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INTRODUCTION: AFRICAN (BLACK) DIASPORA HISTORY, LATIN AMERICAN HISTORY[1]

Inspired in part by Paul Gilroy's Black Atlantic paradigm, the past several years have witnessed a reinvigoration of Black Studies, with careful attention being paid to the approaches and methods of writing black history.[2] The terms "African Diaspora" and "Black Diaspora" have become almost commonplace in scholarly discourse, emerging out of relative obscurity from their roots in the politically inspired Pan-Africanist and Civil Rights discourses of the 1950s and '60s.[3] Critiques of the Black Atlantic model and its overly narrow concentration on the English-speaking world have fueled new and important discussions that have touched fields and subfields well beyond the traditional boundaries of Black Studies.[4] While the internationalist perspective of Black Studies (particularly in the U.S. acad-

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[2] Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double-Consciousness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993). Although Gilroy is largely credited with popularizing the "Black Atlantic" as a concept, its roots extend to the work and teachings of Robert Farris Thompson and Peter Linebaugh. See Isidore Okpewho, introduction to *African Diaspora: African Origins and New World Identities,* ed. Isidore Okpewho, Carole Boyce Davies, Ali A. Mazrui (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), p. xxii; and Brent Hayes Edwards, "The Uses of Diaspora," *Social Text* 19:1 (2001), p. 62. Some interesting articles on the relationship between black history and the African Diaspora include Patrick Manning, "Africa and the African Diaspora: New Directions of Study," *Journal of African History* 44:3 (2003), pp. 487-506; Tiffany Ruby Patterson and Robin D. G. Kelley, "Unfinished Migrations: Reflections on the African Diaspora and the Making of the Modern World," *African Studies Review* 43:1 (2000), pp. 11-45; and Darlene Clark Hine and Jacqueline McLeod eds., *Crossing Boundaries: Comparative History of Black People in Diaspora* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999).

[3] Edwards, "Uses of Diaspora," p. 45-73; George Shepperson, "Pan-Africanism and 'pan-Africanism': Some Historical Notes," *Phylon* 23:4 (1962), pp. 346-58. Also informative on the origins of African Diasporic Discourse is Penny von Eschen, *Race against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937-1957* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997).

[4] A good article showing the range of works written on the black Diaspora, particularly in response to the Black Atlantic paradigm, is Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, "Rewriting the African Diaspora: Beyond the Black Atlantic," *African Affairs* 104:414 (2005), pp. 35-68.

emy) is not new,[5] it is not too much to say that perhaps, for the moment, the recent academic enhancement of Black Studies has transformed blackness into a "hot" counter-narrative, offering new and keen perspectives on traditionally conceived histories, while at the same time helping to re-theorize the concept of blackness itself. The historiography of Latin America has not been left unaffected by the trends.[6]

Latin American historiography, however, has been traditionally preoccupied with questions seemingly distant from the core topics of African Diaspora study. A quick glance at Latin America's historiographical canon, especially as written by North American scholars, reveals inquires into issues such as the long-term ramifications of the Conquest, understanding the vicissitudes of the colonial economy, the impact of the Bourbon reforms, the causes of independence, the political and social shocks involved in the creation of nation-states, the impact of populism, the roots of economic dependency, etc. Rich and abundant regional histories have provided focus to these macro-historical questions. Important advances in social history,

[5] A concise and useful synopsis of the trajectory of Black Studies is Linda M. Heywood, introduction to *Central Africans and Cultural Transformations in the American Diaspora* ed. Linda M. Heywood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 2-8.

[6] Some representative, notable titles include Herman L. Bennett, *Africans in Colonial Mexico: Absolutism, Christianity and Afro-Creole Consciousness, 1570-1640* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003); Kim D. Butler, *Freedoms Given, Freedoms Won: Afro-Brazilians in Post-Abolition São Paulo and Salvador* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1998); María Elena Díaz, *The Virgin, the King, and the Royal Slaves of El Cobre: Negotiating Freedom in Colonial Cuba, 1670-1780* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000); Aline Helg, *Liberty and Equality in Caribbean Colombia, 1770-1835* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); Alejandro de la Fuente, *A Nation For All: Race, Inequality, and Politics in Twentieth-Century Cuba* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001); Matthew Restall, ed., *Beyond Black and Red: African-Native Relations in Colonial Latin America* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005); Ben Vinson III and Stewart R. King, "Introducing the 'New' African Diasporic Military History in Latin America," special issue, *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 5:2 (2004); James H. Sweet, *Recreating Africa: Culture, Kinship, and Religion in the African-Portuguese World, 1441-1770* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Robinson A. Herrera, *Natives, Europeans, and Africans in Sixteenth-Century Santiago de Guatemala* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003); George Reid Andrews, *Afro-Latin America, 1800-2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Toyin Falola and Matt D. Childs, eds., *The Yoruba Diaspora in the Atlantic World* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 2004); Daniel E. Walker, *No More, No More: Slavery and Cultural Resistance in Havana and New Orleans* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004); Berta Ares Queija and Alessandro Stella, eds., *Negros, mulatos, zambaigos: derroteros africanos en los mundos ibéricos* (Seville: EEHA/CSIC, 2000); Rina Cáceres, *Negros, mulatos, esclavos y libertos en la Costa Rica del siglo XVII* (Mexico City: Instituto Panamericano de Geografía e Historia, 2000); María Eugenia Chaves, *María Chiquinquirá Díaz: Una esclava del siglo XVIII: acerca de las identidades de amo y esclavo en el puerto colonial de Guayaquil* (Guayaquil: Archivo Histórico del Guayas, 1998); and Carlos Aguirre, *Agentes de su propia libertad: Los esclavos de Lima y la desintegración de la esclavitud: 1821-1854* (Lima: Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, Fondo Editorial, 1993); Marcel Velázquez Castro, *Las mascaras de la representación: El sujeto esclavista y las rutas del racismo en el Perú* (Lima: Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos y Banco Central de Reserva del Perú, 2005).

gender studies, and, more recently, cultural studies have helped us personalize these histories to the point that we are now entering into the private lives and mentalities of families, while unmasking the deep historical processes behind the discursive structures of power in the public sphere. When race and/or ethnicity have entered these analyses, the indigenous population, which has arguably had a more prominent long-term demographic impact on the region, has frequently enjoyed priority, especially with respect to research on the Spanish-speaking mainland.[7] Apart from places like Venezuela, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic, even the influence of blackness on one of the primary racial discourses in Latin America, *mestizaje*, has been minimal in comparison to the impact of whites, Indians, and mestizos.[8]

In short, when looking at the broad trajectory of historical writings on Latin America, outside of the Caribbean and Brazil, it has long been possible to do Latin American history without referencing blackness or the African Diaspora. This should come as no surprise, for although this condensed overview of the field leaves major gaps, we can all recognize that there are many seminal texts that mention blacks only in passing. This is not to say that these works lack merit; rather, the tradition of the field has simply prioritized other questions ahead of reconciling the region's African heritage.[9] I raise these issues because it seems worth pondering here that with

[7] This despite the fact that according to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the population figures for indigenous peoples are currently lower than those of those of African-descent. The ECLAC records 33-40 million indigenous people in Latin America (8 per cent), as opposed to 150 million individuals of African descent (30 percent). This Afro-Latino population is mainly concentrated in Brazil, Central America, and the northern coast of South America. See Juliet Hooker, "Indigenous Inclusion/Black Exclusion: Race, Ethnicity and Multicultural Citizenship in Latin America," *Journal of Latin American Studies (JLAS)* 37:2 (2005), p. 287.

[8] Even in places like the Dominican Republic, Brazil, Venezuela, and Cuba, the discussion of blacks in national discourses of *mestizaje/mulataje* have been difficult and complex, but important literature has been rectifying the situation. See De la Fuente, *A Nation for All*; David Howard, *Coloring the Nation: Race and Ethnicity in the Dominican Republic* (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner, 2001); Robin E. Sheriff, *Dreaming Equality: Color, Race, and Racism in Urban Brazil* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2001); Winthrop R. Wright, *Café con Leche: Race, Class, and National Image in Venezuela* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990); and Ernesto Sagás, *Race and Politics in the Dominican Republic* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2001). For Colombia see Peter Wade, *Blackness and Race Mixture: The Dynamics of Race Mixture in Colombia* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993). An interesting re-assessment of *mestizaje* and its impact on national differentiation can be found in Wade, "Rethinking *Mestizaje*: Ideology and Lived Experience," *JLAS* 37:2 (2005), pp. 239-57. Good discussion of black influences on nineteenth-century state formation and national identity processes (particularly in Cuba and the Dominican Republic) can be found in Nancy Priscilla Naro, ed., *Blacks, Coloureds and National Identity in Nineteenth-Century Latin America* (London: London Institute of Latin American Studies, University of London, 2003).

[9] Certain influential ideologies linked to racial mixture and nationalism (particularly racial democracy) have also dictated the research agenda, as is explained later in this article.

all of the attention that African Diaspora studies are currently receiving, even to the point of characterizing some work on Latin America as being "diasporic" in nature, what exactly is the relationship between the African Diaspora paradigm and Latin American historiography?[10] How do they impact one another and what should be their future course? Lastly, what does this special issue of *The Americas* offer in that respect?

A good starting point for delving into these questions involves clarifying what is currently meant by the term "African Diaspora" in the existing literature. This is easier said than done, given the flurry of work spanning multiple disciplines on the topic. Moreover, at its core, African Diaspora scholarship bears some key disjunctures and debates that are as yet unresolved and which fragment the field, but which also offer intellectual dynamism and vibrancy. Despite recent tendencies to compress and label almost any work even tangentially dealing with the black experience as "diasporic" (the "Diaspora" substitutes for "minority" discourse in certain circles),[11] it would seem that for the Diaspora paradigm to be most meaningful its works should move beyond a simple indexing or cataloging of global black experiences. In other words, the primary link uniting Diasporic studies should not be exclusively one of color—a sort of reductionist, racial essentialism. Diaspora theorists have wrestled with this problem, observing that the very complexity of the field and its exhaustive global reach has inadvertently encouraged a vagueness of meaning and imprecision in the use of terms. One of the original intended uses of the phrase "African Diaspora," as it arose in the 1950s and 1960s, was to address a problem in the formulation of Pan-Africanism. In being an umbrella term for collective, global black activism, Pan-Africanism unintentionally (and ironically) homogenized the diversity of experiences that were possible within black internationalism.[12] But "diaspora," a newer concept, divorced

[10] An example of such inquiry can be found in Herman Bennett's "The Subject in the Plot: National Boundaries in the History of the Black Atlantic," *African Studies Review* 43:1 (2000), pp. 101-24. In examining the case of Luisa de Abrego, an Afro-Mexican bigamist who faced the Inquisition in the 1570s, he argues persuasively that African Diaspora scholarship promises to make blacks into distinct subjects of inquiry that are freed from the "nationalist chokehold that renders their narratives invisible." At the same time, he argues that whereas Spaniards, mestizos, and even natives have been given a firm place in the historiography of "nation" and "colony" in Latin America, he argues that blacks have not. He asserts that Africans, negros, and mulattos have been routinely read as having their "race, ethnicity, and legal status [trump over]...any and all national sentiments." While I believe that many aspects of Bennett's argument are true, I argue in this article that the mechanisms for black inclusion into the colonial world and the emerging nation states were greater—but with equally isolating outcomes for black history and consciousness in Latin America.

[11] Khalid Koser, "New African Diasporas, an Introduction," in *New African Diasporas*, ed. Khalid Koser (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 5.

[12] Edwards, "Uses of Diaspora," pp. 46-55.

from the politically charged meanings of Pan-Africanism, could better account for the multiplicities of the black experience, while at the same time stopping short of providing an explanatory, unifying, and homogenizing metanarrative. However, these early conceptualizations of the African Diaspora did not materialize as anticipated. Lacking a tight definition, the concept's fluidity has encouraged numerous re-readings.

Some have noted that the political program seemingly inherent in the Black Studies mission (both inside and outside the U.S. academy) requires the propagation of a brand of racial essentialism in order to successfully advance the larger goal of nurturing and engendering black identity.[13] Seeing as the African Diaspora agenda has been pivotal in refining the terms of black identity, "essentialism" has been espoused in some circles (particularly among Afrocentrists), even if only to emphasize the ways in which people of African descent share a sense of common origins.[14] According to scholars such as Manthia Diawara, recent trends in postmodernist and poststructuralist studies have served to fragment this important identity building enterprise.[15] By contrast, there are scholars who insist that Black Studies and African Diaspora studies must retain space for de-centered, even conflicting black narratives of existence. Gilroy's Black Atlantic thesis is itself representative of this agenda, despite offering its own unitary theoretical model, albeit a heuristic one.

The critical tension over essentialism has led to seemingly endless struggles to refine the terms of the discourse, which as yet have proven inconclusive. Moreover, the tension has given expression to other disjunctures, one of which deals with debates over Africa's place and representation within Diaspora scholarship. Despite efforts towards consensus through conferences, workshops, and collaborative research, the past twenty years have seen the creation of a divide between studies dealing with Africa and those addressing blackness in other global contexts.[16] Tremendous geographical and ethnic diversity both within and outside of Africa has meant that some of the grow-

[13] It should be noted that the strategies used to launch Black Studies in the U.S. were also important to the formulation of Latino Studies.

[14] Okpewho, introduction, pp. xv-xvi.

[15] Manthia Diawara, "Black Studies, Cultural Studies, Performative Acts," *Afterimage* 20:3 (1992), p. 476. See also Maurice Stevens, *Troubling Beginnings: Trans(per)forming African American History and Identity* (New York: Routledge, 2003), pp. 16-23.

[16] Laura Chrisman, Farah Jasmine Griffin, and Tukufu Zuberi, "Introduction to 'Transcending Traditions': Special Issue of the Black Scholar," *The Black Scholar* 30:3-4 (2001), pp. 2-3. Note that the efforts of organizations such as the Association for the Study of the Worldwide African Diaspora (ASWAD) and UNESCO's Slave Route Project have been instrumental in helping bridge the differences between Africanists and African Diaspora scholars.

ing literature has been unable to account for the full complexity of the Diasporic experience. Sometimes Africa has been oversimplified; sometimes even intra-regionally, the vastness and range of the literature (published in disparate sources) has created a situation whereby works fail to cross-reference each other. Not to mention that fringe areas of the Diaspora world, like the Pacific basin, Asia, and the Indian Ocean have been infrequently incorporated into work on the Atlantic basin or the African continent.[17]

The heavy bias towards Anglophone scholarship has also been seen as a problem, particularly the priority afforded to U.S. and British research agendas. Given the growing political importance attributed to Africans living abroad by the African Union (AU), a surging interest in "new," contemporary Diasporas is attracting more African scholars to the field, signaling greater change to come. Significantly, this emerging work may be able to connect with important research being done on African nationalism to show the potential political impact that diasporans may have upon neo-colonial and postcolonial relationships. As African migrants are increasingly reclaimed as citizens of African nations, they radically call into question the boundaries of "national" space, altering the configuration of the metropolis's power in the process. Analogous to what is happening in Africa, the recent rise in political activism from black Latin American NGOs, spurred by the politics of multi-cultural citizenship that have emerged under the neoliberal regimes of the 1980s and '90s (emphasizing issues of land rights, citizenship reforms, economic improvement, and even affirmative action)—has created new voices that both espouse and reject North American and British Black Diasporic discourses.[18] Often left unheard within the halls of academe, their perspectives are now poised to eventually affect the course of Diaspora research.[19] Ultimately, however, both the emerging African and black Latin American agendas, among others, may be slow to change the

[17] Zeleza, "Rewriting the African Diaspora," pp. 35-68; and Pier M. Larson, "African Diasporas and the Atlantic," in *The Atlantic and Global History* ed. Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra and Eric Seeman (New York: Prentice Hall, 2006 (forthcoming).

[18] Hooker, "Indigenous Inclusion/Black Exclusion." In Brazil, the impact of North American discourses upon Afro-Brazilian identity politics has also been a topic of international debate. A quick entry into the debate can be obtained by reading John D. French, "Translation, Diasporic Dialogue, and the Errors of Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc Wacquant," *Nepantla: Views from South* 4:2 (2003), pp. 375-89; Michael George Hanchard, "Racism, Eroticism, and the Paradoxes of a U.S. Black Researcher in Brazil," in *Racing Research, Researching Race: Methodological Dilemmas in Critical Race Studies,* ed. France Widdance Twine and Jonathan W. Warren (New York: New York University Press, 2000); and Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc Wacquant, "On the Cunning of Imperialist Reason," *Theory, Culture, and Society* 16:1 (1999): pp. 41-58.

[19] Sheila Walker has brought together a number of essays written by black Latin American activists. See Sheila S. Walker, ed., *African Roots/American Cultures: Africa in the Creation of the Americas* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001). Organizations such as the Inter-American Develop-

existing orientation of the field—especially given that Black Studies, and even African Diaspora Studies, are traditionally seen as North American-driven disciplines, supported by North American agendas.[20]

Despite its multiple fissures, several empirical and theoretical advances in African Diaspora research have led to the production of a number of key concepts that either directly or indirectly underwrite the scholarship. Without delving into all of these, and without pretending to offer definitive definitions here, I would like to highlight a few aspects that may prove useful to Latin Americanists reflecting on their relationship to the African Diaspora field. On the whole, scholars seem to be in agreement that the African Diaspora paradigm theorizes, documents, and strives to understand the movement of black peoples from their ancestral homelands to a variety of hostlands. More than the study of migratory patterns, Diaspora work seeks deeper explorations into the social, psychic, political, cultural, and economic meanings of black movement, as well as the interrelationships diasporans maintain among themselves, their host societies, and their original homelands. Borrowing from the Jewish Diaspora, from which the term "African Diaspora" derives ideological strength, the dispersion of blacks is frequently associated with traumatic movement. Analogous to the Holocaust, the current configuration of black populations throughout the globe is heavily associated with the slave trade and its legacy, although inquiries into Diasporic movement also cite modern African Diaspora flows associated with the dislocations of decolonization, ethnic conflict, and postcolonial relationships. While efforts have been made to historicize African Diasporic movement from periods of antiquity, the bulk of scholarship concentrates on the era of Atlantic slavery and beyond. At its core, with its emphasis on transnationality, diasporic work is involved in the project of "problematizing the relationship between diaspora and nation," and all of its attenuate effects upon the identities of the diaspora's subjects.[21] Work on recent diasporas highlights the liminality of the diasporic condition; the sense of movement, the sense that diasporans are

ment Bank (IDB), Afroamérica XXI, and the Inter-American Dialogue's Inter-Agency Consultation on Race have been instrumental in providing a public forum for the voices of black Latin American activists. For example, see Inter-American Dialogue, Inter-American Development Bank, and the World Bank, "Race and Poverty: Interagency Consultation on Afro-Latin Americans," LCR Sustainable Development Working Paper Number 9 (Washington, D.C., November, 2000). Note that regular information on African descendants in Latin America is maintained at the Inter-American Dialogue's Inter-Agency Consultation on Race web site at http://www.thedialogue.org/iac/eng/index.html. Note as well that Afroamérica XXI maintains a web site at http://www.afroamerica21.org/.

[20] Afro-Latin Americans face an additional obstacle towards impacting Diaspora research since not only must they carve space for their voices to be heard within the Diaspora field, but they must also fight for validity amongst the intellectual circles of their respective nations.

[21] Zeleza, "Rewriting the African Diaspora," p. 39.

constantly rootless—traveling, but never "arriving," metaphorically speaking. In this state, instead of seeking assimilation, diasporans retain an inherent "otherness" within a world seeking homogeneity.[22]

In working on the Diaspora a number of methodologies have proven useful. Michael Goméz has highlighted two of the more influential ones. The first is a comparative historical approach, whereby discrete black populations, often separated geographically, are juxtaposed, differentiated, and described against one another in hopes of arriving at larger systemic understandings of the Diasporic experience. The other is a creolizationist/survivalist approach, whereby the influences and impact of diasporans upon the regions where they have migrated are carefully evaluated.[23] In helping to chart the future course of Diasporic work, Kim Butler has further signaled the need to be mindful of anchoring our studies in questions more specifically related to theoretical concerns surrounding the terminology "diaspora" in its broader sense, such as investigating (1) the conditions of dispersal, (2) the relationship with homeland, (3) the relationship with hostlands, (4) the interrelationships within diasporan groups, and (5) the comparative study of Diasporas.[24] Lastly, in reminding us of the existence of historic Diasporas, Colin Palmer adds the important caveat that Diasporas have life cycles—they mature, transform, die, and can regenerate.[25] This organic quality is an important aspect of the Diasporic condition.

One of the great challenges posed to Latin Americanists who are conducting diasporic research is that blackness has to be examined as a moving target. Quite simply, for us, the contexts in which blackness is produced often eschew the very category of study, and among Latin American diasporans themselves, blackness possesses a proverbial fluidity. As scholars, we are well aware that within our region, blackness is simultaneously segmented, denied, and reluctantly embraced—all while morphing into something that seemingly stretches beyond blackness. Herein lies a great research opportunity—Latin Americanists are well poised to theorize forms of multivalent blackness that transcend some of the identity models forwarded by the existing diaspora cannon, such as the influential double-consciousness model articulated by W.E.B. Du Bois, re-articulated by the likes of Frantz Fanon,

[22] Donald Carter, preface to *New African Diasporas*, p. x.

[23] Michael A. Gomez, *Reversing Sail: A History of the African Diaspora* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 2

[24] Kim D. Butler, "Defining Diaspora, Refining a Discourse," *Diaspora* 10:2 (2001), pp. 189-219.

[25] Colin A. Palmer, "Defining and Studying the Modern African Diaspora," *American Historical Association Perspectives* 36:6 (1998), pp. 1, 22-25.

and further theorized by Paul Gilroy.[26] In Latin America, the experience of not just living dual lives (in the "white" and "black" worlds), but inhabiting the space in-between, among, and through various racial existences (while reconciling one's existence within the mestizo mainstream) offers rich theoretical potential.[27] Moreover, the shifting nature of Latin America's blackness makes for more ambiguous, less linear relationships with the Diaspora than can be encountered in other regions, particularly the United States. These relationships too can be analyzed and theorized. Asymmetrical configurations of, and to the Diaspora may well be one of the pivotal contributions provided by scholarship conducted within a Latin American research frame.

One of the key features of Latin America's existing historiography on blackness is its profound impact on answering questions of local and regional development, frequently within national frameworks. Even studies of the colonial period can slip into this nationalistic mode, given that the distribution and location of archives favors the reconstruction of histories written from national and regional, rather than viceregal perspectives. Such studies have grown in sophistication over the years, and coverage is extending to areas like Guatemala, Bolivia, Costa Rica, and Ecuador—places where the black presence has not been familiar.[28] However, our quick survey of some

[26] In *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), Du Bois writes: "After the Egyptian and Indian, the Greek and Roman, the Teuton and Mongolian, the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world, a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness, an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder." W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Bartleby.com, 1999), p. 3. See also Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York: Grove Press, 1982); and Gilroy, *Black Atlantic*.

[27] It is important to keep in mind that while working on Latin America does position scholars to be able to creatively engage the double-consciousness model, one should also note that heavy emphasis on class analysis within the political/cultural ideologies of the Latin America tradition has historically worked to obscure understandings of black consciousness. In other words, the race vs. class debate has encouraged a particular reading of black history (after slavery) as operating within a class framework that eradicated the need to employ multiple forms of racial consciousness to maneuver within structures of discrimination and prejudice. Since the race line was softer, as has been proverbially argued, then the need to employ any levels of racial consciousness were concomitantly muted.

[28] For a few examples, see Herrera, *Natives, Europeans, and Africans*; Cáceres, *Negros, mulatos, esclavos*; Kris Lane, *Quito 1599: City and Colony in Transition* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002); Chaves, *María Chiquinquirá Díaz*; Lolita Gutíerrez Brockington, "The African Diaspora in the Eastern Andes: Adaption, Agency, and Fugitive Action, 1573-1677," *The Americas (TAM)* 57:2 (2000), pp. 207-24; Paul Lokken, "Marriage as Slave Emancipation in Seventeenth-Century Rural Guatemala," *TAM*, 58:2 (2001), pp. 175-200; Kent Russell Lohse, "Africans and their Descendants in Colonial Costa Rica, 1600-1750," (PhD. diss., University of Texas at Austin, 2005); and Sherwin K. Bryant, "Enslaved Rebels, Fugitives, and Litigants: The Resistance Continuum in Colonial Quito," *Colonial Latin American Review* 13:1 (2004), pp. 7-46.

of the African Diaspora's larger ambitions reveals the literature's marked interest in engaging experiences of transnationality and global interconnectivity. The Diaspora strives to reconfigure ideas about borders and nations through the modality of race. This provides numerous opportunities for Latin Americanists, some of which are already being explored,[29] and some of which still need further exploration.

With this in mind, it is important to ponder the relationship of our historiography to globally oriented, race-based questions, in order to consider how and where our scholarship can continue to make contributions. Arguably, the early evolution of the study of blackness in Latin America was deeply influenced by international trends and contributed to hemispheric debates on race. The impact of positivist thought generated philosophical arguments for and against European-grade positivism. In turn, this brought about the introspection that eventually resulted in Latin America's early academic treatments of the black presence. Gil Fortul in Venezuela, Fernando Ortiz in Cuba, Gilberto Freyre in Brazil, and Alfonso Toro in Mexico, among others, all incorporated blackness into their articulations of national development and identity, and in some cases borrowed ideas from each other.[30] It was these late-nineteenth and

[29] Some interesting work on Afro-Caribbean influences on social and identity-formation processes in Central America include Edmund T. Gordon, *Disparate Diasporas: Identity and Politics in an African Nicaraguan Community* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998); Laura Muñoz Mata, "De la raza de color: esclavos para Yucatán," in *Pardos, mulatos y libertos. Sexto encuentro de afromexicanistas*, ed. Adriana Naveda Chavez-Hita (Jalapa, Veracruz: Universidad Veracruzana, 2001), pp. 217-30; and Frederick Douglas Opie, "Foreign Workers, Debt Peonage, and Frontier Culture in Lowland Guatemala, 1884-1900," *Transforming Anthropology* 12:1/2 (2004), pp. 40-50. Work on African-American influences in Mexico includes Gerald Horne, *Black and Brown: African-Americans and the Mexican Revolution, 1910-1920* (New York: New York University Press, 2004), Ben Vinson III, *Flight: The Story of Virgil Richardson, a Tuskegee Airman in Mexico* (New York: Palgrave McMillan, 2004), Karl Jacoby, "Between North and South: The Alternative Borderlands of William H. Ellis and the African American Colony of 1895," in *Continental Crossroads: Remapping U.S.-Mexico Borderlands History* ed. Samuell Truett and Elliott Young (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2004); and Rosalie Schwartz, *Across the Rio to Freedom: U.S. Negroes in Mexico* (El Paso: University of Texas at El Paso Press, 1974). For information on African soldiers in 19th century Mexico see Richard L. Hill and Peter C. Hogg, *A Black Corps d'Elite: An Egyptian Sudanese Conscript Battalion with the French Army in Mexico, 1863-1867, and its Survivors in Subsequent African History* (East Lansing: Michigan State Univ. Press, 1995). Work on interactions between Afro-Cubans and African-Americans can be found in Frank A. Guridy, "From Solidarity to Cross-Fertilization: Afro-Cuban/African American Interaction During the 1930s and 1940s," *Radical History Review*, 87 (2003), pp. 19-48.

[30] Alfonso Toro, "Influencia de la raza negra en la formación del pueblo mexicano," *Ethnos. Revista para la vulgarización de estudios antropológicos sobre México y Centroamérica* 1:8-12 (1920-21), pp. 215-18; Gilberto Freyre, *Casa grande y senzala* (Rio de Janeiro: José Olimpo, 1933); Fernando Ortiz, *Hampa afrocubana, Los negros brujos (apuntes para un estudio de etnología criminal)* (Madrid: Editorial América, 1917). For a contextualization of Gil Fortul's theories, see Wright, *Café con Leche*. Note that other thinkers could have been included here as well. My decision to include Alfonso Toro (instead of José Vasconcelos) for Mexico stems from the fact that upon close reading, Vasconcelos was not as preoccupied with the black presence in *mestizaje* as were other contemporary Mexican thinkers, such as Toro.

early twentieth-century intellectual writings that helped prod Frank Tannenbaum to reflect comparatively upon race relations in the United States and Latin America—thereby opening up the comparative slavery school and facilitating close analyses of Latin American slave systems, legal codes, and the social history of freedmen and women.[31] Names such as Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán, Miguel Acosta Saignes, and Miguel Barnet emerged as pioneers of these research agendas in their respective countries.[32] Work in the cultural sphere accompanied their writings, influenced by methodologies first championed by Melville Herskovits.[33] In short, local histories of the black presence in the individual countries of Latin America were initially the by-product of international debates about the role of race in the region, and debates over whether Latin America's seemingly positive record of race relations, combined with its exaltation of racial hybridity (*mestizaje*), could facilitate moves towards modernity.

Significantly, all of these debates came about before and during the formulation of the "African Diaspora" as an intellectual concept. However, as the idea of the Black Diaspora developed within the field of Black Studies, research on Latin America arguably grew more compartmentalized by examining questions of national development. Ironically, this happened at the same time as the new studies of Latin America were striving to address broader issues pertaining to hemispheric differences in race relations. Of course, compartmentalization was not necessarily bad. In a seminal article published by Frederick Bowser in 1972, he praised efforts to sharpen our knowledge of the intricacies of the black experience through heavy, localized archival research, so as to demystify stereotypes and offer greater precision to our analyses.[34] Yet, he envisioned such work as steps along the path to a grander synthesis, a proto-diasporic vision, if you will. Still, to the best of my knowledge, apart from Brazil, there were limited attempts to bridge the evolving diasporic discourse in Black Studies with emerging Latin American research on blackness. It is important to note that what I am describing here is quite different from the contributions made by scholarship on Latin America to the comparative slavery school, which remained

[31] Frank Tannenbaum, *Slave and Citizen: The Negro in the Americas* (New York: Vintage Books, 1946).

[32] Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán, *La población negra de México, 1519-1810* (Mexico City: Ediciones Fuente Cultural, 1946); Miguel Acosta Saignes, *Vida de los esclavos negros en Venezuela* (Caracas: Hespérides, 1967); and Miguel Barnet, *Biografía de un cimarrón* (Havana: Instituto de Ethnología y Folklore, 1966).

[33] Melville Jean Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1941).

[34] Frederick P. Bowser, "The African in Colonial Spanish America: Reflections on Research Achievements and Priorities," *Latin American Research Review (LARR)* 7:1 (1972), pp. 77-94.

vibrant. Rather, what I am postulating is that as the field of Black Studies matured, and as the concept of the Diaspora evolved, Latin America was tangentially related to this development. It has been only in recent years that there has been more fusion and synthesis. Perhaps this is a result of the diaspora's own coming of age as a theoretical concept. Or perhaps it is also a result of the recognition by Latin Americanists of the potential uses of the diaspora paradigm for illuminating national/colonial histories, while connecting to a wider network of scholarship.

As Latin Americanists now engage the field of African Diaspora history, a few cautionary signposts seem warranted. While the trend of studying blacks within national and regional contexts does offer powerful revisionist correctives that enrich existing national narratives, especially those that have muted or overlooked black historical contributions, at the same time, writing about blacks within the framework of Latin American regional, national, and colonial histories necessarily affects the writing of "Black Diaspora" history. This point is somewhat obvious, but still worth examining because of its broader implications. Re-stated, when writing about the history of blacks in Latin America one must navigate existing historiographies in the Latin American canon. Some of these are ideologically crucial to the heritage and politics of the region, making them even more canonical in a sense. The powerful modern tradition of indigenous revisionist history, closely allied with the 20th century activist programme of *indigenismo*, occupies such a role. The discourses of *mestizaje* and *mulatez* (or *mulataje*) have also been significant modern nationalist ideologies, replete with their attenuate academic inquiries. Equally, the importance of Marxism and class analysis has deeply influenced the research arena, in many cases serving to privilege the study of class over race, or at least urging scholars to read *through* race for class. As the discourse of Diaspora develops within these standing historiographic traditions, our interpretation of black social action can become affected, potentially to the point of distorting historical perceptions of black agency. For example, in the on-going effort to unveil Latin America's rich native tradition, powerful statements have been made to the degree of agency and resistance that have existed (and exist) in native communities. Appropriately, native accommodationism is becoming ever more problematized in the process. But scholars of the African Diaspora must be careful not to over-interpret native agency to the point of circumscribing the social action of black populations. Agency was not necessarily a zero-sum game in this respect, and various subaltern agencies could often work in tandem. Older models of black-native interaction may have over-emphasized the competition between these groups. Newer models investigating the dimensions of indigenous and black power appear to highlight processes of

native-black cooperation, cultural borrowing, and interactivity, without ignoring conflict and antagonism.[35]

As Latin Americanists write the history of African descendants it is also possible that the historiographical emphasis on hybridity and mixture can work to delimit our understanding of the social space that was available for blacks to operate within. As a result, black social actors can emerge as flat—as conduits to the activities of other, more "important" groups. In a historical tradition where mestizos, natives, and whites have dominated, blacks can be seen as facilitating their history and interrelationships. Of course, during the colonial period, the independence era, and the early national period, gradual increases in social interaction across racial and class lines did seem to situate blacks in important intermediary roles, especially in Spanish mainland areas where indigenous populations loomed large. Yet one must caution against overemphasizing the black interstitial position to accommodate, or even tweak the narrative of existing historical traditions, especially when new traditions may well need to be theorized and called for. Indeed, one thrust of Black Diaspora paradigm is to compel scholars to conceive of black populations as valid subjects of study in their own right. The paradigm's influence within Latin American historiography may ultimately mean continually conceiving of innovative ways to write histories that foreground black roles such that they seem less complementary to a variety of areas of social development.

Of course, in addressing the pressures that have long stifled the study of black populations in Latin America, scholars equally run the risk of overemphasizing black agency in an effort of historical correction. Latin Americanists must also guard against this, as well as our own brand of essentializing. It is seductively easy to present (even simplify) our research findings as representing some elemental form of black experience in order to offset the historical renderings of actors whose story has been "set," so to speak. In related fashion, as we recover African identities within New World blackness, we run the risk too of oversimplifying Africanity—dissociating it from complex change in Africa, while deemphasizing the processes of rich, interactive New World exchanges. Fortunately, our scholarship appears to be headed in the right direction on these points. Latin Americanists are ever more careful to contextualize black behavior within local and international systems, so as to guard against breeching the bounds of agency. Likewise, especially with regard to the survival of African ethnicities in the New World, we are arriving at better understandings of how ethnicity served for

[35] Restall, *Black and Red* offers a good model for these interactions.

blacks to remember their African past in ways that fit with emerging New World realities. Instead of representing facile replications of supposedly static African identities, research appears to stress the constant social energy and cultural inputs that went into crafting African "diasporic" ethnicities that incessantly triangulated New World, European, and African elements—at times presenting preservations of each culture, at times blending them into something new, and at times layering them upon each other.[36]

One area where our scholarship may be weakest, however, is in developing an understanding of Black Diaspora history that surmounts the hurdle of slavery and that highlights the interconnections of black populations outside of national contexts. As this article has tried to demonstrate, many of the works within the broader corpus of African Diasporic scholarship seek to transcend national/regional frameworks of analysis, in part to release black populations from being over-determined by theoretical models that overly bind blacks into frameworks of national subjectivity wherein they are further constrained by social positions of inferiority. This is one of the core missions of the Pan-Africanist research agenda launched in the 1950s and '60s. But in Latin America, discussions of inter-regional and international black exchange have faced barriers. For instance, national discourses on racial mixture have historically worked to dissect and partition Latin America's populations of African descent, effectively discouraging connections with other diasporans.[37] Also, the ways in which nationalism has been constructed, combined with the rhetoric of certain populist regimes (including political parties such as Venezuela's *Accíon Democratica* and Costa Rica's

[36] For some interesting (but by no means exhaustive) discussions on the crafting of African ethnicities in Africa and the New World, and various perspectives on the debate as to how to "best" identify "Africans" in the Americas see Douglas B. Chambers, "Ethnicity in the Diaspora: The Slave-Trade and the Creation of African 'Nations" in the Americas," *Slavery & Abolition*, 22:3 (2001), pp. 25-39; Gwendolyn Mildo Hall, *Slavery and African Ethnicities in the Americas: Restoring the Links* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Sweet, *Recreating Africa*; Gomez, *Exchanging our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); Kristin Mann, "Shifting Paradigms in the Study of the African Diaspora and of Atlantic History and Culture," *Slavery & Abolition* 22:1 (2001), pp. 3-20; Bennett, *Africans in Colonial Mexico*; Bryant, "Slavery and the Context of Ethnogenesis: Africans, Afro-Creoles, and the Realities of Bondage in the Kingdom of Quito, 1600-1800" (Ph.D. diss., The Ohio State University, 2005); Falola and Childs, *The Yoruba Diaspora*; and Mieko Nishida, *Slavery and Identity: Ethnicity, Gender, and Race in Salvador, Brazil, 1808-1888* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2003).

[37] Scholars like Michael Hanchard in *Orpheus and Power: The Movimento Negro of Rio de Janiero and São Paulo Brazil, 1945-1988* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), signal that in some instances, black consciousness movements, such as Brazilian "Black Soul" and the Movimento Negro Unificado of the 1970s, made cultural associations with the broader Black Diaspora (such as wearing an afro or dressing in "African" styles) but did not engage in grassroots political outreach.

Partido de Liberación Nacional) have allowed some blacks to feel forms of inclusion not seen elsewhere in the Diaspora. This has facilitated distance between Latin America's blacks, and those diasporans who have struggled against firmer, state-sanctioned segregation policies.[38] Of course, it is important to stress that Latin American mechanisms of racial inclusion (especially the notion of racial democracy) were often incomplete, or were not made available in regions where the black population was small. It is well known that in places like Venezuela and the Dominican Republic, and even to a lesser extent in Mexico, public discourses, combined with immigration policies in the 19th and 20th centuries, strove to marginalize the blackest peoples so that they would become isolated within the body politic and might vanish from the nation.[39] Nevertheless, either because of partial inclusion, the segmentation of blackness, or simply because of their muzzled voices, our understanding of potential hemispheric linkages among blacks has been curtailed, leaving important stories unheard.

This issue of *The Americas* draws together a collection of essays originally presented at the "African Diaspora Identities" panel of the 2004 Latin American Studies Association Meeting in Las Vegas. Each article showcases some benefits of blending Latin American history with African Diaspora history. Primarily, this volume is concerned with the black presence in the colonial (sixteenth and seventeenth centuries) Andean region, still an underresearched field, despite the landmark work of Bowser and subsequent inquiries made by Carlos Aguirre, Christine Hünefeldt, Peter Blanchard, María Eugenia Chaves, and Kris Lane, among others.[40] In this respect, the

[38] Of course, the famous mulatto escape hatch theory is important here—articulated by Carl Degler, *Neither Black Nor White: Slavery and Race Relations in Brazil and the United States* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986 [1971]). The ways in which blackness have been appropriated into the cultural mainstream image of some nations has been impressive, as documented by Robin Moore, *Nationalizing Blackness: Afro-Cubanismo and Artistic Revolution in Havana, 1920-1940* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997). Forms of black inclusion into Cuba's political network (especially the Communist Party) are nicely traced in Alejandro de la Fuente, *A Nation for All.*

[39] Winthrop Wright's examination of Venezuela in *Café con Leche*, demonstrates the pattern. Meanwhile, Trujillo's harsh, anti-Haitian policies sought to eradicate this black population from the Dominican Republic; see Thomas Fiehrer, "Political Violence in the Periphery: The Haitian Massacre of 1937," *Race and Class* 32:2 (1990), pp. 1-20. In Mexico, José Vasconcelos's classic statement on mestizaje, *La Raza Cósmica*, articulated notions of how blacks posed a hindrance to progress given that they were bearers of immorality and sensuality. See José Vasconcelos, *La raza cósmica: misión de la raza iberoamericana* (Barceolona: Agencia Mundial de Librería, 1958), p. 19. Mexico during the late 19th and early 20th centuries also wrestled with immigration policies that sought to invite blacks into the nation and those that strove to bar their entry.

[40] Bowser, *The African Slave in Colonial Peru, 1524-1650* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974); Christine Hünefeldt, *Paying the Price of Freedom: Family and Labor Among Lima's Slaves, 1800-1854* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); Peter Blanchard, *Slavery and Abolition in Early Republican Peru* (Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources, 1992); Lane, *Quito*; Chaves,

volume calls into question the Black Atlantic paradigm, imploring us to incorporate the Andes into its matrix. At the same time, the volume's regional focus presses forth the issue that mainland Latin America must be prominently considered not just within the orbit of the major slave societies, but as an important region of blackness within its own right. It had distinct patterns of development that help illuminate our hemispheric understanding of blacks, while contrasting with the primary slave holding areas.

In a unique investigation of power, agency, and cultural hybridity, Charles Beatty Medina's article demonstrates how Esmeraldas, a fringe region within a marginal area of the Spanish empire, offered a special space for the inversion of power relations. Through creatively studying the saga of marronage in the zone, he retraces how relatively independent, African-based communities negotiated their freedom with the Spanish regime, re-shaped the political landscape of the region, used Christianity as a tool to facilitate their autonomy, and even harnessed the coerced labor of indigenous populations. In the process, these communities engaged in ethnogenesis—the transformation and amalgamation of regional society through an evolutionary racial process which differed from assimilation, in that power dynamics were more equalized. As with some of the more recent work being done on the black presence in Latin America, Beatty carefully analyzes the relationship of blacks and blackness with whites and natives. Rachel O'Toole's article, also concerned with agency and power dynamics, reveals equally interesting circumstances of indigenous-black relations. Her essay demonstrates how highly mobile black populations in the northern Andes interacted richly with native communities. Sometimes they settled in their townships; at other times they established more distant relationships. In both cases, their interactions had concrete effects on local politics—but unlike Beatty's article, O'Toole's natives often had the upper hand. When convenient, or when they felt that the black presence was interfering with their ability to control their settlements, natives were able to manipulate Spanish law and sensibilities to mobilize against their Afro-Peruvian neighbors. With respect to the arena of coerced labor, O'Toole further shows how black fugitive and non-fugitive slaves voluntarily and involuntarily worked in the indigenous communities of the northern Peruvian coastal hinterland. Interestingly, when juxtaposing both O'Toole's and Beatty's essays, we witness white Spaniards playing unusually subdued roles in managing colonial affairs, even labor systems. This is quite a different picture from the firm power that whites were

María Chiquinquirá Díaz; Aguirre, *Agentes de su propia libertad*; and Camilla Townsend, "Half My Body Free, the Other Half Enslaved: The Politics of the Slaves of Guayaquil at the End of the Colonial Era," *Colonial Latin American Review* 7:1 (1998), pp. 105-12.

depicted as wielding in some classic examinations of slave societies. But then, given the composition of these economies and the diversity of their workforces, the traditional historiography would argue that these regions were not slave societies per se—or were they? These articles plead for us to at least consider a re-examination.

Sherwin K. Bryant's essay postulates that Quito *was* a quintessential slave society, despite the fact that the number of slave imports was far lower than in places like Brazil or nineteenth-century Cuba. He notes that regardless of scale, key features could exist to transform an ordinary mainland Spanish colonial society into a "slave society." One implication of his work is that more of such micro-slave societies (my terminology) existed, and it is up to us to search for them within the under-explored regions of the Diaspora. At least for the kingdom of Quito, the mining industry was instrumental for the transformation, contributing to a rise in slavery in late-seventeenth-century Popoyán, Ibarra, and Guayaquil, precisely the moment when slavery in other mainland Spanish areas (such as Mexico) was beginning to decline.

Leo J. Garofalo's paper returns us to the theme of culture and the complex formation of New World Diasporic identities. He notes that in urban areas, Afro-Peruvians, especially ritual specialists, were important in engaging natives with Iberian culture. But he also traces how Afro-Peruvians reworked Iberian culture with African components, and how they weaved native cultural practices into Iberian ones (albeit with distinct African/creole twists). His cultural analysis further addresses the subject of colonial power, in that he suggests that the Afro-Peruvian ability to translate and interpret culture multi-vocally, ultimately served as a tool that contributed to the long-term success of the colonizing mission. However, his assessment moves beyond placing Afro-Peruvians in static roles as cultural mediators. Inherent in his argument is that a new, Andean ritual culture emerged by the 18th century, due in large part to Afro-Peruvian assistance—yet this was a radically different culture from what the colonizers originally intended or could have ever imagined.

While contributing to broader diasporic discussions in their own right, each of these essays, in varying degrees, incorporates insights derived from other regions and aspects of the Diaspora experience. O'Toole, for instance, is able to connect the increase in bellicose fugitive slave activity in seventeenth-century northern Peru with the warrior tradition of captives drawn from the kingdom of Kongo. Meanwhile Bryant's reflections on the structure of slave systems are based on a wide reading of the literature on captivity, including works on antiquity. Together, these four essays represent

what Diaspora research is bringing to the table for Latin Americanists—a new, critically engaged brand of history that re-situates Latin American localities into a network of scholarship conjoined to the question (and methodology) of uncovering the African and black-creole past.

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