

Racial Identification in Colonial Latin America: Social Class in the Visual Form

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THESIS APPROVAL

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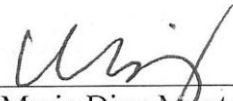
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Abstract

This thesis will analyze the evolution of racial identity during the colonial period in Spanish Latin America and how Casta paintings in the seventeenth century led to the creation of a society based on social stratification originating from the mixing of races. The chapters of this thesis will track the evolution of how those of mixed racial heritage have been viewed in Latin American society. I also examine how the visual identification of “mixed race” has affected the social class or social status of people of mixed races during the Colonial period. This thesis will incorporate various literature regarding the origins of Casta paintings and their multifaceted meanings. This thesis will also examine the intersectionality of visual representation of race, gender, and religion. These visual forms of racial art set forth the foundation of a new social hierarchy based on the idea of Spanish purity of blood and the mixing of races. The aim of this thesis is to reveal how those of mixed races, especially in Latin American society, have faced oppressive social standing. I argue that many mixed-race individuals face a dual identity crisis in which they do not know which group or culture they are “supposed” to identify with or belong to. This marginalization has been inscribed and reinscribed through visual representations. Often those of mixed races are not allowed to fully participate in the advantages or disadvantages of at least one of their races. Historians and scholars have deemed this the crisis of “dual identity.” With this thesis, I provide insight into the daily struggles of identifying as a mixed marginalized group in a society that emphasized racial difference and hierarchy. I also explore the intersections of this hierarchy with gender. Finally, this thesis explores the difficulties of attempting to identify as one race or another and the social struggles that emerge for people of mixed race.

Introduction

Since the beginning of colonial rule and the Transatlantic slave trade, mixed-raced people, especially those of African descent in the Americas, faced a struggle over identity in a society dominated by a narrative that favored the majority elite Spanish born “white” members of society. Mixed-racial people often had to navigate their identity and myriad background cultures within a system that did not know how to categorize them. By default, mixed raced individuals were often placed towards the bottom of the racial hierarchy. Issues of race and gender impacted the everyday lives of multiracial individuals in very specific and often painful ways.

Race is a complex system of classification that has affected various cultures throughout history. The study of Race has also aided in further analysis of subcategories regarding race. These studies provide a more nuanced context concerning the struggle for identity many people of different races experienced in a dominant white society. The history of mixed raced people is often overshadowed in the overall study of Race and mixed raced individuals can be subsumed or homogenized as one default race. I hope with this work to give context to the struggle that multiracial individuals experienced regarding their own identity.

Mixed-racial experience is not a new aspect of culture as mixed-raced individuals have been common since different races historically interacted with one another. In colonial Latin America, particularly between the 16th and 18th centuries, there existed a fascination with race and the mixture of races. The European power that seemed most preoccupied and even at times obsessed with race and mixed-racial classification was the Spanish empire. The Spanish empire created a system of classification based on race that “was partly inspired by the Spanish concept of *limpieza de sangre*, originally referred to the status or condition of having unsullied ‘Old

Christian' ancestry, free of Jewish, Muslim, and heretical antecedents.”¹ Spanish identity revolved around so called “purity” regarding race and racial mixture. This stemmed in large part from Inquisitional conquest of Islamic territories in the Iberian Peninsula. This Islamic and African cultural presence in the Iberian Peninsula was a prominent factor in Spanish culture until the Inquisition during the colonial period. African cultures and traditions have had an “ancient presence in the Iberian Peninsula. In fact, Spanish identity especially has been forged on the frontlines of African and European interactions.”² The ideology originating from the Reconquista movement in the Iberian Peninsula directly affected ideas of racial superiority in colonial Latin America, aiding in the creation of a racial hierarchy influenced by Roman Catholicism. The reacquisition of Islamic territories in Spain set the precedent of racial ideology that the culture and religion of Spain was superior to the African influenced culture and religions, like those of the Islamic people commonly known as Moors.³

The Church had a heavy presence in colonial Latin America, and greatly affected the Reconquista movement in Latin America. The study of the Catholic Church's presence in Latin America notes that “The Church tried to control their presence in the Americas and it set up several branches of the Inquisition in various parts of Latin America. The control exerted by the Church eventually led to an elimination of Muslims in the Spanish peripheries”⁴ and reveals that the Inquisition of Spain did not stop after its success in the Iberian Peninsula. I argue that the

¹ María Elena Martínez. “The Black Blood of New Spain: Limpieza de Sangre, Racial Violence, and Gendered Power in Early Colonial Mexico.” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 61, no. 3 (2004): 479–520. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3491806>.

² Antumi Toasije. “The Africinity of Spain: Identity and Problematization.” *Journal of Black Studies* 39, no. 3 (2009): 348–55. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40282566>.

³ I use the term *Moor* to reference the group of Islamic peoples in the Iberian Peninsula during the Spanish Inquisition. The term *Moor* is an outdated term to refer to this group of people.

⁴ Rukhsana Qamber. “Inquisition Proceedings against Muslims in 16th Century Latin America.” *Islamic Studies* 45, no. 1 (2006): 21–57. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20839001>.

connection between the Church and the Crown of Spain allowed the religious ideology of La Reconquista in the Iberian Peninsula to be easily transmitted to the minds of colonial Latin America, aiding in a racial hierarchy with Roman Catholic influences.

The subsequent colonization of Latin America by Spain created a pervasive influence regarding race and hierarchy in the Latin American region. The Spanish colonization of Latin America brought various races in contact with each other, bringing with them their own cultural beliefs, religions, traditions, and experiences. This interactive space became a catalyst that led to the creation of new cultures, new traditions, and a unique rising nationalism based on the mixed-racial habitants of Latin America.

In the work, *From Transculturation to Hybridization*, Jean-François Côté explores concepts that various cultures throughout Latin America have adapted multiple aspects of different cultures. Côté focuses on a concept of transculturation, which he defines as “a deep and all-encompassing process at work in every aspect of social life, all of which become ‘fusions’ of diverse cultural horizons that are in contact at a given historical point in time.”⁵ This concept of transculturation is an epitome of the historical event of the colonial period. The interactions between diverse cultural forms in colonial Latin America led to the formation of multiracial cultures in Latin America. This concept of transculturation shares comparisons with the concept of hybridization. Garcia Canclini has researched the concept of hybridization, noting that this concept does differ slightly from transculturation. While these two concepts may differ, these concepts also share similarities with one another. Canclini defines the concept of hybridization as “a process through different cultural areas and practices are coming together and defining new

⁵ Jean-François Côté, “From Transculturation to Hybridization: Redefining Culture in the Americas.” In *Amériques Transculturelles - Transcultural Americas*, edited by Afef Benessaïeh, 121–48. University of Ottawa Press, 2010. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1ch78hd.8>.

cultural forms.”⁶ Indeed, transculturation can be seen as the process of these interactions and hybridization as the result.⁷ These two concepts are similar since they both involve the interactions of various groups and the creation of a new form of mixed culture.

The concepts of racial identity based on racial “mixture” and socioracial hierarchies have been a popular research discussion in modern historiography. The historiography on race has shown that “emphasis on remote racial history as an explanation of national greatness increased during the eighteenth century.”⁸ Scholars have written on social identity based on race for over two centuries, analyzing the complex racial tensions within global history. While discussions regarding race have been a global issue, within the Historiography there has been a focus on racial tensions in the United States of America. However, in the last few decades, there has been a rise in historiography focusing on race and the variety of different mixed racial identities in the Caribbean and Latin America. Historians have researched the complexities around racial integration in Latin America, starting around the time of the Atlantic Slave Trade that forcibly brought millions of African enslaved peoples to the islands of the Caribbean and Latin America. My thesis will explore the visual representation of these categorizations, specifically through casta paintings and examine the intersections of race with gender. The creation of art with the sole purpose of establishing a hierarchy based on racial mixture created a foundation of colorism and racism throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. I argue that those with multiracial heritage have occupied a zone of complexity in cultural identity. Through the historical analysis of casta paintings, I assert that this zone of complexity is shown through the visual depictions of

⁶ Jean-François Côté, “From Transculturation to Hybridization: Redefining Culture in the Americas.” 2010, 12.

⁷ “Transculturation and hybridization(See what Dr. C text)

⁸ Edward Norman Saveth. “Race and Nationalism in American Historiography: The Late Nineteenth Century.” *Political Science Quarterly* 54, no. 3 (1939): 421–41.

various mixed-racial groups in colonial Latin America, and the forced racial identities given to specific racial groups.

In addition, colorism continues to be an issue for many people(s) of color not only in North America but in South and Central America as well. Colorism is a viewpoint of society in which case those of lighter skin or white skin are treated the best and those with darker skin or black skin are treated the worst. Modern historiography on identity based on color also includes terms such as colorism or more recently, the notion of “color blindness.” Colorism is prevalent in many aspects of society in the United States, but especially in Mexico and other Latin American countries.

Widespread colonization in Latin America led to multiple and often painful interactions between various races during the colonial period. The indigenous populations inhabiting North and South America for thousands of years established complex civilizations before European contact in the sixteenth century. The indigenous populations had their own system of economy, laws, and religion that was vastly different than European society. These already established civilizations were completely foreign to the society of the dominant European empires during the age of exploration, including the differences in gender and racial standings between both these foreign entities. The already established gender roles in indigenous Latin American society differed in various ways, but these gender roles also reflected the societal influences these communities were experiencing during this period. The indigenous communities of pre-colonial Latin America did not experience the same religious influences European society experienced before the age of exploration. These indigenous communities had more of a natural influence on their religion and culture, connecting natural phenomena occurring in their world to either masculine or feminine traits. Pre-colonial indigenous religion focused on the complementary

aspects of both men and women, attributing certain daily life actions to being masculine or feminine.

The differences in pre-colonial indigenous culture and the dominant Western culture can be seen in the analysis of religion between these two cultures. The religious ideals of Western civilization before European colonialism were focused on Christian beliefs, which had a different emphasis on gender roles than pre-colonial indigenous society. The Western gender ideology, which was heavily influenced by Christian teachings, focused on the masculine dominance in society. The prominent emphasis on male figures in Christian beliefs reflect an emphasis on the importance of these masculine figures in religious teachings. These same teachings also reflect an emphasis on the subservience of the feminine character, showing an importance of women to be obedient to the male figures of their society. The religious influences brought a change in the gender dynamic of Latin America during the sixteenth century, changing the way not only different gender interact with one another, but also the way different races interacted with each other during the colonial period. As discussed, these religious influences also were impacted by the reconquest of Islamic territories in Spain during the Inquisition. This reconquest of these Islamic territories on the Iberian Peninsula affected the ideology of Christian Spaniards in colonial Latin America and the Caribbean. In this thesis, I explore how the religious ideology of the Catholic church impacted not only the thoughts on racial hierarchy and superiority, but also on ideologies on gender and the forced gender identities experienced during the colonial period.

The Spanish fascination with the interaction between various races led to the creation of visual art forms that have set forced societal roles based on mixed-racial histories. During the colonial period, these visual representations of racial art were produced for those of mixed-racial individuals, aiding them in their own self-identification in Colonial Latin America and the

Caribbean. These visual forms of art are called casta paintings, and these paintings have had long implications on the complex struggle for identity many mixed-racial individuals faced throughout the evolution of New Spanish society. The Spanish fascination with racial mixture was not brand-new in colonial Spanish ideology. The Spanish had experience various cultural interaction prior to the colonization of the Americas, but the establishment of Spanish colonies in Latin America sparked a rebirth in fascination of racial mixture. This increase in interest in racial mixing was in result of the various cultures in the small geographical area of Spanish colonies in Latin America.

The examination of the history of casta paintings, especially the analysis of the histories of the painters, inspires many inquiries in modern academia. The questions that stem from this analysis of art include: why these were created, and who these paintings were intended to impact? I argue the creation of casta paintings represented a visual form of the reality of colonial Latin American society that allowed those of mixed-racial backgrounds to understand their own place in a white dominant society. I also argue that these casta Paintings have created the foundations of a social hierarchy that revolved around race which has continued to affect racial tensions over the past century. The study of this art based on race, as well as the history behind Spanish colonization, exemplifies the struggle many mixed-racial individuals experienced during this time. The subject of the examination of casta paintings obtains a variety of racial terms. These terms have origins in the Spanish language and often have translations from the Spanish language. The term casta refers to the social status of different marginalized groups in colonial Latin America, and often refer to the system of categorization based on race. The colonization of Latin America would set the precedent for the perspectives on having mixed-racial blood and their placement in the social hierarchy. The study of casta paintings also contain many racial

terms regarding the various mixed-racial groups in colonial Latin America. The most common racial term seen in the examination of mixed-racial history during this period is the term “*mestizo*.” Throughout this thesis, these various racial terms will be used to describe the numerous mixed-racial groups found in analysis of mixed-racial history in colonial Latin America. These terms are not meant to be demeaning, but to emphasize the socially constructed hierarchy based on race created during this period and the terminology utilized. The mixed-racial terms used in Chapter 2 will show the negative depictions the European elite created regarding racial identity to further their own authority and status in colonial Latin America.

In Chapter one, “Historiography,” explores the scholarship regarding ideas of racial tension from slavery, colonialism, and imperialism as well as Black identity in the political, economic, and social aspects of Caribbean society. Historians have analyzed Black identity, as well as the social implications of various mixed-race identities. The modern historiography of the evolution of mixed-race identity has been impacted by various socioeconomic movements brought by global events. Modern historiography has been vastly impacted by important historical movements such as the rise of nationalism, the increase in intellectual Black writers and their influence on Black identity, and the rise of social progressive thinking with equal rights movements of various marginalized groups. The historiography surrounding the rise of mixed-racial identities has shed light on the forced racial identities given to many mixed-race individuals, as well as many different marginalized groups. The historiography of mixed-racial identity has intersectional ties with social constructed gender identities. My research adds to the overall historiography of mixed-race history by showing the social roles of status that mixed-race people have been forced to take by a dominant white society. I also contribute to the consensus of mixed-racial history by adding an in-depth analysis of the different mixed-racial groups

depicted through the casta Paintings and the forced racial identities also shown through these visual forms of racial art. These identities intersected with ideas about gender roles for both men and women.

The second body chapter will analyze the complexities around the concept of identity for multiple mixed-race groups in Latin America during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Those born mixed-race, especially within countries with evolving social constructions like social hierarchy based on race, often have difficulty being fully integrated into not only one, but both of their racial cultures. This is evident in colonial Latin America, when children born half African and half Spanish, called “mulattos” in the nomenclature of the histories of colonization in Latin America, were not treated as equals in Spanish society. These individuals were also not fully accepted into African culture because of their mixed heritage. This chapter will examine the evolution of terms such as “racial ambiguity” and “passing,” and how these terms have had lasting effects on the complexities revolved around racial identity in the Americas, including how it has affected mixed-race identity. The creation of a social hierarchy based on race has led to several social issues such as colorism, racism, and homophobia. These social issues have continued to dominate, negative aspects on present society, leading to the rising sense of social justice within the past decades.

The third chapter will be an in-depth analysis of the dual cultural identity that many of mixed raced origins faced in their individual societies. This chapter will incorporate the work of W. E. B. DuBois and his theories on double consciousness in relation to the identities of mixed groups in their own societies. I use this concept as a lens to view mixed racial identity in Latin America and the Caribbean. This third chapter will use the theory of “double consciousness” to look at the social struggles of mixed-race groups in the colonial period. Those of two or more

racess often found (and find) themselves in a social struggle regarding identity. They were often rejected by both cultures for failing to fully “pass” as being a part of one single race. This chapter will also incorporate the examination of the casta paintings in connection with mixed-raced identity in colonial Latin America. The examination will include the historical context of these casta paintings, the social and cultural environments of pre-colonial Latin America, and the transformation of these same environments after European colonization during the sixteenth century. This thesis will include analysis of the different perspectives behind the creation of these visual forms of racial art, looking at the purpose behind creating this art from both a colonial elite perspective and a marginalized perspective. The racial tensions between colonial Latin American society shown through the casta Paintings are interconnected with the struggle of identity mixed-race people experienced during this time. This chapter examines the multiple influences throughout colonial Latin America that aided in the struggle for place and belonging regarding mixed-racial identity.

The final chapter for this thesis explores the intersectionality of race and gender within the social environment of colonial Latin America. This chapter will focus on the identities of marginalized women in colonial Latin America. This chapter will also emphasize the intersectionality of visual representation of different groups of people of color in colonial Latin America. I examine the evolving identities of not just women of color, but all women in Latin America during the colonial period. This chapter will utilize historiography based around gender identity and visual representation of gender in the Americas to show the connection between the identities of marginalized groups and the identities of women and different genders. This final chapter will shed light on how women, particularly women of color, have been given forced identities revolving around reproductive abuse, forced sex work, and as “property” for Latin

American men. The examination of the casta paintings reveal the tense gender dynamics between different racial groups in colonial Latin America. The look into colonial daily life that the casta paintings reveal demonstrate the various social dynamics between many different groups. These paintings also reveal how these interactions between genders stemmed from the racial tensions of colonial Latin America.

The analysis of the creation of casta paintings reveals much of the tense racial dynamic experience in the Caribbean and Latin America between the sixteenth and eighteenth century. While these paintings give much insight on these complex racial identities during this period, these paintings also give much insight on the complex transformation of the ideology of gender roles in colonial Latin America. The casta paintings made between the 17th and 18th century reflected colonial daily life. While showing the different perspectives on mixed-racial identity, these paintings also reflect the various interactions between different genders during this period. The intersectionality of race and gender is reflected in the creation of these visual forms of art based on race. The daily lives of women of color in the Latin American region were filled with experiences that included the numerous racial and gender interactions. These paintings show the religious influence stemming from European religious ideals revolved around the forced gender roles of European “civilization.” The analysis of the intersectionality of race and gender in this region reveal many religious influenced terms on gender roles in the colonial period, including the terms “Machismo” and “Marianismo.” These terms will be used to describe the ideology of how men were to be aggressive in their masculinity through machismo and to describe the subservience of colonial women in this region. These gender roles would also be introduced during conversion attempt on various marginalized groups during this period, further showing the intersectionality of both race and gender in Latin America. The analysis of mixed-racial

interactions in Latin American history reveals the misconception that these two fields of historiography are not disconnected in cultural analysis, but rather have been social constructions that continue to be linked in numerous historical examinations of culture.

The examination of mixed-racial history in colonial Latin America revolves much around the struggle for self-identification based on the creation of various mixed-races. The research found in this thesis includes the mixed-racial struggle of identity stemming from the duality of existing in two cultures. Throughout their history many Afro-Latinos have had difficulty either identifying themselves as African descended or Latino. This trouble identifying themselves stems from the old themes of colorism and racism. Those of mixed-racial backgrounds were socially marginalized or discriminated against if they were of darker complexion, and those with lighter complexion were favored and treated more favorably. This treatment includes being offered higher positions in a workplace while darker skinned individuals would be offered lower positions in the workplace. This trouble identifying themselves also mirrors a similar reaction to mixed race people throughout the world, especially black and white individuals in the United States. Mixed-racial individuals have trouble identifying as being a part of either culture because of the various communities that they come from, and this treatment can be similar to that of mixed-race individuals in North and South America. Although these individuals may identify as Latino even though they have African descended blood, the societies they live in will continue to discriminate against them even though they identify as Latino. This thesis includes the analysis of identity based on race and the disadvantages of being a part of their original cultures. The focus in this thesis includes the ideologies of a “double consciousness”⁹ based on the writings of W. E. B. DuBois, emphasizing that the creation of new mixed-racial cultures with their own

⁹ W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 1903.

rising nationalism in a dominant white society. Mixed-racial groups created their own cultures while being different from their original cultures, as well as taking cultural influences and traditions from their original cultures.

Race and Gender have been controversial topics of research that have aided in the formation of modern-day society. The research found in this thesis will reveal that the creation of a social hierarchy based on racial mixing has been a prominent aspect in forced racial statuses in Latin American society. The establishment of this system of classification has been a foundation of racism and colorism that not only plagues modern Latin American society, but also plagues the ideologies of social issues involving race and gender throughout the world. Race and gender have been used by a white dominant society in the categorization of different groups to further divide these same groups. The creation of categorization by race and gender has alienated those who do not fall into a single category. Mixed-race people do not comply with the cultural standards of a single race because they are part of duality of culture. These multiracial individuals often cannot identify as being a part of a single culture, but instead have created a new mixed-racial identity. This new mixed-race identity has influences from both cultures, but is a new, complex identity that is unique. The following chapters include the historical context of mixed-racial identity in the colonial period, and include the various influences on both the interactions of different gender and racial groups. The established ideologies around race and gender are rooted in different perspectives on social status and the social mobility many marginalized groups did not have access to in colonial Spanish society. The research found in this thesis hopes to give context on the struggle for identity those of mixed-racial background experience in a system of classification based on race.

Chapter One: Historiography of Mixed-Race Identity

The concepts of identity based on race and racial mixture, and socioracial hierarchies have been a popular research discussion in modern historiography. Scholars have written on social identity based on race for over two centuries, analyzing the complex racial tensions that have been ever present in global history. While the discussion over race has been a global issue, there has been a focus on racial tensions in the United States of America. There has been increasing historiography focusing on race and the variety of mixed racial ethnicities in the Caribbean area of Latin America. Historians have researched the complexities around racial integration in Latin America, starting around the time of the Atlantic Slave Trade that forcibly brought millions of African enslaved peoples to the islands of the Caribbean and the areas of many present day South American countries. The historiography for this thesis incorporates the ideas of racial tension from slavery, colonialism, and imperialism, but some of the historiography also focuses on Black identity in the political, economic, and social aspects of Caribbean society. Historians analyze Black identity, but also analyze the social implications of various mixed-race identities.

The modern historiography of the evolution of mixed-race identity has been impacted by various socioeconomic movements brought by global events. Modern historiography has been vastly impacted by socioeconomic movements such as the rise of nationalism, the increase in intellectual Black writers and their influence on Black identity, and the rise of social progressive thinking with equal rights movements of various marginalized groups. The historiography surrounding the rise of mixed-racial identities has shed light on the forced racial identities given to many mixed-race individuals, as well as many different marginalized groups. The historiography of mixed-racial identity has intersectional ties with socially constructed gender

identities. The historiography of mixed-race identity examines many different racial mixings of various groups. Modern historiography on the racial atmospheres in Latin America involved mixed-racial identity examines the creation of casta paintings in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Historians emphasized the growing identities of marginalized groups, including the variety of mixed racial identities in the Colonial Caribbean. The historiography, originating in connection with the rise of scholarly literature on Black nationalism, primarily focused on how the Black identity figured into the socio-economic systems of the powerful white elite. This literature first focused on the Black identity during the enslavement of West and Central Africans in the Americas.

Historiography on the enslavement of West and Central Africans includes the various hardships these enslaved people endured and views on how Black identity was through the elite perspective. The evolution of the historiography of Black identity transitioned from the identity of “property” to a rising identity originating in the common history of struggle. This literature includes the rise of Black nationalism following the effects of the Haitian Revolution in the early nineteenth century. The historiography of Black identity in the colonial period also focuses on the mixed-racial identity and its correlation within the Black identity, emphasizing the struggle for identity many mixed-racial groups experienced. My thesis will add to the popular historiography on mixed-racial identity by revealing the socially constructed identities have been deeply ingrained in the global systems due to the colonization of the Caribbean and Latin America. The creation of public portraits that depict the social standings of individuals based on the purity of blood, ethnic background, or mixture of races had set a precedent of how people of color have continued to be viewed in these hierarchal social systems.

Historians have consistently analyzed the concepts of racial mixing when looking at the extent of the colonization of Latin American countries. The modern historiography of Black identity, as well as mixed-racial identity, often revolves around one of the most influential Diaspora in global history, the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. Historians also note that while much of the historiography revolving Black identity can be traced back to the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, the rise of Black nationalism can also be seen originating from resistance to American and Latin American slavery. The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade brought millions of enslaved Africans into North and South America and drastically changed the physical environments of both North and South America, including the islands in the Caribbean. The enslaved Africans brought to this “New World,” were forced to transform the primal environments into valuable plantations and the original colonies in the Americas. The slave trade had created the foundations of the American economy using oppression, racism, and brutality towards African people. The enslaved Africans brought to the Americas because of Atlantic Slavery found many ways to rebel and resist their white masters. Throughout the development of historiography, many historians have studied Atlantic Slavery and how enslaved people would resist the systems of slavery. The evolution of the historiography through the decades shows how the viewpoint of the Black identity transformed as the rise of Black nationalism and the voices of marginalized groups added to the modern historiography.

The historiography of Black identity originated during the late-nineteenth century in the writings of Ulrich B. Phillips. Phillips wrote extensively about slavery in the Americas and the perspective of enslaved Africans. The historiography made during the late-nineteenth century and early-twentieth century emphasizes the elite perspective on the enslaved, from the viewpoints of the “master” or economic elite. This literature includes much work by Phillips,

consisting of *Slavery Issue in Federal Politics*¹⁰, *A Jamaica Slave Plantation*¹¹, *American Negro Slavery*¹², and *Life and Labor in the Old South*.¹³ These pieces of literature are similar, portraying the life of the enslavement of Africans in the Americas. This would be similar with much of the other historiography written over slavery before the 1960s. Throughout much of the historiography written over Black identity in connection with American slavery, the historiography has similarly shown the view of Black identity from the consensus created by the white elite. The previous popular consensus, which possibly could be a vivid thought in modern academia and historiography, has been that those view as people of color or having a darker complexion have been seen as inferior to the white elite from Western influence.

The historiography surrounding the view of Black identity has been viewed as tools of oppression, unable to escape the situations forced upon them by their white oppressors. This viewpoint of those who were enslaved has also led to the creation of a negative viewpoint of believing those with darker skin are considered inferior and must be led or governed by those deemed superior in their given society. This previous consensus of thinking has been heavily influenced by other governing bodies or institutions, such as the great influence on the Catholic Church in the colonization of North and South America. While historians have noted that European political bodies sought to colonize the lands across the Atlantic Ocean due to economic opportunity, the study of the colonization of the Americas has also shown that much of the incentive to travel to these unknown lands was to send missionaries to convert marginalized groups and spread Catholicism. The Catholic Church had a massive presence within the

¹⁰ Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, *"The slavery issue in federal politics / by Ulrich B. Phillips."* 1909.

¹¹ Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, *"A Jamaica slave plantation"* Washington, 1914.

¹² Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, *"American Negro slavery: a survey of the supply, employment and control of Negro labor as determined by the plantation régime / by Ulrich Bonnell Phillips."* 1918.

¹³ Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, *"Life and Labor in the Old South."* Little, Brown, and Company, 1929.

colonization of Latin America. The Catholic Church believed those of indigenous and African origin to be “savage” or dependent upon the Europeans to “save” these non-European, marginalized groups. This negative depiction of those of darker skin has been a major influence on the racism towards people of color but has also led to the ideas of conversion and the so called “need” for the white elite to lead the so called “uneducated” peoples of color.

Throughout the evolution of modern historiography, many historians have also researched the historiography and scholarship regarding the ideology behind the “white man’s burden,” where those of the white elite must take it upon themselves to govern the marginalized groups of their society, feeling that these groups are ill equipped in making governing, religious, or economic decisions without the help of the white elite. This forced identity of inferiority has been cemented into racial thinking as far back as the beginning of the sixteenth century when the first cargo ships carrying enslaved Western Africans arrived in the Caribbean.

The 1960s proved to be a pivotal moment in the evolution of the historiography of the Black identity. The historiography on Black identity published during the 1960s, as well as mixed-racial identity, emphasizes the identity of self-racial identification based on societal standards. This historiography also focusses on the social implications of society, showing the constant struggles for identity many black and mixed-raced individuals face in Western society. A prominent Black intellectual in the historiography of Black identity is W. E. B. DuBois. His work *The Souls of Black Folk: Essays and Sketches*¹⁴ sheds light on Black identity showed how “blacks had developed a deep yearning to be a apart of the nation of birth, but as descendants of black slaves they continued to suffer a virulent, abusive, persistent and endemic racism.”¹⁵

¹⁴ W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 1903.

¹⁵ Lisa Brock, and Castañeda Digna Fuertes, *Between Race and Empire: African-Americans and Cubans before the Cuban Revolution*. Temple University Press, 1998, 15.

DuBois also mentions the concept of “double consciousness,” which DuBois defines as “the struggle African Americans face to remain true to black culture while at the same time conforming to the dominant white society.”¹⁶ Du Bois also writes, “It is a peculiar sensation, this double consciousness...one ever feels his two-ness, an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two un-reconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.”¹⁷ DuBois work on Black identity and the need for a rise in “black consciousness” also connects with the conflict of a double identity many mixed racial groups have in their relative societies. The historiography around identity and self-consciousness are deeply interconnected with the history and historiography of mixed-racial identity in the Caribbean.

Another piece of literature published in 1968 that showed the changing point in the historiography of the Black identity is the text of *The Autobiography of a Runaway Slave*, written by Esteban Montejo.¹⁸ This text is one of the first to give voice to the marginalized enslaved peoples, giving their experiences and stories. This text provides accounts of the life of Montejo, detailing his experiences as an enslaved individual, as a fugitive living in isolation, and as a soldier who fought against the Spanish in the Cuban War for Independence from 1895 to 1898. These pieces of historiographical literature provided great change in the evolution of the Black identity in modern historiography by including the Black experience within maroon literature. While the 1960s proved to be a changing moment, the decades following would have a massive

¹⁶ W.E.B. Du Bois, and J. Saunders Redding, *The Souls of Black Folk: Essays and Sketches*. Fawcett World Library, 1961.

¹⁷ DuBois, *Souls of Black Folk*, 1903.

¹⁸ Montejo Esteban and Miguel Barnet, “*The Autobiography of a Runaway Slave*” New York: Pantheon Books, 1968.

increase in the writings on Black Identity, Black Nationalism, and the struggle for identity for mixed-raced individuals.

The period from the 1980s to the 2000s did not provide as much focus on racial identity, but still provided the foundations for the future boom in the writings of the Black Identity. The literature made during this period also showed the origin of the focus on mixed-racial identity. The historiography made during the period between the 1980s and the 2000s includes the historiography on race in both Cuba and Puerto Rico, also including the experiences of mixed-racial groups. Mixed-racial identity has been a controversial topic in the analysis of the historiography in Latin America. Historians such as Lisa Brock and Castañeda Fuertes have added to the historiography of racial identity by showing the inconsistencies within the racial atmosphere of Cuba. Brock and Fuertes researched the misconception that Cuba had a more peaceful racial environment in comparison with other Caribbean territories. While Cuba has set the precedent on the consensus on the racial atmosphere in the Caribbean region, there were also many other Caribbean islands that experienced similar atmospheres of racial tension. One Caribbean Island that had similarities in racial tensions but is different regarding discriminatory influences on society is the example of Puerto Rico and the experiences of Puerto Ricans with African heritage. Puerto Rico has much in common with the histories of neighboring Caribbean countries, filled with the mass Diaspora of enslaved Africans to produce economic gain for the resourceful European political bodies, such as the British, the French, and the Spanish. The modern Puerto Rican historiography that has transformed over the centuries, including many pieces of literature on the identity of those of mixed-race in Puerto Rican society.

The modern Puerto Rican historiography has included many writings on the colonization of Puerto Rico, as well as on the mixed-racial identities of those in Puerto Rican society. Puerto

Rico was colonized by the Spanish in 1508 and the first mass influx of enslaved Africans arrived to forcibly be worked like animals within the following five years. Puerto Rico was also originally inhabited by the indigenous tribe called the Taino, and when the Spanish had brought the enslaved Africans with them in their quest for colonization, the two different cultures interacted with each other. This cultural interaction created a mixing of cultures, creating the mixed Afro-Puerto Rican culture.

Historians focusing on Latin American racial identity have written vast amounts of scholarship on Afro-Puerto Rican culture, as well as racial tensions within the social climate of Puerto Rico. One example of modern historiography that analyzes the mixing of two cultures into the creation of a new hybrid culture is the text titled *Puerto Rico: The Question of an Afro-Mestizo Culture*¹⁹, written by Jose Luis Gonzales. Gonzales uses this text to exemplify the fact that Puerto Rican culture is predominantly a culture created by the cultural interaction between the indigenous Taino and the enslaved Africans brought to Puerto Rico. This text reveals much about the view of mixed-racial cultures, attempting to remake the Afro-Mestizo cultural identity as being one created from the bottom up, rather than given a forced cultural categorization imposed by the white ruling class in a more top-down fashion. While this piece of modern historiography exemplifies the attempt to remake the Afro-Mestizo cultural identity, much of the historiography written on racial tensions in Puerto Rico, Black identity within Puerto Rican society, and the creation of Afro-Mestizo culture has also incorporated the use of certain micro-histories. These micro-histories also connect these emerging mixed-racial identities to the concepts of hybridization of culture. The historiography around Puerto Rico in the 1990s provided detailed information on the experiences of Afro-Puerto Ricans during Spanish

¹⁹ Jose Luis Gonzalez, *Puerto Rico: The Four Storeyed Country and Other Essays*. University of Texas, 1993.

colonization. The historiography of race in Puerto Rico also involves the mixture of races and cultures. One piece of literature that focuses on the mixing of races and cultures is the text *Boricuas: Influential Puerto Rican Writings--An Anthology*.²⁰ This anthology includes of Puerto Rican writing that reflect the thoughts of Puerto Ricans and their hybridization of culture. This collection of micro histories shows how the Puerto Rican culture had many influences from various cultural sources, such as the Spanish, African, and indigenous cultures. These thoughts include struggles for identity for many Afro-Puerto Ricans as they navigate a world with a “double identity.” These texts of Puerto Rican historiography revealed the on race show the turn in focusing on the individual racial situations of various Caribbean Islands, including the racial tension of the socio-economic situation in Cuba.

The historiography created in the 1990s included the Cuban historiography of race and mixed-racial groups. The modern historiography revolving mixed-racial identity made in the 1990s has also stemmed from the rise of Black nationalism. This rise of Black Nationalism can be traced back to one of the only successful slave rebellions in global history, the Haitian Revolution. After the revolution, those of African descent, especially in the Caribbean region, felt a unifying social movement based on race. The African Diaspora that misplaced millions of enslaved Africans to the regions of North and South America soon gave rise to a unity based on being Black, oppressed, and discriminated against. Modern historians have researched the concepts of Black identity, focusing on different geographical regions and the oppression experienced in those geographic regions. Modern historiography surrounding specific Caribbean islands has shown the difference in race theory and racial tensions than modern historiography in the United States of America. Historians have examined that the racial tensions of the Caribbean,

²⁰ Roberto Santiago, *Boricuas: Influential Puerto Rican Writings--an Anthology*. Ballantine Books, 1995.

before the age of Revolution, were much more socially covert than the racial tensions of their geographical neighbor, the United States of America. This can be seen in the racial discrimination seen in the island of Cuba, which many historians have analyzed a sphere of controversy in regards to racial tensions between those of African descent and other racial groups in Cuban society.

The Cuban historiography written in the 1990s has previously shown a veil of false racial equality. The previous consensus in the modern historiography showed that Cuban society was a society that did not experience the same racial tensions as American society. Previous consensus regarding racial issues in Cuba before the revolution was that Cuba was an “island of racial harmony” where they did not experience the same forms of racial prejudice that many African Americans faced before the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. The racial prejudice felt by Afro-Cubans was often covert, felt by Afro-Cubans. One piece of historiography, that focusses on the “black identity experience” in a certain geographic region, is a book by writers Lisa Brock and Digna Fuertes Castañeda, titled *Between Race and Empire: African-Americans and Cubans before the Cuban Revolution*.²¹ This text examines the racial tensions occurring on the Cuban Island, focusing on the controversies regarding race in Cuban history. The authors of this book examine the origin of the Partido Independiente de Color (PIC), showing the legal prejudice that Black Cubans faced in the nineteenth century. The authors of this book point out the racial controversies in nineteenth century Cuban society, showing that Cuba was not the racial democracy that many scholars believe the country to be. The racial prejudice was focused on legal and political representation within Cuban society. The literature created in Cuban

²¹ V. P. Franklin, “*Between Race and Empire: African-Americans and Cubans before the Cuban Revolution*. Edited by Lisa Brock and Digna Castañeda Fuertes.” Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998. Pp. Xii, 298. Illustrations

historiography on race and the mixture of races provides the focus on race in the period between the 1980s to the 2000s. The decades following would show a massive increase in the creation of literature of the Black struggles, Black identity, the personal histories of the marginalized, and the identities of mixed-racial groups.

The period between the 2000s to the present day represents a massive shift in the research regarding the experiences of those of African descent. The literature created in the modern day includes many marginalized voices. The focus on the experiences of marginalized groups reflects the socioeconomic situations of the world, including the reflection of civil rights progression and social equality for minorities. The use of microhistories in modern historiography often reflects the daily lives of marginalized groups, often showing the everyday tribulations many of these marginalized groups faced. The inclusion of microhistories increased in the historiography of Black identity and mixed-racial identity. One piece of historiography created in the 2000s that demonstrates the microhistorical shift is: *Reyita: The Life of a Black Cuban Woman in the Twentieth Century* (2000). This text highlights the life of a Black Cuban woman as she navigates the covert racial tensions of Cuban during the twentieth century. This use of microhistory not only shows the daily prejudice, discrimination, and hardships of an individual of African origin, but also shows the intersectionality of the struggles of a woman of African origin as she navigates the racial atmosphere of Cuban society. This microhistory is a small, but an important addition to the vast experiences recorded by those of African descent throughout much of Latin American history. When in comparison to other Caribbean islands, the microhistories of the historiography of racial tensions in Puerto Rico show a different experience of racial atmosphere than in Cuba.

The historiography on race created in the 2000s provided insight into Black identity of Haiti. The rise of maroon literature has had an impact on shifting the perspective on being a part of African culture and Black nationality in Haiti. The term maroon is defined as “peoples of the African Diaspora who escaped enslavement and lived independently of plantation societies in the Americas.”²² Maroon literature is a form a literature that came about around the time of a mass increase in free thinking, Black intellectuals. Maroon literature highlights the shift away from popular consensus to a perspective that shows those of African descent as writers of their own stories, and as the protagonists of history, not tools of history. Maroon literature also provides a connection to Africa, remembering their ancestral roots and never forgetting their origins. Maroon literature provided the catalyst towards the rise of Black nationalism, providing a unifying movement to those who shared their African ancestral origins. This can also be seen because of one of the most pivotal moments in the history of Latin American, the Haitian Revolution. There has been much historiography written regarding the importance of the Haitian Revolution, and the rise of Black nationalism that came from this successful revolution. There has been much historiography written on the Haitian Revolution, but there has also been significant historiography written over the treatment of Haiti as the first Black republic. The modern Haitian historiography has also included the popular consensus of how Haitian have been viewed in global society, including mistreatment from the United States.

The modern Haitian historiography includes literature on the Black identity of Haitian citizens, as well as their mistreatment by more powerful political bodies, The modern Haitian

²² Terry Weik, “*The Archaeology of Maroon Societies in the Americas: Resistance, Cultural Continuity, and Transformation in the African Diaspora.*” *Historical Archaeology* 31, no. 2 (1997): 81–92. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25616528>.

historiography also includes the mistreatment of Haiti as a country that was the first free Black republic in Western History. Historians that have researched the concept of a “dual identity” that relates to the history of Black nationalism that occurred after the establishment of the first Black republic of Haiti in the early nineteenth century. This concept of a “dual identity” is linked to a rise of Black nationalism, and revolves around having both a Black identity in white dominant society while also having an American identity after generations of forced settlement in the Americas during enslavement. Although this concept of dual identity is linked with the Black identity in early Western society, this concept can also be applied to the mixed-racial struggle for identity. There is one piece of modern historiography that exemplifies the perspective on the Black identity, seeing Haiti not as a being the first free Black republic, but as being a resourceful tool for economic or political gain. This piece of modern historiography is Paul Farmer’s *The Uses of Haiti*.²³ Paul Farmer was a physician and anthropologist who had worked with the Haitian poor for twenty years. In his book, Farmer focused on how large political forces, like the United States and other powerful European countries, have used Haiti for their own benefit. Farmer also focuses on how the intervention into Haitian affairs has directly impacted the Haitian poor. Farmer paints a picture of a history filled with slavery, oppression, and eventual revolution. As Farmer discusses the origins of the political, economic, and cultural aspects of Haiti, he begins to discuss the significant aspects of other countries roles in Haitian development. Farmer argues that the economic and political systems established in Haiti reflected the deprecating ideology on Black identity. Farmer also argues that Haitians have been exploited in health care systems because of their Black Identity.

²³ Paul Farmer, *The Uses of Haiti*. Common Courage Press, 2006.

In his text, *The Uses of Haiti*, Farmer first begins by discussing the French influence on Haiti, since it was a colony of France to begin with. The French had made this colony in hopes to gain economic wealth from the plantation system they intended to create. After the French had brought slaves to satisfy the labor needs of this ever-expanding economy. After years of slavery, torture and hardship, the slave population of Haiti sought something new. They sought revolution from their oppressors. Through the mass uprising of slaves and the first successful slave rebellion, the French were driven from Haitian soil and the first Black republic was created at the beginning of the nineteenth century. As Farmer discusses these origins, he begins to point out many significant findings in his examination of Haitian history. The first finding he discusses is the hypocrisy of the United States regarding their foreign policy towards Haiti. After the Haitian Revolution concluded, this new “Black republic” was ostracized by other countries, including many European countries and the United States. Farmer provides sources that show how the United States “...refused Haitian independence until 1862.”²⁴

The complete lack of acknowledgment of Haiti as the first Black republic that is free truly shows how throughout much of the history of the Americas, Black history and Black culture has been seen as invisible to the outside world. Those of African descent have faced much of an erasure, change, or transformation of their culture and their identity. This erasure of African influence can even be linked back to the society of Spain. Many historians have linked the erasure of African influence to the Inquisition and have analyzed that “... this process of de-Africanization of Spain has been the depersonalization of the Black migrants in all public

²⁴ Paul Farmer, *The Uses of Haiti*. Common Courage Press, 2006, 66.

discourses”²⁵. The systemic racism and colorism established by the colonial period of history did not erase an entire culture or people but rather lead to a unique trend regeneration or change of their culture. Afro Latinos as well as African-Americans in North America decided to take what history had given them and turn the situation around for themselves. Throughout many recent years there has been a rise of Black nationalism that can be originated from the first successful slave rebellion in Haiti. This rising Black nationalism incorporated the unity of those with African heritage. The spread of information involving the Haitian Revolution sparked unit amongst many enslaved communities throughout the Americas. This communal sense of revolt and freedom from enslavement united many enslaved Africans, leading to a new understanding of the Black identity.

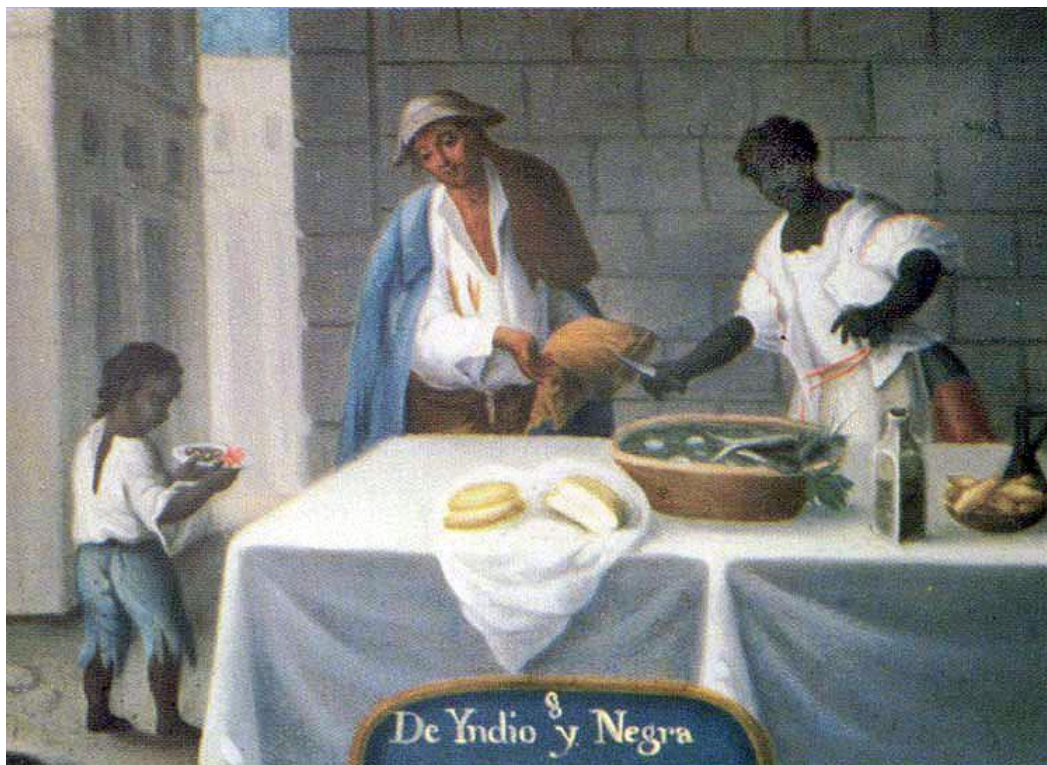
The modern period has also shown much traction in the focus of the casta paintings in the historiography of Race and Mixed-Racial identity. The casta paintings of colonial “New Spain” show much of the Spanish fascination with the racial mixing of different peoples of color. These paintings showed much of race and racial mixing, but that is not all they revealed. Historians have found that “Casta Paintings depict more than race as they illustrate details of the material world,”²⁶ by depicting social status based on race and the how much wealth one could attain based on race. Historians have also linked the origins of casta paintings and have researched that “During the 18th century, more than 500 casta paintings were produced, primarily by mixed-blood such as Miguel Cabrera and José de Paez, for a primarily elite audience in Spain.”²⁷ This shows that although these paintings were created by mixed-blood artists, they were not for the

²⁵ Antumi Toasije, “The Africanity of Spain: Identity and Problematization.” *Journal of Black Studies* 39, no. 3 (2009): 348–55. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40282566>.

²⁶ Diana DiPaolo Loren, “*Corporeal Concerns: Eighteenth-Century Casta Paintings and Colonial Bodies in Spanish Texas.*” (*Historical Archaeology* 41, no. 1, 2007), 23.

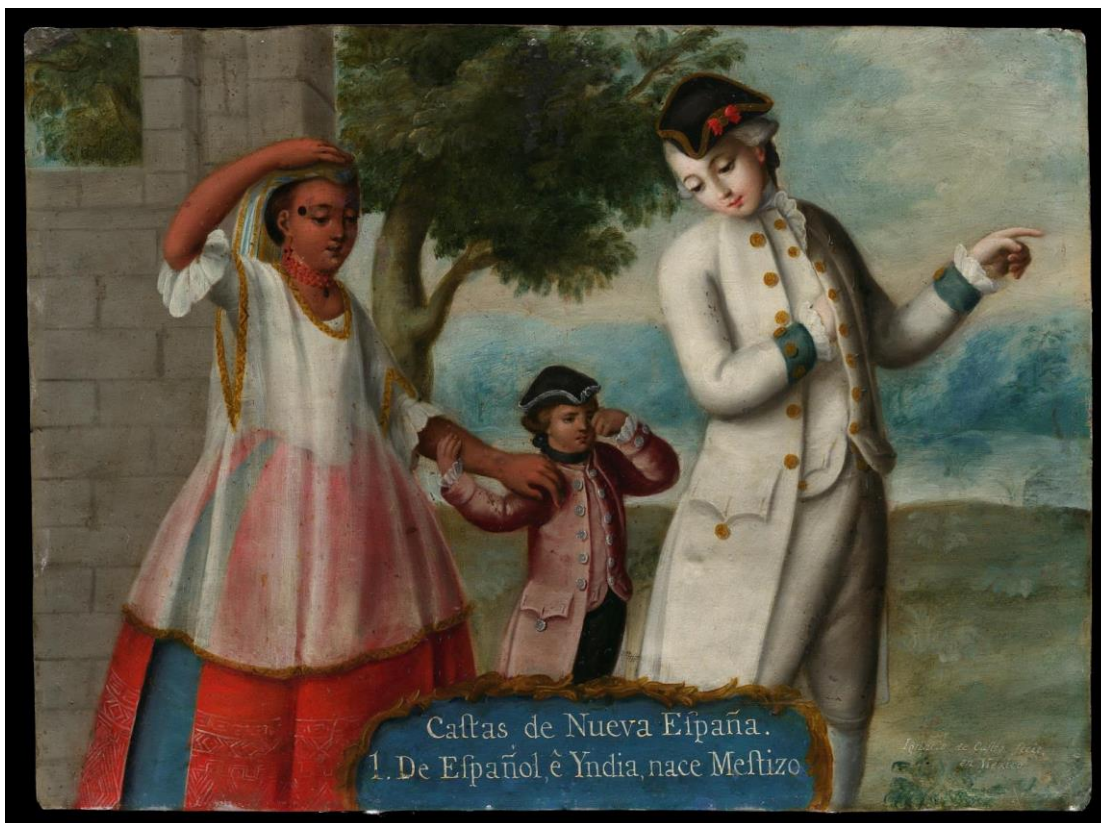
²⁷ Loren, *Corporeal Concerns*, 24.

benefit of other mixed-blood peoples. These paintings were created for the elite class to separate themselves from the other classes and create the social hierarchy of colonial Mexico and colonial Latin America. Historians have found that “several Spanish viceroys ordered sets, as did other colonial and church officials, and we may assume that most paintings were owned by members of the colonial and metropolitan elite, but the circumstances leading to the production of the majority of the paintings are unknown.”²⁸ This shows that while there have been documented cases showing the elite ordered these paintings, this also shows that a decent amount of these paintings was anonymously produced, making it difficult to determine their origins. For example, one of the casta paintings, titled *De Yndio y Negra*, shows a family where the mother is of African descent and the father is of indigenous descent:



²⁸ Rebecca Earle, “The Pleasures of Taxonomy: Casta Paintings, Classification, and Colonialism.” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 73, no. 3 (2016): 427–66. <https://doi.org/10.5309/willmaryquar.73.3.0427>.

The family appears to be in the lower class. The clothes, the father, the mother, and the child all have tattered clothing and barely any food on their table. This casta painting shows that if a person were to be mixed between indigenous ethnicity and African ethnicity, then they were to be of the lower class with lower accessibility to certain goods, services, or benefits other mixed-race individuals. Another casta painting, title *de Español e Yndia*²⁹, shows a different family with different situations.



²⁹ 18th C. A.D. Casta Paintings, Museo de America (Madrid, Spain).

In this casta painting, the mother is indigenous and the father is Spanish. It can be seen in this painting that this family is of a higher class than the family in *De Yndio y Negra*.³⁰ The family is dressed in fine clothing, even the indigenous mother. The father appears to be an officer in the army, for he has a sword on his hip. These casta paintings were displayed in very public places in colonial “New Spain” and always displayed to the citizens what their social class would be based on race and the color of their skin. As many historians have seen in an analysis of Mexican and Latin American history, the origins of casta paintings “...emerged from a long history of defining difference and attempted to outline each possible racial combination”³¹ and these origins have led to the long, systemic issues of racism and colorism.

The historiography over the casta paintings and mixed-racial history is connect with the historiography of Mexico. There has been a great deal of Mexican historiography produced regarding the casta paintings since Mexico was their place of origin. Casta paintings were created by artists with multi-racial backgrounds in Mexico during the late seventeenth century, and quickly spread throughout other Latin American and Caribbean territories. In his book, *Before Mestizaje: The Frontiers of Race and Caste in Colonial Mexico* historian Ben Vinson III presents an in-depth analysis of the caste racial system of colonial Latin America. Vinson looks at Mexico as the original point of the caste system, and the casta paintings as a manifestation of this. Ilona Katzew is another historian who specializes in the analysis of casta paintings from colonial Mexico. In Katzew’s book, *Casta Painting: Images of Race in Eighteenth-Century Mexico*, Katzew emphasizes the impact these casta paintings on other images of race had on marginalized groups in colonial Mexico. Katzew also analyzes the casta paintings, dissecting the

³⁰ 18th C. A.D. Casta Paintings., Museo de America (Madrid, Spain).

³¹ Loren, *Corporeal Concerns*, 28

colonial daily life found within the paintings. These historians offered insight in the creation of new multi-racial identities that were present in colonial Mexico. Spanish territories of Mexico during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries became the prime area for the creation of multi-racial peoples. The fascination with racial mixing would lead to the creation of the casta paintings in colonial Mexico. Mexican historiography has delved deep into the literature published about the cultural hybridization occurring during the colonial period.

While the analysis of the casta paintings provided a different, artistic representation of race in colonial Latin America, the historiography created in the last two decades provides detailed historical analysis on identities based on race. The book, *Imagining Identity in New Spain*,³² analyzes the origin of casta paintings, tracing their creators and the purpose of these public displays. The author, Magali Carrera, examines socially constructed identities in Latin America based on race. Another monograph that demonstrates the categorization of identity by color is the book *Imperial Subjects: Race and Identity in Colonial Latin America*.³³ The author of this book, Andrew Fisher, looks at identity as a concept throughout much of Spanish controlled Latin America during Spanish colonization. This analysis shows the socially constructed identities of pure-blooded racial groups, and mixed-raced individuals within colonial Latin American society. The 2000s showed an increase in the interest in the literature on the Black identity, including the study of casta paintings and the socially construct identities created based on race, originating in the colonization of Latin America and the Caribbean. The historiography

³²Magali M. Carrera, *Imagining Identity in New Spain: Race, Lineage, and the Colonial Body in Portraiture and Casta Paintings*. University of Texas Press, 2003.

³³ Andrew B. Fisher, et al. "*Imperial Subjects Race and Identity in Colonial Latin America*" Duke University Press, 2009.

published in the 2000s built upon the previous academic consensus by incorporating literature revolved around the personal experiences of multiracial individuals.

In the recent decades of research on race in Latin America, the voices of various marginalized groups have been added to the literature. These voices often include the experiences of those enslaved in both North and South America. The enslavement of Western Africans in the Americas was the source for rising capitalism in the Western Hemisphere. The modern historiography around the experiences of the enslaved included the writings of historians who focused on the experiences of slave resistance. Another historian who has researched a different form of slave resistance is Sylvaine A. Diouf. Diouf examines how slave resistance included fleeing into the woods or swamps, studying the maroons and maroon communities during the time of Atlantic Slavery. Diouf's book, *Slavery's Exiles*³⁴, examines how these runaway slaves used nature to escape the brutal systems of Atlantic Slavery. This period in modern historiography also focused on the enslaved as protagonists in their histories, often writing about resistance towards the enslavement systems of the Americas. One historian named Gerald Horne has researched how slave resistance in the Caribbean and in the south of continental America was crucial to the American Revolutionary movement of 1776. In his book, *The Counter-Revolution of 1776: Slave Resistance and the Origins of the United States of America*³⁵, Horne tries to shift the narrative that has surrounded the origins of the country that prides itself on freedom. There has been much historiography surrounding the Trans-Atlantic Slave trade, but much of the historiography that has been written has been written by the

³⁴ Sylviane A. Diouf, *Slavery's Exiles: The Story of the American Maroons*. NYU Press, 2014.

³⁵ Gerald Horne, "*The Counter-Revolution of 1776: Slave Resistance and the Origins of the United States of America*" New York University Press, 2014.

powerful elite that are allowed to create the narrative around the representation of mixed-racial representation in the Caribbean during the colonial age. The transformation of a new consensus from the previous one revolving around colonial mixed-racial representation has been a recent movement in the field of modern historiography, but is allowing the stories of marginalized groups, such as those of African descent, to be present in the evolving narrative surrounding the history of many different marginalized groups.

Modern historiography regarding mixed-racial representation often analyzes the mixture of blood and the so-called purity of Spanish blood. Historians have examined the political restrictions and lack of representation of those labeled with mixed blood, noting the varying degrees of prejudice, discrimination, or legal restrictions depending on the mixed-racial group. The historiography focusing on the purity of blood reveals colonial experiences of multiracial communities, exemplifying the negative depictions the Spanish elite had on those without “pure” Spanish blood. This historical analysis of the “mixture” of blood has been a constant theme in research of colonial Latin America. There has been a great deal of scholarship analyzing the complexities of mixed blood percentages and pure blood benefits of the Spanish elite.

Another addition to this discussion in the mixed-raced social status is the book *Purchasing Whiteness: Pardo, Mulattos, and the Quest for Social Mobility in the Spanish Indies*.³⁶ This text written by Ann Twinam suggests “that the whitening *gracias al sacar* emerged as but one variant, an official reflection of widespread practices that had facilitated pardo and mulatto mobilities for centuries.”³⁷ This part of the historiography illustrates the desperate

³⁶ Ann Twinam, *Purchasing Whiteness Pardos, Mulattos, and the Quest for Social Mobility in the Spanish Indies*. Stanford University Press, 2015.

³⁷ Ann Twinam, *Purchasing Whiteness Pardos, Mulattos, and the Quest for Social Mobility in the Spanish Indies*. Stanford University Press, 2015,

lengths pardos and mulattos went to in order to obtain the social mobility of a white citizen and not to be viewed as a citizen of African descent. The term pardo is a racial term used to describe a person with mixed African, European, and indigenous ancestry. This text shows how the social identity of mulattos and pardos was so dire, many took the chance to “purchase whiteness” for social mobility. This text shows how African blood was depicted in a negative image. Those of African descent were not the only people of color in this context since “‘Jew, Moor, Mulatto or converso in any degree’ could be seen as having ‘bad blood.’ Since both females and males passed this deficit to their offspring, any sexual or marital liaison affected the next generation, which inherited their inferior status.”³⁸ This demonstrates that much of the historiography around the image of mixed-racial blood was negative in Latin American and Caribbean society and had a heavily gendered aspect. These negative opinions on those of mixed-racial background had lasting effects on the treatment of Afro-Latinos throughout much of the countries in Latin America, and many found difficulty in identifying with either of their familial cultures.

Throughout their history many Afro-Latinos have had difficulty either identifying themselves as African descended or Latino. Trouble with self-identification stems from the aforementioned themes of colorism and racism. Afro-Latinos remained outcasted or discriminated against if they were of darker complexion, and those with lighter complexion were favored and treated more favorably. This treatment would include being offered higher positions in a workplace while darker skin Latinos would be offered lower positions in the workplace. Afro-Latinos have trouble identifying as either Latino or African because of the various communities that they come from. This treatment is similar to that of mixed-race individuals in the United States. Although these individuals may identify as Latino even though they have

³⁸ Twinam, *Purchasing Whiteness*, 2015, 101.

African descended blood, the societies they live in will continue to discriminate against them even though they identify as Latino. In colonial New Spain, kids born mixed blood were often deemed illegitimate children in Spanish society. The deeper analysis of race in colonial Latin America also shows “that ‘mestizo’ and ‘illegitimate’ were practically synonymous. People of illegitimate birth might know their parents, but very often they did not (or would not be recognized by them) and this meant they could not formally prove their purity of blood.”³⁹ The denial of the existence of mix children would also play into the unequal treatment based on the color of one’s skin. The act of having a child of mixed-blood proved too taboo for colonial Latin American society, and the popularization of denying the existence of one’s own mixed-blood child would lead to unequal treatment of marginalized groups for hundreds of years. The systemic racism that many countries face after the effects of colonization would continue to discriminate and outcast those who have different colored skin. This idea of colorism began during the colonial period of Latin American history and has continued to be an issue into the modern world today. This idea of an entire race or an entire identity of people being invisible to the society in which they live symbolizes the Black experience throughout much of history. The best example of this lack of acknowledgment is the entire history of Haiti. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, the slaves that were brought over and populated much of Haiti decided to rebel against the French and lead a revolution. The slaves were successful in their rebellion and created the first Black republic in the so-called “New World.” After the success of the first slave rebellion, much of the outside world including the foreign powers of the United States, the French, the English, to Spanish, etc., ostracized Haiti as the first free Black republic.

³⁹ Peter Wade, *Race and Sex in Latin America*, Pluto Press, 2009, 69.

This historiography of Haiti also includes the studies of human beings and their struggles to daily life. Historian Julius S. Scott has researched the sweeping movement of revolution and resistance that united enslaved Africans against their white masters during the rise of Black nationalism. In his book, *The Common Wind: Afro-American Currents in the Age of the Haitian Revolution*,⁴⁰ Scott examines how the use of commerce, particularly the use of ships, trading vessels, and commerce on the sea helped sparked revolution and connected slaves throughout the Western Hemisphere. The modern historiography around Black identity involves the scholarship around the enslavement of Africans, slave resistance and slave rebellion throughout the history of the Atlantic Slave trade and reveals how Black identity is linked to the Afro-Latino history of the enslavement of Africans, as well as linked to the resistance to slavery. While the study of slave resistance has increased in focus, other historians have also researched the politics regarding the enslavement of Africans and the consequences slave resistance had on the slave laws during the colonial Caribbean.

Historian Edward Rugemer has dedicated his career to African American Studies and history. He has published much research into Atlantic Slavery and how slave resistance impacted the slave laws of the Americas. His book, *Slave Law and the Politics of Resistance in the Early Atlantic World*,⁴¹ explores how slave resistance affected the slave laws and how the cruelty expressed in the slave laws passed was an extension of the social control that white slave owners had over the Black slaves. The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade brought millions of enslaved Africans into North and South America. These slaves were to be used as human tools to shape the land the

⁴⁰ Julius S. Scott, and Marcus Rediker, “*The Common Wind: Afro-American Currents in the Age of the Haitian Revolution*” Verso, 2018. F

⁴¹ Edward B. Rugemer, *Slave Law and the Politics of Resistance in the Early Atlantic World*. Harvard University Press. 2018.

way their masters wanted it. Slaves felt everyday hardships and challenges that came with being in bondage. These slaves faced the most brutal of conditions, even losing their lives to the system of slavery. After enough time, these African slaves began to want to fight back against this system. These slaves wanted to resist against these brutal conditions, and through examinations of the research historians have conducted on the topic of slave resistance, we can see that slave resistance was not always the grandiose rebellion against the white masters. There are a few times we can see this form of grand rebellion in the examinations of the Haitian Revolution, but slave resistance came in many shapes and forms. Rugemer stated in his book that “Everyday resistance included actions such as feigned illness, pretended incomprehension, tool breaking, and stealing, while active resistance involved running away, fighting back against the master or overseer, or, at its most extreme, organized rebellion”⁴² and shows that slave resistance was not always a grand battle against the slavery system. Resistance to enslavement was often a means for survival, and to preserve cultural identity.

The concepts of racial mixture, identity based on race and racial mixture, and socioracial hierarchies have been a popular research discussion in modern historiography. Scholars have been writing on social identity based on race for over two centuries, analyzing the complex racial tensions that have been ever present in global history. Historians have researched the complexities around racial integration in Latin America, beginning around the time of the Atlantic Slave Trade that brought millions of African slaves to the islands of the Caribbean as well as the areas of many present day South American countries. The historiography revolves around the ideas of racial tension from slavery, colonialism, and imperialism, but some of the

⁴²Edward B. Rugemer, *Slave Law and the Politics of Resistance in the Early Atlantic World*. Harvard University Press. 2018.

historiography also explores Black identity in the political, economic, and social aspects of Caribbean society. Modern historiography involving mixed-racial identity examines the creation of casta paintings in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, exemplifying the forced identities imposed on various mixed-racial groups in the Caribbean.

No matter how progressive societies perceive themselves regarding social classification based on race, the established historical fact has been a social construction of hierarchy based on the color of one's skin. Indeed, mixed-racial identity is a complex social struggle that has had lasting societal effects on the social standing and culture of those who have a mixed-racial background.

Chapter Two: Evolution of Mixed-Race Identity

The colonization of Latin America and the Caribbean brought various new ideologies, cultures, and traditions together in one geographic space. These new cultures and various racial groups interacted with each other, leading to the creation of mixed-racial groups and cultures. These various interactions also led to the creation of new mixed-racial identities within a society that obsessed over the idea of racial purity. The creation of visual art forms based on the mixture of different races, casta paintings, became the foundation for a new mixed-racial identity within a dominant European society. The casta paintings, as well as the Spanish focus on the purity of blood, set the social standing for marginalized groups in Spanish society. Mixed-racial individuals often had greater social mobility than minority “full blood” racial groups such as enslaved Africans and indigenous peoples. While these mixed-racial individuals did have greater social mobility than “full-blooded” people of color, they still faced similar treatment that all people of color experienced during the colonial period. These mixed-racial individuals, especially those identified as mulatto or zambo (a person of indigenous and African ancestry), received a pseudo higher status since they were more favorable than full-blooded racial groups. As Michelle Montgomery states “Even within groups, such as with Latinos, Black Latinos experience a lower social status than do those of lighter skin color and/or different heritages.”⁴³ These groups obtained more opportunities and social mobility than other marginalized groups, but while they were able to gain social mobility, they were still discriminated against for being a part of the marginalized culture. This pseudo higher status affects the complexity of mixed-race identity, alienating those of mixed-racial backgrounds from both original cultures.

⁴³ Michelle R. Montgomery, “History of Racial Hierarchy and Race ‘Mixture.’” In *Identity Politics of Difference: The Mixed-Race American Indian Experience*, 8. University Press of Colorado, 2017.

Mixed-racial individuals created a new multiracial identity, having influences from both original cultures, but still creating a different identity within a society based on ideas about “purity of blood.” This research also explores the idea of racial “passing” that allowed for easier social mobility for these groups. I argue that mixed-raced identity is a complex struggle that has been affected by the social construction of a hierarchy based on race and the mixture of races. The struggle for identity that these mixed-racial peoples experienced led to the creation of new racial identities with influences from both original cultures, while still being a unique, hybrid culture. Another complex means of survival I explore was through mixed race people “passing.” My analysis will include a look at indigenous identity before colonization, the transition of identity occurring during Spanish colonization with the introduction of African culture, and the creation of mixed-racial identity within the interactions of various races in colonial Latin America. This chapter will also examine the duality of mixed-raced identity, examining the struggle for mixed-racial identity within two cultural influences. I explore the paradox of “mixed race individuals who have been seen by white society as more closely embodying the benefits of Whiteness, while at other times they have been denounced for the presence of Blackness within them.”⁴⁴ This shows the often-double bind of mixed-racial identity. Although this specific example revolves around mixed-racial peoples with African heritage, this is a common experience for various mixed-racial groups.

The concept of identity is generally tied to the image of gender, race, class, and religion within one’s own society. The study of race is connected with the concept that “race” identity took priority over religion, ethnic origin, education and training, socioeconomic class,

⁴⁴ Tru Leverette, “Speaking up: Mixed Race Identity in Black Communities.” *Journal of Black Studies* 39, no. 3 (2009): 436. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40282571>.

occupation, language, values, beliefs, morals, lifestyles, geographical location, and all other human attributes that hitherto provided all groups and individuals with a sense of who they were.”⁴⁵ The concept of identity has been a foundational aspect of society for thousands of years, and especially within Indigenous communities before Spanish colonization. Gender and race are interconnected and intersect in their social constructions. Indigenous identity was linked to the concept of gender, having men identifying as warriors and commonly as political leaders of indigenous society while the women were often given the duties of farming and as important contributors to the larger community. Historian Miranda Stockett states “that men were the primary actors involved in politics and warfare. Numerous examples, however, indicate that women played important roles in Mesoamerican, and particularly Maya, politics.”⁴⁶ The Indigenous construction of gender identity also reveals the ambiguity of gender within pre-colonial indigenous society. In the previous chapters, the analysis of the gender dynamics of pre-colonial indigenous civilizations revealed the focus on equality of gender before the religious influenced European perspectives on gender were introduced during colonization. The main consensus for Stockett’s research has been that “Mesoamerican women engaged in domestic pursuits such as weaving, cooking, childrearing, domestic ritual, and animal husbandry, while men built and maintained homes, hunted and farmed, engaged in warfare and were leaders in politics and public ritual”⁴⁷ showing that indigenous gender roles held a different status than European identity in the colonial Americas.

⁴⁵ Ann Twinam, *Purchasing Whiteness Pardos, Mulattos, and the Quest for Social Mobility in the Spanish Indies*. Stanford University Press, 2015.

⁴⁶ Miranda K. Stockett, “On the Importance of Difference: Re-Envisioning Sex and Gender in Ancient Mesoamerica.” *World Archaeology* 37, no. 4 (2005): 566–78. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40025092>.

⁴⁷ Miranda K. Stockett, “On the Importance of Difference: Re-Envisioning Sex and Gender in Ancient Mesoamerica.” *World Archaeology* 37, no. 4 (2005): 571.

Indigenous women lived in a society that was sometimes matrilineal and offered more opportunity to contribute in a complementary way. The importance of women within Mesoamerican society can also be seen in their religious beliefs and practices. The importance of gender can be seen within the examination of religious systems that gave identity to nature itself. The religious system within Mesoamerica before European contact was comprised of deities that were both female and male. These deities were personified within the natural environment surround pre-colonial indigenous communities. The different natural phenomena, including the sun, moon, air, water, fire, and many more, were given identity that is also interconnected with gender identity during this period. This personification of gender within the indigenous religious systems reveals the importance of gender in these communities. The gender personification of nature within Mesoamerican civilization shows that certain actions performed in this society were viewed as having gender characteristics. Indigenous women had the opportunity to be farmers like indigenous men but were not allowed to take part in the plowing of the land since it represented the masculine aspect of reproduction. This example of the personification of nature reveals the importance of gender identity within pre-colonial indigenous communities. The European colonization of pre-colonial Latin America reveals that “During and after the military phase of the conquest, Christian priests set out to find and destroy temples, images, and native priests. They confiscated and burned indigenous codices and created new sacred texts in the form of native-language doctrines or catechisms”⁴⁸ and shows that the Spanish attempted to erase indigenous cultural identity and replace it with their own ideologies on identity and culture.

⁴⁸ Thomas H. Holloway, ed. *A Companion to Latin American History*. Newark: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2008.

In addition to the disruption of gender roles, there are many historical events within the history of Spanish colonization of Latin America that reveal the creation of new multiracial identities in the society of “New Spain.” The enslavement of Africans in the Western Hemisphere brought a variety of racial groups in contact with each other, creating new mixed-racial cultures within a dominant white society. The creation of the religious movement of Voodoo between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is an example of the interactions between cultures. The heavy influence of the Roman Catholic Church in the Western Hemisphere affected the traditions of the enslaved Africans brought through the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, and led to the creation of a new religious movement with influences from West and Central African traditions and the teachings of Catholicism. The creation of Voodoo also affected the perspective on Black identity during this period, further showing the negative propaganda regarding Black identity in the Americas and the Caribbean. The creation of Voodoo also saw a mass wave of disinformation regarding the nature of this spiritual practice. This disinformation aided in the negative propaganda that saw Voodoo as a pagan religion, focusing on sacrifice, black magic, and devil worship. Perceptions of Voodoo during the colonial period included that “Voodoo was considered to be pure evil, the most repulsive form of African savagery. The Americans saw slavery as a permanent condition appropriate to an inferior race”⁴⁹ and demonstrated the negative depiction on African culture. This negative propaganda reveals the extreme measures the elite of Latin American society took to further devalue the African or Black identity. The enslavement of Africans in the Americas already was a system of diminishment, but the forced identity of those who practiced Voodoo as being so called heathens or devil worshipers further proves that the elite during this period would attempt to denigrate

⁴⁹ Carolyn Morrow Long, “Perceptions of New Orleans Voodoo: Sin, Fraud, Entertainment, and Religion.” *Nova Religion: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions* 6, no. 1 (2002): 87.

those with Black identity. The examination of the history of Voodoo in a European dominant society reveals that the dominant culture in society thought it was “necessary to demonize, ridicule, or trivialize their religion and culture, and to teach the subjugated people to scorn their own traditions and value those of the ruling class”⁵⁰ and is linked to the devaluing of marginalized identity in a culturally white dominant society.

The Trans-Atlantic Slave trade was an important historical event that created the foundation of systematic racism in the Americas since the sixteenth century. The generational enslavement of Africans further set the foundation of inferiority for different racial groups in a colonial Spanish society. The examination of generational enslavement through the analysis of plantations records of registered enslaved Africans reveals that the Black identity in the colonial period was interconnected with an identity of property and submission. The analysis of slavery in the Americas includes the consensus that “The birth of mulatto children to a Black mother increased the plantation's inventory as though the child were a lamb or a bale of cotton”⁵¹ showing the economic perspective on the plantations increase of mixed-racial populations. The established fact of generational slavery that those born of enslaved Africans would still be considered enslaved reveals the insight on negative perspective of the blood of enslaved Africans, forcing the identity of inferior tools to any who share African blood. This is interconnected with mixed-racial identity. Those mixed-raced persons born to enslaved African women were still given the forced identity of inferior tools whose purpose is to serve the elite of

⁵⁰ Carolyn Morrow Long, “Perceptions of New Orleans Voodoo: Sin, Fraud, Entertainment, and Religion.” *Nova Religion: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions* 6, no. 1 (2002): 87.

⁵¹ Christine B. Hickman, “The Devil and the One Drop Rule: Racial Categories, African Americans, and the U.S. Census.” *Michigan Law Review* 95, no. 5 (1997): 1161–1265.

Spanish society. The generational system of enslavement placed in the Americas became a system of discrimination for those associated with African heritage.

These forced racial identities have been prominent in a system established to demean those linked to African heritage and has led to the creation of systematic racism and prejudice. Historian Ben Vinson III, who has researched the *casta* system originating in Mexico, has stated that during this period of exploration, African skin color “was thought to be a physical marker of a Biblical curse”⁵² showing the negative implication to those with African heritage. Vinson has also noted that “These ideas found a home in the early mindset of caste in Spanish America, shaping opinions about mulattos and other blacks of mixed racial heritage who were considered to carry the traits of their African ancestors.”⁵³ This shows the generational stigma experienced by those of not only enslaved Africans, but also to those of mixed racial heritage with African descent. Mixed-racial peoples in colonial Latin America often had a Spanish identity that was viewed more favorably than being identified with a marginalized culture.

Mixed-racial identity in the Americas originated from the collision of cultures in Latin America during the sixteenth century. The struggle for identity in a multi-racial environment was a common struggle for those who identified as multi-racial individuals. These new multi-racial identities navigated through a society infatuated with a hierarchy based on race and the mixture of races, and these identities often struggled being incorporated with both original cultures. The creation of the hybrid culture of Voodoo in the Caribbean exemplifies the creation of a new hybrid culture. The creation of the hybrid religious movement called Candomblé, which author Stephen Selka has noted that “the marks of Candomblé’s long association with plantation

⁵² Ben Vinson III. *Before Mestizaje: The Frontiers of Race and Caste in Colonial Mexico*. Cambridge University Press, 2018, 43.

⁵³ Vinson III. *Before Mestizaje*. Cambridge University Press, 2018, 43.

Catholicism, which resulted in the popular identification of Catholic saints with Candomblé deities and the synchronization of Catholic and Candomblé ritual calendars,”⁵⁴ showing the comparisons of the origins of hybrid cultures between Spanish and Portuguese colonies in Latin America. The Trans-Atlantic slave trade that brought millions of enslaved Africans into the Americas also brought many African traditions into the Americas in close contact with various other cultures. The African religious beliefs were among the primary traditions that enslaved Africans brought with them, but enslaved Africans would not be allowed to practice their original religion peacefully. The Spanish would force enslaved Africans to convert to Christianity, and would severely punish those that still participated in African religion.

While they were forced to participate in the dominant European culture through religious conversion, enslaved Africans would still not be fully accepted in this dominant culture. These enslaved Africans would still be alienated due to their origins and the color of their skin. While these enslaved Africans attempted to either keep their African traditions or participate in Spanish culture, this paved the way for a creation of a new hybrid culture. The religious movement of Voodoo or Vodun is linked with the creation of a religion with African traditions, and influences from Catholicism. Historian Charles Asselin has researched that Voodoo was a “religion born of the encounter between traditional African religions and Catholicism in the 17th century colony of Saint-Domingue.”⁵⁵ The research found in the history of Voodoo reveals that there is a connection with prominent saints in Christianity with the voodoo beliefs in the loa, which were prominent voodoo spirits. This connection with Catholicism and Voodoo exemplifies the

⁵⁴ Stephen Selka. “Mediated Authenticity: Tradition, Modernity, and Postmodernity in Brazilian Candomblé.” *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions* 11, no. 1 (2007): 5–30. <https://doi.org/10.1525/nr.2007.11.1.5>.

⁵⁵ Charles Asselin, “Voodoo Myths in Haitian Literature.” *Comparative Literature Studies* 17, no. 4 (1980): 391.

creation of a new culture with influences from both a marginalized culture, and a dominant majority culture.

The introduction of Spanish religious ideals of Catholicism and European concepts of culture aided in the transformation of gender and race identity during the beginning of the colonial period. The decrease of indigenous populations due to European imperialism expedited the transition towards European gender ideals that became a foundation for mestizo culture in Latin America. The history of European settlement in the Americas has shown that “Colonization is seen as having a devastating effect on the gender relations of indigenous peoples. Family relations, the upbringing of children, labor division, and more were affected by a colonial system which located women first and foremost in the domestic sphere.”⁵⁶ The gender ideologies brought with Spanish colonization were heavily influenced by the religious teachings of Roman Catholicism. The examination of the intersectionality of race and gender in previous chapters reveals that the religious influence on colonial gender identity. The Roman Catholic influence emphasized the male superiority of Spanish society through the ideals of machismo. The ideals of machismo include “the depiction of Latin American men, especially from the lower classes, as essentially intransigent, misogynist, homophobic, and violent.”⁵⁷ The ideals of the female submission in colonial Latin America in marianismo also aided in the forced gender identities in colonial society. The constructed identity of machismo identity expected colonial men to be strong members of society and expected them to exhibit aggression in their interactions towards not only women, but all marginalized groups of colonial Latin American

⁵⁶ Torjer A. Olsen, “Gender and/in Indigenous Methodologies: On Trouble and Harmony in Indigenous Studies.” *Ethnicities* 17, no. 4 (2017): 514.

⁵⁷ Marth Santos, *Cleansing Honor with Blood: Masculinity, Violence, and Power in the Backlands of Northeast Brazil, 1845-1889*, Stanford University Press, 2012.

society. The expected gender identities of colonial women through machismo expected women to be a submissive force in colonial society, accepting all the aggressive behavior Latin American men provided during this period. The expected gender behavior of women, titled marianismo, was modeled after the image of the Virgin Mary and connotes saintliness and submissiveness,⁵⁸ and implied acceptance on machismo in Latin American society.

These forced gender identities can also relate to the creation of the casta paintings, forms of visual art that gives audiences a viewing into colonial Latin American society and culture. These paintings of mixed-racial families showed the religious influence on gender identities. The casta paintings often showed Latin American men as the more prominent figure, being in the foreground of the painting more than any other characters. This shows the importance colonial Latin America had on the male figure and male dominance. The colonial women in these paintings were shown as the submissive figure, implying the importance of the subservience of Latin American women towards the aggression of Latin American men. The knowledge that these casta paintings showed the colonial Latin American social hierarchy based on racial mixture also reveals the forced racial identity occurring during this period. The Spanish racial mixtures being the first in casta painting series ahead of indigenous and African families shows that the forced racial identity implied inferiority to full blooded Spaniards. This implication fortified that those with non-white racial heritage would always be lower in society because of their race and created the foundation of racism and colorism in the Western Hemisphere. The casta paintings revealed the ideology of racial hierarchy within the minds of the Spanish elite, also showing the necessity for the colonial Spanish government to maintain racial order within

⁵⁸ Pamela Fabe Amparo, "Machismo and Marianismo in Latin America." In *World History: A Comprehensive Reference Set*, edited by Facts on File. Facts On File, 2016.

colonial society. These paintings became the foundation of racial ideology that became precedent in colonial Spanish culture for many generations.

Colonial Spanish identity is interconnected with the Spanish importance of the purity of blood. This concept of the purity of blood, or *limpieza de sangre*,⁵⁹ is deeply connected with the Spanish identity, and this purity of blood relates to an individual's standing in society. Full-blooded colonial Spaniards were the elite of Latin American society. Colonial Spanish officials would document the growing colonial populations with an emphasis on Spanish blood purity. They benefited greatly within their society, creating a civilization that raised their superiority while devaluing the marginalized groups within colonial Latin American society. The analysis of the importance of the purity of blood in colonial Latin America reveals the negative perspective colonial elite had on the mixing of Spanish blood with different racial groups. The value of the purity of blood is also interconnected with the social hierarchy created by colonial Spanish elite to further extend elite superiority over various racial groups. This analysis of the social hierarchy based on the Spanish purity of blood can be seen in dissection of the *casta* paintings. The Spanish fascination of *limpieza de sangre* is shown through *casta* paintings and is seen by how the series of paintings is portrayed. Those of full Spanish blood were seen in a luxurious environment with the finest quality offered during the period. This can be seen in the series *Casta Painting*.
c.1750.⁶⁰ Those that were mixed-race, while still having Spanish blood, were the next on the colonial social hierarchy. The value of Spanish blood was extremely important in colonial society those mixed-race individuals with Spanish blood still had better opportunities than full blooded racial groups in colonial Latin America. The emphasis on Spanish blood was also

⁵⁹ Stafford Poole, "The Politics of *Limpieza de Sangre*: Juan de Ovando and His Circle in the Reign of Philip II." *The Americas* 55, no. 3 (1999): 359–89.

⁶⁰ *Casta Painting*. c.1750. Oil on canvas, 67 x 56.2 cm. <https://jstor.org/stable/community.18114313>.

evident in the historical movement of mestizo nationalism occurring in Latin America during an era of post-colonial revolution.

Mixed-racial identity is a complex structure that contains many influences from a racially abundant society. These mixed-racial identities faced difficulties when attempting to take part in either original culture. The colonization of Latin America in the sixteenth century aided in the creation of these new multiracial identities by bringing multiple racial groups in close contact with each other. These mixed-racial identities are linked closely with the creation of the casta paintings in the seventeenth century, which portrayed colonial multiracial families. These paintings gave a forced identity to not only full-blooded racial groups in colonial Latin America, but also gave forced identities to mixed-racial peoples during this period. The analysis of casta paintings in previous chapters connected the purpose of casta paintings with the motivation of mixed-raced painters to create a physical representation of their own social standings in colonial society. The interconnection of racial identity and colonial society is shown in examination of various casta paintings. Analysis of various series of casta paintings reveals that the social standings of marginalized groups was shown in these paintings, but mixed-racial identity was also shown clearly in these series of paintings. The Spanish fascination of racial mixing through casta paintings shows that the Spanish were also interested in the further racial mixing with mixed-race peoples. There are multiple casta paintings covering mulatto peoples having families with full-blooded racial groups and creating further mixed-racial groups in colonial Latin American society. The casta painting titled *Gibaro con Mulata, Albarazado*⁶¹ exemplifies the further racial mixing occurring in Latin America.

⁶¹ Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library. "Racial Mixture in eighteenth-century Mexico: Mestizo, Castizo, Spaniard, Mulatto, Morisco,



In this painting, there is a gibaro man, which is a mixed-racial person that has three eighths African blood, one eighth indigenous blood, and one-half Spanish blood, and there is a mulata woman, which is a person of mixed race that has one-half Spanish blood heritage, and one-half African heritage. The product of the gibaro man and the mulata woman is an *albarazado* or “White-spotted”⁶² child. This mixed-racial identity is composed of mostly of Spanish blood, but includes both Spanish and African heritage. This casta painting shows the complicated structure that mixed-racial identity experienced in the colonial period. These paintings demonstrate the Spanish fascination of racial mixing by showing the different combinations of mixed-racial

Chino, Salta-atrás, Lobo, Gibaro, Albarazado, Cambujo, Zambaigo, Calpamulato, Tente en el aire, No te entiendo, Torna-atrás. New York Public Library Digital Collections.

⁶² Christa Olson, “Casta Painting and the Rhetorical Body.” *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 39, no. 4 (2009): 307–30. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40647265>.

identities. These casta paintings also demonstrate the common colonial experience in their transformation into new multi-racial identities. The interest in these racial mixings is shown through the continuing mixing of mixed-racial peoples that was occurring in colonial Latin America. This interest in the creation of multi-racial cultures was a eventuality in European colonialism. The multitude of races in Latin America would inevitably interact with each other as a natural process, resulting in the process of hybridization, and creating new multi-racial cultures.

The casta paintings aided in the complicated structure of identity created in the colonial period of Latin America. The research on the casta paintings reveals the further racial mixing that continued for generations during Spanish colonization for generations. The casta paintings created in the seventeenth century revealed the social standings of full-blooded racial groups in colonial Spanish society, but also can reveal the forced racial identity of multiple mixed racial groups during this period. The examination of casta paintings in previous chapters revealed much of daily colonial life occurring on a day-to-day basis during this time. A casta painting exemplifying the aspect of colonial daily life is a painting titled *De Espanol y Mestiza, Castiza*.⁶³

⁶³ José de Paez, 1720-ca. 1790. *From Spaniard and Mestiza, Castiza*. c. 1770-80 A.D. Oil on copper, 50.2 x 63.8 cm. <https://jstor.org/stable/community.18127676>.



This painting shows a Spanish man with a half Spanish, half Indigenous woman, and they have created a child that is classified as a Castiza, which is three fourths Spanish and one fourth indigenous. This mixed-racial family are dressed in fine clothing and are sitting with each other. They have some sort of social standing even though their blood is not completely “pure.” There is a gendered aspect to this as well since the man is Spanish and the woman is mixed race and he is “bringing up” her social status with his whiteness.

Mixed-racial identity is also linked with the concept of racial ambiguity, and the fascination of lighter skinned individuals. Mixed-racial groups were able to hide their mixed-racial backgrounds, and sometimes blend in with the white majority in society. This concept of racial passing was historically an opportunity for mixed-racial groups to have social mobility in a racial system designed to demean the culture of various racial groups. Racial passing allowed mixed-racial peoples to achieve certain rights that full-blooded racial groups would not have during this period. This concept of racial passing also aided in the struggle for identity for

mixed-racial groups. The ability to racially pass in a society of racial significance allowed mixed-racial peoples in colonial Latin America to be racial chameleons, allowing to shift racial identities to allow them to fully participate in colonial Spanish society. A casta painting that demonstrates the possible social mobility in colonial Latin America is a painting titled *De Espanol y Morisca, Albina*⁶⁴, created by Miguel Cabrera.



⁶⁴ Miguel Cabrera, *De Espanol y Morisca, Albina*. 1763.

This painting demonstrates the whitening effect in mixed-racial families over many generations. In the painting, there is a Spanish man with a Morisca woman, which is a classification of three fourths Spanish heritage and one fourth African heritage. They have created a child with the racial classification of *albina*, which is a person with seven eighths Spanish heritage and one eighth African heritage. This mixed-racial family reveals the racial ambiguity occurring in colonial Latin America, for the child in this painting looks completely European with blond hair and lighter colored eyes. Mixed-racial peoples in colonial Latin America with similar physical characteristics like the child in the painting would have an easier time gaining social mobility in colonial society than those of darker skin tones.

Identity has been a complicated system of classification used to alienate different marginalized groups within a dominant white culture society. Mixed-racial identity is an identity that allows an individual to have racial ambiguity, often being misidentified as being a part of a specific race. While many mixed-racial individuals participated in this racial ambiguity to gain more opportunity for themselves, the struggle for identity was extremely common for all with mixed-racial backgrounds. Mixed-racial peoples often must navigate in a dual cultural environment. Mixed-racial peoples also have a dual identity within their cultures but struggle to fully identify with these cultures. The research in this chapter, as well as previous chapters, shows that mixed-racial peoples who face this struggle in a dual cultural environment have two options that allow them to end their struggle for identity. The first option is to participate in racial ambiguity in their social environment which allows them to pass as part of the majority race in a multi-racial environment. The research regarding mulattos and pardos in their obtaining

of the *gracias al sacar*⁶⁵, which is the Spanish institutionalized purchasing of whiteness during the colonial period, exemplifies this option of mixed-racial peoples passing as the majority race. This option would be quite difficult for mixed-racial peoples in the colonial time, for “Miscegenation and the practice of ‘passing as a Spaniard’ were serious threats to the maintenance and alignment of the social order and required constant management and surveillance.”⁶⁶ The second option mixed-racial peoples have that aid in the end their struggle for cultural identity is the creation of a hybrid culture containing influences from multiple cultures in multi-cultural environment. The creation of the religious movement of Voodoo, Santeria, and Candomblé incorporate mixed influences from Christianity and ancestral cultural traditions. These two options allowed for mixed-racial individuals to find their own cultural identity within a society that alienates marginalized groups because of the color of their skin.

The colonization of Latin America and the Caribbean brought various new ideologies, cultures, and traditions together in a small geographic space. These new cultures and various racial groups interacted with each other, leading to the creation of mixed-racial groups and cultures. These various interactions also led to the creation of new mixed-racial identities within a society of racial purity. The creation of visual art forms based on the mixture of different races, *casta* paintings, became a foundation of new mixed-racial identity within a dominant white cultural environment. The analysis of mixed-race individuals in the *casta* paintings reveals that mixed-racial social status is linked to the purity of blood, as well as the marginalized heritage in

⁶⁵ Ann Twinam, *Purchasing Whiteness Pardos, Mulattos, and the Quest for Social Mobility in the Spanish Indies*. Stanford University Press, 2015.

⁶⁶ Magali M. Carrera, *Imagining Identity in New Spain*. Univ Of Texas Press, 2012.

colonial society. Mixed-racial identity in colonial Latin America was obtained through either two ways in society. The research in this chapter has shown that mixed-racial groups either attempted to participate in racial ambiguity to pass in a majority racial environment, or these mixed-racial groups created a new mixed-race culture, like the creation of the hybrid religion of Voodoo. Sometimes they did both. Those who come from mixed-racial background face a struggle for this identification because of their racial ambiguity. Their alienation of culture aided in the creation of new mixed-racial identities that are unique cultural entities within a multi-racial environment. The study of the mixture of races in Latin America during European colonization shows the creation of new cultures that originate from the various interactions of varied cultures. These new cultures lead to new multi-racial identities and perspectives on the history of race in Latin America.

Chapter Three: Caribbean Colonialism: Origin of Mixed-Racial Identity

The Caribbean region of the Western hemisphere has been an extremely coveted area of geography for many powerful Western political bodies throughout Caribbean history. The Spanish had established strong fortifications to lay their empirical foundation in the so called “New World.” The Spanish colonization of the Caribbean resulted from Spanish greed to establish gold and silver mines for economic gain. The Spanish, while establishing various economic opportunities for the Spanish crown, required a large enough labor force to provide adequate economic gain for the Spanish crown so the conquistadors sought to acquire such a strong labor force. The Spanish first thought the indigenous inhabitants of the New World could provide the missing labor required for European economic gain. The European diseases decimated the indigenous populations, forcing the Spanish empire to look for other sources of labor for their economic endeavors in the New World. The introduction of enslaved Africans with the already established cultures of the Spanish and Indigenous populations, led to the creation of the first examples of multi-racial identity. These first examples of racial mixing would be the first perspective on the identity of marginalized and mixed-racial groups in the Caribbean, as well as the rest of Latin America, during the colonial period. The Spanish fascination with the interaction between various races led to the creation of visual art forms that have set forced societal roles based on mixed-racial histories. Casta paintings have had long implications on the complex struggle for identity many mixed-racial individuals experienced during colonial New Spain. The examination of the history of casta paintings, especially the analysis of the histories revolving around the painters, raise many questions in academia. For example, why these were created, and who these paintings were intended to impact. The study of this art based on race, as well as the history behind Spanish colonization, exemplifies the

struggle many mixed-racial individuals experienced during this time. This analysis also shows how the creation of this art also led to a rise of mixed-racial nationalism that gave many a sense of commonality in their social environments. There has been much speculation stemming from the analysis of casta paintings since it is a form of art, subject to artistic interpretation. Scholars Stephanie Wickstrom and Phillip Young have noted that “One of the main objectives in developing concepts that characterize the various artistic styles that have emerged throughout human history is to expand or reflect upon the modern concept of art, so that it might come to include sentient expressions of any culture of the world at different historical moments, considering that people in all times and places have elaborated art in accordance with their particular ways of conceiving of and perceiving the world.”⁶⁷ Those who study forms of art work that depict historical movements, such as Rebecca Earle, show how this art had multiple perceptions included within the art. However, scholars have also examined how these paintings portrayed colonial society, including daily life and social class in colonial Latin America.

While a small amount of discussion has included the artistic interpretation of casta paintings, scholarship like Ben Vinson’s *Before Mestizaje* has shown the historical foundation of these paintings. The history of casta paintings is filled with struggles based on race that set the foundation on the view of mixed-racial identity throughout much of Latin American history. The concept of the Spanish fascination of racial mixing can be linked to the Spanish term “mestizaje.” The Spanish term “mestizaje” is like the English term, miscegenation, which is defined as “the sexual mixing of races,”⁶⁸ but has alternative meanings than its English

⁶⁷ Stefanie Wickstrom, and Philip D. Young, eds. 2014. *Mestizaje and Globalization : Transformations of Identity and Power*. University of Arizona Press. 54.

⁶⁸ Tilden G. Edelstein, and Charles Reagan Wilson, “*Miscegenation*.” In *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture: Volume 13: Gender*, edited by Nancy Bercau and Ted Ownby, 184–87. University of North Carolina Press, 2009.

counterpart. Mestizaje also has many other racial terms in association with racial mixing in Latin American history. The research within this thesis will demonstrate that the casta paintings of colonial Latin American were a form of categorization that aided in the solidification of modern racism and views on mixed-racial individuals. Casta paintings were a foundational social aspect that created hierarchal views based on race and racial mixing.

The analysis of Casta paintings also brings to light the intersectionality connecting the topics of race, gender, and religion. While the Casta paintings depict the complex racial dynamics within Latin American society in the colonial period, these paintings also showed the gender dynamics of colonial Latin American society. Spanish colonization led to the creation of forced gender roles, such as the concepts of machismo and marianismo. These deal with forced gender roles, but they also intersect with religious perspectives on gender, as well as on race. Machismo is a gender concept that expects Latin American men to conform to hypermasculinity. Machismo asserts the dominance and superiority concepts of the men of Latin America.⁶⁹ These perspectives are shown also in the casta paintings, showing the Catholic influence in Latin American society. The casta painting that exemplifies the Catholic influence is the painting entitled *De Espanol y Negra, Mulatto*⁷⁰:

⁶⁹ Manuel Pena, "Class, Gender, and Machismo: The 'Traacherous-Woman' Folklore of Mexican Male Workers." *Gender and Society* 5, no. 1 (1991): 30–46. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/189928>.

⁷⁰ Miguel Cabrera, 1695-1768. *From Spaniard and Black, Mulatto*. 1763. Oil on canvas, 132 x 101 cm. <https://jstor.org/stable/community.18118346>.



This painting depicts a Spanish man with an African woman and they have created a mixed-racial child with both Spanish and African ancestry. The African woman is dressed similarly to the Virgin Mary depicted in Christianity but is also depicted as a shadow like figure. This shows the Catholic influence on gender roles in colonial Latin America for women of color. The Catholic Church had a massive presence within the colonization of Latin America. The Catholic Church believed those of indigenous and African origin to be “savage” or dependent upon the Europeans to “save” these non-European, marginalized groups. This negative depiction of those of darker skin has been a major influence on the racism towards people of color, but has also led to the ideas of conversion and the “need” for the white elite to lead the “uneducated” marginalized groups. This religious view of marginalized groups would further set the foundation of how these groups would be seen through the social hierarchy lens. The foundation

of the religious reasoning set the precedent where those with darker skin would be seen as inferior on the social spectrum of Latin American society in the colonial period.

The most common racial term seen in the examination of mixed-racial history during this period is the term “*mestizo*.” This term originates from the original Spanish term “*mestizaje*,” which refers to general mixing of different races. This term, while being connected with miscegenation, has various meanings within the context of Latin American history. *Mestizaje* is a Spanish term that can “be biological or cultural. It can be considered an ideology or a movement, and it has been influential in drawing attention to identity and power in evolving intercultural relations in Latin America.”⁷¹ These racial terms would be present in every aspect of Latin American culture from culture to politics and was a daily experience in colonial Latin America. The racial mixture of the indigenous groups and the Spanish conquistadors produced the mixed-racial category of “*mestizo*.” *Casta* paintings frequently depicted this mixed-race categorization. *Mestizos* had the highest representation within the Caribbean and Latin America, but would still not have the full rights those with full blooded Spanish heritage in Latin America. The evolution of colonization in the Caribbean produced more mixed-racial groups, such as *mulattos*. The term *mulatto* refers to an individual with Spanish and African heritage. There would be many more mixed-racial categorizations created due to the Spanish fascination with the mixture of races and the various combinations that occurred from the colonization of the Caribbean and Latin America.

While *mestizos* would be the majority in mixed-race population, the other mixed-racial groups like *mulattos* would still feel a sense of inferiority within this new mixed-racial

⁷¹ Wickstrom and Young, *Mestizaje and Globalization*. 2014. University of Arizona Press. 6.

nationalism. This hierarchy would be seen in the Casta paintings, showing which racial mixtures would be viewed more favorably in Latin American society. The purity of Spanish blood was the economic elite in colonial Latin American society. Those with so called pure Spanish blood could go on to be governors, military officials, and merchants. Creoles or criollos (Spaniards born in America), were the next level of the hierarchy of colonial Latin America. The casta system analysis reveals that “Official recognition of “clean blood” opened access to the highest-ranking positions within the colonial state and society. Designated in official documents as “Spanish” or “white,” this privileged category could include *peninsulares* (those born in Spain), *criollos*, and *mestizos* (when recognized by their Spanish fathers, or when able to pass due to wealth or social status).”⁷² The sequence of classification shown reveals the hierarchy of power in colonial Latin America. Although mestizos were still viewed as being inferior in comparison to those with pure Spanish blood, they still had better economic opportunities than other mixed-racial groups. The Spanish ideology supporting the inferiority of those with African heritage by showing how “The distinctive treatment of African ancestry in casta paintings similarly resonates with the increasing concern of eighteenth-century science to isolate the black body as fundamentally different from other bodies,”⁷³ In most Casta paintings, mestizos would be portrayed before mulattos or those interracial with African descent.

⁷² Mara Loveman, *National Colors : Racial Classification and the State in Latin America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, Incorporated, 2014.

⁷³ Rebecca Earle, “The Pleasures of Taxonomy: Casta Paintings, Classification, and Colonialism.” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 73, no. 3 (2016): 448. <https://doi.org/10.5309/willmaryquar.73.3.0427>.



Expresión de las Castas de Gentes de que se compone este Reyno de Mexico; los motivos porque resultó la diversidad; y los nombres con que se distinguen todas las calidades: Hecha en la Puebla de los Angeles &

This series of casta paintings shown above shows how Latin American society viewed the purity of blood favorably in the colonial period, but this also shows the negative depictions of those associated with African culture or African heritage.⁷⁴ The perspectives of African heritage often relate to images of “savagery” and “uncivilization,” implying that those of African descent are unable to govern themselves. This negative imagery is also linked to the how women of color were viewed in colonial Latin American society.

This first instance of the form of labor the enslaved would be the first imposed racial identity those of African descent experienced. The Spanish ideology surrounding enslaved Africans and slavery suggest that “blacks were by definition impure because of their connection (real or imagined) to slavery, which by the early seventeenth century various Spanish colonial institutions treated as a permanent stain on lineage and which sought to deny the slave all sorts of rights and claims based on birth.”⁷⁵ Since the enslaved Africans had to be physically strong, healthy, and capable of withstanding the exhausting physical demand that came with being enslaved, many forced identity characteristics showed those with African descent as being prime physical specimens. The establishment of race-based slavery set the forced racial stereotype that those of African heritage must be physically fit, ready to be able to work for hours straight. This imposed racial identity would endure for years after Caribbean slavery ended, forcing former enslaved Africans to turn to physical work to gain finances in Caribbean society. This forced racial identity would also be linked with the treatment of mulattos, pardos, and those of mixed-racial heritage. The product of the sexual assault of enslaved African women in the Caribbean

⁷⁴ *Casta Painting*. c.1750. Oil on canvas, 67 x 56.2 cm.

⁷⁵ María Elena Martínez, “*The Black Blood of New Spain: Limpieza de Sangre, Racial Violence, and Gendered Power in Early Colonial Mexico.*” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 61, no. 3 (2004): 491. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3491806>.

was often the mulatto children of the slave masters. These mulatto individuals would often more favorable than other minority groups because of their lighter complexion. Mulatto individuals were more favorable in terms of partners due to the generational whitening effect. The children of mulattos, especially with mestizos or criollos, would have a fairer complexion than mulattos or other minorities. While mulattos did have few benefits being a person of mixed-racial background, these benefits did not outweigh the discrimination they still felt for being a person of African heritage. The forced racial identity would also be imposed on mulattos in Caribbean society, forcing them to conform to what Caribbean society envisioned for those of mixed-racial heritage.

Historians have examined that “the casta paintings discussed here illustrate a static image of a supposedly highly structured and regulated colonial world that was imposed on colonial individuals through the appearance of their bodies (via skin color, dress, and adornment).”⁷⁶ These portraits of colonial families had great insight into the complexities of colonial Latin America. The social hierarchy was depicted in an artistic form intended to be a great reminder to mixed-race groups where their social status landed. The creators of these racial forms of art often came from mixed-race backgrounds themselves. This provided a personal statement in their artwork, showing the understanding these artists had of their placement in Latin American society. The owners of the Casta paintings also showed the intended audiences of these artistic expressions of racial hierarchy. Although the elite bureaucrats, mainly of Spanish descent, were some of the few owners of these paintings, members of the clergy were also prominent owners of Casta paintings. These owners also had connection with lower-class groups, including those of

⁷⁶ Diana DiPaolo Loren. “Corporeal Concerns: Eighteenth-Century Casta Paintings and Colonial Bodies in Spanish Texas.” *Historical Archaeology* 41, no. 1 (2007): 23. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25617423>.

mixed-racial heritage. This shows the Casta paintings had similar purposes. While these paintings were to solidify the social status of the elite, showing their superior status over the lower classes, these paintings also displayed the supposed inferiority of the marginalized groups of colonial Latin American society. The elite owners of the paintings would display them in public settings, where they could be viewed to maintain the social hierarchy of Latin American society. Spanish colonization led to the examination of “the development of Latin America as a society, or even as what can be construed as a civilization many elements come into play directly or through the sieve of diverse cultural groups as they encountered each other, negotiated the terms of their interactions, and worked toward a fusion or integration, variously identified over time through terms such as *mestizaje*, creolization, or syncretism.”⁷⁷

These portraits of different interracial families depicted much of colonial Latin American daily life. The painters of this art would rely on “one individuals’ clothing, overall lifestyle, and social networks to perform the difficult work of translating their existence into the language of caste.”⁷⁸ The artists of these paintings create such intricate detail that analysts of these artistic expression of race have revealed the tensions and complexities interracial marriages during this period in Latin American history. Examination of these paintings demonstrates the societal hierarchy within Latin America during the colonial period. These paintings often displayed interactions families with Spanish heritage first. Portraits of interracial Spanish families like Spanish with indigenous, and Spanish with African. The following race mixtures, such as African with Indigenous, showed these groups came after in terms of priority in the societal hierarchy. Scholars have studied that the ideology regarding African blood in the colonial

⁷⁷ Ana María Rodríguez-Vivaldi, “Of Hybrids and Other Fusions: Latin America’s Cultural Voyage.” *Pacific Coast Philology* 51, no. 2 (2016): 141–58.

⁷⁸ Earle, “*The Pleasures of Taxonomy*” (2016): 435.

Americas was not looked favorably in Spanish society, which “as a whole-seldom allowed blood the possibility of full redemption.”⁷⁹ Those with Spanish blood came first in society, gaining better privileges than those lower in the caste system. These paintings also depicted aspects of daily life within interracial families. The details include the food portrayed in various interracial families, the clothing each interracial family dressed in, and the surroundings of these families in different economic situations. These artists, having experience in the tensions of interracial families by being byproducts of interracial interactions, also detailed the behavior and body language of these families, often noting the negative or violent interactions between these families. The Casta painting that exemplifies the interactions between mixed-racial men and women during this period is the painting titled *De Español y Negra, Mulatta*⁸⁰:



⁷⁹María Elena Martínez, “The Black Blood of New Spain,” 485.

⁸⁰Anonymous/Mexico (act. 4th quarter XVIII century), artist, and Castro Ignacio de (formerly attributed to) (act. 2nd half XVIII century), artist. *From a Series of 16 Paintings on Miscegenation. No. 4: De Español y Negra Mulata* (“From a Spanish Man and a Black Woman, a Mulata Girl [Is Produced]”). 4th quarter XVIII century. Oil; Support: Copper., Height: 36 cm. (14 3/16 in.); Width: 48 cm. (18 7/8 in.). Madrid, Museo de América. <https://jstor.org/stable/community.14766670>.

This painting depicts a Spanish man and an African woman. They have created a child with the classification of mulatta, which is a mixed-racial individual with half Spanish blood and half African blood. In the painting, the two parents can be seen in a form of conflict. The body language of both parents reveals that there were significant racial tensions between different mixed-racial groups and reveals what mixed-racial people would have experience in racially tension filled families. The conclusions found from analysis of this casta painting could also be a “warning” of the supposed chaos caused by interracial mixing. These paintings demonstrate the daily colonial life experienced by different marginalized groups in Latin America. While these casta paintings showed the political standings of mixed-race groups in colonial Latin America, these paintings displayed the complicated social dynamics of interracial families during this period as well. These paintings also show the daily lives of various mixed-race individuals, and became the first physical representations of the mixed-race community in colonial Latin America.

The creators of casta paintings, and their relative familial backgrounds, help historians understand the complex social dynamics connected with these visual art forms. Through the negative interracial action of sexual assault, the increase in mixed-racial populations skyrocketed within the first four decades of Spanish colonization. These new mixed-racial people would face similar treatment to darker skinned individuals, such as the enslaved Africans and the indigenous populations. The seventeenth century, around the same period as the creation of the casta paintings, would see mixed-racial groups at a higher status than darker skinned people of color. Those of mixed-racial background would also have easier social mobility than other marginalized groups. Those of mixed-races, like mestizos, could become artisans, masons, and painters.” These groups had easier social mobility due to their proximity to the white society or

“whiteness.” Many creators of Casta paintings were often mestizo, which would give their art a more personal touch, as well as social opportunity. These mixed racial artists would be on the front lines in relation to the treatment of mixed-racial peoples in colonial Latin America. These artists would also be familiar with the dynamics of interracial families, experiencing the tensions within interracial families.

The creators of casta paintings experienced the complexities surrounding mixed-racial identity in colonial Latin American society. These creators were among the select few to truly understand the struggle for identity that many mixed-racial individuals experienced. The backgrounds of the creators of casta paintings reveal they had firsthand experience dealing with the duality of being a byproduct of Spanish colonization, but also raises questions regarding the motives they had in creating these racially based forms of art. One painter of casta paintings, Miguel Cabrera, detailed the racial dynamics of eighteenth-century Mexico. Cabrera was born in what is now modern-day Oaxaca, but later moved to Mexico City. Cabrera was a prominent painter of casta paintings, but also of religious art in colonial Latin America. Cabrera often painted for the Catholic Church, creating wonderful masterpieces that captured colonial Latin American culture with a Catholic influence.⁸¹ This connects with the religious intersectionality that many casta paintings revealed in their art, also showing the huge Catholic influence in Spanish colonization.

Another prominent creator of casta paintings was named Juan Patricio Morlete Ruiz. Ruiz was born in 1713, and revolutionized the art industry, especially with his famous casta paintings. Ruiz was a contemporary of Miguel Cabrera, using many of Cabrera’s works to

⁸¹ Rebecca Earle, “Two Pairs of Pink Satin Shoes!!’ Race, Clothing and Identity in the Americas (17th-19th Centuries).” *History Workshop Journal*, no. 52 (2001): 175–95.

influence in his own artwork. Like Cabrera before him, Morlete Ruiz gained high status in the Spanish elite through the fame his artwork gained in colonial Mexico. Morlete Ruiz was revolutionary in Mexican art history because he would set the standard for the next century of art in Mexico. This standard would be set through the Casta paintings Morlete Ruiz would create in colonial Mexico. While Cabrera and Morlete Ruiz would gain a high status in the Spanish elite, Morlete Ruiz was still a mestizo and came from mixed-racial background, just like Miguel Cabrera. Although both Cabrera and Morlete were able to rise the social ladder and gain some prestige in colonial Latin America, they were still seen as inferior in the eyes of full-blooded Spaniards in Latin America. The Casta paintings that these artists made showed that no matter what they did to contribute to the society of New Spain, because they came from interracial backgrounds, they would always be inferior because of their partial proximity to whiteness. They would still have more privileges than mulattos and other interracial groups, but still were seen as inferior when compared to full-blooded Spaniards. The study of the histories of these creators of racially based art raises some questions for their purpose of the motive behind these forms of art.

The creators of the casta paintings were the first to set the foundation of how mixed-racial identity would be interpreted during the colonial period in Latin America. The study of these racially based art forms raises multiple questions on the purpose of this art. Many historians have questioned why these pieces of art were made, and how they were significant in colonial Latin American society. There are many different perspectives on the motives of casta paintings, specifically who they were intended for in Latin American society. One perspective is the idea of these paintings only being used to further gain social mobility within Spanish society. The creators of this type of art could have used their artistic nature to gain favor among the Spanish elite. When examining the different motive perspectives, it must also not be forgotten

that the audience of the casta paintings might have changed. In this perspective, the audience of these paintings would have been the Spanish elite, further solidifying their high status over mixed-racial individuals in society. The differing perspectives can be seen as the casta paintings “simultaneously serve an ‘exoticizing function’ for Spanish collectors and patrons and an ‘identificatory function’ for Creoles.”⁸² The Spanish elite would feel content seeing their significance in higher Spanish society, while setting the foundation of inferiority of interracial groups.

The study of colonial Latin American society shows that a commonality in New Spanish society, the “images of colonies were produced for an elite, educated, and noble audience. Funded and produced in the context of colonial expansion, such images were assertions of power and possession.”⁸³ The creators of these paintings would try to elevate their social standing, but this would not be the only perspective on why these paintings were created. Another possible perspective as the motive behind this racially based art is that the creations of this art gave way to a rising nationalism within mestizo culture. The personal connection the painters had with their art could have led to a common understanding of their situation during this period. The creation of these forms of art would remind the painters of the social standing of their specific interracial identities. The speculation discussed regarding the reason for casta paintings also includes the rising sense of nationalism within Latin America beginning in the 18th century. Mestizo identity increased as the evolution of these Spanish colonies continued. The mestizo population also increased drastically in the duration of Spanish colonization.

⁸² Erin Benay, “*Casta State of Mind: Michael Menchaca and the Graphic Revolution of Caste.*” *Art Journal* 81, no. 2 (Summer 2022): 54–74.

⁸³ Diana DiPaolo Loren, “Corporeal Concerns” (2007): 28.

In a somewhat analogous social movement to the American Revolution in the late eighteenth century, this new culture was not indigenous nor Spanish in nature, but rather a colonial culture with mixed influences from both Spanish and indigenous culture. The creation of casta paintings could have been a way for interracial individuals to come to an understanding of their current social situations. The constant reminder of where their social standing was based on mixed-racial characteristics in a visual art form would give them a sense of where they belong in Spanish colonial society. As mentioned earlier, this perspective would also change the audience of these pieces of art. The Catholic influence in many casta paintings show that these paintings were displayed in churches or houses of worship. Enslaved Africans, and often people with interracial histories, would be present in churches or other religious institutions to convert them to Catholicism. This audience of people of color would see these paintings, examining their position in colonial society. This perspective shows how “Caste terms were claims about an individual’s proximity to colonial power, expressed through a language of lineage.”⁸⁴ The fact that these paintings were often displayed in public could connect to a growing nationalism in Latin America. The rise in mestizo culture gave people of mixed-racial histories a commonality that eventually led to the revolution of many Latin American countries. Historians have argued that “The overall diversity of the Spanish Empire's black population was further increased by mestizaje, which sometimes developed in regions very close to places receiving new slave arrivals.”⁸⁵ These perspectives on the motives further show the complexities that revolve around the visual forms of racial art known as casta paintings. While much of this analysis is

⁸⁴ Rebecca Earle, “The Pleasures of Taxonomy: Casta Paintings, Classification, and Colonialism.” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 73, no. 3 (2016): 427–66. <https://doi.org/10.5309/willmaryquar.73.3.0427>.

⁸⁵ Alex Borucki, David Eltis, and David Wheat. “Atlantic History and the Slave Trade to Spanish America.” *The American Historical Review* 120, no. 2 (2015): 447. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43696678>.

speculation, the examination of these perspectives and motives aids in the understanding of the concept of mixed-racial identity in colonial Latin America.

The analysis of casta paintings also brings to the light the intersectionality connecting the topics of race, gender, and religion. While the casta paintings depict the complex racial dynamics within Latin American society in the colonial period, these paintings also showed the gender dynamics of colonial Latin American society. Casta paintings not only depicted the political environment in colonial Latin America, but also the daily lives of those who lived during this time. The casta paintings utilize a type of microhistory, showing how these mixed-racial families dressed, interacted, and where they were placed on the social status spectrum. The study of casta paintings is significant in the study of racial identity and the complex environment that people of color had to navigate during their struggle for identification during the colonial period.

Chapter Four: A Separate Foundation of Culture? Intersectionality of Race and Gender in Latin America

The history of race in the Latin American region, including the islands of the Caribbean, has also been interconnected with the social construction of gender. The intersectionality of gender and race and its connection to colonization and oppression is an important topic of analysis. Race and gender are not segregated social categories but rather a part of an interconnected system of culture and society.⁸⁶

The Spanish colonization of Latin America and the Caribbean demonstrates much of the intersectionality between these two social aspects. The historical analysis of colonial Spanish society reveals that “Latinos’ experience of oppression due to race, class, and sexuality may provide insights into and empathy regarding the nature of women’s oppression and can have profound consequences for the development of a feminist consciousness in men”⁸⁷ showing that these social constructions of colonial Latin America were interconnected to each other. Spanish colonization often was a lawless process when it came to the treatment of the indigenous populations by the Spanish conquistadors. The Spanish soldiers went unchecked in their conquest, often committing sexual assault against indigenous women, as well as men too. This behavior would be commonly used against women of color, often being a tool of control, both physical control as well as societal control. While sexual assault on different racial groups during the colonization of the Western Hemisphere of the world has led to the creation of various mixed racial groups as well as gender stereotypes created to rationalize mass sexual assault. The

⁸⁶ Kimberle Crenshaw, “*Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color.*” *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (1991): 1242.

⁸⁷ Aída Hurtado, and Mrinal Sinha, *Beyond Machismo : Intersectional Latino Masculinities*, University of Texas Press, 2016.

enslavement of those of African descent led to the genesis of racial gender stereotypes of both men and women with African blood. The enslavement of Africans in Latin America led to the need for strong enslaved Africans physically fit enough for the intense physical trauma of plantation slavery. Plantations owners also needed sufficient population of enslaved Africans to produce enough monetary gain. Often plantation owners would force strong enslaved men to breed with the enslaved women to be sure enslaved populations did not decrease. Historians of slavery have noted that “slaveowners selected, or purchased, healthy young men and employed them as studs. The same practice applied to women who were known as breeders.”⁸⁸ This would lead to the misconception that men of African descent who were physically fit must participate in forced breeding and hypersexuality.

This hypersexuality would also be a common misconception of enslaved woman during Spanish colonization, who also experienced sexual violence from their “owners.” This would often happen when the enslaved women were forced into prostitution by their masters’ for their own financial gain. These enslaved women would also face harsh sexual assault, often leading to so called illegitimate children of mixed-racial heritage. The analysis of gender interactions during Spanish colonization of Latin America reveals that sexual assault was a primary factor in the creation of a mixed-racial identity during the colonial period. These colonial Latin American women, often enslaved women, “would have had a difficult time attempting to repel their master's advances, they were frequently subjected to sexual exploitation.”⁸⁹

The gender dynamic of the areas of now known Caribbean and Latin America was drastically different after initial contact with the Spanish. The culture of Indigenous peoples was

⁸⁸ Steven E. Brown, “Sexuality and the Slave Community.” *Phylon* (1960-) 42, no. 1 (1981): 9.

⁸⁹ Steven E. Brown, “Sexuality and the Slave Community.” *Phylon* (1960-) 42, no. 1 (1981): 7.

very different during the thousands of years before Europeans colonized the continents of North and South America. The indigenous society before European colonization emphasized the importance the role of women to indigenous life. These women in indigenous society could have much more opportunities, often becoming merchants, masons, and spiritual leaders. The familial life in indigenous society gave many more opportunities to women before Spanish colonization. Indigenous women would be allowed to gain a type of education in their culture. These women would be taught by their parent's religion, cooking, art, and farming. This education would be a separate one from indigenous men, which is an education revolved around politics and war.

Mesoamerican boys “would go to the *telpochcalli* to learn how to be soldiers and become Aztec citizens. These sons did not leave home until they married. Other boys, generally but not exclusively the children of nobility, went to the *calmecac*, where the education was more complete and they could learn to read and write codices.”⁹⁰ The study of indigenous history in Latin America reveals that “women and men operated in ‘two separate but equal spheres;’ these were complementary insofar as ‘each gender’s roles were perceived as equally important to the successful operation of the society, whether performed by men or women’”⁹¹ revealing a form of equity in some ways in many indigenous societies before European colonization. Indigenous marriage in pre-colonized Latin America would also sometimes have a matrilineal focus, prioritizing the women of indigenous society. After marriage, indigenous men would often go live in the area with the family on the woman’s side. These men would also need to relocate to fit this social tradition. Indigenous society was also a more sex positive atmosphere before Spanish colonization in the fifteenth century. Many indigenous individuals often participated in

⁹⁰ José Luis de Rojas, *Tenochtitlan: Capital of the Aztec Empire*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2012.

⁹¹ Peter Wade. *Race and Sex in Latin America*, Pluto Press, 2009

homosexuality (though it was not an identity category), fully expressing their sexual nature to their own society. These civilizations, like the Incan civilization in ancient Peru, often displayed homosexual interactions (of men) in their artifacts and sculptures. This shows the different gender dynamic atmosphere than post-colonized Latin America. The atmosphere can also be seen in indigenous religion, showing the heavy importance on female deities. The original gender atmosphere of pre-colonial indigenous peoples was an atmosphere of gender fluidity to varying degrees based on the specific group.

The gender dynamics of indigenous communities emphasize the fluidity of gender. Some indigenous communities rejected the notion of a two gendered identity. The individuals who have been gender diverse in indigenous history are now known as “two spirit.” This term is an English term meant to “refers to the gender constructions and roles that occur historically in many Native gender systems that are outside of colonial gender binaries”⁹² implying the difference between Indigenous gender dynamics and the gender dynamics of European culture. The term two spirit is a new term of cultural categorization since colonization stifled gender diversity and often persecuted or killed two spirit individuals. “For the vast majority of Europeans and Euroamericans who made these observations in the centuries before the American Revolution, this language was loaded with often negative moral and medical connotations.”⁹³ Although the study of the concept of two spirit has been a new field of study in gender studies, the study of two spirit shows that intersectionality of culture and gender identity within Indigenous communities. This intersectionality has been a part of indigenous culture for centuries, showing the emphasis on having multiple identities withing one being. There were

⁹² Daniel Heath Justice, et al. *Sovereign Erotics a Collection of Two-Spirit Literature*. University of Arizona Press, 2011, 4.

⁹³ Gregory D. Smithers, “Cherokee ‘Two Spirits’: Gender, Ritual, and Spirituality in the Native South.” *Early American Studies* 12, no. 3 (2014): 638.

many gods in indigenous religion before Spanish colonization that were extremely masculine in nature, but religion in pre-colonial Latin American civilization also had an important emphasis on goddesses. The duality of gender in Mesoamerican society affect all aspects of indigenous society, meaning that “Everything is identified as either feminine or masculine, and this applies to natural phenomena such as rain, hail, lightening, and clouds; living beings such as animals, plants, and humans; and even to periods of time, such as days, months, and years.”⁹⁴ The analysis equality of gender in pre-colonial Latin American society reveals the important on the feminine figure, but also shows the drastic change after Spanish colonization.

The Roman Catholic influence affected all aspects of colonial Latin American society. This influence affected colonial art, traditions, and especially behavior between various groups in Latin America during the colonial period. This included behavioral interactions between different racial groups during this period, but also influenced the behavioral interactions between different gender groups of colonial Latin America. As mentioned in earlier chapters, machismo and marianismo are social constructions of gender norms that were prominent in the Spanish colonization of the Caribbean and Latin America. Machismo embodied the attitude of how men were to behave in their daily lives, especially towards Spanish women. These Latin American men were expected to be very strong individuals, both physically and mentally. These macho men were also characterized as being aggressive in their interactions with women, often being the dominant force in their intimate relationships. Marianismo is the opposite of machismo, reflecting gender norms on colonial women. Historians have defined marianismo as “a secular construction affecting women’s behavior and made a distinction between the religious cult of

⁹⁴ Sylvia Marcos, “Mesoamerican Women’s Indigenous Spirituality: Decolonizing Religious Beliefs.” *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 25, no. 2 (2009): 25–45.

Mary and the secular stereotypes that she claimed were common to all Latin American countries”⁹⁵ Marianismo forced Latin American women to be in the submissive role in their marriages, as well as in their society. These women would have to accept the aggressive behavior of colonial men. This behavior would include their hypersexuality and their practice of adultery. The analysis of gender in Latin America shows that “Priests and officials alike enforced the “rigid double standard” that allowed men sexual access to any unprotected woman, whether European, Indian, or African, but condemned women for any minor transgression.”⁹⁶

This also reveals that colonial society in Latin America and the Caribbean had gender influenced legal systems, favoring the patriarchal dominance in colonial society. The expectation of “pure” colonial women symbolizes the purity of Mary, the mother of Jesus in Christianity. Colonial Latin American women were supposed to use the image of Mary as reference, acting submissive when it came to the desires of the masculine authority in Spanish society. In colonial marriage in Latin America, these women were expected to be “submissive, governed by religious instruction and their husbands’ mandates”⁹⁷ This imagery used in gender norms during this period, shows the heavy religious influence in society.

As examined in earlier chapters, cultural aspects of society like race and gender are reflected in the arts, and through artistic expression. The *Casta* paintings, made between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, were an artistic reflection on the fascination of a social hierarchy based on race, but they also reveal the emphasis of the gender dynamic in colonial

⁹⁵ *Latinas in the United States, set : A Historical Encyclopedia*, edited by Vicki L. Ruiz, and Korrol, Virginia Sanchez, Indiana University Press, 2006.

⁹⁶ Carole A. Myscowski, *Amazons, Wives, Nuns, and Witches : Women and the Catholic Church in Colonial Brazil, 1500-1822*, University of Texas Press, 2013.

⁹⁷ Myscowski, *Amazons, Wives, Nuns, and Witches*, 2013.

society. An example of the gender interactions in colonial Latin America can be seen in the Casta painting *De Mulato y Espanola, Morisco c1775*⁹⁸ created by Francisco Clapera.



This painting shows a mulatto man, a Spanish woman, and a morisco, the result of mulatto and Spanish mixture. According to Wendy E. Philips, “The family appears to be in emotional turmoil. The mother is scowling as she reaches for the father’s hair and pulls on his jacket. The father is pushing her away and his face communicates annoyance. Several dishes of food have been spilled from the table onto the floor, and the father’s hat has also fallen on the floor. In the foreground of the painting, the child pulls on the mother’s skirt apparently trying to prevent

⁹⁸ *De Mulato y Espanola, Morisco c1775*

intensification of the conflict between his parents.”⁹⁹ This Casta paintings shows the distinct interactions between men and women in colonial Latin America. The portraits of mixed-racial families often showed the women in these mixed-racial families were in the colonial household. This also indicates that these colonial women did not pursue education, often not having the opportunity in colonial Latin American society to pursue an education. The analysis of gender in colonial Latin America shows that “Since women’s primary station has been regarded as home-based, then it was no doubt considered a waste of expenditure to invest in education for girls”¹⁰⁰ These Casta paintings are physical, visual representations of the interconnection between race and gender in colonial Latin America.

The different level of treatment for women of color are also revealed in the analysis of the Casta paintings. The clothing used in the Casta paintings aids in the analysis of gender and race in colonial Latin America. Mixed-racial families connected to African blood and culture would be shown to live in rundown homes with tattered clothing. This would be the reality for any mixed-racial individual connected to African ancestry, further demonstrating the negativity connected with black identity in the colonial period. Women of all social status would be seen holding children, reinforcing this gender norm. The subservient female role is also synonymous with a motherly role, emphasizing on the social characteristics of being house wives and mothers of their children. Historians have noted in the analysis of traditional gender roles that “Women are at the center stage of household management and child-bearing. They are also prolific bearers of children and place much value on motherhood. This picture suggests that Caribbean women

⁹⁹ Wendy E. Philips, “Representations of the Black Body in Mexican Visual Art: Evidence of an African Historical Presence or a Cultural Myth?” *Journal of Black Studies* 39, no. 5 (2009): 771.

¹⁰⁰ Dorian Powell, “The Role of Women in the Caribbean.” *Social and Economic Studies* 33, no. 2 (1984): 106

are quite traditional, both in their behavior and their attitude about their role as women.”¹⁰¹ This traditional gender role for women of color can easily be seen in many casta paintings. In the Casta painting titled *De India y Cambujo Tente en el Aire*¹⁰², Indigenous women can be seen taking care of the mixed-raced child while the father appears to be working as a tailor in the colonial period.



This painting reveals the traditional gender role for colonial women by showing that many colonial women were viewed to be care takers of the home and of their children. This forced gender role would be common for all colonial women, especially colonial women of

¹⁰¹ Dorian Powell, “The Role of Women in the Caribbean.” *Social and Economic Studies* 33, no. 2 (1984): 113.

¹⁰² Anonymous/ Mexico (act. 4th quarter XVIII century), artist, and Castro Ignacio de (formerly attributed to) (act. 2nd half XVIII century), artist. *From a Series of 16 Paintings on Miscegenation. No. 11: De India y Cambujo Tente En El Aire* (“From an Indian Woman and a Cambujo Man, a Tente En El Aire [Is Produced]”). 4th quarter XVIII century. Oil; Support: Copper., Height: 36 cm. (14 3/16 in.); Width: 48 cm. (18 7/8 in.). Madrid, Museo de América.

color. Colonial women often were care takers of children and were often viewed as a reproductive tool to further the familial legacy of colonial men.

The Trans-Atlantic slave trade was a system that emphasized the physical body. The enslavement system established in the American continents was an economic system that focused on the physicality of enslaved Africans. This physicality would be needed to endure a harsh environment filled with punishment for those enslaved who did not meet the slave owner's satisfaction. This power over another human being is evident in the invasive procedures done at slave markets. Buyers would thoroughly inspect enslaved Africans and they would inspect the eyes, teeth, genitals, and many more invasive private places. This shows the power buyers had over their slaves. The second perspective that we see is how human beings have power over nature to be able to drastically transform the environments of the Americas. To make way for profitable plantations, colonists made slaves clear the primal environments of the Americas. This perspective is also shown in how the slave trade helped in building the foundations of economic gain through agriculture. This perspective is also shown in having power over nature by creating economic markets for the cash crops of the Americas. The drastically changing perspectives on the environment of the slave trade helped shape the perspectives we see in environmental history.

These invasive slave markets would also contribute to the devaluing of human life and purpose. In analysis of the historic movement of the Trans-Atlantic Slave trade, historians can show how no matter viewed as a tool or viewed as an economic profit, slaves did not have their lives viewed as being valuable to slave owners, only to produce more profit for plantation owners. This perspective of the Black identity can also be seen in the creation of casta paintings. Casta paintings often have a series of mixed-racial portraits of colonial families, not just one

overall portrait. These paintings often come in series of sixteen paintings, revealing the social hierarchy based on race within the paintings. Colonial families with African ancestry can often be seen in the last rows of the series of Casta paintings, implying their so-called inferiority to mestizo heritage. They are often in agricultural setting or in “natural” places, emphasizing this supposedly inferior role.

In the series of Casta paintings dating back to 1750¹⁰³, the ideology of Spanish superiority over marginalized groups in colonial Latin America is shown by having the Spanish families on the top row of the series while the marginalized groups are shown in the rows underneath the Spanish families.

¹⁰³ *Casta Paintings*. 18th C. A.D. Oil on copper, each 36 x 49 cm. Museo de América (Madrid, Spain). <https://jstor.org/stable/community.18116206>.



The Spanish Colonization of the Caribbean and Latin America was the changing point in the gender norms of the South American continent. The new religiously based gender norms brought many new interactions between not only different racial groups, but between different gender groups as well. The new gender dynamic in colonial Latin America would have a repressive nature for the sexuality of women. The pureness of the Virgin Mary in Christian religious literature would also reflect the attitudes towards colonial women, having the expectation of pureness in their social interactions. While colonial women were expected to behave repressively in their social interactions, this new Spanish colonial society would also support the sexually aggressive behavior of colonial Spanish men. These colonial men would not only use their hypersexuality on the elite, Spanish women of colonial society, but would also use their hypersexual aggressiveness to dominate the marginalized groups in colonial Latin America. The research on gender and racial relations between the elite of colonial Latin American society and the enslaved Africans reveals that “Beyond reproduction, however, sex during slavery was a violent mechanism of power and control used to degrade, torture, and kill slave men, women, and children and to solidify white male supremacy”¹⁰⁴ The analysis of the establishment of generational slavery of Africans reveals the sexual assault the Spanish elite would commit to further establish their legal authority over the enslaved. This would be prevalent in the enslavement of Africans in Brazil during the seventeenth century. Brazilian elites would exhibit sexual aggressiveness towards their enslaved Africans, showing their authority through sexual dominance. Brazilian elites would use sexual assault to dominate their

¹⁰⁴ Lamonte Aidoo, *Slavery Unseen: Sex, Power, and Violence in Brazilian History*. New York, USA: Duke University Press, 2018, 12.

legal authority over the enslaved Africans, but they would also use sexual assault to further their social status as macho Latin American men. This negative sexual treatment would also be equal treatment to both enslaved men and women. The sexual assault enslaved individuals experienced reveal the attitudes of the enslaved Africans as nothing but property to be used by the elite of society. This attitude towards the black identity can also be seen in the use of terminology in religious literature regarding the use of slavery and marginalized groups in society. The Brazilian elite men would use sexual assault to assert their masculine dominance over enslaved men, stripping them of their masculinity during the process. In the analysis of race and gender, historians have noted that “Being an active penetrator was seen as masculine, while being penetrated was feminine,”¹⁰⁵ showing that the use of sexual assault was used to further masculine domination while forcing “femininity” to those who were sexually assaulted.

Brazilian elite men would force enslaved Africans to be submissive to aggressive Spanish men. This also relates to the religiously influenced machismo ideals found in colonial Latin American society, emphasizing male hypersexuality to many different marginalized groups. The sexual assault on enslaved woman would also create the byproduct of so called illegitimate mixed-racial children. While these mixed-raced children would come from the race of the elite in colonial Latin American society, they would still be considered as inferior due to their blood connection with African ancestry, and their lower social status than those of mestizo or creole heritage. This negative imagery on the “Black” identity shows the intersectionality of race and religion, showing a religious influence on the negative imagery of black heritage. The

¹⁰⁵ Peter Wade, *Race and Sex in Latin America*. London: Pluto Press, 2009.

colonization and the near erasure of indigenous populations, society, and culture changed the gender dynamics of the North and South American continents.

The colonization of these newly conquered Spanish colonies had various influences on the treatment between not only different races, but also different gender groups in colonial Latin America. The machismo ideals and religious influence on gender behavior, including the hypersexuality that many colonial Latin American men experienced, caused much sexual aggression between these different groups. Sexual assault was common sexually aggressive action that many slave owners would use impose dominance over their enslaved Africans. While the use of sexual assault was common amongst the Brazilian elite during the colonial period towards enslaved men, sexual assault was also a common practice used towards enslaved women throughout Latin America. The dynamic of sexuality in Latin America during the colonial period revealed that elite Spanish women and their enslaved African women that “shared a closely entwined existence that was a convoluted fusion of intimacy, sex, exploitation, and violence embedded in the white patriarchal structures of slavery and coloniality.”¹⁰⁶ These enslaved women would be exploited, for the elite of colonial Latin American society. The enslaved women in colonial Latin America would also be exploited by the elite women of colonial Latin America, often forcing enslaved women into prostitution for white men.

The history of the category of race in the Latin American region, including the islands of the Caribbean, has also been interconnected with the category of gender. Race has historically been a system of classification based on skin color. While the analysis of race has been controversial through modern academia, the analysis of gender is an equally controversial topic.

¹⁰⁶ Lamonte Aidoo, *Slavery Unseen: Sex, Power, and Violence in Brazilian History*. New York, USA: Duke University Press, 2018, 102.

The surface characteristics of both race and gender classification systems lead to an illusion that these aspects of society are segregated from one another. Race and gender are not segregated social aspects but rather a part of an interconnected system of culture and society. There have been many historical events that reveal the intersectionality of gender and race. The Spanish colonization of Latin America and the Caribbean demonstrates much of the intersectionality between these two social aspects. Spanish colonization often was a lawless process when it came to the treatment of the indigenous populations by the Spanish conquistadors. The previously established gender norms in pre-colonized Mesoamerican society were drastically changed after the introduction of the masculine dominance of Spanish society. The religious influence of the Roman Catholic Church affected all aspects of colonial New Spanish society, including the interactions between different gender groups. The machismo and marianismo ideologies formed traditional gender roles that are the foundations of historical gender analysis in Latin America. The intersectionality of race and gender can be seen in the historic event of the enslavement of Africans in the Americas, revealing an emphasis on the physical bodies of the enslaved Africans. The intersectionality can also be seen in the creation of the Casta paintings, showing the interactions of gender groups, as well as between different racial groups in colonial New Spain. The analysis of race and gender in Colonial Latin America shows the hypocrisies of the justification of Spanish colonization, and the justification of racial and gender interactions during the colonial period. This historical analysis demonstrates that these social constructions of classification are connected aspects of society, and are foundational in the historical analysis of colonial Latin America.

Conclusion

Mixed-racial people, especially those of African descent, face a struggle over identity in a society dominated by a narrative that favors the white elite of society. These mixed-racial people often must navigate in identifying with either of their background cultures. Multiracial peoples are identified as being a part of the marginalized culture in a racial majority dominant environment, while in an environment dominated by the culture of marginalized groups, they are not considered a part of this culture. This social aspect of identity is not only experienced by those of African descent, but for all mixed raced people. While race is a controversial topic that is ever-present in society, the study of race has also aided in the further study of subcategories of race that give context to the struggle for identity many people of different races feel in a dominant white society. One of these subcategories is the study of mixed-racial identity. Mixed-racial identity is linked to the creation of the casta paintings and their forced racial identities imposed on marginalized groups in colonial Latin America. This forced identity also intersected with gender roles in Latin American society. This concept of identity was established during Spanish colonization, but is still a foundational element of modern-day society. Mixed-racial peoples living in modern times still face the struggle for self-identification in a multi-racial setting and are often alienated in their original cultures. The biggest example of this struggle for identity within mixed-racial peoples is the example of those born to both a white parent and a black parent. Those born to these races are often found alienated in a multi-cultural environment. When in a dominant white culture environment, mixed-racial peoples are considered a part of the marginalized race and are different than the majority, but when in a dominant marginalized culture environment, these peoples are considered a part of the white majority race and are still considered different. This cultural alienation aids these people to create a new identity with

influences from both cultures. Although mixed-racial peoples create their own identity based on a hybridization of culture, and they are still identified as part of the marginalized group by the elite of society.

The first chapter of this thesis examined the historiography of mixed-racial history and mixed-racial identity. The modern historiography of the evolution of mixed-race identity has been impacted by various socioeconomic movements brought by global events. Modern historiography has been vastly impacted by socioeconomic movements such as the rise of nationalism, the increase in intellectual Black writers and their influence on Black identity, and the rise of social progressive thinking with equal rights movements of various marginalized groups. The historiography surrounding the rise of mixed-racial identities has shed light on the forced racial identities given to many mixed-race individuals, as well as many different marginalized groups. The historiography of mixed-racial identity has intersectional ties with socially constructed gender identities. My research in this thesis has shown that there has been a small amount of writing on mixed-racial identity, since it is linked with the concept of mestizo nationalism and the rise of Black identity.

My research has offered an analysis of mixed-racial identity through the creation of the casta paintings. I explore Spanish fascination of the mixing of races and the identities that originated from Spanish colonization. Those of two cultures or of two races often find themselves in a social struggle of identity and are often rejected by both cultures for failing to fully “pass” as being a part of one single race. The history of the casta paintings has shown the racial ambiguity occurring in colonial Latin America and the creation of new mixed-racial cultures within a multicultural environment. My research has shown the various racial tensions that have come from the creation of a social hierarchy based on racial background. The racial

tensions between colonial Latin American society shown through the casta paintings are interconnected with the struggle of identity mixed-race people experienced during this time.

My thesis has also explored the intersectionality of race and gender within the social environment of colonial Latin America. The examination of casta paintings reveals the tense gender dynamics between different racial groups in colonial Latin America. The examination of the casta paintings also included forced gender identities given to women of color during this period. Indeed, there were multiple complexities regarding the concept of identity for mixed-race groups in Latin America during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The casta paintings are a visual representation of the struggle for cultural identification and belonging that mixed-racial people experienced daily. Some ways mixed raced people have dealt with this struggle for place is through hybridization and the creation of new cultures as well as through the notion of “passing.” The creation of a social hierarchy based on race have led to several social issues such as colorism and racism, all of which present unique challenges for mixed race people. These social issues have continue dominate the discourse of present day society, leading to the social justice movements of the past 70 years.

This thesis revealed the intersectionality of race and gender in colonial Latin America through the artistic interpretation of the casta paintings. These paintings imposed social identities on various mixed-racial families. While these groups experienced forced racial identities, these casta paintings also revealed the forced identities on gender experienced during this period. These traditional roles for women and men are still forced on people in the modern era. The Catholic Church’s influence and the concepts of machismo and marianismo are still felt today. Men are supposed to behave in the traditional role of being the strength of the household, behaving in aggression and hypersexuality. Women were expected to embody motherhood and

are to help produce and raise their own families. The intersectionality of race and gender identity is also shown in the analysis of the enslavement of Africans in the Americas. The sexual exploitation of enslaved Africans in the colonial period aided in the creation of the myth of African American hypersexuality. This forced identity of hyper sexualization affects African Americans in the modern period and continues to force gender identities on those of African American descent. These constructed gender and racial identities are linked to the identities shown in casta paintings, showing the foundational ideologies forced since Spanish colonization of Latin America.

This thesis, which builds on the works of Rebecca Earle, Peter Wade, Ann Twinam, Ilona Katzew, and others, contributes a mixed-racial perspective on cultural identity in a multi-racial environment. This thesis contributes to the establishment of racial identity in the colonial period through the casta paintings. Although individuals may identify as Latino even though they have African descended blood, the societies they live in will continue to discriminate against them even though they identify as Latino. This thesis includes the analysis of identity based on race and the disadvantages of being a part of their original cultures. The concept of a “dual consciousness” based on the writings of W. E. B. DuBois, shows the creation of new mixed-racial cultures with their own rising nationalism in a dominant white society. Mixed-racial groups took from various cultures and created their own distinct ways of existing. Despite the multitude of accomplishments towards civil rights and equality for all achieved in history, these forced racial and gender identities are still experienced in the modern period. My future hopes for my research will build on this thesis to create an even deeper dissection of multiple mixed-racial groups that occurred in Latin America. I also want to look at the current state of multi racial identity in Latin America. The casta paintings will continue to be a focus of the research,

exploring all the mixed-racial groups shown in these paintings and revealing the various social standings of these multi-racial peoples and their trajectory today.

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