Black Behind the Ears: Dominican Racial Identity from Museums to Beauty Shops by, Ginetta E.B. Candelario, (Durham, NC Duke University Press, 2007), 360 pp., $23.95.

Anti-Haitianismo has been part of the Dominican social fabric since it gained its independence from Haiti in 1844. This Anti-Haitian sentiment reached its most disastrous consequence in 1937 when President Rafael Trujillo led an ethnic cleansing campaign to rid the island of all Haitians. Trujillo's goal was to "Hispanicize" the Dominican Republic, or in essence, "whiten it." *Black Behind the Ears*: *Dominican Racial identity from Museums to Beauty Shops*" by Ginetta Candelario is a groundbreaking assessment of Dominican identity creation and denial, state sponsored racial hierarchies, and nationalism built on the premise that blackness should be ardently avoided while an indo-Hispanic notion of Dominicaness should be valued and encouraged.

Candelario starts her book by presenting travel narratives of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Century's that highly contributed to Dominicans embracing their Indian and Spanish colonial heritage while disowning the presence of African ancestry. Dominican racial identity evolved in counterpoint to the Spanish colonial legacy, the Haitian occupation of 1822-1844, and American expansionist interests (Candelario, 257). The travel narratives presented and dissected by Candelario were written by U.S. government officials, capitalist entrepreneurs, academics, and occupying U.S. Marines who always defined Dominicans in juxtaposition to Haiti. Haitians are repeatedly defined as barbaric, savages, voo-doo worshiping, backwards, and irreligious, Dominicans on the other hand are characterized as "the whites of the land;" catholic and civilized. Candelario argues that these anti-Haitian narratives are "imperial texts of information" (Candelario, 81). U.S. intervention/occupation of both Haiti and Dominican Republic during several periods of the twentieth century demonstrates Candelario's assessment to be spot-on. Not only did the narratives serve U.S. capitalist expansionist interests, they also helped Dominican elites in forming the countries identity. This is made evident later in the book when Candelario writes about "El Museo del Hombre" or the "Museum of Man" located in Santo Domingo (the capital of Dominican Republic). The purpose of the museum is to educate Dominicans on their national history and national identity, but the museum's indo-Hispanic representation of dominicaness is incomplete.

Many of the American and European travel narratives are used as primary documents in El Museo del Hombre. Taino, or indigenous roots are emphasized and utilized as nationalist displays, which cements independence, and by extension difference from Haiti and Spain (Candelario, 127).

Dominicans, like other immigrants from Latin America and the Caribbean in the United States are "world-travelers." Candelario's ethnographic research of Dominicans in Washington, D.C. concludes that there are Dominicans in D.C.

that identify as Black and blacks who identify as Dominicans (Candelario, 151). How can a people whose nationalist discourse is filled with anti-Haitian/Black fervor identify as Black? Candelario's analysis of Black Dominicans in D.C. and their representation in the *black mosaic* exhibit that took place in 1994 at The Anacostia Museum proves that Negrophobia is not universal amongst Dominicans (Candelario, 130). Although it is true that black self-identification in the 1950's and 1960's in D.C. created an opportunity for upward mobility, which can also be considered a major factor in Dominicans identifying as Black, Candelario presents a strong argument that Dominicans in D.C. were in racial solidarity with African-Americans. This was because they were "…forced to negotiate Jim Crow segregation, the Civil Rights Movement, and the Black Power Movement" (Candelario, 169).

Candelario's last stop is Salon Lamadas, a Beauty shop in the Washington Heights section of New York City, a heavily Dominican populated section of Manhattan. She argues that the Dominican Beauty Salon functions to reinforce the racial ideals displayed in El Museo del Hombre. So whether a Dominicana is on the island or the streets of New York City ideas of an Indo-Hispanic identity juxtaposed to blackness are encouraged and policed by the fashion experts who work in the salons. What forms an Indian look as opposed to a black one? Hair!

Hair texture being a major indicator of racial classification, a beauty salon proved to be an ideal place to discuss race and racism. If hair, as Candelario states, is the primary qualifier of racial identification then indianess can be obtained. Hair texture denotes status and opportunity. "Straight hair was equated with upper-class pursuits, while curly hair was connected to middle and lower class ones" (Candelario, 238). Candelario states that Dominican woman are not in search of whiteness, rather, they want to look more "Hispanic."

The Dominican Republic's counter-stance to Haiti, Spain, and the United States has provided her several lenses that it does not want to identify as. Ginetta Candelario argues that Dominicans have chosen to identify as Indo-Hispanic. Hair being the determinant of one's race, the phrase, and the book "Black behind the Ears" serves as an excellent historical-ethnographic take on Dominican racial identity and the social, political, and historical factors that complicated the creation of a national identity.

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