxes due to the fact that 'trading by stealth' could make for as much as a threefold increase in profits.³⁰ I wish to propose that a Dominican Creole idea of Haiti first arose through these networks of exchange, thus Haiti took shape in the Dominican imagination through the meanings implicit in eighteenth century intra-island trade. Bryan Edwards noted that there was 'a hereditary and inextinguishable animosity between the Spanish and French planters' on Hispaniola but this sense of difference was based primarily on colonial identity, or Spanish-French mutual stereotypes that were transported to the colonies.³¹ The eighteenth century was key to defining a sense of what would later become Haitian and Dominican national alterity because this was when the two economies matured as very distinct but symbiotically interrelated. At a time when sugar was one of the greatest sources of global wealth, Haiti blossomed into the paramount sugar producer in the French colonial world, and the Dominican Republic became its foremost supplier of livestock products — meat, hides, cattle, mules and oxen. Just as Haiti came to be seen as embodying the cash nexus — which in the eighteenth century meant gold and silver, and sugar and slaves — Creole identity in the east was imaged through cattle, cacao and tobacco. Haitians drank coffee, while Dominicans drank cocoa.³² This may be why today the dominant racial terms marking *lo criollo* in the Dominican Republic are all agricultural produce, foods that are consumed at home — chocolate, wheat, coffee and cinnamon.³³

30 Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates, and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700–1750* (New York, 1987), p. 42.

31 Although an open question remains just how 'French' the buccaneers saw themselves as being in the period before the French actually acquired the western portion of the island in 1793, since they had rebelled previously when Tortuga Island was administered by the French West Indian Company. See Bryan Edwards, *An Historical Survey of the French Colony in the Island of Santo Domingo* (London, 1797), p. 188. See also Nicholas Canny and Anthony Pagden (eds.), *Colonial Identity in the Atlantic World, 1500–1800* (Princeton, 1987). For accusations that the buccaneers of Mole St Nicolas, Haiti, were monopolising specie to the detriment of everyone else, see Edward Long, *The History of Jamaica or General Survey of the Ancient and Modern State of that Island, with Reflections on its Situations, Settlements, Inhabitants, Climate, Products, Commerce, Laws and Government* (London, 1779 [1774]), esp. p. 535.

32 Moreau de St Mery, *Descripción de la parte española*, p. 97.

33 As noted by Howard, Introduction, 'Colouring the Nation'. The lingering importance of this opposition of identities is also noted by Melville Herskovits, who observed how 'deeply lodged' the 'pattern of a money economy' was in Haiti when he did his fieldwork in 1937; see his *Life in a Haitian Valley* (New York, 1971), p. 83. For more on Creole identity and food, see my essay, 'Gringo Chickens with Worms: Food and Nationalism in the Dominican Republic,' in Gilbert M. Joseph et al. (eds.), *Close Encounters of Empire: Writing the Cultural History of US–Latin American Relations* (Durham, 1998), pp. 451–93.

The most influential theorists of race in the Caribbean have considered the ways in which relations of production have shaped emergent notions of race. They have demonstrated how sugar boom periods corresponded with sharper patterns of social differentiation and increased racial distance.³⁴ These arguments help explain why anti-Haitianism became particularly noticeable from the 1870s onwards, as the Dominican Republic developed modern sugar *centrales* staffed primarily by Haitian and West Indian labour. Yet if anti-Haitianism became dominant during this period, it must have developed from some earlier trace associations. I consider here how relations of exchange and patterns of consumption can give rise to emergent ideas of racial or protonational difference, and thus how regimes of trade can shape ideas of racial otherness, as objects become signs of identity and difference marking discrete trading communities. The contraband economy focused upon here represented the Caribbean corner of the triangle trade, the nexus not only of competing colonial powers and their maritime mercenary representatives, but also the site of competing regimes of value of various kinds — as African paganism vied with Christianity, and feudalism sparred with mercantilism and emergent capitalism. As William Pietz has argued, the idea of the fetish originated in this conflictive moment in coastal West Africa as a form of value that remained stubbornly present amid the ebbs and flows of incessant bargaining. The fetish became a kind of anchor within a 'mercantile intercultural space created by the ongoing trade relations between cultures so radically different as to be mutually incomprehensible',³⁵ thus a dizzying multiplicity of different economies of valuation. It is not coincidental that parallel to the idea of the fetish arose another form of essentialism on the next stop along the same trade circuit, the beginnings of the ascription of fixed identity through race and nationality on Hispaniola. Indeed, as a form of fetishism, notions of essentialised race provided hierarchy, and thus stability, in a moment in which there was no common grammar of trade, and commensurability was so uncertain that trade itself was so frequently violent that it was given its own name — 'rescate' which shares an origin with the Portuguese term for kidnapping — during a period in which trade itself was described by many as a 'mild form of war'.³⁶

34 Mintz and Hoetink are key proponents of this view; see, for example, Sidney Mintz, 'From Plantations to Peasantries in the Caribbean,' in Sidney Mintz and Sally Price (eds.) *Caribbean Contours* (Baltimore, MD, 1985); and Harry Hoetink, 'The Dominican Republic in the Nineteenth Century: Some Notes on Stratification, Immigration and Race,' in Magnus Mörner (ed.), *Race and Class in Latin America* (New York, 1970), pp. 96–121.

35 William Pietz, 'The Problem of the Fetish, I,' *Res* 9 (Spring 1985), pp. 5–17; Pietz, 'The Problem of the Fetish, II,' *Res* 13 (1987), pp. 23–45; and Pietz, 'The Problem of the Fetish, IIIa,' *Res* 16 (1988), pp. 105–123.

36 Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, p. 20.

What I wish to do here is trace the possible origin of certain ideas about Haiti that have become officialised in anti-Haitian policy, but which I argue originated during the formative period when Creole identity was first taking shape.³⁷ The idea of Haiti as a source of hidden potency and illicit value may well have arisen during the period when contraband was the central pillar of the economy and the only form of exchange with Haiti; just as the link between Haiti and monetary value may well have reinforced through the wildly successful sugar bonanza during the decades preceding the revolution, a phenomenon which Dominicans observed from the sidelines with amazement and no small measure of envy. While the Dominican Republic was still engaged in predominantly non-monetised exchange, and most of the peasantry lived from subsistence agriculture, the riches produced by the Haitian sugar boom were quite incomprehensible. Yet even before the sugar economy of Haiti overtook that of Jamaica, the buccaneers of northern Hispaniola were accused of hoarding specie, bullion, slaves, sugar and luxury goods in general, thus draining the value of the entire region and transforming what should be exchange value into inalienable possessions by taking these out of circulation and holding them in check.³⁸ Ideas about Haiti as monopolising illicit value were first established in the early eighteenth century, as accusations raged from as far away as Jamaica that smugglers trading with Haiti had provided her with most of the gold, silver and specie in circulation in the Caribbean. Haiti stood accused, thus, of secretly harbouring specie and driving up slave prices since she had become the only country able to purchase them. At a time when specie was scarce, and sugar or slaves were often used as a general money form, Haiti was seen as avariciously hoarding all the standards of value available within the eighteenth century grammar of West Indian trade — gold, silver, slaves and sugar — and thus underdeveloping her neighbours.³⁹

The meanings transacted through trade, however, were not merely the result of the products themselves serving as symbols; the very terms of exchange itself were important. Eighteenth-century Haiti was a highly monetarised economy, with planters in possession of enough French francs to buy hundreds of slaves to work their sugar, coffee and cacao plantations. By sharp contrast, the Dominican Republic decayed into a

37 These ideas about Haiti are developed in my essay: 'Haitians, Magic and Money: Raza and Society in the Haitian-Dominican Borderlands, 1900 to 1937,' *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 36, no. 3 (July 1994), pp. 488–526.

38 This vision of Haiti as monopolising regional specie and value was not solely the province of Spanish colonists; the topic was of great concern in eighteenth century Jamaica. See Long, *The History of Jamaica*, p. 535. And Howard notes that even today Haitians are seen by Dominicans as having vampire-like qualities, such as blood-sucking and cannibalism (Howard, 'Colouring the Nation,' p. 63).

39 Even if these were calculated in pieces of eight, Spanish currency itself was rare.

colonial backwater after Spain's attention had shifted to the South American mainland, and specie was highly inflationary and hard to come by. In this largely barter economy, tobacco and other products were used as surrogate currency, and slaves were more frequently stolen from Haiti than purchased. These highly unequal terms of exchange served to establish rank on the island as Haiti achieved fame in part through her privileged relationship to France, which provided both economic backing and recognition.⁴⁰ Haitian opulence is clear in travel accounts such as Père Labat's who described the governor's palace at the north-western coastal town of Port-de-Paix as the 'most lovely he had seen in America', or in the fact that in the eighteenth century '*comme il faut*' meant distinguished in Dominican Spanish parlance.⁴¹ I argue here that notions of protonational difference were first outlined through the paths of commodities exchanged across the island, and that ideas about Haitian potency derived from its perceived sumptuary monopolisation of certain highly prized items, especially sugar, slaves, specie and precious metals.⁴² The effective monopoly of value of Haiti was severe enough to create a two-tier logic of exchange, within which Haiti traded with money, while other islands traded in barter, principally for agricultural produce, as well as cattle, tobacco and logwood.⁴³

Contraband, Cattle and Creole Society

Before dealing with the problem of how Haiti came to be seen as the sole repository of blackness on the island, one must explain what enabled Dominican mulattos to see themselves as 'constitutionally white'.⁴⁴ The answer lies in the character of Dominican slavery, and the period of sixteenth and seventeenth century economic decline. After the first attempts at mining and sugar had petered out and Spanish colonial attention had shifted to the more profitable mainland, the Dominican economy devolved into a smallholder's mixed economy of subsistence agriculture, cattle and tobacco production. The first wave of sugar and mining had led to the importing of some 20,000 slaves by the mid-sixteenth century, fre-

40 As in Nancy Munn's formulation developed in *The Fame of Gawa: A Symbolic Study of Value Transformation in a Massim (Papua New Guinea) Society* (Durham, 1992), p. 116.

41 R.P. Labat, *Viajes a las islas de la América*, Colección Nuestros Países (Havana, 1979 [1694]), p. 234; Moreau de St Mery, *Descripción*, p. 85.

42 Arjun Appadurai, 'Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value,' in Appadurai (ed.), *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (New York, 1986), pp. 3–63.

43 Edward Long even proposed that British possessions be allowed to pay taxes to the metropole in produce (as they had been for a short time), since they could pay in sugar (Long, *The History of Jamaica*, pp. 536–7).

44 Baud, 'Constitutionally White'; Peter R. Galvin, *Patterns of Pillage: A Geography of Caribbean-Based Piracy in Spanish America, 1536–1718* (New York), American University Studies XXV, Geography, vol. 5 (1999), p. 109.

quently staffing plantations with as many as 200 slaves, an enormous number for the period. But as Spanish attentions turned elsewhere, and rich planters moved on, the economy floundered due to mercantilist restrictions leaving producers with no outlet for their products nor source for provisions. As a result a flourishing contraband economy developed along the northern and southern coasts, in part in response to the rise of a thriving smuggling economy spurred by Dutch, French and English pirates and mercenaries. In the 1590s the Dutch had some 20 ships trading solely with Santo Domingo and Cuba. Indeed, the very term buccaneer derives from *boucaner*, to smoke, referring to the wild oxen and boar hunters on Hispaniola and subordinate northcoastal Tortuga Island. After the demise of sugar, many former slaves became *cimarrones* (runaway slaves) and retreated into the underpopulated mountains as itinerant peasants, while others found a highly lucrative outlet in this coastal pirate subculture. Labat noted that by 1693 most filibusterers and corsairs in the Caribbean were mulatto.⁴⁵ By 1677 contraband had become '*una verdadera tradición*' principally in the seas between Cuba and Hispaniola, and extending to Puerto Rico, Jamaica, Cartagena and Veracruz, with its 'acropolis' at Tortuga.⁴⁶

The rough and ready subculture of this hunting ecology flourished as long as there were ample stocks of wild boar and cattle, and a highly wasteful style of hunting developed, in which hundreds of boars were felled in a day.⁴⁷ Hunters were classed into two groups; those who hunted bulls for hides (known as *boucaniers*, who were considered far more skilled) and those who chased wild boar, for the sale of meat and fat to the planters.⁴⁸ The latter were called merely hunters and were known for their technique of forming the meat into long strips, the distinctive form of smoking used and its delicious taste. The two groups appear to have been quite distinct. Since the former was considered more skilled, it may have been principally an occupation practised by Europeans who had run away from positions as bond servants or ships' crew. The latter were frequently runaway slaves or half castes, locally known as *monteros*, who practised occasional swidden agriculture but were principally itinerant hunters whose diet consisted of large quantities of meat (at times eaten raw

45 Labat, *Viajes a las islas de la América*, p. 238.

46 Quoted in Michiel Baud, 'Peasant Society Under Siege: Tobacco Cultivators in the Cibao (Dominican Republic), 1870-1930,' PhD dissertation, Utrecht (1991), p. 19.

47 While Oviedo said that in 1535 hunters could kill 500 animals in a morning, later accounts testify to as many as 100 per day (Moreau de St Mery, *Descripción*, p. 99; Galvin, *Patterns of Pillage*, p. 114).

48 Biskumeling, *The Buccaneers of America*, translated by Alexis Brown (London, 1969), p. 54; Labat, *Viajes a las islas de la América*, p. 234. Labat describes the smoking process and praises the quality of the meat.

apparently).⁴⁹ They would remain in the mountains for stints of a year or two and then descend to La Tortuga for necessities such as muskets and shot, where they were known for drinking to excess and womanising.

By the late seventeenth century Spanish mercantilist restrictions had spawned a thriving contraband economy in which the pillage of gold, silver and pearls was combined with a bustling contraband trade in hides. Frequently semi-officialised European corsairs and freebooters seeking to break the Spanish maritime stronghold combined with Spanish colonists in dire need of slaves and manufactured goods to develop a veritable subculture with its own rules and regulations that operated in the interstices of Spanish mercantilism. The larger ships would operate under cover of official trade, obtaining all necessary permissions for the bulk of the cargo and then trading the concealed contraband merchandise on the side. The smaller ships, which were typically English, Dutch, French or Danish, would trade far from the principal cities at subordinate ports or at the mouths of rivers. The ritual of contraband trade started with cannon fire to alert local colonists that a ship had arrived, and always occurred at night. Called '*tráfico á la pica*', this commerce occurred in cash, among heavily armed men in small groups. Only a small array of goods was displayed, most remaining on ship to facilitate rapid disembarkation if necessary, and large sales to distinguished individuals were honoured with cannonfire.⁵⁰

Forged in opposition to Spanish rule, a truly Creole culture emerged through this prosperous contraband economy, one which provided ample space for former slaves to find upward mobility through a combination of smuggling and swidden agriculture and hunting, along with marooned shipmen and deserters, adventurers and runaway bondsmen who would try their fortune. As such a new symbiosis was forged between what Mintz has termed a 'protopeasant' economy based on shifting cultivation and wild boar and oxen hunting, scores of herds of which had multiplied in the wake of the withdrawal of the plantation economy, and the smugglers. A

49 William Walton describes the maroon hunting activities in some detail, especially those in the environs of Neyba; see his *Present State of the Spanish Colonies*, pp. 31-6. For more on the history and ecology of the *montero*, see Raymundo González, 'Ideología del progreso y campesinado en el siglo XIX,' *Ecos*, vol. 1, no. 2 (1993), pp. 25-43. The *jibaro* is the Puerto Rican equivalent, for which there is a more developed literature than the Dominican version; see Scarano 'The *Jibaro* Masquerade,' pp. 1398-1431, for a treatment that stresses the itinerancy and hunting features of the phenomenon. See Jorge Duany, 'Ethnicity in the Spanish Caribbean. Notes on the Consolidation of Creole Identity in Cuba and Puerto Rico, 1762-1868,' *Ethnic Groups*, vol. 6 (1985), pp. 99-123, esp. 112, for an account that describes the *jibaro* as principally a small-scale agriculturalist. One should not fix unduly the boundary separating hunters and pirates, however, since a good many hunters became pirates, and presumably vice versa.

50 Labat, *Viajes a la isla de la América*, p. 144.

new subculture was forged in which, due to mercantilist restrictions that stymied commerce, those on the margins of colonial society — fugitives, runaway slaves and servants, and *mestizos* who had nothing to lose — fled to the coasts where finding their knowledge of local territory and skills with a cutlass highly useful, many freedmen joined ships. For example, Sir Francis Drake, who pillaged the shores of Santo Domingo in 1571, picked up during his travels a 'faithful negro', Diego, who helped him establish communication with runaway slave communities in Panama who kept watch on Spanish whereabouts while he was looting their gold.⁵¹ After the stocks of wild game were depleted, diminishing the output of hides and smoked meat, Hispaniolan hunters scoured the coasts in small vessels seeking Spanish craft to plunder for gold and slaves. Indeed, these smugglers were so successful that the Spanish took to forcibly burning all settlements and their cattle along the northern coast in 1606 so as to force the population into the interior. But contraband continued to thrive and most likely even increased due to greater Caribbean Sea traffic.

With the rise of the Haitian sugar economy came a dramatic rise in trade to Hispaniola, and with it the stakes of freebooting. By the eighteenth century, corsairs from Hispaniola were not only notorious for their expertise as far afield as Mexico, but were capturing small fortunes. Not surprisingly, many were mulattos, especially among the small crews. In 1749 one Domingo Sánchez Moreno and his colleague took a British frigate of 22 cannon, 192 slaves, ivory, wax and dye, at an estimated worth of 32,000 pesos. Lorenzo Daniel was particularly fearsome due to his record capture of more than 70 English war and trade ships.⁵² And the mulatto shoemaker Miguel Enríquez became one of the wealthiest men in Puerto Rico through piracy; he lent money to the Church and had his own fleet of corsairs in the service of the Spanish Crown; he even succeeded in expelling the English from Vieques Island on two occasions.⁵³ During the era of contraband, northern coastal towns such as Monte Cristi and Port-de-Paix became cosmopolitan metropolises, teeming with Portuguese money and exotic spices, and attracting many freedmen looking to find their fortune. One contemporary observer attributed the development of agriculture *in toto* during the mid-eighteenth century to the bounties of contraband, which made more specie available to purchase slaves, which in turn increased production.⁵⁴ While a wild speculation to be sure, one per-

51 Sir Richard Carnac Temple, *The World Encompassed and Analogous Contemporary Documents concerning Sir Francis Drake's Circumnavigation of the World* (London, 1926), p. xxi.

52 Antonio Sánchez Valverde, *La Idea del valor en la isla española* (Ciudad Trujillo, 1947 [1780s]), p. 142.

53 Juan Guisti Cordero, Department of History, University of Puerto Rico at Rio Piedras, personal communication.

54 Sánchez Valverde, *Idea del valor*, p. 146.

son maintained that contraband accounted for a full one-sixth of all commerce, although an even higher figure might be conceivable.⁵⁵ Trade in contraband eventually became so financially rewarding that it began to take its toll on farming. By the turn of the eighteenth century, a petition was filed to the Crown for black slaves 'on credit' to help stimulate agriculture.⁵⁶

In the Spanish colony during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries slavery devolved into a system that barely resembled the corporate model elsewhere. The feature that made the Dominican case distinctive was that the free black population constituted the majority by the eighteenth century.⁵⁷ Colonial poverty made slave imports prohibitive outside the largest of firms; most plantations could only afford to purchase a handful. A Dutch bondservant himself employed by the French West India Company, Exquemelin, noted how scarce African slaves were on Hispaniola even by the late seventeenth century. He also claimed that, due to their short-term contracts, white bondsmen were worked harder and punished more severely than slaves, particularly when under contract to the hunters.⁵⁸

Ranching required a far looser regime of control than sugar, and thus consequently nurtured far more trust between masters and slaves. The fact that most slaves were employed singly or in pairs in cattle ranching encouraged paternalism and fostered identification with a patron who could offer various perks, privileges and upward mobility; it also helped forge vertical as well as horizontal ties of patron clientelism across the social divide.⁵⁹ On the cattle ranches, slave-master relations were quite intimate, particularly since the *hatos* typically only employed one or two slaves and the rancher and his men would spend weeks at a time on the road together.⁶⁰ In eighteenth-century Uruguay, for example, four or five slaves could control a herd of 250,000. Ranching was particularly appropriate to an economy in which capital was scarce and land was plentiful.⁶¹ Indeed, labour

55 *Ibid.*, p. 159.

56 Francisco Franco de Torquemada, 'Representación,' in Emilio Rodríguez Demorizi (ed.), *Relaciones históricas de Santo Domingo*, cited in Silvio Torres Saillant, 'Creoleness or Blackness?', p. 30.

57 Moreau de St Méry claims that there were 'fewer *libertos* than whites, but many in relation to blacks,' although he could have been including many mulattos who passed as white in that category (Moreau de St Méry, *Descripción*, p. 92).

58 Esquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America* (1969), p. 64.

59 Michiel Baud notes that among the tobacco producers of the Cibao valley in the nineteenth century, cross-class interracial unions out of wedlock through the institution of the mistress were the norm (Michiel Baud, *Peasants and Tobacco in the Dominican Republic, 1870-1930* [Knoxville, TN, 1995]).

60 For more on slavery and *cimarronaje* in the Dominican Republic, see Carlos Esteban Deive, *Los guerrilleros negros: esclavos fugitivos y cimarrones en Santo Domingo* (Santo Domingo, 1989); and Ruben Silié, *Economía, esclavitud y población: ensayos de interpretación histórica del Santo Domingo español en el siglo XVIII* (Santo Domingo, 1976).

61 Rodríguez Molas cited in Baretta and Markoff, 'Cattle Frontiers in Latin America', p. 599.

relations in not only cattle but also contraband tended toward intensely personal bonds. Considered inviolable, buccaneers were characteristically fiercely loyal to each other, sharing all booty together. Called *matelotage*, the bonds forged in the intimate ties of codependency among corsairs and pirates were highly ritualised and typically included homosexual ties.⁶²

While it may not be fair to describe slavery in the Dominican Republic as more benign than elsewhere, one can say that relations with owners and employers tended to be intimate, if hierarchical. Most Dominican slaves were domestic, and many of those who relied on slave labour commonly rented it for the day, since they were too poor to purchase it outright. Slave labour was even rented by the day in fairly capitalised firms, such as cigar factories.⁶³ In the most technologically advanced enterprise of the period — sugar — the largest firm in the country was composed of 200 slaves — far inferior to Jamaica, for example. And even on the largest plantations, ties of ritual co-parentage actually linked whites and slaves, making for a less distanced style of authority relations than other slave regimes.⁶⁴

Dominicans did own slaves, yet after the collapse of the early plantation economy, these were most often acquired illicitly. This fact must have fostered Dominicans' tendency to define slavery as something not really their own. Indeed, the bulk of slaves arriving in Santo Domingo during this period were not bought directly, but rather plundered as spoils at sea or stolen and resold. Given the shortage of slave labour, a thriving branch of the contraband economy was that of brigands who operated in the border regions of Haiti and the Dominican Republic who either captured runaways or stole slaves from large French plantations and then bartered them off for cash or cattle. They were also known for kidnapping whites and charging ransom in slaves. Some individuals based in Santiago boldly travelled to Haiti where they robbed slaves to sell in Spanish territory, presumably at locally affordable prices, undercutting slavers with high overheads to recoup. The problem became so severe under Toussaint Louverture that a formal complaint was lodged against the Spanish authorities. Many of these brigands were themselves black or brown, probably Spanish Creoles.⁶⁵ And most slaves purchased on Spanish terrain were not paid for in cash, but rather swapped for tobacco, cattle or other livestock

62 B.R. Burg, *Sodomy and the Pirate Tradition. English Sea Rovers in the Seventeenth-Century Caribbean* (New York, 1983), p. 128. For more on pirate culture during this period, see Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, and W. Jeffrey Bolster, *Black Jacks: African American Seamen in the Age of Sail* (Cambridge, MA, 1997).

63 Sánchez Valverde, *Ensayos* (Santo Domingo, 1988), pp. 249–50.

64 David Barry Gaspar, 'Slave Resistance in the Spanish Caribbean in the Mid-1790s,' in David Barry Gaspar and David Patrick Geggus (eds.), *A Turbulent Time: The French Revolution and the Greater Caribbean* (Bloomington, 1997), p. 142.

65 *Ibid.*, p. 143, note 197.

or otherwise acquired. This fact is particularly notable since both tobacco and cattle, as we shall see, are major symbols of Spanish Creole identity. If slavery in the Dominican Republic was associated with illicit wealth originating outside the nation, perceived as stolen booty, one can begin to see why. By the eighteenth century, slaves were rarely categorised generically as a unit, as '*esclavos*', but rather it was always noted whether they were '*esclavos franceses*' or Creoles, the former presumed to be fugitives escaping harsh crimes, runaways or illegitimately acquired. In the Dominican Republic, not only was slavery perceived as exogenous, as exotic and illegitimate, but blackness was not primarily associated with the slave condition since most Blacks in the Spanish colony were freedmen.

There was enough colonial legislation seeking to curb the advances of freedmen to indicate that they were not only doing well, but too well. Moreau de St. Mery, who visited Santo Domingo in 1783, reported that 'color prejudice, which in other countries has erected a barrier between whites and freedmen or their descendents almost does not exist.' But then, how could it, when 'the great majority of the Spanish colonists are mestizos'.⁶⁶ Laws were passed restricting blacks from wearing the finery of their social superiors such as gold jewellery, pearls, silk or draping shawls, which must have been quite commonplace to merit official intervention. There was also a law preventing freedmen from certain professions, such as secretaries, notaries, the judiciary, the military or the civil service. Yet clearly these juridical barriers were being frequently violated, since the assimilation and advance of mulattos was such that it drew protests from the metropolis when freedmen were encroaching on teaching and the priesthood by the early 1700s.⁶⁷ 'Racial drift' or the effective absorption of mixed-race into the social category of whiteness either by acquiring capital or adopting the demeanour of the upper class must have been commonplace given St Mery's observation that 'the political construction of the Spanish colony does not allow deference before the civil status of a white and a freedman'.⁶⁸ By 1794 there were nearly a third more freedmen than slaves, and the numbers of both greatly outstripped that of whites.⁶⁹

The frontier nature of the economy provided more avenues for upward mobility than the more developed corners of the Spanish Empire. For example, given the lax disciplinary controls of the cattle economy, it was relatively easy for labourers to escape the ranches and either commence

66 Moreau de Saint Mery, *Descripción*, p. 93.

67 Hoetink, *The Dominican People, 1850–1900. Notes for a Historical Sociology*, translated by Stephen K. Ault (Baltimore, 1982) p. 183.

68 Moreau de Saint Mery, *Descripción*, p. 94. On 'racial drift', see Kuznesof and Schwartz, 'Race, Class and Gender: A Conversation,' *Colonial Latin American Review*, vol. 4, no. 1 (1995), pp. 153–201.

69 *The Dominican People*, p. 183.

their own herd, or start their own business selling cattle parts. This must have been quite commonplace, given ordinances specifically aimed at curtailing freed black cattle rustlers by resettling them on the outskirts of the capital city.⁷⁰ Indeed, the tension between agriculturalists and hunters, which was commonplace throughout Latin American frontiers, had a racial valence in this case, with whiter farmers, frustrated by wild boar herds, taking specific legislative aim at the coloured population. Complaints also arose in the world of commerce that 'the white population does not have useful employment because the mechanical trades and retail business are in the hands of free blacks and dark coloureds'.⁷¹ Travellers were consistently shocked at the 'hauteur and overbearing pride' of the Creoles, who probably challenged their sense of appropriate demeanour for those who had only fairly recently escaped the shackles of slavery.⁷²

However, the most important Afro-Creole domain was the backwoods, where many *cimarrón* communities had formed, one of which was even officially recognised by both French and Spanish authorities. Lundahl estimates that by the 1770s, Haitian maroons were the majority in Dominican border towns, and at mid-century 3,000 slaves from the French colony were resident in Spanish border areas (although to be fair the borderline itself was only really established in 1777 when the western area was ceded to France in the Treaty of Aranjuez).⁷³

But to mention only the runaway slave communities presumes that black culture was merely an isolated enclave. Indeed, the fact that slavery was not practised in a discrete zone meant that blackness was patently not bounded, but rather (as Esteban Deive argues) touched Dominican culture as a whole.⁷⁴ Indeed, the free black and mulatto nomadic peasantry practising slash and burn cultivation and only occasional cash cropping as needed was neither marginal nor a minority. Rather, they formed the bulk of the rural population outside the Cibao valley, where the export crop tobacco was produced.⁷⁵ And even the proud Santiago de los Caballeros,

70 *Ibid.*, p. 146.

71 *Ibid.*, p. 183.

72 Walton, *Present State of the Spanish Colonies*, p. 380. Comments of this nature appear in nearly every travel account cited here. Bryan Edwards wages the same nature of complaint about West Indian Creoles, who he said suffered from 'ostentatious pride,' a 'ridiculous affectation of splendor' and an exaggerated 'consciousness of self importance' (*The History, Civil and Commercial, of the British Colonies in the West Indies*, vol. III [London, 1801]), p. 9.

73 Mats Lundahl, 'Haitian Migration to the Dominican Republic,' in his *The Haitian Economy: Man, Land and Markets* (New York, 1993), pp. 112–13.

74 Carlos Esteban Deive, *La esclavitud del negro en Santo Domingo (1492–1844)*, vols. I and II (Santo Domingo, 1980).

75 For a sense of the prevalence of the *montero*, see Sánchez Valverde, *Idea del valor*. Walton (*Present State of the Spanish Colonies*) describes the ubiquity of both *monteros* and maroons.

considered the seat of the agrarian aristocracy, was described in 1666 as a town of hunters and planters (in that order).⁷⁶ Called *monteria*, this style of rural existence was the bane of eighteenth and nineteenth century liberals, who saw its dispersion as anathema to a cultural grid that privileged urbanism as the seat of civilisation and culture. They lamented that the *monteros* 'never see the capital just like the first Indians' and worried incessantly about how to harness their labour for national development.⁷⁷ This free coloured community was also seen as patently dangerous because it could serve as a sponge for escaped slaves fleeing *ingenios* and haciendas. Yet it is clear that the *montero* mountain peasant was critical in defining a patently Creole lifestyle, one that resisted sedentary agriculture, developing small subsistence plots called *conucos* only as needed, and only partially entering market relations. Yet, contrary to protopeasants elsewhere in the Caribbean, these were first and foremost hunters, and only very partially agriculturalists.⁷⁸

Contemporary observers vilified the *monteros* as the quintessential barbarians who refused to sell at market, wear proper clothes or live in towns. They were 'a funny sight', with their black rags, stained with blood and grease, a leather belt threaded with four daggers and a cartridge box and rough-hewn sandals.⁷⁹ They actually figure far more negatively than slaves because they resided completely outside the social order. The slave was subhuman but he at least was located within society — even if on the bottom rung. A 1793 rural report wrote,

the free blacks are the worst ... they are hopeless; they usually live in the bush, as they desire total freedom and independence; they run around almost naked, and are the cause of all the problems that are committed and could be committed on the island. Estos negros son la mayor parte vagos, malentretrenidos ... amancebados, ebrios y ladrones.⁸⁰

To the *monteros*' credit, however, shifting agriculture was a sensible response to the low demographic density of eastern Hispaniola. As late as 1871 only one tenth of the land in La Vega province was in cultivation.⁸¹

76 Esquemeling, *The Buccaneers*, p. 24.

77 Sánchez Valverde, *Idea de valor*, p. 148. The state was too weak to effect a passbook system, which succeeded in sedentising the corresponding *jibaro* population in Puerto Rico.

78 Thus this model resembles more the Puerto Rican style of peasantry than that of Haiti or the British West Indies, where provision grounds were the basis of market relations even within slavery, and thus the basis of the 'protopeasantry' for Mintz and Creole society for Trouillot; see Michel-Rolph Trouillot, 'Culture on the Edges: Creolization in the Plantation Context,' *Plantation Society in the Americas*, vol. V, no. 1 (Spring 1998), pp. 8–28.

79 Labat, *Viajes a las islas de la América*, p. 246.

80 Raymundo González, 'Hay tres clases de gentes en la campaña ...,' *El Caribe*, 23 November 1991, p. 18.

81 Hoctink, *The Dominican People*, p. 5.

Contrary to the fears of *hacendados* and *hateros*, however, free blacks in the Spanish colony appear to have rarely identified with slaves. Indeed, during the rural tumult caused by the Haitian Revolution in the 1790s, the *monteros* more often offered their services in the *marchausée* — groups formed to hunt slave runaways. In the view of a visitor to the island in 1828, there were:

few slaves on this part of the island and these were living in so great a state of equality with the people that slavery was only known by name. They evinced no desire whatsoever to throw off their adherence to their masters and join their brethren of the west.⁸²

Further evidence of the exemplary patriotism of free coloureds is that a group of upstanding mulattos helped fight the British to actually maintain Spanish colonial control in 1810.⁸³ Some notorious *moreno* criminals even focused their attacks primarily on slaves, killing and injuring them.⁸⁴ French minister Raybaud wrote that Dominican Blacks

felt too proud of the social superiority that daily contact with their masters imparted them over the slaves in the French section to consent to imitate the latter whom they haughtily called '*los negros*'.⁸⁵

If the Spanish colonists perceived the *monteros* as completely autarchic, that was not entirely the case. Spatially autonomous, these mountain peasants did maintain active if sporadic relations with the market. Indeed, the *monteros* commenced tobacco production for trading purposes in the latter sixteenth century, finding the British, French and Dutch avid purchasers.⁸⁶ Tobacco served their needs because it could be dried and easily transported, as well as saved; tobacco, alongside the pig, rapidly became the savings bank of the rural poor, a means of quick and ready cash. By 1678 some two million pounds of tobacco leaf were exported to France.⁸⁷ These two valuable exports — tobacco and livestock — created a symbiosis between

82 James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti (Saint Domingo,) with Remarks on its Agriculture, Commerce, Laws, Religion, Finances, and Population, etc., etc.* (Westport, CT, 1970 [1828]), p. 184.

83 Fradique Lizardo, *Cultura africana en Santo Domingo* (Santo Domingo, 1979), p. 53, cited in Torres Saillant, 'Creoleness or Blackness?' p. 31.

84 I have in mind the case of the '*negro incognito*'; see Raymundo González, 'El "Comegente" atacaba personas y propiedades cerca de las poblaciones,' *El Caribe*, 28 September 1991. Although González argues that the attacks on blacks may have been an attack on the most precious property of Spanish colonial society, and thus not really on the blacks per se at all.

85 Raybaud cited in Hoetink, *The Dominican People*, p. 186.

86 Esquemeling states that tobacco production was begun expressly for the purposes of trade (*The Buccaneers of America*, p. 48).

87 Baud, 'Peasant Society under Siege,' p. 20.

the *monteros* and smugglers, as producers and traders, both of which were 'marked by vigorous, often violent antipathy against traditional authority'⁸⁸ — to Spanish colonial society and its mercantile restrictions.

As a result, tobacco and cattle came to symbolise an emergent Creole identity, one associated if implicitly with free blacks and mulattos and a racial democracy in which there were multiple opportunities for upward mobility, unlike plantation crops such as cacao or sugar which required slave labour and produced a rigid virtual caste system. This is clear in the writings of nineteenth century Dominican liberal Pedro Francisco Bonó, whose ideas regarding the virtues of tobacco cultivation influenced Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz's musings about tobacco and sugar. In the words of Bonó, 'cacao is oligarchical and tobacco is democratic ... all the workers work together, all of them earning, producing and consuming national produce and giving life to society'.⁸⁹ Bonó saw tobacco as one of the key formative influences in the development of this cosmopolitan society and new 'race', which was a mixture of the caucasian, the Indian and the African, which he contrasted to Haiti, which was seen as exclusively black.⁹⁰ Indeed, tobacco became a key trope for late eighteenth and nineteenth century liberal boosters who wanted to promote national development through challenging the pessimism of Eurocentric racial theorising. Just as tobacco was superior to sugar (which produced 'excessive profit and caused a risk to our nationalities'),⁹¹ Dominican *criollos* were superior to the French colonists of neighbouring Haiti who were consumed by the tropics; Creoles, by contrast, live longer and get stronger the farther they are from their European origin.⁹²

If intellectuals such as Bonó constructed tobacco and sugar as symbols of Creole identity and its antithesis, thus the Dominican Republic and its difference to Haiti, they did not entirely invent them. Given the pervasive

88 Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, p. 275.

89 Rodríguez Demorizi (ed.), *Papeles de Pedro F. Bonó*, p. 363.

90 *Ibid.*, p. 399. Interestingly, while Bonó embraces tobacco and the racial democracy it helped forge, he vilifies its primary producers, the *monteros*, for their stubborn refusal to live in groups or towns. As he states, 'Nuestro pueblo, señor A., tiene prendas relevantes individuales, es bravo, audaz, es bondadoso, hospitalario, sencillo, trabajador, inteligente, emprendedor. Separadamente individuo por individuo, es de lo mejor que hay en el mundo, pero tomado colectivamente es casi inútil; no tiene la sociedad dominicana esa cohesión indispensable de toda agrupación humana que quiere ser definitivamente independiente, dueña absoluta de sus destinos. El fondo de nuestro carácter nacional lo constituye el particularismo, el individualismo. No se percibe en ninguno de sus actos la nota predominante que constituye el alma de las naciones estables' (p. 399).

91 *Ibid.*, p. 610. For more on Bonó, see Raymundo González, 'El pensamiento de Bonó: Nación y clases trabajadoras,' in González et al. (eds.), *Política, identidad y pensamiento social*, pp. 41–64; and Bonó, *un intelectual*.

92 Sánchez Valverde, *Idea del valor*, p. 163.

poverty and lack of specie, Dominican traders more frequently swapped tobacco for slaves than bought them with cash. Indeed, tobacco, the key smallholder cash crop, and cattle, collected by free black hunters on the north coast or produced by southern ranchers, were the two most important surrogate currencies used for acquiring slaves.⁹³ It is not surprising, then, that cattle and tobacco became popular linked symbols of national value, race mixture and Creole identity. Evidence is the fact that Dominican peasants class their tobacco leaf into two varieties, *criollo* and *oler*. Being from local seeds (*oler* seeds were originally from Cuba) *criollo* is favoured for export due to its rich growth and large leaf. The language used to describe the Creole leaf not surprisingly invokes the *mestizo*: dark brown or dark cinnamon in colour and slightly chocolate in aroma. If both the kitchen garden or provision ground and its produce, food, are staple symbols of *lo criollo*, then it makes sense that the *montero* style of tobacco planting was to intersperse it with food crops such as manioc, corn and beans in the *conuco*, the small subsistence food plots of the itinerant *montero* or free black.⁹⁴ Significantly, tobacco was also planted inside the backyard pigpen.⁹⁵ Interestingly, there are other local tobacco varieties that are not exported and which all invoke cattle: *ranchero*, *lengua de vaca*, *rabo de mula* and *el hatero*.⁹⁶ The cross-pollination of tobacco and cattle names here is significant since it underscores their common identity as linked Creole symbols that form part of the same regime of value, which seemed to become even more Creole in the very act of exchange with outsiders. Tobacco and cattle were thus 'earmarked monies' which came to represent the emerging domestic Creole identity of the Spanish colonists, ones which were seen as distinct from the fabulous yet clandestine wealth of the illicit 'sweet trade' whose bounty of gold, silver, slaves, pearls, specie, sugar and other forms of treasure seemed to appear out of nowhere, and often vanished just as fast.⁹⁷ Although the *montero*-buccaneer relationship was symbiotic,

93 *Ibid.*, p. 157.

94 Baud, 'Peasant Production,' p. 24 and Baud, 'A Colonial Counter Economy: Tobacco Production on Española, 1500-1870,' *Nieuwe West-Indische Gids/New West Indian Guide*, vol. 65, nos. 1 and 2 (1991); pp. 27-49. Trouillot places the provision grounds at the centre of Creole identity production in 'Culture on the Edges'. Sánchez Valverde states: 'Conucos se llaman en Santo Domingo las labranzas de frutos del país, que en cierto número de varas de terreno hacen regularmente los negro libres, etc., o los esclavos jornaleros, a quienes lo conceden los propietarios que no pueden cultivar la área de su pertenencia, por el precio de cinco pesos al año' (Sánchez Valverde, *Idea del valor*, p. 202).

95 Sánchez Valverde, *Idea del valor*, p. 157.

96 Baud, 'Peasant Society under Siege,' appendix: pp. 200-01. For more on Bonó and his contribution to the symbolics of Creole identity in the Dominican Republic, see my essay, 'Gringo Chickens with Worms'.

97 The notion of earmarked monies is from Viviana A. Zelizer, *The Social Meaning of Money: Pin Money, Paychecks, Poor Relief, and other Currencies* (New York, 1994), pp. 1-35.

they were distinguished by the fact that the latter had far more ready access to cash, the lack of which made for certain critical scarcities on land, particularly of manufactured goods. For example, the clothes of Spanish colonists were so ragged that mass was held before sunrise to avoid embarrassment and many women avoided mass altogether for lack of proper shawls.⁹⁸ While buccaneers sought exclusively treasure and high value luxury goods, *monteros* were quite particular about the goods they traded for, requesting only items useful to their hunting needs, such as cloth, shot and gunpowder; they were not interested in accumulation for its own sake.⁹⁹

Indeed, cattle functioned as a virtual currency within the Spanish colony. Interestingly, the very term originated in the Mediaeval Latin *capitale*, which meant funds or holdings. Cattle and its byproducts from the Spanish colony were highly valued in the region, and were taken to be a standard of value, within the colony and without.¹⁰⁰ Indeed, even if payment was reckoned in terms of pieces of eight, seventeenth-century Spanish currency; leather was as good as silver when it came to reckoning ransom and was commonly used as specie.¹⁰¹ Smoked meat was recognised to be the lifeblood of the economy.¹⁰² The Church accepted tithes in calves. So central were cattle to the contraband economy that when the Spanish sought in vain to curtail the black market along the north coast of the island, they did so by ordering the slaughter of all cattle in 1684. Cattle were so singularly important that they served as a means of political currency and leverage by the state.¹⁰³ If slaves were the *m*-commodity par excellence of the eighteenth century, cattle were their mirror, and the two were often coupled as related yet distinct in the imagination of the time. The commensurability of cattle and slaves, for example, was key to the exchange rate of the slave trade in the Caribbean; it was also taken for granted in contemporary parlance.¹⁰⁴

The Haitian Occupation

The period when sugar and cattle were solidified as signs of alterity was the nineteenth century when Haiti entered the sugar bonanza and the

98 Moreau de St Mery, *Descripción*, p. 85.

99 Labat, *Viajes a las islas de la América*, p. 245. Galvin, *Patterns of Pillage*, mentions the fortunes of former buccaneers who retired to civil service on Tortuga Island (pp. 109-68).

100 See Labat's comments on how delicious and unique was the taste of the cured meat produced by Santo Domingo buccaneers, which he says 'is infinitely more delicious and delicate' than other smoked meats (*Viajes a las islas de América*, pp. 234-35).

101 Galvin, *Patterns of Pillage*, p. 132; and Edwards, *An Historical Survey*, p. 136.

102 Moreau de St Mery, *Descripción*, p. 105.

103 As when the Spanish governor froze all French cattle withdrawals to pressure them to sign the border Treaty of Aranjuez in 1773 (Moreau de St Mery, *Descripción*, p. 25).

104 Edwards, *British Colonies*, p. 151.

Dominican economy was cast as its primary source for oxen, mules, meat and hide. Sugar came to stand in for the cluster of associations surrounding the contraband economy. Deployed as a currency, West Indian planters even paid their taxes in sugar in the eighteenth century.¹⁰⁵ As surrogate specie, then, sugar invoked the economy of piracy that virtually monopolised most regional currency from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. By the mid-eighteenth century, the spectacular growth of sugar production in Haiti had created a thriving market for skins and smoked meat products, and as a result the Dominican ranching economy expanded, especially in the frontier areas due to their proximity to Port-au-Prince, the Haitian capital. A guaranteed market also provided an incentive to improve herds, and cattle quality improved along with yields.¹⁰⁶ Ruben Silié describes the Dominican Republic as 'doubly dependent' during this period,¹⁰⁷ upon Spain as well as Haiti, which became the primary consumer of Dominican products, as well as its key link to global markets for products such as mahogany and dyewoods, which were shipped through Haiti to Europe. One observer estimated that the French purchased upwards of 25,000 head of cattle and 2,500 mules and horses, and that the Spanish spent some half a million dollars per year in Haiti purchasing manufactured goods, tools and slaves.¹⁰⁸ This trade was so profitable that the Crown tried hard to tax it, though in vain.¹⁰⁹ By the onset of the Haitian Revolution (1791–1804) there was a clear sense of symbiotically linked yet distinct modes of production on the island, with a flourishing and extensive ranching economy in the east, and a far more prosperous sugar economy in the west (even if the Haitian revolutionary period had been depressionary, since the frontier zones were evacuated and the east was drawn into the civil war). Although the Haitian Revolution itself, which brought successive waves of French, Haitian and British troops onto Dominican terrain, piqued nationalist sensibilities among Dominicans, most slaves actually allied with their owners.¹¹⁰ In the aftermath of the Haitian Revolution fears of possible further foreign intervention drove Haitian leaders to invade and finally occupy the Dominican Republic (1822–44).

The Dominican response was complex and varied considerably by region and social group. In response to rumours encouraged by Haiti that free coloureds could be reenslaved by the French, there was popular support for the intervention in certain regions. Dominican slaves certainly

105 At a time when produce was inadmissible. See Long, *The History of Jamaica*, p. 537.

106 Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti*, p. 26.

107 Silié, *Economía, esclavitud y población*, pp. 35 and 24.

108 Franklin, *Present State of Hayti*, p. 35.

109 Sánchez Valverde, *Idea del valor*, p. 157.

110 Franklin, *Present State of Hayti*, p. 28. See Geggus 'Slave Resistance' for an account of slave revolts in Santo Domingo and Cuba during the revolution.

rejoiced at the unilateral abolition of slavery, which had been declared earlier by Louverture but not enforced. Dominicans in the border zones supported incorporation, since Haiti was their primary market. Moreover, many of the poor were captivated by promises of land grants to freedmen and the abolition of taxes. And some elites felt that union with Haiti would be progressive and could help spur economic development in the east. There was even intellectual support among certain liberals, who rallied in favour of an island confederation.¹¹¹

The basic thrust of Haitian President Boyer's economic policy was the modernisation of land and labour in the Dominican Republic, in an effort to reinvigorate a sagging economy in Haiti. The privatisation of land tenure and the promotion of cash cropping for export became the key watchwords. The revolutionary war had rung the death knell for the plantation economy, as former slaves fled into the countryside to become subsistence farmers. At the same time, the government had agreed to pay an indemnity to France in exchange for recognition and needed to jump-start the ailing economy in order to commence these payments. The first step was the privatisation of land, which had dramatic repercussions in the east where most land was *ejido* or public land for ranching purposes, and most private property was held in common, as *terrenos comuneros*. Church properties were nationalised, and émigré and public lands were recouped, some of which were doled out to revolutionary war veterans instead of a pension. All land that could not prove private ownership was subject to nationalisation for the purposes of redistribution.¹¹² In an effort to conduct more effective taxation the government issued a new round of currency, a highly unpopular move since paper emissions were seen as inflationary, 'ruinous' and even 'fatal', and the new copper coinage was described as too 'diminutive' for Haiti's 'national greatness'.¹¹³ The State sought to counter a widespread culture of economic subterfuge, such as the peasantry's proclivity to engage in 'subterranean investments in capital'.¹¹⁴ Many merchants operated through exchanges of coffee credit rather than cash; and the peasantry frequently invested their earnings in

111 Bonóin Demorizi (ed.), *Papeles de Pedro F. Bonó*, p. 610.

112 For more on the land question during the Haitian period, see Frank Moya Pons' essay, 'The Land Question in Haiti and Santo Domingo: The Sociopolitical Context of the Transition from Slavery to Free Labor, 1801–1843,' in Manuel Moreno Fraginals et al. (eds.), *The Spanish Speaking Caribbean in the Nineteenth Century* (Baltimore, 1985), pp. 181–214; for more on *terrenos comuneros*, see Samuel Hazard, *Santo Domingo, Past and Present; with a Glance at Hayti* (New York, 1873), pp. 481–84, and Sánchez Valverde, *Idea del valor*, p. 149.

113 For a criticism of paper currency emissions, see Long, *History of Jamaica*, p. 533; for the rationale against copper coinage and Haitian national value, see Brown, *Santo Domingo*, p. 262.

114 *Ibid.*, p. 287.

'treasure', which they buried alongside their coinage. Great sums of cash did disappear in this way, even though this practice was prohibited by law. In 1837, for example, 20,000 gold doubloons — a considerable fortune — were discovered under a plantation near Cap François, and smaller troves were found hidden near Port-au-Prince and St Marc.¹¹⁵

The main obstacle to the effective execution of these measures was the confused system of land tenancy in the Dominican Republic. Called *terrenos comuneros*, much of the land in the east was held collectively, with each owner possessing shares (*pesos* or *acciones*) in usufruct, a system developing in the seventeenth century during a period when the man-land ratio was overwhelmingly in favour of the latter. The resultant lack of clear private property in land was seen by the Haitian regime as a major impediment to progress; as a result, legislation was introduced to force sales of all land for which tenancy could not be proved.¹¹⁶ Simultaneous to clarifying private land tenure, the regime sought to require production for export. If former Haitian slaves withdrew from plantation labour due to its association with slavery, the Dominican problem was different: there simply was no widespread practice of commercial agriculture, market relations were not ubiquitous and there was a long history, as we have seen, of barter and contraband. To add muscle to this effort, Boyer then implemented the Rural Code, a vagrancy law requiring everyone to till the land, excepting only a few privileged categories of professionals, such as civil servants and professors. Boyer clearly had his own reasons for seeking to augment state revenues — the need to offset the repeasantisation of the Haitian economy and the resultant collapse of the sugar plantation economy. But these moves were most likely heralded by Dominican liberals who had long since tried to find a way to make peasants out of the *monteros* — to capture the labour of a group which had successfully resisted state capture. As José Ramón Abad lamented,

The land should be the well-guaranteed property of the cultured man, the always fertile workshop of regular and orderly work, not the wrong-headed, unproductive and anonymous pastures of ranching, nor the silent theatre of a vagabond life.¹¹⁷

While the voices of liberal critics became louder over the course of the nineteenth century, a shrill minority at mid-century launched attacks on the itinerant black peasantry as an anti-national force, one which could only become 'true citizens' through the virtues of commercial agriculture and

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ This account derives from Frank Moya Pons, *La dominación haitiana: 1822-44* (Santiago, 1973).

¹¹⁷ José Ramón Abad, *La República Dominicana: reseña general geográfico-estadística* (Santo Domingo, 1888), p. 288.

participation in national markets.¹¹⁸ Boyer's efforts were ultimately a failure, due to the monumentality of the task of overhauling and modernising the land system and the lack of state resources for surveying. And the *terrenos comuneros* were one issue that united elite and peasant Dominican opposition to Boyer alike, since anyone engaged in some sedentary agriculture used this archaic and deeply Creole system for apportioning usufruct, one in which rights to cultivate, harvest and cull wood, for example, on a single plot were discrete and could be assigned to different individuals.¹¹⁹ If 1822 was a good year for the economy, by 1835 a general agricultural decline had set in throughout the island, exacerbated by the US economic crisis, which Boyer sought in vain to avert through inflationary money emissions — by devaluing the Haitian gourde 250 per cent. And the contraband economy based on cattle ground to a halt since unification eliminated trade with Haiti.¹²⁰

The Haitian occupation created a head-on clash between two economic logics. As a result of the sugar plantation economy, Haiti had experienced a far more thorough integration into global commerce and commercial agriculture than the Dominican Republic — the strength of its national currency until the revolution being a prime example. A history of ranching, wild meat hunting and shifting agricultural production based on communal lands made for a radically different economic logic, one that clashed with the Haitian State's agenda when it sought to foster commercial agriculture. The occupation was to confirm the difference between these two regimes of value: if Haiti had a monopoly on what were considered the key seventeenth and eighteenth century commodities — bullion, specie, sugar and slaves — the independent state had money.¹²¹ The impoverished east by contrast had only cattle, tobacco, mahogany and land — all of which had served as alternative protocurrencies in inter-island trade, but had more limited exchange value on the global stage. If the economic disruption brought by the Haitian Revolution had created a situation in which 'the widespread poverty was such that distinct classes almost

¹¹⁸ The 'true citizens' quote is from Hoetink, *The Dominican People*, p. 9. See also Raymundo González, 'Ideología del progreso y campesinado,' pp. 25-44. My thanks to Raymundo for sharing with me his extensive knowledge of nineteenth century Dominican primary sources.

¹¹⁹ Hazard, noted in Hoetink, *The Dominican People*, Hoetink argues that *terrenos comuneros* were a Creole invention in Mörner (ed.), *Race and Class*, p. 103, noting that Del Monte y Tejada mentions fifty *hatos* or ranches that had been individually owned, but which subsequently devolved into *terrenos comuneros*. On the other hand, discrete and distinct overlapping forms of usufruct was a feature of mediaeval Spanish land tenure as well.

¹²⁰ Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti*, p. 297.

¹²¹ The Dominican Republic got its first national currency in 1944, when the National Bank was formed by Rafael Trujillo; before that time a series of regional currencies and the US dollar circulated.

ceased to exist; the purchasing powers of the *hacendado* and the free mulatto were on a par'.¹²² This process of social levelling was furthered by the Haitian occupation due to the attack on the two key factors of production: large landowners and slaves.

During the latter half of the nineteenth century, the racial topography of the Dominican Republic witnessed dramatic change. But the major change occurred in the 1870s, when US corporate firms began installing enormous sugar *centrales* along the southern coast of the island. To staff these enormous enterprises cheaply, they imported contract labour from Haiti and the West Indies for seasonal work cutting cane during the milling season. If the Dominican Republic successfully avoided the first wave of plantation agriculture and the resultant pattern of sharp racial and class stratification, they suffered the second acutely in ways that had dramatic repercussions for the relationship between race and national identity. The creation of a foreign labour niche almost exclusively staffed by Haitians created a new association between blackness and a particularly opprobrious form of labour — unskilled, underpaid, highly dangerous and back-breaking — based on contracts resembling slavery. This new ethnic enclave had been foisted upon the country by US firms and thus was perceived ultimately as yet another US insult to the national patrimony, as Baud asserts, 'Anti-Yankee feelings thus confirmed and reinforced anti-Haitian feelings'.¹²³ This new ethnic labour market segmentation had the dual effect of both denationalising blackness, by making it synonymous with Haiti (as well as the evil machinations of the USA), just as it enabled Dominicans to claim whiteness as a result of the fact they could suddenly see themselves as 'superior' to Haitians for avoiding any participation in this new, disagreeable unskilled form of labour.¹²⁴

This new triangle formed between the USA, Haiti and the Dominican Republic was reinforced even further during the 1920s US military occupations of the two nations. In the US racial gaze, both countries were equally black, since US racial taxonomies did not allow for mixed-race status. The new demeaning conflation between unskilled work and blackness may have created a logic whereby Dominicans sought to reclaim social

122 Hoetink, *The Dominican People*, p. 168.

123 Baud, 'Constitutionally White,' pp. 131–2. Torres Saillant has another take on this, arguing that the ideology of Dominican whitening has arisen in relation to US imperial penetration, representing Dominican elites' need to be recognised and valued by the USA ('Creolence or Blackness?', p. 40). Aviva Chomsky alleges that a similar mix of anti-imperialism and anti-Haitianism developed in Cuba as a result of contract labour; see her essay, 'Barbados or Canada?'

124 See Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York, 1995), for a parallel argument about Irish identity and labour market segmentation in nineteenth-century urban America.

honour by distancing themselves as far as possible from Haiti and Haitians, so as to move closer to whiteness. Only in this way could they avoid bearing the brunt of US sambo stereotypes at a moment when, under US direct rule, they were suddenly painfully aware of the US perception of them as black due to the imposition of Jim Crow segregation on their home terrain. Thus, by providing an avenue for accentuating their difference from Haiti, anti-Haitianism seemed to move Dominicans closer to whiteness on a scale of gradation. In sum, the contract labour scheme inaugurated an entirely new phase in the changing relationship between race and national identity in the Dominican Republic, as blackness was ethnicised through labour force segmentation, reinforcing Dominicans' proclivity to see blackness as a thing apart.¹²⁵

Conclusion

'Of money, as a central sign of civilization.'¹²⁶

Daniel Webb

While traditional Dominican historians have maintained that anti-Haitianism commenced with the Haitian occupation and continued unabated until the present, I would argue that this view accords far too much causal weight to the occupation itself. It provides a nationalist narrative that is sentimentally appealing, and one which assuages contemporary guilt for the 1937 Haitian massacre in which some 20,000 Haitian border migrants were slaughtered by Dominican troops (which then becomes the Dominican riposte to the 'domination'), but which is ultimately inaccurate. Boyer sought to impose a system of commodified property relations in a country in which this was deeply alien; one without a national currency, for which the lion's share of national trade was conducted surreptitiously through contraband; a nation without private property in land or even much sedentary agriculture to speak of. Even if this project ultimately failed, it reinforced the association between Haiti and processes of commodification as embodied in the key symbols of sugar, slaves and specie which originated in seventeenth-century inter-island trade, as we have seen. The paired contrasting terms of sugar and tobacco, and slavery

125 Hoetink places more stress on the stratification produced by sugar itself, than Haitian importation. See his essays: 'Race and Color in the Caribbean,' in Mintz and Price (eds.), *Caribbean Contours*, pp. 55–84; and 'The Dominican Republic in the Nineteenth Century: Some Notes on Stratification, Immigration and Race,' in Magnus Mörner (ed.), *Race and Class*, pp. 96–120.

126 Daniel Webb, esq., *A General History of the Americans, of their Customs, Manners, and Colours. An History of the Blacks, and White Negroes. History of Peru. An History of the Manners, Customs, etc., of the Chinese and Egyptians*, selected by M. Pauw. (Rochdale, 1806).

and ranching, were thus surrogates for the symbolic opposition of commodity versus gift exchange, key signs of difference which helped give shape to emerging national distinctions on the island.

Nor were the symbols of sugar and slaves merely significant on the island of Hispaniola; they were the very substance of West Indian colonial commerce since slaves were used as a general form of value against which quantities of other products were measured, and sugar itself was used as a currency in the eighteenth century.¹²⁷ It was these two items that gave Haitian products their market value and Haiti its national worth. In the eighteenth century, slaves were unique since they were renewable property; they were commodities which themselves produced value. If Haiti had slaves, the Dominican Republic had not even the cash to pay for them and was forced to resort to stealing or kidnapping or bartering them for the homely but trusted Creole products of mules, wild cattle and horses, tobacco, wood and wax. Through its hypermodern industrial sugar *centrales*, Haiti seemed to manufacture money in stark contrast to the natural economy of gathering that ruled in the east. Somehow this economy of swapping came to appear as stealing to Dominicans, since the terms of exchange seemed to make Haiti grow at Dominicans' expense. Haiti has been marked ever since this formative period, making Dominicans feel inadequate since, unlike Haiti, they could not afford to purchase (and the Crown would not grant them) the *in*-form of commodity — slaves — which perhaps would have provided them the spectacular economic development Haiti witnessed (if hopefully not the revolution). In sum, this early formative period marked Haiti as embodying a special kind of value — one that seemed to beget money out of nothing, steadily but surreptitiously, leaving the Dominican Republic with just the evanescent phantasm of its 'idea', in the words of Dominican mulatto priest Antonio Sánchez Valverde. This early phase also posited the notion of Haitian value as illegitimate, as the very embodiment of primitive accumulation through the plundering of gold, treasure and slaves since even though neither nation had yet been formed at that time, Haiti has been blamed by subsequent Dominican anti-Haitian writers as the key agent and instigator of that lawless and thieving seventeenth-century economy of piracy.¹²⁸

Anti-Haitianism was thus neither a product of the nineteenth-century occupation, nor does it consist of flat racism. This idea of Haiti as the virtual embodiment of commodity value — of gold, silver, specie and slaves — dates

127 Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, edited by Edwin Cannan (Chicago, 1976), p. 27. For more on the symbolics of sugar in the Dominican Republic, see my essay, 'Gringo Chickens with Worms'.

128 Arturo Manuel Peña Batlle, *La Isla de la Tortuga: plaza de armas, refugio y seminario de los enemigos de España en Indias* (Madrid, 1952).

from the early buccaneer economy; yet this derived initially from an attitude of reverence, not depreciation. Haiti also had the symbolic capital of the revolution — of having won their independence from Europe at gunpoint.¹²⁹ Anti-Haitianism was transformed into a racially-marked posture of superiority only after the idea of Haiti was ethnicised; when Haitian migrants become synonymous with large scale contract labour imports and the back-breaking and brutal task of cane cutting (which itself is reminiscent of slavery) in the late nineteenth-century. Before that date, it was far more an awe of Haitian potency — economic, political and religious — and a form of racialised national identity. Anti-Haitianism defined blackness as a Haitian monopoly, but it also recognised it as something Dominicans needed to have in order to develop (but continued to lack), given the eighteenth-century logic that great nations were made by plenty of slave labour — and bullion.

The expulsion of blackness from the Dominican nation had repercussions for the meaning of Creole identity. As we have seen, a history of colonial poverty and the openness of the ranching, *montería* and smuggling economies provided many opportunities for freedmen to advance socially and economically. The nineteenth-century multiple interventions and wars also helped enable the formation of an emergent black middle sector through the armed forces, for example, which used the military as a springboard to politics. Indeed, order and progress dictator Ulises Heureaux who ruled for most of the 1880s was but one example of a powerful conservative mulatto strongman; liberal Gregorio Luperón was yet another (not to mention dictator Rafael Trujillo, who ruled from 1930–61). Just as Joaquín Balaguer chided Francisco Peña Gomez in the penultimate Dominican elections as a 'secret Haitian' and thus not Dominican enough to rule, in the 1880s Luperón accused Heureaux as being a US stooge and squashing the 'mestizo race', the Dominican '*indio*', through black importation (not surprisingly, Heureaux himself had Haitian lineage). With the late nineteenth century sugar boom fuelling state formation and the resultant creation of effective party patronage machines, blacks became an important part of both liberal and conservative political factions. Of course, it was the very success of these Dominican mestizos, as well as the fact that all Dominicans have some 'black behind the ear' (as Dominicans say), that has made race so useful as an available negative political currency in electoral discourse.

The fact that creolisation occurred outside the plantation economy in the Dominican Republic shaped a uniquely open pattern of race and class

129 Jonathan Brown complained that 'The mass of the people are not only uninstructed, but so profoundly stupid as to give rise to doubts if they are furnished with any intellect whatever. They know nothing of their age or of the events of their life but by referring to some prominent epoch in the history of their country as the "*ancien régime*", the "*ouverture du nord*" or the "*temps de Toussaint*". (from *Santo Domingo*, vols. I and II.

stratification, one in which movement within the social order was surprisingly generalised, and blackness was not coincident with lowly class status. This was compounded by the fact that freedmen outnumbered slaves very early on, so blackness was not stigmatised in quite the same way as elsewhere by an association with slavery.¹³⁰ The fact of multiple criteria in race marking has meant that almost anyone can seek upward movement through the status order, either through class ascent, or through lineage claims.¹³¹ Unlike white or black, what distinguishes the mulatto is his ability to move into a higher social station than his ascribed status — that of the family he was born into.¹³² A sign of this potential movement is that unlike the twin poles of the racial order — black and white — *mestizaje* is marked linguistically by shades of gradation — *trigueño*, *indio*, *indio claro*, *indio oscuro*, etc., even if hair, ear and lip characteristics are also markers. However, what determines one's ascribed identity in this system is more complicated than appears at first glance since Dominican relations of consanguinity are inherently unstable. They are typically defined by the mother, since the unmarried matrifocal family pattern is most common, but can be overridden by the father's family since it is a putatively patrilineal system.¹³³ Indeed, in popular terms the father's 'blood' is at times considered to have more weight in establishing the race of the child (unlike the British West Indies, where it is said that the mother's is decisive).¹³⁴ Moreover, the relationship between race as a status marker and familial identity is further complicated by the fact that Dominican families inevitably include multiple hues, and thus even sibling rivalries can become in a sense 'racialised'. In the colonial period, individuals of stature passed by acquiring *cédulas de gracias al sacar* by presenting public testimony of their respectable demeanour. Those without resources or friends in high places, today, as in the seventeenth century, change contexts and reinvent themselves, even if

130 While Silvio Torres Saillant makes this point, he places primacy on demography not mode of production. I would concur with Mintz and Hoetink that it is not just the numbers of freedmen in proportion to slaves, but rather the forms of class and race relation that are produced that are significant.

131 As Jonathan Brown stated in 1837, 'the inhabitants ... make unceasing endeavors to appear whiter than they really are. No parvenu pretender ever laboured with more eagerness to gain admission into the highest ranks of fashion than these multi-colored republicans, to be included among those of the class next beyond them in approach to the whites' (*Santo Domingo*), p. 284.

132 Although the prestige value of one's region of origin is a factor as well.

133 See Raymond T. Smith, *The Matrifocal Family: Power, Pluralism, and Politics* (New York, 1996).

134 Although the practice of pregnant mothers drinking milk of magnesia to 'whiten' their unborn child may contradict this claim (Howard, 'Colouring'). This contrasts with Jamaica, where 'Mother-blood' is considered more significant; see Smith, *Matrifocal Family*, p. 47.

the rise of the sugar economy restricted these options considerably. Puerto Rican educator Hostos observed in the 1880s the distinctive style of identity this culture produced when he stated that the opportunities for abrupt mobility have created a species of 'secret respect for oneself' that dominates in all Dominicans, a feature which may not even have been noteworthy if they were white and not so very brown.¹³⁵

135 Hoetink, *The Dominican People*, p. 170.