

Redeeming Bodies and Souls: Penitentiary Science and Spirituality
in Twentieth-Century Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic

By

Alberto Ortiz

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

(History)

at the

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

2017

Date of final oral examination: 04/04/2017

The dissertation is approved by the following members of the Final Oral Committee:

Francisco A. Scarano, Professor Emeritus, History

Steve J. Stern, Professor Emeritus, History

Florencia E. Mallon, Professor Emeritus, History

James H. Sweet, Professor, History

Pablo Gómez, Assistant Professor, History of Science and Medicine

Page Intentionally Left Blank

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures	iii
Acknowledgments	v
Abstract	ix
Introduction. Penitentiaries and Intersections in Comparative Context	1
Chapter 1. More Than Flesh: From Medical to Penitentiary Science	55
Chapter 2. Heterodox Medico-Religiosities: Dissident Healers and Physicians	117
Chapter 3. Determining Redeemability: Social Health Experts and Convicts	182
Chapter 4. <i>Los vivos muertos</i> : The Many Meanings of Death and Awakening	255
Chapter 5. Performing Faith: Sacred Knowledge and the Experiential	323
Chapter 6. Sharing the Sun: Clemency, Redemptive Networks, and Populism	390
Conclusion. The Living Dead and Ambiguous Legacies	449
Bibliography	466

LIST OF FIGURES

Introduction

Figure 1. Bennett, Parsons & Frost, “Group Plan of the Proposed Manicomio & Presidio, Río Piedras, Porto Rico,” January 1925.

Figure 2. “Penitenciaría de Nigua,” 1920-40.

Figure 3. Map of Hispaniola and Puerto Rico, with the Mona Passage emphasized [2011].

Figure 4. Total Number of Prisoners in Puerto Rico’s Penitentiaries and other Island Prisons (including district jails, youth institutions, and agricultural penal colonies), c. 1923-1956.

Figure 5. Total Number of Paroles Granted and Denied in Puerto Rico, 1947-1956.

Chapter 1

Figure 1. Mug shot of Juan Sampayo López, October 1933.

Figure 2. Comparative Racial Classifications of Convicts in Puerto Rican Penitentiaries, c. 1917-1956.

Figure 3. Oso Blanco’s front entrance, March 2014.

Figure 4. Rear view of Oso Blanco around midcentury.

Figure 5. José M. N., Ceferino Méndez Polo performing a physical, April 1950.

Figure 6. Anterior and side views of normal lungs, 1930-31.

Figure 7. Elephantiasis patient José Capre Cajigas, c. 1933-34.

Chapter 2

Figure 1. Olivorio Mateo (Liborio), c. 1909 [2004].

Figure 2. Arrested gavilleros, *Revista Policial*, October 1926.

Figure 3. Domingo Otero advertisement, c. 1920s-30s.

Chapter 3

Figure 1. José M. N., “Servicio social en la comunidad,” May 1950.

Figure 2. Convict Occupations After Entering Puerto Rican Penitentiaries, c. 1927-1956.

Figure 3. Confesor Canales Fernández, “Programa de tratamiento,” January 20, 1950.

Figure 4. José Rafael Maymí Nevares, July 1951.

Figure 5. Rafael Troyano de los Ríos, Federico García Lorca, Laura de los Ríos, and Isabel García Lorca in Morocco, 1931 [2009].

Chapter 4

Figure 1. Suicide of Luis Vázquez Irizarry, August 2, 1933.

Figure 2. Mug shot of Octavio Montilla, April 1938.

Figure 3. Living death in Nigua, 1937 [2013].

Figure 4. Susano Ortiz, May 1949.

Figure 5. José M. N. and/or Ángel L. R. R., Oso Blanco movie screening, July-August 1950.

Figure 6. José M. N. and/or Ángel L. R. R., Oso Blanco library, July-August 1950.

Figure 7. Delia Weber, 1950 [2015].

Figure 8. María del Carmen Mejía, December 1951 [2016].

Chapter 5

Figure 1. “Evidence seized/taken from the prisoner [Nereida Ribot],” 1957.

- Figure 2. Map of the division of Puerto Rico by various Christian denominations, 1899 [1998].
- Figure 3. Comparative Religious Classifications of Convicts in La Princesa and Oso Blanco, c. 1917-1956.
- Figure 4. “Una misa en el Presidio Insular,” August 13, 1946.
- Figure 5. “Via crucis en el Presidio,” April 19, 1973.
- Figure 6. José M. N., Oso Blanco holy communion, November 1949.
- Figure 7. Protestant missionary Gladys B. Harrow, October 1, 1952.
- Figure 8. Don Eduardo Rivera, President of the House of Spirits, 1947-62.
- Figure 9. Pastor Rufus Prince and his wife, April 1943.
- Figure 10. Baptismal class in Oso Blanco, March 1945.

Chapter 6

- Figure 1. Octavio Barrous Álvarez, July 1940.
- Figure 2. Obdulia Aldahondo and children, November 1937.
- Figure 3. PPD, “Fulfilled Promise,” mid-1940s [2014].
- Figure 4. Darío Suro, “Protector and Protected,” May 16, 1942.
- Figure 5. Our Lady of Altagracia postcard, January 1938.
- Figure 6. Mug shot of Isabelo Figueroa Pizarro, June 1934.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Dissertators and distinguished scholars alike follow certain rules when writing their acknowledgments. I will break some of these rules here. First, this dissertation would not have been possible without the true and living God of the universe, who has for some reason groomed me for this purpose. As I age, I understand that I need you more than ever. I see now that I must do my part. Most importantly, God led me to my wife, Sherlie Ivonne, who has taught me a great deal about love, compassion, and forgiveness, and that one should never submit to their ego, even if the world tells you to do so and trivializes you in the process. Thank you for taking this ride with me, Sherlie. I know too well you did not have to, and that you deserve better, but you have stayed the course with me, and for that I am grateful. I could not have done this without you or Ason Duke. *Los amo.*

I subscribe to the “There are too many people to thank” and “Not every name requires exhaustive adjectives” business. In doing so, I do not mean to be bland or reticent about my academic journey or the people that matter. Rather, if I went down such a path, then most of what follows would be an acknowledgments section and not a dissertation. Having said this, my immediate and extended family and friends merit recognition here. But there are too many of you to name! All I can say is that you know who you are. For all our different trials and tribulations, we end up in the same place when we reunite, waxing nostalgic about times that do not require much explanation, just gratitude for having shared in them, *en las buenas y en las malas*. I want to salute my parents, Isabel and Alberto, and especially my grandparents, María, Manuel, Mónica, and Alberto, none of whom lived to see any of their grandchildren earn a Ph.D., but whose storytelling nonetheless planted an appreciation for history in me. In our limited time together, you taught me not to take knowledge of self for granted. My aunt Luz Esther has been in my corner

since day one. Stephen Davis helped me get into college and encouraged me through the undergraduate process. Further, I must salute all the Five Percenters, Moors, black Muslims, *Ñetas*, hip-hoppers, and dearly departed that took the time to build with and guide me over the years. In the absence of domestic stability and community, I found these in you. Although geography and other factors divide us now more than ever, you contributed to my foundation. I consider you giants of my intellectual formation. Much respect and enough said.

Clearly, this dissertation would not have been possible without the support of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, its Department of History, and its Program in Latin American, Caribbean & Iberian Studies (and by extension, the U.S. Department of Education, the Tinker and Nave Foundations, and the Mellon Foundation). No other entities or institutions believed in or assisted me at the doctoral level. UW-Madison fellowships and assistantships positioned me to achieve the dissertation milestone. Leslie Abadie helped me navigate graduate school bureaucracy; in fact, she simply took care of things. My mentors, Francisco Scarano, James Sweet, Steve Stern, Florencia Mallon and Pablo Gómez, deserve special acknowledgment, far more than I can hope to give them here. I would like to thank you all for taking a risk on me, for your hands-off approach, and for allowing me to make my own way and mistakes. Your collective calm, evenhandedness, patience, support, and wisdom is praiseworthy. You are the epitome of scholar-mentors, by far the best I have ever encountered, and I can only hope that in the future I will become half the scholar-mentors you are. I came to UW-Madison to work with Franco, a master of the history of Puerto Rico and the Spanish Caribbean, specifically. I still fondly remember our first meeting at a Spanish restaurant in Río Piedras as if it were yesterday. Thanks for believing in me, in this project, and for letting me be creative, Franco. You have no idea how much I admire and respect you. Just

because I have “completed” the dissertation does not mean that I will stop seeking your sage counsel and talking your ear off.

Franco suffered through multiple drafts of every chapter in this dissertation. Pablo, Steve, Florencia, Jim, Eileen Suárez Findlay, Lisa Rosner, Shennette Garrett-Scott, and Ligia Licho López made thoughtful observations about my work at different stages, from the dissertation proposal to initial chapter drafts and the proposed final version. If this dissertation is insightful in any way, it is because of these tremendous, caring people. Sean Bloch and Jeanne Essame have been capable and inspiring intellectual sparring partners since I arrived in Madison. I worked through plenty of ideas with them verbally, and took away so much from our exchanges. I should also recognize UW-Madison’s Latin American and Caribbean History program: Jacob Blanc, Ingrid Bolívar Ramírez, Marcelo Casals, Adela Cedillo, Geneviève Dorais, Tamara Feinstein, Julie Gibbings, Jessica Kirstein, Elena McGrath, Valeria Navarro Rosenblatt, Viviana Quintero, Carlyne Ryan, Vikram Tamboli, and Bridgette Werner. I have learned something from each of you, and I am a better scholar for it. I also had the privilege of teaching under Florencia, Franco, Richard Keller, and John Sharpless while at UW-Madison. They collectively enlightened me about instruction methods, and gave me the chance to mature as a teacher.

These acknowledgments would not be proper if I did not applaud the archivists and librarians in Wisconsin, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic that facilitated my research process. There are too many of you to name! You know who you are. Still, José Charón Rivera, Hilda Mercedes Chicón, María Isabel Rodríguez Matos, and Pedro Roig Alvarado warrant specific mention. They mentored me when I was an archivist at the Archivo General de Puerto Rico. Working at the archive was a dream come true for a kid from a forgotten corner of the diaspora. It was an even better experience because of the friendships I forged with people like José, Hilda,

María Isabel, and Pedro. Were it not for Hilda, who was born in the Dominican Republic and raised in Puerto Rico, this dissertation would not have turned into a comparison. Our conversations about life, history, politics, and so much more in the *Gigante Verde* annex, which sometimes included underpaid contract prisoners, inspired me to return to graduate school and shaped my research agenda. I cannot thank you enough, Hilda. *Eres tan especial. Te quiero mucho a ti y a Seba*. My field research year (2013-2014) reinforced what I already knew about Puerto Rico and extended it to the Dominican Republic.

Indeed, it has been quite a journey from Third and Elmer Streets and the Axtell housing project in southern New Jersey to UW-Madison. Growing up between New Jersey and north Philadelphia was quite an experience, but it also presented its share of major problems and obstacles. These formative experiences made me who I am, and have gotten me this far. Some of the strongest and most honorable, intellectual, and resilient people I know come from such circumstances. Yes, these attributes still matter regardless of what the pundits say. I suspect they will continue to tell us who we are and how we should think and feel instead of asking us. At any rate, the more important point is that this dissertation would not have been possible without a complicated village. Any errors or shortcomings in what follows are mine alone, however.

ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines intersections of medicine and belief, and the politics of incarceration in Caribbean societies under U.S. influence. It is a comparative social, cultural, and political history of convicts and the different communities with which they interacted. I use penitentiaries to understand the intricate knowledge and experiences shaping the consolidation of two polities and societies in the twentieth century: the Insular Penitentiary (Oso Blanco) and colonial democracy in Puerto Rico, and the Nigua penitentiary and dictatorship in the Dominican Republic. Rather than focus exclusively on modernization, criminology, and the customary orders of penitentiaries, however, I emphasize convict intellects, how the prison afforded them opportunities to refine their political voice, and how their volition positioned them to negotiate state conditioning. My findings challenge scholars to transcend the biopolitics of prisons by bringing to light the common aspects of “irreconcilable” forms of knowledge and experience. This signals a shift away from narratives that underscore the raw hegemony of incarceration, the magnification of difference, and the failures of rehabilitation. Instead, I trace the medico-religious and humanistic routines of prison life, and the uneven yet profound links between convicts, communities, and political systems.

Using a range of archival, library, and other (un)published materials, I argue that despite historical and political differences in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, science and spirituality were powerful tools of redemptive practice. By redemptive practice I mean (im)material approaches to (un)freedom, citizen-making, and community formation. In both societies, science and spirituality helped produce “awakened” citizens on the one hand and perpetual citizenship deficits on the other. These “ways of knowing” diverged in terms of content, but shared the scaffolding of performance. As experiential reformatory enterprises, Caribbean penitentiaries and their cultures of care inspired the correctional imagination behind and beyond bars. They formed part of a constellation of redemptive practices that spanned medical and social science, orthodox and heterodox religiosities, the broader humanities, and executive clemency. Convicts, their extended communities, and state professionals engaged these practices, but within limits specific to each society. Redemptive practices showcase national difference within the Caribbean, but also what integrated and subregionalized the region.

INTRODUCTION

Penitentiaries and Intersections in Comparative Context

On April 29, 2014, the Governor of Puerto Rico, Alejandro J. García Padilla of the Popular Democratic Party (*Partido Popular Democrático*, or PPD), delivered his State of the Commonwealth address. In the address, he outlined Puerto Rico's need for "radical changes." The Governor called for a "more just" and "productive" society, one that embraced a culture of freedom, respect and solidarity, and that rejected "ideological tunnel-vision." The bulk of his address, however, attempted to calm an anxious public about the economic and political crises impacting the island. The Governor proposed specific measures, including a tighter budget and forums for dialogue, to save Puerto Rico from its problems and itself. Like many governors before him, talk of socioeconomic investments characterized García Padilla's vision for the island's future. The demolition of the island penitentiary in Río Piedras (popularly known as *Oso Blanco*) represented one such investment.¹ In García Padilla's words, "The former prison, symbol of a time when people were afraid to leave their homes, will cease to exist, and in its place will be the City of Science. The symbols of confinement will give way to symbols of creation and creativity, of a search for life, employment—that is our debt to the future" and "the road forward."²

¹ According to State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) architect, Santiago Gala Aguilera, the name *Oso Blanco* (White or Polar Bear) is a reference to the Venezuelan cement company that provided Puerto Rico's government with the raw materials needed for construction of the penitentiary. In an interview, Félix Rodríguez Mateo, a former superintendent of the prison, revealed to Gala Aguilera that he had met one of the prisoners who helped build *Oso Blanco* in the late 1920s and early 1930s. The ex-inmate recalled that neither color, an animal, nor the nickname of a prisoner generated the moniker. "The truth," the ex-convict assured, "is that the term dates to the first months of construction." Workers took notice of "the hundreds of barrels of cement imported from Venezuela." The company responsible for providing the cement was called "Oso Blanco." See Santiago Gala Aguilera, "El Oso Blanco, Landmark of Penal Rehabilitation in the First Half of the Twentieth Century" (San Juan: SHPO, 2003). Also see Fernando Picó, *El día menos pensado: historia de los presidiarios en Puerto Rico, 1793-1993* (Río Piedras: Ediciones Huracán, 1994), 69. On import substitution industrialization and the cement processing industry in Latin America during this period, see Xavier Tafunell, "On the Origins of ISI: The Latin American Cement Industry, 1900-1930," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 39, 2 (May 2007): 299-328.

² Alejandro J. García Padilla, "Debts from the Past and Debts to the Future," State of the Commonwealth Message, Government of Puerto Rico, April 29, 2014, p. 15.

García Padilla's assessment of Oso Blanco emptied the penitentiary and its former staff and inhabitants of their agency, visibility, and significance. His words are a regrettable example of selective historical amnesia. For when Oso Blanco officially opened in May 1933, it already formed part of a City of Science, one undeniably shaped by United States colonialism but also powerfully defined by creole reformatory and creative impulses. García Padilla conveniently overlooked this earlier iteration of Puerto Rico's City of Science, as it did not support the narrative he wanted to promote. And while the Governor portrayed Oso Blanco as a scary and violent place, his estimation was based on the latter bookend, rather than a comprehensive understanding of, the penitentiary's history. As this study will show, not only were penitentiaries like Oso Blanco and the Dominican Republic's *Nigua* centers of raw hegemony and death, they also gave rise to complicated varieties of life, awakening, and consciousness. García Padilla eulogized Oso Blanco by staining its memory with half-truths. However, the institution was central to the production of citizenship, (un)freedom, and community formation, especially in the middle decades of the twentieth century.

This dissertation examines the social, cultural, and political histories of a pair of modern penitentiaries. Given the disparate trajectories of Oso Blanco and *Nigua* and the "truths" and "fictions" associated with these penitentiaries today, I seek to understand how and why the citizen- and community-producing, indeed redemptive, dream of rehabilitative corrections became a forgettable nightmare in two Caribbean societies under U.S. purview. While in Puerto Rico this rehabilitative dream lasted for a generation in contested fashion, in the Dominican Republic it barely materialized at all. In Puerto Rico, state officials and prison professionals offered convicts scientific, religious, and humanistic tools to realize secular healing. In the Dominican Republic, authorities largely hesitated to expose inmates to this trilogy for fear of a civic awakening of epic

proportions. To reduce the experience of incarceration to institutions or the customary orders of prisons would be a mistake, however, for Puerto Rican and Dominican convicts and their extended communities maintained bonds that transcended prison walls, the cities and rural areas shadowing Oso Blanco and Nigua, and even the Mona Passage itself.

To make this case, in the pages that follow I depend on a variety of sources to argue that despite historical and political differences, in mid-twentieth-century Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic penitentiary science and spirituality were powerful, complementary, and contradictory tools of redemptive practice. By redemptive practice, I mean (im)material approaches to improvement in (un)free, citizen-making, and communal contexts. While laboratory medicine and religion made for strange bedfellows in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, these two ways of knowing lent themselves to the construction of sanitary, conforming citizens on the one hand, and perpetual citizenship deficits and inequalities on the other. Penitentiary science and spirituality diverged in terms of content, but shared the scaffolding of performance.

As experiential reformatory enterprises, Caribbean penitentiaries and their cultures of care formed part of a sophisticated constellation of redemptive practices. This constellation spanned medical and social science, orthodox religiosities, heterodox medico-religiosities, humanistic self-help, and executive clemency. The distinction between medicine, social science, and humanities that prisoners did not control, for the most part, and religious epistemologies that they could and did, summarizes the “contest” between state power and convict volition at the core of this dissertation. Redemptive practices shaped the correctional imagination and responses to unequal power structures behind and beyond bars. They helped define the nature of the political systems in which they were embedded, and illustrated how positivist and sacred ideas attached to certain people by force and free will.

A Tale of Two Penitentiaries

At the turn of the twentieth century, Spain ceded its remaining colonies to the U.S. Governor Charles H. Allen and his deputies quickly learned that Puerto Rico had copied the prison blueprint of the peninsula. Thus, one of the first labors of the U.S. military government was to address “the reeking filthiness which made [the prisons] veritable pest holes.” Government officials sent mixed signals in this vein, however. *La Princesa* penitentiary in Old San Juan, for example, enjoyed “schools of mechanical trades” and was clean, but “as far as hygienic conditions and the moral formula are concerned,” did not fit “the purpose of effective correction.” Colonial authorities lamented the insufficient size of La Princesa, and that inmates were not adequately classified. They also trumpeted the need for cellular isolation, which would activate convict minds and free them of “distractions.”³ Over the next few years, the government observed the same progress and shortcomings. Governor William H. Hunt and his team subsequently noted that “The penitentiary is without an infirmary... The sanitary conditions...are very unwholesome... the floors are old, rough, and decayed.” Overcrowding and the lack of inmate classification doubled the task of discharging prisoners as “better men.” Colonial administrators hoped to address these problems through vocational education and structural repairs. They also called for the construction of a modern penitentiary.⁴ However, funds would not be allocated until 1923.⁵

Finally, in May 1933, Puerto Rico’s U.S.-appointed Governor, James R. Beverley of Texas, inaugurated the Insular Penitentiary at Río Piedras. During the spectacle, he and other officials

³ *First Annual Report of Charles H. Allen, Governor of Porto Rico* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1901), 84 and 406-407.

⁴ *Second Annual Report of the Governor of Porto Rico* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1902), 66, 73-75, and 316.

⁵ Picó, *El día menos pensado*, 29.

outlined the penitentiary's goals.⁶ These included "humanizing" punishment by replacing "indifference" with "regenerative treatment," and required that the island distance itself from its "unsanitary" and "promiscuous" Spanish past. U.S. and creole authorities envisioned Oso Blanco as a site of physical and mental rehabilitation where convicts would be "inculcated with healthy and moral habits" through a multidimensional, labor-intensive reform program. Agriculture, industry, education, medicine, social science, and religion formed the core of this project. The point was to civically inspire and return "useful citizens" to their families, their communities, and society at large free of "criminal inclinations." If the prison could stimulate "laboriousness" and "good conduct" in convicts, then chances were that they would eagerly submit to the law as imagined and enforced by the colonial democratic state.⁷

Several months later, in September 1933, Puerto Rico's Justice Department reiterated Oso Blanco's objective and outlined its methods. These were detailed in an institutional *Reglamento*, a series of rules and regulations meant to govern the penitentiary. Attorney General Charles E. Winter published the guidelines, in which he echoed what Beverley and others had underscored in their inaugural addresses. The rulebook stressed that Oso Blanco was a place for "physical and mental regeneration" where convicts would be (re)socialized with "healthy and moral habits." State authorities believed that scientific and spiritual education could save and send convicts home as "useful citizens." The *Reglamento* also established the procedures for inmate central booking and lodging; authorized convict movements within and beyond prison walls; specified their activities, responsibilities, labor assignments, and how they could accrue benefits; and classified

⁶ Government officials, prison authorities, and professional observers viewed the penitentiary as "modern," which to them meant a sturdy structure, sanitary facilities, the efficient use of space and land, self-sufficient and profitable institutional productivity, and the deployment of contemporary criminology. See "Fué inaugurada oficialmente la nueva Penitenciaría de Puerto Rico," *El Mundo*, 16 mayo 1933, portada, 11, and 16.

⁷ *Ibid.*

and distinguished between convict types. The product of a fascination with taxonomy, the rulebook also defined the duties of penitentiary authorities, from the warden and prison guards to professional staff. Several sections entrusted physicians, psychiatrists, social workers, religious officials, and humanistic educators with realizing the penitentiary mission.⁸

Indeed, decades before Governor García Padilla used the phrase “City of Science” to map Puerto Rico’s future, Oso Blanco already formed part of one. It was the capstone of a tri-institutional, interdependent medico-legal complex that also included a tuberculosis hospital and an insane asylum. The Chicago-based architectural firm Bennett, Parsons & Frost devised the original plans for Oso Blanco. This firm had co-spearheaded the “City Beautiful” movement, a reform philosophy of North American architecture and urban planning that flourished in the 1890s and early 1900s with the intent of introducing beautification and monumental grandeur in cities around the world. Bennett, Parsons & Frost sought to beautify urban San Juan through a new Capitol building, gardens, avenues, and a model penitentiary on the city’s edge. The firm was previously active in a similar capacity in other U.S. colonies, including the Philippines.⁹

In 1923, Bennett, Parsons & Frost and the Puerto Rican government consulted architect Louis F. Pilcher, who had modernized Sing-Sing penitentiary in New York State, to draft blueprints for the island penitentiary. Creole architect Francisco Roldán Martínó designed Oso Blanco the next year. Project contractor Antonio Higuera initiated construction in 1927, which lasted until 1933.¹⁰ Figure 1 below, dated January 1925, was their collective vision for the tri-

⁸ Departamento de Justicia, Oficina del Procurador General (Charles E. Winter), *Reglamento para el régimen y gobierno de la Penitenciaría de Puerto Rico en Río Piedras* (San Juan: Negociado de Materiales, Imprenta y Transporte, 1933), 5-27.

⁹ Alberto Ortiz Díaz, “The City and the Penitentiary: Urbanization and the Making of *Oso Blanco* in Río Piedras and San Juan, Puerto Rico, 1920-1940,” MA Report, Department of History, University of Texas-Austin, 2008.

¹⁰ See Gala Aguilera, “El Oso Blanco.”

institutional medico-legal complex. They modeled parts of Oso Blanco, specifically, after Sing-Sing, a penitentiary that throughout the course of its history has blended components of the Auburn, Philadelphia, and Elmira schools of penology.¹¹ Puerto Rico's Justice Department had assumed control of island prisons in 1917 and, according to Bureau of Prisons Chief Martín Ergui, took up the work of "reforming" and "democratically organizing" them.¹² When Oso Blanco finally opened in 1933, it served as a biosocial laboratory where the state and aspiring technocrats sought to manufacture healthy, smart, conforming citizens. This foray into U.S.-inspired prison reform on the island coincided with an imposition of U.S. citizenship, and established that when convicts exited penitentiaries like La Princesa and Oso Blanco, they would go home free of ailments and fit for civil society.

By midcentury, however, conditions at Oso Blanco had devolved and turned caliginous. Prisoners increasingly complained about the quantity and quality of food; hygienic and structural deficiencies; overcrowding; corruption and abuse; the lack of work opportunities; and inefficient services. To preserve the rehabilitative dream that characterized Oso Blanco when it opened, prison authorities moved into the social science phase of the penitentiary project in the 1940s. Their efforts included two major initiatives. In 1946, the island government and Justice

¹¹ Cellular confinement was implemented on American soil in the penitentiaries of Auburn, Sing-Sing, and Philadelphia in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. At Auburn, convicts were isolated at night but worked together during the day. They were forbidden to communicate with one another while working, eating, or in their cells. The Philadelphia system isolated each convict. Prisoners worked, ate, and slept alone. By the mid- and late nineteenth century, "progressive" classification developed out of England's colonial experiences in South Africa, Ireland, and Australia. The reformatory ideal now required inmate collaboration. In the U.S., the Elmira Reformatory became the model. It combined industrial work, cellular isolation, the Irish classificatory system, individual treatment, economic rewards, proto-parole boards, professional wardens, and elementary and religious education. Ricardo D. Salvatore and Carlos Aguirre, "The Birth of the Penitentiary in Latin America: Toward an Interpretive Social History of Prisons," in Salvatore and Aguirre, eds., *The Birth of the Penitentiary in Latin America: Essays on Criminology, Prison Reform, and Social Control, 1830-1940* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996), 6-7.

¹² See Martín Ergui, "Penal Institutions and Reform School," in Eugenio Fernández y García, et al., eds., *The Book of Porto Rico* (San Juan: Libro Azul Publishing Co., 1923), 279; and Ergui, "Puerto Rican Penitentiary," *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology (1931-1951)* 24, 6 (March-April 1934): 1118-20.

Department instituted the penitentiary Classification and Treatment Board.¹³ Physicians, psychiatrists, social workers, educators, and justice officials comprised the Board, which initially improved convict attitudes about societal reinsertion.

Subsequently, in 1949, Classification and Treatment Board officials authorized the production of an inmate magazine called *El Despertar* (The Awakening). This magazine symbolically paid homage to moral and humanistic education behind bars in New York State, where as early as 1908 prison authorities insisted that reformation began with:

...awakening the dormant moral sense, in causing the light of the intellect to shine. Stir in the offender the feeling of regret, repentance, remorse for his wrongdoing; revive in him self-respect; awaken the consciousness of the supreme authority, the inviolable majesty of the moral law, the absolute necessity of obedience to the eternal prohibitions and the categorical imperative, and the work of reformation has begun.¹⁴

Convict awakening in New York State was steeped in U.S. religious tradition, especially the “Great Awakenings” of colonial North America.¹⁵ While mostly under the creative direction of prison authorities and literate convicts, and therefore exclusionary, *El Despertar’s* message dovetailed with the objectives of Puerto Rico’s nascent colonial populist state. Above all, the new populist state wanted to make healthy and intelligent constituents out of *jíbaros* (salt-of-the-earth, rural

¹³ Picó, *El día menos pensado*, 176-77; and Pedro A. Vales, “El impacto de la libertad bajo palabra en la rehabilitación de confinados,” in *Primer ciclo de conferencias públicas sobre temas de investigación social* (Río Piedras: Centro de Investigaciones Sociales, Universidad de Puerto Rico-Río Piedras, 1969), 29.

¹⁴ See Prison Association of New York, *Sixty-Fourth Annual Report* (Albany: J. B. Lyon Co., 1909), 93.

¹⁵ “Great Awakenings” refer to the religious revivals defined by emotional public meetings, fiery preaching, and conversions that swept over the U.S.-American colonies between the second quarter of the eighteenth century and the early twentieth century. These awakenings stressed individuals’ roles in their own salvation, breathed new life into the Puritan notion of a democratic God, and emphasized that Americans would materialize God’s plan. They also underscored the importance of benevolent Christian communities in areas where other forms of belonging were lacking. See Carol Berkin, et al., *Making America: A History of the United States to 1877* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2001), 76, 164, and 227-29.

hillbillies), the urban poor, non-whites, and other subalterns leading perceived aimless and immoral lives.¹⁶



Figure 1: Bennett, Parsons & Frost, “Group Plan of the Proposed Manicomio & Presidio, Río Piedras, Porto Rico,” January 1925, Architecture and Construction Archive, University of Puerto Rico-Río Piedras.

¹⁶ On Puerto Rican *jibaros*, see Francisco A. Scarano’s classic essay, “The *Jíbaro* Masquerade and the Subaltern Politics of Creole Identity Formation in Puerto Rico, 1745-1823,” *The American Historical Review* 101, 5 (December 1996): 1398-1431.

El Despertar represented the apex of rehabilitation efforts in Oso Blanco. Its pages preserved “echoes” of penitentiary life and narrated the varied—including scientific and spiritual—ways in which convicts “awakened” from their collective civic inertia. This slumber was hard to pinpoint, however. Although Puerto Ricans became U.S. citizens in 1917 through the Jones Act, the island did not achieve “self-governing” commonwealth status until 1952. Even then, U.S. jurisdiction prevailed at the federal level, and this has been the case ever since. *El Despertar* was published on the eve of the colonial rearrangement of midcentury. In this context, to awaken meant to defy civic death by using the scientific, religious, humanistic, and legal tools provided by penitentiary personnel and the broader colonial state. These tools allowed convicts to sculpt themselves into sanitary citizens who would positively contribute to society upon release. Part of this implied that they would refrain from radically challenging the new political status quo. To awaken also meant to conform to the intellectual and behavioral standards of the prison and emerging populist state; in other words, to embrace a certain kind of political consciousness.¹⁷ As promising as *El Despertar* seemed, however, it did not last long. The October Revolution of 1950, an insurgency led by radical nationalists that spanned at least eight island communities and Oso Blanco, prompted penitentiary authorities to suspend rehabilitation activities and civic programming, including the production of *El Despertar*.¹⁸

¹⁷ By consciousness, I mean all that one is, thinks they are, and knows. To be conscious is to be self-aware and reason with reality. Inherent in this understanding is that not all that is perceived is real, and all that is “true” is not perceived. Making sense of this paradox requires, as Brazilian scholar Paulo Freire has argued, conscientization (i.e., strategic education that questions and challenges social and political contradictions). See Freire’s *Pedagogy of Freedom: Ethics, Democracy, and Civic Courage*, translated by Patrick Clarke (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998); and *Pedagogia do oprimido* (Rio: Paz e Terra, 1970). More recently in Latin American and Caribbean Studies, consciousness has been linked to (under)development, postcolonial identities, rights and activism, and the translation or undoing of dominance. For example, see Susan Eckstein, ed., *Power and Popular Protest: Latin American Social Movements* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Laura Lomas, *Translating Empire: José Martí, Migrant Latino Subjects, and American Modernities* (Durham: Duke, 2008); and Ella Shohat, *Race and Translation: Culture Wars around the Postcolonial Atlantic* (New York: NYU Press, 2012).

¹⁸ Several works underscore the nationalist insurrection of October 1950. See Nelson A. Denis, *War against All Puerto Ricans: Revolution and Terror in America’s Colony* (New York: Nation Books, 2015); and Miñi Seijo Bruno, *La*

Meanwhile, across the Mona Passage in the Dominican Republic, a different chronology and narrative prevailed. Since Spanish colonial times, punishment in Santo Domingo revolved around physical mistreatment, stocks, and ergastulums. The Haitian occupation of the early nineteenth century introduced the French tradition of legal rights to criminal justice in the Dominican Republic, but most prisons continued to exhibit authoritarian tendencies.¹⁹ Dominicans did not start to pursue their own model penitentiary, Nigua, until the first U.S. occupation of the country (1916-1924). In early 1919, the marine government ordered the construction of a national penitentiary in San Gregorio de Nigua, southwest of Santo Domingo near San Cristóbal, the birthplace of future dictator Rafael L. Trujillo Molina. Although the arrival of U.S. marines in 1916 did not end penal violence, some observers have claimed that the penitentiary system initially improved, only to wither again under Trujillo.²⁰

Like Oso Blanco, Nigua was also meant to turn the page from the “decadent” Spanish past. Contrary to its Puerto Rican sibling, however, Nigua formed part of another kind of City of Science, one that included an insane asylum and a leper colony.²¹ When construction on the penitentiary began, journalists reported that the new prison would “regenerate” and “morally reintegrate” those lost to “the shadows,” a euphemistic reference to both undesirable behavior and

insurrección nacionalista en Puerto Rico, 1950 (Río Piedras: Editorial Edil, 1997). It is important to note that nationalism was but one of several inspirations for insurgencies in island prisons at the time. For example, authorities were also concerned about communist influence, as evidenced by photographs of the Soviet hammer and sickle graffitied onto prison walls after a riot in early 1951. See Gobierno de Puerto Rico (133), Departamentos (6), Justicia-Penitenciaria (25 Fotos), Fundación Luis Muñoz Marín (San Juan).

¹⁹ Yadira Altagracia Hernández and Taurys Vanessa Guzmán Soto, “Estudio comparativo del modelo tradicional y el nuevo modelo de gestión penitenciaria,” Tesina por Licenciado en Derecho, Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo, 2010, p. 27-30; and Luis Brito, *Evolución histórica del sistema penitenciario en la República Dominicana* (Rep. Dom.: Editora Peña Nina, 2007).

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Brian Moran, “Prison Reform in the United States Navy and the Dominican Republic: The Military Occupation and Prisons, 1900-1930,” Doctoral Dissertation, Department of History, University of Illinois-Chicago, 2000, 177-79.

the purported isolation of the prison. Once completed, Nigua would be a “wise mixture” of the Philadelphia system and more communal carceral regimes.²² The marine government inaugurated the penitentiary in February 1922.²³ The next month colonial authorities dubbed it a “separate command.”²⁴ Although military discipline (through formation drills, cadence, and overall pace) marked the Oso Blanco experience, the institution itself was not an extension of the U.S. armed forces. In contrast, the U.S. and Dominican militaries administered Nigua.

Nigua was more “panoptic” than the rectangular Oso Blanco architecturally, as Figure 2 below suggests.²⁵ The Dominican penitentiary preceded Oso Blanco by 14 years, but lacked the universal individual cell design and facilities that distinguished its sibling east of the Mona Passage. Compared to Oso Blanco, which survived the twentieth century, Nigua lasted less than two decades. As historian Brian Moran notes, by 1924 Nigua had fallen into poor physical condition from overuse and overcrowding. Despite repairs, the structure continued to deteriorate.²⁶ In the 1930s, years that overlapped with the rise of Trujillo, Nigua became a violent place known more for violating the sanctity of convict bodies and claiming the lives of political dissidents than for rehabilitative or civic programming. The penitentiary closed in late April 1938 due to the

²² “Editorial: La Penitenciaría Nacional,” *Listín Diario*, 24 febrero 1919, 4.

²³ Moran, “Prison Reform in the United States Navy and the Dominican Republic,” 179.

²⁴ P. M. Rixey, General Order No. 15, March 24, 1922, expediente 29, legajo 76, IT: 1000977, Fondo Gobierno Militar Norteamericano (FGMN), Archivo General de la Nación (AGN).

²⁵ By panoptic, I mean panopticon, a central tower with radiating pavilions. This notion was conceptualized by Jeremy Bentham, a late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century jurist and penal reformer. He deemed the cell the center of the “fabrication of virtue.” The panopticon embodied the social, egalitarian, and moral vision of the state. Bentham’s comprehensive code impressed prison reformers across Latin America. See Salvatore and Aguirre, “The Birth of the Penitentiary in Latin America,” 6 and 18-19; Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, translated by Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1995); Robin Evans, *The Fabrication of Virtue: English Prison Architecture, 1750-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Janet Semple, *Bentham’s Prison: A Study of the Panopticon Penitentiary* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); and Miriam Williford, *Jeremy Bentham on Spanish America: An Account of His Letters and Proposals to the New World* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1980).

²⁶ Moran, “Prison Reform in the United States Navy and the Dominican Republic,” 277-78.

negative reputation it earned during its short lifespan.²⁷ In March 1940, however, Nigua reopened as a mental asylum.²⁸ As a hospital it continued to perform many of the same repressive functions, namely jailing and “treating” the political opposition. This led to calls for prison reform in the 1940s, some based on the model provided by Sing-Sing, but these were not heeded.²⁹ More broadly, Trujillo ordered the construction and/or renovation of more than 15 prisons during his rule.³⁰ He did not inaugurate a new national penitentiary until 1952.

When Trujillo inaugurated *La Victoria* penitentiary in August 1952, he touted its scientific design and infrastructure. The octagonal prison enabled the surveillance of inmates from a central point on an observation deck, and dedicated four pavilions to vocational workshops. These features complemented the “utilitarian” and “rehabilitative” goals of the institution, as did the prison laboratory, hospital, surgery room, dental area, and pharmacy. Staff classified convicts according to the precepts of “modern penitentiary science.” To achieve these ends Dominican authorities followed the blueprint of U.S. architect Alfred Hopkins, who believed that prisoner classification should be based on convicts’ “personal dispositions,” their “aptitude to learn,” and their potential for “corrigibility.” Hopkins also insisted that the location of penitentiaries in rural areas advanced the therapeutic process.³¹ Dominican political dissidents and others quickly saw Nigua in La

²⁷ Secretaría de Estado de Justicia, Educación Pública y Bellas Artes, “Clausuras de establecimientos penales,” *Memoria de la Secretaría de Estado de Justicia, Educación Pública y Bellas Artes* (Ciudad Trujillo: Ed. La Nación, 1939), 33.

²⁸ Congreso Médico Dominicano, *Memoria del Congreso Médico Dominicano del Centenario*, Volume III (Ciudad Trujillo: Editorial El Diario, 1945), 216.

²⁹ Leoncio Ramos, *Yo pasé un día en Sing-Sing y otros escritos*, edited by Wilfredo Mora (Santo Domingo: Pensamiento Criminológico Dominicano, 2001).

³⁰ Consult Abel Moreno Fernández, “El régimen legal penitenciario” (Santiago: Pontificia Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra, 2002). This number does not include the numerous institutions designed for women and children. For example, see Editorial, “Cárceles para mujeres,” *La Tribuna*, 9 agosto 1937, 2.

³¹ “Inauguran Penitenciaría Nacional en La Victoria,” *El Caribe*, 17 agosto 1952, 16. Historian Ryan Edwards has recently called for more analyses of prisons along natural environmental lines. He suggests that modern penitentiaries

Victoria, however. It was not until after Trujillo's death, in 1963, that President Juan Bosch authorized a pilot project for a "true" model penitentiary, an effort that took collaborating technocrats to the global south. But this rehabilitative dream did not last either.³²

A second U.S. occupation of the Dominican Republic (1965-1966) subsequently installed one of Trujillo's confidants, Joaquín Balaguer, in the presidency. This abruptly ended Bosch's penitentiary pilot project. Not until the turn of the twenty-first century did the Dominican Republic rediscover rehabilitative corrections.³³ Thus, Nigua is still better known for its political shortcomings than its scientific dimensions or cultural productivity. Despite the different trajectories of penitentiaries on both sides of the Mona Passage, historical memories of Nigua and Oso Blanco have revolved around legacies of violence. In Puerto Rico, however, fear and terror came to define the penitentiary by and large after midcentury. The colonial rearrangement of 1952, which resulted in a populist democracy "freely" associated with the U.S., played a major role in concealing the real and discursive violence increasingly unfolding behind bars. It was not until the 1970s and 1980s, years coinciding with high crime rates and the rise of Puerto Rico's *Ñetas*, that most vestiges of Oso Blanco's idealistic rehabilitative past were erased. Oso Blanco housed a

are connected to and interactive with their geographic environments. Rather than rehabilitation and rejuvenation through scientific incarceration, he insists that Argentine convicts rotted away in Ushuaia penal colony *because* of the prison. See Edwards' "An Ecology of Exile: Earth and Elsewhere in Argentina's Ushuaia Penal Colony, 1860-1960," Doctoral Dissertation, Department of History, Cornell University, 2016. As Bennett, Parsons & Frost's and Hopkins' respective approaches to penitentiary design in the Caribbean confirm, however, the notions that modern penitentiaries were close to nature and not as enclosed as we think were not novel concepts in the early and mid-twentieth centuries. Rather, they were common knowledge. Oso Blanco convicts, for example, moved between the Río Piedras complex as patients and laborers. Scientific rehabilitation *contributed* to the prison's fluidity instead of its isolation.

³² Bosch served time in Nigua in the 1930s. See Bernardo Vega, "Juan Bosch narra sobre su experiencia en una prisión en 1934," *Hoy*, 16 julio 2007, <http://hoy.com.do/juan-bosch-narra-sobre-su-experiencia-en-una-prision-en-1934/>. I will briefly return to his pilot project in this dissertation's Conclusion.

³³ This disrupts the timeline posed by several scholars who suggest that the era of rehabilitative corrections primarily spanned the middle two quarters of the twentieth century, roughly 1930-1980. See Greg Eghigian, *The Corrigible and the Incurable: Science, Medicine, and the Convict in Twentieth-Century Germany* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2015), 3; and David Garland, *The Culture of Control: Crime and Social Order in Contemporary Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 35-41.

steady stream of inmates until 2004. Authorities transferred the last handful of convicts to other prisons in 2007.³⁴



Figure 2: “Penitenciaría de Nigua,” Colección Alejandro Paulino, 1920-40, AGN.

U.S. Colonialism, Public Health, and Subject-Citizens

This dissertation engages multiple historiographies to bring the Hispanophone Caribbean into scholarly discussions about the role of incarceration in the development of colonial and national states, the production of citizenship, and cultures of health and healing. As they have examined the overlap between race, class, gender, and science in national and imperial settings, historians have also interrogated how disease and medicine shaped subtler processes of colonizing

³⁴ The Ñetas are a prisoners’ rights association and intellectual community; in some circles, they are considered a gang. On their emergence, see Picó, *El día menos pensado*, 151-54; Josué Montijo, *Los Ñeta* (Río Piedras: Centro de Investigaciones Históricas, Universidad de Puerto Rico-Río Piedras, 2011); and *Oso Blanco: Puerto Rico State Penitentiary*, directed by Ramiro Millán and Christian Suau, DVD, 82 mins., Miami: Ondamax Films, 2008.

and doctoring deviant bodies.³⁵ Scholar Ann Laura Stoler, for example, has illustrated the ways in which colonial and imperial relations helped create modern subjects and institutions.³⁶ Yet, reformatory institutions such as penitentiaries are understudied.³⁷ This dissertation contributes to these fields by using prisons to blur the boundaries between colonial and national societies.

As already noted above, U.S. fingerprints are all over Oso Blanco, Nigua, and even Cuba's *Presidio Modelo*.³⁸ Not only were these institutions imagined and founded under U.S. auspices, they relied on penal models emanating from the mainland. But the significance of the U.S. presence runs deeper than a perfunctory relation with the agents and designs of empire. As historian Alfred W. McCoy has observed, at the turn of the twentieth century instruments of modern state power, such as policing (and penitentiaries for that matter), were crucial to the U.S. pacification and political control of its newly acquired colonies. U.S. authorities and their creole collaborators relied on these institutions to entrench the priorities of empire within emerging colonial states.

³⁵ Nancy Leys Stepan, *The Hour of Eugenics: Race, Gender, and Nation in Latin America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991); Lilia Moritz Schwarcz, *The Spectacle of the Races: Scientists, Institutions, and the Race Question in Brazil, 1870-1930* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1999); Laura Briggs, *Reproducing Empire: Race, Sex, Science, and U.S. Imperialism in Puerto Rico* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Alejandra Bronfman, *Measures of Equality: Social Science, Citizenship, and Race in Cuba, 1902-1940* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2004); and Warwick Anderson, *Colonial Pathologies: American Tropical Medicine, Race, and Hygiene in the Philippines* (Durham: Duke, 2006).

³⁶ For instance, consult Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002 [2010]); and Stoler, ed., *Haunted by Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History* (Durham: Duke, 2006).

³⁷ Salvatore and Aguirre, eds., *The Birth of the Penitentiary in Latin America*; Picó, *El día menos pensado*; Pablo Piccato, *City of Suspects: Crime in Mexico City, 1900-1931* (Durham: Duke, 2001), ch. 8; Aguirre, *The Criminals of Lima and Their Worlds: The Prison Experience, 1850-1935* (Durham: Duke, 2005); and Juanita de Barros, et al., eds., *Health and Medicine in the circum-Caribbean, 1800-1968* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 1-18. A stream of scholarship on mental asylums is also emerging. For example, see Ann Zulawski, *Unequal Cures: Public Health and Political Change in Bolivia, 1900-1950* (Durham: Duke, 2007), ch. 5; Cristina Rivera Garza, *La Castañeda: narrativas dolientes desde el Manicomio General, 1910-1930* (México, D.F.: Tusquets, 2010); and Jennifer Lambe, "Baptism by Fire: The Making and Remaking of Madness in Cuba, 1857-1980," Doctoral Dissertation, Department of History, Yale University, 2014.

³⁸ The *Presidio Modelo* was the Cuban contemporary of Oso Blanco and Nigua. See Pablo de la Torriente Brau, *Presidio Modelo* (La Habana: Centro Cultural del autor, 1969 [2000]); and Julio César González Laureiro and Francisco García González, *Presidio Modelo: temas escondidos* (La Habana: Ediciones El Abra, 2001).

This influenced the formation of the American state, namely its internal security “capillaries.” Collaboration between metropole and colonies created the conditions for states to fortify themselves against unwelcomed change.³⁹ Caribbean penitentiaries, specifically, served as laboratories for health initiatives emanating from the U.S. and dedicated to shaping the production, meaning, and performance of local versions of ideal citizenship. For colonial and creole authorities alike, public health was a crucial tool in the (re)making of subject-citizens.

Historian Warwick Anderson has written perceptively about these issues in the colonial Philippines. He contrasts an “American sublime” with a “Filipino abject,” and traces the forms of bodily control that extended “colonial modernity” to Southeast Asia to show how the dissemination of U.S. medico-legal models entailed racializing “excretory habits” and pathologizing “exotic” embodiment practices. According to Anderson, U.S. scientists emphasized the personal hygiene of Filipinos more than environmental sanitation. Their obsession with Filipino waste rendered invisible the problems of economic exploitation and social disruption, even though these problems were largely to blame for the spread of disease.⁴⁰

In Anderson’s words, the American colonial project in the Philippines sought to produce a space for the “somatic disciplining,” control, and closure of “contaminated” Filipinos. Inspired by microscopic germs and their passage through humans, insects and environments, U.S. medical officers eagerly located, isolated, and disinfected native reservoirs and transmitters of disease. These efforts unfolded in laboratories, leading sites for the creation of a colonial state of mind and

³⁹ See Alfred W. McCoy, *Policing America’s Empire: The United States, the Philippines, and the Rise of the Surveillance State* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009), 16-18.

⁴⁰ Warwick Anderson, “Excremental Colonialism: Public Health and the Poetics of Pollution,” *Critical Inquiry* 21, 3 (Spring 1995): 644.

being. More than the army camp, the factory, or the school, in the Philippines the medical laboratory was the “exemplary locus of colonial modernity.”⁴¹

Laboratorial enterprise and the “magical” thinking behind it were not limited to the Philippines. They extended to all corners of the new American empire. As the U.S. occupied other territories, including Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, the laboratory became more specialized and intimate. It had a significant labor dimension and found a new home in the prison.⁴² Symbolically, these colonies were soiled American “toilets” requiring the extension of the boundaries of modern hygienic space.⁴³ Only if locals assented to the toilet and “disinfection” could they enter the “colonial kitchen.”⁴⁴ But before stirring the ladle and serving others, the colonized had to earn subject-citizen status all the while being “foreign in a domestic sense.”⁴⁵

In the case of Puerto Rico, some historians have called for a framework that recognizes the contested and multidirectional nature of colonial dynamics and that questions categories like “colonizer” and “colonized.”⁴⁶ However, this framework underestimates the fact that the U.S.

⁴¹ Anderson, “Excremental Colonialism,” 644 and 652. Anderson further develops his notion of colonial laboratories in *Colonial Pathologies*. He suggests the “well-ordered laboratory” became the “exemplary site for modern Filipino bodies and culture.” The archipelago itself was frequently characterized as a “laboratory of hygienic modernity.” American medical officers linked Filipino self-government to bodily and cultural change, and to the establishment of “hygienic identities in the colonial laboratory.” On the other hand, for Filipinos the laboratory was largely invisible, contested, or negotiated. See *Colonial Pathologies*, 3 and 5-6.

⁴² On the links between forced labor, incarceration, and U.S. imperialism in the Philippines, Panama, Louisiana, and the Pacific Northwest, see Benjamin Weber, “America’s Carceral Empire: Confinement, Punishment, and Work at Home and Abroad, 1865-1945,” Doctoral Dissertation, Department of History, Harvard University, forthcoming.

⁴³ Anderson, “Excremental Colonialism,” 658.

⁴⁴ Anderson, “Excremental Colonialism,” 661. For an interpretation of “cooking history,” one involving deliberate stirring and the anachronistic and strategic blending of different social worlds, see Stephan Palmié, *The Cooking of History: How Not to Study Afro-Cuban Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 29-30 and ch. 2.

⁴⁵ This is a reference to the U.S. Supreme Court Insular Cases, which dealt with the question of “unincorporated territories” like Puerto Rico. See Christina Duffy Burnett and Burke Marshall, eds., *Foreign in a Domestic Sense: Puerto Rico, American Expansion, and the Constitution* (Durham: Duke, 2001).

⁴⁶ Consult, for example, Ellen Walsh, “‘Advancing the Kingdom’: Missionaries and Americanization in Puerto Rico, 1898-1930s,” Doctoral Dissertation, Department of History, University of Pittsburgh, 2007; and Suset L. Laboy Pérez,

government imposed a second-class citizenship on the island that hindered any real challenge to the colonial paradigm for more than half a century.⁴⁷ While contemporary scholars may hunger to chronicle agency, for the historical actors of the mid-twentieth century categories like colonizer and colonized resonated with many Puerto Ricans, especially those trying to influence the island's evolving colonial situation.

Because categories like colonizer and colonized were ambiguous or rearranged did not make them irrelevant or inconsequential. Historian Solsirée del Moral's recent work on education in Puerto Rico, for example, examines how intermediaries like school teachers and parents borrowed and discarded from the U.S. colonial project to craft island educational policy. Though many intermediaries did not support Americanization per se, they embraced health standards that paralleled U.S. imperatives.⁴⁸ "Whitening" and "regenerating" students, and by extension the nation, promoted a local version of ideal citizenship. But this local citizenship did not entirely abandon the goals of empire. Local agency worked within imperial parameters.

Notwithstanding this "mimicry," Anderson's notion of a colonial laboratory through which U.S. officials and their creole collaborators tinkered with the customs, values, and identities of deviant or non-conforming "Others" is applicable to the modern Caribbean.⁴⁹ In this vein,

"Minor Problems: Juvenile Delinquents and the Construction of a Puerto Rican Subject, 1880-1938," Doctoral Dissertation, Department of History, University of Pittsburgh, 2014.

⁴⁷ Scholar Efrén Rivera Ramos shows that the extension of U.S. citizenship to Puerto Rico was an act of discursive violence. It "cannot be interpreted as anything but an imposition." Citizenship has become a crucial building block of the American colonial project in Puerto Rico and a major force in the constitution of experiences, social understandings, and images of the Puerto Rican nation. Consult Rivera Ramos, *American Colonialism in Puerto Rico: The Judicial and Social Legacy* (Princeton: Markus Wiener, 2007), 188-89.

⁴⁸ Solsirée del Moral, *Negotiating Empire: The Cultural Politics of Schools in Puerto Rico, 1898-1952* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2013).

⁴⁹ On colonial mimicry, see Homi K. Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," in *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 121-31. Bhabha claims that colonial mimicry is rooted in colonists' desires for a reformed, recognizable "Other," a subject that is almost the same as them but not quite. Mimicry also signals recalcitrance that coheres with colonialism, intensifies surveillance, and poses an imminent threat to both

penitentiaries functioned as laboratories concerned with not only disease and bodily contamination but also mentalities and social relations. Indeed, as historians Carlos Aguirre and Ricardo Salvatore have noted, in Latin America and the Caribbean the modern penitentiary functioned as a clinic and social laboratory. Modern penitentiaries validated new forms of authority, the classification of the lower classes, and the production of medico-legal knowledge about deviance.⁵⁰

Redeeming convict bodies and minds had broader implications, however. Historian José Amador, for instance, has shown that medical laboratories and public health initiatives with redemptive goals spanned the Western hemisphere.⁵¹ Tropical medicine in Puerto Rico, specifically, was a colonial technology that linked public health and the production of difference.⁵² It reproduced race, class, and gender differences while promoting the surveillance and discipline of a people that had subjection in common.⁵³ In this context, scientific penitentiaries like Oso Blanco and Nigua served as crucibles where liberal states across the political spectrum developed solutions for the contrived and shared problems of ailing cities and populations. Although such spaces and bodies were negatively impacted by disease and other factors, reimagined cities and scientific prisons represented two of several roads to collective and individual “regeneration.”⁵⁴

normalized knowledges and disciplinary powers. Thus, mimicry gives the colonial subject a partial presence, one that is dependent on the authoritative discourse itself. However, it functions as a “double vision which in disclosing the ambivalence of colonial discourse also disrupts its authority.”

⁵⁰ Salvatore and Aguirre, “The Birth of the Penitentiary in Latin America,” 8.

⁵¹ José Amador, *Medicine and Nation-Building in the Americas, 1890-1940* (Nashville: Vanderbilt, 2015), 1-14.

⁵² On the racial dimensions of tropical medicine in Puerto Rico, see Raúl Mayo Santana, et al., eds., *A Sojourn in Tropical Medicine: Francis W. O’Connor’s Diary of a Porto Rican Trip, 1927* (Río Piedras: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 2008), 76, 180-81, and 202.

⁵³ Nicole Trujillo Pagán, *Modern Colonization by Medical Intervention: U.S. Medicine in Puerto Rico* (Chicago: Haymarket, 2014), 16 and 28.

⁵⁴ Diego Armus, *The Ailing City: Health, Tuberculosis, and Culture in Buenos Aires, 1870-1950* (Durham: Duke, 2011); and Julia Rodríguez, *Civilizing Argentina: Science, Medicine, and the Modern State* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2006).

This dissertation's emphasis on the public health dimensions of incarceration enriches how scholars have traditionally conceptualized the prison. The theoretical impact of Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*, for instance, has inspired scholars of disparate world regions to consider prisons as arms of the state, relics of difference-making, and sites of convict agency.⁵⁵ While biopolitics and the clinic are important ways of narrating prisons, Foucault does not account for their colonial dimensions. What is more, convict experiences constantly spilled into other arenas of human life. Religiosity, the humanities, and executive clemency also determined convict routines and how they articulated self-improvement. Diverse intellectual communities generated unique and complementary models of consciousness that contributed to inmates' procurement of belonging, wholeness, and wellbeing. A mosaic of ideas and practices fashioned redemptive projects in the mid-twentieth century, inspiring thousands of Puerto Rican and Dominican convicts and their interlocutors to figure out ways to get by, better, and ahead.

The History of the Prison

The prison precedes the era of cross-Atlantic European expansion, and therefore Caribbean "antiquity."⁵⁶ Ancient, medieval, and early modern societies all built detention spaces (gaols) for lawbreakers. These included underground chambers, dungeons, isolation cells in monasteries and towers, rooms or holes in fortifications, and cellars in town halls. By and large, these forms of confinement functioned as transitory spaces. By the eighteenth century, however, exile, public shaming, fines, penal servitude, corporal discipline, and death sentences became more accepted

⁵⁵ Frank Dikötter and Ian Brown, eds., *Cultures of Confinement: A History of the Prison in Africa, Asia, and Latin America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007); and Mary Gibson, "Global Perspectives on the Birth of the Prison," *The American Historical Review* 116, 4 (October 2011): 1040-63.

⁵⁶ On the antiquity of the Caribbean, see Sidney W. Mintz, *Three Ancient Colonies: Caribbean Themes and Variations* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 2010).

and practiced types of punishment.⁵⁷ In the Spanish colonies, for example, the Inquisition especially leaned on religiously-inspired premodern forms of punishment, which convicts attempted to resist.⁵⁸

Between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, the custodial confinement of perceived deviants underwent a series of changes. As workhouses started mixing charity and discipline, prisons increasingly focused on labor extraction. And since reforming inmates gradually intervened on one's conscience, authorities sought to save people through religious instruction.⁵⁹ By the nineteenth century, routines defined workhouses: rising with the sun, cleaning, education, and work.⁶⁰ In the colonial Caribbean, forced labor pervaded prison culture from the outset. What is more, prisons transitioned societies from pre-emancipation to post-emancipation forms of punishment. The emphasis on work persisted, as did physical penalties, only now both were entangled with more "humane" approaches to organizing power, justice, and socioeconomic relations. Largely by design, more "rational" ways of normalizing control replicated preexisting (that is, pre-slave era and slave era) hierarchies and inequalities.⁶¹

⁵⁷ Edward M. Peters, "Prison Before the Prison: The Ancient and Medieval Worlds," in Norval Morris and David J. Rothman, eds., *The Oxford History of the Prison: The Practice of Punishment in Western Society* (New York: Oxford, 1995), 3-43; Guy Geltner, *The Medieval Prison: A Social History* (Princeton: Princeton, 2008); Jean Dunbabin, *Captivity and Imprisonment in Medieval Europe, 1000-1300* (New York: Palgrave, 2002); and Herman Roodenburg and Pieter Spierenburg, eds., *Social Control in Europe, 1500-1800* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2004).

⁵⁸ See Ana Schaposchnik, *The Lima Inquisition: The Plight of Crypto-Jews in Seventeenth-Century Peru* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2015), especially ch. 5.

⁵⁹ Pieter Spierenburg, *The Prison Experience: Disciplinary Institutions and Their Inmates in Early Modern Europe* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2007).

⁶⁰ Eghigian, *The Corrigible and the Incurable*, 4.

⁶¹ The scholarship on Brazil is especially rich. See Clarissa Nunes Maia, ed., *Historia das prisões no Brasil*, Volumes I-II (Rio: Rocco, 2009); Martha Knisely Higgins, *From Slavery to Vagrancy in Brazil: Crime and Social Control in the Third World* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1985); and Thomas H. Holloway, *Policing Rio de Janeiro: Repression and Resistance in a 19th-Century City* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993). On the Caribbean, see Diana Paton's *No Bond But the Law: Punishment, Race, and Gender in Jamaican State Formation, 1780-1870* (Durham: Duke, 2004); Consuelo Naranjo Orovio, "De la esclavitud a la criminalización de un grupo: la población de color en Cuba," *Op. Cit.* 16 (2005): 137-79; Reynaldo Ortiz Minaya, "From Plantation to Prison: Visual

Between the late eighteenth and early twentieth centuries, secular rehabilitative corrections emerged. This meant that convicts slowly learned how to police and sculpt themselves. Prison authorities became interested in knowing the temperament of convicts and encouraged them to atone for their crimes. As society had to be protected from danger, the new economy of punishment led to different kinds of incarceration, including the standard prison and the penitentiary. How convicts were managed advanced from retributive justifications to deterrence, which signaled the re-articulation of sin as crime. Prison reformers started believing that discipline, conflict resolution, and individualized treatment best prepared convicts to return to society.⁶²

Foucault chronicles this “transition” from confessional justice to technocratic corrections. The birth of the prison formed part of an epistemic shift in how societies understood and dealt with human knowledge and subjectivity in the wake of Western Enlightenment.⁶³ Foucault puts the prison at the center of the construction of modern societies, and depicts the institution as a “rational” and “total” form of discipline.⁶⁴ The penitentiary, specifically, created the delinquent as the subject of criminal science. Prison experts looked to science for answers about incarceration and human nature.⁶⁵ Those trained in the new sciences prognosticated how likely convicts were to

Economies of Slave Resistance, Criminal Justice, and Penal Exile in the Spanish Caribbean, 1820-1886,” Doctoral Dissertation, Department of Sociology, Binghamton University, 2014; Ortiz Díaz, “Race, Crime, and Incarcerated Labor Migrants”; and Scarano, “Congregate and Control: The Peasantry and Labor Coercion in Puerto Rico before the Age of Sugar, 1750-1820,” *Nieuwe West-Indische Gids/New West Indian Guide* 63, 1-2 (1989): 23-40.

⁶² Eghigian, *The Corrigible and the Incurable*, 4-5.

⁶³ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction, Vol. 1* (New York: Vintage, 1990), 139.

⁶⁴ This stance has since been criticized. Consult Garland’s *Punishment and Modern Society: A Study in Social Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990); and Edwards, “An Ecology of Exile.”

⁶⁵ By the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, criminal justice officials and experts grew more curious about the psychological makeup of convicts. Their lines of inquiry crystallized in the form of new academic subfields. They helped install and drew inspiration from criminology and psychiatry, for example, imagining convicts in opposition to the figure of the honest, obedient worker, and seeing them as “sick” and requiring assistance. This heralded the expansion of the human sciences in public affairs, what one scholar has called “the scientification of the social.” See Richard F. Wetzell, *Inventing the Criminal: A History of German Criminology, 1880-1945* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press,

relapse. They believed science revealed whether convicts could conform to social norms or control “genetic” inclinations. What Foucault calls the “carceral,” then, was the systemization of a reformatory ideal that constructed criminals and deviance all the while “correcting” them.⁶⁶

The births of the prison and clinic went hand in hand. Foucault understands both as biopolitical enterprises.⁶⁷ Analyzing how and with what effects science, medicine, and their practitioners impacted rehabilitative corrections is only part of the story, however. A narrow focus on biopolitics casts a reductive net in terms of how scholars approach the history of incarceration. It is not enough to excavate medical perceptions or practitioner relationships with convicts. The prison clinic offered a space to realize remedial interventions and establish the authority of scientific experts and their knowledge. Yet by only linking treatment and security, scholars fail to transcend the corrigible-incorrigible paradigm.⁶⁸

Since Foucault’s work on the biopolitics of prisons, social histories of incarceration have burgeoned. Over the past two decades, the study of crime and punishment in Latin America and the Caribbean has expanded. Historians concur that, having shed the Spanish colonial yoke, the political leaders, elites, and intellectuals of the newly independent nations of the region reimagined legal codes and institutions to validate modern liberal states. Those in high political power showed concern for the seeming insubmission of non-conforming groups, including former slaves,

2000); Eghigian, *The Corrigible and the Incorrigible*, 5-6; Aguirre, *The Criminals of Lima and Their Worlds*, ch. 2; and Robert Buffington, *Criminal and Citizen in Modern Mexico* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000).

⁶⁶ Salvatore and Aguirre, *The Birth of the Penitentiary in Latin America*, xi, 17, and 29; Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 271 and 294; and Eghigian, *The Corrigible and the Incorrigible*, 7-8.

⁶⁷ Biopolitics refers to scientific, medical, and administrative methods that “make it possible to analyze processes of life on the level of populations and to ‘govern’ individuals and collectives by practices of correction, exclusion, normalization, disciplining, therapeutics, and optimization.” See Thomas Lemke, Monica J. Casper, and Lisa Jean Moore, *Biopolitics: An Advanced Introduction* (New York: NYU Press, 2011), 5; Eghigian, *The Corrigible and the Incorrigible*, 12; and Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose, “Biopower Today,” *Biosciences* 1, 2 (2006):195-217.

⁶⁸ Eghigian, *The Corrigible and the Incorrigible*, 10 and 14.

workers, the poor, immigrants, women, and others. Emerging states tried to reform these groups, and in the process articulated ideal citizenships. Debates about crime and punishment proved a crucial arena for state-building and the development of nationalisms. They contributed to the recasting of preexisting (colonial) forms of social and legal power.⁶⁹

Criminal justice and corrections especially sought to regulate people in the service of national projects. The penitentiary made this and more possible. Latin American penitentiaries appeared in earnest in the nineteenth century. Their general aim, Salvatore and Aguirre contend, was to “eradicate the ruinous, unhealthful, inefficient, and inhumane jails that existed all over the region and to replace them with modern, ‘scientific,’ and rehabilitative institutions for transforming the criminal into an obedient, hardworking, law-abiding subject [or citizen].” The penitentiary served multiple purposes: to alert ruling elites about the “social question” and the risks it posed to export economies, to legitimate elite prejudices about difference, and to build new forms of authority (e.g., medical, professional, and technocratic). Latin American reformers embraced positivist criminological science; placed academic research facilities in prisons; enhanced the power of prison experts; generated criminal statistics; and induced changes in legislation.⁷⁰ These steps “humanized” convict treatment, and signaled that post-independence law reinvented old forms of punishment.

⁶⁹ See Paton, *No Bond But the Law*; Salvatore and Aguirre, *The Birth of the Penitentiary in Latin America*; Salvatore, Aguirre, and Gilbert M. Joseph, eds., *Crime and Punishment in Latin America: Law and Society Since Late Colonial Times* (Durham: Duke, 2001); and Sueann Caulfield, Sarah C. Chambers, and Lara Putnam, eds., *Honor, Status, and Law in Modern Latin America* (Durham: Duke, 2005). Also see fn. 61.

⁷⁰ Indeed, south of the U.S. border, efficient containment initially trumped the concern for reformation. The specificity of the early Latin American penitentiary experience distinguishes the region from Europe and North America. The discourses, policies, and institutions “invented” in the emerging global north for dealing with crime and punishment may have been adopted in Latin America, but were also transfigured. See Salvatore and Aguirre, *The Birth of the Penitentiary in Latin America*, ix, 1, 19, and 33-34.

While the historiography on crime and punishment in Latin America and the Caribbean has grown, several gaps remain. We know more about South America than Central America and the Caribbean.⁷¹ Further, few studies consider the intersection of race, belief, and punishment.⁷² In the Dominican Republic, studies about criminology are the norm.⁷³ And regarding Puerto Rico, although historian Fernando Picó has written a sweeping overview of island prisoners spanning two centuries and two empires (Spanish and U.S.), he does not fully account for how inmates engaged medicine, religion, and the humanities.⁷⁴ This dissertation focuses on these aspects. It examines the communities and cultures of care along the spectrum of science and belief that were vital to the making of states, (un)freedom, citizenship, and healing.

The literature on subalterns has sparked deep questions about crime and punishment in Puerto Rico. Historical approaches to the theme have either followed a structural line of analysis that focuses on the economy, or another model that zooms in on “ordinary” people. Historian Blanca Silvestrini, for example, has argued that high crime rates on the island have correlated with periods of political, economic, and social turbulence.⁷⁵ Other scholars have examined criminal ascription and agency. Sociologist Kelvin Santiago Valles, for instance, understands the creation of Puerto Rican criminals as a contested process linked to the rise of U.S. capitalism on the island through which colonial and creole officials outlawed the survival practices of the peasant

⁷¹ *Ibid*, xi and 14.

⁷² Bronfman, *Measures of Equality*; Fernando Ortíz, *Hampa afro-cubana: los negros brujos, apuntes para un estudio de etnología criminal* (Miami: New House Publishers, 1906 [1973]); and Reinaldo L. Román, *Governing Spirits: Religion, Miracles, and Spectacles in Cuba and Puerto Rico, 1898-1956* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2007).

⁷³ See Constancio Bernaldo de Quirós, *Criminología dominicana*, edited by Wilfredo Mora (Santo Domingo: Editora Búho, 2000); Mora, *Criminología y violencia urbana: un análisis de la criminología y de la violencia urbana en la República Dominicana* (Santo Domingo: Editora Búho, 2001); and Ramos, *Yo pasé un día en Sing-Sing*.

⁷⁴ Picó, *El día menos pensado*.

⁷⁵ Blanca Silvestrini, *Violencia y criminalidad en Puerto Rico, 1898-1973: apuntes para un estudio de historia social* (Río Piedras: Editorial Universitaria, 1980).

population. This guaranteed labor for emerging industries. But Puerto Rican workers challenged U.S. criminalizing efforts by continuing to live as they always had.⁷⁶

While many scholars continue to approach island crime and punishment through discourse analyses or narratives of control, in this dissertation I trace the correctional imagination and redemptive practices. Doing so reveals the ways in which incarceration experiences transcended prison walls, national borders, and the potentially nefarious designs of high power. In the middle decades of the twentieth century on both sides of the Mona Passage, multiaxial difference compromised the precarious hold of convicts and their communities on the legal and symbolic rights of citizenship and human dignity. However, by knowing the ledge prisoners and their extended networks not only endured despair, trauma, and legitimate punishment, they also innovated and pioneered. They mobilized to secure an elusive and increasingly illusory freedom. Like Foucault and others, I am concerned with how criminality, rehabilitation, and societal reintegration emerge as remedial problems that are primarily viewed and managed through medico-legal eyes and methods.⁷⁷ But I stretch my horizon beyond the clinic by looking to the pulpit and other convict communities inside and outside of the prison to disclose how science and spirituality redeemed convict bodies and souls.

Comparisons and Sources

This dissertation uses the comparative method to shed light on the intellectual histories of incarceration in two modern Caribbean societies. Comparative historical studies became well

⁷⁶ Kelvin Santiago Valles, *“Subject People” and Colonial Discourses: Economic Transformation and Social Disorder in Puerto Rico, 1898-1947* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994).

⁷⁷ Foucault, *Abnormal: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1974-1975* (New York: Picador, 2003); Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archeology of Medical Perception* (New York: Vintage, 1994); and Eghigian, *The Corrigible and the Incurable*, 11-12.

established in the late twentieth century. Scholarly interest in the relationship between the global and the local initially fueled the comparative turn. Studies about knowledge transfer and human experience in international context bore some of the earliest fruit in this regard. Yet, these studies largely left it to readers to compare historical processes and developments across space and time. Save for comparative slavery and emancipation studies, only recently has such an approach started to feature more prominently in histories of modern Latin America and the Caribbean.⁷⁸

With the emergence of transnational studies, it might seem that the comparative method is dead. Scholar Micol Seigel, for example, has argued that regarding race, comparative history has been shaped by “overtly political comparisons.” She adds, “Academic comparisons help make race, and they should be treated by historians of ideas and of racial construction not as methodological models but as subjects in their own right.”⁷⁹ But as historian Florencia Mallon pointed out well in advance of Seigel’s claims, what scholarship is not political?⁸⁰ To suggest that transnational history is somehow neutral because it adheres to “a range of social phenomena to be studied rather than the frame of the study itself” is to establish a false dichotomy. One need not crucify comparisons because they betray our expectations when this is true of virtually all fields of study and methods.

⁷⁸ An insightful comparative study that bridges the Mona Passage is Humberto García Muñiz, *Sugar and Power in the Caribbean: The South Porto Rico Sugar Company in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, 1900-1921* (Miami: Ian Randle, 2010). Key comparative slavery and emancipation studies include: Manuel Moreno Friginals, Frank Moya Pons, and Stanley L. Engerman, eds., *Between Slavery and Free Labor: The Spanish-Speaking Caribbean in the Nineteenth Century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985); Seymour Drescher, *From Slavery to Freedom: Comparative Studies in the Rise and Fall of Atlantic Slavery* (New York: NYU Press, 1999); David Brion Davis, “Looking at Slavery from Broader Perspectives,” *The American Historical Review* 105, 2 (April 2000): 452–66; Rebecca J. Scott, *Degrees of Freedom: Louisiana and Cuba after Slavery* (Cambridge: Belknap, 2005); and Engerman, *Slavery, Emancipation, and Freedom: Comparative Perspectives* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 2007).

⁷⁹ Micol Seigel, “Beyond Compare: Comparative Method after the Transnational Turn,” *Radical History Review* 91 (Winter 2005): 63.

⁸⁰ Florencia E. Mallon, “Time on the Wheel: Cycles of Revisionism and the ‘New Cultural History,’” *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 79, 2 (May 1999): 331-53.

As Mallon has argued, comparative history *is* transnational history and vice versa. Comparative studies make systematic comparisons. They entail a side-by-side presentation of seemingly distinct cases, emphasize parallel developments, and make shared, connected, or crossed histories fathomable. While comparison and transfer studies were *the* methods of choice in the 1990s, transnational and entangled histories have since become standard. The latter challenge single-country studies, the reification of national borders, and notions of center versus periphery, east versus west, traditional versus modern, and so on.⁸¹ Transnational studies upend such binaries and focus on the (dis)connections and relationships that mutually shape at least two places or societies at the same time. They juxtapose objects of study from different fields or traditions to bring new understandings into view.⁸² Given the promise of both comparative and transnational studies, my analysis starts from a simple premise. Since the beginning of their respective histories, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic were roughly comparable. This is not to suggest that I achieve an equal comparison, however, for perfectly symmetrical comparisons are impossible.⁸³ Still, as the chapters that follow make clear, notable intersections bind the histories of Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic in expected and unexpected ways.

Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic are (dis)connected by converging and diverging historical conjunctures. Overlap dates to the pre-colonial period, when Arawak-Taíno peoples

⁸¹ The historical literature is too vast to cite here, as it spans multiple subfields, but some contributions include: Seigel, “Beyond Compare”; Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmerman, “Beyond Comparison: *Histoire Croisée* and the Challenge of Reflexivity,” *History and Theory* 45, 1 (February 2006): 30-50; Sloan Mahone and Megan Vaughan, eds., *Psychiatry and Empire* (New York: Palgrave, 2007); Waltraud Ernst, “Beyond East and West: From the History of Colonial Medicine to a Social History of Medicine(s) in South Asia,” *Social History of Medicine* 20, 3 (October 2007): 505-24; and Ernst and Thomas Mueller, eds., *Transnational Psychiatries: Social and Cultural Histories of Psychiatry in Comparative Perspective, c. 1800-2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010).

⁸² Heidi Tinsman, *Buying into the Regime: Grapes and Consumption in Cold War Chile and the United States* (Duke: Durham, 2014), 9-13, 16, and 22.

⁸³ See Mallon, *Peasant and Nation: The Making of Postcolonial Mexico and Peru* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), xvii-xviii; and Steve J. Stern, *The Secret History of Gender: Men, Women, and Power in Late Colonial Mexico* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1995), chs. 9-12.

occupied the lands bordering the Mona Passage (see Figure 3 below). Migration, political alliances, sport, and sophisticated earthenware defined this area.⁸⁴ Mona Passage communities shared similarly organized chiefdoms and embraced the same spiritual artifacts and practices, creating an interisland cultural sphere.⁸⁵ During the early modern period, the indigenous peoples of the Mona Passage endured denigration, forced labor, and resisted the Spanish.⁸⁶ The subregion also witnessed the emergence of the earliest sugar plantations and slave rebellions in the New World.⁸⁷

When the Spanish discovered mineral-rich Mexico and the Andes, the Mona Passage became a colonial backwater. With the rapid decline of Taínos and sugar production in the sixteenth century, the Spanish Crown invested in imperial defense fortifications spanning San Juan, Santo Domingo, la Habana, and elsewhere.⁸⁸ Colonial authorities and settlers established unfenced, extensive grazing lands for cattle (*hatos*) on military garrison frontiers. Further inland enclosed cattle farms (*corrales*) and thousands of smaller farms for raising crops (*estancias* and *conucos*) dotted the landscape.⁸⁹ By the seventeenth century, along the unsettled coastlines and

⁸⁴ L. Antonio Curet, “The Earliest Settlers,” in Scarano and Palmié, eds., *The Caribbean: A History of the Region and its Peoples* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 53-67.

⁸⁵ By the early modern period, religious beliefs and *cemí* idols served a new purpose: fueling conflict between Spaniards and Taínos. *Cemís* are portable artifacts and embodiments of persons or spirits, which the Taínos and other indigenous groups of the pre-colonial Greater Antilles regarded as numinous beings with supernatural or magic powers. See José R. Oliver, *Caciques and Cemí Idols: The Web Spun by Taíno Rulers between Hispaniola and Puerto Rico* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2009), xiii-xviii and 3-5.

⁸⁶ Lynne A. Guitar, “Negotiations of Conquest,” in Scarano and Palmié, eds., *The Caribbean*, 115-29.

⁸⁷ Stephan Palmié, “Toward Sugar and Slavery,” in Scarano and Palmié, eds., *The Caribbean*, 134-37; and Jalil Sued Badillo, “From Taínos to Africans in the Caribbean,” in Scarano and Palmié, eds., *The Caribbean*, 109.

⁸⁸ Josep M. Fradera, “The Caribbean between Empires: Colonists, Pirates, and Slaves,” in Scarano and Palmié, eds., *The Caribbean*, 166-72; Scarano, “Imperial Decline, Colonial Adaptation: The Spanish Islands during the Long 17th Century,” in Scarano and Palmié, eds., *The Caribbean*, 177-89; and Alejandro de la Fuente, *Havana and the Atlantic in the Sixteenth Century* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2008).

⁸⁹ Scarano, “Imperial Decline, Colonial Adaptation,” 177-89.

deeper in “the bush,” piracy, contraband, maroon communities, proto-peasantries, and the remnants of indigenous groups predominated.⁹⁰



Figure 3: Map of Hispaniola and Puerto Rico, with the Mona Passage emphasized; adapted from Scarano and Palmié, eds., *The Caribbean* [2011].

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the trajectories of Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic diverged. Peasantries specific to each place surfaced.⁹¹ With the Haitian Revolution, Cuba and Puerto Rico became the new pearls of sugar production in the Caribbean, supplanting Saint Domingue and Jamaica.⁹² Meanwhile, Haiti’s and Santo Domingo’s national futures increasingly merged. Although Santo Domingo separated from Spain during the wars of

⁹⁰ Isaac Curtis, “Masterless People: Maroons, Pirates, and Commoners,” in Scarano and Palmié, eds., *The Caribbean*, 149-61; and Scarano, “Imperial Decline, Colonial Adaptation,” 177-89.

⁹¹ See, for example, Scarano, “The *Jibaro* Masquerade”; Roberto Cassá, “El campesinado dominicano,” *Boletín del Archivo General de la Nación*, 30, 112 (mayo-agosto de 2005): 213-61; Raymundo Manuel González de la Peña, “La figura social del montero en la formación histórica del campesinado dominicano,” *Clío* 74, 168 (julio-diciembre de 2004): 75-96; Lauren Derby, *The Dictator’s Seduction: Politics and the Popular Imagination in the Era of Trujillo* (Durham: Duke, 2009), 13; and Richard L. Turits, *Foundations of Despotism: Peasants, the Trujillo Regime, and Modernity in Dominican History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), ch. 1.

⁹² Christopher Schmidt Nowara, *Empire and Antislavery: Spain, Cuba, and Puerto Rico, 1833-1874* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1999).

independence, Haiti annexed its Dominican neighbor in 1822 and ruled there until 1844.⁹³ The Spanish protected Santo Domingo from Haiti between 1861 and 1865. After liberating themselves again, Dominicans entered a period of flux defined by clashes between former allies, frequent regime change, and *junta* rule.⁹⁴ Hispaniola's nineteenth-century tensions blurred Dominican links to other parts of the Caribbean, namely Puerto Rico, and this despite exchanging political refugees like Ramón Emeterio Betances, Eugenio María de Hostos, and José María Serra.⁹⁵

In the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, both Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic were drawn into the U.S. imperial orbit.⁹⁶ Puerto Rico's relationship with Spain ceased, and its connection to the U.S. evolved from spoil of war to territory to second-class citizenship to associated state over the first half of the twentieth century. Thousands of Puerto Ricans settled in the Dominican Republic between empires, establishing communities and clubs and working in the banana and sugar industries.⁹⁷ In the Dominican Republic, interaction with the U.S. was more concentrated but just as colonial. An American firm took over Dominican debt in 1892 and the

⁹³ Frank Moya Pons, *La dominación haitiana, 1822-1844* (Santiago: Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra, 1973). Some scholars insist the two sides clashed through midcentury. Consult Alberto Despradel and Miguel Reyes Sánchez, *La guerra dominico-haitiana: las cinco campañas de separación, 1844-1856* (Santo Domingo: Ediciones Senderos del Mundo, 2011).

⁹⁴ Ulises Heureaux's presidencies in the 1880s and 1890s offered some stability, but by the early twentieth century political instability reemerged.

⁹⁵ See Vivian Quiles Calderín, ed., *República Dominicana y Puerto Rico: Hermandad en la lucha emancipadora, correspondencia 1876-1902* (Río Piedras: Instituto de Estudios Hostianos, 2001), 13-32; and José María Serra, *Apuntes para la historia de los Trinitarios* (Santo Domingo: Editora de Colores, 1998), 64. On Dominican Máximo Gómez's contributions to the Cuban wars of independence from Spain, see Ada Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation, and Revolution, 1868-1898* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1999).

⁹⁶ On Dominican-U.S. relations in the late nineteenth century, see Ellen Davies Tillman, "Imperialism Revised: Military, Society, and U.S. Occupation in the Dominican Republic, 1880-1924," Doctoral Dissertation, Department of History, University of Illinois-Urbana Champaign, 2010. Also see Derby, *The Dictator's Seduction*, 14 and 16-17.

⁹⁷ Carmelo Rosario Natal, *Exodo puertorriqueño: las emigraciones al Caribe y Hawaii, 1900-1910* (Río Piedras: Editorial Edil, 1983 [2001]), 16-44; Sebastián Robiou Lamarche, "Las migraciones puertorriqueñas a Santo Domingo," *Revista Domingo, El Nuevo Día*, 30 mayo 1999, 17; and Teresita Martínez Vergne, *Nation and Citizen in the Dominican Republic, 1880-1916* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2005), 88.

U.S. assumed control of customs houses there in 1905, maintaining fiscal hegemony until 1941.⁹⁸ U.S. intervention between 1916 and 1924 impacted the country for decades to come. Marines disarmed the population; inspired peasant insurgencies; contributed to the foundation of a centralized state; pursued a major public works agenda; and established the professional police force and army through which Trujillo began his career.⁹⁹ Not until 1965 did the U.S. intervene again, this time due to Cold War posturing and the threat of communism in “America’s lake.”¹⁰⁰

To demonstrate the convergences and divergences between Puerto Rican and Dominican incarceration in the twentieth century, I depend on a range of underutilized sources from archives, libraries, and other institutions. Specific materials include: inmate files and parole records; reams of medical, psychiatric, and social work correspondence and notes; the academic journals of the time; clemency petitions; private letters written by convicts, their families, and members of their extended networks; institutional publications; and government reports. These collections also contain photographs that offer visual evidence of penitentiary routines and redemptive techniques. Further, I worked with the mainstream and religious press, art and literature, published medico-legal studies from the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, memoirs, audiovisual sources, and current Puerto Rican and Dominican scholarship on crime and punishment and health and healing. Finally, I spent time in penitentiaries (or their ruins), exploring them as much as gatekeepers

⁹⁸ Derby, *The Dictator’s Seduction*, 17-19. Martínez Vergne argues that the U.S. presence motivated Dominican elites to become more nationalist in their collective outlook. See *Nation and Citizen in the Dominican Republic*.

⁹⁹ See Bruce Calder, *The Impact of Intervention: The Dominican Republic during the U.S. Occupation of 1916-1924* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984); Stephen M. Fuller and Graham A. Cosmas, *Marines in the Dominican Republic, 1916-1924* (Washington D.C.: History and Museums Division, Headquarters of the U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Govt. Printing Office, 1974-75); Roberto Cassá, *Historia social y económica de la República Dominicana* (Santo Domingo: Editora Alfa y Omega, 2006); Humberto García Muñiz, “Sugar Land and *Gavillero* Warfare in the Eastern Dominican Republic: The Case of Central Romana, 1910-1924,” *Historia y Sociedad* 12 (2000-2001): 3-47; and María Filomena González Canalda, *Los gavilleros, 1904-1916* (Santo Domingo: Archivo General de la Nación, 2008).

¹⁰⁰ Eric Thomas Chester, *Rag-Tags, Scum, Riff-Raff, and Commies: The U.S. Intervention in the Dominican Republic, 1965-66* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2001).

permitted and linking my own experiences to historical documents and events that occurred decades ago in these spaces.

It is important to note that, overall, I did not have access to the same sources in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. Incarceration is a more controversial topic in the Dominican Republic given the legacies of dictatorship and penology there. Indeed, a narrative of political violence prevails and it is in the current state's interest to maintain the truths and fictions surrounding incarceration under Trujillo. This is visible in everything from archival access to the nature of preserved oral histories, which tend to emphasize political violence. While in Puerto Rico political violence also characterized incarceration, it happened under democratic rule and the island remains a colony. The government has had success in silencing nationalist opposition and normalizing U.S. rule. Researchers have more fluid access to relevant data, but the theme of incarceration tends to be overlooked in favor of more "productive" avenues of inquiry.

My methodology allows us to grasp what made Puerto Rican and Dominican penitentiaries similar and different. Doing so reveals the tensions within each polity while inviting us to reflect on the array of contexts, structures, and agency that framed prison experiences in both societies. Comparing Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic can also transcend the divide between colony and nation without discarding the political and cultural integrity that defines each. This comparative axis challenges the Cuban monopoly on modern Caribbean history. It belies the fixity of national and imperial difference in the region by blending Puerto Rico, for example, into Latin American history instead of assuming its place is in American or Diaspora studies.

But were convicts a community of consequence? How many convicts are we even talking about? Between the 1920s and 1950s, thousands of convicts filled Puerto Rican and Dominican prisons. This means that tens of thousands of people inhabited the collective circumference of

convicts at any given moment (e.g., family, spiritual advisors, and other extended communities, not to mention prison personnel and government officials). Figure 4 below, extracted from the Annual Reports of the Attorney General of Puerto Rico, indicates how many convicts served time in Oso Blanco and other island prisons between 1923 and 1956, save for certain years I could not locate in time. The gestation, birth, and childhood of the modern penitentiary in Puerto Rico (mid-1920s to late 1930s) coincided with population growth, sophisticated justice infrastructure, high crime rates, and a steady increase in the total number of convicts.¹⁰¹

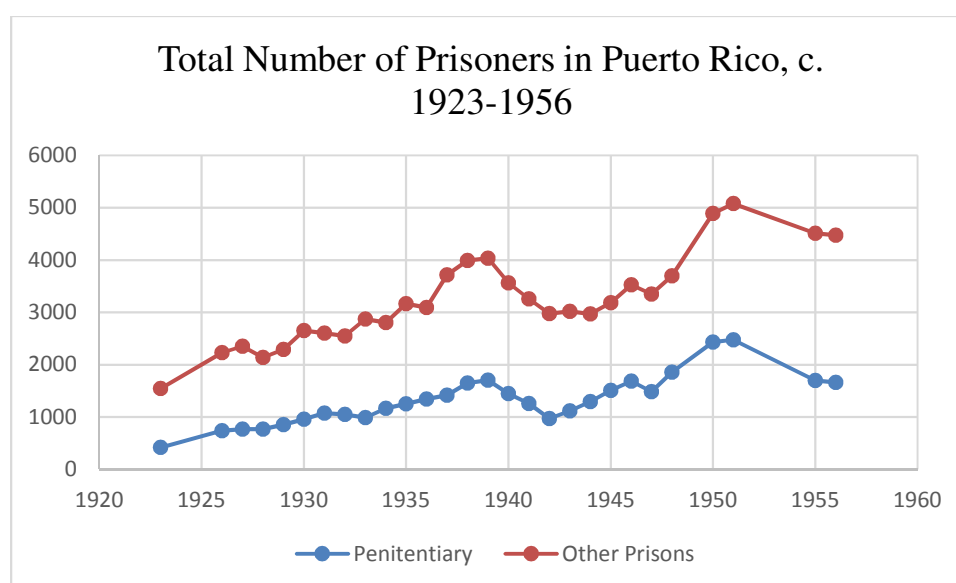


Figure 4: Total Number of Prisoners in Puerto Rico’s Penitentiaries and other Island Prisons (including district jails, youth institutions, and agricultural penal colonies), c. 1923-1956; adapted from *Reports of the Attorney General of Porto/Puerto Rico*, AGPR.

With World War II, compulsory military service, and the prison crises of the early 1940s, these numbers decreased. The total number of prisoners generally recovered by the end of World War II in light of improvements in prison infrastructure, the political turbulence of midcentury, and in anticipation of commonwealth status in 1952. These latter patterns overlapped with the island “Gag Law,” which targeted island nationalists, communists, and other fringe groups

¹⁰¹ See Santiago Valles, “*Subject People*” and *Colonial Discourses*.

between 1948 and 1957. The consolidation of PPD power in 1952 prompted another decline in the total number of convicts, partly because of major outmigration to the U.S. mainland and the fact that Governor Luis Muñoz Marín believed, to a degree, in making a constituency out of convicts.¹⁰²

A numerical profile is one thing, however. How do we measure convict redemption, specifically? For the case of Puerto Rico, parole statistics offer a cursory answer to this question. Parole was a means to freedom, a process to which convicts had to conform if they were ever to shed civic death and reenter society; they primarily did so by petitioning for the restoration of their “political rights” several years after being released. Puerto Rican authorities revamped the island Parole Board in April 1946 to grant paroles and supervise released parolees. The Board also monitored all persons conditionally pardoned by the Governor. The government’s experimental approach to parole before 1946 suggests that the state definition of redemption was an inexact science.¹⁰³ When the Puerto Rican state settled on a uniform policy, the number of parolees increased significantly. Figure 5 below shows how many prisoners earned or were denied state-sanctioned parole for the years 1947-1956. When the Parole Board started its work, its numbers fluctuated. This is to be expected of a nascent institution. But as the Board stabilized, its numbers

¹⁰² In the Dominican Republic under U.S. rule and subsequent governments, documentary and anecdotal evidence suggests similarly fluctuating rates of incarceration. Moran notes that during the U.S. occupation and slightly thereafter the country’s prison populations ranged between a few dozen or a hundred at regional institutions to more than a thousand and as high as 1,500 at Nigua. Moran, “Prison Reform in the United States Navy and the Dominican Republic,” ch. 4. Political prisoner Juan Isidro Jimenes Grullón estimated a few thousand convicts occupied Nigua and Ozama in the mid-to-late 1930s. See *Una gestapo en América*, Quinta edición (Santo Domingo: Editora Montalvo, 1948 [1962]). The Attorney General of the Dominican Republic reported that in the mid-1940s, between 2,000 and 2,400 convicts occupied more than 20 island prisons. By the mid-1950s, the total number of convicts increased to between 2,500 and 3,000. See *Memorias de la Procuraduría General de la República* (1943-1945 & 1953-1954).

¹⁰³ Prior to 1946, parole and executive clemency formed part of the same legal process. Between 1933 and 1940, parolees and amnesty recipients numbered between a dozen and a few dozen per year. In July 1940, the island government established the Advisory Parole and Pardon Board through Act 29. This Board included the Attorney General, a judge representing the San Juan District Court, the president of the Puerto Rico Bar Association, the Chief of the Social Welfare Bureau of the Department of Health, and a psychiatrist. The new system assured “paroles and pardons will be handled more systematically and humanely.” In its first full year, this proto-version of the Parole Board reviewed 633 cases and paroled 162 convicts; 212 were denied. These numbers remained relatively constant through 1946. See *Report of the Attorney General to the Governor of Puerto Rico for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1940*, p. 40. Also see the *Reports* for the years 1941-1945; and Picó, *El día menos pensado*, 176.

increased modestly, then spectacularly, before decreasing after the establishment of the U.S.-Puerto Rico commonwealth pact in 1952.¹⁰⁴

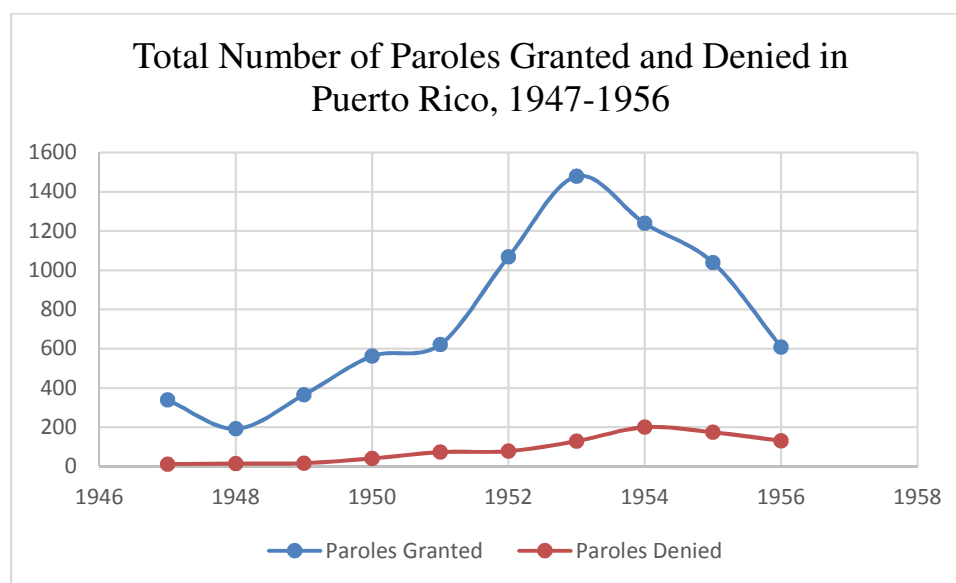


Figure 5: Total Number of Paroles Granted and Denied in Puerto Rico, 1947-1956; adapted from *Reports of the Attorney General of Puerto Rico, AGPR*.

Several factors explain the growth and decline. Initially, there was a backlog of convicts. Therefore, it took some time to work through outstanding cases. The increase in parolees between the late 1940s and early 1950s also coincided with waves of soldiers returning to Puerto Rico from theaters of war only to find few economic opportunities. Some of these individuals fell into petty crime, served their sentences, and were scheduled for release around midcentury. Concurrently, many convicts pending release aspired to migrate to the U.S. mainland, where they planned to join their families in growing diaspora communities. Then, there were the prison reforms of the late 1940s, which were meant to counter problems like overcrowding. Further, it is important to note that at least some parolees supported the populist government. This may have earned them an early exit from prison. The colonial rearrangement of 1952 contributed to the increased number of

¹⁰⁴ Picó estimates that between 1949 and 1953, the Board released 75 percent of parole seekers. See *El día menos pensado*, 177.

parolees as well. The political turbulence of the era forced the state to act to save face, which is to say that some parolees were likely political dissidents. Indeed, 1952 marked the beginning of a downward parole trend as the state started to invest more of its resources and energy elsewhere, especially the island economy through Operation Bootstrap.¹⁰⁵

Cumulatively, this dissertation's sources communicate far more than a perceived set of facts about crime and punishment. Additional layers of the convict experience are buried in the sources, including their familial and communal life, their beliefs, and the varieties of science and humanistic activity they laid claim to behind bars. The coexistence of these different intellectual spheres form the core of this study. Assessing them disrupts the narratives of control, inhumane conditions, and unequal treatment that scholars tend to emphasize when contemplating the prison. Tracing intersections also allows me to use institutional history to transcend prison walls. This shows how penitentiaries, the processes of reform, parole and clemency, and the production of individual and collective consciousness were central to populist political projects, the normalization of sensationalized difference, and the performance of the law, science, and belief.

Layers of "Intersectionality"

This dissertation also builds on the scholarly literature that uses "intersectionality" to explain historical process and change. Several historians of the Americas have leaned on intersectionality to shed light on race, class, gender, and sexuality and their roles in the making of

¹⁰⁵ Although justice officials claimed that the drop in the number of convicts released in 1956 was because the Board felt compelled to limit the granting of paroles to only those who "can make a satisfactory readjustment with a lesser measure of supervision," the reduction was in fact symptomatic of not only this but also the issues I mention above. From 1955 to 1959, the Board granted parole to 54 percent of applicants. Between 1960 and 1965, the number of parolees fluctuated between 576 and 716. By the 1970s and 1980s, the Puerto Rican government appears to have lessened its commitment to rehabilitation. See Free Associated State of Puerto Rico, Department of Justice, *Annual Report of the Secretary Justice for the Year Ending 30 June 1956* (San Juan: Servicio de Compra y Suministro, División de Imprenta, 1961), 121; Picó, *El día menos pensado*, 177; and Vales, "El impacto de la libertad bajo palabra en la rehabilitación de los confinados," 31.

nations and other forms of community. The strength of intersectional analysis is that it acknowledges that multiple human experiences and perceptions of experience coexist. For example, several scholars have demonstrated the heterogeneity of women's experiences by employing an analysis of race *and* gender.¹⁰⁶ Others have shown that the intersection of multiple identity markers *with* race, such as class, gender, skin color and geography, produced difference *within* black communities.¹⁰⁷

Recent crime and punishment studies have not deviated much from this script. A collection of essays on the construction and contestation of social control, for example, understands criminal intersectionality in terms of identity politics, as expected.¹⁰⁸ Similarly, I use intersectional framing to incorporate historically marginalized actors into the overlapping histories of state formation and incarceration. But I seek to stretch the limits of intersectionality by tracing how the concept works beyond race, class, and gender identities. To transcend narratives of victimization and extraordinary individualism, to showcase the palimpsest of medicine(s), death and awakening, and redemption, I consider several dialectical relationships. Specifically, this dissertation zooms in and out of three layers of intersections beyond the one around which the entire study revolves: (un)freedom. The other three layers are science and religion, democracy and dictatorship, and common and political imprisonment.

¹⁰⁶ For example, see Sueann Caufield, *In Defense of Honor: Sexual Morality, Modernity, and Nation in Early-Twentieth Century Brazil* (Durham: Duke, 2000); Eileen Suárez Findlay, *Imposing Decency: The Politics of Sexuality and Race in Puerto Rico, 1870-1920* (Durham: Duke, 2000); and Putnam, *The Company They Kept: Migrants and the Politics of Gender in Caribbean Costa Rica, 1870–1915* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2002).

¹⁰⁷ For instance, consult Kevin Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1995); Michele Mitchell, *Righteous Propagation: The Politics of Racial Destiny after Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2004); and Martin A. Summers, *Manliness and Its Discontents: The Black Middle Class and the Transformation of Masculinity, 1900-1930* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2004).

¹⁰⁸ Luz E. Huertas, Bonnie A. Lucero, and Gregory J. Swedberg, eds., *Voices of Crime: Constructing and Contesting Social Control in Latin America* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2016), especially the Conclusion.

First, I engage the complicated relationship between science and religion. As scholar Thomas Dixon suggests, how knowledge is made, disseminated, and acquired is central to the science-religion dyad. Social, political, and ethical contexts help shape the tensions between the two. Dixon claims that the modern conflict between evolution and creationism, for example, is quintessentially an American phenomenon, arising from the culture and history of the U.S.¹⁰⁹ This legacy permeated modern Caribbean penitentiary experiences as well, especially given that at specific junctures the U.S. presence in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic significantly altered the political, economic, and sociocultural geographies of each country. Indeed, a slow disenchantment with religion at the state level unfolded in both societies in the middle decades of the twentieth century. The movement from religious fervor to a highly rational, secular ethic invested in personal achievement and empirical standards was a key factor in the rise of science on both sides of the Mona Passage.¹¹⁰ While imagined as fundamentally different, however, the shift from religion to science amounted to little more than the exchange of one salvation doctrine for another. Yet, the “shift” was never total, for these systems of knowledge continued to coexist in productive tension.

Second, I focus on two political systems: democracy and dictatorship. As scholars Scott Mainwaring and Aníbal Pérez Liñán posit, short- and long-term structural and cultural processes accompanied the rise and fall of democracies and dictatorships in twentieth-century Latin America. The decisions and political preferences of specific leaders and powerful actors especially indicated the extent to which certain countries embraced either system. Further, Mainwaring and Pérez Liñán suggest that transnational forces also shaped waves of democracy and dictatorship in Latin

¹⁰⁹ Thomas Dixon, *Science and Religion: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford, 2008), chs. 1-2.

¹¹⁰ Steven Gerardi, “The Dialectical Relationship between Religion and the Ideology of Science,” *Sociology Mind* 2, 1 (2012): 50-52.

America.¹¹¹ A major motor in this vein in the Caribbean was U.S. influence, which inspired democratic and authoritarian tendencies across the region at different junctures in the twentieth century.

In Puerto Rico, a colonial populist democracy spearheaded by Muñoz Marín and the PPD emerged in the late 1930s and 1940s. According to historian Andrés Matías Ortiz, this populism had a “social justice” and electoral orientation, took seriously subaltern socioeconomic demands such as access to food and land, and attempted to dismantle the patron-client political culture then prevailing on the island. As it matured, however, Puerto Rican populism shifted from a broad concern with social justice and political accountability to a centralized modernity based on industrialization.¹¹² Many Puerto Rican convicts identified with the PPD. In the Dominican Republic, on the other hand, Trujillo established a populist dictatorship capable of controlling its constituents’ feelings. It was based on agrarian reform, healthcare, fictive kinship, witchcraft, popular idioms of masculinity, gossip, gift exchange, and fantasies of race and class mobility.¹¹³ Trujillo became a master of “continuism,” changing laws to suit his objectives. These included the control of the armed forces and the personal accumulation of wealth.¹¹⁴ This style of government

¹¹¹ Scott Mainwaring and Aníbal Pérez Liñán, *Democracies and Dictatorships in Latin America: Emergence, Survival, and Fall* (New York: Cambridge, 2013), 1-28.

¹¹² Andrés Matías Ortiz, “Evolutionary Populism in a Place Where Nothing Happens: Coamo, Puerto Rico, 1930-1969,” Doctoral Dissertation, Department of History, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2009, 2-6.

¹¹³ On the populist dimensions of Trujillo’s rule, see Turits, *Foundations of Despotism*; Derby, *The Dictator’s Seduction*, 7; and Ignacio López Calvo, “*God and Trujillo*”: *Literary and Cultural Representations of the Dominican Dictator* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005), 8.

¹¹⁴ As scholar Russel H. Fitzgibbon has noted, continuism provides the veneer of legality for those regimes wanting to stay in power indefinitely. Continuism is the practice of administrative continuity by “a constitutional amendment, or a provision in a new constitution, exempting the president in office, and perhaps other elected officials, from the historic and frequent prohibition against two consecutive terms.” See Fitzgibbon, “*Continuismo*: The Search for Political Longevity,” in Hugh M. Hamill, ed., *Caudillos: Dictators in Spanish America* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), 211. Several Latin American political leaders and military strongmen (*caudillos*)—from Porfirio Díaz in Mexico and Juan Vicente Gómez in Venezuela to General Gerardo Machado y Morales in Cuba and General Anastasio Somoza García in Nicaragua—manipulated their respective constitutions by changing term laws or by removing reelection mandates entirely. See López Calvo, “*God and Trujillo*,” 20.

undermined many of the rights and freedoms of citizens.¹¹⁵ Establishing “order” in the Dominican Republic entailed winning manipulated elections, starting with the one in February 1930.

Dominican continuism subsequently gave way to a personalism that projected Trujillo as a national messiah. Therefore, the Dominican state under Trujillo never became an authentic democracy. Rather, his government was a poorly camouflaged dictatorship. During World War II, Trujillo’s “political operetta” included declaring war on the Axis Powers to present a more democratic façade.¹¹⁶ He claimed that his country had the most genuine program for democratic rehabilitation in Latin America and feigned staying in power reluctantly. He also allowed the founding of another political party, the Trujillista Party, to complement the Dominican Party (*Partido Dominicano*, or PD). Many Dominican convicts were members of the PD.

Although they diverged in terms of political outlook and substance, Puerto Rican and Dominican populisms shared common ground. The penitentiary was central to the ways in which both Muñoz Marín and Trujillo went about state-building and nation (re)formation. Historian Geoff Burrows has recently argued that despite this overlap, neither experience can be reduced to a colonial framework. He points out the vast differences between the local growth of political democracy in Muñoz Marín’s Puerto Rico and its absence in Trujillo’s Dominican Republic.¹¹⁷ On another level, Burrows adds, public works built and financed by the Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration were turned over to autonomous public agencies whose services

¹¹⁵ Several scholars have underscored that the era of Trujillo has much in common with the rule of Díaz in Mexico. For example, scholar Lyle N. McAlister maintains that, like Díaz, Trujillo transformed the country from a “praetorian state” characterized by frequent military coups to an order-obsessed “gendarmist state.” The latter kind of state “emerges when a single individual, generally but not always a military man, uses a mercenary army to make himself master of the state, imposes social and political order, tames the army and uses it as a gendarmery to maintain himself in power.” See McAlister, “Dictators and the Military,” in Hamill’s *Caudillos*, 208.

¹¹⁶ López Calvo, “*God and Trujillo*,” 18.

¹¹⁷ Geoff Burrows, “The New Deal in Puerto Rico: Public Works, Public Health, and the Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration, 1935-1955,” Doctoral Dissertation, Department of History, City University of New York, 2014, 251.

enhanced democracy through increased participation and mobility, thereby transforming U.S. citizenship. Infrastructural works developed by Trujillo—even those modeled on Puerto Rico’s New Deal—remained under the purview of a dictatorship, which “reduced democracy and turned citizens into subjects of a militarized police state.”¹¹⁸

Yet, despite the routes they took to power and how they exercised it, Muñoz Marín, Trujillo, and their parties legitimized their rule by monopolizing electoral politics and violence. Further, Puerto Rico’s Gag Law was as undemocratic as the Dominican Republic under Trujillo.¹¹⁹ Regarding incarceration, however, there was at least one major difference between the two societies. The degree to which governments entrusted convicts with scientific tools for their “awakening” and “redemption” varied considerably. In Puerto Rico, the PPD encouraged convicts to embrace science to get better, whereas in the Dominican Republic the Trujillo regime expressed doubt about the prospect given that physicians and other scientists constantly conspired against them. This reflects a broader argument historians have made about the relationship between political systems and science, that democracies tend to respect the autonomy of science while dictatorships try to usurp it.¹²⁰ Thus, science was a contested field of power, and each political style proved equally capable of corrupting it.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*, 252.

¹¹⁹ Scholars Jorge Duany and Emilio Pantojas Garcia write that “paradoxically, Puerto Rico is one of the most democratic countries in the Caribbean region, as measured by massive electoral participation, a competitive party system, and legal protection of individual rights and freedoms,” but it is also “one of the most undemocratic ones” due to the limited nature of Puerto Rican citizenship—such as no voting representation in Congress or for President. See Duany and Pantojas García, “Fifty Years of Commonwealth: The Contradictions of Free Associated Statehood in Puerto Rico,” in Lammert de Jong and Dirk Kruijt, eds., *Extended Statehood in the Caribbean: Paradoxes of Quasi-Colonialism, Local Autonomy, and Extended Statehood in the USA, French, Dutch, and British Caribbean* (Amsterdam: Rozenberg Publishers, 2005), 21-57.

¹²⁰ Amparo Gómez Rodríguez, Antonio Francisco Canales Serrano, and Brian Balmer, eds., *Science Policies and Twentieth-Century Dictatorships: Spain, Italy, and Argentina* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015), 1-26.

Despite the real and perceived differences between democracy and dictatorship in the twentieth-century Caribbean, the two political systems had more in common than one might assume. In addition to the nature of penitentiary cultures, the Puerto Rican and Dominican governments revered constitutions that propagated illusory freedom in cult-like fashion. While Muñoz Marín and Trujillo crashed into one another within the confines of the democracy-dictatorship dialectic, both espoused gnostic states premised on constitutional liberty, equality, and fraternity. These were not only secular and nationalist, but Masonic, evidenced by the backgrounds of those who designed the states in the first place.¹²¹ What matters here is not that Trujillo and Muñoz Marín consorted with Freemasons and other secret societies in the making of modern states, but rather that science-leaning and masked influences would be hidden in plain sight. This matters for the history of incarceration since the prison was and continues to be a central arm of statecraft the world over. The (un)freedom dyad in the Caribbean, so central to modern understandings of democracies and dictatorships, was built and refined through institutions like prisons during the eras of racial slavery and Atlantic revolution, for example. The kinds of “awakening” and “redemption” generated by penitentiary science and spirituality were rooted in mystery even as they granted convicts access to meaningful forms of therapy, consciousness-making, and tangible secular deliverance.

Finally, the third layer of intersectionality I examine in this dissertation is the one between common and political prisoners. This binary represents a major tension in the historiography of crime and punishment in modern Latin America and the Caribbean. Few historians have taken up the challenge of reconstructing the relationship between the two groups. Historian Julia Rodríguez,

¹²¹ On how the secular is “not” religious, see Talal Asad, “Religion, Nation-State, Secularism,” in Peter van der Veer and Hartmut Lehmann, *Nation and Religion: Perspectives on Europe and Asia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 178-96, especially 183-88.

for example, illustrates how the modern Argentine state's use of science not only created the conditions for political and everyday forms of policing, but also collapsed different imprisoned social groups into a national whole.¹²² Aguirre has noted that while there could be collaboration among common and political prisoners behind bars, as in Peru during the 1920s and 1930s, unity withered after political prisoners departed from penitentiaries, improved their individual lots, and in some cases became state authorities.¹²³ Historian Pablo Piccato shows how in post-revolutionary Mexico common prisoners *became* politically active by organizing unions and demanding improvements in prison conditions.¹²⁴ This is the position of most historians who write about incarceration. They trace how common convicts “acquired” a political voice.¹²⁵ I suggest that while many common convicts most certainly *refined* their politics in prison, more of them than we might otherwise assume were already political before they got there.

Many historians privilege the voices of political prisoners over common prisoners because the former can be more effectively tied to histories of broader significance. Additionally, across Latin America and the Caribbean, political prisoners have left behind a heftier documentary record. But hyperbolizing the differences between political and common prisoners reinforces a false dichotomy that highlights one group at the expense of the other. Although political and common inmates typically occupied different cellblocks in prisons, this was not always the case. It most certainly was not in the Dominican Republic, where communal cells were the norm until the mid-twentieth century. Even when political prisoners numerically dominated some communal cells,

¹²² Rodríguez, *Civilizing Argentina*.

¹²³ Aguirre, *The Criminals of Lima and Their Worlds*, 199-202, 206, and 220-21.

¹²⁴ Piccato, *City of Suspects*, 161-62 and ch. 8.

¹²⁵ Part of the reason for the distinction is real difference. Common and political prisoners were not alike in most ways. Given this, it is easier to assign the moral high ground to idealistic political prisoners rather than common prisoners who, in many cases, had histories of being victimizers.

which occurred in Nigua, they still interacted with and depended on common prisoners for company, information, and favors. The *shared* space of the prison brought the two groups together in ways that minimized difference. This is not to suggest that the two groups did not struggle with their differences or that they romanticized one another. Be this as it may, it is essential to challenge the assumption that common prisoners were apolitical, impulsive creatures of habit compared to political prisoners, who were decisive intellectuals.

There is no shortage in Latin American and Caribbean historiography of scholarship about political prisoners. The problem with this literature is that it largely ignores the understudied routines of the prison to address “weightier” historical issues, whether labor regimes and transitions, war and historical memory, or the contested negotiation of dictatorship and the development of activist movements.¹²⁶ It is not enough to relegate common prisoners to context, to say that they are present but not really see or hear them, especially when they comprise the bulk of most penal populations. Therefore, in the chapters that follow, I try to center *all* convicts and their communities. I avoid turning incarceration on and off like a light switch because doing so contributes to essentializing and de-intellectualizing them. Challenging shallow views of incarceration is a goal of this dissertation.

Historians can offset the inclination to deem certain prison experiences worthier than others by assessing the two groups together and bearing in mind (in)comparable themes and features. I do this by considering common and political prisoners in broad colonial and national context;

¹²⁶ José Lee Borges, *Los chinos en Puerto Rico* (San Juan: Ediciones Callejón, 2015), ch. 3; Tamara Feinstein, “Competing Visions of the 1986 Lima Prison Massacres: Memory and the Politics of War in Peru,” *A Contracorriente* 11, 3 (Spring 2014): 1-40; Jorge Marturano, “Vampiros en la Habana: discursos intelectuales, políticas de la cultura y narrativas de encierro en la República (1934–1958),” Doctoral Dissertation, Department of Romance Languages, Duke University, 2006; Jacob Blanc, “The Last Political Prisoner: Juvêncio Mazzarollo and the Twilight of Brazil’s Dictatorship,” *Luso-Brazilian Review* 53, 1 (June 2016): 153-78; Matilde Zimmerman, *Sandinista: Carlos Fonseca and the Nicaraguan Revolution* (Durham: Duke, 2001), ch. 6; Mario Mencía, *The Fertile Prison: Fidel Castro in Batista’s Jails* (Melbourne, Australia: Ocean, 1993); and Gladys McCormick, “The Last Door: Political Prisoners and the Use of Torture in Mexico’s Dirty War,” *The Americas* 74, 1 (January 2017): 57-81.

focusing on their experiences with redemptive practices; and keeping in mind how the groups contradicted and complemented one another. The diverse and complicated exchanges between common and political convicts can be viewed as scattered data points. Plotting a figurative line through them, it is possible to trace what linked the two groups. This belies the notion of impenetrable national difference in the modern Caribbean, tempers narratives of extraordinary individualism or isolation, and subverts the binary between common and political prisoners.

Chapter Outline

Science and spirituality shaped struggles over power and meaning-making in and beyond Caribbean penitentiaries. Assumptions about race, class and gender, national identity, and colonialism colored these processes. They played out on the terrain of convict bodies and souls. These encounters stimulated dynamic ways of imagining corrections and performing redemption. The diverse experiences of common and political prisoners were not entirely incompatible in this context. Rather, the shared space of the prison brought the two groups together. These findings encourage scholars to move beyond the biopolitics of prisons by underscoring the common aspects of experiences and forms of knowledge usually regarded as contradictory or mutually exclusive. Historiographically, this marks a shift away from the perceived raw hegemony of the modern prison, difference-making, and the failures of rehabilitation. Instead, I emphasize the medico-legal and spiritual routines of penitentiary life and the links between prisons, convicts, and the intellectual communities with which they interacted. Far from being isolating, total institutions in a Foucauldian sense, in this dissertation penitentiaries emerge as organically linked to communities beyond the wall. Indeed, they were porous and culturally dynamic.

I organize the dissertation into six chapters that roughly span the 1920s and 1950s, or the interwar and early Cold War periods. Admittedly, I am more concerned with people and the plurality of their experiences than with linear periodization and historical eras. As far as I am concerned, this is unnecessary at this point, for the latter frames are integrated into the storyline and embedded in several chapters. Chapter 1, “More Than Flesh,” examines the emergence of a medicalized positivist science of prisoners and their bodies in Puerto Rico, in which the lines between the medical treatment of the person and anthropological ranking of the human were quite blurred. Beginning in the late nineteenth century, physicians with humanistic backgrounds, especially anthropology, established the contours of this science, which survived the transition to U.S. rule and became more accentuated thereafter.¹²⁷ The inauguration of Oso Blanco in 1933 and its public health orientation represented a step toward absorbing ordinary Puerto Ricans into state-building efforts and the broader U.S. body politic, but convict beliefs and realities disrupted what physicians understood to be a seamless sanitary enterprise. Medical doctors believed that convict redemption started with healing their physical bodies, with diagnosing and curing them of disease. For inmates, however, health was about more than flesh. Briefly considering prisoner voices in this vein illustrates how oblivious physicians could be of the knowledge(s) and needs of convicts and related communities.

Chapter 2, “Heterodox Medico-Religiosities,” introduces the Dominican case. It investigates convict-physician interactions and the diverging experiences of healers and licensed doctors between the late nineteenth century and the rise of the Trujillo regime in the 1930s and 1940s. Whereas in Puerto Rico a burgeoning medico-legal culture concerned with differentiated

¹²⁷ Consult María del Carmen Baerga Santini, “History and the Contours of Meaning: The Abjection of Luisa Nevárez, First Woman Condemned to the Gallows in Puerto Rico, 1905,” *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 89, 4 (November 2009): 643-73; and Ileana Rodríguez Silva, *Silencing Race: Disentangling Blackness, Colonialism, and National Identities in Puerto Rico* (New York: Palgrave, 2012).

criminal and convict bodies emerged in the late nineteenth century, in the Dominican Republic this was not the case until the twentieth. Even then, the Dominican state was more committed to reining in “suspect” black cultural forms than with improving the overall lot of its multiracial citizenry. I underscore Dominican medico-religious ideologies and practices, with some Puerto Rico content as a point of reference, to suggest that from the perspectives of incarcerated healers and physicians, redemptive health movements in the country were rooted in revolutionary politics and struggles over the sanctity of the body. These struggles turned prisons like Nigua and Ozama into sites of contestation. State angst of popular health movements and their rituals shows how the government nurtured a culture of fear to intimidate “recalcitrant” members of society and their communities. Consequently, the Trujillo regime blended a range of “black matter,” ranging from *Olivorismo* and *luá* to *curanderismo* (healing) and “witchcraft.”¹²⁸

Chapter 3, “Determining Redeemability,” examines the interactions and activities at the heart of social health enterprise in Puerto Rican and Dominican penitentiaries. I consider how classification and treatment framed the ways in which liberal intellectuals from various fields created and sustained mental and social health discourses about the redemptive potential of convicts. My definition of social health is necessarily broad. It includes psychiatry, psychology, social work, and prison boards. I build this chapter around case studies of transnational psychiatrists, namely Rafael Troyano de los Ríos, to directly connect the Puerto Rican and Dominican cases. While stationed at the Río Piedras tri-institutional complex, specifically, Troyano collaborated with psychiatrist José R. Maymí Nevares. Both men approached convicts as objects of mental and social health treatment. They diagnosed and treated mental illness and

¹²⁸ This amounted to the surveillance of blackness. For a theoretical analysis of the problem, see Simone Browne, *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness* (Durham: Duke, 2015). Browne defines blackness as a key site through which surveillance is practiced, narrated, and resisted.

measured convict intelligence. Their brand of redemptive psychiatry was caught between the eugenics of the recent past and the psychopathology of the future. Yet, convict volition often complicated psychiatric and social health practice. This chapter also reveals a wider web of Atlantic connections, south-south transnationalism, and regional comparisons that disrupts narratives of impenetrable national difference.

Chapter 4, “Los vivos muertos” (The Living Dead), underscores death to bridge the previous chapters on medicine and social science with subsequent chapters on religiosity and community. It traces how convicts on both sides of the Mona Passage used the humanities to challenge their presumed social and/or civic death. On the one hand death signaled destruction, but on the other it was also generative, especially given that the penitentiary promoted key features of acceptable social and cultural life.¹²⁹ As many inmates lived bare lives before even landing in prison (e.g., via social exclusion and economic deprivation), the humanities became a way of tutoring them in tolerable forms of social and cultural being. This, in turn, gave convicts civic potential. By reading literature, participating in the performing arts, and watching films, among other activities, convicts proved they were fit to reenter and thrive in society. While the humanities offered them opportunities for freedom of imagination and play in the form of state-approved intellectual awakening, most inmates remained on the margins of the mortuary politics that led to humanistic empowerment and redemption.¹³⁰ Though real for some, ultimately freedom was an illusory construct for most inmates and therefore largely unrealizable. Since the humanities were not universally available to all prisoners, many more convicts invested in preserving the bonds that

¹²⁹ Vincent Brown, *The Reaper’s Garden: Death and Power in the World of Atlantic Slavery* (Cambridge: Harvard, 2008), 4.

¹³⁰ Like Brown, I define “mortuary politics” as “concerted action toward specific goals.” *Ibid*, 5.

tangibly linked them to their communities. Still, those who accessed the humanities used them to refine their consciousness and express themselves.

Chapter 5, “Performing Faith,” examines orthodox religiosity and other belief systems behind bars. In Oso Blanco, convicts were exposed to several Christian denominations. Catholicism predominated, but Protestant Evangelicals, Spiritists, and other groups also competed for inmate souls. Regardless of belief, however, convicts mutually relied on visual and sound registers to give meaning to their discourses and rituals. Performing their beliefs publicly in the penitentiary patio or privately in their cells facilitated convict wellbeing and their sense of collective belonging. Perhaps most importantly, performing faith through observing the Sabbath, enrolling in Bible classes, and sharing testimony, among other practices, allowed convicts to enact and feel what they believed. Making belief flesh provided prisoners with evidence that a Higher Power (usually God) could make them better. In this chapter, I mainly underscore the Puerto Rican experiential, with some Dominican Republic content as a point of reference. Convicts in Puerto Rico, specifically, found meaning in ritual practices. They understood religiosity and philosophy as edifying. While some convicts critiqued religious services in particular, for most prisoners, services presented opportunities for spiritual redemption and to reach beyond prison walls.

Chapter 6, “Sharing the Sun,” considers the process of executive clemency in mid-twentieth-century Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. Convicts, their families, and their extended networks used the platform of clemency to debate and secure prisoners’ freedom. Often they did so in a language the state understood. In terms of redemptive practice, this meant writing letters to people in high power that invoked ethno-racial and religious discourses, civic and political party associations, and Spanish colonial precepts like honor and laboriousness. More broadly, petitioning for clemency meant acquiescing to nationalist cults of personality, especially

those dedicated to heads of state, including Trujillo and the military and civilian governors of Puerto Rico. These leaders achieved “celestial” status because of their roles as national fathers and final arbiters of their respective criminal justice systems. Common prisoners and their communities received a crash course in civics, conformed to the system, and pressured it to achieve clemency, whereas political prisoners and their relations similarly navigated state machinery but openly resisted it.¹³¹ While the Puerto Rican and Dominican states calibrated their repression of political convicts and those linked to them, overemphasizing this point sustains the false argument that common prisoners were somehow pusillanimous and less political than political prisoners. I conclude the dissertation by considering penitentiary historical memory in more recent times.

Given how this dissertation blurs much of what we think we know about the interface between punishment, health and healing, and citizenship, it is imperative that I clarify what I am not trying to do. This dissertation is *not* a history of the prison and its customary order, but rather its scientific, humanistic, and religious/spiritual worlds, which often extended “beyond the wall.” Nor is it a history of penology or crime and criminology. I focus on prisoners more than the victims of crime. I contend that incarceration in the middle decades of the twentieth century cannot be adequately assessed by conventional history, a Foucauldian emphasis on isolated biopolitics, or pitting victims against victimizers.¹³² Since rehabilitative corrections was a project for society and individuals, I ponder how this project hurled convicts toward an idealistic future while encouraging them to treat their personhood as projects to be fulfilled.¹³³

¹³¹ On popular engagement with the criminal justice system as a form of “civic education,” see Amy Chazkel, “Social Life and Civic Education in the Rio de Janeiro City Jail,” *Journal of Social History* 42, 3 (March 2009): 697-731.

¹³² While it is important to note that convicts frequently victimized people who looked like them and/or had similar socioeconomic backgrounds, this does not negate the fact that prisons mostly accommodated a certain demographic.

¹³³ M. P. Drost, “Sartre’s Concept of a Person as a Project,” *Dialogos* 23, 52 (1988): 97-108; and Eghigian, Andreas Killen, and Christine Leuenberger, eds., *The Self as Project: Politics and the Human Sciences*, Osiris 22 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

The chapters that follow offer a history of the correctional imagination and redemptive practices in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic between the interwar and early Cold War periods. My understanding of correctional imagination is informed by historian Greg Eghigian, who defines it as “the ensemble of ideas, values, policies, practices, subjects, and objects associated with public attempts to reform and rehabilitate criminals.”¹³⁴ This framing clarifies that incarceration is more than a reaction to crime; more than a consequence of local desires to exercise power. As Eghigian argues, correctional rehabilitation is an “inspirational project of collective imagining, an enterprise onto which states, experts, and the public have projected ideals of good and bad, normal and pathological, corrigible and incorrigible.”¹³⁵ Tracing inspiration and how it was practiced suggests that hopes, ambitions, and intellectualities can also be conveyed in images, narratives, performances, and emotions. My goal is not to reify the social imaginary, however. Instead, I am interested in the inspired aspects of administrative, medico-legal, spiritual, and interpersonal life.¹³⁶ This approach answers Salvatore and Aguirre’s call to probe the relation between the prison and society, and between technologies of punishment and culture.¹³⁷

This history of intersections of science, spirituality, and incarceration is primarily built around the excavation of Oso Blanco and Nigua. Rich literatures on scientific penitentiaries across societies and the impact of these institutions on state-building, the making of (un)freedom and citizens, and redemptive convict routines must be understood as part of an integrated story about

¹³⁴ Such a definition clearly piggybacks on the work of Benedict Anderson and other scholars who have invoked the notion of “the social imaginary.” See Eghigian, *The Corrigible and the Incorrigible*, 10; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1983 [2006]); Cornelius Castoriadis, *The Imaginary Institution of Society* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987); and Charles Taylor, “Modern Social Imaginaries,” *Public Culture* 14, 1 (2002): 91-124.

¹³⁵ Eghigian, *The Corrigible and the Incorrigible*, 11.

¹³⁶ Claudia Strauss, “The Imaginary,” *Anthropological Theory* 6 (2006): 322-44.

¹³⁷ Salvatore and Aguirre, “The Birth of the Penitentiary in Latin America,” 34.

twentieth-century Caribbean politics. A subregional synthesis can help us better understand how the penitentiary is not just an arm of the modern state but central to modern governance; not just a biopolitical laboratory but a hub of sociocultural and political dynamism.¹³⁸ In this story of the correctional imagination and redemptive practices, convicts, their families, and their extended networks are visible actors full of character, complexity, and volition. They are not just homogenous clinical subjects. These combined elements reveal how power fluidly operates in modern societies regardless of the perceived total hegemony of prisons or the assumed incommensurability of diverging political systems, competing epistemologies, and other dualities.

¹³⁸ For example, my understanding of “subregional” is informed by Juan Giusti Cordero, “Beyond Sugar Revolutions: Rethinking the Spanish Caribbean in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries,” in George Baca, Aisha Khan, and Stephan Palmié, eds., *Empirical Futures: Anthropologists and Historians Engage the Work of Sidney W. Mintz* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2009), 58–83; and Mimi Sheller, *Democracy after Slavery: Black Publics and Peasant Radicalism in Haiti and Jamaica* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001).

CHAPTER 1

More Than Flesh: From Medical to Penitentiary Science

On October 28, 1933, the U.S. Federal Court in San Juan sentenced a 45-year-old white industrial worker living in Río Piedras named Juan Sampayo López to two years in prison for producing and disseminating counterfeit money.¹ Health professionals examined him shortly after he arrived at Oso Blanco, and learned he was infected with gonorrhea and syphilis.² A year into his sentence, Catholic physician Leandro López de la Rosa reexamined Sampayo López.³ The physician concluded that the convict's condition had improved. It was "apparently good" except for lingering syphilis, "probably cerebral spinal."⁴ Subsequently, Sampayo López rejected a lumbar puncture, a diagnostic procedure that collects and analyzes the fluid surrounding the brain and spine, and follow-up treatment. Yet, island justice officials paroled him in March 1935. At least two factors explained their decision. First, Sampayo López was politically connected, evidenced by the fact that his wife lived in the Condado residence of former Senate President, Antonio R. Barceló.⁵ Second, his case presented the colonial state with a dilemma: how to balance the individual right to reject medical treatment with the public's nascent right to be free of disease.

¹ Sampayo López and others counterfeited \$1 silver certificates, series 1928 A, serial #67418148A. The fraud network in which he participated extended from Santurce in Puerto Rico's northeast to Ponce in the southwest. Legal officials accused Sampayo López of having played a key role in convincing ordinary people to accept the currency. Expediente del confinado Juan Sampayo López, Caja 302, Serie Expedientes de Confinados (SEC), Fondo Departamento de Justicia (FDJ), Archivo General de Puerto Rico (AGPR).

² *Reglamento para el régimen y gobierno de la Penitenciaría de Puerto Rico en Río Piedras*, 6.

³ López de la Rosa studied medicine at Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia. He returned to the island to practice in 1915, and started serving the penitentiary in 1927. López de la Rosa directed and owned the Miramar Clinic in Santurce and was a San Juan municipal assembly member from 1920 to 1924. He was also a military physician during World War I. Conrado Asenjo, *Quién es quién en Puerto Rico*, Cuarta edición (San Juan: Imp. Venezuela, 1947), 97.

⁴ Expediente del confinado Juan Sampayo López.

⁵ On Barceló's political trajectory, see Delma S. Arrigoitia, *Puerto Rico por encima de todo: vida y obra de Antonio R. Barceló, 1868-1938* (San Juan: Ediciones Puerto, 2008).

The balancing act mattered and had faith-based connotations because Sampayo López was a Spiritist. This implied that he likely trusted other forms of knowledge and ritual for the purposes of intellectual insight, health, and healing. While penitentiary physicians hoped to diagnose and treat Sampayo López's syphilis according to their medical standards, his rejection of their methods suggests at least one of two things. On one level, he did not want them to stick a huge needle in his spine, which would inevitably lead to some degree of pain in the aftermath of the procedure. On another level, he may have wanted to look to his own belief system (Spiritism) to deal with the infection.

Spiritism also linked the convict to what U.S. Attorney Harry F. Desosa described as “bad,” manipulative company. Among those with whom Sampayo López consorted was Cuban occult physician Antonio Lezcano Prado, who journalist Carlos N. Carreras had discovered among Oso Blanco's “living dead” in May 1934.⁶ Further, Desosa called Sampayo López a “man of criminal tendencies,” language that reflected the positivist criminology permeating Puerto Rico at the time. But the convict “was just a tool” of Lezcano Prado's broader scam, Desosa insisted.⁷ In other words, the occult physician was the brains behind the operation, and the Spiritist, although skilled in his own right, merely a sidekick.

Considered from the vantage points of government officials, this case illustrated the shadiness of misbelieving miscreants that used the power of persuasion to not only convince ordinary people that they spoke to the dead, but to circulate false currency as well. In both instances—speaking to dead and making fake money—Sampayo López was a fraud in the eyes of

⁶ Lezcano Prado was scheduled for deportation upon completing his sentence. See Carlos N. Carreras, “La vida tras las rejas: una tarde con los ‘muertos vivos,’” *Puerto Rico Ilustrado* 25, 1264 (26 mayo 1934): 67. On intersections of spirituality and political economy in modern Puerto Rico, see Raquel Romberg, *Witchcraft and Welfare: Spiritual Capital and the Business of Magic in Modern Puerto Rico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003).

⁷ Expediente del confinado Juan Sampayo López.

the state. In one fell swoop, he bridged the (im)material worlds, and challenged Puerto Rico's prevailing moral and colonial orders. The dual threat he posed landed him in Oso Blanco, where he straddled the increasingly divergent, though not yet entirely antithetical, worlds of science and belief. The little we know about his experiences inside and beyond prison walls sheds light on intersections between medicine and belief in the context of incarceration.

Using prison records, health bulletins, medico-legal texts, and other published and archival sources, this chapter examines the emergence of a medicalized positivist science of prisoners and their bodies in Puerto Rico in which the lines between the medical treatment of the person and anthropological ranking of the human were quite blurred. To a lesser degree, especially in the bookends of the chapter, I probe how criminals and convicts responded to this epistemological imposition. Beginning in the late nineteenth century, physicians with trans-Atlantic humanistic backgrounds, namely anthropology, established the contours of an ethnographic science. While their efforts originally focused on Puerto Rico's mixed-race population, by the turn of the twentieth century physicians increasingly fixated on people of color, thereby normalizing links between race, crime, and punishment in a racially elastic society. This trend survived the transition to U.S. colonial rule, and became more accentuated as the new century unfolded.⁸

When Puerto Ricans became U.S. citizens in 1917, however, island physicians aspiring to create "Latin-Anglo-Saxon civilization" attempted to transcend debates about criminal and convict atavism. Physicians embraced the laboratory state of mind offered by tropical medicine and applied it to the island at large, but could not wholly shake the imperial and civilizing dimensions of their interventions, which had racial and religious components. After 1933, Oso Blanco's public health orientation helped absorb ordinary Puerto Ricans into state-building efforts and the broader

⁸ Baerga Santini, "History and the Contours of Meaning"; and Rodríguez Silva, *Silencing Race*.

U.S. body politic, but assumptions about their “degeneracy” and “incapacity” strained the aspirational sanitary enterprise of the medical class. Physicians believed that convict redemption started with cataloging and mapping their physical bodies, especially diagnosing and curing them of disease, all of which contributed to their “regeneration.” Yet, despite embracing laboratorial penitentiary science, they and other experts were underprepared to map convicts’ and related communities’ knowledge bases and intangible needs (e.g., Sampayo López’s).

Several scholars have illustrated that in the early twentieth century, U.S. colonial authorities and their creole collaborators typically disregarded, even trivialized, local ideas and practices as they assumed the burden of cleansing, pacifying, and remaking colonized territories. They sought to purify not only public spaces, water sources, and food, but also to control the conduct and political ideas of subaltern populations. Health and police reform were cornerstones of U.S. “legibility” processes in its newly acquired empire.⁹ Laboratories of “hygienic modernity” like the Philippines and Puerto Rico served as sites of protracted social experimentation where military personnel, medico-legal experts, creole collaborators, and others endeavored to reconfigure national bodies, attitudes, and mores. Modern prisons and public health emerged in the shadow of U.S. empire and propelled new conflicts and conversations about achieving scientific and national progress in “the tropics.”¹⁰

Policing and prison laboratories were central to achieving social and political discipline and “progress” throughout the new U.S. empire. They facilitated innovations in state-building and

⁹ Anderson, *Colonial Pathologies*, 1, 3, and 6-8; McCoy, *Policing America’s Empire*; Kelvin Santiago Valles, “American Penal Forms and Colonial Spanish Custodial-Regulatory Practices in Fin de Siècle Puerto Rico,” in McCoy and Scarano, eds., *Colonial Crucible: Empire in the Making of the Modern American State* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009), 87-94; and Trujillo Pagán, *Modern Colonization by Medical Intervention*. On U.S.-imposed reforms in the Dominican Republic, see Calder, *The Impact of Intervention*; and Fuller and Cosmas, *Marines in the Dominican Republic*.

¹⁰ Trujillo Pagán, *Modern Colonization by Medical Intervention*; Amador, *Medicine and Nation-Building in the Americas*; and Parts II and V in McCoy and Scarano, eds., *Colonial Crucible*.

the “perfection of American power.”¹¹ In prisons, specifically, human sciences like criminology turned the penitentiary into a clinic or laboratory, inmates into patients, and the working poor into the endangered population of a disease called crime.¹² These changes stimulated more specialized forms of bodily knowledge. The degree to which labor complied with capital and state mandates also informed how U.S., Latin American, and Caribbean elites constructed deviance.¹³ Modern prisons acted as catalysts of a clinical view of social problems, provided the experimental grounds for the consolidation of science, and pioneered professional interventions that reshaped relations between the state and the lower classes. Indeed, the goals of the penitentiary were reform, surveillance, and social control.¹⁴ These institutional goals coincided with those of larger colonial and national laboratories, including sociocultural domestication and ideological (re)colonization.

Oso Blanco in particular was a protracted laboratory experiment in colonialism and democracy.¹⁵ The penitentiary provided island-based physicians with the spaces, raw material, and tools to justify the “inferiority” of certain people while naturalizing the authority of state biopower.¹⁶ Prisons were among several welfare institutions where physicians imagined and tried to improve the island’s political and economic future by helping create sanitary, productive

¹¹ McCoy, *Policing America’s Empire*, 1, 36, and 40.

¹² Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*; Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic*; Aguirre, *The Criminals of Lima and Their Worlds*; Salvatore and Aguirre, “The Birth of the Penitentiary in Latin America”; and Rodríguez, *Civilizing Argentina*.

¹³ Prisons transitioned Latin American and Caribbean societies from colonialism to nationhood, or at the very least from racial slavery to other exploitative labor systems. See Paton, *No Bond But the Law*; and Naranjo Orovio, “De la esclavitud a la criminalización de un grupo,” 137-78.

¹⁴ Salvatore and Aguirre, “The Birth of the Penitentiary in Latin America,” 2 and 26.

¹⁵ On this duality in Southeast Asia, see Michael Salman, “The Prison That Makes Men Free: The Iwahig Penal Colony and the Simulacra of the American State in the Philippines,” in McCoy and Scarano, eds., *Colonial Crucible*, 124.

¹⁶ Biopower, as defined by Foucault, refers to how states regulate their subject-citizens through diverse techniques to achieve control of entire populations. The prison contributes to such efforts. More importantly, biopower resembles a series of webs and networks working its way around the societal body, allowing for the “capillary functioning of power.” See Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*; and Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 198.

citizens. Although physicians used prisoners' bodies to establish the dominance of their discourses and connected medical knowledge to state power, convict experiences spilled over the epistemic levees physicians and the state had constructed to regulate them. Positivist science—the only “true” source of authoritative knowledge derived from observation, experimentation, logic, and math—prevailed within the levees. But beyond them were the wider intellectual and emotional worlds of convicts and the varied ways in which they approached health and healing. This breaching of Oso Blanco's scientific levees subtly pervaded Sampayo López's case.

The Science of Mug Shots

Spanish colonial authorities in Puerto Rico began centralizing law enforcement and criminal justice in the late nineteenth century, partially in response to the abolition of racial slavery and popular resistance to post-emancipation forms of coerced labor.¹⁷ Centralization entailed the introduction of early forensics, communications technology, and prisons. Though underfunded and overwhelmed, the Spanish forged a bureaucratic template for security institutions.¹⁸ Mug shots also formed part of the centralization process.¹⁹ The Spanish first used mug shots in Puerto Rican

¹⁷ For instance, see Gerardo A. Carlo Altieri, *Justicia y gobierno: la Audiencia de Puerto Rico, 1831-1861* (Sevilla: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Academia Puertorriqueña de la Historia, 2007), especially chs. 7-8; and Carlo Altieri, *El sistema legal y los litigios de esclavos en Indias: Puerto Rico, siglo XIX* (Sevilla: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2010).

¹⁸ McCoy, *Policing America's Empire*, 18, 30, and 33; Santiago Valles, “American Penal Forms and Colonial Spanish Custodial-Regulatory Practices”; and Santiago Valles, “‘Bloody Legislations,’ ‘Entombment,’ and Race-Making in the Spanish Atlantic: Differentiated Spaces of General(ized) Confinement in Spain and Puerto Rico, 1750-1840,” *Radical History Review* 96 (Fall 2006): 33-57.

¹⁹ French biometrics researcher Alphonse Bertillon is credited with the expansion of mug shots. In the early 1880s, he founded a laboratory in Paris where anthropological measurements and observations were used to identify criminals. He classified criminals according to the length, width, and diameter of their skulls, and stressed the importance of logging other physical characteristics such as eye, hair, and skin color and ethnic indicators like scars. Further, Bertillon underscored facial features and the build, demeanor, and voice of individual convicts. See Diego Galeano, “Identidade cifrada no corpo: o bertillonage e o gabinete antropométrico na polícia do Rio de Janeiro, 1894-1903,” *Boletim do Museu Paraense Emílio Goeldi, Ciências Humanas* 7, 3 (2012): 721-42; and Jennifer Hecht, *The End of the Soul: Scientific Modernity, Atheism, and Anthropology in France* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), ch. 4.

prisons in the late nineteenth century.²⁰ In conjunction with hospitals and other welfare institutions, Spanish authorities and creole physicians depended on convict images and assessments of their bodies to produce knowledge about deviance, disease, and the body's reaction to adverse land, labor, and social conditions.²¹ This happened in a context of infectious and parasitic disease, high infant mortality and malnutrition, and overall despair for the majority rural population during exasperating political and economic times.²²

Mug shots emerged in the Spanish Caribbean alongside criminal anthropology, a pseudoscience about “inherent criminality” popularized by Italian physician Cesare Lombroso in the late nineteenth century. According to Lombroso, “born criminals” could be identified by their “atavistic deficiencies.” These were measurable through anthropometry—the measurement of certain parts of the human body.²³ The confluence of positivist medical and social science also helped birth criminal anthropology in Latin America. Latin American intellectuals and health professionals absorbed and reconfigured the musings of thinkers like Lombroso. Some parroted Lombroso, as Nina Rodrigues and Julio Guerrero did in Brazil and Mexico, respectively. Others complicated Lombroso's ideas. Critical readers like Argentine José Ingenieros, for instance, sought to dispel the doctrines of the positivist school with psychological and cultural explanations.

²⁰ For example, see Cajas 62, 156, 161, and 163, SEC, FDJ, AGPR.

²¹ Picó, *El día menos pensado*; and Martínez Vergne, *Shaping the Discourse on Space: Charity and Its Wards in Nineteenth-Century San Juan, Puerto Rico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999).

²² Carlos Vélez, et al., *Crónicas de la educación para la salud en Puerto Rico* (Valencia, CA: Delta, 1994), 7; and Antonio Salvador Pedreira, *El año terrible del 87: sus antecedentes y sus consecuencias* (Río Piedras: Editorial Edil, 1974).

²³ Lombroso opposed eighteenth-century Italian jurist Cesare Beccaria's emphasis on free will, and instead argued that criminal behavior was determined by biological, psychological, and social factors. Like disease, criminals required examination, observation, and treatment. Lombroso's text, *Criminal Man*, circulated widely and was translated into multiple languages between 1876 and 1895. See Lombroso, *Criminal Man*, edited by Mary Gibson and Nicole Hahn Rafter (Durham: Duke, 2006), 2-3, 6, 29, and 350-51; Salvatore, Aguirre, and Joseph, eds., *Crime and Punishment in Latin America*, xiv-xvi; and Carlos Alberto Cunha Miranda, “A fatalidade biológica: A medição dos corpos, de Lombroso aos biotipologistas,” in Nunes Maia, ed., *História das prisões no Brasil*, Volume II, 281.

In the 1880s, these classes of “enlightened” men formed the first associations for the study of criminal anthropology across Central and South America.²⁴

Meanwhile, mug shots and criminal anthropology reached Cuban and Puerto Rican shores in the 1870s and 1880s.²⁵ During this period in Cuba, historian Rebecca Scott notes, members of the propertied and educated classes embraced anthropological science. They thought it showed “the differences between whites and blacks and that, in times of great turmoil, blacks historically reverted to barbarism and human sacrifice.”²⁶ Among the architects of Cuban anthropology was Luis Montané, who returned to Cuba from France in 1874 and founded the island’s first anthropological society in 1877.²⁷ Echoing Lombroso and others, Montané’s work highlighted the physical features that purportedly signaled criminality and degeneration.²⁸

Similar developments occurred in Puerto Rico, where creole intellectuals and the leisure classes shared what sociologist Kelvin Santiago Valles has called the “Europocentric and

²⁴ As would later be the case with eugenics, the region’s elites adapted criminal anthropology to local circumstances. Further, the pioneering studies of Rodrigues, Guerrero, Ortiz in Cuba, and Abraham Rodríguez in Peru were carried out in prisons with inmates serving as evidentiary raw material. See Salvatore and Aguirre, “The Birth of the Penitentiary in Latin America,” 20-21; Salvatore, Aguirre, and Joseph, eds., *Crime and Punishment in Latin America*, 192, 214, 243, 346, and 392; and Mariza Corrêa, *As ilusões da liberdade: Nina Rodrigues e a antropologia no Brasil* (Bragança Paulista: Ed. USF, 1998).

²⁵ Bronfman, *Measures of Equality*. Also see fn. 20. There are numerous inmate files with mug shots in the mentioned boxes, more of which pertained to Cubans than Puerto Ricans. This attests to the “advanced” state of Cuban positivist science in the late nineteenth century.

²⁶ Rebecca J. Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba: The Transition to Free Labor, 1860-1899* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000), 124.

²⁷ Montané was a student of Paul Broca’s, who founded the world’s first physical anthropology society in 1859. Like many of his predecessors and contemporaries, Broca was trained in medicine. Through his work on skull variation, he put skeletal interpretation on more scientific footing. Broca developed new tools, including the goniometer and stereograph, for the quantification of skeletal measurements. He also initiated training and discussion in comparative skeletal anatomy. See Aurore Schmitt, Eugénia Cunha, and João Pinheiro, eds., *Forensic Anthropology and Medicine: Complementary Sciences from Recovery to Cause of Death* (Totowa, NJ: Humana Press, 2006), 5-7.

²⁸ These concerns persisted well into the twentieth century. See Bronfman, *Measures of Equality*, 13, 28-34, 46, 52, and 59-62; Ortíz, *Hampa afro-cubana*; Román, *Governing Spirits*; 7-8, 13, 18-19, and 82-106; and Armando García González and Consuelo Naranjo Orovio, “Antropología, ‘raza’ y población en Cuba en el último cuarto del siglo XIX,” *Anuario de Estudios Americanos* 55, 1 (1998): 267-89.

custodial-punitive grammar” of positivist science. This grammar dated to the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when Spanish colonial officials used formulaic descriptions to classify runaway slaves and convey criminality.²⁹ It emphasized the “natural immoralities” of peasants, free people of color, the enslaved and formerly enslaved, and convicts.³⁰ Accentuating such tropes was the fact that Puerto Ricans of color were deemed as religiously dubious as their Cuban counterparts.³¹ Many of the health and social scientists who wrote about crime, punishment, and health in late-nineteenth-century Puerto Rico portrayed peasants, laborers, former slaves, and others as beings in need of extensive regeneration and acclimation to a brave new world. To repair and orientate marginalized groups, physician-anthropologists shaped by Atlantic intellectual currents steered them toward biomedical knowledge and practices.

The cross-fertilization of policing, indexing, and U.S. colonialism in Puerto Rico intensified after the turn of the twentieth century.³² By the middle decades of the century, mug shots had fused into everyday criminal justice practice. They became a central feature of the taxonomic culture of information gathering and synthesis characteristic of modern penitentiaries. Indeed, the mug shots of Sampayo López and hundreds of other prisoners are preserved in the archival record. Figure 1 below is Sampayo López’s mug shot. He is wearing a prison uniform, which comprised of slacks and a collared shirt, typical for most convicts at the time. His

²⁹ Benjamin Nistal Moret, *Esclavos, prófugos y cimarrones: Puerto Rico, 1770-1870* (San Juan: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1984 [2004]).

³⁰ Santiago Valles, “‘Forcing Them to Work and Punishing Whoever Resisted’: Servile Labor and Penal Servitude under Colonialism in Nineteenth-Century Puerto Rico,” in Salvatore and Aguirre, eds., *The Birth of the Penitentiary in Latin America*, 133-35; and Santiago Valles, “The Trans-Atlantic Instance within the Imperial Global Carceral Structures of the Late-1800s and the Turn-of-the-Century,” paper presented at “Making Empire Visible in the Metropole: Comparative Imperial Transformations in America, Australia, England, and France,” Sydney University, Australia, July 3-4, 2008.

³¹ Marta Moreno Vega, “*Espiritismo* in the Puerto Rican Community: A New World Recreation with the Elements of Kongo Ancestor Worship,” *Journal of Black Studies* 29 (1999): 325-53.

³² McCoy, *Policing America’s Empire*.

identification number, 328, was the only thing unique about him. So were the lifetime of memories and experiences buried in his mug shot.

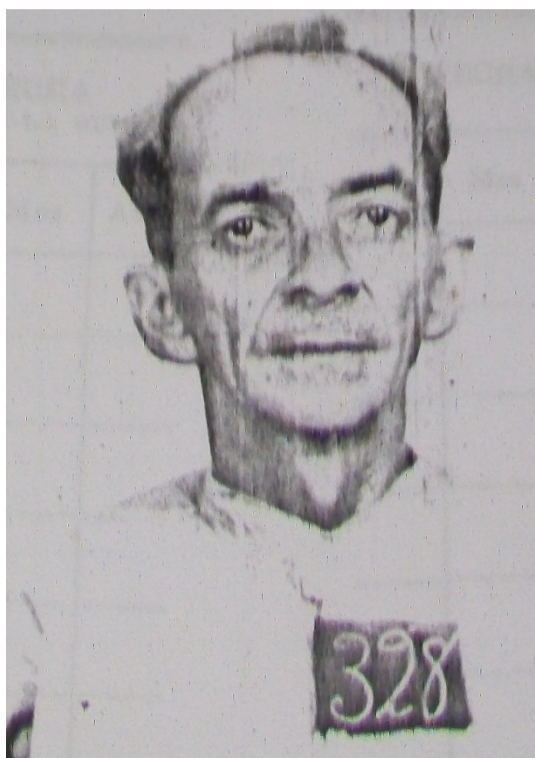


Figure 1: Mug shot of Juan Sampayo López, October 1933, AGPR.

Historical lessons about positivist science are also buried in Sampayo López's mug shot. Figure 1 and another photo of the convict (a side view of his skull and face) suggest that well into the twentieth century criminal anthropology and even phrenology still informed how state and prison authorities understood what it meant to be a criminal. While mug shots continued to shape how the state organized punishment, the rise of rehabilitative corrections signaled that they did not have to invariably lead to pseudoscience. The mug shot was an important cornerstone for modern biometric systems, and set precedents for precise measurement, reliable taxonomic indices, visual confirmation, and more recently, retinal identification.³³

³³ *Ibid*, 24.

Like other Oso Blanco prisoners, Sampayo López's photographs were pasted onto preprinted forms that recorded vital information about convicts. Compiled data included references to convict sentences, places of birth and residence, age, marital status, occupation, literacy, and religiosities. Descriptions of convict bodies documented skin and eye color, hair type, facial features, height, and scars. For example, Oso Blanco central booking staff logged Sampayo López as white, though in many cases convict mug shots reveal their colors to be more ambiguous than the images suggest. Sampayo López had brown eyes, grey hair, a "roman" nose, a "wide" mouth, and a "round" face. His body bore the marks of previous medical procedures, including a large scar on the left side of his back and another one between his throat and right jaw. Thus, his mug shot amounted to "a synergy of information technologies" that provided state, police, and prison authorities with the capacity to identify people. As McCoy puts it, U.S. colonial officials merged these technologies to create an integrated, "factual" system of social and political control.³⁴

Mug shots like Sampayo López's facilitated the classification and control of prisoners. They gave observers a basic understanding of convict bodies. As scholar Michelle Caswell shows, on a superficial level mug shots indicate that confinement brings prisoners to "a point of stasis." In addition to temporarily freezing time, they showcase how state power shapes understandings of convicts. They also shed light on "state hostility" toward convicts. But mug shots do not merely record the disciplining of subjects. The individuals photographed are not just controlled by the prison photographer, and by extension, the state. Rather, as Caswell notes, prisoner mug shots merely "take hold of the presentation of convict faces."³⁵ Facial poses, indeed one's overall gaze,

³⁴ *Ibid*, 34-35. On "facts" as a modern concept that originated not in natural science but in legal discourse, see Barbara J. Shapiro, *A Culture of Fact: England, 1550-1720* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000). Also see Lorraine J. Daston, "The Factual Sensibility," *Isis* 79, 3 (1988): 452-67.

³⁵ Michelle Caswell, *Archiving the Unspeakable: Silence, Memory, and the Photographic Record in Cambodia* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2014).

illustrate that convicts exercised a degree of control, albeit small, over how they were archived and would be remembered. The “hidden transcript” that lies behind mug shots evokes the active role of prisoners in shaping perceptions of them.³⁶ Perhaps most importantly, convict mug shots are linked to individual histories about crime and punishment. They are cursory windows into personal, familial, and communal stories.

When considered collectively, Oso Blanco mug shots disclose that there was more to convicts than their appearance. They also reveal that prisoners tried to control how they would be perceived by prison authorities and employees, just as slaves sold in the market adopted postures and gestures to try to control who purchased them.³⁷ A grimace, a smirk, a blank expression—these were not only windows into the lives and attitudes of inmates but also the universe of the prison and communities at large. However, the twitching, crossed eyes, and other physical “deformities” preserved in Oso Blanco mug shots ultimately contributed to the creation and perpetuation of generally foul, though empirically grounded, tropes about convicts and their interlocutors. While interested in speculative disciplines like anthropology and their artifacts (e.g., mug shots) in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, by the middle decades of the twentieth physicians in Puerto Rico were primarily concerned with flesh and sought to map its complexity. They also made more rigorous biomedical attempts to bring convicts back from the health brink by diagnosing and curing them of all manner of disease.

The fascination with physically regenerating prisoners’ bodies not only persisted, but increased, with the implementation of U.S. scientific medicine. When Oso Blanco opened in 1933,

³⁶ *Ibid.* On “hidden transcripts,” see James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).

³⁷ Walter Johnson, *Soul by Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999).

physicians occupied the redemptive frontlines. They were among the institution's most active health professionals. Importantly, they also set a religious or spiritual example, as many of them identified with Christianity, Freemasonry, or some combination of these or other rites-based belief system. By midcentury, physicians had built on the biological determinism and speculative science of the recent past by repackaging positivism in the form of eugenics.³⁸ Simultaneously, they paved the way for the robust populist prison social science of the 1940s. In doing so, they regained some of the national political clout they had previously enjoyed at the turn of century.

Atlantic Science, Caribbean Bodies

In late-nineteenth-century Puerto Rico, physicians practiced medical science and anthropology concurrently. Disciplinary intersectionality reflected the eclectic nature of the knowledge consumed, produced, and hustled by physicians, which knew few political and geographic boundaries. As positivist science thrived on Atlantic crossings, it is difficult to periodize. Historians of anthropology have located its origins in different moments from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. However, historian Alejandra Bronfman indicates that the institutionalization of the discipline—characterized by an emphasis on empirical evidence gathered from participant observation—emerged in the mid-nineteenth century. This occurred in Cuba and France, for example, at roughly the same time.

Trans-Atlantic scientific inquiry about Caribbean bodies expedited transborder exchanges among participants. For instance, French medical anthropologist Henri Joseph Dumont worked in a liminal Atlantic space that linked black slaves and healers, white physicians, and American

³⁸ Baerga Santini claims this process started at the level of discourse, if not practice, at the turn of the century. See "Transgresiones corporales: el mejoramiento de la raza y los discursos eugenésicos en el Puerto Rico de finales del siglo XIX y principios del XX," *Op. Cit.* 19 (2009-10): 79-106.

diseases.³⁹ Dumont was born in Paris. He earned medical and surgery degrees in both Paris (1859) and Strasbourg (1862). French authorities sent him to Veracruz in 1863 to study and contain the yellow fever afflicting their troops stationed in Mexico. In 1864 Dumont proceeded to Cuba, where he worked in plantation clinics and hospitals for more than two years. He then visited St. Thomas, Guadeloupe, and Guyana. From there Dumont settled in Puerto Rico, where he stayed for several years, published works on his Caribbean field experiences, and died in 1878.⁴⁰

While in Puerto Rico, Dumont published an essay on the island's medico-surgical history. The text chronicled his examinations and treatments of local patients, some of whom had kin or epidemiological links to neighboring islands.⁴¹ To understand and treat patients, he largely depended on his own expertise. He also consulted the work of cosmopolitan colleagues, especially those with firsthand knowledge of local health issues. These individuals included Drs. Audinot, Betances, and Blondet, among others.⁴² Betances was in exile by the time Dumont practiced medicine in Puerto Rico, but it is possible the two men had previously crossed paths as students in France. Both would have been studying in the 1850s, with Betances graduating in 1856 and

³⁹ On black contributions to the production of bodily knowledge and medical science in the Atlantic during the early modern period, see Pablo F. Gómez, "The Circulation of Bodily Knowledge in the Seventeenth-Century Black Spanish Caribbean," *Social History of Medicine* 26, 3 (2013): 383-402; and *The Experiential Caribbean: Creating Knowledge and Healing in the Early Modern Atlantic* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2017). On the broader intellectual contributions of people of African descent in an Atlantic context, see James H. Sweet, *Domingos Álvares, African Healing, and the Intellectual History of the Atlantic World* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2011).

⁴⁰ Bronfman, "On Swelling: Slavery, Social Science, and Medicine in the Nineteenth Century," in Diana Paton and Maarit Forde, eds., *Obeah and Other Powers: The Politics of Caribbean Religion and Healing* (Durham: Duke, 2012), 108. Also see Manuel Rivero de la Calle, "Henri J. Dumont, precursor de los estudios antropológicos en Cuba," *CEHOC* 4 (1978): 1-14.

⁴¹ For example, Curaçao, Santo Domingo, and St. Thomas. Consult Dumont's two-volume *Ensayo de la historia médico-quirúrgica de la isla de Puerto Rico* (La Habana: Imprenta "La Antilla" de N. Cacho Negrete, 1875-76), Volume I, p. 110, 135, 173, 210, and 290; and Volume II, p. 6, 131, 134-35, 143, and 181-83.

⁴² Drs. Audinot and Betances were creole physicians based in Mayagüez at the time. They worked together. Blondot exercised medicine in Arroyo and Guayama. Consult Dumont's *Ensayo de la historia médico-quirúrgica*, Volume I, p. 24-25, 109, 137, 151-57, 167, 170-78, 192, 195, 198-99, 214, and 216; and Volume II, p. 134, 137, 152-53 and 178.

Dumont several years later.⁴³ Dumont likely read Betances' thesis while pursuing his own research. Otherwise, he accessed the creole physician's work upon arriving in Puerto Rico. The latter assumption is evidenced by Dumont's frequent references to Betances' clinical activities on the island. Dumont also consulted the research of colleagues active in other corners of the colonial world.⁴⁴ He tapped into Atlantic, even global, medical knowledge and practices.⁴⁵

The Atlantic web of knowledge and practices that shaped Dumont's outlook and experiences illustrates the importance of the circulation of people, ideas, and goods in the configuration of geographic spaces and borders, medical knowledge and conditions, and collective identities. The port cities and islands hosting people like Dumont were "loci of entanglement" where imperial projects and national futures intersected.⁴⁶ Living in such an interconnected world inspired Dumont to designate Cuba, Puerto Rico, and other Caribbean locales as "intertropical regions of America." His emphasis on plantation medicine, diseases like yellow fever, and race situated him in an "Atlantic medical dialogue" that spanned Paris, Philadelphia, New Orleans, Veracruz, Havana, and San Juan.⁴⁷

Regarding race, specifically, Dumont participated in producing what scholar Andrew S. Curran has called "the anatomy of blackness." By the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries blackness changed from a mere descriptor into something to be quantified, managed, and

⁴³ On Betances' Masonic background and experiences in France, see Félix Ojeda Reyes, *El desterrado de París: biografía del Dr. Ramón Emeterio Betances, 1827–1898* (San Juan: Ediciones Puerto, 2001).

⁴⁴ For example, Dumont cited the work of Dr. Clot Bey, a French physician active in Egypt in the nineteenth century. See G. N. Burrow, "Clot Bey: Founder of Western Medical Practice in Egypt," *The Yale Journal of Biology and Medicine* 48, 3 (July 1975): 251-57. Also see Dumont, *Ensayo de la historia médico-quirúrgica*, Volume I, p. 214.

⁴⁵ Bronfman, "On Swelling," 105-106 and 108-109.

⁴⁶ Ernesto Bassi, *An Aqueous Territory: Sailor Geographies and New Granada's Transimperial Greater Caribbean World* (Durham: Duke, 2017); and "Beyond Compartmentalized Atlantics: A Case for Embracing the Atlantic from Spanish American Shores," *History Compass* 12, 9 (2014): 704-16.

⁴⁷ Bronfman, "On Swelling," 108-109.

butchered both literally and figuratively.⁴⁸ While not explicitly racist, Dumont conveyed his findings along racial lines. He drew parallels and divergences between “the races.” One of his major concerns was to determine the “diagnostic difference” between “negro yaws” and “white syphilis,” for example. Throughout much of his essay on Puerto Rico, Dumont contrasted creole whites and blacks to establish the convergences and deviations between the races in terms of disease susceptibility, immunity, and treatment.⁴⁹

Within the field of Atlantic knowledge production, Dumont’s medical activities contributed to the making of regional and local science. His two-volume essay on Puerto Rico lingers on case studies of slaves, free people of color, and whites of all caste and class backgrounds suffering from various tumors and diseases. Dumont used these case studies, as well as autopsies and photographs, to yield insights about epidemiology and surgery. He disclosed the ways different groups acted as patients and healers. In the latter vein, he referred to the “improvised treatments” of female healers of color known as “*curiosas*,” nomenclature that underscored their superstitious views.⁵⁰ *Curiosas* were not specialists, but rather inquisitive and self-taught. For example, to cure back problems they “covered the body with sulfur ointments.”⁵¹ To treat yellow fever, they used “high doses of oil.”⁵² The degree to which Dumont relied on subalterns for accounts of their symptoms and healing methods speaks to a complex “patient-doctor script.”⁵³

⁴⁸ Andrew S. Curran, *The Anatomy of Blackness: Science and Slavery in an Age of Enlightenment* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013).

⁴⁹ For example, see the indices in Dumont, especially the chapters organized by race. *Ensayo de la historia médico-quirúrgica*, Volume I, p. 315-18; and Volume II, p. 191-94.

⁵⁰ Dumont, *Ensayo de la historia médico-quirúrgica*, Volume II, p. 54.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Dumont, *Ensayo de la historia médico-quirúrgica*, Volume I, p. 184.

⁵³ Bronfman, “On Swelling,” 109-11.

Dumont identified places and plants from which patients derived benefit. Some treatments were extensions of geography, such as the curative waters of thermal baths in Coamo, Quintana (Ponce) and those of “Saint Peter” in Arroyo, or the “sacred grounds” of Hormigueros where “ill pilgrims” made “vows” to a Higher Power to heal their ailments.⁵⁴ Other treatments traversed the sea to reach Puerto Rico, including “Cuichunchulí,” from the Rubiaceae family of flowering plants.⁵⁵ For example, creole physician D. Nicolás Rodríguez of Cabo Rojo procured the Venezuelan plant and used it to treat the elephantiasis and “San Lázaro” (leprosy) of a young black man named Carlos, who lived on *ingenio* San José.⁵⁶ Along Puerto Rico’s black southern coast, physicians and the population at large treated tetanus with “cereipo,” a species of flowering plant in the legume family Fabaceae.⁵⁷ Dumont and other physicians relied on diverse flora and an oversupply of diseased bodies for experimental purposes.

The integrated view of the Caribbean and its subregions that Dumont possessed rested on his concerns for flesh and how topography and material conditions impacted the body. The physician-anthropologists that followed in his footsteps, however, increasingly looked inward toward the national future in their assessments of health issues. Even then, Atlantic intellectual currents still shaped emerging national pictures. This coincided with the materialization of

⁵⁴ Dumont, *Ensayo de la historia médico-quirúrgica*, Volume I, p. 13 and 17; and Volume II, p. 162-69 and 187-89.

⁵⁵ See A. P. Davis, et al., “A Global Assessment of the Distribution, Diversity, Endemism, and Taxonomic Effort in the Rubiaceae,” *Annals of the Missouri Botanical Garden* 96, 1 (2009): 68-78; Hans Dieter Neuwinger, *African Ethnobotany: Poisons and Drugs, Chemistry, Pharmacology, Toxicology* (Stuttgart, Germany: Chapman & Hall, 1994); and Esteban Nuñez Meléndez, *Plantas medicinales de Puerto Rico: folklore y fundamentos científicos* (San Juan: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1982), 61, 213, 263, 291, 308, 369, 399, and 405.

⁵⁶ The saint name San Lázaro also aligned with the Yoruba deity Babalú Ayé, the *orisha* of infectious disease and misery. See Dumont, *Ensayo de la historia médico-quirúrgica*, Volume I, p. 153; Laciél Zamora, *El culto de San Lázaro en Cuba* (La Habana: Fundación Fernando Ortíz, 2000), ch. 2; and Raul Canizares and Eric Lerner, *Babalú Ayé: Santería and the Lord of Pestilence* (Plainview, NY: Original Pubs., 2000).

⁵⁷ Dumont notes that cereipo also originated in “Costafirme,” or the Caribbean coast of South America. See *Ensayo de la historia médico-quirúrgica*, Volume II, p. 152 and 184; and Nuñez Meléndez, *Plantas medicinales*, 317.

sophisticated systems of surveillance created from the ashes of enslavement and apprenticeship. In contrast to Cuban anthropologists Luis Montané, Fernando Ortiz and Israel Castellanos, who focused exclusively on the body or depicted people of color as sorcerers and born criminals, Dumont attempted to salvage the remnants of a labor force devastated by slavery and other coercive regimes. Whereas Montané, Ortiz, and Castellanos studied physical signs of “atavism,” Dumont understood ethno-racial markers as indicators of workplace potential and health.⁵⁸

Similar developments prevailed in Puerto Rico, where the next generation of physician-anthropologists were molded not only by Dumont but also positivist criminology. Creole intellectuals traced what health revealed about the “criminal proclivities” of the island’s majority rural population, and pondered how the imbricated problems of labor, health, and crime could be solved. In the late nineteenth century, medical anthropology sensitive to socioeconomic context increasingly fashioned how island intellectuals and colonial authorities related to marginalized social groups. This happened as large groups of racially dubious people earned rights to suffrage, religious freedom, autonomy within empires, and so on.⁵⁹

Indeed, several historians have observed that Puerto Rican medical anthropologists conflated scientific discourse with a language of labor that relied on the law to make workers compliant. The writings of medical scientists echoed and reinforced state efforts to turn peasants into political allies and healthy, disciplined workers that would meet the island’s need for a reliable labor supply. To control labor, authorities constructed the antithesis of workers as “vagrants,” who were distinguished by their clothing, shoes or lack thereof, and poor health and teeth. Among other technologies, including notebooks (*libretas*) that documented worker assignments and clashes

⁵⁸ Bronfman, “On Swelling,” 114.

⁵⁹ Bronfman, *Measures of Equality*; and “On Swelling,” 106.

with the law, medico-legal authorities used physical appearance to establish social boundaries and mark the poor as a “sick, threatening, and potentially contaminating presence.”⁶⁰

As vagrants were persecuted and segregated to develop a compliant working class, colonial officials developed new hospitals and asylums to complement labor control efforts. Charity and welfare institutions resembled prisons. All were places where inmates were sent to learn and toil in public works.⁶¹ Prison administrators sometimes even supplied “unproductive” people to employers in need of laborers for high-demand occupations.⁶² Historian Rosa E. Carrasquillo explains that “docility and contentment” were expected but “workers did not embrace this ethic.” Thus, the police enforced it. These circumstances brought together rural laborers, sharecroppers, the landed peasantry, and prisoners on public works projects.⁶³

While Puerto Rican politicians and intellectuals wrestled with labor issues and their implications for productivity and national unity, island physicians contributed to the broader conversation on health and healing, and by extension, crime and punishment. The standard interpretation of island medical history is that the Spanish- and French-trained physicians of the late nineteenth century clashed with Americans after 1898 because the former were more concerned about socioeconomic context and the latter with laboratory medicine. Another key difference between eras was that the Americans benefitted from paradigm-shifting advances in technology and the emergence of new, or repackaged, scientific fields. Still, Iberian and American

⁶⁰ See Trujillo Pagán, *Modern Colonization by Medical Intervention*, 162-65; Schmidt Nowara, *Empire and Anti-Slavery*, ch. 2; and Rodríguez Silva, *Silencing Race*, chs. 1-2.

⁶¹ Picó, *El día menos pensado*, ch. 6; and Martínez Vergne, *Shaping the Discourse on Space*.

⁶² Trujillo Pagán, *Modern Colonization by Medical Intervention*, 163-64; and Suárez Findlay, *Imposing Decency*.

⁶³ Rosa E. Carrasquillo, *Our Landless Patria: Marginal Citizenship and Race in Caguas, Puerto Rico, 1880-1910* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 69 and 80-82.

physicians alike were similarly obsessed with flesh, to the extent that they could not always make sense of the intangible dimensions of popular experiences.

Medical Anthropology in Spanish Puerto Rico

In the 1880s, poor health and labor conditions persisted in Puerto Rico. In 1883, for instance, island physician Francisco del Valle Atilas founded the periodical *La salud* to disseminate hygienic knowledge.⁶⁴ Valle Atilas had studied medicine in Spain and France. In 1887, he published a seminal text on Puerto Rican peasants (*campesinos*) and their “physical, intellectual, and moral conditions.” Apart from Dumont’s essay, which considered the medical experiences of island peasants in conjunction with other groups, few anthropological studies of this kind had been published as of 1887. Valle Atilas’ text contemplated the anthropological and anatomic features of island campesinos. He diagnosed Puerto Rican peasants as “Mediterranean types” and blamed their physical shortcomings on “Andalusian heritage.” Their skulls were not deformed but the faces of peasants of color “projected forward” more than whites. Their “cranial volume” was “less” than that of their white counterparts.⁶⁵

Around the same time, Lombroso argued that sloping faces and reduced cranial volume signaled a “dolichocephalic” (longheaded) and “ape-like” structure, a “type” purportedly characteristic of thieves.⁶⁶ Historian Stephen Jay Gould shows that Lombroso’s view of sloping faces promoted a “unilinear scale of human races and lower relatives” that purposely inflated the

⁶⁴ Eliseo Font y Guillot, “Public Health: Sanitary Development, Legislation, Board of Health,” in Fernández y García, et al., eds., *The Book of Porto Rico*, 293-94. On Valle Atilas’ educational and Masonic background, see Eugenio Astol, “Francisco del Valle Atilas,” *Puerto Rico Ilustrado* 27, 1387 (10 octubre 1936): 17.

⁶⁵ Francisco del Valle Atilas, *El campesino puertorriqueño: sus condiciones físicas, intelectuales y morales, causas que las determinan y medios para mejorarlas* (San Juan: Tipografía de José González Font, 1887), 10, 19, 21, 23, 25-26, and 65-66.

⁶⁶ Lombroso, *Criminal Man*, 303.

skull of the chimpanzee and extended the jaws of people of color.⁶⁷ This gave the false impression that people of color ranked lower than apes. Citing Broca and Swedish anthropologist Anders Retzius, Valle Atilas suggested it was worthwhile to determine which of the cranial types—dolichocephalic, brachycephalic (shortheaded), or mesocephalic (skull and nasal cavity of equal proportions)—characterized island peasants. Not because, as Retzius believed, “the horizontal cephalic index serves to classify the races,” but because miscegenation thrived in Puerto Rico.⁶⁸

Valle Atilas employed racialized anthropological knowledge to understand the social, labor, and health challenges faced by island peasants. Campesino bodies carried lessons about class as well. In his observations about peasant feet, for example, Valle Atilas stressed that “in many the big toe is quite separate from the others,” as peasants used them for a variety of labor-related tasks.⁶⁹ Lombroso similarly interpreted lower-class feet a year earlier at the 1886 International Congress on Criminal Anthropology in Rome, although for different purposes. At the conference, Lombroso opined that the feet of prostitutes “are often prehensile as in apes,” with the big toe widely separated from the others.⁷⁰ Comparing these reflections on peasant feet reveals that even in a racially elastic society like Puerto Rico, race was not as fluid as contemporary scholarship suggests, at least from the collective vantage point of cultural elites.

⁶⁷ Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1981 [1996]), 65.

⁶⁸ Valle Atilas, *El campesino puertorriqueño*, 23-25. Although versed in the “polygenist” school of anthropology, as indicated by his familiarity with Broca, Retzius, and U.S. physician Samuel G. Morton, Valle Atilas engaged the “monogenist” school as well. Unlike polygenists, who stressed racial dichotomies, monogenists accepted racial fusion and emphasized a common descent for all human races. Valle Atilas cited French physician and naturalist Armand de Quatrefages multiple times in *El campesino puertorriqueño*. Quatrefages believed that biological, ethical, and moral factors more efficiently classified the races than determinism. In one instance, Valle Atilas emphasized Quatrefages’ “prophecy” that “the definitive possession of the earth belongs to the mixed races.”

⁶⁹ Valle Atilas, *El campesino puertorriqueño*, 25.

⁷⁰ Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man*, 159. On the International Congress, consult Martine Kaluszynski, “The International Congresses of Criminal Anthropology: Shaping the French and International Criminological Movement (1886-1914),” in Peter Becker and Richard F. Wetzell, eds., *Criminals and their Scientists: The History of Criminology in International Perspective* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 301-16.

Sensory knowledge also shaped Valle Atilés' racial doubts about peasant flesh. Not only did peasants of color have a "curious" and "inferior" biological composition, he claimed, they also emitted a "foul stench." This was attributable to their "overactive sebaceous glands." Valle Atilés insisted that peasants of color wanted to "mix their blood" with whites to achieve a lighter complexion and all the benefits that entailed, including less active sebaceous glands. Stench and smell, as scholar Jean Comaroff has noted elsewhere, suggests that a body surface could emit "contagion and odor to those with whom it came into contact."⁷¹ Therefore, Puerto Rican hillbillies constantly aspired to "erase or diminish" their grotesque "African features." The fat accumulation on and around the buttocks characteristic of Sara Baartman (or the Venus Hottentot), Valle Atilés wrote, "is not observable in white peasant women" but "excessive bulkiness of the hips" could be found in some *mestizas* and almost all black island women.⁷² A scientific racism of Atlantic proportions framed Valle Atilés' understanding of poor, rural working people of color, thereby contradicting the myth of racial democracy that has since come to define Puerto Rico.⁷³

For physicians like Valle Atilés, health trumped racial tropes. He examined the tough conditions Puerto Rican peasants endured and proposed how they should be medically treated;

⁷¹ Jean Comaroff, "The Diseased Heart of Africa: Medicine, Colonialism, and the Black Body," in Shirley Lindenbaum and Margaret Lock, eds., *Knowledge, Power, and Practice: The Anthropology of Medicine and Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 316.

⁷² Valle Atilés, *El campesino puertorriqueño*, 23-24 and 73-74. On the Venus Hottentot, consult Clifton Crais and Pamela Scully, *Sara Baartman and the Hottentot Venus: A Ghost Story and Biography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 76 and 130-49. Also see Natasha Gordon Chipembere, ed., *Representation and Black Womanhood: The Legacy of Sarah Baartman* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

⁷³ Numerous historians have developed the theme of racial flexibility/inflexibility in Latin America and the Caribbean. See, for example, R. Douglas Cope, *The Limits of Racial Domination: Plebeian Society in Colonial Mexico City, 1660-1720* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994); María Elena Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions: Limpieza de Sangre, Religion, and Gender in Colonial Mexico* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008); Sarah Chambers, *From Subjects to Citizens: Honor, Gender, and Politics in Arequipa, Peru, 1780-1854* (University Park: Penn State Press, 1999); Jay Kinsbruner, *Not of Pure Blood: The Free People of Color and Racial Prejudice in Nineteenth-Century Puerto Rico* (Durham: Duke, 1996); and Ann Twinam, *Purchasing Whiteness: Pardos, Mulattos, and the Quest for Social Mobility in the Spanish Indies* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015).

through hygiene, vaccinations, nutrition and diet, and moral and scientific education, for instance. But he also questioned their “inherent” criminality and “immorality,” echoing Lombroso. To thwart peasant criminality, he seconded sociologist Salvador Brau’s recommendation to expand education on the island, critiquing those who did not want to invest in schools because of the costs associated with their construction, operation, and maintenance. The resources not employed in schools, Valle Atilas lamented, “are spent on jails and prisons.”⁷⁴ His opposition to the expansion of island prisons illustrates that he was aware of the links between race, crime, and punishment in post-emancipation Puerto Rico. Other physicians, however, were more appreciative of the relationship between criminal anthropology and incarceration.

Polyglot criminal anthropology became more pronounced in Puerto Rico in the late 1880s and early 1890s. Forensic pathologist José Rodríguez Castro, for instance, published extensively about the “hereditary” dimensions of alcoholism, criminal behavior, and insanity among Puerto Rico’s rural and working-class populations. Educated in Spain, he was one of the first scholars on the island to seriously engage Lombrosian criminal anthropology. Further, he widened the category of criminal to include female offenders. Rodríguez Castro looked to European scientific authorities for answers to the island’s most vexing medico-legal problems. Instead of allowing local attitudes to exclusively shape his work, he situated it in transnational context.

In an 1889 essay on drinking and insanity, Rodríguez Castro used the evidence provided by autopsies and other clinical experiences to argue that alcoholism sparked criminal behavior and disproportionately impacted Puerto Rico’s working classes. The groups he encountered at his clinic included young men, female beggars, Africans, farmers, artisans, freed blacks, poor and illiterate day laborers, and less frequently, businessmen and upper-class women. Through these

⁷⁴ Valle Atilas, *El campesino puertorriqueño*, 125 and 146.

living and dead sources, he emphasized the physical and mental consequences of alcohol abuse, including crime, suicide, and illnesses like dementia and epilepsy. Rodríguez Castro believed that some of these conditions had “hereditary” roots. To substantiate his claims, he cited English, French, Spanish, and Swedish experts in the field of alcoholism.⁷⁵ Whereas Dumont and Valle Atilas identified their bodily knowledge as mainly medical, Rodríguez Castro’s was behavioral, environmental, and premised on notions of atavistic deficiency.

Rodríguez Castro started publishing about criminal anthropology in the early 1890s. In an 1892 medico-legal report about a young black woman named Isidora Gual, who had drowned her eight-month-old child, he applied the ideas of Lombroso, German psychiatrist Carl Friedrich Flemming, and French physician Bénédict Augustin Morel to project Gual as a pathological subject. He deployed Lombroso’s notion of “born criminal” in his account and distanced himself from purely psychological and metaphysical interpretations of crime, which he felt lead to erroneous conclusions. In general, Rodríguez Castro’s narrative of Gual revolved around her youth, regional origins (i.e., Guayama in southeast Puerto Rico), race, education, and labor background, all of which supposedly determined her social worth.⁷⁶ He also portrayed her as hypersensual and promiscuous. In addition to only possessing “fifty-three centimeters of cranial circumference,” Gual lived in miserable squalor. She and her child suffered numerous spells of hunger and sickness. Her “solitary lifestyle” was equally “disturbing.” Rodríguez Castro even

⁷⁵ José Rodríguez Castro, *La embriaguez y la locura, ó consecuencias del alcoholismo* (San Juan: Imprenta del Boletín Mercantil, 1889), 5-8 and 43-46.

⁷⁶ Rodríguez Castro, *Infanticidio: causa contra Isidora Gual, informe médico-legal* (Ponce: Imprenta “El Telégrafo,” 1892), 6 and 9. Also consult Rodríguez Castro and Ramón A. de Torres, *El crimen de “Las Lomas”: informe pericial* (Ponce: Imprenta “El Vapor,” 1893), 5. It is unclear from these reports whether or not Isidora Gual had any patron or kin connections to the planters, slaves, or ex-slaves of the same surname that historian Luis A. Figueroa identifies in *Sugar, Slavery, and Freedom in Nineteenth-Century Puerto Rico* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2005), 59, 67, 82-89, 120, 153-57, 162, and 178.

invoked “racial and hereditary laws” to explain the “strange but irresistible impulse” Gual felt “in the depths of her soul” prior to killing her own child.⁷⁷

To Rodríguez Castro, Gual embodied the nexus between race, crime, and hereditary illness. However, she failed to exhibit physical markers of criminality. Gual did not show signs of “microcephaly, facial or cranial asymmetry, oblique eye sockets, prognathism, extraordinary breast development, or anything else that can be observed in the physiognomy of criminals.”⁷⁸ Instead, her case displayed the need to distinguish between criminality and insanity. Rodríguez Castro blamed Gual’s deviance on slave ancestry and family history. Her entire immediate family showed signs of “mental instability.” One brother had died in Santo Domingo; the other lived in the Ponce mental asylum. Rodríguez Castro’s ideas about insanity and crime transcended borders, and underlined a certain demographic: young, poor, and working-class people of color.⁷⁹

Puerto Rico’s nineteenth-century courts did not seamlessly accept criminal anthropology, however. Echoes of other debates permeated their medico-legal discourse. In the preface of a second report about black crime, Rodríguez Castro and Ramón A. de Torres highlighted the collegial grilling they received at the hands of the Ponce Criminal Court after submitting their findings about Gual. Magistrates bemoaned that the two experts had failed to consider all the elements that may have determined Gual’s actions, namely “ailments of the soul.” The physicians put too much faith in “cranial circumference” and “hereditary” mental instability. Instead, they should have performed an ethnography, which would have helped them explain the “workings of Gual’s soul.” They had to go beyond “the anatomical and physiological rules of the nervous

⁷⁷ Rodríguez Castro, *Infanticidio*, 3-4, 6-7, 9, 12, and 14.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 5, 9, and 11-12.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 18-19.

system,” which the Court identified as symptomatic of the “overly scientific” rationalism of the Italian positivist school. Compiling ethnographic knowledge not only required the interrogation of texts and criminal anthropology, but also the accrual of local testimony, especially data pertaining to Gual’s employers, co-workers, kin, and broader (in) tangible circumstances.⁸⁰ The Audiencia’s preoccupation with Gual’s soul attests to the staying power of Catholicism and its continuing influence on island structures on the eve of a new empire. In fact, Catholicism promoted a certain kind of ethnographic science, one that would be initially displaced by the expansion of laboratorial science under early U.S. rule but eventually revived in modified form through penitentiary science.

Rodríguez Castro and Torres welcomed the critiques of the Ponce Criminal Court. In a subsequent medico-legal report, they were more thorough about tracing the “ethnographic” factors influencing crime. The second report examined a young “peon” of color from the hills of Juana Díaz named Francisco Corchado, who worked on the sugar estate “Cristina.” Corchado had bludgeoned his common-law, pregnant wife to death with a machete for her alleged infidelity. Rodríguez Castro and Torres attributed Corchado’s mental state to a “weak moral complex” and his “defective organic configuration.” The physicians identified the “physical markers” of his behavior, poor health, and “acquired” insanity. He was dark-skinned, anemic, “muscularly feeble,” “irritable,” an epileptic, suffered from fainting, and bore vertigo scars. His head “presented a degree of asymmetry, a defect that is also visible in the shape of the roof of his mouth and in the imperfect alignment of his teeth.” Rodríguez Castro and Torres believed these features made Corchado “incurable,” “dangerous,” and ultimately, “irresponsible” for his actions.⁸¹

⁸⁰ It is important to note that the Ponce Criminal Court exalted the opponents of Lombroso, Enrico Ferri, and Raffaele Garofalo, especially Félix de Aramburu y Zuloaga and Luchessi, who “victoriously combated” the Italian positivist school of criminology in Spain and Italy, respectively. See Joshua Goode, *Impurity of Blood: Defining Race in Spain, 1870-1930* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 2009), 152; and Rodríguez Castro and Torres, *El crimen de “Las Lomas,”* 6-7.

⁸¹ See Rodríguez Castro and Torres, *El crimen de “Las Lomas,”* 9-13, 16-18, 20, 22-23, 25, and 28.

To determine Corchado's culpability, Rodríguez Castro and Torres followed the advice of the Ponce magistrates. They spoke to the sugar estate police officers that responded to the crime, as well as with neighbors and family members. When the physicians learned that Corchado likely hallucinated his partner's infidelity, they felt vindicated and continued to advocate for criminal anthropology, biomedicine, and a distinction between criminality and insanity. Citing German, French, and Spanish authorities in legal medicine such as Johann Ludwig Casper, Henri Legrand du Saulle, and Pedro Mata, Rodríguez Castro and Torres argued that only "real" criminals tried to hide their indiscretions. Corchado had not. Therefore, his mental state merited investigation. To explain Corchado's "cerebral disequilibrium," the physicians traced his family's "pathological" history. Corchado's father had committed suicide. One of his sisters suffered from hysteria, another from bad nerves, and a cousin from "mental derangement."⁸²

In late-nineteenth-century Puerto Rico, physician-anthropologists attempted to reconcile Lombrosian understandings of race and crime with socioeconomic conditions, family history, and notions of genetic inheritance. The troubles experienced by Gual and Corchado were symptomatic of the "sick world" detailed by Puerto Rican physician Manuel Zeno Gandía in his 1894 novel *La charca*.⁸³ Zeno Gandía's chronicles of a sick Puerto Rican world also made a case for the use of ethnography—albeit literary—to understand, diagnose, and save poor islanders from one another and themselves. Unlike Rodríguez Castro, however, Zeno Gandía subtly dealt with racial issues. He relied on symbols of decay—especially the image of the contaminated pond—to link race, crime, and "degenerate" sociocultural conditions and practices. These included adverse labor climates, rural internal differentiation, and sexual violence.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ Manuel Zeno Gandía, *La charca*, edición de Juan Flores (Río Piedras: Ediciones Huracán, 1999).

Puerto Rican medical anthropologists also looked beyond the island to understand criminality. The Haitian counterpoint, usually associated with histories of the Dominican Republic, helped Rodríguez Castro develop his insights about punishment in Puerto Rico. He visited Haiti in early 1892 and later wrote a memoir about the trip, noting that Haitian criminal justice was “theatrical” and run by “buffoons.” Most prisons had walls but lacked roofs. Men and women occupied the same penal space and wallowed in “filth.” The Haitian police “catered to elites,” seldom patrolled, and “dropped everything...when they heard the beat of a *vodou* drum.”⁸⁴ Haiti’s “suspicious” social order and hot-blooded cultural practices facilitated discussion about the significance of race in Puerto Rico. Indeed, the Haitian “realities” chronicled by Rodríguez Castro sharply contrasted with what he knew about his homeland, where criminal justice was taken seriously, police officers did their jobs, and prisons were increasingly scientifically organized.

Positivist Science Under U.S. Rule

Scientific laboratory medicine transformed Puerto Rico’s medical profession in the early twentieth century. Spanish- and French-trained physicians sensitive to ethnography increasingly clashed with their U.S.-American counterparts after 1898 not only because Americans were more laboratory-oriented, but also because the Americans displaced them politically. This apparent shift tempered the power of pseudosciences such as criminal anthropology but did not eliminate them.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Rodríguez Castro, *Cosas de Haití: notas de un viaje a este país* (Ponce: Tip. El Telégrafo, 1893), 5-8, 73-78, 126-29, and 211-13. Some Afro-Puerto Ricans challenged Rodríguez Castro’s understanding of Haiti, seeing cultural progress instead of stagnation. See Tomás Carrión Maduro, *A vuela pluma: Haití, Plácido y Manuel Sanguily* (La Habana: Imprenta “La Constancia,” 1864); and Roberto Ramos Perea, ed., *Literatura puertorriqueña negra del siglo XIX escrita por negros* (San Juan: Ateneo Puertorriqueño, Editorial LEA, 2009), 333-36.

⁸⁵ The debates reemerged in relation to other issues or fields; for example, the death penalty. Consult “La pena de muerte: masones de Ponce piden anulación de esa pena,” *La Correspondencia*, 16 enero 1906. This analysis suggested that “true delinquency” resided in the “intellect” and “perverse will” of the transgressor, not their biology. On the death penalty in the first decade of U.S. rule, see Nahomi Galindo Malavé, *Ni un vaso de agua* (Independent Publishing, 2016).

Positivist science fused into everyday judicial practice, which normalized its legitimacy in the process. The Puerto Rican colonial state started to depend on “purer” and “non-speculative” forms of laboratory medicine to redeem criminals, convicts, and society at large. As the twentieth century unfolded, however, these different sciences came together in a single brew.

Lombrosian approaches to crime and punishment persisted in early-twentieth-century Puerto Rico, especially in relation to the rural and urban poor.⁸⁶ Historian Reinaldo L. Román contends that medical professionals were also shaped by Lombrosian positivism. Physicians treated individuals and society for medico-legal infirmities, including alcoholism, prostitution, mental illness, criminality, superstition, and quackery, “all of which were believed to cause the degradation of genetic ‘types.’”⁸⁷ Lombroso influenced Puerto Rican criminologists, physicians, and Spiritists through midcentury, leading them to believe that positivist science was crucial for physical and social “regeneration” across the board.⁸⁸ As criminal anthropology fused into everyday practice, proponents of positivism increasingly banked on eugenics.

Across the early-twentieth-century Americas, eugenics tailed positivism.⁸⁹ In Puerto Rico, eugenics-tinged interventionist discourses of rescue inspired U.S. imperial projects and organized

⁸⁶ See Baerga Santini, “History and the Contours of Meaning,” 659-60. Baerga Santini argues that Luisa Nevárez embodied the “prototype of the criminal woman: degenerate, ugly, black, and sexually insatiable.” Further, she notes that the mainstream media disseminated Lombroso’s writings among Puerto Rico’s intellectual elite. Also see Santiago Valles, “*Subject People*” and *Colonial Discourses*, 126; Lombroso, “Una exposición sobre antropología criminal,” *La Democracia*, 24 julio 1906, 1; and the same article in *La Correspondencia*, 24 julio 1906.

⁸⁷ Román, *Governing Spirits*, 74. Also consult División de Educación, *La ciencia contra la superstición* (San Juan: Departamento de Instrucción Pública, 1951).

⁸⁸ Román, *Governing Spirits*, 225, fn. 93.

⁸⁹ Across Latin America in the early twentieth century, race, class, and gender ideologies shaped eugenic science, public health practices, and national politics. Eugenics emerged in the late nineteenth century. It was a scientific and social theory that advocated “race improvement” through “better breeding.” In Latin America, eugenic science offered an interpretive framework to reformulate the “problems” of race, reproduction, and public health in a time of intensified searching for national identities. See Stepan, “*The Hour of Eugenics*”; Briggs, *Reproducing Empire*; and Alexandra M. Stern, *Eugenic Nation: Faults and Frontiers of Better Breeding in Modern America* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2005).

U.S. colonialism on the island.⁹⁰ U.S. colonial authorities created a discourse of tutelage and Americanization that claimed to represent the public interest. This discourse implicated both medicine and public health. “Rescuing” Puerto Rico depended on the intersecting efforts of U.S. administrators, the creole elite, and competing social groups at the local level. Physicians sought to redeem individual bodies. *Jíbaro* bodies were imagined as both “symbol and myth” of Puerto Rico as a “sick nation.” Under Spanish rule, the *jíbaro* was a sick patient requiring care. Under U.S. rule, the *jíbaro* symbolized Puerto Ricans’ “primitive nature” and “lack of capacity for self-government.”⁹¹ With Oso Blanco, state officials and health professionals finally had a laboratory where they could tinker with individuals and the larger Puerto Rican national body.

While the shift in approaches to the *jíbaro* body between empires is significant, the two visions eventually merged as U.S. administrators utilized public health to colonize Puerto Rican society. Even though U.S. officials enlisted Puerto Rican physicians in the struggle between labor and capital and in enforcing the island’s subordination to the U.S. metropole, the two groups competed to establish the meanings of duty, expertise, and work. Moreover, sociologist Nicole Trujillo Pagán illustrates, colonial authorities and local physicians shared the objective of medically targeting workers. They emphasized hookworms as the culprit undermining the productivity of laborers. Ignoring the material problems posed by unemployment, hunger, and natural disasters, U.S. officials and island physicians focused on parasites to promote a message

⁹⁰ Briggs, *Reproducing Empire*; and Baerga Santini, “Transgresiones corporales.”

⁹¹ Trujillo Pagán, *Modern Colonization by Medical Intervention*, 2 and 9-10. Puerto Rico’s rural population consisted of many *jíbaros*; that is, mountain-dwelling peasants or salt-of-the-earth hillbillies “proud” of their independent subsistence and closeness to nature. The term, however, does not account for the differences within the rural population. On the cultural genesis of the *jíbaro* concept, see Scarano, “The *Jíbaro* Masquerade.” On rural internal differentiation, see Picó, *Los gallos peleados* (Río Piedras: Ediciones Huracán, 1983); and *Al filo del poder: subalternos y dominantes en Puerto Rico, 1739-1910* (San Juan: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1993).

of bodily redemption and spiritual salvation.⁹² This message subsequently permeated island institutions, including Oso Blanco.

The lack of common ground between jíbaros and elites drove the former to “charlatans” for medical advice.⁹³ Engaging jíbaros in this way not only allowed physicians to slowly monopolize local medical practice, but also assisted the government in promulgating different regenerative regimes. As Román shows, approaches to regeneration varied at the time, yet science and religion advocates often shared in the redemptive functions they assigned to specific groups of people. Women, for example, assumed different roles depending on the regenerative formula framing and animating their lives. Spiritists counted on women to educate their families in the “discoveries of science-religion.” The Catholic hierarchy expected women to maintain tradition and faith in the home. Physicians sought to extirpate diseases that originated in pregnancy and motherhood, and asked women to bring their domestic practices into conformity with scientific norms. Everyone “followed different routes to a common destination,” one of national progress and redemption.⁹⁴ Oso Blanco represented another, more laboratorial route.

U.S. colonialism and laboratory science were central to Puerto Rican state-building. American medical intervention in Puerto Rico amassed data on local topography, institutions, and people. Making the island medico-legally “legible” required that U.S. officials and their creole allies expand surveillance over remote and inaccessible areas. They used medicine and the law to justify their authority to police Puerto Ricans, and to determine the political, economic, and sociocultural future of the island.⁹⁵ The founding of Oso Blanco in 1933 culminated a historical

⁹² Trujillo Pagán, *Modern Colonization by Medical Intervention*, 3, 5, and 11-16.

⁹³ *Ibid*, 16-18.

⁹⁴ Román, *Governing Spirits*, 74.

⁹⁵ Trujillo Pagán, *Modern Colonization by Medical Intervention*, 2. Also see McCoy, *Policing America's Empire*.

process decades in the making. Penitentiary science extended colonial health and labor enterprises, first undertaken by the Spanish and later expanded by U.S. imperialists and island petit-Yankees, into the realm of citizen-making.

Oso Blanco formed part of a sanitary, scientific city imagined by the Chicago-based architectural firm Bennett, Parsons & Frost in the 1920s. This city consisted of the Capitol grounds in Old San Juan, Luis Muñoz Rivera Park in Puerta de Tierra, and the University of Puerto Rico-Río Piedras. It also included a water aqueduct, a municipal cemetery, mental and tuberculosis hospitals, and the penitentiary itself in Río Piedras.⁹⁶ Bennett, Parsons & Frost carried out similar projects in the “global north” and colonies of the “global south” the world over. Oso Blanco was more than a capstone project, however. The penitentiary showed that transnational urban planners, U.S. colonial officials, and their Puerto Rican allies viewed sanitary citizenship and scientific incarceration as central to the construction of a modern, appealing, safe, healthy, and productive city and society. The prison also signaled the creole elite’s obsession with bringing “whiteness” to Puerto Rico and remaking the island in the image of the U.S.⁹⁷ Further, Oso Blanco encapsulated past anxieties and goals, such as normalizing the authority of positivist science and disciplining the island labor force. Puerto Rico’s modern penal spaces were byproducts of U.S. colonialism, transnational urban and medical expansion, and the evolution of perceptions of punishment.

Persistent and Precise Positivist Science

The medico-legal precedents established by physicians and anthropologists in Puerto Rico at the turn of the twentieth century continued to shape state approaches to crime and punishment

⁹⁶ Ortiz Díaz, “The City and the Penitentiary”; Bonita Radio (with Anibal Sepúlveda), “Oso Blanco Especial,” 23 mayo 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QBvU8qBjUAE>.

⁹⁷ Ortiz Díaz, “The City and the Penitentiary.”

as the new century unfolded. Prisoner healthcare became more sophisticated during this period. The founding of Oso Blanco in 1933 overlapped with the health leadership of physician Antonio Fernós Isern. Fernós Isern finished medical school in Maryland and returned to Puerto Rico during World War I. In the U.S. and Puerto Rico, he immersed himself in civic associations, which he believed provided the best forums to unravel the mysteries of awakening and redemption. A devout Freemason, Fernós Isern wanted to improve the health and social conditions of the island.⁹⁸

In February 1923, Fernós Isern gave a lecture entitled “Know Thyself” (*Nosce te ipsum*) at a Masonic conference in San Juan. In the talk, he urged local Freemasons to “contain and remedy” the “ills” plaguing island society, for only they could. This was why so many of them had studied abroad, so that they could return and forge a “better future” for the homeland. Fernós Isern attributed Puerto Rico’s medical problems to the majority rural population. Although jíbaros and other groups stirred the images of disease and deviance in his mind, he believed that they could become physically, socially, and spiritually responsible.⁹⁹ In short, they could achieve sanitary citizenship. Teaching subalterns also required getting to know them mathematically. Fernós Isern posited that health professionals and scientists were attracted to math and statistics “not because of the abstract numbers but because of the realities the numbers represent” and the power associated with harnessing them.¹⁰⁰ He perceived of math as a system of understanding numerals alongside qualitative representations, and stressed that it gave value to numbers beyond quantity.

⁹⁸ On Fernós Isern’s Masonic trajectory, see Luis A. Otero González, “El hermano masón,” in Héctor Luis Acevedo, ed., *Dr. Antonio Fernós Isern: de médico a constituyente* (San Juan: Universidad Interamericana de Puerto Rico, CIEDP, 2014), 284-342.

⁹⁹ Antonio Fernós Isern, *Nosce te ipsum: conferencia pronunciada en la Logia “Caballeros de la Verdad”* (San Juan: Tipografía “El Compas,” 1923), 3-4. Military physician Bailey K. Ashford’s later summation of the work of American doctors also claimed to have resulted in turning deviant, physically emaciated jíbaros into sanitary citizens. See his autobiography *A Soldier in Science* (New York: W. Morrow and Company, 1934).

¹⁰⁰ Fernós Isern, *Nosce te ipsum*, 4.

In addition to praising mathematics, Fernós Isern invoked positivist science to make claims about modern Puerto Rico. He discussed the “racial and anthropological antecedents” of the island at length. Fernós Isern wanted to determine if Puerto Ricans were constituted like other “civilized people” and whether they should adjust to new ways or stay true to prevailing norms. Biology guided his understanding of anthropology. In his mind, anthropology classified the human races according to body measurements—the trunk in relation to the limbs. He identified three primary “races”: “brachycephalic,” “macrocephalic,” and “mesaticephalic.”¹⁰¹ Like Valle Atilas and other humanistic physicians, Fernós Isern deployed this language to project the bodily health and social etiquette of Puerto Rico’s majority rural, autonomous population in a problematic light.

Fernós Isern gave this lecture just as the medico-scientific intervention of the U.S. on the Puerto Rican body was about to achieve a milestone: the founding of the School of Tropical Medicine in 1926.¹⁰² And although the turn of the century marked a change of the colonial guard, ethnographic science and scientific laboratory medicine increasingly complemented one another. Even Fernós Isern’s laboratorial reading of poor urban and rural islanders had an ethnographic dimension. For example, he proposed that brachycephalic races had “broad” and “flat” skulls, long bodies, “voluminous” bellies, wide chests, and short necks. The “rich flow of blood” to their brains made them capable of “extensive mental development” and the “highest ideals of civilization.”

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, 5-7.

¹⁰² A health center founded in the early 1910s by U.S. and creole physicians associated with the hookworm eradication campaigns of Drs. Ashford, Pedro Gutiérrez Igaravidez, and others preceded Puerto Rico’s School of Tropical Medicine. Puerto Ricans had to demonstrate public health expertise to Columbia University for several years before the School was finally inaugurated in September 1926. When the School opened, Columbia administrators controlled academic policies, curriculum, and faculty appointments. The government of Puerto Rico had control of finances. Many members of the hookworm campaigns were displaced, even as their previous work was exalted. As Amador argues, Puerto Ricans reconciled their desire for a “public service” institute with Columbia officials’ desire for a “research outpost.” This clash of contrasting visions and the fact that Columbia’s prevailed showcases the way in which informal colonialism drove the founding of the first medical school in Puerto Rico. See Amador, *Medicine and Nation-Building in the Americas*, ch. 3.

But short limbs limited their movement and kept them from enjoying practical activities.¹⁰³ Indigenous macrocephalic races were “long-headed” and had a “larger cranial capacity,” long extremities, and narrow chests. They possessed great mobility, yet were “superficial” and “incapable of profound thought.” This race, “incapable” of “progress,” seldom resisted anything. Meanwhile, “mother harmony” guided the mesaticephalic or white races. These groups had no limits, only advantages. They were capable of “eternally progressive civilization.”¹⁰⁴

Racial heterogeneity represented an obstacle to Puerto Rico’s future, but one that could be overcome, Fernós Isern insisted. The island’s indigenous presence was “negligible” due to sickness, enslavement, and extermination. Island blacks were “moderately macrocephalic” and “suited” for “the tropics.” Hispanics—the most numerous group—gave their “civilization,” “idealism,” and “soul” to the island. This meant that Puerto Rico was “mostly mesaticephalic,” implying that “macrocephalic tendencies” could be nipped in the bud through better breeding. This aspiration for whiteness qualified Puerto Rico for “progress and happiness.” Positivist science, then, offered “capable” Puerto Ricans the vocabulary and tools with which to imagine a brighter future and improve the health and etiquette of the nation’s racially mixed but mostly white population.¹⁰⁵ Fernós Isern’s subdivided understanding of humanity was not simply a reflection of exclusive fraternity, positivist science, or modern eugenics, however. It also encapsulated elites’ hunger for whiteness. Anthropology designated “innate” capacities and signaled how medical and social science could contribute to the citizen-making process in a racially flexible society.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Fernós Isern, *Nosce te ipsum*, 6.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 7-13.

¹⁰⁶ This contrasts with the experience of Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz, who several years earlier began turning away from a Lombrosian lens to reimagine the “raceless” Cuban nation. See Palmié, *The Cooking of History*.

Some members of Puerto Rico's medical and intellectual communities challenged these ideas about race in the 1920s and 1930s. Physician José Celso Barbosa, for example, declared black pride and suggested that Puerto Ricans of color were not inferior to whites. But he also noted that white highland jíbaros believed that coastal blacks were largely shameless rouses and dishonest lowlifes.¹⁰⁷ Transnational physicians active in Puerto Rico, such as Irishman Francis W. O'Connor, also understood local people of color in terms of racial tropes. One time he observed little "nigger" babies bathing in Boca de Cangrejos (Santurce), a charged assessment that cast a shadow over the scientific "gospel" he wanted to spread in the countryside.¹⁰⁸ Beyond the island medical community, intellectual conversations about the place of race in island society and identity were intense. These debates reflected Fernós Isern's assumptions about white civilization and superiority vis-à-vis black barbarism and inferiority. Island literary experts developed the case for "biological civil war" on the one hand, and the legitimacy of Afro-Antillean cultural contributions on the other.¹⁰⁹ By 1940, sociologists concluded that there was racial prejudice in Puerto Rico. This prejudice had Spanish colonial origins and hardened under "democratic" U.S. rule.¹¹⁰

Beneath the surface of racial invective was a fraternal spiritual enterprise, however. Before the rise of the PPD, other political parties and Freemasonry played the role of harbinger of democratic progress in Puerto Rico. Fernós Isern believed that while redeeming the island required

¹⁰⁷ José Celso Barbosa, *Problemas de razas* (San Juan: Imprenta Venezuela, 1937), 126-27. Quoted in Tomás Blanco, *El prejuicio racial en Puerto Rico*, edited by Arcadio Díaz Quiñones (Río Piedras: Ediciones Huracán, 1985), 33.

¹⁰⁸ Mayo Santana, et al., eds., *A Sojourn in Tropical Medicine*, 29 and 76.

¹⁰⁹ Antonio Pedreira's *Insularismo* summarized the former position, whereas Luis Pales Matos' body of work, including *Tuntún de pasa y grifería*, advanced the latter project. See Pedreira, *Insularismo* (Madrid: Tipografía Artística, 1934), 24-30; and Palés Matos, *Tuntún de pasa y grifería* (San Juan: Biblioteca de autores puertorriqueños, 1937). Also see Díaz Quiñones, ed., *El prejuicio racial*, 29-34.

¹¹⁰ José Colombán Rosario and Justina Carrión, *Problemas sociales: el negro* (San Juan: Negociado de Materiales, Imprenta y Transporte, 1940). Later in the 1940s, physician Tomás Blanco articulated a national identity discourse that considered all Puerto Ricans Hispanic regardless of color. See Díaz Quiñones, *El prejuicio racial*.

saving locals from bodily and social ills, it also necessitated redeeming Puerto Ricans racially. This meant that their blood had to be “continually altered” through race-mixing until whiteness became achievable.¹¹¹ More likely, their thinking would “approximate” whiteness even if their skin color did not.¹¹² Fernós Isern’s vision for Puerto Rico’s future was racially delusional, but in the sense that culture could be whitened or domesticated, he was on to something. A similar attitude prevailed among other modernizing elites, especially proponents of “Latin-Anglo-Saxon civilization,” a “mixture of the exquisite Spanish sentiment with that practical sense and mental equilibrium so genuinely North American.”¹¹³

Island justice officials and penitentiary medical staff shared these bipolar understandings about race. Racial dilemmas often played out during the inmate central booking process, when prison guards logged convict races according to one racial category, but later, penitentiary scientists used others. Justice officials also used statistics to determine the racial composition of island prisons. As Figure 2 below indicates, between 1917 and 1956 legal authorities recorded that any given year most Puerto Rican penitentiary convicts (in La Princesa through the late 1920s and Oso Blanco thereafter) were white and therefore salvageable. However, prisoners of color consistently accounted for 35-45 percent of the total penitentiary population during the years in question, and this despite their minority representation in national censuses.¹¹⁴ Indeed, the percentages of incarcerated people of color were higher than the overall racial percentages documented in the censuses. Similar patterns prevailed in island district jails. Meanwhile, in the

¹¹¹ Pedreira made a similar claim in *Insularismo*. He proposed Puerto Rico’s “reconstruction” while viewing miscegenation as an “obstacle” that hindered national unity. See Díaz Quiñones, *El prejuicio racial*, 30.

¹¹² Fernós Isern, *Nosce te ipsum*, 14.

¹¹³ Fernández y García, et al., eds., *The Book of Porto Rico*, xxi and xxiii.

¹¹⁴ See Mara Loveman and Jeronimo O. Muniz, “How Puerto Rico Became White: Boundary Dynamics and Intercensus Racial Reclassification,” *American Sociological Review* 72 (December 2007): 915-39.

Industrial Reform School for Boys, inmates of color predominated most years, which is suggestive of a racialized community to prison pipeline. Convict occupations and spiritualities intersected with these broader racial statistics. The most common occupations represented in Oso Blanco between the 1920s and midcentury included day laborers, farmers, peons, vendors (of fruit, root crops, and other goods), carpenters, artisans, and other skilled or semiskilled workers. In terms of belief, most identified as Catholic, and about a third as Protestant, Spiritist, or creedless.

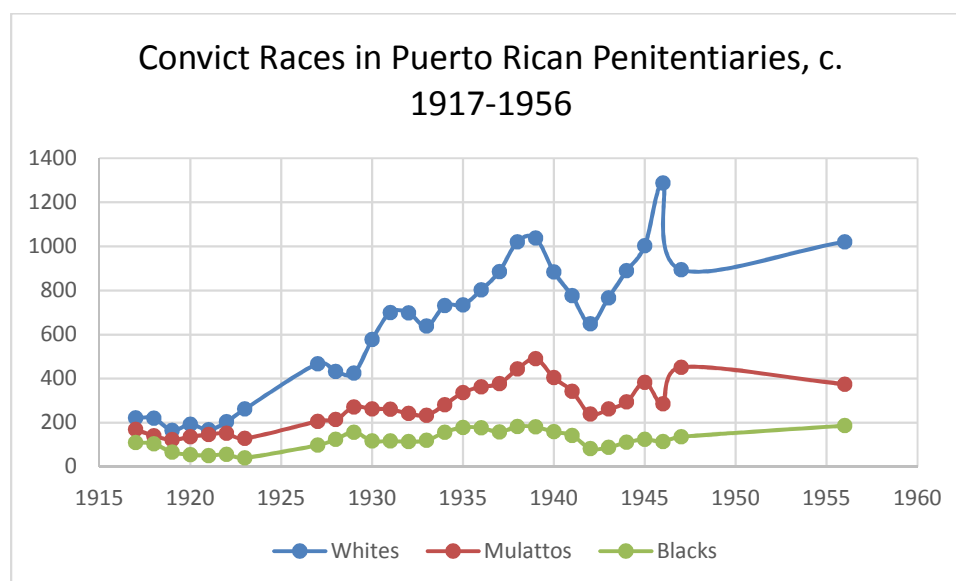


Figure 2: Comparative Racial Classifications of Convicts in Puerto Rican Penitentiaries, c. 1917-1956; adapted from *Reports of the Attorney General of Porto/Puerto Rico, AGPR*.

Oso Blanco lodged diverse communities that coexisted, but statistics also point to the criminalization of people of color. Even the use of the category “white” by justice officials was ambiguous, for to be a white Puerto Rican or jíbaro meant that, from the point of view of the U.S. colonial state, one was not white enough. Further, justice officials appear to have conflated the categories “white” and “mixed-race” (*blanco-trigueño*). This means the number of “pure” or “real” whites may be overrepresented in Figure 2 above. As scholar Isar P. Godreau claims, the Puerto Rican national discourses about race that (re)emerged on the eve of the populist state tried to overcome U.S. colonial power but at the same time privileged whiteness, stereotyped blackness,

and silenced charges of racism.¹¹⁵ On another level, since crimes were recorded by type and not race, it is difficult to gauge how many prisoners of color served time for crimes associated with their beliefs.¹¹⁶ Regardless, as scores of racially diverse convicts entered and exited Oso Blanco, many of them became medically legible. Medicine contributed to dissolving and reinforcing racial difference. Certain bodies were more subject to scientific incarceration than others.

Penitentiary Healthcare

Between the late 1920s and the mid-1940s, Oso Blanco officials and professionals finally brought penitentiary science into being. They used healthcare to even the racial playing field behind bars. Starting in the late 1920s, physicians treated prisoners for syphilis, hookworm, tuberculosis, and malaria. Convicts also benefitted from surgeries.¹¹⁷ Oso Blanco's medical hospital represented the next link in a strong chain that had expanded since the late nineteenth century. Penitentiary healthcare merged ethnography, positivist science, eugenics, and tropical medicine in a single brew, paving the way for the robust prison social science of the 1940s.

When Oso Blanco was inaugurated in spring 1933, U.S. and creole officials underscored the penitentiary's multifaceted "regenerative" potential.¹¹⁸ Mainstream newspapers reported that the new prison substituted La Princesa penitentiary in Old San Juan. During the festivities, Governor Beverley and other state bureaucrats received guests, delivered speeches, and led a tour

¹¹⁵ Isar P. Godreau, *Scripts of Blackness: Race, Cultural Nationalism, and U.S. Colonialism in Puerto Rico* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2015).

¹¹⁶ For example, according to the *Report of the Attorney General of Puerto Rico* (1933-1945), the "violation of health laws" and the "illegal practice of medicine, nursing, pharmacy, and dentistry" are mentioned on a yearly basis, but not in conjunction with races or spiritualities.

¹¹⁷ *Report of the Attorney General of Porto Rico* (1927-1930).

¹¹⁸ *Report of the Attorney General of Puerto Rico* (1933), 17-18.

of the institution, emphasizing Oso Blanco's advanced medical facilities.¹¹⁹ Before anyone even entered Oso Blanco, however, they encountered nineteenth-century Spanish feminist and sociologist Concepción Arenal's phrase, "Hate the crime and pity the criminal" (*Odia el delito y compadece al delincuente*). This message captured how many Ibero-Atlantic medical and social scientists understood penitentiary enterprise at the time.¹²⁰ In Figure 3 below, a blindfolded sculpture of justice is to the left of the inscription, and one of the law is to the right.



Figure 3: Oso Blanco's front entrance; photo taken by the author March 5, 2014.

Hating the crime and pitying the criminal required rational penitentiary science. Guards registered and photographed convicts upon their arrival. Next, inmates met with resident or visiting

¹¹⁹ Beverley was from Texas and spoke Spanish. He was a Presbyterian Christian and a Freemason. See Asenjo, *Quién es quién en Puerto Rico*, Primera edición (San Juan: Real Hermanos, 1933), 35; and Luis A. Otero González, "Brother John Will Harris: An Adopted Son from Texas," *The Scottish Rite Journal* (January-February 2012). Also see "Fue inaugurada oficialmente la nueva Penitenciaría de Puerto Rico," 2; and Ernesto J. Fonfrías Rivera, "Un magno festival para la inauguración del Presidio Insular," *La Correspondencia*, 16 mayo 1933, 1.

¹²⁰ Arenal was the first woman to attend university in Spain. She published widely about charity, social problems and groups, and the prison experience in Spain and beyond. For example, see *Estudios penitenciarios* (Madrid: Lib. de Victoriano Suárez, 1895); *Las colonias penales de la Australia y la pena de deportación* (Madrid: Lib. de Victoriano Suárez, 1895); and *La Cárcel llamada Modelo* (Madrid: Imp. T. Fontanet, 1877).

medical doctors. Physicians asked convicts about their bodily health, physically examined them, and treated them if necessary. If an inmate had tuberculosis or another infectious disease, then prison officials quarantined them. Sometimes this meant transferring convicts to other welfare institutions.¹²¹ At the nearby tuberculosis hospital, for example, cottages accommodated prisoners suffering from the disease as early as 1923.¹²² By the 1930s and 1940s, these facilities were in extensive use.

Oso Blanco formed part of an interconnected, tri-institutional medico-legal complex. Each division tried to heal a specific sector of the national population—whether lunatics, tuberculosis patients, or criminals. Journalists recalled that during Oso Blanco’s inauguration, state officials underscored the mutual dependence of the institutions comprising the scientific city.¹²³ Deputy Warden Toledo Vázquez specifically explained the penitentiary’s healthcare organization, and led a tour of the prison’s psychiatric, surgical, and dental facilities. These were under the supervision of López de la Rosa and dentist Ángel C. Cortés. Toledo Vázquez showed visitors the tuberculosis infirmary, a miniature version of the larger hospital just a short car ride away from Oso Blanco. He also introduced them to a convict named Miguel Quiñones, who assisted the surgery department.¹²⁴

¹²¹ For example, the district hospital of Bayamón or the School of Tropical Medicine in San Juan. See Victor F. F., “Departamento médico: impresiones y comentarios de un enfermero,” *El Despertar* (mayo 1950): 21. Also see *Reglamento para el régimen y gobierno de la Penitenciaría de Puerto Rico en Río Piedras*, 12-13.

¹²² *Report of the Attorney General of Porto Rico* (1923), 49.

¹²³ Mutual reinforcement went beyond science. The scientific city spilled outside of Río Piedras economically and logistically, for instance: “The penitentiary bakery supplies bread for the penitentiary, the San Juan district jail, the Insane Asylum, the government Orphan Asylums of Santurce, the Tubercular Hospital, and the Leper Colony. The value of the bread made during the year was \$20,040.42. The cost of bread to the Government is approximately half the amount which would have to be paid in the open market.” See *Report of the Attorney General of Porto Rico* (1929), 20; and *Twenty-Ninth Annual Report of the Governor of Porto Rico* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1930), 424.

¹²⁴ “Fue inaugurada oficialmente la nueva Penitenciaría de Puerto Rico,” 2 and 11; and Fonfrías Rivera, “Un magno festival,” 1 and 3.

Oso Blanco's hospital occupied the rear of the overall structure, near agricultural and other healthcare facilities (Figure 4 below). It was a beehive of activity in the 1930s and 1940s. The hospital space included a surgical hall equipped with the relevant tools, technology, and medicine.¹²⁵ There, medical staff studied, treated, and in some cases trained inmates. This represented a shift from the 1920s, when the closest most convicts got to healthcare enterprise was by serving as foot soldiers during public health crusades and national emergencies.¹²⁶ Later in the 1920s and especially by the 1930s and 1940s, however, convicts themselves increasingly became the objects of laboratory medicine.¹²⁷ In 1936, Oso Blanco obtained a diagnostic laboratory, which facilitated the study of convict bodies.¹²⁸ This contrasted sharply with the poor health and infrastructural conditions prevailing in Puerto Rico's municipal jails during the same period.¹²⁹

As Oso Blanco's hospital took shape in the early 1930s, state authorities became more interested in preventive health measures. Thousands of prisoners passed through the hospital and received consultations, examinations, and treatment (including prescriptions and surgeries). They had their blood drawn, which was sent to the laboratories of the Health Department for analysis.¹³⁰

¹²⁵ *Reglamento para el régimen y gobierno de la Penitenciaría de Puerto Rico en Río Piedras*, 12.

¹²⁶ For example, in 1921 prisoners participated in combatting the bubonic plague. Nearly 100 La Princesa convicts fought the epidemic in infected districts by providing cleaning services. None of them contracted the plague. See *Report of the Attorney General of Porto Rico* (1921), 412 and 422. Immediately after the hurricane of September 13, 1928, prisoners were put to emergency work around the island. They rendered "prompt and efficient service under the control of prison guards and of the National Guard." Several convicts from the Arecibo district jail were permitted to work without supervision and their "conduct was excellent." See *Report of the Attorney General of Porto Rico* (1929), 18. Adolescent males and children incarcerated in the Mayagüez Industrial Reform School assisted in draining and cleaning flood-prone areas to control malaria. See *Report of the Attorney General of Porto Rico* (1931), 16.

¹²⁷ *Report of the Attorney General of Porto Rico* (1929), 18.

¹²⁸ *Report of the Attorney General of Puerto Rico* (1935-1936), 3.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 22; and *Report of the Attorney General of Porto Rico* (1930), 16; *Report of the Attorney General of Porto Rico* (1931), 16; *Report of the Attorney General of Puerto Rico* (1932), 14; and *Report of the Attorney General of Puerto Rico* (1933), 16.

¹³⁰ See *Report of the Attorney General of Porto/Puerto Rico* (1931-1933).

Dental services revolved around prophylaxis and extractions. Between 1933 and the early 1940s, as penitentiary staff inched toward more robust social science and therefore a return to ethnography, medical services expanded.¹³¹

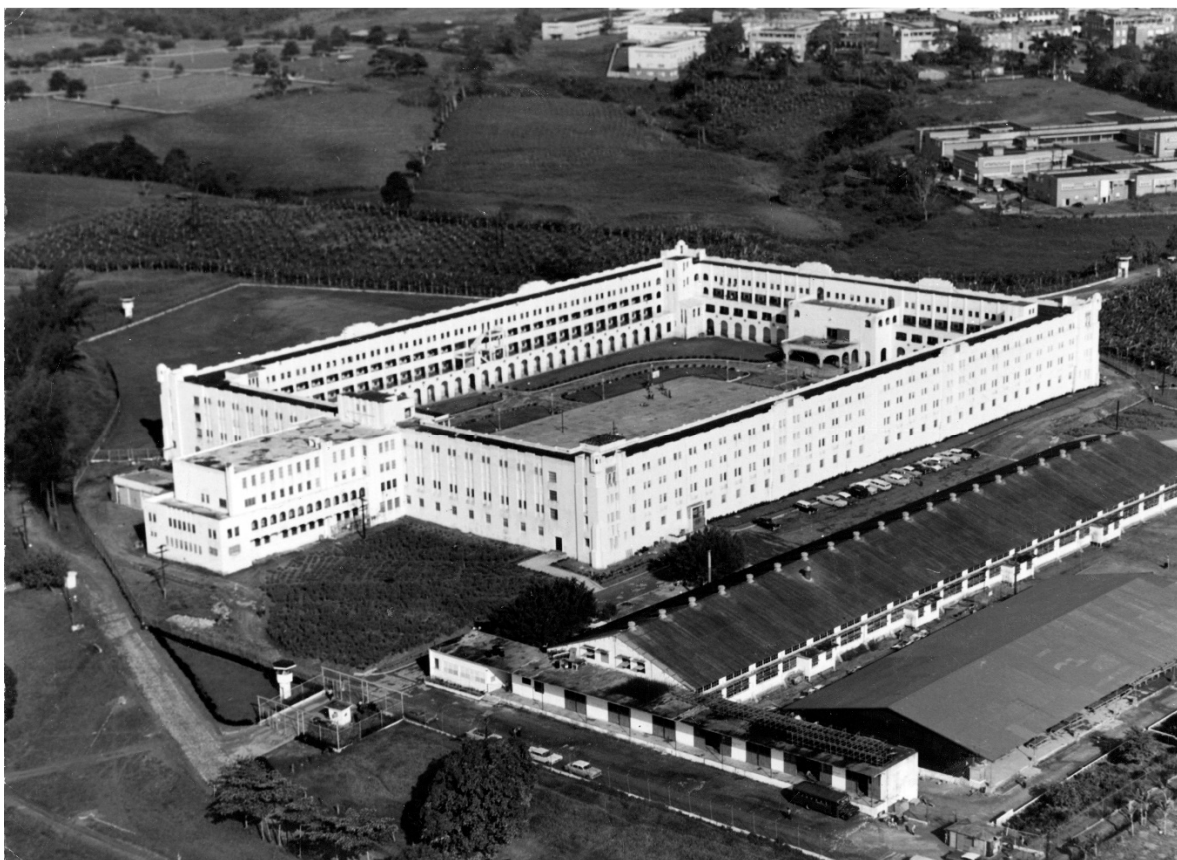


Figure 4: Rear view of Oso Blanco around midcentury; Image No. 037/4951/5109, Proyecto *El Mundo*, Biblioteca Digital Puertorriqueña, University of Puerto Rico-Río Piedras.

Between the mid-1920s and mid-1940s, thousands of inmates received medical attention in prison hospitals. Penitentiary convicts were best positioned for diagnosis and treatment due to their long sentences. Overall, as Puerto Rico's healthcare infrastructure improved, the daily average number of sick prisoners ascended. One exception had occurred in 1919, when sick convicts greatly increased because of the large number of female prostitutes confined in four district jails in conjunction with the war activities of the Justice Department. Most of these women

¹³¹ See *Report of the Attorney General of Puerto Rico (1933-1942)*.

suffered from venereal diseases. Influenza epidemics at La Princesa, some of the district jails, and the boys' reform school also resulted in the number of sick convicts to climb.¹³²

The systematization of diagnostic procedures and cures made government intervention even more necessary. Common ailments afflicting convicts in the middle decades of the twentieth century included hookworm, syphilis, and tuberculosis. Year after year, U.S. and creole legal officials referred to these three specific diseases and their treatment. In 1925, for example, Attorney General George C. Butte recorded that inmates received “special medical attention in the treatment of syphilis and uncinaria [hookworm].”¹³³ To treat their syphilis, more than 200 inmates were given “Salvarsan (arsphenamine).”¹³⁴ An arsenic-based compound, Salvarsan was toxic and eventually replaced by penicillin in the early 1940s.¹³⁵ But its use persisted in Oso Blanco through midcentury. By 1946, Oso Blanco healthcare also touted the services of eyes, ears, nose, and throat specialists.¹³⁶ This showcased the extent to which the health profession matured, and the degree to which various medical fields embedded themselves in the prison system.

El Despertar provided convicts with a forum through which to reflect on penitentiary healthcare. An inmate named Joaquín B., Jr., for example, published a brief report on Oso Blanco's hospital in summer 1949. The report offered a snapshot of the hospital's geography. The hospital

¹³² *Report of the Attorney General of Porto Rico* (1919), 642-43, 649, and 673.

¹³³ Born in California and raised in Texas, Butte earned a law degree and pursued a career as a legal scholar before serving as a colonial administrator in the Philippines. He was a Baptist Christian, Freemason, and military general. See Sam Hanna Acheson, Herbert P. Gambrell, Mary Carter Toomey, and Alex M. Acheson, Jr., *Texan Who's Who*, Volume 1 (Dallas: Texan, 1937).

¹³⁴ *Report of the Attorney General of Porto Rico* (1924-25), 23. Salvarsan was a synthetic drug produced to treat syphilis. German scientist Paul Ehrlich (1854-1915) developed the drug in 1909. The diluted yellow treatment was difficult and painful to inject. See London Science Museum, “Salvarsan treatment kit for syphilis,” accessed November 26, 2014, <http://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/broughttolife/objects/display.aspx?id=5630>.

¹³⁵ By 1951, each convict patient qualified for as many as “six million units of penicillin.” See Benjamin Santana, “La sección médica del Presidio cuenta ahora con hospital bien equipado,” *El Mundo*, 24 agosto 1951, 18.

¹³⁶ *Report of the Attorney General of Puerto Rico* (1946), 44.

entrance was located on the second floor of the prison. This floor of the clinic included a stocked pharmacy supervised by a “trusted” convict; an infirmary and curative facilities for patients with minor emergencies; a sanitary station for medical staff; a small room for convicts to receive weekend visits; and a petite dining room for inmate patients and laborers alike. The most prominent spaces of the second floor were four large rooms with hygienic facilities and 12-15 beds inside each. A clinician or “trusted” convict supervised these rooms day and night. Physicians and convict nurses interacted with patients and monitored their diets in these spaces. The basic infirm convict diet at the time comprised of oatmeal, milk, coffee, juices, soups, and potatoes.¹³⁷

An elevator linked the different areas of the penitentiary hospital. One could take it to the fourth (or top) floor of the clinic, where recordkeeping offices dotted the space. Every prisoner’s medical record, mug shot, and inmate file could be found in this archive. The top floor also included an isolated tuberculosis ward. The third floor of Oso Blanco’s hospital accommodated physicians. It housed specialist offices, a laboratory with microscopes, x-ray machines, an operating room, and materials related to “pneumothorax” (collapsed lung) treatment.¹³⁸ “Responsible and competent” employees and convicts managed these facilities.¹³⁹

Upon arriving at Oso Blanco, all prisoners visited the third floor of the hospital to get a physical, part of which is depicted in the convict sketch below (Figure 5). The physical exam determined whether convicts were contagious, if they could handle hard labor, or if they had another “defect” meriting attention. Prisoners also received vaccinations and had their blood

¹³⁷ Joaquín B., Jr., “Informe Clínico,” *El Despertar* (junio 1949): 17-18; and *Reglamento para el régimen y gobierno de la Penitenciaría de Puerto Rico en Río Piedras*, 13 and 15.

¹³⁸ A pneumothorax is an abnormal collection of air or gas that causes uncoupling of the lung from the chest wall, and that may interfere with normal breathing.

¹³⁹ Joaquín B., Jr., “Informe Clínico,” 17-18; and *Reglamento para el régimen y gobierno de la Penitenciaría de Puerto Rico en Río Piedras*, 15.

drawn. Further, the third floor housed a dental office where Cortés extracted convict teeth and provided them with prophylaxis treatments. The specialists working in Oso Blanco's hospital during the latter bookend of the interwar period included Ceferino Méndez Polo, a Tulane-educated surgeon.¹⁴⁰ He served as hospital director and was assisted by Catholic tuberculosis specialist, Fernando Luis Buxeda Vélez; eyes, ears, nose, and throat specialist Miguel A. Mariani; and bacteriologist José M. Dobal. Civilian and convict technicians assisted the physicians.¹⁴¹



Figure 5: José M. N., Ceferino Méndez Polo performing a physical, *El Despertar*, April 1950.

Another inmate, Joaquín R. B. V., also contemplated the significance of Oso Blanco's hospital in the pages of *El Despertar*. He chronicled the activities of Méndez Polo and the other

¹⁴⁰ As the penitentiary's primary medical officer, Méndez Polo inspected the facilities and made sure all health staff fulfilled their moral and sanitary duties. He also participated in Oso Blanco's Classification and Treatment Board. See *Reglamento para el régimen y gobierno de la Penitenciaría de Puerto Rico en Río Piedras*, 12-13; and Ceferino A. Méndez Polo, "Departamento Médico," *El Despertar* (abril 1950): 19.

¹⁴¹ Buxeda Vélez earned his medical degree from Hahnemann Medical College in Philadelphia in 1941. Upon returning to Puerto Rico, he worked at the Bayamón district hospital and served as a government medical official in Maunabo. Later, he directed the tuberculosis sanatorium in Mayagüez and was the resident surgeon at the Río Piedras sanatorium. Buxeda Vélez was a member of Puerto Rico's Medical Association, the American Trudeau Society, and the American College of Chest Physicians. He participated in island civic associations, including the Río Piedras Lions Club and the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks in San Juan (Lodge No. 972). Consult Asenjo, *Quién es quién en Puerto Rico*, Cuarta edición, 34; and Joaquín B., Jr., "Informe Clínico," 18. For an example of the limits of eyecare when Oso Blanco opened and its partial outsourcing to medical professionals beyond the prison, see Expediente del confinado José Sotero Ortiz Cruz, Caja 298, SEC, FDJ, AGPR.

physicians responsible for the bodily health of inmates. Méndez Polo periodically examined convicts and made recommendations about individual treatment. Buxeda Vélez cared for prison tuberculosis patients suffering from collapsed lungs and pneumonia. Surgery technician Pedro R. Astor, Méndez Polo's primary assistant, administered Oso Blanco's hospital on a day-to-day basis. He lent a hand with major surgical procedures and carried out minor ones on his own. Dobal supervised the penitentiary laboratory. His daily routine included collecting convict blood, fecal, urine, and skin samples. He also supervised the x-ray process. Dobal's work revealed if convicts were infected with specific ailments, namely hookworm, syphilis, and tuberculosis.¹⁴²

To understand convict bodies, Oso Blanco doctors and hospital staff compiled inmate medical histories. Echoing the ways in which nineteenth-century physician-anthropologists chronicled their patients, these reports had individual and familial components. According to Méndez Polo, considering domesticity unveiled if convict families had histories of "hereditary" or contractible disease (e.g., syphilis, pulmonary tuberculosis, cancer, diabetes, epilepsy, or mental illness). Such narratives described the illnesses, surgeries, and vaccinations prisoners experienced as children, adolescents, and adults. A physical exam followed the completion of the medical history.¹⁴³

When performing convicts' physicals, physicians logged their height, weight, general appearance, skin condition, and systemic functionality (e.g., cardiovascular, respiratory, digestive, lymphatic, nervous, and genital/urinary). They examined convicts' eyes, ears, noses, throats, muscles and tendons, and noted lesions, contusions, and evidence of "vice" due to alcohol, narcotics, or venereal disease. Extremities also warranted attention, especially if the prisoner had

¹⁴² Joaquín R. B. V., "Orientación sobre plan de clasificación y tratamiento," *El Despertar* (julio-agosto 1950): 21-22.

¹⁴³ Méndez Polo, "Departamento Médico," 19-20; and *Reglamento para el régimen y gobierno de la Penitenciaría de Puerto Rico en Río Piedras*, 12.

varicose veins, “deformities,” or was “flatfooted.”¹⁴⁴ The results of physicals prompted physicians to order chest x-rays, laboratory work, blood tests for cell counts and syphilis (via the Kahn method), urine exams for bacterial infections, and excrement analyses to check for parasites. By midcentury, there were routine exams for filariasis and bilharzia.¹⁴⁵ If the resources required for understanding and combatting disease were not available in the prison, then medical staff sought them beyond the wall or sent ailing convicts elsewhere.¹⁴⁶

Regardless of which hospital cared for convicts, physicians often decided that surgery was the best available treatment. Méndez Polo, for example, recounted the case of a young prisoner who underwent two surgeries. The first extracted a handful of nails from the inmate’s intestine. The second occurred two months later and removed a piece of iron and a laboratory needle from his intestine. The convict “recovered quickly and received psychotherapy.” During therapy sessions, he claimed that problems with other inmates influenced him to ingest hazardous objects. Thus, Méndez Polo observed that the convict’s bodily “redemption” depended on Oso Blanco medical staff. He stressed the importance of using surgery to salvage inmates (and their labor power), especially those debilitated by anemia (uncinariasis or hookworm).¹⁴⁷

The health activities reported by convicts and physicians in the pages of *El Despertar* were not entirely novel, however. Attempts to understand convict flesh and etiology dated to at least the

¹⁴⁴ See the physical evaluation form in Expediente del confinado Justo Rivera Pabón, Caja 477, SEC, FDJ, AGPR.

¹⁴⁵ Filariasis is a tropical disease caused by a parasitic worm spread by mosquitoes. It affects the lymph nodes and vessels, and swells and thickens the skin. Bilharzia is a tropical disease caused by infection with freshwater parasitic worms. It can affect the liver, bladder, and other organs.

¹⁴⁶ Méndez Polo, “Departamento Médico,” 19-20; and Victor F. F., “Departamento Médico,” 21.

¹⁴⁷ Méndez Polo, “Departamento Médico,” 19-20 and 26. After prison rebellions in late October 1950 and late January 1951, Oso Blanco’s hospital was remodeled. Journalist Benjamin Santana wrote a brief article about the restored and more sterilized facilities the following summer. The photograph accompanying the article is of an operation in progress. See Santana, “La sección médica del Presidio cuenta ahora con hospital bien equipado,” 18.

1920s, when Catholic physician and Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration official Pablo Morales Otero examined blood, feces, and spinal fluid obtained from the penitentiary. He identified intestinal parasites as a major problem in La Princesa. In 1925, the hookworm infection rate in the prison reached almost 50 percent, the highest rate for any welfare institution on the island. More than 50 percent of prisoners also had syphilis.¹⁴⁸ A few years later, when construction on Oso Blanco commenced, Morales Otero discovered some 40 percent of inmates still tested positive for hookworm. The syphilis rate dropped, but teetered between 14 and 19 percent depending on diagnostic method.¹⁴⁹ By the mid-1930s, López de la Rosa regularly diagnosed inmates with sprue, gonorrhea, tuberculosis, asthma, bronchitis, hernias, and hemorrhoids, among other conditions.¹⁵⁰

In the 1930s and 1940s, justice officials and physicians reported that thousands of convicts were examined, diagnosed, and treated in prison hospitals around the island every year. Blood samples helped identify diseases and guide overall treatment efforts. In 1946, a zoologist and a health clinician conducted a filariasis study at Oso Blanco, finding that the prison's 1300-1500 impoverished inmates slept without mosquito nets. Using blood samples analyzed in the penitentiary laboratory, the medical scientists learned that at least five percent of inmates were infected with the disease. They also detected other conditions, including scabies and testicular

¹⁴⁸ Pablo Morales Otero, "The Work of the Biological Laboratory of the Department of Health," *Porto Rico Health Review* 1, 3 (August 1925): 21-25.

¹⁴⁹ Morales Otero, "The Work of the Biological Laboratory of the Department of Health," *Porto Rico Health Review* 2, 9 (March 1927): 10-16.

¹⁵⁰ Sprue is a disease of the digestive tract that interferes with digestion and nutrient absorption. On López de la Rosa's and other doctors' diagnoses in Oso Blanco, consult, for example, Expediente del confinado Candelario Robles Pérez, Caja 219, SEC, FDJ, AGPR; Expediente del confinado Aquilino Sánchez, Caja 223, SEC, FDJ, AGPR; Expediente del confinado Juan Sepúlveda Figueroa, Caja 225, SEC, FDJ, AGPR; Expediente del confinado Damaso Robles, Caja 230, SEC, FDJ, AGPR; Expediente del confinado Luis Cruz Martínez, Caja 333, SEC, FDJ, AGPR; and Expediente del confinado Nicasio Rosado Rodríguez, Caja 310, SEC, FDJ, AGPR.

atrophy. The physicians traced most positive cases of filariasis to urban areas around the island, places that lent themselves to natural water collection and mosquito breeding.¹⁵¹ By the late 1940s, convict nurse Víctor F. F. recalled regular cases of hookworm, tuberculosis, syphilis, bilharzia, arthritis, and skin infections. Hookworm, however, was increasingly “under control.” Oso Blanco averaged about 50 cases a month at the time.¹⁵² Méndez Polo, for his part, emphasized anemia, bilharzia, and intestinal strongyloidiasis.¹⁵³

Oso Blanco physicians used visual aids to make their findings about disease intelligible to prison administrators and other health professionals. Figure 6 below is from a routine questionnaire that penitentiary medical staff completed when transferring tubercular inmates to the sanatorium. The diagrams specify the normal limits of healthy lungs. López de la Rosa employed the images in a case about a 40-year-old convict of color from Fajardo named Luciano Ayala Ramos, who was serving three years for first-degree breaking and entering. The visual aid offered penitentiary medical staff a guide with which to corroborate x-ray and surgical evidence. But there was little López de la Rosa could do for the ailing Evangelical day laborer. Officials confined Ayala Ramos to the penitentiary tuberculosis ward in April 1931. Warden Sixto Saldaña had the convict transferred to the nearby sanatorium in early June, and even then, Ayala Ramos could not make the short trip. His chest pain, bloody cough, weight loss, and weakness grew worse in subsequent weeks, and killed him in July 1931.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ F. Hernández Morales and G. González Barrientos, “The Incidence of Filariasis at the Insular Penitentiary for Men,” *The Puerto Rico Journal of Public Health and Tropical Medicine* 22, 1 (September 1946): 99-101; and Expediente del confinado Saturnino Rodríguez Andújar, Caja 325, SEC, FDJ, AGPR.

¹⁵² Victor F. F., “Departamento Médico,” 21.

¹⁵³ Méndez Polo, “Departamento Médico,” 19-20. Picó suggests that hookworm impacted island prisons well into the 1940s, albeit in diminishing numbers. See *El día menos pensado*, 89.

¹⁵⁴ Expediente del confinado Luciano Ayala Ramos, Caja 223, SEC, FDJ, AGPR.

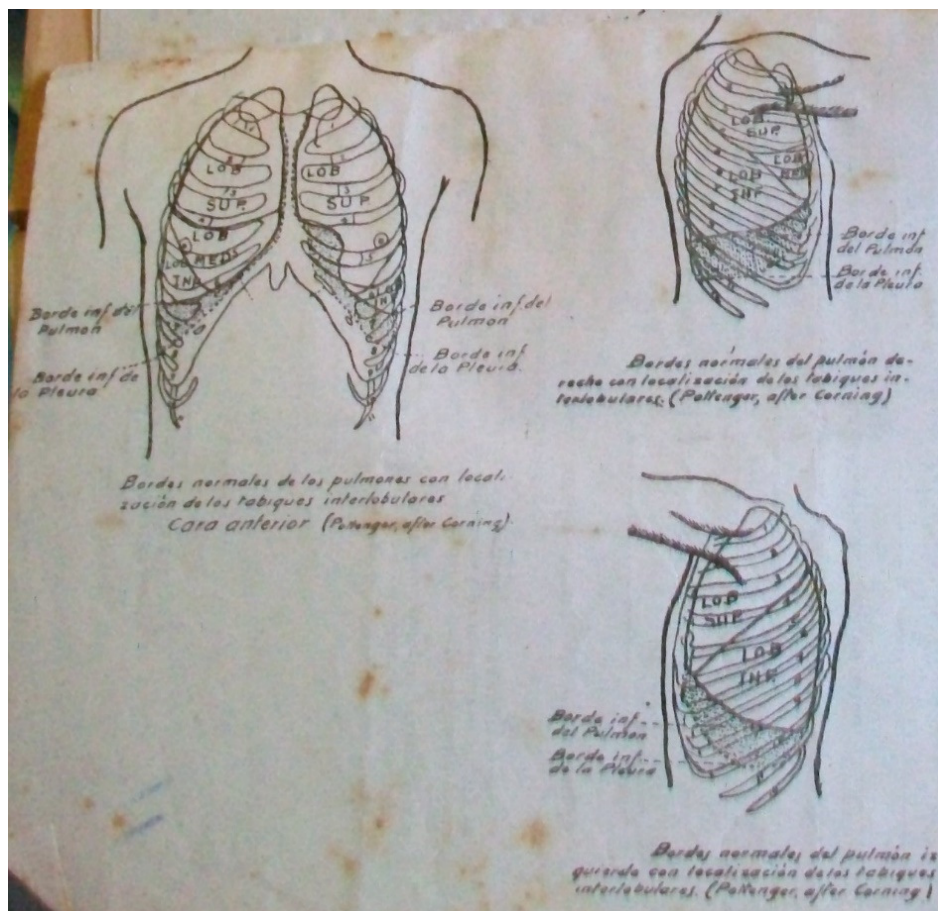


Figure 6: Anterior and side views of normal lungs, expediente del confinado Luciano Ayala Ramos, 1930-31, AGPR.

Physicians and prisoners labored in medical capacities both inside and beyond Oso Blanco. In the penitentiary, convicts assisted physicians and dentists, served as nurses, and cleaned the hospital premises, kitchens, and bathrooms, among other activities. Outside the prison, inmates worked in health “platoons”—groups that labored in neighboring welfare institutions to clean, serve as orderlies, oversee food production and distribution, milk cows, spray insecticide, collect and burn sputum, or provide other services. Most health platoons were stationed at the insane asylum and the tuberculosis sanatorium. Convicts also labored on embankment sites between these institutions.¹⁵⁵ The relative freedom convicts enjoyed moving between institutions gave many of

¹⁵⁵ See Expedientes de los confinados Mariano Vélez Rodríguez; Miguel Ángel Vargas Bonilla; Julio Vélez; Pedro Pérez Rivera; Celestino Colón Plaza; and Francisco Carlos Rodríguez, Caja 302, SEC, FDJ, AGPR; Expediente del

them a chance to escape. Although most were recaptured, dozens fled their platoons in the late 1930s and early 1940s.¹⁵⁶ Sometimes exposure to the elements and epidemics beyond prison walls figured into the equation of recapture. These circumstances exposed institutions to potential outbreaks when escapees returned or when sick convicts were otherwise moved between institutions.¹⁵⁷ Several convicts also feigned sickness to avoid certain work assignments, including those at nearby hospitals. They asked for laxatives and liniments to validate their claims. Víctor F. F. called this strategy “*el picheo*,” which today conveys conscious avoidance.¹⁵⁸

Convicts overwhelmingly lent their labor power to the state, however.¹⁵⁹ While prisoners worked beyond the Río Piedras medical complex, especially in road construction from 1928 to 1933, at other penal institutions, and for municipal governments, in the 1930s and 1940s the Health Department reliably employed them. Save for the first few years of Oso Blanco’s existence (i.e., 1932-1934, when the institution was refining its healthcare capacity) and the latter bookend of

confinado Inocencio Reyes Martínez, Caja 289, SEC, FDJ, AGPR; Expediente del confinado Martín Acevedo Rosa, Caja 284, SEC, FDJ, AGPR; and Expediente del confinado Juan González Santiago, Caja 230, SEC, FDJ, AGPR.

¹⁵⁶ See *Report of the Attorney General of Puerto Rico* (1938-1942).

¹⁵⁷ Penitentiary physicians were responsible for declaring and reporting epidemics to prison, health, and justice officials. See *Reglamento para el régimen y gobierno de la Penitenciaría de Puerto Rico en Río Piedras*, 13. On administrative concerns about the movement of sick convicts, see Expediente del confinado Nicasio Rosado Rodríguez, Caja 310, SEC, FDJ, AGPR.

¹⁵⁸ Victor F. F., “Departamento Médico,” 21.

¹⁵⁹ They toiled for the Interior Department on construction and road projects, park maintenance, and the Homestead Commission. Structures convicts helped build included the Capitol, the National Guard building, the island Chemical Laboratory, and Oso Blanco. Roadways included those to Mameyes, Río Grande, and Humacao, and those linking Miramar-Martín Peña, Río Piedras-Martín Peña, Ponce-Jayuya, and Mayagüez-the Boys’ Reform School. Convicts also helped construct and maintain Colón and Muñoz Rivera parks. *Report of the Attorney General of Porto/Puerto Rico* (1928-1933). The Homestead Commission emerged in response to the usurpation of land by tobacco and sugar interests during the first two decades of U.S. colonial rule. In 1923, the island government authorized the commission to develop areas to be used as urban settlements where artisans and workers could secure affordable housing (in some cases houses and lots), and for the establishment of farm homesteads. These became workers’ neighborhoods in Arecibo, Salinas, and Santurce. See “Land Settlement: Homestead Experiments in Puerto Rico,” *Monthly Labor Review* 35, 4 (October 1932): 814-17; Zaire Zenit Dinzey Flores, *Locked In, Locked Out: Gated Communities in a Puerto Rican City* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 34; and Teresa P. R. Caldeira, *City of Walls: Crime, Segregation, and Citizenship in São Paulo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

World War II (i.e., 1943-1945, when selective service and military base construction increasingly siphoned what otherwise would have been prisoner labor), the leading employer of island convicts was the Health Department. Between the late 1920s and mid-1940s, thousands of inmates spent tens of thousands of labor days working for Puerto Rico's Health Department. Their duties included cleaning docks, streets, gardens, and government offices, serving on health platoons that worked between welfare institutions, and participating in more specific sanitation efforts such as the destruction of tubercular sputum and the drainage of lowlands or marshes to control malaria. That the Health and Interior Departments consistently employed scores of convicts is suggestive of the state's investment in urban and scientific enterprises, and indicative of an attempt to provide convicts with a medical education and thereby access to sanitary citizenship.¹⁶⁰

Labor demands on both ends of the class spectrum bounced prisoners and physicians between welfare institutions. In the late 1930s and early 1940s, the superintendent of the insane asylum, Dolores M. Piñero, routinely requested and confirmed patient transfers to and from the penitentiary.¹⁶¹ She also made recommendations about the mental health of maroon convicts.¹⁶² In one case, Warden Saldaña sought to move a syphilitic prisoner to the insane asylum. The convict frequently attacked other inmates, and during a recent family visit he spit on his parents.¹⁶³ The Director of the tuberculosis hospital moved patients to and from Oso Blanco for treatment and

¹⁶⁰ If health-related labor was a way to impart a medical education to prisoners, then it formed part of a broader civic education like the one described by Chazkel in her work on Brazil. Chazkel shows how in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century Brazil the legal process afforded inmates and their families a "civic education" that served multiple purposes. Above all, it taught prisoners' and their networks how to navigate the criminal justice system, and by extension, the formal and informal rules that governed Brazilian society. See Chazkel, "Social Life and Civic Education in the Rio de Janeiro City Jail," 697-731.

¹⁶¹ Piñero served Puerto Rico through civic associations and her work in the Health Department. She was "Physician of the Year" in 1969. See Oscar Costa Mandry, *Apuntes para la historia de la medicina en Puerto Rico: reseña histórica de las ciencias de la salud* (San Juan: Departamento de Salud, 1971), 46.

¹⁶² Expediente del confinado Carlos Feliciano González, Caja 238, SDJ, SEC, AGPR.

¹⁶³ Expediente del confinado Juan Vélez Rodríguez, Caja 238, SEC, FDJ, AGPR.

surgeries. One time, an inmate's family accused prison guards of having purposely confined him to the penitentiary tuberculosis ward. After testing positive for the disease, the prisoner started to frequent the sanatorium for collapsed lung treatments.¹⁶⁴ Víctor F. F. recorded that a hepatitis expert named Dr. Hall, who was based at the School of Tropical Medicine in San Juan, also contributed to healthcare efforts at Oso Blanco. Not only did Hall examine and treat convicts, he supplied them with “candies and cigarettes.”¹⁶⁵

The circulatory experiences and exchanges of sick inmates and physicians suggest that Oso Blanco was never meant to be an isolated institution. Social disorder also disrupted the utopic, inward-looking medical vision that state authorities and health professionals had for the Río Piedras scientific city. For instance, on one occasion two convicts somehow managed to drink alcohol in excess and subsequently got into a fight while working on an embankment between the prison and insane asylum.¹⁶⁶ In another example, convicts that worked in food production and distribution between institutions successfully distanced themselves from penitentiary lands and surveillance to visit the nearby neighborhood of “El Cinco.” There, they sold prison clothes and shoes to purchase alcohol and sugarloaves, which they in turn smuggled into Oso Blanco.¹⁶⁷

The story of a white Spiritist with tattoos named Victor Figueroa Ayala also illustrates the interactive dynamism of the Río Piedras scientific city. In June 1938, the 25-year-old “jealous” prisoner attacked a woman named María Rosario with a small axe. Both worked in the

¹⁶⁴ Expediente del confinado Joaquín Muñiz Nevárez, Caja 238, SEC, FDJ, AGPR.

¹⁶⁵ Victor F. F., “Departamento Médico,” 21-22.

¹⁶⁶ Expediente del confinado Martín Acevedo Rosa, Caja 284, SEC, FDJ, AGPR.

¹⁶⁷ Expediente del confinado Manuel Cordero Iglesia, Caja 324, SEC, FDJ, AGPR.

sanatorium—Rosario as a laundress and Figueroa Ayala as a sputum dispenser.¹⁶⁸ This and other cases demonstrate that interpersonal problems surfaced as convicts carried out their labor responsibilities between institutions. Figueroa Ayala’s case also sheds light on the limits of the medical education prisoners received. Destroying sputum taught inmates how to dispose of infectious material.¹⁶⁹ Yet, it was dangerous, disgusting work. Other health-related work and accidents caused convict injuries. For example, an insecticide pump exploded in the face of a young black tattooed convict from San Juan named José García Lavergne, sending copper sulfate and calhydrate mixed with water directly into his eyes.¹⁷⁰ While race did not determine where convicts labored and who received treatment per se, certain assignments signaled the disregard officials had for convict bodies that since the era of slavery were deemed disposable.

The Case of José Capre Cajigas

Puerto Rican inmates benefitted from improving healthcare infrastructure. As the knowledge and diagnostic skills of physicians and the treatments they provided congealed, the number of convicts needing and receiving medical attention soared. The growing demand for medical services in Oso Blanco drove physicians to start outsourcing some of their responsibility. Public-private partnerships—a hallmark of U.S. imperial relations—shaped daily medical life at Oso Blanco.¹⁷¹ For instance, physicians of San Juan’s Miramar Clinic, which focused on internal medicine and surgery, flowed between the penitentiary and their private practices.

¹⁶⁸ The two had several kids out of wedlock. Expediente del confinado Victor Figueroa Ayala, Caja 243, SEC, FDJ, AGPR. Compare this and previous cases with Marilene Antunes Sant’Anna, “Trabalho e conflitos na Casa de Correção do Rio de Janeiro,” in Nunes Maia, ed., *História das prisões no Brasil*, Volume I, ch. 8.

¹⁶⁹ Sputum is a mixture of saliva, mucus, blood, etc. emitted from the respiratory system due to infection or disease.

¹⁷⁰ Expediente del confinado José García Lavergne, Caja 324, SEC, FDJ, AGPR.

¹⁷¹ McCoy and Scarano, *Colonial Crucible*.

Oso Blanco's López de la Rosa and Francisco A. Ferraiuoli of the Miramar Clinic, for example, played key roles in caring for the body of a 59-year-old white inmate suffering from elephantiasis named José Capre Cajigas.¹⁷² In the 1930s, this disease was associated with the perils of living in the tropics, and a major focus of tropical medicine research.¹⁷³ López de la Rosa and Ferraiuoli co-treated Capre Cajigas in 1933. Before landing in their hands, however, physician G. H. Barbosa of the Medical Surgical Institute of San Juan treated the convict. While under Barbosa's care in 1929, Capre Cajigas underwent surgery for "inguinal adenitis" (groin inflammation). The convict had a testicle removed in 1931 due to its "tumorization." A biopsy of the testicle completed at the recently opened School of Tropical Medicine disclosed a "serious" case of "granuloma," a mass of tissue produced in response to infection or inflammation. Barbosa also noted that Capre Cajigas' advanced age and "elephantiasis of the legs, scrotum, and penis" developed alongside "intermittent attacks of lymphangitis." Subsequently, Antonio R. Reyes, a physician based in the Santurce Clinic, examined the convict and found him to be "suffering from swelling of the legs, likely of filarial origin," and exhibiting symptoms of a "rectal condition characterized by pain and profuse hemorrhages." The prisoner was committed to bed.¹⁷⁴

López de la Rosa and Ferraiuoli built on the diagnostic and surgical work of Barbosa and Reyes. In January 1933, López de la Rosa observed that Capre Cajigas suffered from "chronic filariasis" in both legs and feet. The convict had "scars on the groin and scrotum." His "penis

¹⁷² Legal officials accused Capre Cajigas of perjury and sentenced him to two years in prison. He supposedly gave false testimony under oath concerning the death and burial of a relative of a female acquaintance. In his court appeal (April 1932), Capre Cajigas' attorney, Juan Valldejuli, argued that major errors marred the legal case against his client. The appeal was denied. See 44 D. P. R. 112 (1932) *Pueblo v. Capre*, Tribunal Supremo de Puerto Rico.

¹⁷³ Amador, *Medicine and Nation-Building in the Americas*; Mayo Santana, et al., eds., *A Sojourn in Tropical Medicine*.

¹⁷⁴ Expediente del confinado José Capre Cajigas, Caja 26, Serie Clemencia Ejecutiva (SCE), Fondo Oficina del Gobernador (FOG), AGPR.

foreskin” was “swollen.” These symptoms are either visible or taped over in Figure 7 below. Further, Capre Cajigas complained of “bodily pains” and “bloody spells of dysentery.” The inmate also relayed to López de la Rosa that he “could not get up from bed or stand.” Given this, López de la Rosa recommended transferring the convict provided “an ambulance is made available, because he resists walking.” As the year unfolded, López de la Rosa’s reports to justice officials fluctuated between Capre Cajigas having no and slight improvement. He resigned from the case in the summer, turning it over to Ferraiuoli. Between July and November 1933, Ferraiuoli corroborated the “facts” his colleague had established.¹⁷⁵



Figure 7: Elephantiasis patient José Capre Cajigas, c. 1933-34, AGPR.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

Capre Cajigas did not earn a full pardon until early 1934. Attorney General Winter, who in January 1933 acknowledged that the ailments from which Capre Cajigas suffered “will no doubt result in his death,” recommended the pardon. Winter suggested that “[a]ny man, no matter what his physical condition might be, could be confined in a penal institution, but it is the consequences of such a move that should be averted.” “Confinement,” he added, “would be detrimental to the already harassed health of this man.” Capre Cajigas was a “physical wreck.” This was enough grounds to release him from custody under the condition that prison physicians visit him and report changes accordingly.¹⁷⁶

The family of the convict also set the terms of medico-legal conversations. In fall 1933, when traveling to the penitentiary for examination became too taxing for Capre Cajigas, he wrote to Winter and Governor Robert H. Gore pleading for pardon and explaining his point of view. The convict assured authorities that frequent trips to the penitentiary would kill him. He was certainly desperate. As he put it, he was “knocking on death’s door” and had to prepare for the immaterial future. Governor Benjamin Horton granted him a full pardon in January 1934.¹⁷⁷ Capre Cajigas obtained clemency in a context of rapid change in island executive power. It seemed as if his family repeated their request for action every time a new acting governor entered office.

Capre Cajigas’ daughter, Carmen, especially nudged the state to act in favor of the health and spiritual care of her imprisoned father. She viewed the two kinds of care as entangled. As early as December 1932, Carmen submitted a legal petition on her father’s behalf. She argued that his elderly and sickly condition would create a logistical onus for all involved parties in terms of transportation. Moreover, his desire to spend the rest of his life with family was sufficient criteria

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

for release, or at the very least house arrest. Carmen's original request reached Rafael Hernández Usura of Puerto Rico's Legislative Economic Commission. Illustrating the importance of networks and friendships in obtaining favorable legal outcomes, Hernández Usura contacted interim Governor José Padín Rodríguez. He conveyed Carmen's "just" assessment and recommended swift patronage.¹⁷⁸ But subsequent changes in executive power delayed action.

With new executives came new opportunities to win state support. On April 22, 1933, Carmen wrote to Governor Beverley. She explained that her father's multiple ailments kept him from leaving the house, where he was confined to his room and bed. She challenged the recent decision of the Justice Department (April 18) to have him travel to the penitentiary from Santurce for medical exams. Carmen posited that this would create a burden for her father, "worsen his physical condition," and hurry him into the afterlife. She appealed to Beverley's "generous" and "magnanimous heart" to "save" her father from "unnecessary hardship," especially since he was "nearing his final days." To legitimize her position, she invoked "the faith that has always defined me and my family." In another letter, Carmen asserted that Capre Cajigas had committed perjury unintentionally. Emphasizing his "ignorance," she expressed that "my father has been tormented by a moral suffering that will end his life." She hoped to exchange "gratitude" for "mercy."¹⁷⁹

From the point of view of some convicts and their networks, then, belief became entangled with science and shaped redemptive practice. The cases featured in the bookends of this chapter suggest that convicts and their communities were concerned about more than flesh. Capre Cajigas, specifically, worried about his "last days." His daughter Carmen invoked the otherworld to help him win clemency. Sick convicts and their interlocutors set their sights on a horizon beyond legal

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

prescriptions and eugenics-tinged science. Whereas physicians diagnosed and treated inmates in prison laboratories, convicts could look elsewhere, including belief, to address their circumstances. The “science of personal experience” in Puerto Rico’s rural areas, shanties, and urban centers, Spanish folklorist Pablo Garrido observed in 1950, proved to be as fruitful as institutional medicine in improving or at least speaking to the health conditions of jíbaros, the working classes, and in this case, convicts.¹⁸⁰ Prisoners and their families also deployed religious and reverential language to convince authorities that their requests came from an honorable place, a trope consistent with the sensibilities of politicians and the medical class. And although physicians similarly believed in something—whether Christianity, Freemasonry, or secular progress—they were less inclined to address the intangible needs of convicts.

Conclusion

In late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century Puerto Rico, physicians used criminal and convict bodies to make subaltern groups legible medico-legally on one level and to imagine difference, commonality, and scientific and national progress on another. A trans-Atlantic web of knowledge and exchange resting on Spanish and U.S. colonial foundations defined this progress, as did a productive tension between science and the humanities. By the 1930s, when Oso Blanco

¹⁸⁰ Garrido found that most popular medical prescriptions addressed common health problems like asthma, the common cold, headaches, ear and stomach pains, fever, and eyesight issues. In total, his investigative team classified at least 116, including filariasis, the condition afflicting Capre Cajigas. Garrido’s team also documented at least 173 varieties of plant and tree species that jíbaros used as remedies, namely salvia leaves. Additional curative substances included different oils, waters, sugars, liquors, salts, animal parts and extracts, human bodily fluids, stones, and other material artifacts. For example, to treat tuberculosis, an infectious bacterial disease that ailed scores of island convicts in the mid-twentieth century, jíbaros relied on the *malá* plant; they sucked the raw juice out of it or consumed the juice by the spoonful. To treat parasitic anemia, another condition that impacted the health of convicts at the time, Utuado jíbaros put rusty nails retrieved from sterile fruit trees in water and later drank the tonic. Such nails were believed to have a renewing quality, as they triggered the regeneration of said trees. Garrido, “La ciencia médica del jíbaro,” *Puerto Rico Ilustrado* 41, 2111 (30 septiembre 1950), 48-51; and *Esoteria y fervor populares de Puerto Rico* (Madrid: Ediciones Cultura Hispánica, 1952).

opened, creole physicians understood prisons as laboratories through which they could diagnose and treat convict flesh, a project that contributed to defining the political future. As a laboratory, the penitentiary afforded physicians with the raw material to measure and resolve bodily and societal problems scientifically.¹⁸¹ Oso Blanco became a key site where physicians attempted to rectify these problems without as much recourse to ethnography, which had been a trademark of the speculative science of physician-anthropologists during the Spanish colonial period.

Modern laboratorial medical care in Oso Blanco absorbed the criminal anthropology and ethnographic science of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Each generation of knowledge modified what had come before. Yet, each discourse contributed to the single brew that became penitentiary science. Perhaps the main reason Oso Blanco healthcare barely resembled criminal anthropology, mug shots aside, was because the penitentiary gave physicians a chance to reclaim a stake in state enterprise. In other words, their work in Oso Blanco was more about their prestige and agency than it was about convicts. Contributing to the success and sophistication of Oso Blanco revived the legitimacy and significance of an island professional medical class that had not enjoyed major political clout since the turn of the twentieth century.¹⁸²

But prisoners were not blank canvases. Some convicts possessed extensive knowledge of the body and its functions. Many more recognized the fragility of their bodies and embraced the care offered by the state and prison medical staff. Inmates also looked beyond penitentiary science to get by and better. The epistemic levees regulating inmate health were porous. In traversing the boundary between various sciences, and in some cases belief, convicts and their families showed that blended and immaterial understandings were as valid as the speculative and laboratory science

¹⁸¹ Physicians and other modernizing elites understood tropical diseases and related conditions not only as plagues and scourges but as curses of underdevelopment. Mayo Santana, et al., eds., *A Sojourn in Tropical Medicine*.

¹⁸² The latter point is one of Trujillo Pagán's central arguments in *Modern Colonization by Medical Intervention*.

used to make sanitary citizens or secure public health. For everyone involved, but especially convicts, penitentiary science was about more than flesh.

Whereas in Puerto Rico medical discourses and activities tended to reinforce state power, in the neighboring Dominican Republic they generated open conflict between the state and convicts. However, prison laboratories in both societies furnished physicians with instruments of precision for the scientific study of inmates and societal problems. These tools were similar in each country. Still, the discursive purposes for which physicians used them varied. Puerto Rican and Dominican health practitioners made comparable contributions in the realm of bodily knowledge, but the two societies diverged in terms of the overall roles medical experts played in the drama of imprisonment. As the next chapter will show, more Dominican physicians (popular *and* titular) were likely to land in prison than Puerto Ricans. This was unlike most Puerto Rican physicians, who tended to collaborate with the state.

While government officials in both societies trivialized the expertise of most informal physicians, including itinerant healers, in the Dominican Republic many more healers were persecuted legally. This is suggestive of a medical pecking order, meaning that the substance of physicians' beliefs (e.g., positivism, fraternity, or messianism) ultimately decided their proximity to statecraft and their prospects for successfully negotiating power or incarceration. A similar pecking order existed in Puerto Rico at the end of Spanish rule but the Americans worked hard to divorce non-titled health workers from the state-sponsored health system.¹⁸³ The Dominican Republic, where an indirect colonial situation prevailed, traipsed in this regard. As laboratories premised on the control and regeneration of inmates and the use of certain legibility technologies, however, Dominican and Puerto Rican prisons resembled one another very much.

¹⁸³ Trujillo Pagán, *Modern Colonization by Medical Intervention*.

CHAPTER 2

Heterodox Medico-Religiosities: Dissident Healers and Physicians

On July 15, 1940, a group of rural leaders, traders, artisans, and farmers from the Los Cerritos and Rancho sections of Higüey in the eastern Dominican Republic wrote a letter to Trujillo. The letter concerned Jorge Lico, an English-speaking migrant who found himself in prison for “illegally” exercising medicine, a “crime” associated with *curanderos* (healers). While letter signatories numbered more than a dozen and came from all walks of life, the mayor of Los Cerritos, Felipe de Morla, led the charge. According to Morla, Lico was equipped with medical knowledge he had learned while serving the Red Cross in Europe during World War I. He was a “perfect practitioner” and provided services “without exploiting us.” Further, he covered patients’ pharmaceutical expenses out of pocket.¹

In addition to having served the international Red Cross, Lico’s English Atlantic/Caribbean background is suggestive of transnational and regional movement in an increasingly integrated world. Locally, however, Morla referred to the “campaign against witchcraft, spells, and illegal medicine” recently initiated by the Prosecutor of El Seibo province, northwest of Higüey. Although Morla and others “applauded” the efforts against “superstition,” they believed that state authorities had mistaken Lico’s identity. Therefore, they petitioned Trujillo to both free Lico and certify his medical expertise. After all, Lico was the only qualified person with “proven results” in the area who could provide “injections” and “urgent care.” Higüey residents also emphasized that Lico already had a record of “cooperating” with state-sanctioned medicine. He played a key role in “preserving the health” of rich and poor locals. For example, an “important” resident suffering

¹ Subsecretario de la Presidencia al Procurador General de la República, “Prisión del curandero Jorge Lico,” 20 julio 1940, No. 8566, Code 161, Caja 642, Secretaría de Estado de Justicia e Instrucción Pública (SEJIP), Serie Palacio Nacional (SPN), Fondo Presidencia (FP), AGN.

from malaria counted on Lico to give him “injections” that “boosted his [declining] heart rate.” Higüey sanitary authorities similarly praised Lico’s methods and efforts.²

As of the summer of 1940, no titular physician permanently resided in Higüey.³ Residents credited Lico with providing essential services to a rural community beyond the reach of physicians happily stationed elsewhere, namely in the cities of Ciudad Trujillo (Santo Domingo) and Santiago. Although under Trujillo the Dominican state and military established a sanitary presence around the nation and actively recruited titular physicians to work in the countryside, ordinary people still looked elsewhere to get by and better. In Higüey, residents sought out healers like Lico. They appealed to Trujillo’s self-professed affinity for “working men” to achieve their twin goals of freeing Lico and legitimizing his healing pedigree.⁴ Morla and company also invoked “health conservation,” which was another one of the “noble” pillars sustaining the Trujillo regime between the 1930s and midcentury. As Higüeyanos put it, they were “unflinchingly supportive” of the “saving politics of integrity, freedom, work, and morality wisely imposed by you [Trujillo] on blessed Dominican soil.” Trujillo had nothing to fear, for they were his “faithful friends.”⁵

Lico’s case is one of many from the modern Dominican Republic that lays bare the “illegality” and racialization of objectionable medico-religious practices. In neighboring Cuba, for example, where racial and cultural heterogeneity posed continual challenges to liberal notions of national citizenship, the “barbarous,” nomadic, and child-sacrificing *negro brujo* (black sorcerer)

² *Ibid.*

³ Not until November 1941 did the Dominican state pass law No. 617, which obligated recent medical graduates to serve for six months in rural districts lacking titular physicians before receiving exequatur status. M. R. Cruz Díaz, *Supersticiones criminológicas y médicas: apuntes folklóricos* (Santo Domingo: Editora Caribe, 1965), 140 and 157.

⁴ On the Trujillo government’s friend of the people and working men discourse, see Derby, *The Dictator’s Seduction*; and Turits, *Foundations of Despotism*.

⁵ “Prisión del curandero Jorge Lico.”

became a centerpiece of academic and state inquiry. Post-independence Cuban anthropologists, criminologists, and eugenicists produced impactful knowledge about this social category. They employed science to try and rid Cuba of its colonial past, especially its black or African components. In this context, the law created freedoms but also forms of repression, especially regarding rite-based Afro-Cuban religiosities such as Yoruba-Cuban *regla ocha*, Bantu-Cuban *reglas de congo* and *arara*, and male secret societies like *abakuá* and *ñáñigos*.⁶

In the middle decades of the twentieth century, the (re)emerging Dominican state similarly criminalized black medico-religiosities, including regional religious messianism, itinerant curanderismo, and urban *luá*.⁷ Despite the specific ideas and beliefs about morality, science, and healing intrinsic to each of these systems, the governments of Horacio Vásquez and Trujillo viewed the different groups as part of a collective, black criminal whole, one profoundly shaped by Haitians and Pan-Caribbean migrants. However, the government targeting of medico-religiosity in the modern Dominican Republic dates to the Spanish colonial period and the Black Codes of 1768 and 1784, which punished people of color for offenses against the propertied and leisure classes. The Codes sought to keep people of color from becoming maroons and criminalized them for having unrecognizable and threatening beliefs and practices.⁸ Dominican independence from

⁶ Bronfman, *Measures of Equality*, especially chs. 1-3. Also see Paton and Forde, *Obeah and Other Powers*; Paton, *The Cultural Politics of Obeah: Religion, Colonialism, and Modernity in the Caribbean World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); and Todd Ramón Ochoa, *Society of the Dead: Quita Manaquita and Palo Praise in Cuba* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010).

⁷ Scholars Carlos Hernández Soto and Martha Ellen Davis note that Dominican *luas*, or “material spirits,” of which there are at least 21, are the equivalent of Haitian vodou deities. In this case, materiality means “earthly expressiveness” instead of “spiritual” or “elevated” expressions. See Hernández Soto, “To Die in Villa Mella,” and Davis, “A Tire Blowout Gives Entry into the World of Spiritism,” in Eric Paul Roorda, Derby, and Raymundo González, eds., *The Dominican Republic Reader: History, Culture, Politics* (Durham: Duke, 2014), 405 and 408.

⁸ For example, the Codes outlawed the evening funerary rituals of enslaved and free people of color, Africanized “secret rites,” and unsanctioned medicine. See Bernaldo de Quirós, *Penalidad en el Código Negro de la Isla Española*, edited by Wilfredo Mora (Santo Domingo: Sociedad Dominicana de Criminología, 2006); and Liliana Obregón, “Black Codes in Latin America,” *Encarta Africana*, Third edition (1998-2000), 1-11. This was also true of Haiti. See Kate Ramsey, *The Spirits and the Law: Vodou and Power in Haiti* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

Spain and Haiti at different junctures in the nineteenth century exacerbated the racial targeting outlined in the Black Codes.

In the early twentieth century, under Dominican and U.S. rule, the criminalization of non-sanctioned healing regimes coincided with the rise of *Olivorismo*, *caudillo* Desiderio Arias in the north, and *gavillero* (armed bandit) insurgencies.⁹ Between the 1920s and midcentury, Dominican authorities cast a wider disciplinary net in terms of who they targeted in defense of the health and prosperity of the nation. Healers, sorcerers, *luá* practitioners, and even radical humanistic physicians increasingly fell under the purview of the state during these years.¹⁰ Historian Lauren Derby's recent research, for example, links the colonial and modern periods in this vein. She explores rumors about demonic animals (*bacás*) in the Dominican-Haitian borderlands as a form of sorcery and historical memory. Using popular narratives of *bacás*, she insists that the dread and antipathy represented by these creatures encapsulate histories of trauma related to the use of animals and their place in the colonial cattle economy, in hunting and killing Indians and escaped slaves, and in the surveilling of political foes by the Trujillo and François Duvalier regimes.¹¹

⁹ *Olivorismo* was a rural, peasant movement of religious, social, and political importance. It was based in San Juan de la Maguana, near the borderland with Haiti, and founded by the "man-god" Olivorio Mateo (also known as Liborio or Papá Liborio), an illiterate, kinky-haired, and dark-skinned day laborer from La Maguana Arriba. See Irio Leonel Ramírez López, "Dios Olivorio Mateo: The Living God," in *The Dominican Republic Reader*, 411-14; Derby, *The Dictator's Seduction*, ch. 7; and Davis, ed., *La ruta hacia Liborio: mesianismo en el sur profundo dominicano* (Santo Domingo: Editora Manatí, 2004).

¹⁰ Building on fn. 7 above, *luá* (plural *luases*) refers to vodou spirits with mysterious invisible powers that link the (im)material realms and intervene in human affairs. *Luá* is the Dominican Spanish singular of the Haitian term *loa/lwa*, or a supernatural entity that is propitiated and/or feared by Dominicans. The term is also interchangeable with *seres* (beings), *misterios* (mysteries), *santos* (saints), *santos mágicos* (magical saints), and *demonios* (demons). *Luá* names vary by region and person and are not always consistent. Compared to Haitian vodou priests, Dominican *luá* practitioners are not as concerned with the origins of the *luases* whose assistance and protection they seek. Dominican *vodú* does not have a shared doctrine. Rather, it is understood in terms of rituals, ceremonies, and magical assumptions. Most Dominican *luases* come from the Haitian pantheon of spirits and share the names of their Christian and African counterparts. There are also local *luá*, "real" men or women who in life distinguished themselves as military or religious leaders. Brendan J. Thornton, "The Cultural Politics of Evangelical Christianity in the Dominican Republic," Doctoral Dissertation, Department of Anthropology, University of California-San Diego, 2011, 64 and 91-97.

¹¹ Derby, *The Dictator's Seduction*, ch. 6; "Trujillo, the Goat: Of Beasts, Men, and Politics in the Dominican Republic," in Martha Few and Zeb Tortorici, eds., *Centering Animals in Latin American History* (Durham: Duke,

Local, regional, national, and imperial anxieties concerning objectionable medico-religiosities contributed to modern Dominican state-building. Meanwhile, across the Mona Passage in neighboring Puerto Rico, U.S. rule brought freedom of worship, and along with it, scores of Protestant missionaries. In the twentieth century, Puerto Rican healers did not experience the same scrutiny endured by their Dominican counterparts. This was because many of those battles had already transpired under Spanish Catholic rule, when the colonial government persecuted Freemasons and other groups for promoting “heterodoxies” and alternative political orders.¹² While such concerns reemerged in the twentieth century, island authorities experimented with ways to control and domesticate “suspicious” beliefs and medical practices from a safe distance. Román illustrates that physicians and other “rational” government authorities used harsh rhetoric to condemn the medico-religiosities of Puerto Rican peasants, but they tolerated much in practice. Potentially menacing figures and movements like La Samaritana Julia Vázquez, the Hermanos Cheos, and the Virgin of Sabana Grande hardly engaged in acts of violence against the state. For the most part, these “inspired” men and women kept to themselves and preached in the countryside. The real threats they posed were as conjurers of alternative political utopias.¹³

2013), 302-28; and “Male Heroism, Demonic Pigs, and Memories of Violence in the Haitian-Dominican Borderlands,” *UCLA Center for the Study of Women* (UCLA: UCLA Center for the Study of Women, 2010), retrieved from: <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/1q5711vd>.

¹² José M. García Leduc, *Intolerancia y heterodoxias en Puerto Rico, siglo XIX: protestantes, masones y espiritistas-kardeccianos reclaman su espacio social, c. 1869-1898* (San Juan: Isla Negra Editores, 2009).

¹³ By the mid-twentieth century, the Puerto Rican state celebrated the “miracle of order.” The commonwealth government had an interest in harnessing the power of grassroots religious mobilization and putting the faithful at odds with the Catholic hierarchy. The state did this to preserve the recently installed, “progressive” democratic order modeled after the U.S. The “appearance” of the Virgin of Sabana Grande in *barrio* Rincón, for example, did not trigger the use of excessive force by the state. Police were mindful of pilgrims’ values, many of which they shared, and were active participants in legitimizing the spectacles and curative miracles performed in and around Rincón. Román claims that the state’s “tolerance” rested on “self-interest,” namely the central government’s “populist strategy,” which sought to empower and domesticate Puerto Ricans by caressing their most intimate sensibilities. The resulting “harmonious relationship” generated government authority while avoiding the hostility of peasants. See Román, *Governing Spirits*, 4-17 and 177-81, and more broadly, chs. 2, 4, and 6.

Whereas in Puerto Rico state officials and collaborators domesticated peasant health movements and religiosities to build and preserve a new political status quo and to transform the island into a showcase for colonial democracy and industrial progress, in the Dominican Republic the state hoped to achieve similar goals by repressing the medico-religiosities of marginalized communities. Yet, as Lico's case indicates, even in the Dominican Republic there was room for negotiation, just as in the Puerto Rican case island authorities subtly criminalized popular beliefs and practices. This chapter attempts to peel away the many layers (dis)connecting the two societies in this regard. The core of the chapter is on the Dominican Republic, but I emphasize points of similarity and contrast with Puerto Rico. I mainly focus on the Dominican case because the literature is less developed in terms of intersections of crime, medicine, and belief.

This chapter utilizes the mainstream press, memoirs, and other archival and published sources to examine how and why Dominican authorities condensed and criminalized different medico-religiosities between the late nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries. I argue that various iterations of the Dominican state outlawed belief-based medical practices in order to neutralize the emancipatory effects of popular knowledge and movements. This happened on at least two levels. First, the Dominican state trivialized the intellectual integrity of medico-religiosities that challenged its hard-earned cultural hegemony, a process dating to the Haitian occupation of the nineteenth century and that culminated in the U.S. military occupation and dictatorships of the early twentieth. Portraying medico-religious healing regimes like *Olivorismo*, *curanderismo*, and *luá* as culturally retrograde and politically hostile enabled the Dominican state's monopolization of guardianship of the nation.

On another level, the Dominican state confronted the political opposition of competing secular factions. These factions were comprised of individuals who had the same class and race

backgrounds as members of the government, but who were imprisoned for their real and discursive transgressions against the state, especially the Trujillo regime. Physician Juan Isidro Jimenes Grullón, for instance, fit this description. Unlike incarcerated healers, whose beliefs developed under more autonomous circumstances, the secular humanism of Jimenes Grullón was rooted in his prison experiences. However, the Dominican state's two-tiered approach to criminalizing belief was a leaky enterprise. Communities came together to legitimize their methods and personnel even if (in)formal laws erected barriers. While it is unclear whether Lico specifically was eventually freed, this was probable given local dynamics, the needs of Higüey, and the oratory employed by Morla and other signatories. Ironically, Higüey's social basis of health and healing, and vision of community justice, reproduced the principles espoused by the Trujillo regime.¹⁴

Few historians have understood intersections of crime, punishment, and belief as indicative of an integrated Caribbean. Increasingly, however, scholars are transcending national frames in this vein by either comparing societies or unpacking the legacies, discourses, and cultural practices that influenced justice policy-making in specific societies.¹⁵ This chapter also builds on the recent scholarship on miracles and public spectacles in the modern Hispanophone Caribbean.¹⁶ It engages the sparse historiography on crime and punishment in the region, which rarely considers medico-religiosity, if at all.¹⁷ Scholars Wilfredo Mora and Martha Ellen Davis have developed the themes

¹⁴ Steven Feierman and John M. Janzen, eds., *The Social Basis of Health and Healing in Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

¹⁵ Román, *Governing Spirits*; Dain Borges, "Healing and Mischief: Witchcraft in Brazilian Law and Literature, 1890–1922," in Salvatore, Aguirre, and Joseph, eds., *Crime and Punishment in Latin America*; Ramsey, *The Spirits and the Law*; Bronfman, *Measures of Equality*; and Jonathan Skinner, "Interning the Serpent: Witchcraft, Religion, and the Law on Montserrat in the 20th Century," *History and Anthropology* 16, 2 (2005): 143-65.

¹⁶ Román, *Governing Spirits*; and Derby, *The Dictator's Seduction*.

¹⁷ Picó's *El día menos pensado*, for example, summarizes multiple aspects of life behind bars in Puerto Rican prisons except religion. This is ironic considering Picó's Jesuit background and his insistence on incorporating religious perspectives into Puerto Rican historical work.

of Dominican crime and spiritual medicine, respectively, but seldom have they done so in conjunction.¹⁸

Regarding an integrated Hispanophone Caribbean, specifically, Román argues that Cuban and Puerto Rican “misbelieving miscreants” fell under renewed suspicion in the early twentieth century. In Cuba, “superstitions” were construed as obstacles to republican ambitions since they could “prove” that Cubans of color were not ready for citizenship. Those who opposed universal male suffrage cited the links between superstition and child murders to discredit black and mulatto political candidates and voters. In Puerto Rico, U.S. colonial officials similarly deemed the local population as unfit for self-rule. Though campaigns against superstition did not target Puerto Ricans of color in the same manner as Cubans, the state subtly racialized the rural and urban poor. Román does not consider Hispaniola. A fundamental difference between the Greater Caribbean’s “wings” (Cuba and Puerto Rico) and its “core” (Haiti and the Dominican Republic) is that whereas the former societies embraced organic acts and constitutional charters that established and “respected” the freedom of worship, in the latter societies governments legally targeted specific beliefs and practices.¹⁹ Even in Cuba and Puerto Rico, those who wanted to end “atavistic” customs and behaviors relied on contortions and procedural technicalities to undermine the law.²⁰ Rational government *across* the Caribbean was as “irrational” as those bearing the brunt of legal disparity.

¹⁸ Mora, *Criminología y violencia urbana*; and Davis, *La otra ciencia: el vodú dominicano como religión y medicina popular* (Santo Domingo: Editora Universitaria, 1987). Dominican anthropologists have also developed insightful but secluded studies about race and religiosity. See Hernández Soto, *¡Kalunga eh! Los Congos de Villa Mella* (Santo Domingo: Editorial Letra Gráfica, 2004); and José G. Guerrero, *Cotuí: villa, carnaval, cofradía y palos* (Santo Domingo: Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo, 2005).

¹⁹ Derby posits that *Olivorista* attempts to fashion “divine democracy” reflected their desire for a more balanced moral economy, for an “architecture of rule” beyond the reach of an intrusive and abusive state. The Dominican state, in turn, interpreted the Olivorista search for a “higher moral order” as politically hostile. Derby, *The Dictator’s Seduction*, ch. 7. Also see Ramsey, *The Spirits and the Law*; and Laird W. Bergad, “¿Dos alas del mismo pájaro? Notas sobre la historia económica comparativa de Cuba y Puerto Rico,” *Historia y Sociedad* 1 (1988): 143-54.

²⁰ Román, *Governing Spirits*, 5-8 and 10-11.

Positivist Science and Popular Medicine

The tension between state and popular approaches to morality, science, and healing in the twentieth-century Dominican Republic did not emerge in a sociocultural or political vacuum. Much of what became common knowledge about criminalized medico-religiosity and redemptive practice had roots in the “modernizing” and global capitalist processes of the early and late modern periods.²¹ By the nineteenth century, Dominican politicians, judges, intellectuals, and others had transformed notions of religion and individual rights. Dominicans had Haitians (and their revolution) in mind when considering these issues.²² And while they looked to the global north as they tried to build a modern nation, they also looked within the Caribbean.²³

Puerto Rican educator Eugenio María de Hostos, for instance, helped install the positivist tradition in the Dominican Republic. In 1875, he embarked on a mission to guide Dominicans to “modernity.” In Puerto Plata, in the northern part of the country, Hostos educated a group of disciples later charged with spreading a gospel of *moral social* (social morals). His gospel was “evolutionism in contrast to revelation,” and preferred experiments over dogma, rationalism over persuasive oratory.²⁴ Dominican intellectuals adapted Hostos’ teachings to the Hispaniolan context in polarizing ways. Many used his ideas to suggest that their country was “underdeveloped” and in “decay.” Some even claimed that Dominicans were “degenerating” and “losing their stature,

²¹ Luis Nicolau Parés and Roger Sansi, eds., *Sorcery in the Black Atlantic* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

²² Sibylle Fischer, *Modernity Disavowed: Haiti and the Cultures of Slavery in the Age of Revolution* (Durham: Duke, 2004); and Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon, 1995).

²³ Martínez Vergne, *Nation and Citizen in the Dominican Republic*.

²⁴ Mats Lundahl and Jan Lundius, *Peasants and Religion: A Socioeconomic Study of Dios Olivorio and the Palma Sola Movement in the Dominican Republic* (Hoboken, NJ: Taylor and Francis, 2012), 572; Ciricao Landolfi, *Evolución cultural dominicana, 1844-1899* (Santo Domingo: Editora Universitaria, 1981), 137; and Eugenio María de Hostos, *Moral social*, Segunda edición (Madrid: Imprenta de Bailly-Bailliere é Hijos, 1906).

physical rigor, and mental potency.”²⁵ These observers credited starvation, political anarchy, warfare, and social Darwinism for the country’s dismal prospects. They went so far as to blame “African blood” and Haitian proximity to explain Dominican problems.²⁶

Socially conservative liberals espoused the dictum of order and progress from the 1870s onward. Hostos and Américo Lugo, for example, postulated that Dominicans were a people but not yet a nation. Citizens still needed to be formed by state institutions such as schools and prisons, which in turn would forge a lasting democratic culture. Biological determinism emanating from Europe partly influenced Lugo. He held the view that “the state must lead because many citizens were at best uneducated and thus ignorant of republican ideals and moral values; at worst, they were seen as decadent due to racial mixture, a tropical environment, and poor diet.”²⁷ His perplexed view of rural Dominicans ran deeper: “Our peasants are an ignorant race that vegetates without hygiene, prisoners of the most repugnant sicknesses that due to their lack of foresight, their violence and their duplicity, are generally incestuous, gamblers, alcoholics, thieves, and murderers.”²⁸ Another Dominican liberal, Francisco Henríquez y Carvajal, was just as unforgiving. Dominican society “is a chaotic mess of crime and blood... [M]ost Dominicans are inferior beings, infected by vices or dreams that completely distort their intellectual effort.”²⁹ Only hygiene, education, and other institutions could stop the “degeneracy.”³⁰

²⁵ Lundahl and Lundius, *Peasants and Religion*, 572.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 572-73.

²⁷ See Derby, *The Dictator’s Seduction*, 15; and *El Liberal*, 26 octubre 1900.

²⁸ Derby, *The Dictator’s Seduction*, 24 and 30; and Américo Lugo, “El estado dominicano ante el derecho público,” *Obras escogidas*, Volume 1 (Santo Domingo: Ediciones de la Fundación Corripio, 1993), 33.

²⁹ Derby, *The Dictator’s Seduction*, 16; and *El Liberal*, 24 octubre 1900.

³⁰ Derby, *The Dictator’s Seduction*, 70 and 277, fn. 21. On the deprecated image of the Dominican peasantry in the nineteenth century, see Raymundo González, “Ideología del progreso y campesinado en el siglo XIX,” *Ecos* 1, 2 (1993): 25-44; and “Notas sobre el pensamiento socio-político dominicano,” *Estudios Sociales* 20, 67 (1987): 1-22.

Hostos' teachings, in their original and adapted forms, left a lasting impression on Dominican society. Some of his ideas generated opposition, especially from the Catholic Church. In 1879, for instance, a secular law established teachers' training schools in the country. Public schools replaced courses on religion with classes in social morals. Dominican clerics cringed over "schools without God" and joined forces to respond to the challenge. They founded Catholic schools and different religious orders, and declared the country "missionary territory" anew.³¹ Priests also intensified their preaching against Haitian influences on popular religion. As scholars Mats Lundahl and Jan Lundius note, Dominican clergy and government officials portrayed Haitian influence as "spiritual poison":

Among the things which have come to us from the people of Louverture and [Henry Christophe], no less harmful than their barbaric hordes, we find the dance of cuyaya, cannibalism, voodoo, witchcraft and other sorceries and customs, some of which have introduced themselves into the simple customs of Dominicans, to such an extent that it now has proved to be impossible to eradicate their dark roots.³²

Alongside objectionable Haitian beliefs and practices, government concerns about Dominican curanderismo dated to the nineteenth century. In 1883, for example, war veteran and national poet Juan Antonio Alix (of partial Haitian descent; his father hailed from Cap-Haïtien)

On Lugo's view of the peasantry, consult *A punto largo* (Santo Domingo: Impresora la Cuna de América, 1901), 22-23. On the discourse of hygiene in constructing Dominican citizenship, see Martínez Vergne, *Nation and Citizen in the Dominican Republic*.

³¹ Lundahl and Lundius, *Peasants and Religion*, 578; and Antonio Lluberes, "Notas históricas sobre la enseñanza de la religión católica en las escuelas, 1795-1983," *Estudios Sociales* 16, 52 (junio-agosto 1983): 9.

³² Lundahl and Lundius, *Peasants and Religion*, 578; and Emilio Rodríguez Demorizi, "Contra el Voudou," *La Nación*, 5 octubre 1945, 5. It is important to note that while Haitians shaped Dominican vodú, the opposite was also true. French plantation slaves often escaped to live with Spanish-speaking maroons in eastern Hispaniola. Further, the most "violent expression" of Haitian vodou, the Petwo/Petro loa cult, seems to have origins in Santo Domingo. According to Moreau de Saint-Méry, a renowned French chronicler of the Haitian Revolution: "In 1768, a Negro of Petit-Goâve, of Spanish origin, abused the Negroes' credibility in superstitious practices, and gave them the idea of a dance analogous with that of Vaudoux, but with much more rapid movements... [E]ven spectators get electrified by the spectacle of these convulsive exercises; they share the drunkenness of the actors, and by their singing, and an irresistible rhythm, they whip up some kind of common frenzy." Consult Lundahl and Lundius, 579, fn. 67; and Sara E. Johnson, *The Fear of French Negroes: Transcolonial Collaboration in the Revolutionary Americas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

published “Los Curanderos.” In the poem, Alix referred to the different classes of healers that existed in the country, including the “surgeons” of the revolutionary period who “amputated arms and legs” and the “superstitious” ones who used “magical prayers” and dispensed “foul prescriptions.” To cure indigestion, for instance, healers recommended tea made of herbs and “dog dung.” According to Alix, healers did not have to physically examine patients’ bodies to determine what ailed them. Rather, depending on the symptoms, they only needed to consult bodily fluids, such as urine.³³ Narratives of healers emerge in late-nineteenth-century press accounts as well. In 1896, a Santiago-based newspaper reported that a sorcerer named Carlos de Vargas frequently gathered large “crowd[s] of curious and sick people” and “kept the nervous public in a state of constant commotion.”³⁴ He cured those who sought his services and gave visitors the sensation of “being in the heart of Africa.”³⁵

Dramatic narratives of Dominican healers persisted in the early twentieth century. Alix published poems about the island peasantry and their “vices”: vagrancy, sorcery, and *vodú* rituals. In “Los brujos y adivinos expendedores de guaguá,” he lamented that some Dominicans were more versed in sorcery than Haitians.³⁶ In “Las bailarinas del judú en la calle de la ‘Victoria,’” Alix emphasized the Pan-Caribbean dimensions of occult ritual. He chronicled the story of four women (three Dominican and one Puerto Rican) who police officers had caught dancing *judú* (luá)

³³ Cruz Díaz, *Supersticiones criminológicas y médicas*, 141 and 146; and Juan Antonio Alix, *Décimas*, edited by Joaquín Balaguer, Segunda edición (Ciudad Trujillo: Librería Dominicana, 1961). On Alix’s Haitian ancestry, see “Familias haitianas al servicio de nuestra independencia,” *Hoy*, 9 diciembre 2005; and Edwin Espinal, “Juan Antonio Alix, a 180 años,” *Hoy*, 9 noviembre 2013.

³⁴ *La Prensa*, 18 octubre 1896.

³⁵ *La Prensa*, 19 noviembre 1896.

³⁶ Alix, *Décimas*, 54-55. Johnson suggests that *guaguá* derives from Central African/Bantu *nganga*, a power “object that serves as a weapon against one’s enemies.” An 1802 dictionary assembled by a Saint-Domingue exile defines *guaguá* as a “charm” for “sorcery.” See Johnson, *The Fear of French Negroes*, 79.

in private with a *Papabocó* (vodou expert) named Grambuá of the “D’Otrú society.”³⁷ The dance was performed according to Haitian custom, in front of an altar adorned with lights, saints, and a range of food and condiments—roasted plantain, toasted peanuts, corn, pepper, and sea salt. Each participant carried a candle symbolizing knowledge of the hidden. The “saints bore witness” to the dance, which was accompanied by “drums” and “chants.” As the bodies of the participants violently contorted, one woman went into a “trance” guided by “the spirit of a goddess” (*Proserpina*). Police also confiscated a can filled with “green, foul-smelling water.” Alix concluded the poem identifying Haiti as an outpost of Africa, one that had to be checked by “good” Dominican government. Otherwise, Dominicans would lose themselves and start to “eat people.”³⁸

While there was some discord among Dominican intellectuals regarding the extent to which education and prisons could or should “civilize” the culturally promiscuous lower classes, many elites attributed societal problems to “organic defects.” This view translated into an “interventionist approach” to the specific problem of “barbarisms,” including healing practices.³⁹ In the early twentieth century, such practices were perhaps best personified by Olivorismo, a social and religious peasant movement that thrived in San Juan de la Maguana and environs, near the border with Haiti. La Maguana was a political and ceremonial center of Hispaniola during Taíno times. It was also where some of the first Indian and black opposition to European hegemony in the New World sprouted. Also known as *Liborismo*, Olivorismo was a “religion” based on healing

³⁷ *Papbocós* or *Bocós* were extraordinary men capable of remarkable magic. They could immunize people from injuries or bullets, and teach those who could morph into animals (*galipotes*) how to control their power. See Cruz Díaz, *Supersticiones criminológicas y médicas*, 119 and 128. Also see Ramón Emilio Jiménez, *Al amor del bohío: tradiciones y costumbres dominicanas* (Santo Domingo: Editora de Santo Domingo, 1927-29 [1975]).

³⁸ Alix, *Décimas*, 23-24. The reference to cannibalism is suggestive of the predatory *Comegente*, an allegorical figure of uninhibited crime common in narratives of colonial Santo Domingo during the revolutionary era. See Johnson, *The Fear of French Negroes*, 62 and 78-89.

³⁹ Derby, *The Dictator’s Seduction*, 34.

and salvation, one marked by “pagan-Christian syncretism.”⁴⁰ Olivorio Mateo, the illiterate, kinky-haired, and dark-skinned leader of the movement, was a faith healer (Figure 1 below). He rose to prominence between 1908 and 1922. During these years, peasants from Jarabacoa, Cotuí, and elsewhere sought him out for curative medicine but also “sectarian” purposes. U.S. marines viewed Mateo as a bandit. Dominican nationalists called him a “patriot” with great “suggestive power.”⁴¹ Before becoming a caudillo-type figure, he worked on an estate under the supervision of a “*cocolo*” from the English or French Caribbean named Juan Samuel (or Manuel), a renowned healer and sorcerer in La Maguana from whom Mateo learned most of what he knew about curanderismo.⁴²

An inspired Mateo employed different techniques to cure people of whatever ailed them. Like Lico, he is said to have rarely, if ever, charged the poor for services. Mateo cured people through dreams and with raveled cotton cords, prayers and sacred songs, herbal drinks, his “anointed” hands, and a trademark stick.⁴³ He used the *palo de piñón*, a stick from a bush or small tree (*Jatropha curcas*) imbued with magical and curative properties, to identify and extirpate maladies. In a typical ritual, Mateo made lines on the ground with the stick or placed it on an infirm person, and followed up with cabbalistic signs and chants. He turned acts into rituals by beating sick bodies with his stick, shaking cords and scapulars, and muttering and gazing while gesturing.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Emigdio O. Garrido Puello, *Olivorio: un ensayo histórico* (Santo Domingo: Librería Dominicana, 1963); and Carlos E. Deive, “El Olivorismo: estudio de un movimiento mesiánico,” *Boletín del Museo del Hombre Dominicano* 3 (1973): 235-59. Also see Román, *Governing Spirits*.

⁴¹ Cruz Díaz, *Supersticiones criminológicas y médicas*, 151; and Garrido Puello, *Olivorio*.

⁴² *Cocolo* is a term used in the Spanish-speaking Caribbean to refer to non-Hispanic Afro-descendants or dark-skinned people. Victor Garrido, “Común de San Juan: datos acerca de la situación,” in Emilio Rodríguez Demorizi, ed., *Lengua y Folklore de Santo Domingo* (Santiago: Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra, 1975), 232-33; Garrido Puello, *Olivorio*; and Lusitania Martínez, “Un estudio preliminar acerca del movimiento de Palma Sola, como movimiento mesiánico y social campesino,” *Revista Dominicana de Antropología e Historia* 10, 19-20 (1980): 83-209.

⁴³ Derby, *The Dictator’s Seduction*, 236; and Lundahl and Lundius, *Peasants and Religion*, 64-65.

⁴⁴ The *piñón* contains a poison called *curcina*. The sap is viscose, milky, or reddish and is used in Dominican popular medicine. Tea made from *piñón* leaves is sometimes administered to cure intestinal problems and the sap can seal

Palos (long-drums) and *comarca* (accordion music) served as Liborio's soundtrack when he performed his healing.⁴⁵



Figure 1: Olivorio Mateo (Liborio); adapted from Davis, *La ruta hacia Liborio*, c. 1909 [2004].

In addition to solid and mystical remedies, Mateo prescribed liquid cures. For example, he rubbed holy water on the afflicted body parts of the infirm with his bare hands or a cloth, a method also used by vodou priests.⁴⁶ A peasant named José del Carmen Ramírez remembered seeing Mateo perform such an act in person:

open wounds and treat eye infections. Further, the piñón is said to “bleed” on Good Friday, the day of Jesus’ crucifixion. Lundahl and Lundius, *Peasants and Religion*, 62-63, fn. 103; and Derby, *The Dictator’s Seduction*, 236.

⁴⁵ *Papá Liborio: el santo vivo de Maguana*, directed by Martha Ellen Davis, Video, 56 mins., Santo Domingo: Secretaría de Estado de Cultura, 2003.

⁴⁶ Lundahl and Lundius claim that this practice is common throughout the Caribbean. Cloths and kerchiefs are often used by vodou priests. Different luases prefer different colors. Practitioners put themselves in a trance by holding a

Olivorio was dining in our house when my brother Danilo, who was two years old, the youngest of 12 brothers and sisters, got hold of nitric acid that was kept above the door to keep the cockroaches away. Danilo fell to the floor and the acid burned him on his belly. The people around the table rose and my mother ran up to Danilo. Olivorio rose as well and said, with a calm voice: ‘What happened, Lady?’ Danilo was crying, Olivorio approached him, knelt by his side, passed a [wet] kerchief across his belly and apparently cured him in this way.⁴⁷

To drive away the “evil spirits” believed to cause sickness, Mateo ordered patients to immerse themselves in sacred bodies of water as well. One such place was located outside the village of Yacahueque, and another at the spring of San Juan outside La Maguana. Mateo is also reported to have lubricated his fingers with urine, one of the body’s cleanest liquids when free of bacteria, before making the sign of the cross over afflicted body parts. This “purged” malignant forces.⁴⁸

Although many rural Dominicans cherished Mateo’s services, his brand of popular science came under positivist assault during the U.S. marine occupation of 1916-1924. As the marines started to address the political and social concerns of turn-of-the-century Dominican liberals, U.S. sanitary inspectors commenced round-ups of rural healers like Mateo, jailing these “malefactors of humanity” because they were unhygienic and lacked licenses.⁴⁹ Authorities went so far as to describe Mateo’s followers as “criminals who are fugitives from justice.” These “criminals” were likely “hardcore” *Olivoristas*, persons who could not leave the “cult” because they were known to have broken the law.⁵⁰ Marines believed that bandits and criminals consorted with Olivoristas and

cloth or kerchief, tying knots in it, and putting it around their head. The fabric is a symbol of the luá and is imbued with its powers. It can be used in acts of healing. Many sorcerers in Santo Domingo are devotees of luases but would likely object to being called vodou practitioners because of their “devout” Catholicism and because vodou is prohibited by Dominican penal law. See Lundahl and Lundius, *Peasants and Religion*, 64, fn. 112.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 63-64. While standard first aid for skin exposure to nitric acid is irrigation with large quantities of water and washing, in this case Liborio did not have to go that far.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Derby, *The Dictator’s Seduction*, 34.

⁵⁰ Lundius and Lundahl, *Peasants and Religion*, 83.

accepted their beliefs to escape justice. To make them surface, U.S. marines and Dominican police officers collaborated to destroy sites important to Olivoristas, including Yacahueque.

By the summer of 1922, authorities had discovered Mateo's camp near La Loma de la Cotorra. A surprise attack not only fragmented the movement, but injured Mateo. Over several days and weeks, officials arrested and interrogated Mateo's advisors and family members. They even paid his acquaintances for information about his location. The data led them to a deep gorge situated high in the Cordillera mountains called Arroyo Diablo, not far from Pico Duarte, the highest point in the Dominican Republic. The marines and Dominican police attacked at dawn, as Mateo and his followers performed their morning rituals. In the battle, Mateo was killed. Subsequently, authorities placed the non-conforming man-god's corpse under a tree in the central square of San Juan de la Maguana as a disciplinary example for all to see.⁵¹ Photos of Mateo in this position circulated around the country (a la mug shots). As Liborio's followers believed he was an incarnation of Jesus Christ, people read the image through a spiritual prism.⁵²

Olivoristas and other "criminal types" challenged the boundaries constructed by those in high power, whether Dominican liberals, U.S. marines, or aspiring dictators. By the 1930s, the dangers posed by healers had shifted from the countryside to the city as the displaced peasant became the central figure of urban social depravity. This coincided with the emergence of more polished state institutions under Trujillo. Derby has shown that the image of the uprooted peasant in the city, and the ensuing angst that the "backward periphery" linked to Haiti was going to consume the "respectable" city, constitute central themes of the period.⁵³ Puerto Rican peasants

⁵¹ Lundahl and Lundius, *Peasants and Religion*, 108-10 and 117-21; and *El Cable*, 1 julio 1922.

⁵² Charlemagne Péralte of the cacos guerrilla movement in Haiti suffered a similar fate. See "An Iconic Image of Haitian Liberty" and Edwidge Danticat, "The Long Legacy of Occupation in Haiti," *The New Yorker*, July 28, 2015.

⁵³ Derby, *The Dictator's Seduction*, 70.

had a similar experience in the early twentieth century. East of the Mona Passage, a discourse of “criminal saturation” underscored rising crime resulting from heavy rural-to-urban migration.⁵⁴

In both Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, the rural and urban poor stirred images of shanties, disease, and dangerous beliefs in the minds of elites and state officials. In Santo Domingo, however, the blurring of rural and urban boundaries was the main problem. Understanding this dynamic, Trujillo changed the nature of the political system. After the hurricane of San Zenón in 1930, contagion became a trope for “offensive social contact” between tiers of society that should be kept apart. Ideas about infectious disease expressed fears about boundary crossing. This urbanism was closely related to social control and it birthed efforts to regulate “vagrants,” beggars, and other socioeconomic “parasites.”⁵⁵ Model neighborhoods, asylums, hospitals, and prisons were presented as solutions to these problems. Scientific policing and Lombrosian prisons would distinguish between “degenerate criminal types” and the “redeemable.” Indeed, vagrancy laws, anti-superstition campaigns, identification cards, and forced agricultural labor (as a punishment for crime) became key measures of control under Trujillo.

Scientific Policing and Incarceration

U.S. marines established the Nigua penitentiary during the occupation of 1916-1924. Since Nigua did not leave behind an archive as deep or public as Puerto Rico’s Oso Blanco, one must rely on fragmentary prison records and police discourse to capture glimpses of scientific policing and incarceration in the Dominican Republic. The cover pages of inmate files from regional prisons or public jails and mug shots and articles from police journals serve this purpose. Together,

⁵⁴ Santiago Valles, “*Subject People*” and *Colonial Discourses*, ch. 7.

⁵⁵ Derby, *The Dictator’s Seduction*, 70, 82-83, 88, 91, and 93.

these sources confirm that a positivist culture of indexing was central to the surveillance of black people in the Dominican Republic. More broadly, the imperatives of prison administration and classification west of the Mona Passage resembled those in place east of it.

For example, in San Juan de la Maguana—the birthplace of *Olivorismo*—prison authorities recorded vital data about convicts on preprinted forms. Categories of significance included aliases, sex, age, skin and eye color, height, weight, hair type, civil status, occupation, scars, place of birth, nationality, and residence. Identification card (*cédula*) numbers, literacy, and religion were logged when available. Centralized preprinted forms also left room for brief descriptions of crimes, where these had occurred, and the relevant dates and sentences. The case of Pedro Díaz from Cercado in San Juan de la Maguana province was typical: age 28, Indian (*indio*), black eyes, kinky hair, agriculturalist, illiterate, Catholic, and convicted of “vagrancy” in the summer of 1943.⁵⁶ The prisoners documented in this particular slice of archive served short sentences, between a few weeks to several months. Some “whites,” “blacks,” and Haitians could be found among all the “Indians,” the largest color group represented in the prison.⁵⁷ Many of the convicts hailed from Las Matas de Farfán, Los Arroyos, and other communities known for “illegal medicine” and their proximity to Haiti and *Olivorista* settlements.

In the early interwar period, the residues of criminal anthropology primarily emerged on the preprinted forms that Dominican officials used to document the people flowing into and out of

⁵⁶ Informe de presos, hoja penal de Pedro Díaz, Caja ID: 8/006069, Fondo Ejército Nacional (FEN), AGN.

⁵⁷ This reflects the politics of racial identity in the Dominican Republic, where most people of color, many of whom could be mistaken as “black,” notionally identify as Indians. They do so to distance themselves from Haiti while embracing a Hispanicized indigenous identity. The Trujillo government played a major role in stirring up this racial angst, but its origins date to the first half of the nineteenth century, when Haiti invaded and occupied the Dominican Republic. “Blackness” and crime started to become synonymous at that time. April J. Mayes, *The Mulatto Republic: Class, Race, and Dominican National Identity* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2014); and Ginetta E. B. Candelario, *Black behind the Ears: Dominican Racial Identity from Museums to Beauty Shops* (Durham: Duke, 2007).

police precincts, courts, and prisons. Scholarly articles also communicated positivist ideas.⁵⁸ The *Revista Policial* especially disseminated information about crime and punishment in the 1920s.⁵⁹ Some police accounts even documented Dominican-Haitian “letches” and briefly chronicled the experiences of foreign, including Puerto Rican, criminals and prisoners.⁶⁰ Stories about “infamous fugitives” and disenchanted “trusted” prisoners were also published.⁶¹ Fugitives and convicts eventually earned their own column, entitled “Faces to Remember,” which was inspired by the growing police collection of mug shots.⁶²

The Dominican state sharpened its focus on criminal identification in the 1920s. Several *Revista Policial* contributors emphasized the importance of cédulas to policing and classification.⁶³ Others reiterated the supremacy of the mug shot. In March 1922, for example, Dominican authorities published mug shots of persons of color suspected of a spate of drug store robberies.

⁵⁸ In May 1922, for example, physician L. Gambara published an article on anthropometry, “one of the most efficient ways to identify criminals, especially recidivists.” Gambara believed that Bertillon’s classification system and fingerprinting were the future of policing. Gambara, “La antropometría,” *Revista Policial* 1, 4 (mayo 1922): 1-6.

⁵⁹ Reflections on theft, fraud, illegal lotteries, crimes of passion, women with “criminal instincts,” recidivists, vagrants, criminal investigations, and prison renovations filled the pages of the *Revista Policial*. See “Enfermería para la cárcel correccional,” *Revista Policial* 1, 15 (abril 1923): 12; “Clases de dactiloscopia e identificación,” *Revista Policial* 1, 17 (junio 1923): 10; “Cárcel para mujeres,” *Revista Policial* 1, 18 (julio 1923): 3-4; “Contra la prostitución,” *Revista Policial* (second print) 2, 15 (agosto 1927): 20; “Captura de un temible y célebre ladrón,” *Revista Policial* (second print) 2, 20 (enero 1928): 26-27; “Armando Contín capturado por robo,” *Revista Policial* (second print) 2, 21 (febrero 1928): 21; “El joven Ramiro Alvarado parece en las aguas del Río Isabela,” *Revista Policial* (second print) 2, 23 (abril 1928): 17; “Vagos capturados” and “Abandona la cárcel por haber cumplido su condena y la misma noche comete un robo en un hotel,” *Revista Policial* (second print) 2, 24 (mayo 1928): 16 and 19; and “Una madre desnaturalizada ingresa a la cárcel por maltratar terriblemente a su hijo,” *Revista Policial* (second print) 2, 25 (junio 1928): 23.

⁶⁰ See “Importante captura,” “Vicente o Leoncio Ortíz [de Puerto Rico],” “Juan Rodríguez [de Puerto Rico],” and “Una parte del botín ocupado a los delincuentes,” *Revista Policial* (second print) 3, 28 (septiembre 1928): 19-21, 23, and 25. These Puerto Rican prisoners robbed the “aristocratic” neighborhood of Gazcue for months before being captured. Also consult “La policía municipal localiza a un puertorriqueño reincidente en estafas,” *Revista Policial* (second print) 3, 30 (noviembre 1928): 17. On the Dominican-Haitian “letch” terrorizing Villa Duarte, see “El sátiro Armando Contín cae de nuevo en poder de la policía,” *Revista Policial* (second print) 3, 30 (noviembre 1928): 18-19.

⁶¹ Consult, for example, “Uno de los presos de ‘confianza’ resulta ser el autor de numerosos robos cometidos recientemente en esta ciudad,” *Revista Policial* 1, 24 (enero 1924): 11-12.

⁶² “Caras que deben recordarse,” *Revista Policial* (second print) 2, 20 (enero 1928): 23.

⁶³ Francisco Vicioso Maceo, “La cédula personal,” *Revista Policial* (second print) 1, 3 (agosto 1926): 10.

One of the perpetrators was a Puerto Rican named Félix Velázquez.⁶⁴ In June 1922, the mug shot of Afro-Dominican Pedro Trinidad landed in the *Revista Policial*. Trinidad had killed an elderly man in Mata Cabra and was considered armed and dangerous. The speedy adoption of mug shots, Dominican police officials argued, “allowed officers to combat crime more effectively.”⁶⁵ A year later they celebrated their use of mug shots when they captured “juvenile tricksters” accused of abusing women in Santo Domingo.⁶⁶

Dominican police officials believed that group pictures were just as valuable as individual images. The August 1926 edition of the *Revista Policial*, for example, included group photographs of perpetrators of color and the merchandise they had seized from stores in San Pedro de Macorís.⁶⁷ Other articles noted that itinerant black men robbed San Pedro sugar estates.⁶⁸ Group pictures also drew attention to gang (*pandilla*) activities and the persistent “menace” of armed guerrillas and bandits (*gavilleros*). In the October 1926 edition of the *Revista Policial*, there is a mug shot of “idling” *gavilleros*. The two young Afro-Dominicans in the picture, Rafael and Juan Javier, presumably kin, had assaulted a youth and stole his money (see Figure 2 below).⁶⁹ Though no

⁶⁴ See *Revista Policial* 1, 2 (marzo 1922): 10-11.

⁶⁵ “Fotografía, Telégrafo, Teléfono y Prensa,” *Revista Policial* 1, 6 (junio 1922): 10-11.

⁶⁶ Police officers used “cross-dressing” methods to locate and arrest the group. One officer dressed up as a “tempting” woman in a short skirt to lure the group out of hiding. Other officers observed the operation and followed the group back to their base, a *bohío* hidden in the brush of the Independence Avenue/Pasteur Street property of Dominican scholar and Freemason Haim H. López Penha. See “Una banda de sátiros que actuaba en la Avenida Independencia, capturada por la Policía Municipal,” *Revista Policial* 1, 16 (mayo 1923): 5-6. Also see “Álbum fotográfico de delincuentes,” *Revista Policial* 1, 16 (mayo 1923): 8.

⁶⁷ See *Revista Policial* (second print) 1, 3 (agosto 1926): 17-19 and 21-23.

⁶⁸ While not mentioned in the police briefing, one wonders if the sugar estates, particularly those belonging to U.S. capital, were especially targeted, and if so, whether the state’s response was stiff. “José Peña,” *Revista Policial* (second print) 1, 6 (noviembre 1926): 27; and “Victor Conkung,” *Revista Policial* (second print) 2, 22 (marzo 1928): 25.

⁶⁹ See “La misma pandilla del Bonito con el robo efectuado en la pulpería de Américo Ortíz,” *Revista Policial* (second print) 1, 4 (septiembre 1926): 9. Also see “Francisco Perdomo” and “Rafael and Juan Javier,” *Revista Policial* (second print) 1, 5 (octubre 1926): 24 and 26.

weapons are prominently displayed in this photograph, other images included them.⁷⁰ The mug shots of *cacos* and *cocolos* were also featured in the police magazine, an indication of the significance of blackness for the police.⁷¹ This emphasis on a cabinet of black monstrosities is also suggestive of how notions of race and region shaped understandings of crime and punishment at the national level.

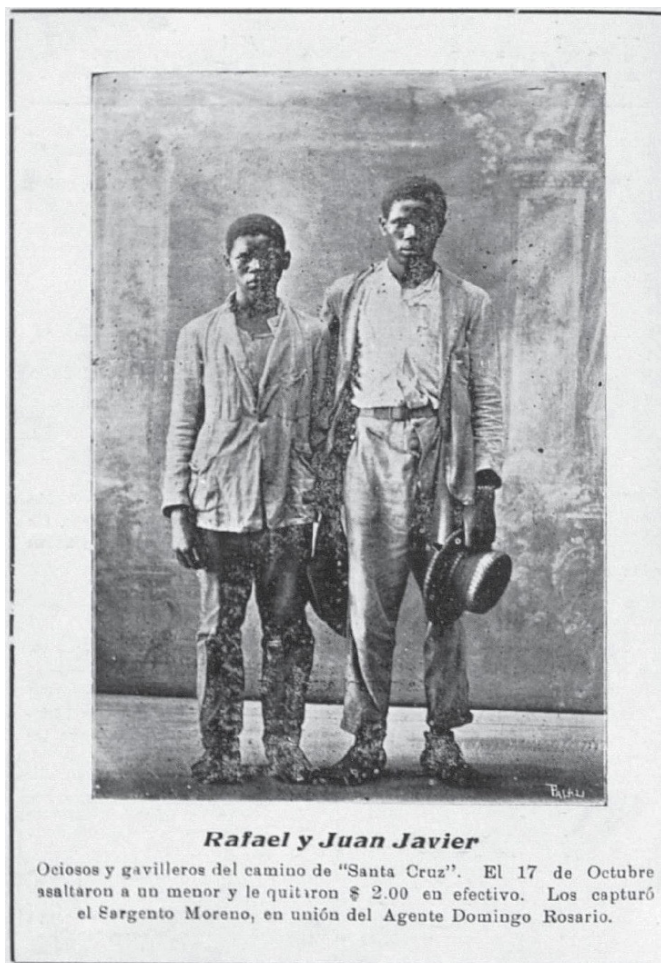


Figure 2: Arrested gavilleros, *Revista Policial*, October 1926.

⁷⁰ "Mangú y Alfredo Núñez," *Revista Policial* (second print) 2, 22 (marzo 1928): 19; and "Luis A. Castro," *Revista Policial* (second print) 2, 18 (noviembre 1927): 21. Castro's is a rather dramatic picture, showcasing the blood-soaked knife he used to perpetrate a violent crime that resulted in the death of the victim. Castro strikes a serious pose and is dressed in a suit and tie with a handkerchief in his front pocket.

⁷¹ *Cacos* were the Haitian equivalent of Dominican *gavilleros*. They resisted the U.S. marine occupation of Haiti (1915-1934) and some harbored nationalist sentiments. For example, consult "El Teniente Evangelista captura un caco," *Revista Policial* (second print) 3, 30 (noviembre 1928): 30.

During the U.S. occupation, bandit gangs also traversed the Dominican countryside, especially the eastern and southern parts of the country. Gavilleros were organized militarily and destroyed villages and agricultural fields. They operated at a time when U.S. marines attempted to disarm the Dominican population. Internal power struggles and guerrilla efforts to depose U.S. marines and their local allies forced many gavilleros to establish themselves in the wilderness. Some, however, were out for individual gain. Dominican judge M. R. Cruz Díaz, who spent the bulk of his personal and professional life in the provinces of Duarte and Santiago in the north-central part of the country, observed that bandit gangs emerged during the “revolution” against U.S. imperialism. But they also attacked the homes of Dominican elites, committing “horrendous” crimes in the process. In Santiago and San Francisco de Macorís, elites who were robbed recalled seeing “naked” bandits wearing only “loincloths” drenched in “fat or tallow.” The application of fat to the skin before committing a crime was a “superstitious” practice that allegedly made fugitives undetectable and uncatchable. Dominican authorities called such criminals “*lucios*,” a term that denoted radiance but also bright-skinned reptiles.⁷² In a world where people could transform into animals, one could never be sure.

Cruz Díaz made these and other observations in a text called *Supersticiones criminológicas y médicas*, published in 1965. He finished writing the book in San Francisco de Macorís at the height of the Trujillo regime in 1945, but let the manuscript collect dust because of printing costs

⁷² Cruz Díaz, *Supersticiones criminológicas y médicas*, 123-25. On gavilleros in general, see María Filomena González Canalda, *Los gavilleros, 1904-1916* (Santo Domingo: Archivo General de la Nación, 2008); Calder, “Caudillos and Gavilleros versus the United States Marines: Guerrilla Insurgency during the Dominican Intervention, 1916-1924,” *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 58, 4 (November 1978): 649-75; Pedro L. San Miguel, “An Island in the Mirror: The Dominican Republic and Haiti,” in Palmié and Scarano, eds., *The Caribbean*, 553-70; García Muñiz, “Sugar Land and Gavillero Warfare in the Eastern Dominican Republic: The Case of Central Romana, 1910-1924,” *Historia y Sociedad* 12 (2000-01): 3-47; and Julie Franks, “The Gavilleros of the East: Social Banditry as Political Practice in the Dominican Sugar Region, 1900-1924,” *Journal of Historical Sociology* 8, 2 (October 2006): 158-81.

and government censorship.⁷³ Cruz Díaz's assessment of crime, medicine, and popular belief was based on personal anecdotes and judicial practice. Throughout his life and career, he personally witnessed peasant medico-religiosities in action. Growing up, he attended evening meetings on ranches and in cemeteries to hear peasant stories and songs and to see their "superstitious cures" for himself. Far too often, however, "criminal" healers and tricksters abused "innocent" peasants by exposing them to occult treasures, quack remedies, and protective charms and amulets, "superstitions" that put the Dominican Republic "at risk." "Criminal" healers sought to "outwit" the authorities and used their medico-religious knowledge to mock society.⁷⁴ This often landed them behind bars.

When healers arrived in prisons, they interacted with scores of convicts serving time for theft. Many of these thieves had been exposed to "superstition" before their incarceration. They carried written "prayers or protective amulets in their pockets to avoid apprehension" and believed that these artifacts made them "invisible" to police. Criminals especially used *manteca de muerto* (dead human fat) to produce "lethargic effects" on their targets.⁷⁵ Dominican sorcerers especially

⁷³ At the time, the Trujillo government "decreed" that all published books had to go on the market. None could be for private use. All published works had to shower praise on Trujillo. Such was the dictator's "megalomania" and rapaciousness, that he always had to be "eulogized." Cruz Díaz, *Supersticiones criminológicas y médicas*, 5.

⁷⁴ Cruz Díaz defined the "science of [Dominican] folklore" as "popular knowledge," meaning what the popular classes thought they knew about themselves and all things. Ralph Steele Boggs, who arrived in the Dominican Republic in 1944 and lectured about folklore and "superstition" at the University of Santo Domingo, helped establish the country's first folkloric societies in Santiago and Santo Domingo, but there was no attempt to institutionalize and enshrine folklore at the highest levels of government. The Dominican press, on the other hand, increasingly published articles about local and regional customs. Cruz Díaz's unbridled access to data about the ways in which superstitions and criminology became entangled in the Dominican Republic pushed him deeper into social science. He noted that his "critical perspective" was shaped by one of the fathers of Dominican social science, Spaniard Constancio Bernaldo de Quirós, who had the ear of Trujillo. See Cruz Díaz, *Supersticiones criminológicas y médicas*, 7-8 and 11-12. This sequence of events contrasts with the approach of Puerto Rico's commonwealth state, which around midcentury constructed island identity around the myth of a "racial trilogy." The use of folklore in Puerto Rico helped mitigate internal national differences. See, for example, Ricardo E. Alegría, *El Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, 1955-1973: 18 años contribuyendo a fortalecer nuestra conciencia nacional* (San Juan: Instituto de Cultura, 1978-79).

⁷⁵ However, sometimes the fat was not human. Several Dominican pharmacists prepared and sold "pig fat" to ritual practitioners without the latter knowing. Cruz Díaz, *Supersticiones criminológicas y médicas*, 91-93.

valued children's fat mined for magical potions and rituals. Similar to the Cuban press of the period, Dominican newspapers published several stories about missing children.⁷⁶ For instance, in September 1938 in Samaná (the country's northernmost peninsula), legal officials accused three men and a woman of kidnapping and disemboweling a girl. By November 1940, authorities had learned that the girl was "ritually" killed to remove the provincial governor from power. The accused conspirators wrapped the girl's head and some of her bones in royal palm leaves and buried the package near a main road. One of the culprits led authorities to the burial site, where they exhumed the girl's partial remains. The local Attorney General relayed to Cruz Díaz that the girl was "torn apart alive" for her body fat. Several witnesses heard her screams but feared intervening, let alone coming forward, because they believed the practitioners would unleash "mysterious beings" on them.⁷⁷

The suspect practices embraced by sorcerers, thieves, and gavilleros earned the heightened scrutiny of the maturing Dominican state. The Trujillo government attempted to counter the objectionable practices culturally dubious Dominicans with more aggressive scientific policing. This partially explains why Dominican criminal anthropology persisted through midcentury, although it eventually fused to fingerprinting and everyday judicial practice. Physician Federico A. Cabral Noloa, who received criminal identification training in New Orleans, Louisiana, made significant contributions in this vein. He helped establish the Dominican identification archive in 1937, when Trujillo tasked the Prisons Office and Justice Department with preparing index cards

⁷⁶ Bronfman, *Measures of Equality*, chs. 1-3; Román, *Governing Spirits*, ch. 3; Palmié, *Wizards and Scientists: Explorations in Afro-Cuban Modernity and Tradition* (Durham: Duke, 2002), ch. 2; Derby, *The Dictator's Seduction*, 62; and Cruz Díaz, *Supersticiones criminológicas y médicas*, 97-99.

⁷⁷ Cruz Díaz obtained a sample of the girl's fat and sent it to the National Laboratory to be analyzed. But even the National Laboratory could not determine if it was animal or human. See Cruz Díaz, *Supersticiones criminológicas y médicas*, 91-104.

for all prisoners.⁷⁸ This was the broader medico-legal context in which the Dominican Republic's first modern penitentiary, Nigua, rose to prominence and fell from grace.

Nigua's Emergence

Advances in Dominican policing coincided with the emergence of Nigua penitentiary. Like its Puerto Rican sibling, Dominican penitentiary science had U.S. colonial roots. Although prison reformers proposed a national penitentiary as early as 1905, construction did not begin until 1919. The U.S. marine government envisioned medicine and sanitation as central elements of Nigua, which was expected to accommodate some five hundred prisoners. Nigua's \$130,000 construction estimate included an infirmary with more than 20 cots, hygienic and laundry facilities, sewer and water systems, and miscellaneous items such as hospital gear and sterilizers. Marine authorities expected yearly operating costs to hover around \$105,000. The latter figure covered everything from medical supplies and convict subsistence to funds for visiting physicians and nursing services.⁷⁹ Nigua's purpose was to "open the door of redemption and moral reintegration to those lost in the shadows," shadows being a euphemism for imprisonment and twisted human nature.⁸⁰

Akin to Puerto Rico, where the Landrau estate donated the land for Oso Blanco, in the Dominican Republic an elite family donated the land for Nigua. Located less than 15 miles west-southwest of Santo Domingo, the penitentiary formed part of a network of engineering and welfare

⁷⁸ The Dominican archive was initially based on Edward Henry's identification scheme in British India, and focused on photographs, defining crime, and fingerprinting. Initially, attorney María Teresa Nanita de Espaillet directed the archive. Consult Federico Alberto Cabral Noloa, "El sistema de identificación en la República Dominicana," *Revista de Policía* 8, 35 (enero-febrero 1948): 17-21; and "El sistema de identificación en la República Dominicana," *Revista de Policía* 8, 37 (mayo-agosto 1948): 13-14.

⁷⁹ "Report of the Board on Prisons and Prison Administration in the Dominican Republic" (1917-18), legajo 76, expediente 11, SEJIP, FGMN, AGN.

⁸⁰ "Editorial: La Penitenciaría Nacional," *Listín Diario*, 24 febrero 1919, 4.

institutions off the banks of a river in the Boca de Nigua area. Once completed, the complex would encompass the prison, a leprosarium, and a mental hospital. Marines hoped that these institutions would collaborate with adjacent agricultural experiment stations, all of which had privileged access to the nearby water supply. Puerto Rico's Oso Blanco formed part of a similar scientific complex positioned near a water source.⁸¹

Whereas Oso Blanco was the last welfare institution of the Río Piedras complex to be built, construction on the Nigua penitentiary and leprosarium spearheaded the development of the Boca de Nigua area. Between 1919 and 1920, construction proceeded unabated. The lack of skilled carpenters, however, caused a delay in completing buildings. To rectify this shortcoming, the project director imported carpenters from Puerto Rico and the eastern Dominican provinces of La Romana and San Pedro de Macorís. Another complication surfaced when the Puerto Rican superintendent of construction got sick and returned home to convalesce. His superiors urged him to recruit 15 carpenters while home and to bring them to the Dominican Republic.⁸² The post-World War I financial depression also forced the marine government to cut spending, temporarily halting Nigua's assembly. Construction on the prison resumed in late 1921, when its plumbing system was installed.⁸³ Dominican and U.S. authorities completed and opened the penitentiary the following year, in large part thanks to inmate labor.

Dominican prisoners helped build Nigua, just as Puerto Rican convicts helped build Oso Blanco. Inmates lived on the grounds, cleared brush, and sand-filled the swampy lands surrounding the prison. Beyond the penitentiary, Dominican convicts collected garbage, cleaned the streets,

⁸¹ Picó, *El día menos pensado*, 72.

⁸² "Lack of Carpenters Causing Delay in the Construction of Buildings at Nigua," September-November 1919, legajo 68, expediente 157, SEJIP, FGMN, AGN.

⁸³ Moran, "Prison Reform in the United States Navy and the Dominican Republic," 177-78.

and carried out other hygienic tasks. They also labored on military bases and airfields, on the agricultural estates of government officials, and in public works (e.g., roads). Construction continued in the Boca de Nigua area until the penitentiary officially opened in February 1922. That March, the penitentiary ceased to be part of the national police training center at Haina. Commander Presley M. Rixey appointed Major Joseph M. Feeley Warden of Nigua.⁸⁴ Marine authorities began shipping convicts to Nigua from around the country after the institution's inauguration. An expanding road system expedited convict transfers.⁸⁵ Nigua's construction also jumpstarted government efforts to renovate provincial prisons. Once completed, Nigua satisfied a major reform objective of the marines and several pre-occupation governments.⁸⁶

The hordes of convicts of color entering and exiting Nigua made the marine government anxious. The prison reflected the marine desire to collect the country's "most dangerous" convicts, who before the 1930s were typically found in the countryside. The unpacified Dominican countryside, where gavilleros, forest and mountain dwellers (*monteros*), autonomous peasants, caudillos, messianic leaders and Haitians lurked, was a thorn in the collective side of the marine, Vásquez, and Trujillo governments. While each government had varying levels of success in controlling these groups, all of them understood that prisons had to operate as more than spaces of confinement if the country was going to be politically stable and centralized. Therefore, centralization efforts also revolved around the physical health of convicts.

The marine government initiated convict health programs. As soon as inmates entered prison, they were required "to take a bath, scrub [their] clothing and submit to an examination by

⁸⁴ See legajo 76, expediente 29, documento 15, 24 marzo 1922, General Orders (GO), FGMN, AGN.

⁸⁵ Moran, "Prison Reform," 178-79.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 184-85, 194-95, and 214.

the prison doctor.”⁸⁷ Inspection by prison physicians did not guarantee a disease-free outcome or environment, however. When overcrowding and poor screening led to an outbreak of typhoid in prisons around the country, for example, marine authorities responded by inoculating “all prisoners with a prophylactic vaccine.”⁸⁸ Other diseases and ailments proved to be scourges as well, including beriberi, the flu, malaria, smallpox, and syphilis. Illnesses like beriberi were deemed particularly pernicious due to major outbreaks in the early 1920s.⁸⁹ Further, prison physicians often lacked the medical supplies they needed to provide preventive care or treatment. This resulted in dependence on measures such as quarantines.⁹⁰ Given the inconsistent nature of Dominican medicine in the early interwar period, many diseases freely circulated in the country’s prisons.

By the 1930s and early 1940s, the Trujillo government had invested in prison infrastructure to the extent that the detection of convict sicknesses became common practice. In September 1933, for example, health officials working at Ozama prison in Santo Domingo diagnosed several female prisoners with appendicitis, the flu, gonorrhea, malaria, and syphilis.⁹¹ After Nigua closed in 1938

⁸⁷ “Regulations on the conduct of prisoners,” legajo 14, expediente 150 (document code 1700218), GO, FGMN, AGN.

⁸⁸ See Chief Sanitary Officer to the Secretary of the Interior and Police, “Typhoid prophylaxis for prisoners,” September 26, 1919, legajo 119, expediente 58 (document code 1700204), FGMN, AGN.

⁸⁹ Marine Colonel Arthur T. Marix filed a report in 1921 about one such outbreak of beriberi. In the study, he discussed the health observations, chemical tests, and colonial experiments linked to advancing scientific knowledge about beriberi. Marix cited Malaysia and the Philippines, where prisoners’ bodies disclosed that “a polished [white] rice diet” produced the disease and “a red rice diet” protected against it. Officials intentionally triggered beriberi in convicts to test the hypothesis that “the prolonged use of the polished rice as a staple article of the diet produces beriberi” via “metabolic disturbances.” Marix found it difficult to “harmonize” chemical theories about rice with the Dominican prison experience even though the rice given to inmates was deficient. Thousands of Dominicans “lived off a worse diet” before landing in prison and avoided beriberi. This led Marix to ponder the impact of vitamin deficiency and the lack of exercise on the beriberi outbreak. Attorney General of the Santo Domingo Appellate Court to the Secretary of Justice and Education, “Concerning the beriberi outbreak,” February 16-17, 1921, SEJIP, FGMN, AGN.

⁹⁰ See Secretary of Sanitation and Charity to the Military Governor of Santo Domingo, “Medical Supplies,” November 30, 1921, expediente 71 (document code 1700205), Caja 11, FGMN, AGN; and Post Medical Officer to the Commanding Officer of the Marine Barracks at Puerto Plata, “Quarantine of Cárcel in the Fort,” December 1921, expediente 72 (document code 1700205), Caja 11, FGMN, AGN.

⁹¹ Comandante de Ozama al Procurador de la República, “Informe de mujeres presas,” 5 septiembre 1933, legajo 39, Caja IT: 8/004926, FEN, AGN.

due to political pressure, the Dominican state extended basic medical and sanitation services to prisons around the country. In the absence of a central penitentiary, scientific redemptive practice shifted to the regions. In 1944, for example, the warden of Puerto Plata prison reported that a provincial sanitary physician serviced the facility. The sanitary official logged more than 30 cases of disease, mostly gonorrhea and malaria. Further, if prison facilities were lacking medically, then physicians moved inmates to nearby hospitals, in this case Hospital Ricardo Limardo. Of the 215 prisoners hospitalized in Puerto Plata prison, 50 were sent to Limardo.⁹² Prison hospitals were nodes in broader networks of welfare institutions administered by the Dominican military. A similar pattern prevailed in Puerto Rico, but not under explicit military purview.

The Puerto Plata prison was but one link in a chain. In 1944, Attorney General Víctor Garrido also reported which diseases prevailed in the country's prisons. Provincial disease patterns depended on geography, economic activities, migratory flows, total population, the degree of urbanization, and so on. In general, the flu, malaria, and venereal diseases predominated in Dominican prisons this year. Prison physicians logged other maladies as well, including tuberculosis, dysentery, and anemia.⁹³ The reality of interconnected welfare institutions and the scale of disease recognition and treatment by the Dominican state were impressive. It turns out that even dictatorships could pour significant resources into improving the physical wellbeing of their subject-citizens. Trujillo himself reflected on this "progress." The year 1930 marked the start of "the great sanitary crusade to be undertaken if the diseases that beset the populace and hamstrung the country's progress were to be wiped out, or at least brought under control. Today

⁹² Oficial encargado de la Cárcel Pública al Magistrado Procurador Fiscal de Puerto Plata, "Informe de la labor realizada durante el año en la Cárcel Pública," 31 diciembre 1944, legajo 12, Caja IT: 8/006064, FEN, AGN.

⁹³ Procuraduría General de la República, *Memoria de la Procuraduría General de la República* (Santiago: Editorial El Diario, 1944).

[1953], the Dominican Republic is among the most advanced countries in the field of sanitary legislation.”⁹⁴ As Dominican health policy was not limited to hospitals or advances in medical science, it is not surprising that prisons served as laboratories for lite social progress under Trujillo.

Prison Physicians, Dissident Physicians

In the middle decades of the twentieth century, Dominican physicians contributed to prison healthcare and served prison sentences. As institutional physicians, they tried to control the spread of contagion. While state authorities expressed dissatisfaction with the poverty of some prisons, they invested the resources, manpower, and time to resolve what they viewed as deficient convict health. The implementation of policies promoting prisoner health depended on the quality of the personnel, however.⁹⁵ Under U.S. rule, institutional medical personnel often failed to meet the standards of the marine government. For starters, they were overworked and their salaries were low.⁹⁶ Secondly, they could avoid state oversight if they were privately contracted, which was typically the case in the early interwar period. This contrasts with the regulatory efficiency of the Trujillo regime, which by the 1940s had built a sturdy prison infrastructure primarily administered by the Dominican military.

The Trujillo government largely phased civilian physicians out of prison administration, but during the marine government this was not the case. In September 1921, the commander of the military training center at Nigua, Andrew E. Creesy, recommended that Medical Officer John L.

⁹⁴ Rafael Trujillo, “Rehabilitation Program of the Dominican Republic,” in *Dominican Republic: A Bulletin of the Dominican Embassy* 174 (August 16, 1953): 4.

⁹⁵ Moran, “Prison Reform,” 195-96, 200, and 204.

⁹⁶ Under U.S. rule and the Vásquez government, for example, prison physicians treated inmates while also working on anti-prostitution campaigns, forensic investigations, and as coroners. See Secretary of Sanitation and Charity to the Military Governor of Santo Domingo, “Annual Report for the year 1920,” March 21, 1921, legajo 77, expediente 15 (document code 1700219), FGMN, AGN.

Ross be appointed “doctor” of the national penitentiary. Military censuses taken in 1920 put the total population of Nigua and Ozama at approximately 1,600. The high number proved to be a burden for the civilian physician, whose services were deemed unsatisfactory: “His supplies, office and living quarters were found in a dirty and unsanitary condition. As a sanitary and medical adviser...he is useless.”⁹⁷ In other cases, prison physicians failed to visit inmates at all. This happened in the public prison of El Seibo, where Dr. Sánchez ignored sick prisoners for as many as five days. Sánchez claimed that he limited his activities because authorities had failed to reimburse the drug stores he depended on for supplies. Shortly after this incident, the marine government replaced Sánchez with Dr. K. B. Urban of the Red Cross Hospital.⁹⁸

Marine government health programs in Dominican prisons by and large ended in 1921, in part due to a postwar economic depression. Budgetary problems, specifically, limited the government’s ability to fill prison medical posts. Military medical officers slowly started replacing private physicians and other health experts during the marine occupation, a tradition that subsequent Dominican administrations embraced and expanded. Whereas under the marine government civilian physicians primarily managed prisoner healthcare, under subsequent regimes undertrained medics initially cared for inmates.⁹⁹ A transition was underway, but it would take some time before military personnel fully inherited these duties. And when they finally did, the administration of penitentiary medical science did not always go smoothly.

⁹⁷ “Services of the Civilian Medical Attendant at the Nigua Penitentiary,” September-November 1921, expediente 54, Caja 11, SEJIP, FGMN, AGN. The list of drugs and supplies accompanying this assessment sheds light on the goods and medicines used in Dominican prisons: quinine and magnesium sulfate, ammonium chloride, iodine, alcohol, calomel, sodium salicylate, biochloride tablets, brown mixture, cotton, gauzes, bandages, and pints of cowpox vaccine.

⁹⁸ Detachment Commander to Commanding Officer of the 11th Company, “Medical conditions at the public cárcel of el Seibo,” December 8, 1920, legajo 14, expediente 86 (document code 1700218), FGMN, AGN.

⁹⁹ Moran, “Prison Reform,” 212-13.

The fickle nature of U.S. rule exposed cracks in prison administration that spirited Dominican citizens attempted to address. One such citizen was Haim H. López Penha.¹⁰⁰ Marine authorities credited López Penha with creating a framework for labor, education, and basic healthcare inside Dominican prisons. He frequently offered the marines advice on public policy and encouraged them to establish agricultural colonies, which would limit the total number of convicts and keep rural banditry under control. These marine colonies were antecedents to Trujillo's agricultural colonies. López Penha also noted that prisoner labor could be used to build and repair roads, a policy Trujillo continued well into the 1930s and 1940s. Marine Secretary of Development and Communications Lt. C. C. Baughman, however, felt that it was premature to install the programs recommended by López Penha. Convicts should be employed in ways that kept them near the prison, Baughman argued; for example, cultivating parcels of land near Nigua. Despite Baughman's reservations, López Penha's recommendations were implemented in modified form at an experimental agricultural station in Haina.¹⁰¹ They also informed Vásquez's and Trujillo's respective approaches to welfare institutions and prison administration.

Following the U.S. occupation, the Dominican government constructed new prisons and renovated existing facilities. Vásquez relied on prison design principles introduced by the marines. During his time in power, he hoped to modernize the Dominican prison system. One of Vásquez's major contributions was the implementation of a specialized labor protocol at Nigua. The protocol established guidelines for vocational training and inmate agricultural production, both of which were key pillars of Dominican redemptive practice in the 1920s. By the late 1920s, however, Secretary of Justice and Education P. A. Lluberes reported that Nigua had fallen into poor physical

¹⁰⁰ López Penha identified as a Sephardic Jew and Freemason. He studied in Germany and became a journalist and essayist upon his return to the Dominican Republic in the early interwar period.

¹⁰¹ Moran, "Prison Reform," 248-52 and 304-305; and Calder, *The Impact of Intervention*.

condition due to overcrowding and overuse. In response, state authorities commenced construction on prisons in Barahona, El Seibo, and other provinces. Nigua received funding for a new water tank and an electric grid. Prison roofs and windows around the country were also repaired.¹⁰² These renovations barely improved Nigua and other prisons.

Despite these investments, over the next decade Nigua continued to deteriorate. Under Trujillo, the penitentiary earned a reputation for political violence. In the mid-1930s, many professionals and politicians served sentences there. Dominican scholar and founder of the leftist Revolutionary Party (Partido Revolucionario Dominicano), Juan Bosch, served time in Nigua. Among the titular physicians imprisoned there were Leovigildo Cuello Hernández and Buenaventura Báez Ledesma. One physician even claimed that he had seen Trujillo personally “whip” political prisoners with torture instruments. Many of these political prisoners, including dissident physicians, went into exile in neighboring Puerto Rico after their releases.¹⁰³

Juan Isidro Jimenes Grullón was among the most active Dominican physicians incarcerated during the era of Trujillo. He was imprisoned in Nigua and Ozama for more than a year (July 1934-October 1935), during which time he smuggled paper and other writing materials into prison so he could write “testimony” about Trujillo’s “crimes.” In his memoir, Jimenes Grullón claimed that he witnessed torture, observed poor healthcare conditions, and survived even worse hygienic and labor conditions. He and other political prisoners suffered daily “martyrdom” at the hands of prison bosses. While imprisoned, he worked in road construction, building renovations, weeding, and rice

¹⁰² See Moran, “Prison Reform,” 276-78.

¹⁰³ Cuello Hernández was an ophthalmologist educated in Paris who famously rejected a handshake from Trujillo in front of Puerto Rican colleagues. Báez Ledesma was a young physician trained in Santo Domingo from whom authorities hoped to extract a confession by having him “mistake” the dead body of a common Puerto Rican prisoner for the body of a radical Dominican dentist. See “Lecturas: El doctor Cuello dejó a Trujillo con la mano en el aire,” *Diario Libre*, 19 diciembre 2009; and Francisco C. Girona Pérez, *Las fechorías del bandolero Trujillo* (Santo Domingo: Academia Dominicana de la Historia, 1937 [2013]), 11-19 and 138-39.

cultivation. He also held informal responsibilities in his cellblock as a physician, a role that put him into contact with non-titular but “deeply spiritual” popular medics.¹⁰⁴

Incarcerated physicians diagnosed and treated sick inmates. Jimenes Grullón found that convicts suffered several conditions behind bars, such as dysentery, malaria, tuberculosis, anemia, diarrhea, feet mycosis, nerve disorders, paralysis, and vertigo. Prison authorities carried out routine medical inspections, but this was to save face, as there were few sanctioned physicians and nurses present, he insisted. Although Nigua and Ozama had infirmaries, they lacked the necessary resources. Antiseptics, bandages, condensed milk, emetine, and anti-infection drugs, for example, were in short supply. Indeed, quinine capsules were among the most smuggled and used drugs in Nigua and Ozama. Jimenes Grullón estimated that between illness, repression, accidents, and other ways to die, Nigua claimed the lives of at least 1,000 prisoners during his brief incarceration. All this lent credence to the saying: “[b]etter to have 100 *niguas* [a biting insect] gnawing at one’s foot than a foot inside Nigua.”¹⁰⁵

Dominican physicians formed part of the prison universe beyond their (in)formal roles as gatekeepers of health. Meanwhile, Puerto Rican physicians were not as radically active in politics as their Dominican counterparts.¹⁰⁶ There were tensions between physicians and their different interlocutors in both societies, but few cases in Puerto Rico reached the levels of hyperbolic violence that characterized cases like Jimenes Grullón’s. Regardless of differences between common and political prisoners, for example, convicts shared moments of solidarity. These

¹⁰⁴ Jimenes Grullón, *Una gestapo en América*, 51-84 and 209-55.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 100, 106-107, 121, 133, 161, 210, 221, 231, 240-41, 251, 263, 280-81, 306-310, 318, and 325-26.

¹⁰⁶ Trujillo Pagán suggests that university-trained Puerto Rican physicians had been confronting the state since the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. I contend that by the 1930s and 1940s, they had become the state again. Fernós-Isern, for example, co-founded the PPD and co-brokered the island’s commonwealth status.

moments generated “fraternal affect,” Jimenes Grullón asserted.¹⁰⁷ Fraternal affect emerged in specific prison contexts, including prisoner healthcare, and helped convicts transcend difference, if only for a moment.

Jimenes Grullón worked closely with a common prisoner who practiced popular medicine. What infatuated him most about Diógenes, a Catholic healer, was his fervent religiosity. While incarcerated, Diógenes constantly prayed near a makeshift altar. He believed that his devotion to a Higher Power “guided his hands and senses” when he provided services. Like Lico and other healers, Diógenes was familiar with syringes and injections. He had a knack for treating open wounds. On one occasion Jimenes Grullón observed that Diógenes boiled needles to disinfect them before injecting a stimulating substance into a dying prisoner. A “trusted” prisoner, Diógenes distributed smuggled emetine and quinine to Ozama’s other informal physicians.¹⁰⁸ For all intents and purposes, he facilitated convict survival.

Notwithstanding this interaction between titular and popular physicians, positivist science remained Jimenes Grullón’s focus. He was particularly humanistic and had the fate of the country in mind. He recognized that religion could be an agent of change or “progress,” but held that its time had passed. Instead, he had tremendous faith in “reason” and positivist science. Partially planted in Dominican soil by the Puerto Rican philosopher and educator Eugenio María de Hostos, scientific rationalism offered a means to “discover and exploit natural law.” Jimenes Grullón theorized that humanity had it in them to be rational and build a better national future but failed to act. He clashed with fellow imprisoned medical scientists regarding these issues.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Jimenes Grullón, *Una gestapo en América*, 124, 139, 152-55, 209, 241, 251, 288, 293, 297, 300, 314, and 319.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 136, 181-82, 194-95, 201, 245, and 249.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 32, 52, 142-43, 170, and 173.

Jimenes Grullón intellectually clashed with a dentist named José Selig while incarcerated. Their exchange was about the proper philosophical response to the Dominican Republic's political situation. Jimenes Grullón argued that Selig's approach was overly abstract. Selig had studied theosophy for years. While in prison, he tried to rally younger convicts around his beliefs. Rather than emphasize the "instruments required for progress," including "positivist science," Selig embraced "metaphysical concepts" and the works of Besant and Krishnamurti. This "misplaced" attitude defaced things more than it revealed, Jimenes Grullón reasoned. He thought that the country needed "social builders," not metaphysical ones, and feared that Selig's mentality would constrain the country's revolutionary project. The debate with Selig convinced Jimenes Grullón of "the superiority of rationalism" and "dialectical materialism," which he deemed "transcendent truths" Studying medicine made Jimenes Grullón skeptical of everything *but* scientific methods and findings. Dialectical materialism was a "natural progression" of his faith in science.¹¹⁰

Not only does Jimenes Grullón's memoir provide snapshots of his scientism, it also traces the political and spiritual contributions of other imprisoned titular physicians. The experience of Ramón de Lara is instructive. Lara studied medicine in Paris. At the time of his arrest, he sat on the faculty at the University of Santo Domingo and was Director of the Dominican National Hospital. Many Dominicans admired Lara for his independent political streak and for showcasing his entrepreneurship in a dictatorial climate. He seldom succumbed to the pressures of the Trujillo regime and only answered to "civics." While in prison, however, he attempted to commit suicide. Further, authorities later pressured Lara into publishing a confession of his political transgressions.¹¹¹ A Puerto Rican observer pointed to Trujillo's ritual offerings "to God and the

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 154-55, 235-36, 301, 312-13, and 327.

¹¹¹ Ramón de Lara, *Delincuente confeso y amnistiado agradecido* (Ciudad Trujillo: Partido Dominicano, 1945).

devil” as the cause of Lara’s vulnerability.¹¹² Despite these setbacks, Lara enjoyed a good reputation among convicts. Jimenes Grullón even sanctified Lara when he stated that the surgeon had “realized true miracles” and that those who knew him were “spiritually enriched.”¹¹³ A “saint” of the political opposition, Lara illustrated that the divide between medical science and religiosity could lighten depending on who did the narrating. The out of jointness of the prison positioned convicts, even physicians, to struggle with and potentially splice the ragged edges of meaning.

Misbelieving Miscreants and Their Laboratories

Misbelieving miscreants shared the prison universe with dissident physicians. This community encompassed Olivoristas, sorcerers, healers, and luá practitioners. These groups did not suddenly emerge as a perceived threat to the Dominican state during the era of Trujillo. Their roots as “suspect” ran deeper. While these groups were different, church and government authorities bunched them together. The earliest legal efforts to contain potentially revolutionary medico-religiosities and social banditry on the Dominican side of Hispaniola date to the Black Codes and the Haitian Revolution.¹¹⁴ For example, a series of murderous attacks against Spanish colonists started in 1790, leaving more than 20 people dead and as many injured in a three-year span. The assaults included attacks against people and livestock, the destruction of crops, and the defilement of corpses. Colonists especially panicked over an itinerant, inscrutable culprit of color colloquially known as the “People-eater” (*Comegente*).¹¹⁵

¹¹² Girona Pérez, *Las fechorías del bandolero Trujillo*, 128-30.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 195-96 and 206.

¹¹⁴ See Karol K. Weaver, *Medical Revolutionaries: The Enslaved Healers of Eighteenth-Century Saint-Domingue* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006).

¹¹⁵ Raymundo González, “The ‘People-Eater,’” in Roorda, et al., eds., *The Dominican Republic Reader*, 102-108; and Johnson, *The Fear of French Negroes*, ch. 2.

Dominican authorities revisited black criminality in 1845, when they promulgated a police code that targeted the beliefs and customs of people of color.¹¹⁶ Then, in 1862, the Dominican government issued a law prohibiting “The dance called *jodú* [vodou/luá].”¹¹⁷ Officials’ concerns with such practices persisted in the early twentieth century. In 1903, court officials filed charges against a middle-aged carpenter named Raymundo Mundito Ureña for hosting *jodú* rituals in his Puerto Plata home in the northern part of the country during which participants chanted in French, played drums, and danced in circles. The police reported that Ureña “broke a jug” and “spilled water on the street” in front of his house while shouting “God in Heaven and I on Earth” to obtain “remedies for the sick.”¹¹⁸

The confluence of belief, medicine, and politics in black bodies and communities prompted Dominican authorities to view different misbelieving miscreants as criminal and as one in the same. In 1908, the year *Olivorismo* emerged in San Juan de la Maguana, the government of Ramón Cáceres reissued sections of the 1845 police code. Non-Christian “cults” were declared to be:

...a pretext for vagrancy and different forms of corruption. The vigils, the last prayers, the puberty rites and other acts [carried out as] non-authorized religious practices...are nothing but [examples of] extremely unreligious acts, acts of savagery that were occasions for getting drunk, diversions offending good customs, and, accordingly, they were to be strictly forbidden.¹¹⁹

The U.S. marine government also had to deal with “cults.” Immigration authorities, for example, received numerous complaints about Haitians “constantly dancing Judú.” In July 1921, one official stationed in Sánchez, Samaná described the dance as “completely immoral” and a “hindrance to

¹¹⁶ “Un bando de policía de 1845,” *Eme Eme: estudios dominicanos* 5, 28 (enero-febrero 1977): 70-72.

¹¹⁷ Lundhal and Lundius, *Peasants and Religion*, 577.

¹¹⁸ “Expediente seguido a Raymundo Ureña por baile indecoroso,” 2-4 julio 1903, Juzgados.2.3.36-65, AGN.

¹¹⁹ Lundhal and Lundius, *Peasants and Religion*, 577-78; and Patrick E. Bryan, “La cuestión obrera en la industria azucarera dominicana a finales del siglo XIX y principios del XX,” *Eme Eme* 7, 41 (marzo-abril 1979): 73.

work.” The Haitians who participated “killed goats to drink their blood,” which inspired dancing for up to nine days. Lt. Commander of the military government R. M. Warfield forwarded such complaints to the Department of the Interior and Police so that an appropriate course of action (in this case deportation) could be pursued.¹²⁰

The problem of misbelieving miscreants with a penchant for heterodox ritual healing grew more intense under Vásquez and Trujillo. In the late 1920s, Vásquez received “humble advice” from an anonymous observer in Barahona, in the country’s deep south near the border with Haiti. The source feared “the slow but sure moral conquest of the country thanks to vodoux.” According to the observer, more than 40,000 Haitians lived along the border and their vodou had already influenced the Dominican peasantry. Major legal action was required if the “Dominican family” hoped to survive the onslaught of sorcerers and priests entering the country at an uncontrolled pace.¹²¹ It is unclear whether Vásquez immediately responded to the concerns of the informant. Trujillo certainly did. In December 1930, the Dominican National Congress declared its opposition to “exotic” and “barbarous” medico-religious practices. Preserving “good manners” and “honest habits” in Dominican families and society at large demanded an antithesis. For some time, “savage practices” like vodou and luá had been spreading like wildfire around the country. These medico-religiosities “represented a dangerous source of corruption” and dissent.¹²²

The congressional legal project targeting black medico-religious forms prohibited vodou, *sance*, luá, and guanguá. It also outlawed *baquiní* and all other “cures practiced through

¹²⁰ “Haitianos bailando el vudú,” 5 julio 1921, expediente 92, Gobierno Militar.2.9.L61, AGN.

¹²¹ “Oficios y correspondencia enviados y recibidos: ‘Un humilde consejo,’” 1925-30, expediente 3624, Presidencia.1.7.L64, AGN.

¹²² “El proyecto de ley que prohíbe el baile de voodoo ó sance y sus similares,” diciembre 1930, legajo 207472, Poder Legislativo 2.1.LC853D, AGN.

witchcraft.”¹²³ Yet, the law failed to have the instant impact Trujillo desired. This is evidenced, in part, by the 1937 massacre of 12-25,000 Haitians on the border, which did more to manage the Haitian “scourge” than any law.¹²⁴ Dominican authorities were also concerned about Olivoristas on the borderland, including associates of Mateo that had survived the man-god. These people were known for smuggling rum, courting women already “conquered” by local officials, and picking fights with Dominican soldiers before escaping to Haiti.¹²⁵ The use of the borderland as an Olivorista and Haitian outpost troubled the Trujillo regime.

Notwithstanding the violence of 1937, black medico-religiosities continued to rouse the angst of elite Dominicans. In response, the Trujillo government issued law No. 391 against vodou and witchcraft. Passed in 1943, this law built on a 1908 anti-Olivorista directive and represented the culmination of legal efforts at least a century in the making: “The spectacles known by the name ‘voudon’ or ‘lua,’ or any others of the same, or similar, character are considered...a violation of good manners and as such they will be punished with corrections.”¹²⁶ While the state projected the problem as one about morality and decency, the popular classes understood their targeting as a consequence of politics. A 1986 oral history suggests that one could not even “light a candle in honor of Olivorio” because Trujillo despised the “competition.”¹²⁷ Indeed, fear of political

¹²³ Representative Miguel A. Roca drafted the legislation. If someone were found guilty of the cited offenses, then they had to pay a fine between ten and 50 *pesos*. The law subjected culprits to up to six months in prison. Recidivists paid a fine between 25 and 100 pesos and served a prison sentence between six months and two years. If the convict was Dominican, the police surveilled them for at least three years after release. Foreigners caught engaging in *luá* and *baquiní* were deported and kept from reentering the country. Officials from the Dominican Department of the Interior and Police supported the law because “exotic” rites were slowly chipping away at Dominican culture. “Radical measures” were necessary if the country’s “good customs” and “honest habits” were going to be preserved. *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ On the massacre, see Turits, “A World Destroyed, A Nation Imposed: The 1937 Haitian Massacre in the Dominican Republic,” *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 82, 3 (2002): 589-635.

¹²⁵ Lundhal and Lundius, *Peasants and Religion*, 154.

¹²⁶ Cruz Díaz, *Supersticiones criminológicas y médicas*, 18-19; and Lundhal and Lundius, *Peasants and Religion*, 155.

¹²⁷ Lundhal and Lundius, *Peasants and Religion*, 155.

competition “justified” and strengthened the Dominican state’s resolve to “whiten” the country’s mostly black population in terms of cultural practice.¹²⁸ To cultivate “whiteness,” governments on both sides of the Dominican-Haitian border initiated “anti-superstition” campaigns.

For example, historians have traced the considerable violence launched in the early 1940s by Elie Lescot’s government and the Catholic Church in Haiti. This “crusade” barely concealed the Francophile disposition of Haiti’s mulatto elite, which was challenged by mostly black and radical intellectuals who spoke on behalf of Haitian peasants and workers.¹²⁹ In the Dominican Republic, the state and provincial governments introduced similar campaigns between the 1920s and midcentury, as Lico’s case corroborates. The Dominican press and state agencies documented these police operations, characterizing them in the same disparaging manner as their neighbors to the west. It is tough to determine the bookends of these campaigns, for when they emerge in documentation and press accounts, they do so unpredictably. This is suggestive of a misbelieving black underground that surfaced and submerged depending on the rigor of state surveillance.

Cruz Díaz lauded the surveillance campaigns that aspired to rid Hispaniola of black medico-religiosities. He linked the campaigns to improvements in education, communications, and travel infrastructure. Cruz Díaz specifically cheered the Dominican state’s “relentless” operation against healers and *luá* priests, groups that “infested” the country thanks to Haiti. As he put it, “repatriating 80-100,000 Haitians” would help “civilize” Dominicans. The “constant contagion”

¹²⁸ By some counts, the Dominican population of color was as high as 85 percent at the time. Like other societies in Latin America and the Caribbean, “blackness” in the Dominican Republic meant more than skin color. Physical attributes, social relations, and cultural practices were just as important in determining race. To “lighten” the Dominican Republic, the Trujillo government encouraged white immigration while people of color had to pay a 500 pesos entry fee. Trujillo also welcomed several hundred phenotypically white Jews from Europe during World War II to advance his agenda. See Allen Wells, *Tropical Zion: General Trujillo, FDR, and the Jews of Sosúa* (Durham: Duke, 2009). Dominican “blackness” was challenged on official documents as well. Dominicans became Hispanicized “Indians,” a new social fact that was reflected in their passports and national identification cards. See Alan West Durán, *African Caribbeans: A Reference Guide* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2003), 81.

¹²⁹ Ramsey, *The Spirits and the Law*; and San Miguel, “An Island in the Mirror,” 560.

of “low-cultured” Haitians was largely to blame for the limited intellectuality and superstitions of rural Dominicans. While many medico-religiosities, including those of indigenous and slave origins, had faded by the mid-twentieth century due to Hispanicization, others persisted.¹³⁰ Cruz Díaz failed to understand that the objectionable customs that endured did so because ordinary people saw them as logical, reasonable, and central to getting by and better.

Dominican peasants called their folklore “science,” but Cruz Díaz overlooked this line of analysis. His reluctance to interrogate the full texture of the intellectuality of Dominican peasants, criminals, and convicts is notable. Nevertheless, an integrated view of Hispaniola characterized his understanding of medico-religiosity in the Dominican Republic. Any semblance of Dominican “savagery” could be directly tied to Haiti and the country’s tumultuous French colonial and early national histories, histories purportedly far more brutal than anything that ever transpired in Spanish Hispaniola. To blame Haiti for Dominican deviance, Cruz Díaz used “evidence” like John Vandercook’s novel *Black Majesty*. He cited Vandercook’s narrative of the bloody Bois Caïman ritual, which was co-led by the Jamaican maroon leader and vodou priest Dutty Boukman.¹³¹ According to Cruz Díaz, such “savagery” and related problems still pervaded the borderland between Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

Cruz Díaz’s invocation of Boukman and the Bois Caïman ritual to project black Hispaniolans as deviant shows the depth of integrated Caribbean roots. Several historians have

¹³⁰ Cruz Díaz, *Supersticiones criminológicas y médicas*, 14-16; and Flérida de Nolasco, “Por qué no tenemos folklore negro,” *La Nación*, 19 marzo 1945.

¹³¹ The ritual is said to have initiated the Haitian Revolution. “Each [rebel/conspirator] drank and, as their lips touched the [sacrificial] blood, swore upon the name of Papalois, the snake god of Africa, that they would give their lives, if necessary, for the cause of black rebellion.” Cruz Díaz, *Supersticiones criminológicas y médicas*, 16-18; and John W. Vandercook, *Black Majesty: The Life of Christophe, King of Haiti* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1928). One scholar claims that Boukman was a “man of the book [the Quran],” a synonym for an adherent of Islam. Sylviane A. Diouf, *Servants of Allah: African Muslims Enslaved in the Americas* (New York: NYU Press, 1998 [2013]), 219-20.

written perceptively about Caribbean subregions during the colonial period.¹³² The Dominican-Haitian borderland continued to integrate the region in the twentieth century, both literally and in the popular imagination. This explains why, from Cruz Díaz's point of view, the specter of Haiti's revolutionary tradition (particularly its ritual aspects) was a necessary smokescreen. To validate their own national project, Dominicans recreated the fear that they would be on the receiving end of Haitian guanguá, vodou, and "telepathic murder." Without this reference point, Cruz Díaz maintained, the Dominican "national soul" ceased to exist.¹³³

The Dominican press played a key role in preserving the Dominican national soul. During the governments of Vásquez and Trujillo, journalists recorded numerous episodes of police surveillance of luá dances.¹³⁴ In April 1927, Sgt. Major of the municipal police Juan Rodríguez took nine men and six women into custody for "dancing LUA" [original emphasis] in the Bella Vista neighborhood of Santo Domingo.¹³⁵ In August, journalists reported that Haitians and Dominicans continued to celebrate "LUA" dances in "elevated" parts of the city. As these dances were "prohibited," reporters expected authorities to respond accordingly.¹³⁶ In December 1929, *La Opinión* chronicled that people of the elevated neighborhoods of Santo Domingo complained to newspaper editors about "Judú dances" and a "Luá sect." "Credulous" Haitians and Dominicans

¹³² Sheller, *Democracy after Slavery*; Giusti Cordero, "Beyond Sugar Revolutions"; Scott, *Degrees of Freedom*.

¹³³ Cruz Díaz, *Supersticiones criminológicas y médicas*, 18-20.

¹³⁴ In the Dominican Republic, divination is practiced through the luases. However, practitioners also use playing cards, cigarettes or cigar ash, urine, candles, coffee cups, etc. Divination occurs through dreams and communication with the dead (necromancy) as well. While consultations with practitioners tend to happen in private, luá dances are occasions to socialize as a community. These gatherings are thrown in honor of the luases on holy days. Drumming dominates the festivities during which the spirits "mount" participants. Carlos Deive, *Vodú y magia en Santo Domingo* (Santo Domingo: Fundación Cultural Dominicana, 1975 [1992]), 170-171, 179, 183, 227, 231, and 293; Thornton, "The Cultural Politics of Evangelical Christianity in the Dominican Republic," 64, 70, 82-83, and 95-97.

¹³⁵ "Quince fanáticos del 'Luá' fueron sorprendidos en sus salvajes prácticas," *La Opinión*, 18 abril 1927, 1.

¹³⁶ "Se celebran bailes de luá," *La Opinión*, 12 agosto 1927.

attended these “savage” dances at night. Their chants and songs sounded like “howling.” The “raucous” dance steps kept locals from sleeping. These “scandals” happened frequently in poor communities “overflowing with ills.” This particular episode, off Ramírez Street, unfolded near a “filthy and smelly reservoir” releasing “malarial microbes.”¹³⁷

As the Ramírez Street episode indicates, the Dominican press used public health concerns to accentuate the dangers associated with the misbelieving black underground. Practitioner ritual objects were similarly cast as public health nuisances. For example, in April 1934 police and sanitary officials in La Romana surprised a group practicing “witchcraft” with flowers, incense, rum, and colored handkerchiefs. Authorities feared sorcery would have a “devastating impact” on the “health” of those foolish enough to invest in the “dark arts and sciences.”¹³⁸ One such health mishap happened in Ciudad Trujillo in November 1936. A seven-year-old girl named Nestora Félix was severely injured during a luá ceremony led by a Haitian “Papabocó” in the “shanty heights” of Vicente Noble. Attempting to exorcise malignant forces from the girl, the Haitian mounted Nestora and jumped with her “as if she were a ball.” During one of the jumps, Nestora landed on the ground mouth-first, breaking her jaw and the Haitian’s fall in the process.¹³⁹

When police raided misbelieving miscreants, or caught them in the act, they stumbled upon laboratories replete with altars and power objects. In January 1937, for instance, authorities in San Pedro de Macorís (in the southeastern part of the country) surprised a 22-year-old practitioner named Rafael Leonardo while he provided services to a divorced English Caribbean woman in *barrio* Sur Miramar. Leonardo charged the woman five *pesos* per visit and had accumulated 198

¹³⁷ “Sigue propagándose el llamado -Luá-,” *La Opinión*, 27 diciembre 1929, 1.

¹³⁸ “Ecos de todo el país: hechiceros arrestados en el este,” *La Opinión*, 12 abril 1934, 4.

¹³⁹ “Todavía el Luá,” *La Tribuna*, 18 noviembre 1936, 3.

from her alone. The police raided the “doctor’s curious laboratory,” where they found jewelry (e.g., two gold rings, one silver ring, and a necklace); a pocket watch; a rosette-encrusted chain; spare change; copper coins; a mirror; a book on white magic; a tin plate with melted wax; burnt candle ends; a vase holding different plants (including *amansa guapo*¹⁴⁰); “vini-vini” perfume;¹⁴¹ a red kerchief; and an image of the Catholic martyr Saint Expeditus.¹⁴² Officers surmised that Leonardo used these items to perform “witchcraft.” The local court fined the “doctor” 30 pesos and sentenced him to six months in prison for “swindling” the woman.¹⁴³ Perhaps more importantly, however, this case reminded authorities that science was not exclusive to the state or its surrogates. Laboratory experiments did not always take place in sanitary environments, and they could be as immaterial as they were material.

As the Dominican Republic’s black medico-religious underground continued to thrive, or at the very least exist, the state responded aggressively. The year 1937, which overlapped with the massacre of thousands of Haitians in the borderland, turned out to be a particularly active year for police campaigns against *luá*. In March 1937, *La Tribuna* reported the ongoing “unprecedented insolence” of *luá* practitioners in the “heights” of Ciudad Trujillo, especially barrio Galindo. During this episode, the ritual drove a woman “mad” to the point that authorities sent her to an asylum to see if she could be “cured by medical science.” The woman left behind several children,

¹⁴⁰ Original Products Botanica insists that *amansa guapo* is a sweet herb used as extract in the form of oil or perfume. Its leaves can also be ingredients in spiritual baths and love spells.

¹⁴¹ According to Botanica San Lázaro, vini-vini perfume is one of many fragrance- and oil-based potions sold in bottles that attract love. It can be used to supplement spiritual baths, or in a bag to anoint the contents. Combining several bottles can make ritual spells even stronger.

¹⁴² Cruz Díaz suggests that religious iconography and imagery were common features of healer workshops during the era of Trujillo. For example, “superstitious” healers had rooms filled with portraits of “saints” where they entered trances to learn how to cure patients. They sent clients to collaborating pharmacists, and tried to sell them images of “rare saints” like Saint Caralampio and Saint Tiburtius. See Cruz Díaz, *Supersticiones criminológicas y médicas*, 147.

¹⁴³ “La policía de Macorís da una sensacional balida al brujo Rafael Leonardo,” *La Opinión*, 13 enero 1937, 5.

who paid the price for her lack of “consciousness.”¹⁴⁴ This example is noteworthy if only because the state combatted occult science with institutional science. Police action and press bias, however, could not hide the reality of competing forms of consciousness. More than a clash between civilization and barbarism, luá raids were about smothering the agency of those who dared to claim power for themselves instead of conforming to the emerging state’s monopoly on violence. The state itself acknowledged the power of the occult, even if it did not embrace it.

The next month, in late April, *La Tribuna* and *La Opinión* chronicled that Lt. Col. Juan Pou was actively pursuing “vulgar” luá dances in Galindo.¹⁴⁵ Police efforts there continued through at least May, when two additional women were caught practicing the “strange rite.” Unlike previous raids, however, this one yielded the confiscation of “weird” objects central to the redemptive practice of believers, including a considerable amount of tobacco, beans, garlic, and indigo plant. Police also seized other artifacts used by the “initiates” of the “diabolical ceremony” to make “offerings to their gods.” Again, the reporting journalist declared support for the “praiseworthy” police campaign to “free us” of the “exotic custom” of luá propagated by “ignorant” Haitians and Dominicans.¹⁴⁶ Black people simply possessing certain kinds of power objects alerted authorities, but it was putting them to use that really sounded the alarm.

Seeing a ritual in progress concerned the police and the press alike. In July 1937, authorities “surprised” two men and two women as they were “immersed in the rites of the exotic dance ‘luá’” in La Esperilla, near Gazcue. Police confiscated bottles of rum, tobacco, red handkerchiefs, and other items from the scene. The misbelieving miscreants were relegated to “preventive prison,”

¹⁴⁴ “Las prácticas de Luá siguen,” *La Tribuna*, 27 marzo 1937, 5.

¹⁴⁵ “Sometidos a la Justicia por bailar ‘luá,’” *La Tribuna*, 22 abril 1937, 6; and “Continúa la campaña de la policía contra los bailes de ‘luá,’” *La Opinión*, 24 abril 1937, 2.

¹⁴⁶ “Nuevos bailadores de ‘luá’ apresados por la policía,” *La Opinión*, 6 mayo 1937, 2.

where they awaited trial.¹⁴⁷ It was not unusual for such instances of drum- and chant-driven luá dances led by “crazy” practitioners wearing “red gowns” to include animal skins and charms. Much to the chagrin of Dominican officials, these “unusual” approaches to belief, morality, healing, and empowerment persisted in the early 1940s.¹⁴⁸ This speaks to the power of experiential alternatives and alternate political utopias in the making of Dominican redemptive practice. That these alternatives exploited objects laden with otherworldly authority reminded the Dominican state of the revolutionary potential of medico-religious rituals and its and own spiritual vagueness.

Scientific Tensions, “Illegal” Medicine

Although the Vásquez and Trujillo governments embraced positivist medical science, religious “folk” medicine challenged the notional and material hegemony of the Dominican state and titular physicians. Some intellectuals examined folk medicine in relatively objective fashion during this period. For example, Spanish scholar Manuel J. Andrade visited the Dominican Republic in 1927 under the auspices of Columbia University and U.S.-based folkloric societies.¹⁴⁹ In 1930, he published a text called *Folklore from the Dominican Republic*, one of the first of its kind. Although the study emphasized language, it also compiled 304 folktales from the testimonies of 79 mostly “illiterate” and middle-aged informants from all around the country.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ “Bailadores de ‘luá’ sorprendidos por la Policía Nacional,” *La Opinión*, 12 julio 1937, 2.

¹⁴⁸ “Varios bailadores de ‘Luá’ fueron detenidos ayer,” *La Tribuna*, 8 enero 1941, 6; “Fueron sorprendidos bailando ‘voodoo,’” *La Nación*, 8 enero 1941, 10; and “Varias personas fueron sorprendidas en momentos que realizaban un salvaje espectáculo,” *La Tribuna*, 30 julio 1941, 4.

¹⁴⁹ Columbia University was also active in neighboring Puerto Rico in the 1920s. In San Juan, university officials collaborated with local authorities to implement medical science policies and enterprises, namely the School of Tropical Medicine. By midcentury Puerto Rico became a field for anthropological research, also under the auspices of Columbia. Consult Amador, *Medicine and Nation-Building in the Americas*; and ch. 3 of this dissertation.

¹⁵⁰ Thirty informants hailed from the eastern part of the country (San Pedro de Macorís, Villa Velázquez, El Seibo, and Higüey). Another 24 were interviewed along the northernmost border with Haiti (Dajabón, Restauración, and Monte Cristi). Fifteen lived in the center of the country (Bonao and La Vega). The remaining ten had roots in the

The stories preserved by Andrade sparked Cruz Díaz. The judge was especially captivated by the tales about deities, thieves, diviners, magical objects, enchantments, death, ghosts, the devil, and trickery. One can draw a figurative line between Cruz Díaz's interest in medico-religious beliefs and practices and the knowledge and wisdom of two women documented by Andrade. One of these women was an 80-year-old from Higüey named Juliana Arache. Andrade described her as his "best informant," as an "illiterate but intelligent villager of pure African blood, a fact that she asserted with pride." Arache spoke in riddles and furnished Andrade with vital data about Dominican customs and folktales.¹⁵¹

The other woman who inspired Cruz Díaz was a 50-year-old chambermaid from La Vega named Eulalia, an expert in "remedies and incantations." Eulalia grew up in a rural district and was the primary source of most of the data compiled by Andrade on these topics. In a section on childbirth, for example, Andrade revealed that Eulalia was known in La Vega province as a "skillful curandera." To avoid illness (e.g. tetanus and puerperal fever) while pregnant, she consumed "charred food" mixed with "ochra," a tall tropical African plant (*Abelmoschus esculentus*) widely cultivated for its edible green pods used in soups and stews. She ate abundantly thanks to an "infallible remedy": three pieces of hardened cheese rind, three pieces of partly charred manioc cake, and three sips of water. Additionally, she claimed that if an infant nursed

north-central part of the country (Puerto Plata and San José de las Matas). Most of the informants were peasants, farmers, vendors, construction workers, or shoeshiners. A few worked in packing houses, markets, and hotels. Some had privileged backgrounds and spoke languages besides Spanish, including English and Kreyòl. Manuel J. Andrade, *Folklore from the Dominican Republic* (New York: American Folklore Society, 1930).

¹⁵¹ *Ibid*, 3-4. Cruz Díaz asserted that he was especially "charmed" by accounts of the Pedro Animales and Juan Bobos of the Dominican Republic, the allegorical protagonists at the center of Cibao folklore. Juan Bobo is also a favored protagonist in moral tales in Puerto Rico and other parts of the world. Often portrayed as a trickster and fool, Juan Bobo has been called an avatar of indigenous morality, a repository of cultural/historical information, and a symbol of resistance to colonial exploitation. Juan Bobo stories meld spiritual strength and resistance into a benign art form. Historian Lillian Guerra has observed that narratives about the jíbaro assume a similar power and evince an anti-establishment, or revolutionary, slant. See Sarai Lastra, "Juan Bobo: A Folkloric Information System," *Literary Trends* 47, 3 (Winter 1999): 529-57; and Guerra, *Popular Expression and National Identity in Puerto Rico: The Struggle for Self, Community, and Nation* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998).

while its mother was pregnant, “it should be given a dose of wine with the powder of an egg-roasted shell.” This made “the bad milk come out.” Eulalia learned these “secrets” from her godmother and kept them from other women in her community.¹⁵²

In addition to showing how Eulalia’s methods were produced among kin and authenticated via broader communities, Andrade also chronicled how she treated various ailments. For example, to counteract serious indigestion, Eulalia cooked a handful of *túatúa* leaves without water. She mixed the leaves with eggs, making an omelet patients consumed while sucking the juice of the cooked leaves. Eulalia complemented material cures with immaterial remedies. She viewed these as “therapeutic,” not necessarily as magical or spiritual. Yet, religious symbolism, prayers, and “superstition” in the form of animal sacrifice formed part of how she went about providing treatment. For example, in cases of high fever, she sliced open a breathing, young chicken by striking it with a machete between its legs and placed it on patients’ chests while the blood was still warm.¹⁵³ Eulalia did not personally believe that “evil spirits” caused sickness and death, but her actions and methods suggested otherwise.

Although early studies about Dominican folklore like Andrade’s took popular healing seriously, the Dominican press generally disapproved of curanderismo and related practices. Numerous press accounts from the middle decades of the twentieth century indicate that the tensions between positivist and “illegal” medicine were not easily resolved by laws, surveillance, or imprisonment. Newspaper reports and editorials rarely captured the vantage points of healers. Instead, they underscored the epistemological prerogative of the state and medical professionals.

¹⁵² Andrade, *Folklore from the Dominican Republic*, 3-4 and 405.

¹⁵³ On remedies for other conditions, see *Ibid*, 426-27.

Despite their differences, however, positivist and “illegal” healing regimes were both shaped by broader beliefs about the nature of the body.

A powerful example of the tension between positivist medical science and religious folk medicine is evident in a series of articles written by Paris-educated physician Darío Contreras in 1930. Contreras worked in the northern city of Santiago, which at the time was a hotbed of healer activity.¹⁵⁴ On November 7, he published an article about a “savage” male healer who had treated Sr. S. T. in Guayubín, a town in Monte Cristi province near the border with Haiti. The patient had been admitted to Altagracia Clinic—founded by Contreras—on November 1 with lower abdominal and rectal pain, which he relieved by defecating liquid stool and, later, “pure blood.” S. T.’s family was interested in an official prognosis, as he had recently been treated by a healer. Although S. T. slightly improved, he continued to emit bloody feces. Contreras noted that were it not for “energetic care” and “active medication,” the patient most certainly would have died. The physician soon learned that the healer who first treated S. T. introduced 19 “purgative liquid enemas” into his rectum to evacuate and medicate the bowels. One of them consisted of a half-liter of olive oil, vegetable oil, and cotton seeds. The healer also gave S. T. oral purgatives. The resulting “pressure” was enough to “seriously injure the intestines.” Contreras concluded that S. T. could have been cured quickly, but the hemorrhages put him in a grave state.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁴ Contreras earned his license in Medicine in the Dominican Republic in 1900. His thesis was about “soft chancres.” Subsequently, Contreras studied in Paris, where he focused on Gynecology and Surgery under Drs. Pozzi, Faure, Marion and Cosset, earning his medical degree in 1914. Upon returning home, Contreras worked in various cities in the northern part of the country, especially Santiago, where he served in public and private capacities. From the 1920s to midcentury, he held numerous government posts, including surgeon of San Rafael hospital; medical examiner of the Santiago Judicial District; Director of Padre Billini hospital; Health Secretary of the nation; House representative and Senator; and embassy advisor in Washington, D.C. Contreras is also known for performing lifesaving surgery on Trujillo in 1942. See Herbert Stern, “Dr. Darío Contreras,” *Hoy*, 20 diciembre 2012.

¹⁵⁵ Darío Contreras, “Una víctima del curanderismo de Guayubín se encuentra en Santiago en estado de suma gravedad: el bárbaro curandero le aplicó al infeliz paciente, nada menos que 19 enemas purgantes,” *Listín Diario*, 7 noviembre 1930, 2.

A few days later, Contreras published another article about health tragedies linked to healers. On November 13, he reported that a 45-year-old woman named Sra. R. C. had died in Hoya del Caimito, a neighborhood in eastern Santiago. The woman was suffering from a hernia that caused her tremendous pain, anxiety, nausea, and facial decomposition. Indeed, it eventually “strangled” her. When R. C. started experiencing “cold and sticky sweats,” her family called on a male healer to assist. The healer applied “enemas and purgatives” to improve the patient’s condition. He also used a cloth-dependent “poultice” (i.e., a soft, moist mass of material, typically made of plants or flour) on the patient’s body to relieve soreness and inflammation. Repeated treatments failed to improve R. C.’s condition. Only when her pulse turned “intermittent” did her family secure the services of a titular physician, who in turn diagnosed her with a “constricted hernia.” When physicians put R. C. under the knife, however, they found her “intestine totally gangrened.” She died during the procedure. Altagracia physicians blamed the healer.¹⁵⁶

These cases of healer services gone wrong validated why Contreras thought “humanity [only] progresses by suffering.” He framed tensions with healers as a battle between “correct” positivist medical science and “mistaken” medico-religiosities.¹⁵⁷ The major difference between the service providers was that Contreras and other titular physicians possessed the resources to establish a monopoly on authority and to project their brand as truth. While Contreras may have been right about some of the intricacies of medical diagnosis and treatment, he did not offer a full portrait of healers’ cures or the social and communal basis of their approach. Instead, like his

¹⁵⁶ Contreras, “Otra víctima del curanderismo en Santiago: un caso grave tratado a base de purgantes y enemas ocasiona la muerte de una pobre mujer que deja en la orfandad un cuadro de pequeñuelos,” *Listín Diario*, 13 noviembre 1930, 2.

¹⁵⁷ The newspaper *Listín Diario* framed the tensions the same way several years later in “Editorial: El curandero versus el médico,” 23 febrero 1936. Several historians have shown how the conflicts between physicians and healers were not only reflective of local dynamics and the struggle between “good intent” and “blind ignorance,” but also indicative of broader historical processes and changes. See Diego Armus, ed., *Entre médicos y curanderos: cultura, historia, y enfermedad en la América Latina moderna* (Buenos Aires: Grupo Editorial Norma, 2001).

colleagues, the press, and the highest levels of the state, he reproduced reproachful narratives already in circulation about healers and their methods. In doing so, he maintained the imagined barriers between urban, “couth” sectors of society and their largely rural, “unintellectual” peasant counterparts.

In talking and acting past one another, Dominican physicians and healers found it difficult to interact with, let alone recognize and appreciate, one another’s intellectuality. The burden of these misunderstandings largely fell on the shoulders of healers because medico-legal authorities understood and depicted them as resistant to change and progress. But alleged cognitive dissonance cut both ways, and one could have equally expected physicians, the press, and the state to do their part to productively engage marginalized communities and their heterodoxies. Yet, these latter entities chose not to do so, as they were invested in elevating positivist science above traditional medicine. Solving health problems could be as simple as engaging in professional grandstanding while ignoring or vilifying different ways of knowing and being.¹⁵⁸

For all their pretention, however, eager positivists of all stripes could not declare mission accomplished. An editorial in a 1937 edition of *La Tribuna*, for instance, reiterated that the battle against curanderismo had not been won yet. According to the editorial’s author (newspaper director César E. Tirado), folk medicine still “displaced [real] science.” Healers feigned being medical students but knew “absolutely nothing about medications.” They spent their time “prescribing concoctions” that did not work and haphazardly giving “injections” rather than actually attending university classes or consulting trustworthy “medical texts.” Even worse, the spiritual healers (*curanderos espiritistas*) “invading the republic” in large numbers, presumably

¹⁵⁸ As several scholars have noted, professionals are more likely to see the “witchcraft” of others rather than the sorcery of their own statecraft. See Hussein Abdilahi Bulhan, *Frantz Fanon and the Psychology of Oppression* (New York: Plenum, 1985); and Palmié, *Wizards and Scientists*.

from Haiti and other parts of the Caribbean, had the “audacity” to recommend treatments that “no real physician in his right mind” would ever prescribe. Anyone with a “moderate sense of science” knew that such counsel was the “product of people suffering from mental disequilibrium.”¹⁵⁹ This would not be the last time that press observers and scientific experts in the Dominican Republic linked heterodox medico-religiosities and insanity.

Despite the Trujillo government’s best efforts, this state of affairs persisted. Ordinary Dominicans played both sides and most physicians decided a hands-off approach worked best for them. But eventually, Tirado asserted, as physicians carried out “prophylaxis” more securely, the government increasingly hosted conferences to cultivate the health “consciousness” of the public.¹⁶⁰ Still, physicians were not as active in extirpating folk healing as Tirado might have hoped. Rural Dominican communities had difficulties attracting resident physicians well into the 1940s. Therefore, they embraced informal practitioners, as was the case with Lico. Meanwhile, authorities continued to perceive of *Olivoristas*, *luá* practitioners, sorcerers, and healers as one in the same. Their itinerant nature made them moving threats and targets. The deprecation of healers and other groups reached a new level of intensity under Trujillo. Like its colonial antecedents, the modern policing of illegal medicine and misbelief was rooted in racial disparities and inequalities.

It bears repeating that the Dominican state and its surrogates especially expressed concern about practitioners that specialized in blending the (im)material worlds. In November 1937, for example, Dominican police arrested “fake doctor” Rafael Leonardo (introduced above) for medical sorcery. *La Opinión* reported that he represented one of the “worst types” of healer because he attributed disease to a bundle of (in)tangibles: spirits, human quarrels, and emotions

¹⁵⁹ “Detengamos el curanderismo,” *La Tribuna*, 26 julio 1937, 2.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

like hate.¹⁶¹ The reporting journalist also alleged that Leonardo “intoxicated simpleton patients with concoctions” to rob them, “worsening their health” in the process. “Indian women” and “white men” were particularly susceptible to his advances.¹⁶²

Portraying Leonardo in this way—as an economic, health, and racial menace—spoke to state-level anxieties on one level. On another, it was also meant to control potential popular disorder. For left unchecked, ordinary Dominicans would take justice into their own hands if the state failed to respond to the abuses of tricksters. This mattered because tricksters often used the reputation of esteemed healers to commit fraud. In April 1945, for example, a man named Hilario Tavaréz Ramos, who knew about the curative miracles performed by the “*médico de Santiago*,” prepared “bottles” of “water and twigs” and sold them near a cemetery off La Hoya Road in Guerra, a municipality east of Ciudad Trujillo. Tavaréz Ramos told clients that he was a disciple of the Santiago physician and that his bottles “cured everything.” He sold them for five pesos each, typically to peasants desperate for faith cures. When Tavaréz Ramos’ first patient did not heal, the police sequestered his bottles. More than 30 people testified against him. He was fined and jailed for violation of the Dominican sanitary code.¹⁶³

¹⁶¹ Cruz Díaz referred to healers and sorcerers as “primitive physicians.” He identified them as one of five types: those who believed in the efficiency of their cures (like Lico); those who believed in the efficiency of their cures in dialogue with superstitions; those who cured exclusively with superstitions; those who believed they were divinely anointed (like Mateo); and those who did not believe in anything but sought to exploit people gullible enough to entrust them with their healing. These latter healers were out for personal financial gain. This was “the prototypical delinquent healer,” the kind that usually ended up in prison. As a judge, Cruz Díaz presided over many of these cases, including one in 1942 about Pimentel peasants negatively influenced by the spirits of Candelo and Tinyó. The case revealed that delinquent healers existed on a scale ranging from “empirical” to “criminoide trickster.” See Cruz Díaz, *Supersticiones criminológicas y médicas*, 144 and 152-55.

¹⁶² “Un brujo curandero detenido en Santiago,” *La Opinión*, 30 noviembre 1937, 8.

¹⁶³ “Pagará \$50 de multa por pretender ser médico,” *La Opinión*, 6 abril 1945, 3. Also see “Sucesos en la República: detenido un curandero,” *La Tribuna*, 18 marzo 1942, 4. While Cruz Díaz was critical of the Trujillo government overall, when it came to medical enterprises he lauded the state. Law No. 1456 (passed in 1938) punished healers with fines and prison time. Sanitary laws 111 and 115 (passed in 1941) limited the practice of medicine to “capable” hands. These laws culminated in law No. 617 (also passed in 1941), which led to the expansion of a national network of hospitals and dispensaries and obligated medical students to serve six months in a *común* upon graduation. Cruz Díaz, *Supersticiones criminológicas y médicas*, 138-40 and 156-57.

While the victims of fraudulent healers did not hesitate to collaborate with Dominican authorities when their interests were at stake, they also lent support to “authentic” healers (e.g., Mateo and Lico) who provided services for free. The flexible relationship between healers and their devotees is suggestive of a redemptive practice beyond the reach of the state. The power of folk medicine rested on its synchronized emphasis on social relationships and the health of the body, mind, *and* soul. This contrasted with the Dominican state’s growing division of the trilogy. The Dominican government’s approach to health and healing was like the Puerto Rican colonial state’s approach in this vein. But Puerto Rico’s populist government did not legally target objectionable medico-religiosities in the same way as the Dominican government.

Puerto Rican Counterpoint

Whereas the Dominican government viewed medico-religious practices as two sides of the same coin, the Puerto Rican colonial state separated medical and misbelieving reprobates. Puerto Rican officials allowed healers and others to peddle their goods and services publicly if their activities were channeled through state institutions (e.g., through the Catholic Church or laboratory medicine). When healers disregarded health and sanitation laws and practiced medicine illegally, however, state officials intervened. In the 1920s and 1930s, for example, the Puerto Rican Justice Department reported several instances of unsanctioned dentistry, nursing, medicine, and pharmaceuticals. Between 1926 and 1938, 156 people were charged for ignoring public health laws, including those related to “illegal” medicine. Ninety-four (or 60 percent) of those charged were convicted. The remaining 40 percent were either acquitted or their cases were dismissed.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁴ See *Report of the Attorney General of Porto/Puerto Rico* (1926-1938).

These numbers pale in comparison to the national population of more than a million, but they nonetheless confirm that authorities kept an eye on healers. Further, it is likely that justice officials collapsed non-Catholic and non-Spiritist healers into the broad category of “creedless” inmates, who accounted for 13-20 percent of Oso Blanco’s population between the 1920s and midcentury (see chapter 5 in this dissertation). As bulk statistical references to illegal medicine after the late 1930s are hard to come by, it is likely that the dip in “creedless” inmates during the latter bookend of these years is indicative of the “success” of the Puerto Rican state in domesticating objectionable medico-religiosities. This is not to suggest that illegal medicine ceased in Puerto Rico, for it persisted through midcentury. Indeed, it persists today, although the practices have shifted toward pseudo-medical and non-diplomatic forms of healing.

Unlike the Dominican Republic, where authorities hoped to eliminate alternative medicine altogether, the Puerto Rican government wanted to regulate heterodox medico-religiosities. Race played a significant role in determining who the Dominican and Puerto Rican states targeted or tolerated. In the Dominican Republic, a country with a mostly black or “Indian” population closer to Haiti than Puerto Rico, most healers, sorcerers, and *luá* priests were people of color. In Puerto Rico, a country that had gone through intense whitening processes (due to race-mixing, migration, and discursive projections by cultural elites) in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, healers and sorcerers were just as likely to be notionally white. However, more than just whitening operated here. Historical memory also loomed large. In the Dominican Republic, Haiti was deemed a threat to national identity. Puerto Rico did not have the same specter. The influence and proliferation of African-derived religions were measurably greater in the Dominican Republic than in Puerto Rico.

The surveillance of objectionable beliefs and practices in Puerto Rico proved to be less intense. In the 1920s and 1930s, white medico-religious peddlers frequently circulated flyers

announcing their services and healing prowess in San Juan and elsewhere. These itinerant healers were active in rural and urban areas alike. Among the most well-known in rural communities were the Hermanos Cheos¹⁶⁵ and La Samaritana Julia Vázquez. Vázquez (1893-1986), a dark-skinned *jíbara*, worked in barrio Hato in the eastern town of San Lorenzo. The jíbaros who sought Vázquez's services dubbed her *médica* rather than *curandera*, *santiguadora* (a specialist who cured by means of prayers, oils, and abdominal rubs), or *curiosa*. The term *médica* linked Vázquez to earlier figures, such as the "*médica de Puerta de Tierra*," a woman who achieved notoriety in 1914 after performing miracles by means of magnetic hand passes. This gave Vázquez a lineage that made her recognizable to her followers but deplorable to critics. The absence of clergy in Utuado and San Lorenzo contributed to the celebrity of figures like the Cheos and Vázquez.¹⁶⁶

Itinerant Spiritists like Félix R. Martínez¹⁶⁷ and Domingo Z. Otero¹⁶⁸ propagated their own pseudo-scientific gospels in San Juan's medical marketplace. Martínez, for example, dubbed himself a "miracle-maker" and a manipulator of natural law. He sought to heal the scores of infirm across the Americas who had lost hope in finding cures for their maladies. Phrenology was one of his specialties.¹⁶⁹ Otero was a phrenologist as well. He also identified as a "grand herbal magician"

¹⁶⁵ The Cheos, a brotherhood of itinerant preachers and rural nurses known by the names of the saints who inspired them, defended Catholicism. They mainly operated in Utuado's coffee country and in nearby tobacco-producing areas. Their preaching emphasized salvation, the Day of Judgment, and the moral imperatives of Christian life. They hoped to "inspire" commitment to church sacraments and devotion to the Virgin Mary and the saints. They also performed "cures" (e.g., via the use of altar flowers), but only occasionally. Their cures were more often the result of association with "divine" persons, whose attributes included the ability to heal. The Cheos communicated inspiration through metaphors that linked the earth and an extraterrestrial abode. See Román, *Governing Spirits*, ch. 2.

¹⁶⁶ Román, *Governing Spirits*, ch. 4.

¹⁶⁷ Specialist in occult sciences, hypnotism, and magnetism; had knowledge of the work of German naturopath Louis Kuhne and botanists Renato de Grousordi and François-Vincent Raspail; promoted himself as a vice-killer (e.g., of alcoholism, gambling, and smoking).

¹⁶⁸ Specialist in hypnotism and occultism; a "necromantic" who contacted the dead to predict the material future; an expert in the scientific study of "perfume essences" for lost loves.

¹⁶⁹ "El hombre de los poderes misteriosos," expediente 917, Caja 101, Colección Robert Junghanns (CRJ), Serie Impresos y Asuntos Generales (SIAG), AGPR.

(*gran mago de yerbas*) who provided bodily- and soul-soothing experiences to the sick. Figure 3 below is an image that Otero used on his flyers. It depicts him dressed in a black robe and headdress adorned with stars. This symbolized his knowledge of the universe and its secrets. He is grasping an unlit candle in his right hand, which he presumably sparked for each client. The lit candle represented his shedding light on the intimate affairs of clients and pointing them in the right direction. A table is to Otero's right, replete with a metallic relic at its base and three concoction-filled bottles resting on its top. These were to be used for ritual and treatment purposes.¹⁷⁰

Empirical healers like Martínez and Otero mediated between “dominant” scientific notions and “suspect” medico-religiosities. For example, Otero's flyer invoked the biblical story of Lazarus to incite the interest and investment of potential clients.¹⁷¹ He elevated himself to the level of Jesus to legitimize his wisdom and sell his cures. Otero thought of himself as a prophet with a ministry that performed spectacular works. Titular physicians like Francis W. O'Connor, who were also active in Puerto Rico at the time, similarly thought of themselves as prophets, albeit prophets of secular medical science.¹⁷² Other healers active in Puerto Rico had a harder time selling their product. For example, a Cuban “occult” physician named “Doctor Lezcano” found himself serving time in Oso Blanco in 1934. He regretted his situation, which he deemed unbecoming for a “scientist” of his caliber. Lezcano's detractors had other ideas, however. One journalist all but condemned him in the mainstream press, comparing Lezcano to the fictional Doctor Faustus, a character in Christopher Marlowe's seventeenth-century play of the same name who sold his soul to the devil for power, youth, pleasure, and knowledge.¹⁷³

¹⁷⁰ “Anuncio del mago Domingo Z. Otero,” expediente 684, Caja 101, CRJ, SIAG, AGPR.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷² Mayo Santana, et al., eds., *A Sojourn in Tropical Medicine*.

¹⁷³ Carreras, “La vida tras las rejas,” 67.



Figure 3: Domingo Otero advertisement, c. 1920s-30s, AGPR.

That the likes of Martínez, Otero, “the Goddess of Mystery” Luz de María Poche (from Russia), and other healers roamed about San Juan, Mayagüez, and elsewhere without clashing with police, and the fact that Lezcano, a Cuban, ended up in prison, indicates the importance of regional and racial difference in determining who could freely pursue their medico-religious craft. It is also suggestive of a society that accepted its own medico-religious experts but rejected those not deemed local, like Lezcano. This demonstrates the centrality of place in constructing legitimacy, and that popular medicine in Puerto Rico was authenticated through a variety of social and cultural processes and relationships involving kin, community, and religious groups. Although the Puerto

Rican colonial state surveilled healers in the mid-twentieth century, authorities remained committed to non-violently domesticating objectionable medico-religiosities.¹⁷⁴

In domesticating devotional spectacles and related practices rather than confronting them, the Puerto Rican government made a rational calculation to not spread itself thin. The Dominican Republic, on the other hand, achieved a version of the “miracle of order” through bellicose policing and imprisonment. As this brief comparison with Puerto Rico confirms, there were important differences between the Dominican and Puerto Rican states in terms of how they dealt with questionable belief systems and “illegal” medicine. However, the two countries did not develop indiscriminately in this regard. Rather, the two societies were outposts of an integrated Caribbean similarly influenced by experiences with empire, colonial medicine, and state-building. That each society resolved medico-religious and political issues inversely does not mean that they were oblivious to developments across the Mona Passage and Greater Caribbean more broadly. Each society set different precedents but along the same spectrum of reason. In the process, they consolidated the wobbly barriers of national difference.

Conclusion

This chapter has illustrated that the tension between state positivism and popular healing in both Dominican prisons and communities at large intensified in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Scientific policing and prison physicians contributed to the state production of knowledge about deviance and disease. As was the case for neighboring Puerto Rico, this

¹⁷⁴ Román shows that in the early 1950s the “miracle of order” in Puerto Rico could be seen everywhere from tamed mass pilgrimages in Sabana Grande to the distribution of more than 300,000 copies of the Health Department’s *La ciencia contra la superstición*, a book about the “proper” and legal exercise of medical science. See Román, *Governing Spirits*, 180-81. Had the spectacles described by Román occurred when radical nationalism germinated in the 1930s, it is possible the state would have reacted more violently than it did around midcentury, when nationalists posed less a threat to the emerging commonwealth save for a few high-profile attacks in Washington, D.C.

happened in a context of colonial transition, but in the Dominican case the state was far more open about using racial tropes and legally targeting marginalized populations to secure power and legitimacy. In the early twentieth century, when criminal anthropology fused into everyday practice in the Hispanophone Caribbean, prison authorities experimented with a eugenic variety of medical science, one still shaped by determinism but increasingly occupied with treatment and fleshly regeneration. This fascination with improving flesh shaped scientific incarceration on both sides of the Mona Passage during the interwar period.

In the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico, the state sought to improve the health of prisoners. Symbolically, the health and fate of the national body was also at stake. Prison laboratories offered both collaborating and incarcerated physicians the tools and raw material with which to paint and tinker with the national future. In the Dominican Republic, Jimenes Grullón was but one of many positivist-influenced and secular-leaning physicians who had a say in what the national future would look like. In Puerto Rico, he had a counterpart in Fernós Isern, who played a similar dual role in the populist movement of the 1940s and colonial realignment of the 1950s. However, whereas Fernós Isern used education in the U.S. metropole and subsequent government service to negotiate colonial rule, Jimenes Grullón used his cosmopolitan background to challenge dictatorship. Jimenes Grullón ended up in prison but was eventually released. He then found himself in exile sharpening his political sword, challenging Trujillo, and distinguishing himself from the “den of lowlives” he briefly shared a home with in Nigua and Ozama. Despite the different chronologies of the two physicians, they shared a broader empirical science that consolidated the modern state and that differentiated *them* from purportedly apolitical common convicts.

The Dominican and Puerto Rican states employed science to produce national consciousness out of masses of people with “curious” politics and “objectionable” medico-religious beliefs and practices. Included in the pool of criminals and convicts were healers who had their own ideas about morality, science, and belief. Olivoristas, sorcerers, and luá practitioners did not go quietly into the night. For at least a century, they coexisted in productive tension with Dominican authorities, clergy, intellectuals, and titular physicians. The criminalization of their cultures and political trivialization at the hands of the state and other elitist institutions made the Dominican Republic unique compared to other Hispanophone Caribbean societies, where local dynamics limited but did not undermine state management of “menacing” difference.

This does not mean that developments in the Dominican Republic were divorced from the rest of the Caribbean. While race, war, and historical memory colored Cuban perceptions of “misbelieving miscreants,” Román claims they are not enough to explain why healers were treated differently in twentieth-century Cuba. He argues that the contrasts in healers’ careers had to with changes in Cuban government that aimed to do “more than punish” misbelievers. Cuban officials and journalists sought to alter the conditions that produced religious “fanaticism,” which in turn paved the way to a “modern and rational political order.” The judicial fates of different healers attest to a struggle between “rational governance” and the “subjugated knowledges” of man-gods. Thus, Román believes it would be an “oversimplification” to assert that some healers were condemned because they were black and others were celebrated for their whiteness.¹⁷⁵ But if one thinks of the Caribbean as *integrated*, Román’s insistence on the discursive supremacy of “raceless” political systems in the context of a race-conscious and race-weary Caribbean (largely

¹⁷⁵ Román, *Governing Spirits*, 24.

because of Hispaniolan precedents) becomes less compelling. Race and national politics circled one another. At the very least, they were equal partners in the differential treatment of healers.

Regardless of how “hard” or “softly” a specific government persecuted marginalized communities within colonies and nations, across the Caribbean, states emphasized the (in)formal “illegality” of certain medico-religious beliefs. This allowed authorities to project healers and common convicts as apolitical and unintellectual. In part, this helped congeal state systems, including policing and incarceration. The metrics of these systems can be measured in arrests. The goal of the police, and by extension the state, was to arrest people for forbidden thoughts and behaviors. And as these systems amassed and furnished data, the state justified putting and keeping certain people in prison. The intent was not to deescalate situations, but to criminalize non-mainstream redemptive practice and to establish a certain order of things. This was the context in which criminal profiling emerged in the modern Caribbean. In the Dominican Republic, healers and their communities fit this bill. In Puerto Rico, the emphasis was less on healers and more on potentially disruptive communities, which happened to include those who practiced “illegal” medicine. Yet, both societies jailed disproportionate rates of people of color.

The similarities between the Dominican and Puerto Rican cases are powerful, but stark differences abound. Medico-religiosities were not smothered by the law in Puerto Rico, although there were instances of surveillance and oppression. Meanwhile, titular physicians collaborated with insular government officials and played key roles implementing science in Oso Blanco. In the Dominican Republic, on the other hand, physicians had a harder time convincing Trujillo of such a need. Trujillo’s doubts were rooted in the prohibited political sympathies of many physicians, who conspired against him frequently, but he never entirely abandoned penitentiary science. Rather, Trujillo slowly built up prisoner healthcare infrastructure. While some physicians

and healers experienced torture in Nigua and Ozama, others (in)formally labored in prison infirmaries. But Trujillo was an equal-opportunity despot. He targeted healers as much as he did titular physicians, if not more so. Many Dominican physicians and healers experienced the body in ways unlike most Puerto Rican doctors, who by midcentury had grown accustomed to diagnosing inmates, not being diagnosed. Because of their systematic repression at the hands of the state, Dominican physicians and healers were more likely than their Puerto Rican counterparts to recognize the sanctity of the body.¹⁷⁶

Dissident healers and physicians in the Dominican Republic recognized the body's sanctity due to the political violence they endured. The surveillance of black medico-religiosities suggests that positivist science was just one way of measuring and explaining human behavior and progress. Healers did not monopolize spiritual approaches to health and healing, however. Titular physicians showcased a great deal of spirituality in their approaches as well. Many Puerto Rican and Dominican physicians identified as Catholics, denominational Christians, Freemasons, secular humanists, and so on. Physicians like Fernós Isern and Jimenes Grullón straddled spiritual and intellectual worlds and were applauded for it, but if a common criminal or convict like Diógenes, Mateo, Lico, or a random luá priest demonstrated ontological complexity, then something was terribly wrong. Both the Puerto Rican and Dominican states forbade the practices and worldviews of healers and radical physicians not because they were intolerable, but because they were political and potentially revolutionary.

¹⁷⁶ After midcentury in the Dominican Republic, physicians increasingly conspired against the Trujillo regime. They met in secret to plot against the government. Their clandestine activities in clinics powerfully marked the twilight of the era of Trujillo. Meanwhile, nothing of the sort unfolded in Puerto Rican medical circles. While there were sporadic cases of physicians lending health aid to radical nationalists, more physicians became centrally implicated in the island's subordination to colonial modernity and capitalism and collaborated with the state. Consult José Tallaj, *Un médico en la 40: recuerdos de una conspiración* (Santiago: Editora Búho, 2006); Freddy Bonnelly Valverde, *Mi paso por la 40: un testimonio* (Santo Domingo: Editora Mediabyte, 2009); Trujillo Pagán, *Modern Colonization by Medical Intervention*; and Antonio Gil de Lamadrid Navarro, *Los indómitos* (Río Piedras: Editorial Edil, 1981).

CHAPTER 3

Determining Redeemability: Social Health Experts and Convicts

On January 3, 1951, Spanish psychiatrist Rafael Troyano de los Ríos examined a 22-year-old unemployed sex offender from Mayagüez named José Luis Rodríguez Galarza. Troyano studied the convict in Oso Blanco, where he served as the resident physician. Troyano arrived in Puerto Rico several years earlier by way of Santo Domingo, where he had worked from 1939 to 1945 in the Nigua mental hospital, formerly the Dominican national penitentiary, and other national institutions. In Puerto Rico, where he worked from 1945 to 1957, Troyano treated everyone, from political prisoners like Afro-Puerto Rican nationalist leader Pedro Albizu Campos to the likes of Rodríguez Galarza. He determined that Rodríguez Galarza was an alcoholic “acromegaloide,” a biological “type” and endocrine condition in which the pituitary gland produces excess growth hormone that enlarges the face, hands, and feet.¹

In his psychiatric evaluation of Rodríguez Galarza, Troyano situated the convict’s biology in socioeconomic context. Specifically, he mentioned Rodríguez Galarza’s primary-level education, “vices,” and criminal record, one that included a previous sentence for breaking and entering. Troyano also unpacked the convict’s “illegitimate” labor history. Rodríguez Galarza was likely a pimp or prostitute who “lived off what whores paid him.” But the convict also exhibited darker tendencies. He enjoyed “screwing” kids. Further, Troyano observed that Rodríguez Galarza did not work or receive vocational training while incarcerated. Penitentiary staff punished him at least 14 times for playing dice, assault, and engaging in “immoral” acts with younger, impressionable convicts. These and other “facts” prompted Troyano to diagnose Rodríguez Galarza as a “psychopath” requiring “special attention” and isolation. Keeping the convict in an

¹ Expediente del confinado José Luís Rodríguez Galarza, Caja 50, Serie Junta de Libertad Bajo Palabra (SJLBP), FDJ, AGPR.

individual cell would prevent him from freely roaming Oso Blanco's cellblocks, thereby dodging the troubles he was known to spark.²

Troyano's psychiatric portrait of Rodríguez Galarza, while unique in substance, was not unique in terms of how he organized it. Echoing historians Warwick Anderson, Deborah Jenson, and Richard Keller, psychiatric discourses like Troyano's allowed for the particularization of individuals but ultimately concealed their diversity.³ Nor was the gendered and sexualized language that Troyano used to project Rodríguez Galarza as deviant exceptional. Perhaps the most conspicuous aspect of his evaluation of the convict is the subtextual dialogue between biology and sociology. Much like Troyano, who in the middle decades of the twentieth century found himself between societies, the discipline of psychiatry itself attempted to bridge increasingly disparate forms of science by merging laboratorial and ethnographic methods.

In both Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, Troyano wielded psychiatry to frame and explain the nature of Rodríguez Galarza and countless other inmates. His awareness of the interplay between medical and social science points to an understudied dimension of the history of twentieth-century psychiatry and medicine. Contemporary scholarship underscores the broader colonial aspects of psychiatry and psychoanalysis to disclose the role of specific "colonial political and ontological relations" in the production of "uncivilized, primitive, concealed, and timeless colonized peoples."⁴ However, while anchored in (neo)colonial contexts, Troyano's midcentury convict evaluations did not always center colonial principles and calculations. Instead, he masked

² *Ibid.*

³ Warwick Anderson, Deborah Jenson, and Richard C. Keller, eds., *Unconscious Dominions: Psychoanalysis, Colonial Trauma, and Global Sovereignties* (Durham: Duke, 2011), 2.

⁴ Ranjana Khanna, *Dark Continents: Psychoanalysis and Colonialism* (Durham: Duke, 2003), 6 and 73; and Joy Damousi, "Géza Róheim and the Australian Aborigine: Psychoanalytic Anthropology during the Interwar Years," in *Unconscious Dominions*, 80.

colonial impetus by emphasizing neuropsychiatry, a science more concerned with the links between mental or emotional disturbance and disorderly brain function than colonial relations. This contrasted sharply with the findings of French Caribbean psychiatrist Frantz Fanon, who at the time argued that arrogant colonialism and dehumanizing race relations drove blacks and other people of color mad.⁵

Even modern neuropsychiatry, however, had a checkered colonial past. As Comaroff has noted, during colonial times neurology most explicitly addressed the spiritual and moral capacity of people. Biomedical scientists believed the nervous system was the site of internal animation, and that its complexity determined one's intelligence and volition.⁶ Acumen and will were precisely what Troyano wanted to gauge in convicts, for understanding these components justified whether to release someone from prison. Still, Troyano's focus and language reinforced longstanding colonial tropes, namely that non-white places harbored bodies of color with dim minds, even if these bodies were mixed-race or otherwise not entirely white, as was the case with Puerto Rican jíbaros. As historian Francisco Scarano has observed, whereas in the Spanish colonial period the jíbaro trope allowed "structurally weaker groups" to "disguise their oppositional politics behind a discursive mask, passing themselves as native peasants" whose "plebeian" expressions and forms of resistance became the foundation of a Puerto Rican proto-nation, by the mid-twentieth century island populists reimagined the jíbaro as national folklore and as needing to

⁵ According to Fanon, oppressed black people are perceived to be lesser creatures in the white world in which they live. He is especially concerned with how black use of colonial language is seen by the colonizer as rapacious, not transformative. This creates insecurity in the consciousness of blacks. Mastering the language of the colonizer to be recognized as white reinforces black dependency and subordinates black humanity. My research has not uncovered an explicit connection between Troyano and Fanon. When Fanon published *Black Skin, White Masks* in 1952, he was in France, whereas Troyano was in the Caribbean. Fanon's thesis about the links between race, colonialism, and madness is probably more applicable to the case of Albizu Campos, who was exposed to the bifurcated U.S. race model when he studied at Harvard and served in the U.S. military, than most incarcerated Puerto Ricans in the mid-twentieth century. See Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York: Grove Press, 1952).

⁶ Comaroff, "The Diseased Heart of Africa," 309-10.

conform.⁷ The (re)articulation of national identity in this way loomed large over the commonwealth pact of 1952.

The convicts Troyano interacted with learned to navigate a system of surveillance and reform that was no longer just concerned with classifying them or making them legible, but with transforming their bodies, minds, and civic spirits, thereby giving them a history. Ideally, this was the purpose of the modern penitentiary the world over, to the point that even a “sexual deviant” like Rodríguez Galarza qualified for sociocultural restoration and political consciousness. This meant that convicts could refine their etiquette and behavior, which brought them closer to sanitary citizenship. But again, subject- and citizen-making appear to have been in Troyano’s rearview mirror. These goals were in sight but not necessarily at the core of his psychiatric style.

Troyano’s labeling of Rodríguez Galarza as an “acromegaloide” illustrates the extent to which mid-twentieth-century psychiatrists still valued and trafficked in eugenic bodily knowledge even as they increasingly depended on psychopathology and analysis. Historian Alexandra M. Stern makes a similar observation for the twentieth-century American West, where the influence of eugenics on race-based intelligence tests and school segregation, for example, characterized psychiatric enterprise.⁸ In Puerto Rico, acromegaloide underscored certain facial features and bone formations, a low intelligence quotient, and the underdevelopment of motor skills. Personality symptoms included emotional fluctuations, impulsivity, eagerness, apathy, and egocentricity—traits common to most, if not all, human beings. That Troyano saw these symptoms in convicts more than himself or his colleagues is suggestive of the enduring power of the (neo)colonial relations and structures he underestimated.

⁷ Scarano, “The *Jbaro* Masquerade,” 1399-1404.

⁸ Stern, *Eugenic Nation*.

Acromegaloides were not the only “type” Troyano encountered behind bars, however. He also came face-to-face with “adenoids,” “eunuchoides,” “feminoides,” and “oligóides,” each type purportedly saying something substantive about convict biology, their social worth, and their social potential.⁹ This framing indicates that psychiatrists like Troyano were migrating from the study of the “troubled mind” to the study of the “broken brain.”¹⁰ Indeed, Troyano and other penitentiary scientists worked hard to convince prisoners that they had to stop looking with their eyes and start seeing with the brain, which in turn meant knowing what the body could do and accepting the kind of labor it was predisposed to perform.

Troyano’s psychiatric portraits of convicts also contributed to broader social science enterprise. They pointed to societal change in terms of how states and their populations engaged the problems of crime and punishment. Before the rise of the Classification and Treatment Board in the late 1940s, these activities in Oso Blanco revolved around biological determinism and medical science. Around midcentury, however, prison authorities and professionals turned a corner in convict rehabilitation. No longer did they simply focus on counting and sorting convict bodies epidemiologically or anthropologically. Now they studied and pathologized them psychiatrically. Whereas chapter 1 of this dissertation shows the extent to which physicians were concerned with flesh and examines the ways in which they understood and repaired convict bodies, this chapter proposes that psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, and others—a collective of social health experts—invested in mapping the criminal and convict mind and its relation to behavior and

⁹ Adenoid, for example, refers to a mass of enlarged lymphatic tissue between the back of the nose and the throat that often hinders speaking and breathing in young children. That Troyano used the term to discuss convicts reflects that his work was a microcosm of a colonialism that cast prisoners as children in need of healthcare and education. The term oligóide implied oligophrenia, or mental “retardation,” sub-average intellectual functioning that originates during the developmental period (i.e., childhood and adolescence) and is associated with impaired adaptive behavior.

¹⁰ Later in the twentieth century, the expansion of knowledge about how the brain works revealed that many forms of mental illness were due to abnormalities in brain structure or chemistry. Nancy C. Anderson, *The Broken Brain: The Biological Revolution in Psychiatry* (New York: Harper & Row, 1984), viii.

society. These penitentiary scientists forecasted the social redeemability, or corrigibility, of prisoners. Together, social health experts and convicts co-determined uplifting programming to make their, and by extension the Puerto Rican populist state's, redemptive visions flesh.¹¹

The Puerto Rican state and its professional surrogates in prisons sought to socially save and transform convicts. Psychiatry, psychology, social work, and a Classification and Treatment Board were critical in this regard, as they represented increasingly legitimate ways to intervene in the mental and social lives of inmates. I use the group identifiers “social health experts” and “social scientists” interchangeably with psychiatrists, psychologists, social investigators, and prison boards because of their overlapping activities and shared commitment to convicts, at least in terms of social structure. While these liberal intellectuals were not as deeply concerned with convict bodily health as physicians, their understandings of prisoners had a biological dimension. They dialogued with physicians in their own work, as Troyano did, or through the Classification and Treatment Board, which reserved seats for Oso Blanco's resident medical staff. Overall, they were more dedicated to redeeming convicts socially. This meant curing mental illness, putting prisoners in position to sharpen their intelligence, and exposing them to the “right” consciousness for the times. Yet, prisoners also had their own visions of freedom and formulas for social redemption.¹²

This chapter showcases the perspectives of psychiatrists like Troyano, their work within and across national borders, and their exchanges with convicts and other scientific communities. I use the life stories of psychiatrists like Troyano, psychiatric evaluations, parole records, and other sources to argue that the diagnostic methods and curative formulas of mental and social health

¹¹ William C. Lubenow, *Liberal Intellectuals and Public Culture in Modern Britain, 1815-1914: Making Words Flesh* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2010).

¹² Lila M. Caimari, “Remembering Freedom: Life as Seen from the Prison Cell,” in Salvatore, Aguirre, and Joseph, eds., *Crime and Punishment in Latin America*, 391-414.

experts in the 1940s and 1950s approached convicts as objects for redemptive treatment. Psychiatric knowledge in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic assumed the form it did in large part because of how it was caught between seemingly incommensurable political systems and ways of knowing. Psychiatry was a key ingredient of this bricolage, and in the recasting of colonial power relations during the postwar and early Cold War period, an era of accentuated national and political difference and international tension. A transnational perspective, therefore, helps us see between and around these binaries.¹³

Historians of modern psychiatry in global context have underscored (post)colonialism, trauma, and cultural psychosis to understand mental health.¹⁴ Scholars of Latin America have highlighted these issues in the “core of the periphery” (e.g. Argentina and Mexico). While the “core of the periphery” of Latin America is well accounted for, the Spanish Caribbean has hardly figured in the recent renaissance in the Latin American history of medicine and public health.¹⁵

¹³ Tinsman, *Buying into the Regime*, 16 and 21.

¹⁴ In African and Caribbean historiography, mental illness has long invited engagement with the questions of other ways of knowing, multiaxial models of suffering, and the psychic damage wrought by colonial violence and its overthrow. See, for example, Megan Vaughan, *Curing Their Ills: Colonial Power and African Illness* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991); Sloan Mahone and Vaughan, eds., *Psychiatry and Empire* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, translated by Richard Philcox (New York: Grove, 1961 [2004]); Keller, *Colonial Madness: Psychiatry in French North Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007); Jonathan H. Sadowsky, *Imperial Bedlam: Institutions of Madness in Colonial Southwest Nigeria* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Lynette Jackson, *Surfacing Up: Psychiatry and Social Order in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1908-1968* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005); and Paul Farmer, “On Suffering and Structural Violence: A View from Below,” *Daedalus* 125, 1 (Winter 1996): 261-83.

¹⁵ Historian Jennifer L. Lambe’s work on Cuba begins to cover such ground. She examines institutional psychiatry and popular approaches to mental health in the context of national change. But in general, when scholars contemplate Caribbean psychiatry and even criminology, Cuba tends to stand in for the rest of the region. The watershed moment of the Cuban Revolution, in part, has fueled this imbalance, as it provides a meaningful and structural counterpoint to what unfolded elsewhere in the Caribbean. On Latin American psychiatry and broader public health, see, for example, Mariano B. Plotkin, *Freud in the Pampas: The Emergence and Development of a Psychoanalytic Culture in Argentina* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001); and his edited volume *Argentina on the Couch: Psychiatry, State, and Society, 1880 to the Present* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003). Also see Rodríguez, *Civilizing Argentina*; De Barros, et al., eds., *Health and Medicine in the circum-Caribbean*; Zulawski, *Unequal Cures*, ch. 5; and Rivera Galarza, *La Castañeda*. On Caribbean psychiatry and social science, consult Lambe, “Baptism by Fire”; Javier Mariátegui, “Prensa psiquiátrica latinoamericana,” *Revista de Neuropsiquiatría del Perú* 63, 3-4 (septiembre-diciembre 2000): 138-52; Ortiz, *Hampa afro-cubana*; and Bronfman, *Measures of Equality*.

This chapter considers mental and social health issues in a corner of the understudied modern Hispanophone Caribbean. It emphasizes the relationship between psychiatry's mental *and* biological components, and the discipline's impact on bodily and symbolic politics and discourse. In mid-twentieth-century Puerto Rico, specifically, the blending of eugenics and psychoanalysis resulted in neuropsychiatry. Oso Blanco was a key site in this vein. There, Troyano played the role of apolitical alchemist in the sense that he mixed empirical and speculative sciences using convict bodies, including Dominican asylum inmates and Puerto Rican jíbaros and nationalists.

In the pages that follow I primarily highlight Troyano's Puerto Rican experience, but I also point to (dis)connections with the Dominican portion of his Caribbean odyssey. In the Dominican Republic, Troyano, other Spanish exiles, and local experts sculpted the modern state's approach to crime, punishment, and social science enterprise, which included psychiatry. However, the political rigidity of the Trujillo government limited the impact of psychiatry by restricting its application to hospitals, venues where citizen-making and the production of scientific knowledge could be channeled into the political economy of the state rather than fixing the sociological problems ailing society at large. For those who went against the grain, there was Nigua, which by the late 1930s became known for its political violence instead of its psychiatric or rehabilitative pedigree. Turning Nigua into an insane asylum in 1940 showed that the Trujillo government had, on the surface at least, committed itself to the pursuit of redemptive science.

Troyano's work in Puerto Rico suggests a different relationship between the state and psychiatry. East of the Mona Passage, a revamped, populist university assigned a redemptive function to socio-scientific understandings of island society. The penitentiary was a key site of political intervention *and* social reform. In Oso Blanco, socially redeeming prisoners revolved around diagnosing their mental health, quantifying their intelligence, and cultivating a culture of

social uplift that sharpened convict minds. These practices determined whether convicts had the capacity to be corrected, let alone reintegrated into society, on the terms of the ruling PPD. This is suggestive of the decline of biologically-oriented criminology, which emphasized anthropometric data, and a move toward sociological and environmental views of crime and punishment. However, as Troyano's concerns about Rodríguez Galarza confirm, the power of biology lingered.

Contours of Classification and Treatment

The classification and treatment of convicts in Puerto Rico was a deep process, a mix of laboratorial and ethnographic knowledge production. It required the immersion of social scientists, justice officials, and convicts alike. Psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, and educators helped realize the populist government's vision for a redeemed and "awakened" citizenry. In the late 1930s and 1940s, the Puerto Rican state increasingly turned to science to solve its economic and social problems. The PPD employed a discourse of personalism exemplified by the phrase, "bread, land and liberty," to build political "consent" and bring "progress" to the island.¹⁶ The creation of a consumption-oriented middle class and the maturation of the island's criminal justice system were consequences of the state's engagement with social science.¹⁷

Puerto Rican social health experts embraced colonial approaches to mental health, classification, and treatment. Oso Blanco psychiatrists and psychologists relied on tools imported from universities and experiences in Europe and the U.S. to diagnose and treat inmates. This

¹⁶ Emilio Pantojas García, "Puerto Rican Populism Revisited: The PPD during the 1940s," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 21, 3 (October 1989): 521-57; Luis Gabriel Villaronga Sweet, *Toward a Discourse of Consent: Mass Mobilization and Colonial Politics in Puerto Rico, 1932-1948* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004); Luis Vega Ramos, *Pan, tierra y libertad: historia y filosofía del Partido Popular Democrático* (San Juan: EMS, 2006); and César J. Ayala and Rafael Bernabé, *Puerto Rico in the American Century: A History since 1898* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2007).

¹⁷ Suárez Findlay, *We Are Left without a Father Here: Masculinity, Domesticity, and Migration in Postwar Puerto Rico* (Durham: Duke, 2014), ch. 2.

neglected the multiracial reality of the island. As scholar Hussein Abdilahi Bulhan shows, psychiatry as a discipline was derived from a white, middle- and upper-class male minority and subsequently generalized to humanity everywhere. Europeans and their descendants who “embarked on violent assaults on the rest of the world now dictate the theories and methods of comprehending the essentials of human psychology.” They have flourished because of slavery and colonialism, and “set themselves up as peacemakers and purveyors of what is human about us.”¹⁸

Psychiatry in modern was undoubtedly Eurocentric even though island experts adapted it to local context. It persisted as such in the middle decades of the twentieth century because the discipline still had not achieved national notoriety. Through institutions like Oso Blanco, the state carefully linked psychiatry with broader social reform efforts. In the 1940s, specifically, opportunities increasingly presented themselves for the implementation of psychiatry in welfare institutions. A prison reform campaign and the intensification of social science inside Oso Blanco marked the period. The campaign called for more funding to transform prisons, the improvement of penal facilities and convict hygiene, and the relaxation of rules governing inmate life (e.g., visitation, education, and sentence reduction). Major rebellions broke out in Oso Blanco in late 1950 and early 1951, prompting the state to revisit these and related issues.¹⁹ Refining Puerto

¹⁸ Bulhan, *Frantz Fanon and the Psychology of Oppression*, 63-64 and 68.

¹⁹ Attorney General Victor Gutiérrez Franqui petitioned the National Probation and Parole Association to conduct a study about Puerto Rico’s “peno-corrective” activities, and what could be done to make them better. The Association assigned the project to legal consultant Sol Rubin, who carried it out in September 1951. Consult Rosa Celeste Marín, Awilda Paláu de López, and Gloria P. Barbosa de Chardón, *La efectividad de la rehabilitación en los delincuentes de Puerto Rico* (San Juan: Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1959), 253-56 and 272-75. Rubin published extensively about the relation between the law, children, and psychiatry. See Rubin, “The Legal Character of Juvenile Delinquency,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 261 (January 1949): 1-8; “Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency: Illusions in a Research Project Using Matched Pairs,” *American Journal of Sociology* 57, 2 (September 1951): 107-14; “Protecting the Child in Juvenile Court,” *The Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology, and Police Science* 43, 4 (November-December 1952): 425-40; and *Psychiatry and Criminal Law: Illusions, Fictions, and Myths* (Dobbs Ferry, NY: Oceana, 1965). Also see Seijo Bruno, *La insurrección nacionalista*; Ramón Bosque Pérez and José Javier Colón Morera, *Puerto Rico under Colonial Rule: Political Persecution and the Quest for Human Rights* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006); Denis, *War against All Puerto Ricans*; and the mainstream newspapers *El Mundo* and *El Imparcial* (from 27 enero 1951 through early February).

Rico's rehabilitative model continued to shape the concerns of social scientists, social workers, and justice officials through the late 1950s, in part because older understandings of island crime and punishment had not entirely faded from view.²⁰

The 1940s marked a turning point in island rehabilitation. On the heels of state approval of deeper psychiatric treatment, federal corrections official Frank Loveland investigated island prisons between 1945 and 1947.²¹ His study coincided with the founding of Oso Blanco's Classification and Treatment Board in 1946.²² Once installed, the board initiated conversations between social health experts and convicts. It was initially based in Oso Blanco but later reached into other island prisons. The Classification and Treatment Board studied and compiled data about convicts to produce criminological social histories of them. These histories traced the socioeconomic backgrounds, interpersonal and legal mistakes, treatment options, and voices of individual prisoners. They were also commentaries about convict families and communities.

The social scientists and justice officials that comprised Oso Blanco's Classification and Treatment Board depended on inmate social histories to determine whether they had progressed enough behind bars to be freed from prison and reintegrated into society. Psychiatrists, specifically, assessed convicts' minds through interviews, observation, and mental tests, laying the foundation for a subsequent education that would teach them to know the ledge before falling into

²⁰ Marín, et al., *La efectividad de la rehabilitación*; and Santiago Valles, "*Subject People*" and *Colonial Discourses*.

²¹ Marín, et al., *La efectividad de la rehabilitación*, ch. 1.

²² According to Marín, et al., the year 1946 signaled the start of the third era of classification, treatment, and parole in Puerto Rico. This era ended in 1957. The first era was in effect between 1907 and 1939, and the second between 1940 and 1946. These initial periods were building block periods for the modern parole system of 1946-1957. On the features of each era, see *La efectividad de la rehabilitación*, ch. 6. Picó indicates that the Classification and Treatment Board was founded in 1946. Attorney General Enrique Campos del Toro characterized the enterprise in the following way: "Our great preoccupation is the individual treatment of criminals. Each delinquent is a problem in and of himself and should be the object of careful study and research to determine the causes that prompted them to break the law and to determine the methods and treatment that should be applied. To date the methods used to treat criminals in Puerto Rico have not only been inefficient, but also counterproductive." See *El día menos pensado*, 82-83.

further despair and “ignorance.” Mental tests not only measured prisoner intelligence, but also their prospects for becoming law-abiding, productive, and reliable citizens. Social workers, for their part, similarly relied on interviews and observation to make their assessments. They also went into the field and visited convict families, as the inmate sketch in Figure 1 below indicates. The sketch depicts a well-dressed, white, female social worker visiting the meek family of a jíbaro convict. The family is also white but their poverty is revealed through their dingy clothing; their zinc-roofed home built on stilts and its location on a remote hillside; an empty multi-task bucket positioned beneath a plantain tree; and the shoeless children inquisitively hovering over both the home’s primary doorway and the elderly couple talking to the social worker. The involvement of convict families personalized the process of social redemption, but made it no less political, as the state’s goal remained turning former criminals into healthy, smart, and loyal citizens.

Oso Blanco classification and treatment records disclose that convicts came from all sorts of backgrounds. They grew up cutting and transporting sugarcane; picking coffee; cultivating tobacco and root crops like *batatas* (sweet potatoes), *ñames* (yams), *yautía* (taro root), and *yuca* (cassava); selling jewelry and fruit like avocados, mangos, and breadfruit; performing odd jobs at patron saint festivals, for contractors, or on U.S. army bases; toiling on port docks, on public works projects, or in factories; delivering goods and messages; caring for dairy- and food-producing animals and birds; serving in the U.S. military and as cooks, drivers, farmhands, day laborers, fishermen, laundresses, carpenters, and so on. Figure 2 below divulges the leading occupations of island prisoners after they landed in jail. Day labor, when workers are hired and paid one day at a time with no promise of future employment, and farming consistently accounted for about or more than half of all documented occupations between 1927 and 1956.



Figure 1: José M. N., “Servicio social en la comunidad,” *El Despertar*, May 1950.

Jobs folded into the “other” category included blacksmiths, butchers, electricians, hat makers, masons, musicians, plumbers, printers, students, tinsmiths, and by the 1950s, the unemployed, among others. Day labor was likely driven by rural enterprise, as Puerto Rico’s midcentury economy was still mainly agricultural, although starting to move toward industrialization and mass production given world war, military base construction, and Operation Bootstrap (the latter encouraged the establishment of more factories). Further, as many convicts likely pursued occupations they already had experience with, it is reasonable to assume that Figure

2 provides a sense of pre-incarceration labor distribution as well. But this is only partially true, for several convicts took advantage of learning new vocational skills behind bars. Changing occupations represented a path to public utility and social redemption, and presumably positioned convicts to thrive economically after prison.

Convict social histories also indicate that many of them grew up in what by the mid-twentieth century was still a Puerto Rican world riddled with disease and poverty. Anemia, syphilis, and tuberculosis impacted inmate families. On another level, convicts were vulnerable to disease thanks to their own “vices,” including smoking, drinking, prostitution, and sexual perversions. The contaminated places they frequented, such as bars and brothels, also figured into the sickness equation. Social health experts used this collective information about biological and behavioral disease to generalize convicts and their families, and by extension, socioeconomic groups such as the urban poor and rural peasants. The case of a young white convict from barrio Los Ángeles in Utuado named Cándido Cordero Ríos, serving time for possession of illegal weapons and homicide, was common. In April 1953, parole officer Fromestano Córdova Claudio labeled the convict’s upbringing and situation immediately prior to incarceration as “solitary,” “sickly,” and “typical of all jíbaros.”²³ Another notionally white convict from Isabela, 22-year-old José Sánchez Rodríguez, purportedly exhibited classic jíbaro characteristics. In May 1951, Troyano recorded that the convict was serving time for a crime against nature. Like many jíbaros, he lived with a large family and was “reserved,” “withdrawn,” uneducated, barely literate, a smoker, a drinker, and violent but only in defense of his honor and reputation.²⁴

²³ Expediente del confinado Cándido Cordero Ríos, Caja 307, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

²⁴ Expediente del confinado José Sánchez Rodríguez, Caja 202, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

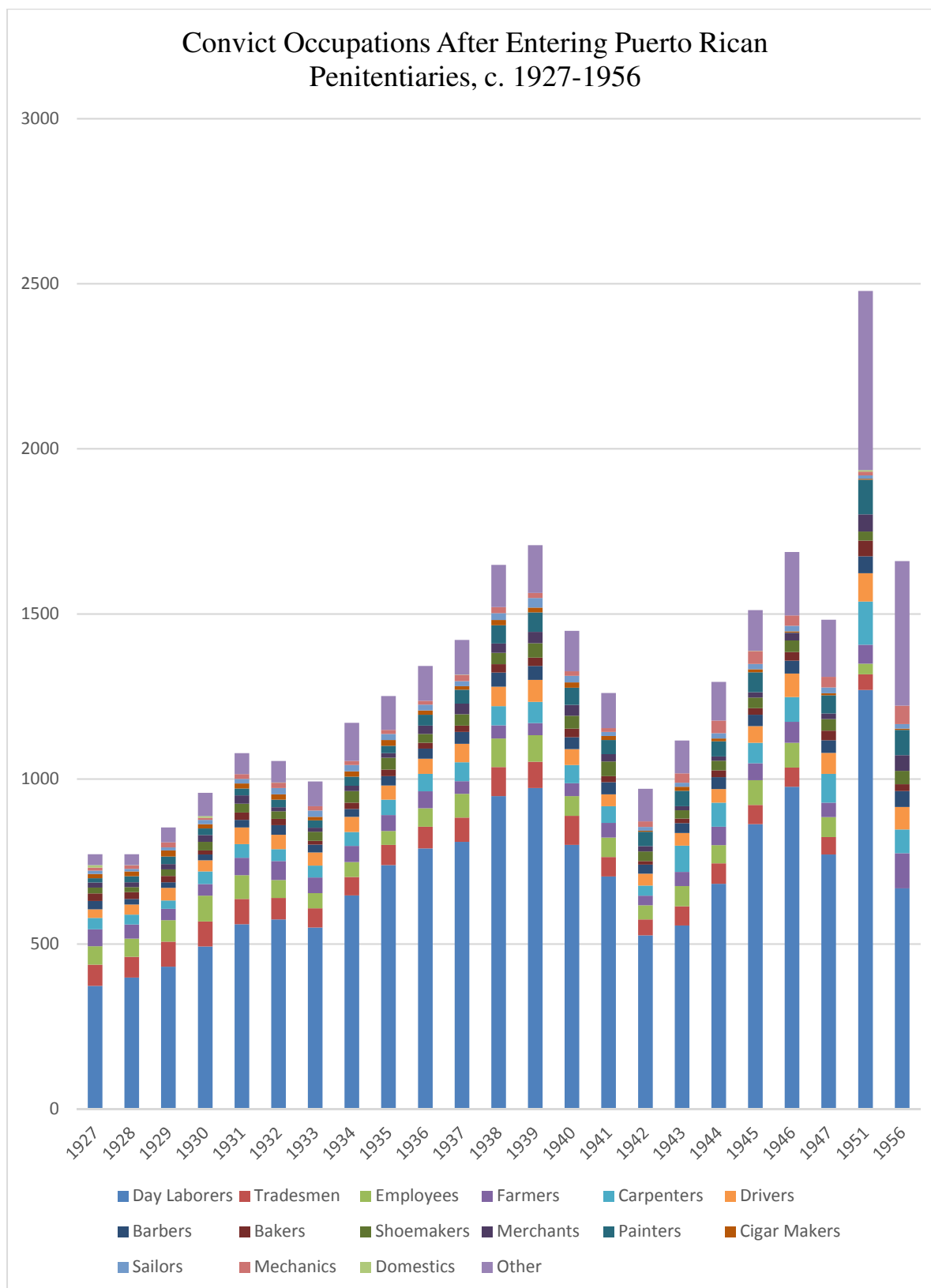


Figure 2: Convict Occupations After Entering Puerto Rican Penitentiaries, c. 1927-1956; adapted from *Reports of the Attorney General of Porto/Puerto Rico*, AGPR.

Social workers also contributed to modernizing tropes about jíbaros. One female social worker portrayed jíbaros of color as amateur botanists obsessed with herbs, twigs, and “manatee bone.”²⁵ Other social workers understood them as less knowledgeable. Lydia Peña Beltrán, who worked in Oso Blanco around midcentury, recalled that hillbillies were discussed at many Classification and Treatment Board meetings. Among those debated was a peasant named Nino, whom she used to pathologize jíbaros overall. Nino was “illiterate” and “ignorant.” Like most peasants, he could be aggressive but was ultimately “docile.” One time behind bars, Peña Beltrán noted, Nino feared the theft of his belongings. Unaware of the supervising guard’s name, he asked another prisoner to help identify the sentry. Taking his fellow convict’s advice, Nino called the guard “Don Pinocho,” a reference to Italian writer Carlo Collodi’s late-nineteenth-century fairy tale novel *The Adventures of Pinocchio*.²⁶ The Walt Disney film version of the novel was released in 1940. Given Oso Blanco’s commitment to humanistic education, convicts and guards would have been exposed to both versions. Nino, however, had not yet been exposed to either. Therefore, he was apparently oblivious to the fact that the guard’s nickname drew attention to his enlarged nose and tendency to lie. The guard struck Nino and sent him to solitary confinement. He likely would not have hit Nino had he been unaware of the meaning of the moniker.

According to Peña Beltrán, most jíbaro prisoners were minimum security risks. Social workers experimented with their methods vis-à-vis jíbaros, often failing to achieve the desired outcome. On one occasion, Classification and Treatment Board members allowed a jíbaro inmate from Cayey named Juan to visit his barrio and family. They wanted to see how he reacted to freedom. Visits outside the prison reflected negatively or positively on inmates, depending on what

²⁵ Celia Nuñez de Bunker, “El hueso del manatí,” *Revista de Servicio Social* 2, 2 (julio-agosto 1940): 12-13.

²⁶ Lydia Peña Beltrán, *30 años en las cárceles de Puerto Rico* (Río Piedras: Borikén Libros Inc., 1995), 58.

transpired. In this case, Juan visited each of his neighbors and acquaintances on his way down the mountain paths of his community. An intoxicating drink at each stop assured he returned to Oso Blanco late *and* a drunken mess. Prison authorities determined that the “ingrained customs and habits” of jíbaros were more to blame for Juan’s miscalculations than individual malicious intent.²⁷ Other prisoners relished the chance to leave Oso Blanco for a few days and behaved accordingly. In late January 1950, Oso Blanco’s Director of Socio-Penal Services, Susano Ortiz, approved convict Florencio R. S.’s visit to Ponce. It was a “dream come true” for the inmate, as he got to see his mother, extended family, and friends after what seemed like centuries “buried” alive in the penitentiary. On the way to Ponce, Florencio R. S. and several other convicts reflected on how they missed out on their youth, relatives, and lives. Florencio R. S. returned to Oso Blanco on time, and as dedicated as ever to “correcting” those things that had landed him in prison.²⁸ Another convict identified the family as the “psychological point” on which convicts should focus if they desired to awaken, change, and assume civic responsibility.²⁹

Before home visits became a viable option, however, convicts went through an extensive evaluation process. The Classification and Treatment Board and parole officers examined prisoners’ bodies and their personalities. They noted what convict attitudes and mannerisms were like during interviews and recorded information about body language. For example, in March 1951 Troyano evaluated Ernesto Rivera Rodríguez, a 34-year-old mixed-race resident of Santurce. He stressed that the convict’s “mannerisms and gestures” were “feminoide,” or apparently but not actually female.³⁰ In another case, probation official Blanca J. Arce noted in the summer of 1947

²⁷ *Ibid*, 59.

²⁸ Florencio R. S., “Dos días de pase en Ponce,” *El Despertar* (marzo 1950): 13-14.

²⁹ Joaquín B. V., “El punto psicológico,” *El Despertar* (marzo 1950): 9.

³⁰ Expediente del confinado Ernesto Rivera Rodríguez, Caja 284, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

that a 25-year-old “clear-skinned” mulatto inmate from Caguas named Clotilde Marrero Arzuaga was “well-developed physically.” He had “thick lips,” “enormous eyes,” and an “insecure” and “lost gaze.” His attitude was “difficult to pinpoint.” Arce continued: “At times he seems elusive, as if he wants to hide something; but in general, he gives the impression that he is content with his current situation, that he is uneager to change whatsoever.”³¹ More than a year later, in January 1949, Arce re-interviewed Marrero Arzuaga, whose physical appearance had turned “scruffy.” His condition “deteriorated.” She learned that he “resented” the penitentiary and “lacked self-confidence” because of having to work in a cleaning platoon. Arce visited Marrero Arzuaga’s brother Nicolás, a silversmith in Caguas who resided in a shanty called Czechoslovakia, to develop a “life plan” for the convict. She feared leaving him in prison would do more harm than good.³²

As these cases indicate, social scientists and investigators recorded what they felt was most important to know about convicts. They did so with colorful language and adjectives. Their assessments could evolve over time, as confirmed by Arce’s impressions of Marrero Arzuaga at two different junctures in his life. There were also countless other ways in which penitentiary professionals made prisoners legible. Convicts could be engaged and animated, or distant and indifferent; honest and trustworthy, or suspicious and undependable; relaxed and well-spoken, or sensitive and excitable. They folded their arms when responding to certain questions, eagerly bit their fingernails, or showed impatience with the classification, treatment, and parole processes by repeatedly tapping their fingers on interview tables.

Some convicts deflected the queries of prison social health experts by dictating the terms of classification and treatment conversations, giggling incessantly, or striking a confrontational

³¹ Expediente del confinado Clotilde Marrero Arzuaga, Caja 80, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

³² *Ibid.* That a shanty had the name of an Eastern European country that at the time formed part of the Soviet bloc implied a link between poverty and communism. Ironically, Puerto Rico was a democracy, albeit a colonial one.

tone. A 37-year-old prisoner of color from San Juan named Fernando Lassalle Concepción, for example, mocked the prison board interview process by “using pornographic language” when asked to reflect on his “social progress” to date. Parole officials deemed the convict’s approach symptomatic of “a psychopathic personality.” Lassalle Concepción, however, assured social investigators that his attitude “responded to the dictatorial and inhumane treatment” he endured at the hands of prison guards and administrators.³³

Convict perspectives countered state narratives of their deviance with context-driven explanations for their behavior. For instance, prisoners charged with sex crimes often claimed alcohol and “crab antics” were to blame for the charges against them.³⁴ A 25-year-old white convict from Añasco named Ramón Méndez Rivera assured social investigators that prior to his arrest he had been drinking heavily before crossing paths with an “enemy” who “hated” him. Nothing transpired between them but a few days later the convict was in custody for allegedly having intercourse with an animal. Méndez Rivera believed that his imprisonment was the doing of his “enemy,” who wanted to humiliate him and smear his honor and reputation. Yet, he was not worried because he had “a woman” and therefore “no need for an animal.” Further, in the end “God would serve justice.”³⁵ Gendered and religiously-charged convict chronicles like these did not always fall on deaf ears given the increasing legitimacy of environmental and sociological explanations of deviance in the mid-twentieth century. In part for these reasons, it was not uncommon for sex criminals to be deemed “rehabilitable” by prison social scientists.

³³ For many prisoners, the line between democracy and totalitarianism was a thin one. Expediente del confinado Fernando Lassalle Concepción, Caja 171, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

³⁴ I use the phrase “crab antics” to draw attention to some of the standards by which Caribbean people judge each other’s worth. As anthropologist Peter J. Wilson argues, “crab antics” are suggestive of values based on respectability, reputation, and the dialectical relation between the two. See his *Crab Antics: A Caribbean Study of the Conflict Between Reputation and Respectability* (Long Grove, IL: Waveland, 1973 [1995]).

³⁵ Expediente del confinado Ramón Méndez Rivera, Caja 88, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

Social health experts learned about convict sensibilities by amalgamating the voices of the different people who knew them best. Social workers synthesized the most impactful data provided by convict family and community members, prison staff, and health professionals. Depending on the case, political, economic, religious, and/or community networks could trump tropes like race or sex criminal. For example, a 26-year-old white inmate from Sabana Grande named Pedro Ortiz Figueroa, who was serving time for a crime against nature, benefitted from his association with the PPD. While the convict had a “borderline deficient” I.Q. (76) and admitted that alcohol clouded his judgment the night he slept with another young male, classification and treatment officials concluded that his work distributing flyers for the PPD and reading habits (he read *El Imparcial* and *El Mundo*) illustrated his social potential. He was a “good” case for rehabilitation.³⁶

Indeed, when Oso Blanco’s Classification and Treatment Board convened, social health experts intended to determine the redeemability of inmates. Prisoners were “regular,” “good,” or “bad” cases for rehabilitation. In some cases, they were outright “rehabilitable” or “redeemable.”³⁷ Board officials believed that convict redemption could be achieved through social uplift. Inmate treatment programs reflected this notion. Although they varied, the different programs were rooted in the same principles. The treatment program form, which did not change much in the late 1940s and early 1950s, shows that every facet of the inmate experience helped determine prisoners’ rehabilitative regimes. Figure 3 below is an example of such a form and program from January 1950. It belonged to Confesor Canales Fernández, a young mixed-race convict from the San Juan shanty El Fanguito who was serving time for mutilation. Canales Fernández was in prison because

³⁶ Expediente del confinado Pedro Ortiz Figueroa, Caja 307, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

³⁷ As for parole, Picó notes that after midcentury prison officials were more inclined to afford convicts opportunities for rehabilitation and release. In the early 1950s, when island crime rates somewhat declined, the Parole Board released more prisoners than usual. Between July 1949 and June 1953, the Parole Board heard nearly 5,000 cases and conditionally freed 76 percent of inmates. By comparison, only 54 percent of inmates were granted parole between 1955 and 1959. See *El día menos pensado*, 177.

he had invited friends to drink beer, but did not invite someone who considered himself a friend. The men exchanged obscenities, and Canales Fernández sliced the other man's face with a sharp instrument. The Classification and Treatment Board determined that the factors influencing his conduct included liquor use, an undesirable environment, his misunderstood *machismo* (or sense of manhood), and the lack of education and religious precepts.³⁸

Está en Zarzales

Programa de Tratamiento

Fecha: 20 de enero de 1950

En su reunión de esta fecha, la Junta de Clasificación y Tratamiento de la Penitenciaría Insular, una vez discutido el caso, recomendó el siguiente programa de tratamiento para el confinado:

CONFESOR CANALES FERNANDEZ

- (1) Custodia: M I N I M A
- (2) Vivienda: Galera No. 16.
- (3) Tratamiento Social: Entrevistas de orientación
- (4) Tratamiento Médico: Está bien de salud.
- (5) Diagnóstico o Trat. Psiquiátrico: Impresiona como normal.
- (6) Programa Educativo: Cursó el tercer grado.
- (7) Asignación Vocacional: Faenas Agrícolas fuera del Panal.
- (8) Recreación: Actividades recreativas y deportivas dentro y fuera del Panal. Utilizar los servicios de la biblioteca.

Síntesis del Caso: Invitó a unos amigos para tomarse unas cervezas pero no invitó a uno que no conceptuaba como amigo. Este le profirió palabras obscenas y trató de sacar algo y este se defendió dándole una herida en la cara.

- (1) Descripción breve del caso: Invitó a unos amigos para tomarse unas cervezas pero no invitó a uno que no conceptuaba como amigo. Este le profirió palabras obscenas y trató de sacar algo y este se defendió dándole una herida en la cara.
- (2) Factores que han influido en la conducta del confinado: Uso del licor, ambiente indeseable, sentido de machismo mal entendido, falta de instrucción y de religión.
- (3) Debilidades y potencialidades del confinado: Uso del licor, trabajador, sentido del machismo mal entendido.
- (4) Aspecto importante del plan de tratamiento: Orientación
- (5) Estimado del Pronóstico del Caso: Rehabilitable.

Figure 3: Confesor Canales Fernández, "Programa de tratamiento," January 20, 1950, AGPR.

³⁸ Expediente del confinado Confesor Canales Fernández, Caja 250, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

Notwithstanding their concerns, officials praised Canales Fernández for his laboriousness. They considered him a minimum-security risk. Canales Fernández's social treatment consisted of orientation interviews, which prison authorities deemed the most important aspect of his particular treatment plan. He had no need for medical treatment at the time, and psychiatrically he seemed "normal." The convict was enrolled in primary school behind bars, and completed agricultural tasks outside the penitentiary at the Zarzal encampment in Río Grande. For recreation, he visited the library and participated in sports both inside and outside Oso Blanco. All of this made him "rehabilitable."³⁹ As this case demonstrates, the justice officials and social scientists who presided over the Classification and Treatment Board used a variety of criteria to make their decisions. They consulted the insights of physicians, psychiatrists, social workers, teachers, vocational supervisors, and prison guards, among many other people, before making the assessments and recommendations laid out in treatment programs.

Redeemability was not always framed by the state or social scientists, however. Sometimes the expectations of the state and prison professionals collided with the redemptive visions of convict advisors. Such clashes reveal the extent to which any top-down project of social redemption or engineering was subject to micro-level forces, contingencies, and individuals not formally tied to the state. For example, in the case of a 31-year-old mixed-race inmate from Arecibo named Josefina Colón Rivas, prison board officials permitted her advisor, Angélica Campos de los Santos, to define the approach to rehabilitation. Campos de los Santos did not let Colón Rivas "wear high heels" or "tight dresses" and "constantly preached" to her. The advisor's ideas came across as an "energetic imposition" given the degree of informal surveillance that accompanied them (i.e., she monitored Colón Rivas' frequent "private" meetings with local men

³⁹ *Ibid.*

and police officers). When these matters came to the attention of the Parole Board, officials found that Campos de los Santos' "reform methods were counterproductive" even though she used strong eugenic language to cast her mentee as irredeemable.⁴⁰ As this case suggests, formulas for rehabilitation varied and were multidirectional. Overall, however, island social health experts collectively strived to bring convicts back from the social and cultural brink. They sought to improve prisoners' physical and mental health, strengthen their morals and intelligence, and make them receptive to institutional social uplift. Indeed, convicts had to conform to populist socio-scientific redemptive practice if they wanted to get by, better, and ahead.

Mental and Social Health in Puerto Rican Prisons

Puerto Rican mental and social health efforts spanned multiple academic disciplines. Psychiatry was the outlier given its grounding in biology. But as Troyano's commitment to psychopathology and analysis illustrates, by the middle decades of the twentieth century psychiatrists embraced both medical and social science. Oso Blanco's Classification and Treatment Board made psychiatry, psychology, sociology, and social work synonymous with the modern penitentiary. However, the roots of mental and social health practice in Puerto Rico date to Spanish colonial times.⁴¹ In the 1880s and 1890s, physician-anthropologists and sociologists

⁴⁰ Expediente de la confinada Josefina Colón Rivas, Caja 150, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

⁴¹ Before the Spanish and other Europeans arrived in the Caribbean in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the region's indigenous inhabitants developed their own approaches to mental health. According to scholar Guillermo Bernal, in Puerto Rico the *buhiti* (healer and teacher of the village) "treated the bodies and souls of the infirm with practices that integrated spirituality, hypnosis, suggestion, and medicine to strike a balance between patients, nature, and the spiritual realm." Bernal, "La psicología clínica en Puerto Rico," *Revista Puertorriqueña de Psicología* 17 (2006): 349. Under Spanish rule, the colonial government and Catholic Church attended to the mentally infirm, usually in hospital settings. It was not until the nineteenth century that positivist psychiatry became more visible in Puerto Rico. Spanish colonial officials established the island's first mental hospital in 1822, and promulgated the Casa de Beneficencia's charter in 1851. The charter emphasized that mental treatment required a humane and moral approach to medicine. In 1888, Puerto Rico's first psychological society emerged. This group examined intersections between psychology and spiritism. Several studies focus on the history of psychiatry in Puerto Rico and on institutions like the Casa de Beneficencia in San Juan. See Norman Maldonado, "La psiquiatría en Puerto Rico: notas sobre su desarrollo," *Galenus*

carried on this work. Forensic pathologist José Rodríguez Castro, for example, published multiple pamphlets on the relation between mental health and criminal justice. His scholarship on insanity especially underscored the mental pathologies of convicts of color and whether they were responsible for their crimes. Rodríguez Castro's contributions to Puerto Rican criminal anthropology built on the work of sociologist Salvador Brau and physicians Francisco del Valle Atilas and Manuel Zeno Gandía, whose empirical and literary chronicles of "miseducated" and "sick" Puerto Ricans preceded the emergence of American laboratory medicine.⁴²

Brau helped forge the notion that peasants were socially and culturally redeemable. He contended that color-class hierarchies permeated Puerto Rican society and identity, and argued that the rigidity of these hierarchies clouded the decision-making of the island's intellectual, political, and socioeconomic top brass. Their own bourgeois luxury kept them from seeing how they contributed to normalizing the perceived deviance and misery of peasants, day laborers, and other rural groups. Attempts to regulate autonomous peasants only augmented their reprehensible behavior. Life in the countryside, Brau stressed, "corrupted" the sentiments. Climate and the delicate biology of "sickly," anemic peasants inflamed their sensuality. Men and women intermingled in rustic homes and work fields without supervision or legitimacy. What is more, these hillbillies interacted with the enslaved, the formerly enslaved, and their progeny. The proximity between the free and the enslaved facilitated the transfer of undesirable traits, such as

20 (2010): 53; Juan A. Rosselló, *Historia de la psiquiatría en Puerto Rico: siglo XIX* (Río Piedras: Universidad de Puerto Rico, Unidad de Investigación Científica, 1975); Rosselló, *Historia de la psiquiatría en Puerto Rico, 1898-1988* (San Juan: Instituto de Relaciones Humanas, 1988); Sandra Sofía García Selva, "La razón de la sinrazón: paradigmas, tratamiento y encierro de los alienados en el Puerto Rico del siglo XIX, 1844-1898," Doctoral Dissertation, Department of History, University of Puerto Rico-Río Piedras, 2009; Francisco J. Muñiz Vázquez, "Los locos de Ballajá y su entorno: la aparición de la locura en Puerto Rico, 1848-1898," Doctoral Dissertation, Department of History, University of Puerto Rico-Río Piedras, 2015; and Martínez Vergne, *Shaping the Discourse on Space*.

⁴² See ch. 1 in this dissertation; Bernal, "La psicología clínica en Puerto Rico," 349-52; and Rosselló, *Historia de la psiquiatría en Puerto Rico: siglo XIX*.

impudence and resistance, from one group to the other. Brau insisted that this history and the “natural” inclinations of the races that constituted island society at the time shaped the “vices” of the working classes. Concubinage, prostitution, drinking, gambling, idleness, and celestially-informed agriculture were “evidence” that peasants lacked a moral compass and common sense. He proposed that these sociocultural problems could only be resolved through moral and scientific education, deeper policing, and fraternal organizations.⁴³ In the early twentieth century, these discourses complemented new ones being drawn from the confluence of American laboratory science and U.S.-influenced institutions and medical training. By the time Oso Blanco opened, they formed a palimpsest of science.

Positivist psychiatry in Puerto Rican prisons can be traced to the late nineteenth century. At the time, Spanish medics measured convict skulls and applied electric currents to the mentally disturbed. Between 1890 and 1930, island prison authorities routinely logged convict mental health issues.⁴⁴ However, psychiatric services remained under the purview of hospitals rather than prisons.⁴⁵ The 1920s, specifically, witnessed several developments in the field of psychiatry in Puerto Rico. The conclusion of World War I magnified the need for expanded mental health services on the island. In part, this was due to the deteriorating mental fitness of military

⁴³ Brau, *Las clases jornaleras de Puerto Rico: su estado actual, causas que lo sostienen y medios de propender al adelanto moral y material de dichas clases* (1882), in *Ensayos: disquisiciones sociológicas* (Río Piedras: Editorial Edíl, 1972), 27-30, 34, 37-38, 41-42, 46, 50, 56, 58-59, 61, and 66. Also see Silvia Álvarez Curbelo, *Un país del porvenir: el afán de modernidad en Puerto Rico, siglo XIX* (San Juan: Ediciones Callejón, 2001), ch. 5. In a subsequent essay Brau identified peasant women as the primary vehicles through which to (re)socialize and reform rural families and men. See *La campesina: disquisiciones sociológicas* (Puerto Rico: Imprenta de José González Font, 1886).

⁴⁴ Picó, *El día menos pensado*, 98.

⁴⁵ Consult Francisco Rufino de Goenaga y Olza, *Antropología médica y jurídica* (San Juan: Imprenta Venezuela, 1934). In this text, Goenaga (a Venezuelan by birth) examined psychopathologic practice in Puerto Rico’s Insular Mental Asylum during the first third of the twentieth century. He called for the expansion and entrenchment of neuropsychiatry in government and society at large. To make this point, he documented infamous civil and criminal psychiatric cases. These showed that patient facial features and expressions, inadvertent body movements, and untidy habits helped psychiatrists make mental diagnoses. The job of the psychiatrist, Goenaga asserted, was not to promote his convictions but to use scientific knowledge (biological and social) to bring clarity to the judicial process.

servicemen returning home from war zones. In 1923, Commissioner of Health Pedro Ortiz called for the construction of a modern psychiatric hospital in Río Piedras, which opened in 1929, around the time construction started on Oso Blanco. By 1925, mental health professionals founded the Juliá Clinic, another major step in introducing modern psychiatric practice to the island. Among the first specialists to receive formal education in the field and to work in Puerto Rico was Luis M. Morales, a graduate of the University of Virginia.⁴⁶ Other experts included Juan A. Rosselló, a graduate of the University of Maryland. The field of psychiatry continued to grow through the 1930s.⁴⁷

Puerto Rico's Justice Department jumpstarted mental and social health services in island prisons. In the mid-1920s, Attorney General George C. Butte asserted that "Great care has been given...to the health of the boys [prisoners]." With physicians routinely screening and treating convicts for syphilis, hookworm, and malaria, justice officials and prison administrators hoped to make progress diagnosing and curing mental ailments as well. Butte welcomed the cooperation of Professors F. C. Walters and F. E. Morse of the University of Puerto Rico's Psychology Department. These scholars performed "an educational and mental survey of the inmates, using, among other tests, the Stanford Test of Ability, which was used by the Commission from Columbia University in a study made of the children of the public schools of Puerto Rico."⁴⁸ As Amador observes, Columbia University also helped erect the island's first modern medical school.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Morales is said to have been a "spiritual" psychiatrist, sensitive to the (non)human forces at work in the world. Abelardo Díaz Alfaro, "Consideraciones en torno a un psiquiatra: Dr. Luis M. Morales," *Revista de Servicio Social* 2, 2 (julio-agosto 1940): 6-7.

⁴⁷ Maldonado, "La psiquiatría en Puerto Rico," 54; and Bernal, "La psicología clínica en Puerto Rico," 351.

⁴⁸ *Report of the Attorney General of Porto Rico* (1927), 17.

⁴⁹ Amador, *Medicine and Nation-Building in the Americas*, chs. 3 and 5; and Edith M. Irvine Rivera, "Brief News Notes," *Porto Rico Health Review* (October 1926): 34.

Columbia also participated in securing Puerto Rico's social health infrastructure. The PPD commissioned and publicized a high-profile social science study of Puerto Rican immigrants to the U.S. with Columbia University, published in 1950 as a book titled *The Puerto Rican Journey*. Columbia, the University of Puerto Rico's Social Science Research Center, and the Rockefeller Foundation later sponsored the Puerto Rico Project, a large-scale anthropological research study that focused on the island's communities and modernization.⁵⁰ What is most striking about early mental health in island prisons, specifically, is that justice officials and educators correlated the intelligence and intellectual potential of adult convicts with public school children. The prevailing logic, at the level of high politics at least, was that Puerto Rican convicts were as naïve and pliable as children and that mental tests could quantify this dynamic.

Psychologists like Walters and Morse helped shape the field of social work in Puerto Rico as well. For example, the June 1927 edition of the *Porto Rico Health Review* promoted a series of summer conferences on "Social Service Work." The island Health Department organized the conferences, and the University of Puerto Rico-Río Piedras hosted them. During the conferences, enrolled students were exposed to cutting-edge knowledge about the role social science played in medicine and public health. The program for the conferences referenced Walters and Morse, among others. Walters, an Assistant Professor of Education, gave a lecture on "The Psychology of the School Child" and another on "The Mentally Handicapped Child—His Treatment in Special Schools." Morse, an Instructor in Psychology, discussed "Problem Children."⁵¹ That Butte tapped

⁵⁰ See Charles Wright Mills, et al., *The Puerto Rican Journey: New York's Newest Migrants* (New York: publisher not identified, 1950); Clarence Ollson Senior, *Strangers and Neighbors: The Story of our Puerto Rican Citizens* (New York: Anti-Defamation League, 1952); Robert A. Manners, "The Cultural Study of Contemporary Societies: Puerto Rico," *American Journal of Sociology* 59 (1954): 123-30; Julian H. Steward, *The People of Puerto Rico: A Study in Social Anthropology* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1956); David Landy, *Tropical Childhood: Cultural Transmission and Learning in a Puerto Rican Village* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1959); and Sidney W. Mintz, *Worker in the Cane: A Puerto Rican Life History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960).

⁵¹ Edith M. Irvine Rivera, "Brief News Notes," *Porto Rico Health Review* 2, 12 (June 1927): 40-41.

leading scholars on child psychology to evaluate inmates throws into sharp relief what colonial and creole justice officials thought of convicts, that they were children in need of redemptive diagnosis, treatment, and education. Even though most inmates at any given time were technically adolescents and young adults (on average in their late teens through late 30s), social health experts perceived of them as incapable of adulthood without intervention. The use of mental tests designed for children doubly infantilized convicts.⁵²

Meanwhile, colonial and creole authorities increasingly embraced sociological explanations of the problems facing Puerto Ricans. Their emphasis on the social conditions and contexts impacting Puerto Ricans did not dismiss, as much as subtly reinforce, islanders' "tendencies" toward crime, poverty, and disease.⁵³ The sociological approach to understanding crime and social problems assumed that certain Puerto Ricans exhibited flaws in dire need of correction. These were vigorously researched at the university's Social Science Research Center. The populist state envisioned psychiatrists, psychologists, and platoons of social workers as important lynchpins in this vein. Government officials, medical and social scientists, and others viewed these different disciplines as interrelated, as part of a desirable, holistic approach to physically, mentally, and socially redeeming convicts.

By the 1940s and 1950s, island social scientists and social workers achieved professional legitimacy.⁵⁴ A female social worker named Adriana Ramú de Guzmán believed that social science

⁵² Picó, *El día menos pensado*, 188-89.

⁵³ Numerous studies formed part of this wave of scholarship, including Teobaldo Casanova, *La tendencia criminal en Puerto Rico* (Río Piedras: Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1944); Jaime Toro Calder, "Personal Crime in Puerto Rico: A Study of the Cultural Elements in Personal Crime," MA Thesis, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1950; Colombán Rosario and Carrión, *Problemas sociales*; and Colombán Rosario, *El problema de la criminalidad en Puerto Rico* (Río Piedras: Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1952).

⁵⁴ Social work had been around for decades but did not take off until the late 1930s and early 1940s. The Puerto Rican Legislature passed Law 171, which created the College of Social Work, in summer 1940. The Legislature also established the Public Welfare Department in May 1943. See "Ideas del Director: El Colegio de Trabajadores Sociales

and social work had a mutual calling. Given that prudent social workers were concerned “with the wellbeing of people,” it was “inevitable” that they engage social science, which she defined as disciplines like sociology and anthropology or methods like statistics and interviews. Ramú de Guzmán added that the best social workers brought “an analytic perspective to their work” and possessed “administrative common sense and the ability to think in terms of groups, communities, and individuals,” key features of PPD penitentiary science.⁵⁵ Concurrently, the Puerto Rican state attempted to improve psychiatric practice in welfare institutions. Psychologists and psychiatrists were in short supply, however. Those lucky enough to secure employment filled government posts. In Oso Blanco, social scientists and social workers collectively focused on mapping the mental problems, conduct, personality, and adaptability of convicts. Together they determined the redeemability of inmates.⁵⁶

When government officials inaugurated Oso Blanco in May 1933, they underscored the institution’s psychiatric facilities. Journalists highlighted the psychiatric hall located on the penitentiary’s second floor, where studies about “the mental organization of prisoners” were to be carried out. Health Commissioner Antonio Fernós Isern lobbied to make sure that the penitentiary could offer such services. Though a medical scientist, Fernós Isern was equally invested in promoting the maturing discipline of psychiatry.⁵⁷ Insular government officials like Fernós Isern

necesita la cooperación de todos sus miembros,” *Revista de Servicio Social* 2, 2 (julio-agosto 1940): 3; and “Ley Número 95 del 12 de mayo de 1943,” *Revista de Servicio Social* 4, 5 (julio 1943): 37. The establishment of the *Revista de Servicio Social* in 1939 also signaled social work’s rise as a profession in demand. Psychiatrists, psychologists, and educators frequently published in this journal.

⁵⁵ Adriana Ramú de Guzmán, “El trabajo social y su relación con las ciencias sociales,” *Revista de Servicio Social* 9, 4 (octubre 1948): 2-5 and 20.

⁵⁶ Bernal, “La psicología clínica en Puerto Rico,” 351-52.

⁵⁷ Fernós Isern wrote the foreword to Fernando Ordoñez y Fernández’s little known but powerful 1936 essay on sexual instincts and the psychic faculties. This study explored the psychiatric genealogy of sexual deviance in a polyglot way. Topics ranged from reproduction and eunuchs to the sexual typologies of the future, sports, and love. However, rather than excessively rely on the usual criminological and psychiatric authorities—such as Cesare Lombroso and Sigmund

also drew attention to a future need, that of a “psycho-pathology clinic.” This clinic would facilitate the “effective” study, diagnosis, and treatment of criminals.⁵⁸

State authorities inscribed these mental health concerns in Oso Blanco’s charter. Articles 47-51 of Oso Blanco’s rulebook focused on psychiatry. As the penitentiary lacked its own resident psychiatrist when the institution opened in 1933, administrators requested the services of psychiatrists from elsewhere. They shared personnel with the neighboring psychiatric hospital, at least initially. Visiting psychiatrists were charged with studying the mental states of inmates. They performed psychological and neuropsychiatric exams. These were carried out in a team-based environment. Psychiatrists had free access to Oso Blanco’s archives and therefore data about prisoners. Oso Blanco’s rulebook also required that they submit periodic reports of convicts.⁵⁹

Although Oso Blanco’s rulebook affirmed that psychiatric services were a pillar of the penitentiary’s rehabilitative efforts, the institution did not have the resources to contract full-time psychiatrists until the early 1940s. In 1942, Attorney General George A. Malcolm documented the milestone. He noted that psychiatric services “are very much needed for the treatment of the prisoners of the institution.” The new psychiatrist pursued 113 cases, 37 of which were referred by penitentiary administrators, 16 by resident physician Ceferino A. Méndez Polo, and 11 by the Parole Board. Ten prisoners voluntarily visited the psychiatrist and 39 prison guards were referred,

Freud—Fernós Isern and Ordoñez y Fernández cited a broader range of scholars, some of whom had worked with Lombroso and Freud. These included Italian neurologist and anthropologist Paolo Mantegazza, who had traveled widely in South America; the Marqués de Sade, a revolution-era French politician famous for his libertine sexuality, blasphemy, and “insanity”; and Spanish physician Gregorio Marañón, whose works on endocrinology crisscrossed the Atlantic and settled in places like Mexico, Brazil, Cuba, and Puerto Rico. Perhaps most importantly, Fernós Isern underscored the subterranean or sub-rosa nature of sexual deviance in Puerto Rico. Fernando Ordoñez y Fernández, *Influencia del instinto sexual sobre las facultades psíquicas: ensayo* (S.I.: s.n., 1936), 3-9.

⁵⁸ “Fue inaugurada oficialmente la nueva Penitenciaría de Puerto Rico,” 2, 11, and 16; and Fonfrías Rivera, “Un magno festival,” 1 and 3.

⁵⁹ *Reglamento para el régimen y gobierno de la Penitenciaría de Puerto Rico en Río Piedras*, 6 and 13-14.

attesting to the stress of Oso Blanco work conditions. Officials transferred four inmates to the nearby insane asylum and subjected three to prolonged “medico-legal-penal study.” Further, the psychiatrist completed five examinations that required “lumbar punctures,” a procedure that collected cerebrospinal fluid for biological analysis and that relieved intracranial pressure. He also administered a skull x-ray.⁶⁰ As the 1940s unfolded, psychiatrists became permanent features of the penitentiary landscape. Their growing legitimacy coincided with that of social workers and the establishment of Puerto Rico’s Classification and Treatment Board, where they had a voice to influence official policy toward convicts. Alongside physicians, educators, social workers, and justice and prison officials, psychiatrists contributed to determining who was civically salvageable.

Pioneering Psychiatry, Representing the Jíbaro

An exclusive club of psychiatrists pioneered their discipline in Oso Blanco. Although some provided a trickle of service in the 1930s, two of them virtually monopolized penal psychiatric practice in the 1940s and early 1950s. Before Troyano assumed leadership of medical and psychiatric services in Oso Blanco after midcentury, in the 1940s José Rafael Maymí Nevares (Figure 4 below) was arguably the penitentiary’s most active psychiatrist. Born in Toa Alta in 1903, he left Puerto Rico in 1927 to study psychiatry in Paris. There, he completed the coursework for his degree in 1933, the year Oso Blanco opened. Subsequently, he wrote a doctoral thesis on early dementia and tuberculosis, which he finished in 1936.⁶¹ He did his residency at St. Anne’s hospital in Paris. Maymí Nevares returned to Puerto Rico in 1936 and started practicing psychiatry

⁶⁰ *Report of the Attorney General of Puerto Rico* (1942), 38; and Picó, *El día menos pensado*, 98.

⁶¹ The thesis argued that tuberculosis was an etiological factor in the pathogenesis of early dementia. José Rafael Maymí Nevares, “Démence précoce et tuberculose: la tuberculose comme facteur étiologique dans la pathogénie de la démence précoce,” Medical Thesis, Paris, Centre Hospitalier Sainte Anne, L. Arnette, 1936.

the next year. At the time, the field was still young.⁶² A psychoanalytic society, for example, would not be established on the island until the mid-1950s.⁶³ Maymí Nevares and a handful of others, including Luis M. Morales, planted the seeds of modern psychiatry and mental hygiene in Puerto Rico. In 1940, they joined the island medical association and became founding members of its psychiatry and neurology section.⁶⁴

While active in Oso Blanco, Maymí Nevares researched convict mental illnesses. For example, in late September 1942 he assessed a 29-year-old mulatto day laborer from Carolina named Félix Calderón Parrilla, who was serving time for second-degree murder. The convict suffered from an “acute outbreak” of “catatonic excitement.” Maymí Nevares linked Calderón Parrilla’s episode of extreme agitation to his “accentuated psychopathic personality,” which also had “schizoid” and “paranoid” features. He pointed to the convict’s “isolation” and “suspicious” and “strange” conduct, behavior that became more “psychotic” over five years. Penitentiary professionals and staff often found the prisoner “making silly faces,” “gesticulating,” “talking to himself,” complaining about “persecution,” and experiencing “auditory hallucinations.” Calderón Parrilla even attacked other inmates in “sudden” fits of “impulsive” rage. One time, he ran through his cellblock “making fun” of authorities and burst into the nearest administrative office to demand his freedom because “a voice called on me, telling me I completed my sentence.” Thus, authorities

⁶² Plotkin suggests this was also the case in the psychiatric “cradle” of Latin America (i.e., Argentina). See *Freud in the Pampas*, chs. 1-3.

⁶³ Rosselló, *Historia de la psiquiatría puertorriqueña, 1898-1988*, 125-31.

⁶⁴ Justino del Valle Correa, *Los muchachos de París* (Puerto Rico: el autor, 2003), 153-62 and 171-73; “Notas necrológicas,” *Boletín de la Asociación Médica de Puerto Rico* 43, 4 (1951): 247; Luis M. Morales, “In Memoriam,” *Boletín de la Asociación Médica de Puerto Rico* 43, 7 (1951): 396-97; and García Selva, “La razón de la sinrazón.” Maymí Nevares’ psychiatric training in France is not a moot point, especially given that existing scholarship emphasizes Puerto Ricans who received training in the U.S. The impact of French psychiatric tradition on island mental health dates to the late nineteenth century, and is visible in Francisco del Valle Atilés’ *El campesino puertorriqueño*, for example. Puerto Rico was a crossroads of the Atlantic, as well as a crossroads of the Americas. On Puerto Rico’s first U.S.-trained psychologists and psychiatrists, see Irma Roca de Torres, “Algunos precursores/as de la psicología en Puerto Rico: reseñas biográficas,” *Revista Puertorriqueña de Psicología* 17 (2006): 61-88.

were “wrongly retaining” him. Maymí Nevares diagnosed Calderón Parrilla as a “paranoid schizophrenic,” a disorder in which a person loses touch with reality, and recommended his transfer to the nearby insane asylum.⁶⁵

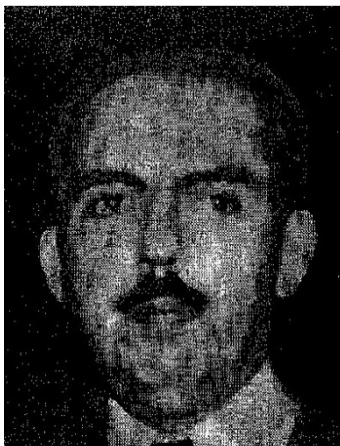


Figure 4: José Rafael Maymí Nevares, *Boletín de la Asociación Médica de Puerto Rico*, July 1951.

Maymí Nevares also published several articles on prisoners, and lectured about child welfare and psychology.⁶⁶ Again, that island mental health experts correlated adult convicts with children throws into sharp relief the domesticating impulse of rehabilitation in mid-twentieth-century Puerto Rico. On this point, U.S. colonial and populist top brass shared common ground. Maymí Nevares’ access to Oso Blanco’s Classification and Treatment Board allowed him to extract the data he needed for publications and conference presentations. His work reveals that neuropsychiatry offered penitentiary staff more than a thick description of insanity. Rather, the field represented a way to bridge biology, psychiatry, and sociology, which in turn enabled the thorough analysis and treatment of “abnormal” and “antisocial” convicts.⁶⁷ Neuropsychiatric

⁶⁵ Expediente del confinado Félix Calderón Parrilla, Caja 392, SEC, FDJ, AGPR.

⁶⁶ For example, see José R. Maymí Nevares, “La higiene de la formación de hábitos durante la primera infancia,” *Memoria del Primer Congreso del Niño de Puerto Rico, 1941* (San Juan: Negociado de Materiales, Imprenta y Transporte, 1943), 318-22.

⁶⁷ Maymí Nevares did not always particularize treatment in the writings and reports I have seen. One must look elsewhere to get a sense of what psychiatric treatment was like in Puerto Rico in the 1940s and 1950s. Rosselló, for

services, Maymí Nevares claimed, were indispensable to the penitentiary's redemptive efforts. This was the case because prison guards did not possess the "technical" and "specialized" expertise needed to "adequately resolve" the "diverse problems" posed by such prisoners."⁶⁸

According to Maymí Nevares, five sets of "mental problems" characterized most Oso Blanco convicts: those related to 1) conduct and discipline, 2) work, entertainment and leisure, 3) segregation and living arrangements, 4) sexual perversions and homosexuality, and 5) amnesty and parole. In one study, he assessed 400 inmates, a sub-set of the total penitentiary population believed to have a psychiatric problem, and grouped them into five additional categories: insane, feeble-minded, psychopathic, neurotic, and maladjusted. Maymí Nevares theorized extensively about each of these categories, linking them to the "inferior" intelligence, "emotional instability," and rural background of many inmates. The criminally insane were epileptic, syphilitic, and had "crazy ideas" about the nature of the universe. Feeble-minded prisoners had experience with economies of sweat and toil, exhibited mental "deficiency," and recognized themselves as "campesino types." Psychopaths possessed "normal" intelligence but lacked "emotional maturity." They were egocentric, failed to consider others, and struggled to learn from experience. Neurotics were anxious, obsessive-compulsive, and hypochondriacs. Maladjusted inmates appeared "normal" but stood out for curious behaviors that upon further examination confirmed minor, though significant, "emotional and mental imbalances."⁶⁹

example, notes that treatment included: autohemotherapy (the reinjection of freshly drawn blood), electroshock therapy, hydrotherapy (the use of water for pain relief and treatment), narcosis (drug-induced stupor), penicillin therapy, psychosurgery (e.g., lobotomies), and sterilization. See Rosselló, *Historia de la psiquiatría puertorriqueña, 1898-1988*, 22-25, 79-80, and 88-89.

⁶⁸ Maymí Nevares, "Contribución del médico neuropsiquiatra al tratamiento individual del delincuente en un presidio," *Revista de Servicio Social* 7, 2 (abril 1946): 42.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 43-49. On the point of emotional fluctuations and naiveté, Maymí Nevares drew from child psychiatrist and criminologist William Healy, who established the first children's guidance clinic in the U.S. in the early twentieth century. Healy helped introduce Freudian thought to the U.S. A major contribution of Healy's was his "multifactor

Maymí Nevares carved a window into “the nature of the subconscious psychological mechanisms that engender abnormal conduct” among delinquents of all kinds, especially those of “impoverished and rural origins.”⁷⁰ He made campesinos, jíbaros, and others psychiatrically legible through the lens of crime and punishment. Indeed, around midcentury, about half of Oso Blanco’s total population consisted of “campesino types”; that is, people with rural origins or who worked in rural environments. In a clinical evaluation of a 31-year-old *trigueño* (wheat-colored) alcoholic farmer from Ponce named Gervasio Troche Torres, Maymí Nevares extended “cultural deficiency” to Puerto Rico’s wider rural, poor, and mixed-race populations. Such people went their entire lives “without an education” that would help them “defend their moral and social selves” from “instincts reinforced by external organic-toxic influences and stimulants.” Their “intellectual deficit” and the “poverty” of their “affective tendencies” made it difficult for psychiatrists to not only read convicts but also treat and uplift them.⁷¹ In another case, a 44-year-old white convict from Aguas Buenas named Arcadio Vargas Pagán exhibited the “sentiments and emotions” of rural convicts, which “are of a simple nature,” even though he had an entrepreneurial background. He should have been brimming with the “complex, elevated, and modern sentiments” of morality, family, and honor. These “elevated sentiments,” Maymí Nevares trumpeted, merged emotion and abstract ideas, which “a mentally deficient person is incapable of conceiving.”⁷²

As Vargas Pagán’s case indicates, convicts did not need to literally be jíbaros to qualify as corrigible or incorrigible. Geography, leading a traditional lifestyle, substance abuse, and

theory” of delinquency, which considered the perspectives of criminals and social context, thereby moving the field away from strict biological explanations of crime. See J. Snodgrass, “William Healy (1869-1963): Pioneer Child Psychiatrist and Criminologist,” *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 20, 4 (October 1984): 332-39.

⁷⁰ Maymí Nevares, “Contribución del médico neuropsiquiatra,” 48-49.

⁷¹ Expediente del confinado Gervasio Troche Torres, Caja 86, SCE, FOG, AGPR.

⁷² Expediente del confinado Arcadio Vargas Pagán, Caja 414, SEC, FDJ, AGPR.

corrupting perceived timeless values were enough to confirm one's "abnormality." It just so happens these things often coalesced in rural people. But abnormality did not always explain crime. In fact, Maymí Nevares argued in a summer 1949 article on "abnormal criminals" that the impact of mental illness on island crime was exaggerated. While there were abundant cases of "emotional instability," in many more cases environmental and sociological factors proved just as important. Adverse socioeconomic conditions and personal factors created mental conflicts in convicts. These forces shook convict "security" beyond material concerns. According to Maymí Nevares, 25 percent of Oso Blanco's prisoners suffered from mental problems defined along these lines. He encouraged the populist state to institute better guidelines for processing such cases. Those who qualified, he suggested, included the "undeniably insane," sex criminals, elderly and first-time offenders, murderers lacking motive, and other "lurid" crooks.⁷³ These groups showed signs of mental "abnormality," insanity, and psychosis, making them less salvageable than the other three-fourths of the prison population.

After classifying inmates, psychiatrists recommended where they should receive treatment. Maymí Nevares advised that prisons with corresponding facilities were ideal. In cases of "real" insanity, however, convicts should be transported to a psychiatric hospital. Leaving most treatment to the prison system both reinforced the law and was practical. As platoons of social workers and probation officers were not yet the norm in the 1940s, it was difficult to maintain surveillance of mental patients outside of welfare institutions. Individually monitoring them defeated the purpose of redeeming them. Maymí Nevares also dreaded "false abnormal," such as patients at large and ambulatory patients, who disrupted the flow of treatment to real "neurotics."⁷⁴

⁷³ Maymí Nevares, "El delincuente anormal ante la justicia," *Revista de Servicio Social* 10, 3 (julio 1949): 19-20.

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 20.

Thus, Maymí Nevares called for uniform procedures to deal with unhinged convicts. He proposed that judges submit “borderline” cases of mental perturbation to no more than 90 days of observation in a psychiatric hospital. “Repeated” and “discreet” evaluations formed the backbone of the profiles on which the Classification and Treatment Board leaned to determine who was redeemable. Compared to the hardline courts of the time, the living laboratory of Oso Blanco offered a better ambiance to carry out this work.⁷⁵ Intelligence exams provided psychiatrists and psychologists with the “evidence” they needed to bring clarity to dubious cases. For Maymí Nevares and other social scientists, mental tests quantified convict prospects for mental health, social uplift, and civic resurrection, especially those of rural origins or proclivities.

Mental Tests

In the middle decades of the twentieth century, mental tests were key technologies of U.S. empire and populist redemptive practice in Puerto Rico. Psychiatrists and psychologists used them extensively in Oso Blanco. Their preferred assessments included the Wechsler-Bellevue and Stanford-Binet psychometric exams and the Rorschach, Goodenough, and Bender-Gestalt personality tests. Psychiatrist Pablo Roca de León translated the Stanford-Binet exam, for example, and applied it to the Puerto Rican context in 1937.⁷⁶ Translations of other tests soon followed.⁷⁷ Oso Blanco psychiatrists and psychologists relied on these exams to study prisoners, determine their “pathologies,” and quantify their intelligence. The tests helped social health experts decide if convicts could be mentally rebooted and eventually released from prison. This made the data

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Roca de Torres, “Algunos precursores/as de la psicología en Puerto Rico,” 67.

⁷⁷ Rosselló, *Historia de la psiquiatría puertorriqueña, 1898-1988*, 107-108.

yielded by mental tests instrumental to the Classification and Treatment Board, for it clarified how convicts thought, specifically.

The mental tests on which the Classification and Treatment Board depended traveled and evolved across national boundaries. At the broadest of levels the tests measured different groups' capacities for nationhood, as well as the U.S. polity's competence as an empire. In the U.S. and Mexico, for instance, intelligence tests promoted the shared goals of modernizing and standardizing education. Introduced alongside the eugenics movement in the early twentieth century, mental tests bolstered arguments about race, class, and gender differences in both societies.⁷⁸ I.Q. tests established numerical indices to classify pupils of all backgrounds on a spectrum of imagined mental types, ranging from idiots, imbeciles, morons, and geniuses to the feebleminded, borderline deficient, dull, normal, superior, and very superior.⁷⁹

Mental tests purportedly measured the content of malfunctioning brains. According to Gould, I.Q. tests contributed to the notion that intelligence could be “meaningfully abstracted as a single number capable of ranking all people on a linear scale of intrinsic and unalterable mental worth.” This led many scientists to wrongfully assume that “oppressed and disadvantaged groups—races, classes, or sexes—are innately inferior and deserve their status.”⁸⁰ Gould's view echoes Bulhan's in the sense that the intelligence tests of the middle decades of the twentieth century were developed and standardized outside of the communities they measured. Certain tests, including the Stanford Intelligence and Wechsler-Bellevue Scales, revealed “truths” about non-

⁷⁸ For a multi-axial approach to eugenics in Latin America, see Stepan, “*The Hour of Eugenics*,” 1-20. Also see Laura Luz Suárez y López Guazo, *Eugenésia y racismo en México* (Coyoacán: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2005), 9-20; and Baerga Santini, “Transgresiones corporales.”

⁷⁹ Alexandra M. Stern, “An Empire of Tests: Psychometrics and the Paradoxes of Nationalism in the Americas,” in Stoler, ed., *Haunted by Empire*, 326, 329, and 331-33. Also, see Stern's *Eugenic Nation*.

⁸⁰ Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man*, 20-23.

white peoples even though they were not designed for such groups in the first place.⁸¹ This was also the case in mid-twentieth-century Puerto Rican prisons.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, Oso Blanco psychiatrists and psychologists regularly administered convict mental tests and psychometric exams. Parole records make repeated references to convicts' "neuropsychiatric conditions" and the specific tests prison professionals used to gain insight into their minds. The Otis Quick Scoring Mental Ability Test, the Stanford-Binet exam, and the Rorschach inkblot and Goodenough drawing tests were among those consulted at the penitentiary. The Otis test of general ability generated I.Q. scores that allowed researchers to compare the intelligence of different groups.⁸² The Stanford-Binet exam identified the intellectually challenged so that they could be placed in special education programs.⁸³ The Rorschach test required the interpretation of inkblot designs to assess personality traits and emotional tendencies.⁸⁴ The Goodenough exam determined one's intelligence based on how accurately they drew a person. This last test was developed by a female psychologist and Professor at the University of Minnesota named Florence Goodenough. Her research underscored childhood

⁸¹ Later revisions recognized this limitation, but failed to change the tests. See Bulhan, *Frantz Fanon and the Psychology of Oppression*, 69.

⁸² Del Moral, *Negotiating Empire*, 131. The test's founder, psychologist Arthur Otis, was born in Colorado and educated at Stanford University. Throughout his career, he held various research and consulting positions for different U.S. government agencies, including the military. Otis developed multiple-choice intelligence tests for the U.S. Army during World War I. After the war, the Otis scale became widely used, especially in public schools.

⁸³ The Stanford-Binet exam, originally developed at the turn of the twentieth century by French psychologist Alfred Binet and his apprentice Theodore Simon, was later revamped by Stanford University psychologist Lewis Terman. Whereas Binet regarded intelligence as too complex to be captured by a single number, Terman thought that it was innate and could be quantified. Terman raved about the accuracy of I.Q. tests and their ability to "objectively" identify delinquent, retarded, diseased, and otherwise unfit individuals. See Stern, *Eugenic Nation*, 18 and 93.

⁸⁴ Swiss psychiatrist Hermann Rorschach studied medicine in Germany under Eugen Bleuler. He is known for developing the inkblot test, which tries to map the unconscious parts of the brain and personality. Individuals were shown ten inkblots, and asked to report what objects or figures they saw. Answers disclosed data about cognition and variables like motivations, affectivity, and (inter)personal perceptions. A young white inmate named Juan Masas Carcaño, who was serving an extended sentence in Oso Blanco for multiple counts of theft in 1951, scored 30 percent on the Rorschach. This suggested he had "near average intelligence" and "acceptable maturity, balance, extra-introversion, and self-control." Expediente del confinado Juan Masas Carcaño, Caja 24, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

intelligence.⁸⁵ Again, that mental tests used on children were deployed in Puerto Rican prisons as often as in local schools is suggestive of the importance of Oso Blanco as a laboratory of not only sanitary but also social citizenship.⁸⁶ It is also indicative of Midwestern academic and informal U.S. imperial influence on Puerto Rican science and deviant bodies.⁸⁷

This is not to suggest that convicts seamlessly embraced the socio-scientific method of the state. For example, a 33-year-old white sugarcane transporter from Yabucoa named José Medina Berríos asserted that mental tests could not explain his insanity. Someone had put a spell on him (*le hicieron una enviación*). This had driven him mad.⁸⁸ In another case, a 28-year-old black day laborer from San Juan named Sotero Castro Torres explained that the “*mal de [g]otacoral*” caused the physical convulsions and mental perturbations from which he suffered.⁸⁹ Not only did mental tests measure convict intelligence or tangle biomedical-folk monologues, however, they were also instruments of control. For instance, in 1949 Oso Blanco mental health professionals had a 41-year-old white day laborer named Félix Nieves Ortiz, who was serving a contested six-month sentence for incest, take the Otis mental ability test. According to the results, Nieves Ortiz had an

⁸⁵ Florence Goodenough, *Measurement of Intelligence by Drawings* (New York: Arno Press, 1975).

⁸⁶ Del Moral’s study on the cultural politics of schools in Puerto Rico offers little insight about the extent to which psychometric exams and other mental tests shaped educational policies and practices on the island. However, she does discuss a similar phenomenon in the Puerto Rican diaspora on the U.S. mainland, which, she argues, had ramifications for identity politics and education on the island. Del Moral, *Negotiating Empire*, ch. 4. On the administration of mental tests in island schools and children’s welfare institutions in the mid-twentieth century, see Guillermo Bernal, “60 Years of Clinical Psychology in Puerto Rico,” *Interamerican Journal of Psychology* 47, 2 (2013): 212-13.

⁸⁷ Another example of such influence is from Wisconsin. See Toro Calder, “Personal Crime in Puerto Rico.”

⁸⁸ Expediente del confinado José Medina Berríos, Caja 146, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

⁸⁹ In this case, penitentiary professionals identified the convict’s ailment as epilepsy, although his use of different nomenclature indicates he perceived of his condition according to another logic. For example, in the deep past and even recent present, epilepsy has been associated with religious experiences and spirit possession. See Expediente del confinado Sotero Castro Torres, Caja 474, SEC, FDJ, AGPR; Franco Fabbro and Yvan Lebrun, *Language and Epilepsy* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons, 2002); Louise Jilek-Aall, “Morbus Sacer in Africa: Some Religious Aspects of Epilepsy in Traditional Cultures,” *Epilepsia* 40, 3 (March 1999): 382-86; and Ignacio Balcells, *El tiempo en la costa* (Santiago de Chile: Editorial Andres Bello, 1999), 191.

I.Q. of 75 (“borderline deficient”). The instructions of the test he took claimed to measure, among other things, “how well you can think and follow orders.”⁹⁰

Nieves Ortiz answered three sample questions, but he did not follow other criteria. For example, he ignored the instruction ordering him to underline correct answers.⁹¹ The test’s focus on instructions corroborates that Oso Blanco social scientists correlated the mental health and intelligence of adult inmates with children. If convicts could not follow basic directions, then they would not function in society, where the rule of law and personal responsibility prevailed. Just as children had to be socialized for life outside the home, convicts had to be groomed for life beyond the walls of the prison. Social redemption, then, entailed a domestication that emphasized education (or ideological colonization) and a passive acceptance of the illusion of freedom.

Psychologists administered psychometric exams at Oso Blanco. Some of them, like the Columbia-trained Juan B. Picart, taught at the University of Puerto Rico.⁹² For instance, in December 1947, Picart proctored the mental test of a young mulatto/trigueño shoemaker from Santurce named Salvador Álamo Rivera. This “*ratero*” (thief) arrived at Oso Blanco from the Industrial School for Boys in Mayagüez.⁹³ Authorities shipped him to the penitentiary for being a “menace” who constantly disregarded prison rules and escaped from jail. His psychometric exam results revealed an I.Q. of 85 (“normal inferior”). Álamo Rivera scored well in general comprehension, ordering images, and finishing incomplete drawings. His weaknesses included

⁹⁰ Expediente del confinado Félix Nieves Ortiz, Caja 480, SEC, FDJ, AGPR.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² Picart was one of the architects of clinical psychology in Puerto Rico. After the U.S. Congress passed the GI Bill in 1944, which extended educational and training resources to veterans, officials and educators at the University of Puerto Rico created orientation programs for these students. Picart supervised one of these programs. See Bernal, “Sixty Years of Clinical Psychology in Puerto Rico,” 212. Also, see National Council on Measurement in Education, *The Yearbook of the National Council on Measurements Used in Education* 11 (1953-54), xiv.

⁹³ On the term *ratero* and the imagery associated with it in modern Mexico, see Piccato, *City of Suspects*.

quantitative reasoning, similes, and processing symbols. Picart concluded that Álamo Rivera had a “psychopathic personality.” The inmate was confident, cooperative, expressed himself easily and with an abundance of details, and had good method and sound intuition. However, he used these skills deceitfully. For example, he took books, including a biography of Governor Muñoz Marín, to classification and treatment orientations to insinuate that he had changed.⁹⁴

Psychometric exams in Oso Blanco quantified inmate intelligence, especially their motor and verbal skills. The anatomy of psychologists’ reports typically looked the same. Psychologists analyzed how convicts solved arithmetic problems, completed drawing exercises, and ordered blocks. They made observations about “deficiencies” in convict mental “capacity” or their overall mental “deterioration.” Psychologists also attempted to link symptoms with known disorders. They especially wanted to know if prisoners were “psychopaths.” To do so, psychologists detailed convict attitudes toward the test and the language they used while carrying out exam tasks. In many cases, this confirmed the “infantile” nature of inmates.⁹⁵

Mental tests helped psychiatrists and psychologists determine whether convicts were mentally healthy, eligible for social uplift, and smart enough for civic responsibility. While Oso Blanco’s mental health infrastructure regressed in the wake of the political violence of late 1950 and early 1951, mental tests again permeated the penitentiary by the mid-1950s. In 1956, clinical psychologists Franco Ferracuti, George Witt, and Ceferina Cedeño pursued intelligence studies of

⁹⁴ On other occasions, Álamo Rivera had copies of Benito Pérez Galdós’ 1878 novel *Marianela* and Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra’s 1605 novel *El Quixote* in his possession. Social scientists thought this material was too complex for Álamo Rivera to interpret, but he felt otherwise. Expediente del confinado Salvador Álamo Rivera, Caja 468, SEC, FDJ, AGPR.

⁹⁵ For example, Picart suggested that prisoner Fernando Lassalle Concepción “lacks a sense of reality and is incapable of resolving problems involving even the most elementary arithmetic [and] reasoning.” The convict’s “logic is infantile.” His “mental concentration is inadequate.” Lassalle Concepción “seems allergic to arithmetic and numbers. He said he did not want to learn arithmetic because he would have to think.” He had “fits of anger” when presented with such problems. Expediente del confinado Fernando Lassalle Concepción, Caja 171, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

dozens of Oso Blanco convicts under the auspices of the university's Social Science Research Center. The exams they used included: Porteus Maze, Rorschach, Thematic Apperception Test (T.A.T.), Draw a Person, and Bender-Visual Motor Gestalt. The psychologists put exam results into dialogue with social data about convicts, continuing the pattern established a decade earlier by the Classification and Treatment Board.⁹⁶

Ferracuti, Witt, and Cedeño found that 40 percent of the convicts were dangerous, while 44 percent posed an average threat. The remaining 16 percent were not dangerous. Fifty-four percent would be a threat to society if released, while 42 percent would pose an average threat. Only four percent could be trusted beyond prison walls. Fifty-six percent ran the risk of developing serious mental illness upon release. Twenty-four percent were moderately at risk. Twenty percent had little chance of this happening. More than half of all convicts were likely to commit a crime again.⁹⁷ These findings not only justified the need for mental health experts, they also amplified the role of social workers in the rehabilitation process.

Collectively, psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers sought to tinker with the resistant or reprobate mind, which they believed could evolve into a healthy, awakened one that was cognizant not only of self but family, community, and nation. As several convicts observed, female social workers and other collaborators—such as the Athenaeum-affiliated and President of the Young Women's Christian Association, Carmelina G. Freyre—contributed significantly in this vein.⁹⁸ Their socio-scientific “missionary” zeal made awakening and so much more possible. More

⁹⁶ Celeste Marín, et al., *La efectividad de la rehabilitación*, 190 and 211.

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, 223.

⁹⁸ Freyre submitted uplifting book excerpts for publication in *El Despertar*. For example, in October 1949 she supplied a portion of Glenville Kleiser's *Inspiración e ideales*, translated by Ponceña María I. Landrón. In December 1949, she contributed a slice from *Hechos heroicos, del tesoro de la juventud*, on the life of Isabel Fry, who sought to reform English prisons in the nineteenth century. See “Colaboración que agradecemos mucho,” *El Despertar* (octubre 1949): 20; and the same column in *El Despertar* (diciembre 1949): 15 and 17-20.

broadly, physically and mentally resurrecting convicts and preparing them for meaningful citizenship required a holistic treatment program that ranged from medical science and social health to the humanities and religiosity. But by midcentury, psychiatry had particularly enjoyed a renaissance. Psychiatry bridged not only empirical and speculative science (a Spanish throwback), however. It also linked different corners of the Spanish-speaking Caribbean and Atlantic worlds.

Transnational Psychiatry

Psychiatric knowledge and practice in the Caribbean was not only shaped by forces and anxieties specific to the region or individual colonies/nations within it, but also transnational actors and intellectual currents. In the mid-twentieth-century Spanish-speaking Caribbean, Troyano facilitated this entanglement. But Troyano was not the sole harbinger of “progress” in this regard. The penitentiary itself, after all, was a transnational idea and structure. Its goals and architectural blueprint had been crisscrossing the globe for a few centuries before seeding the Caribbean. Transnational psychiatry was commensal to penitentiary culture, an important forum for scientific exchange and knowledge production on the one hand, and a terrain of political struggle on the other. In this context, Troyano provides a lens through which to juxtapose objects of study from various traditions to bring different understandings into view.⁹⁹

Several scholars have argued that a shortcoming of transnational history is that it tends to foreground privileged actors (like Troyano) and certain aspects of their lives (like profession). This results in an “international provincialism” that underemphasizes local and national dynamics and crowds out other equally valuable perspectives and stories.¹⁰⁰ For all his “elitism,” however,

⁹⁹ Tinsman, *Buying into the Regime*, 9, 13, and 22.

¹⁰⁰ Putnam, “The Transnational and the Text-Searchable: Digitized Sources and the Shadows They Cast,” *The American Historical Review* 121, 2 (April 2016): 377 and 391-92; and Marc A. Hertzman, “The Promise and

Troyano's work put him into everyday contact with convicts, a community often left out of the narratives of even the most social justice-oriented of scholars. Troyano's odyssey provides insight not just about his life, but the beliefs he embraced, the spaces and places he frequented, the sensibilities of convicts, and the political systems and structures to which he adapted. True, this discloses much about him, but it also reveals much about the societies that hosted him and the local communities with which he interacted. Using Troyano in this way, as a lens to see intersections, preempts portraying him in a triumphalist light.

Troyano arrived in the Caribbean from Spain after the conclusion of the Spanish Civil War, bringing psychiatric knowledge that he would put to productive use in the societies that hosted him. First in the Dominican Republic (1939-1945), and subsequently in Puerto Rico (1945-1957), the ways in which Spanish psychiatric knowledge transformed the experience of incarceration and politics in each society flowed from dynamics operating within and across national borders. Troyano was born in November 1910 in Madrid, Spain.¹⁰¹ He earned his first degree at the local Instituto Escuela, a (post)secondary school founded in 1918 that experimented with advanced secular and Krausist pedagogies.¹⁰² Karl Christian Friedrich Krause was a German philosopher and Freemason. He tried to reconcile the idea of God known by faith with sensory knowledge of the world, and posited that God is not a limited personality but a universal essence. His philosophy was very influential in Restoration Spain (1874-1931). Spanish Krausists combined scientific

Challenge of Transnational History," *A Contracorriente* 7, 1 (2009): 312. On transnational lives, see the essays in "Transnational Lives in the Twentieth Century," *AHR Forum, The American Historical Review* 118, 1 (February 2013): 45-139.

¹⁰¹ Julián Amo and Charmion Shelby, *The Printed Work of Spanish Intellectuals in the Americas, 1936-1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1950), 121.

¹⁰² Elvira Ontañón, "El Instituto Escuela: una experiencia educativa ejemplar," *Circunstancia* 5, 14 (septiembre 2007); and Francisco Giral, *Ciencia española en el exilio (1939-1989): el exilio de los científicos españoles* (Madrid: Centro de Investigación y Estudios Republicanos, 1994), 260.

rationalism and a liberal commitment to individual freedom. They were opposed to the perceived privilege and arbitrary power of the Catholic Church hierarchy.¹⁰³ These kinds of ideas formed the core of Troyano's intellectual genealogy.

In the mid-to-late 1920s, Troyano proceeded to study under the Faculty of Science at the Universidad Central in Madrid, one of the oldest and most prestigious public research universities in the world. The university was known for its mentality of "liberal renewal."¹⁰⁴ At the same time, Troyano got more involved with the intellectual efforts of his family. His family ties and extended networks spanned high government and prominent humanistic circles. Rafael's uncle Fernando Troyano de los Ríos, for example, served as Spain's minister of education. Further, among Rafael's acquaintances was the politically-outspoken poet and playwright Federico García Lorca, an emblematic member of the Generation of 1927. This influential group of poets emerged in Spanish literary circles between 1923 and 1927 out of a shared desire to experience and work with avant-garde forms of art and poetry. García Lorca was executed by "reactionary" nationalist forces at the start of the Spanish Civil War.¹⁰⁵

In December 1931, Rafael traveled with García Lorca, Fernando, and other family members to Morocco (Figure 5 below). The two young intellectuals assisted Fernando as

¹⁰³ Krause's system of thought was called pantheism, which combined the belief in one God with the belief that all of reality is divine. According to pantheism, God is a reality which transcends and includes both nature and humanity. As differences between people disappear and universal structures harden, humanity becomes God. Hugh Chisholm, ed., "Karl Christian Friedrich Krause," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911); and Paul Heywood, *Marxism and the Failure of Organized Socialism in Spain, 1879-1936* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 21-23.

¹⁰⁴ "Expediente académico de Rafael Troyano de los Ríos, alumno de la Facultad de Ciencias de la Universidad Central," ES-AHN-28079-UD-178145 & ES-AHN-28079-UD-4387140, Universidades, 6237, Expediente 2, Archivo Histórico Nacional de España (AHNE).

¹⁰⁵ Jesús Ruiz Mantilla, "Reportaje: cartas y dibujos inéditos sobre el Lorca más íntimo," *El País*, 19-21 octubre 2007; Juan Luis Tapia, "García Lorca, 'el africano,'" *Ideal Granada*, 4 junio 2009; and Miguel Caballero Pérez, *Lorca en África: crónica de un viaje al protectorado español de Marruecos, 1931* (Granada: Diputación de Granada, Patronato Cultural Federico García Lorca, 2010), 25 and 64. Also, see Ian Gibson, *The Assassination of Federico García Lorca* (New York: Penguin, 1983).

secretaries and speechwriters. The group visited different Moroccan cities, inspected schools, and encouraged educational reforms. A component of the trip that political opponents in Spain later used against García Lorca and the Troyano family was that they invited Muslims, Jews, and Freemasons to the meetings they convened. Fernando was a Freemason himself, and he appeared to be grooming Rafael and García Lorca to enter the secret society, philanthropic fraternity, and civic association, if they were not already members.



Figure 5: Rafael Troyano de los Ríos (back row, left) and Federico García Lorca (back row, right), with Laura de los Ríos (front row, left) and Isabel García Lorca (front row, right), *Ideal Granada*, 1931; adapted from <http://www.ideal.es/granada/20090604/cultura/garcia-lorca-africano-20090604.html> [2009].

The group of Spaniards attended a Masonic lunch in Larache during the trip. Fernando's detractors used his communications with Masonic lodges and his speech to a Sephardic community

in Tetuán to label him “a Marxist, Mason, and Zionist Jew,” a subversive mix of one-world government enthusiasts eager to upend disparate moral orders by relativizing everything under the sun. García Lorca was guilty by association because of his Socialist views, Masonic connections, and the services he rendered to Fernando while in Morocco. Many of the speeches García Lorca wrote for Fernando defended the “coexistence” of Muslims, Jews, and Christians.¹⁰⁶ Ethnoracial and religious coexistence is a celebrated legacy of medieval Spanish history, and per so-called conspiracy theorists, an aspiration of modern Freemasonry. It is unclear whether Rafael Troyano was a Freemason. At any rate, the Craft’s secular spirituality and appreciation for science influenced him. These intellectual currents gave him insight into the mysteries of awakening and redemption, which he took to the Caribbean, where he helped modernize local medicine.

Troyano’s intimacy with the generation of dissidents and scientists that abandoned Spain during and after the Spanish Civil War landed him on the radar of falangist nationalists led by General Francisco Franco. On the eve of the civil war, in 1935, Troyano was a fellow at the Instituto Cajal, a neurobiological research center based in Madrid. At the research center, he collaborated with neurologist Gonzalo Rodríguez Lafora, the discoverer of neurodegenerative disease, an umbrella term for a range of conditions that affect the neurons in the human brain, spinal cord, and nervous system.¹⁰⁷ Troyano also directed the male section of the Ciempozuelos mental asylum in Madrid.¹⁰⁸ He served the republican government as a military health officer

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.* For a panel discussion on García Lorca’s trip to Morocco, see “Presentación del libro ‘Lorca en África,’ de Miguel Caballero, en Casa Árabe,” 23 mayo 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X1V0aApOkvc>.

¹⁰⁷ Luis Enrique Otero Carvajal, ed., *La destrucción de la ciencia en España: depuración universitaria en el franquismo* (Madrid: Editorial Complutense, 2006), 109 and 333.

¹⁰⁸ Amo and Shelby, *The Printed Work of Spanish Intellectuals in the Americas*, 121; and Giral, *Ciencia española en el exilio*, 260.

during the civil war.¹⁰⁹ In 1938, falangist nationalists prosecuted him for selling consumable goods on the black market to Joaquín López, a chauffeur for the Chilean embassy.¹¹⁰ Although cleared of all charges, Troyano left Spain. He abandoned the country in 1939 in response to the “purging” of dissidents, scientists, and others by the Franco regime.¹¹¹ Describing Spanish science as destroyed, however, is misleading, for it rose like a phoenix, albeit in modified form, in the Spanish-speaking Caribbean.

Dominican Interlude

Exiled psychiatrists and social scientists ensured the survival and evolution of Spanish science by putting down roots in other corners of the Atlantic. Troyano, for example, helped develop Caribbean styles of colonial and national science. His first stop was the Dominican Republic, where he arrived in 1939.¹¹² Scholar Antonio Zaglul suggests that the year 1939 marked when modern psychiatry in the country started in earnest. Antonio Román Durán and Troyano were among the first to practice the discipline there.¹¹³ Together, Dominicans and Spaniards advanced science at the behest of the Trujillo government, to which they owed a debt of gratitude

¹⁰⁹ Caballero Pérez, *Lorca en África*, 25.

¹¹⁰ Provisions included chicken, rabbit, lamb, eggs, and liquor. “Causa No. 15 instruida contra Rafael Troyano de los Ríos por el delito/s de infracción en materia de subsistencias,” ES-AHN-28079-UD-3713805, FC-CAUSA_GENERAL, 155, Expediente 21, AHNE.

¹¹¹ Amo and Shelby, *The Printed Work of Spanish Intellectuals in the Americas*, 121; and Otero Carvajal, *La destrucción de la ciencia en España*, 109.

¹¹² Amo and Shelby, *The Printed Work of Spanish Intellectuals in the Americas*, 121; and Giral, *Ciencia española en el exilio*, 260.

¹¹³ Andrés Blanco Díaz, ed., *Obras selectas: Antonio Zaglul*, Volume II (Santo Domingo: Archivo General de la Nación, 2011), 121. Psychiatrists from around Latin America also contributed to the renaissance in Dominican psychiatry. Their ranks included “Crespo from Cuba, Solís Quiroga from Mexico, and González Danreé from Uruguay.” These three psychiatrists specialized in the mental development of Iberoamerican children. Consult Antonio Zaglul, *Mis 500 locos* (Santo Domingo: Ediciones Taller, 1966 [1998]), 55-56.

and service for having received them from war-torn Spain.¹¹⁴ Trujillo's view of science was that it could be useful, but only if its tools and products remained in the hands of the state.¹¹⁵ This would soon become a point of contention for everyone involved.

By the time Troyano arrived in the Dominican Republic, Nigua had started transitioning into a mental hospital. At Nigua's apex, its regenerative premise revolved around working the land. Well-behaved convicts received individual plots surrounding the penitentiary and reaped the benefits of whatever they produced.¹¹⁶ By late April 1938, however, the Trujillo government closed the penitentiary and several other island prisons due to accusations of torture and political violence. These rumors also circulated across the Mona Passage in Puerto Rico.¹¹⁷ Turning Nigua into an insane asylum signaled that the Trujillo regime had superficially recommitted itself to science, but Troyano quickly learned that the new hospital designation represented little more than fresh dressings for old wounds. Exiled Dominican physicians and their allies painted Nigua as a concentration camp, not as a redemptive institution.¹¹⁸ Dramatic accounts of political violence in Nigua impacted how Dominican social scientists and psychiatrists imagined convict classification

¹¹⁴ Consuelo Naranjo Orovio and Miguel Ángel Puig Samper, "De isla en isla: los españoles exiliados en República Dominicana, Puerto Rico y Cuba," *ARBOR Ciencia, Pensamiento y Cultura* CLXXXV, 735 (enero-febrero 2009): 89 and 100. Also see Naranjo Orovio, "Las redes de un exilio errante: republicanos españoles en Santo Domingo, Puerto Rico y Cuba," in Reina C. Rosario Fernández, *El exilio republicano español en la sociedad dominicana* (Santo Domingo: Archivo General de la Nación, 2010), 146.

¹¹⁵ This is a fundamental feature of scientific dictatorships. See Amparo Gómez, Antonio Francisco Canales, and Brian Balmer, eds., *Science Policies and Twentieth-Century Dictatorships: Spain, Italy, and Argentina* (New York: Routledge, Taylor and Francis, 2015).

¹¹⁶ "Instrucciones sobre la organización del trabajo de los presidiarios en la Penitenciaría Nacional de Nigua," 1929, Agricultura.1.2.L01, legajo 600722PN, AGN.

¹¹⁷ The official closing date was April 28, 1938. Secretaría de Estado de Justicia, Educación Pública y Bellas Artes, "Clausuras de establecimientos penales," *Memoria de la Secretaría de Estado de Justicia, Educación Pública y Bellas Artes* (Ciudad Trujillo: Ed. La Nación, 1939), 33.

¹¹⁸ On these cumulative themes, see, for instance, *La Opinión*, 23 abril 1938-2 mayo 1938. Also, see Jimenes Grullón, *Una gestapo en América*; and Girona Pérez, *Las fechorías del bandolero Trujillo*. The latter text was originally published in Puerto Rico, illustrating further connections between the two societies.

and treatment in subsequent decades. And while the Dominican state flirted with social science in the early 1940s, authorities eventually isolated and (re)exiled many of its advocates later that decade and beyond because of its subversive potential, which Trujillo correlated with conspiratorial health professionals.¹¹⁹

For centuries, magic and colonial medicine shaped psychiatry in the Dominican Republic. It was not until 1886 that Franciscan priests lacking medical specialization established Padre Billini asylum on the ruins of San Francisco church in Santo Domingo. When the hospital opened, President Ulises Heureaux could not provide all the resources necessary for the initiative. The hospital lacked proper facilities, trained staff, basic recordkeeping, and hygiene. In the early twentieth century, mental healthcare in the Dominican Republic continued to be provided in places like Padre Billini. These patterns persisted through the U.S. occupation. Marines improved the hospital's structure but did not change its medical approach. When hurricane San Zenón struck the country in September 1930 and destroyed Padre Billini asylum, this created a psychiatric vacuum, one eagerly filled by an alpha Trujillo government.¹²⁰

Surgeon Armando Ortiz, a “superstitious” psychiatrist who earned his medical credentials in Germany, inherited the directorship of Nigua when the institution transitioned into a mental asylum in 1940. He wore special garments “to ward off evil spirits” and had various medications at his disposal, including mercury salts, “propidom, mafarside, calmopen,” injections of “606 and

¹¹⁹ Jimenes Grullón, *Una gestapo en América*. Also, consult Constancio Bernaldo de Quirós, *Una pluma en el exilio: los artículos publicados por Constancio Bernaldo de Quirós en República Dominicana* (Santo Domingo: Archivo General de la Nación, 2009).

¹²⁰ Blanco Díaz, ed., *Obras selectas*, Volume I, 116-17 and Volume II, 181 and 185; Lino A. Romero, *Historia de la psiquiatría dominicana* (Santo Domingo: Editora Búho, 2005), 35, 39-40, and 44-46; and Zaglul, *Mis 500 locos*, 17-19.

914,” and penicillin. Ortiz also administered electroshock therapy.¹²¹ Troyano served as Ortiz’s deputy at Nigua.¹²² However, Trujillo’s suffocating grip on high politics, and increasingly science itself, disenchanted many liberal intellectuals (including Troyano) as the 1940s and 1950s unfolded, prompting them to leave the country.¹²³ A major reason for their cynicism was the continued jailing of political dissidents.¹²⁴

Before disillusion took root, however, Troyano made scientific progress at Nigua. He experimented with “non-superstitious” remedies, including Sakel therapy, a treatment of Jewish-Austro-German origins in which patients were repeatedly injected with large doses of insulin to produce comas.¹²⁵ Troyano’s work conflicted with how local non-titular psychiatrists such as Julio González Herrera, an alcoholic journalist who served time in Nigua asylum in the early 1940s, understood mental health and psychiatry. In his novel *Trementina, Clerén i Bongó*, for example, González Herrera indicates that to maintain order at a fictional asylum representing Nigua, psychiatrists injected patients with turpentine. The injections painfully paralyzed patients for extended periods of time, defined the culture of abuse and excess at Nigua, and sparked a

¹²¹ Romero, *Historia de la psiquiatría dominicana*, 39-40, 44-46, and 51. On other treatments used in Nigua at the time, consult Zaglul, *Mis 500 locos*, 142-48. Zaglul mentions insulin, labor, psychotherapies, and “Largactil, Epamin, Cardiazol, and Fenotiazina.”

¹²² See fns. 111 and 112.

¹²³ For example, in 1955 Zaglul became director of Nigua. He viewed patients “as patients,” and ended treatment preferences according to class and race. Zaglul moved the mental asylum to Duarte highway in August 1959 and is said to have used electroshock therapy regularly. In 1960, he abandoned the Dominican Republic and relocated to Puerto Rico for political reasons. There, he worked at the insular psychiatric hospital, near Oso Blanco penitentiary. Consult Romero, *Historia de la psiquiatría dominicana*, 51; and Zaglul, *Mis 500 locos*, 3-4 and 142.

¹²⁴ Romero, *Historia de la psiquiatría dominicana*, 44-51.

¹²⁵ Sakel therapy was introduced in 1927 by Austrian-American neurophysiologist and psychiatrist Manfred Sakel. It was used extensively in the 1940s and 1950s, mainly for schizophrenia, before being replaced by neuroleptic drugs in the 1960s. Sakel developed the therapy in Germany and refined it in Vienna. See Blanco Díaz, ed., *Obras selectas*, Volume II, 62, 71, 85, 101, 107-108, 181, 185, and 206; and Zaglul, *Mis 500 locos*, 42 and 127.

“revolution” effectuated by creole Dominicans and their necromantic, *kanga*-inspired Haitian allies. By the end of the novel, Dominicans regret the alliance and stumble upon U.S. help.¹²⁶

In addition to serving as a psychiatrist at Nigua, Troyano worked for the Dominican criminal justice and military court systems. He also published *Asylum Labor-therapy and [the] Organization of Psychiatric Colonies*.¹²⁷ The research for this book was carried out in Nigua. In 1945, Ciudad Trujillo hosted a medical congress where Troyano’s Nigua colleague, Armando Ortiz, presented a paper on the effectiveness of labor therapy for the mentally ill. Ortiz’s findings were largely based on Troyano’s observations of insane patients in the former penitentiary, which he had chronicled in *Asylum Labor-therapy*. Troyano’s book and Ortiz’s paper both identified a “radical shift” in how the Dominican state deployed psychiatry.

The shift dated to March 1940, when the Trujillo government turned the Nigua penitentiary into an insane asylum. The Dominican state envisioned creating a psychiatric colony defined by the “curative” labor therapy system. Before 1940, Ortiz and Troyano insisted, those “deprived of reason” were packed inside tight cells and barred from physical activity. But after 1940 they performed agricultural work, practiced carpentry, and cultivated flowers. Regimented labor returned many ex-patients to society with “useful knowledge.” Doubting the system’s “educational and curative value” did not negate the fact that it helped “resolve the problem of social assistance” better than anything else. For example, Padre Billini asylum was characterized by dramatic suffering and galleries of screaming patients. In Nigua, on the other hand, platoons of “peaceable

¹²⁶ See Julio González Herrera, *Trementina, Clerén i Bongó* (Ciudad Trujillo: Editorial Pol Hermanos, 1943); Blanco Díaz, ed., *Obras selectas*, Volume II, 76 and 205-206; and Zaglul, *Mis 500 locos*, 21-25.

¹²⁷ Or *La laborterapia en los manicomios y organización de las colonias psiquiátricas*. Consult Giral, *Ciencia española en el exilio*, 260; Naranjo Orovio and Puig Samper, “De isla en isla,” 100-101; and Amo and Shelby, *The Printed Work of Spanish Intellectuals in the Americas*, 121.

workers” prevailed.¹²⁸ This psychiatric discourse intentionally echoed Trujillo’s friend-of-the-rural-working-classes approach to Dominican society at large.¹²⁹

Dominican labor therapy was not entirely homegrown, however. Ortiz and Troyano credited psychiatrist Hermaan Simon, Director of the Gütersloh asylum in northwest Germany (North Rhine-Westphalia) from 1919 to 1934. According to scholar Yolanda Eraso, in the early twentieth century labor therapy became paradigmatic. Eugenics, economic crises, and government anxieties about national cohesion prefigured its emergence. The “active therapy” implemented by Simon at Gütersloh inspired South American psychiatrists. For example, his ideas were debated by Uruguayan and Argentine psychiatrists at a specialist conference in Buenos Aires in 1928. But Simon’s ideas were employed in Latin America well before he published his seminal text about active therapy. The idea of labor as therapy already existed as part of a colony-asylum model that blended agricultural work and moral improvement. Simon revitalized the therapeutic potential of preexisting practices and reinforced their scientific principles.¹³⁰

Ortiz and Troyano concurred with Simon’s views. As they put it, his work represented the “greatest effort to scientifically organize labor therapy in psychiatric institutions.” Simon’s main contribution was not illustrating the advantages of the “therapeutic method,” but rather applying it to chronic cases. Also, Ortiz’s and Troyano’s understanding of Simon’s work largely coincided with how Southern Cone psychiatrists viewed it. A Uruguayan psychiatrist who visited Gütersloh and worked with Simon on a paper about labor therapy stated that “active treatment” meant

¹²⁸ Armando Ortiz, “Colonia psiquiátrica: el tratamiento del enfermo por la laborterapia,” in Congreso Médico Dominicano, *Memoria del Congreso Médico Dominicano*, Volume III, 216; Blanco Díaz, ed., *Obras selectas*, Volume II, 20-21, 37, and 42; and Zaglul, *Mis 500 locos*, 15, 18, and 64.

¹²⁹ On this discourse, see Turits, *Foundations of Despotism*; and Derby, *The Dictator’s Seduction*.

¹³⁰ Waltraud Ernst and Thomas Mueller, “Introduction,” and Yolanda Eraso, “‘A Burden to the State’: The Reception of German ‘Active Therapy’ in an Argentine ‘Colony-Asylum’ in the 1920s and 1930s,” in Ernst and Mueller, eds., *Transnational Psychiatries*, xviii-xix and 58-65.

“improving the non-therapeutic conditions” of the asylum. When patients confessed that they needed help, asylum staff proceeded to expose them to the “habits of order, respect, and work.”¹³¹ These habits were foundational pillars of the Dominican political economy and Trujillo’s populism. The state and psychiatrists alike linked them to rural peasants and working-class Dominicans as part of reform efforts and to preserve power.

Dominican labor therapy applied to certain kinds of inmates. It helped patients (re)acquire independence and personal responsibility, repress pathology, and learn to behave as “normal” people. Dominican psychiatrists measured “normality” through the work performance of patients.¹³² Ortiz and Troyano believed that Nigua’s mentally infirm required this style of labor orientation. Only in “exceptional” cases could patients perform the same work incarcerated that they had when “healthy” and free. Officials had to determine which labor path suited patients. “Productivity” should not be the goal, Ortiz and Troyano insisted. Rather, the goal should be channeling patients’ “morbid energies.” A three-pronged front was therefore needed: organized administration, collaboration with sanitary officials and vocational experts, and periodic “psychic control.” This rationale reflected the priorities of an asylum as opposed to those of a penitentiary. In the latter, officials typically tried to reaffirm or build upon the kinds of labor skills convicts already possessed, as was the case in Oso Blanco.

¹³¹ Eraso, “A Burden to the State,” 58-65; and Ortiz, “Colonia psiquiátrica,” 216.

¹³² The first and lowest level of work included cleaning, domestic jobs, moving objects, and simple agricultural tasks. Second were technical or vocational jobs that required a certain degree of “concentration” and “vivacity.” These jobs included rearing birds, washing clothes, cooking, sewing, ironing, and gardening. The third level had patients perform light industrial jobs, such as hauling materials and distributing food. “Intelligence” mattered in the designation of these duties. Level-four work required “attention to detail,” “comprehension,” and a “capacity to reflect normally.” This meant performing level-two jobs alone. Other jobs included office work, upholstery, carpentry, tailoring, bookbinding, and advanced agricultural production. The fifth and most advanced level exposed patients to “regular” jobs usually completed by “normal adults.” Ortiz, “Colonia psiquiátrica,” 217.

Satisfied with the results in Nigua, Ortiz and Troyano called for the intensification of labor therapy via farms and vocational workshops. But these plans barely got off the ground. González Herrera pointed out some of the limits in this vein in his literature about Dominican mental health services, that given their lack of agency vis-à-vis the state, institutional personnel and patients sought to exercise power locally. By the time Ortiz shared his findings at the Dominican medical congress, however, Troyano and Trujillo had clashed politically. Troyano especially despised the dictator's violent treatment of political dissidents, and decided to leave the country.¹³³

Port of Psychiatric Riches

The Trujillo regime's grip on high politics and science troubled Spanish psychiatrists based in the Dominican Republic. Many abandoned the country and resettled in U.S.-controlled Puerto Rico, where members of the Spanish and Dominican exile communities supported one another.¹³⁴ In 1945, Troyano made the trip across the Mona Passage. He entered a society that had been improving its mental healthcare infrastructure for more than half a century, starting at the turn of the twentieth century via the expertise of Francisco de Goenaga, who administered the Spanish-era insular asylum in Old San Juan. This progress continued during the interwar period, when droves of Puerto Ricans returned from combat zones with mental problems. As soon as he arrived on the island, Troyano became a member of Puerto Rico's Faculty of Medicine and began researching mental hygiene. The next year, he served as a neuropsychiatrist for the State Insurance Fund. Subsequently, he worked at the Río Piedras insular hospital of psychiatry, located near Oso

¹³³ *Ibid.*; and Blanco Díaz, ed., *Obras selectas*, Volume II, 181.

¹³⁴ Naranjo Orovio and Puig Samper, "De isla en isla," 97; Naranjo Orovio, "Las redes de un exilio errante," 154; and Myrna Herrera Mora, *Mujeres dominicanas, 1930-1961: anti-Trujillistas y exiliadas en Puerto Rico* (San Juan: Isla Negra, 2008), chs. 3-4.

Blanco. Once based in the tri-institutional complex, Troyano published literature reviews about neurosyphilis and encephalitis.¹³⁵

Troyano spent the bulk of his 18-year Caribbean odyssey in Puerto Rico. There, he performed tasks like the ones that defined his tenure in the Dominican Republic. These included studying and treating mental health subjects. More broadly, Puerto Rico's democratic masquerade eased any reservations Troyano may have had about earning a living in a U.S. colony. He quickly ascended the professional ladder on the island. It appears Troyano assumed the medical directorship of Oso Blanco before Maymí Nevares died in spring 1951. He got right to work on the backlog of convicts requiring evaluations. Between January and June 1951, he examined hundreds of inmates and filed short reports about them. These landed in convict parole records.¹³⁶

Troyano's convict psychiatric portraits have a common architecture in terms of how they are laid out. Their general composition include, in one section, inmate names, "groups" ranging from "A-E" (i.e., minimum security cases to cases of vulgar sexuality), ages, civil statuses, and geographic origins. Most convicts were single young men. They came from all over the island. Most were illiterate or possessed a grade-school education. Some acquired literacy behind bars. Other prison scientists complemented Troyano's observations with their own. They noted convict races and skin tones, for example. The second, lengthier section of Troyano's evaluations consists of a paragraph (or several short paragraphs) that builds on these basic vital data by alluding to the

¹³⁵ Otero Carvajal, *La destrucción de la ciencia en España*, 109; Giral, *Ciencia española en el exilio*, 260; Amo and Shelby, *The Printed Work of Spanish Intellectuals in the Americas*, 121; and Naranjo Orovio and Puig Samper, "De isla en isla," 101. Also see Goenaga y Olza, *Desarrollo histórico del Asilo de Beneficencia y Manicomio de Puerto Rico* (San Juan: Cantero, Fernández & Co., 1929); Troyano de los Ríos, "Neurosífilis," *Boletín de la Asociación Médica de Puerto Rico* 39, 5 (1947): 187-92; and Troyano de los Ríos, "Pseudo-psicopatías de origen encefalítico," *Boletín de la Asociación Médica de Puerto Rico* 39, 6 (1947): 238-40.

¹³⁶ The parole record series containing Troyano's Oso Blanco psychiatric evaluations dates from 1946 to 1965. However, the files in which they are located mostly span midcentury, especially 1951, the year Troyano replaced Maymí Nevares as the penitentiary's resident psychiatrist.

domestic and family lives of convicts, as well as their appearances, mannerisms, and attitudes. Troyano also signposted what landed convicts in prison, linking their mental health to biology and sociology. Finally, he referred to labor therapy, inferring what would be the most therapeutic work regime. For most convicts, this meant agriculture, although it is important to note that animal care, cooking, carpentry, shoemaking, plumbing, and other vocations were options as well. The emphasis on agriculture reflected the largely jíbaro convict pool at Troyano's disposal. Overall, he used psychiatric evaluations to discursively corral the most suspicious elements of the Puerto Rican national herd, to paint them with a broad brush, and to imagine them as people in desperate need of mental health intervention and social guidance.

Regarding treatments beyond labor therapy, Troyano only mentioned pneumothorax for collapsed lungs, and the anti-syphilitic (neo)salvarsan, a synthetic chemotherapeutic and arsenic-based compound.¹³⁷ While in general his psychiatric evaluations are silent in terms of drug treatments, female convict records from the mid-1950s indicate that antipsychotics such as “thorazine” and “trilafon” were drugs of choice in Puerto Rican prisons.¹³⁸ Mental health professionals also depended on liver extract and penicillin to treat convicts.¹³⁹ In Puerto Rico, penicillin replaced (neo)salvarsan relatively late compared to other societies. For example, as late as February 1951, Troyano confirmed that a 45-year-old inmate of color afflicted with *tabes dorsalis* from Santurce named Fernando Lassalle Concepción received salvarsan-bismuth

¹³⁷ For a reference to pneumothorax in Troyano's evaluations, see Expediente del confinado Santiago Santana Díaz, Caja 205, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

¹³⁸ Thorazine (chlorpromazine) is an antipsychotic that treats mental illness, behavioral and blood disorders, tetanus, severe nausea and vomiting, and anxiety. Trilafon (perphenazine) is an antipsychotic that treats schizophrenia, nausea, and vomiting.

¹³⁹ See Lydia Peña de Planas, “Informe anual de la Escuela Industrial para mujeres, 1956-57,” 50-52, Caja 24, SFEIM, FDJ, AGPR; and Lydia Peña de Planas, “Informe narrativo del funcionamiento de la Institución en los pasados tres meses de enero, febrero, y marzo de 1958,” Caja 24, SFEIM, FDJ, AGPR.

treatment.¹⁴⁰ Conversely, island psychiatrists embraced antipsychotic drugs well before these gained a commercial foothold elsewhere in the world. The lack of progress in bodily medicine on the one hand, and progress in psychiatry on the other, stand in strong juxtaposition in the Puerto Rican case.

Troyano's commitment to neuropsychiatry did not mean he disavowed psychoanalysis. Rather, he merged the two in a single brew. Although his convict evaluations lack the Daliesque distortions and Freudian language one would expect to find in such documents, he employed some psychoanalytic language and ideas to cast Puerto Rican convicts as problems to be solved. Terms that appeared repeatedly in Troyano's convict evaluations included "untrusting," "withdrawn," "filthy," "indifferent," and "cheeky." Wilson Brignoni Padilla, a 17-year-old white carpenter's apprentice from Mayagüez, came from a "broken home" and displayed an "impertinent" and "withdrawn" attitude, making it difficult for Troyano and other prison scientists to interpret his thoughts and feelings. During his psychiatric exam, the convict proved to be excessively "cynical." This did not bode well for the prison ambiance, Troyano chronicled.¹⁴¹

He deployed positive terms as well, including "clean," "affable," "educated," "respectful," "communicative," and "attentive." Troyano described a 23-year-old tattooed white root crop peddler from Maricao named Pedro Ortiz Figueroa as "educated," "attentive," and "affable." Oso Blanco's Classification and Treatment Board, on which Troyano sat, dubbed the convict "expressive."¹⁴² Other terms used by the psychiatrist referred to the physical condition of inmates, whether they were "athletic," "anemic," "tubercular," "syphilitic," "malnourished," or "pale." For

¹⁴⁰ Tabes dorsalis, or syphilitic myelopathy, is the slow degeneration of the nerves in the dorsal columns of the spinal cord. Expediente del confinado Fernando Lassalle Concepción, Caja 171, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

¹⁴¹ Expediente del confinado Wilson Brignoni Padilla, Caja 270, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

¹⁴² Expediente del confinado Pedro Ortiz Figueroa, Caja 307, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

instance, Troyano started his assessment of an 18-year-old “sickly” convict from Aguadilla named Julio Ramírez Cruz in the following way: “Malnourished, pale, emaciated, anemic, [with a] constitution resembling a tubercular patient.” He moved into personality traits and sociological context thereafter: “Quiet, shy, withdrawn, says he lived with his mother and worked as a restaurant waiter. Father lives elsewhere. Youngest of three children. Smokes. Denies drinking.”¹⁴³ In some cases, Troyano used deeper psychiatric explanations to normalize the perception of Puerto Rican convicts as defective, yet salvageable. For example, he described Felipe Reyes de Hostos, a 64-year-old white convict from Bayamón, as prone to mood swings and “senile lability.” This convict tried to “hide the truth” about his crimes.¹⁴⁴ Even the most “senile” and “psychopathic” of the colonial-national flock could be brought back from the social and intellectual brink and awakened, but only if they saw themselves as prison scientists perceived them.

According to penitentiary scientists and government officials, awakening was a relational and intellectual process. To address convict mental health issues, their intelligence required measurement, typically through ability and psychometric testing. Before taking this step toward eugenic social science, however, psychiatrists reiterated the importance of physically screening inmates for disease and other biological “defects.” Left unchecked, bodily problems would inevitably impact or hinder physical, mental, and social health treatment. Therefore, psychiatrists made detailed observations about convict bodies to complement the work of physicians and to assure prison treatment and release boards that no stone was left unturned in making convicts sanitary citizens. Paulino Vega Amaro, a 24-year-old mulatto cane worker from Guayama, had “pituitary gland” issues, which signaled hormonal imbalance, tumor vulnerability, or physical

¹⁴³ Expediente del confinado Julio Ramírez Cruz, Caja 210, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

¹⁴⁴ Expediente del confinado Felipe Reyes de Hostos, Caja 300, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

underdevelopment. Troyano used endocrinology to link Vega Amaro's physical "type" to criminality, indicating that as late as the mid-twentieth century, penitentiary psychiatrists continued to view the body with eugenics despite the rise of sociological convict rehabilitation.¹⁴⁵

Several biological or physical types surfaced in Troyano's reports of convicts. Rodríguez Galarza was an "acromegaloide." Troyano called a 21-year-old convict from Lares named Bernardo Cornier Rodríguez an "oligóide" and a "mild psychopath."¹⁴⁶ He labeled a 17-year-old student from Corozal a "feminoide" and a "psychopathic homosexual."¹⁴⁷ Another young "homosexual" named Julio Enrique Muriel Rodríguez suffered from partial facial paralysis. Troyano diagnosed this mixed-race convict with curly hair as an "adenoide." Despite this portrayal of Muriel Rodríguez, however, Troyano also noted that the convict had worked in construction and committed attempted murder. He was truly "tough" and "hardcore" (*guapo y malote*). When interviewed by parole officials, Muriel Rodríguez even declared: "What kills me is that I have a bad temper, that I can't stand anyone; if I'm mistreated or wronged somehow, then I fight."¹⁴⁸ This inmate clearly destabilized what Troyano and other penitentiary scientists expected from most gender nonconforming males: effeminate passivity. Some of the biological conditions that Troyano mentioned in convict psychiatric evaluations can also be read sociologically. For example, a 22-year-old "malnourished" and "anemic" but "educated" chauffeur from Yabucoa named Juan Rodríguez Pérez suffered from myopia, or nearsightedness. But myopia could also refer to lack of intellectual insight.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁵ Expediente del confinado Paulino Vega Amaro, Caja 220, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

¹⁴⁶ Expediente del confinado Bernardo Cornier Rodríguez, Caja 175, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

¹⁴⁷ Expediente del confinado Antonio Enrique Lafontaine, Caja 208, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

¹⁴⁸ Expediente del confinado Julio Enrique Muriel Rodríguez, Caja 133, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

¹⁴⁹ Expediente del confinado Juan Rodríguez Pérez, Caja 205, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

While Troyano and other members of Oso Blanco’s Classification and Treatment Board studied diverse convict bodies, their primary focus was on rural peasants, who comprised a significant portion of all penitentiary inmates around midcentury. According to Troyano, certain conditions, habits and lifestyle choices, besides occupation, made jíbaros unique compared to other convicts. For instance, a 22-year-old white day laborer from Isabela named José Sánchez Rodríguez exhibited several characteristics “typical” of jíbaros. He was barely nourished, quiet, reserved, and lived with a large family. The convict was practically illiterate, minus what he had taught himself, and drank and smoked. Perhaps most importantly, he defended his “honor” fervently, “sang,” and “played the guitar and *cuatro*,” instruments specific to Puerto Rican hillside communities.¹⁵⁰ Language also helped prison scientists classify and treat jíbaro convicts. A 74-year-old white inmate from San Sebastián named Eustaquio Pérez González, for example, was so “simple” that authorities had to explain the questions they asked him. In response, Pérez González used “jíbaro language.”¹⁵¹ This meant the verbalized assumptions, idioms, and vocabulary associated with rural island society. But it was not that jíbaros were simple. Rather, prison scientists failed to grasp their internal logics and the meanings they assigned to experience.¹⁵²

Troyano’s descriptions of other peasants expanded this general picture. He called a 36-year-old convict from Mayagüez named Félix Valentín Cruz “dirty,” “untidy,” and “shy.” Further, the convict did not work in the penitentiary, suggesting that sloth could infect the “noble” nature of jíbaros.¹⁵³ This contrasts with late-nineteenth-century complaints about peasant idleness by island intellectuals like Salvador Brau, who argued that rural consciousness should be refashioned

¹⁵⁰ Expediente del confinado Juan Sánchez Rodríguez, Caja 202, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

¹⁵¹ Expediente del confinado Eustaquio Pérez González, Caja 161, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

¹⁵² See Arcadio Díaz Quiñones, *El arte de bregar: ensayos* (San Juan: Ediciones Callejón, 2000).

¹⁵³ Expediente del confinado Félix Valentín Cruz, Caja 201, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

through education, not incarceration. On the other hand, Troyano may have been referring to the less pliable character of those jíbaros who were already in prison. In such case, he would have agreed with Brau that education best suited those who were fundamentally, morally upright.¹⁵⁴ At any rate, by the mid-twentieth century Oso Blanco took on this challenge and in fact became the premier laboratory through which the populist state tried to intellectually awaken convicts. Still, even institutionalized education had limited reach, for other ways of knowing and handling life predominated in Puerto Rico's shanties and rural hillside communities.

In such places, Troyano observed, violence and carelessness equally knocked jíbaros out of balance. However, their "humility" and "laboriousness" proved they had socioeconomic potential and worth. In early 1951, for example, prison scientists identified a 34-year-old mixed-race day laborer from Coamo named Ángel Colón León as a "simple jíbaro." Although serving time for attempted murder, the result of a "fit of rage," the convict was "hardworking" and "humble." Discreetness and religiosity also made Colón León a jíbaro archetype.¹⁵⁵ An 18-year-old mixed-race peasant from Dorado named Pedro Rodríguez Hernández similarly exhibited simplicity and silence, but also a "puerile" or childish demeanor, another alleged feature of jíbaro convicts.¹⁵⁶ Moreover, Troyano used the word "isolated" to project jíbaros to wider audiences.¹⁵⁷ But isolation did not mean hillbillies were unrepentant or irredeemable. For instance, penitentiary scientists noted that a 23-year-old white day laborer from Vega Alta named Lady Rosado Mercado "is serious, honorable, and hardworking. He is the true jíbaro type. When he responds to something

¹⁵⁴ Brau, *Ensayos: disquisiciones sociológicas*; and *La campesina*.

¹⁵⁵ Expediente del confinado Ángel Colón León, Caja 215, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

¹⁵⁶ Expediente del confinado Pedro Rodríguez Hernández, Caja 215, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

¹⁵⁷ Expediente del confinado Julián Cruz González, Caja 156, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

in err, he is ashamed, taps his face and asks for forgiveness.”¹⁵⁸ As in the Dominican Republic, where Troyano assumed that labor therapy applied to certain kinds of people, in Puerto Rico he similarly linked jíbaros and other social groups to certain defects, qualities, and rehabilitative routes.

Nationalist Encounters

Convict psychiatric portraits suggest that Oso Blanco was a living laboratory. On the other hand, the interaction between Troyano and nationalist prisoners shows that the penitentiary was also a site of political contestation.¹⁵⁹ This contestation amounted to subtle resistance by rank-and-file nationalists, who bent classification and treatment in their favor by linking political consciousness to the crimes they had committed. A 41-year-old white resident of Santurce named Juan Cardona Albarrán, for example, throws this point into sharp relief. The convict, a former cadet of the Nationalist Party, explained how several months after the October revolution of 1950 he was drinking and overheard people “talking bad about Albizu Campos, my former leader.” He also overheard people saying that “nothing happened in Humacao during the nationalist rebellion.” A cocktail of alcohol, “political feelings,” and considering the “revolutionary” acts of the recent past inspired him to start a fire at a post office, a symbol of U.S. colonial empire on the island. Transnational circumstances impacted the convict as much as nationalist sentiments. Cardona Albarrán planned to move to the Dominican Republic after finishing his sentence, where his common-law wife Mérita Almeida lived in the Cibao region.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁸ Expediente del confinado Lady Rosado Mercado, Caja 210, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

¹⁵⁹ See Keller, *Colonial Madness*, ch. 3.

¹⁶⁰ Expediente del confinado Juan Cardona Albarrán, Caja 215, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

Nationalist leaders had a harder time redirecting the flow of psychiatric knowledge. They were held accountable for their politics. For instance, Troyano first examined Albizu Campos in May 1951 in La Princesa. After interviewing the nationalist leader, Troyano concluded that the convict suffered from a “pre-senile delirium of prejudice.” He blamed age for Albizu Campos’ “unfounded” belief of state persecution, specifically that the government subjected him to radiation treatment that damaged his body. As Troyano put it, his delirium “can only be understood as hallucinatory.” The atomic lynching the black nationalist claimed to have experienced, captured in the “smell” of burning flesh, was a figment of his imagination, the monologue of a madman.¹⁶¹

Troyano visited Albizu Campos multiple times in June 1951. While occasionally Albizu Campos appeared “physically refreshed” and “less excitable,” his “psychic disorder” persisted.¹⁶² In a letter to Attorney General Victor Gutiérrez Franqui, Troyano asserted that the nationalist was not insane: “I am plainly convinced that this inmate is in [healthy or sane enough] condition to appear before the court” and answer the charges against him. This meant that Albizu Campos’ “delirium of prejudice” was one he “consciously” and “voluntarily” developed.¹⁶³ Indeed, he found “refuge” in “paranoia.” What Troyano viewed as paranoia, however, Albizu Campos understood as subjective attacks against his body, freedom, and dignity.¹⁶⁴ Troyano projected his assessment of Albizu Campos as objective fact, but his evaluations really reflected the commitment he made to the colonial populist state, which by midcentury operated less like a democracy and more like a dictatorship, at least from the vantage point of nationalists in the criminal justice system.

¹⁶¹ Pedro Aponte Vázquez, *Locura por decreto: el papel de Luis Muñoz Marín y José Trías Monge en el diagnóstico de locura de don Pedro Albizu Campos* (San Juan: Publicaciones René, 1994 [2005]), 17, 23, and 33.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 20 and 22.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 21-22.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

Troyano did not stumble upon Albizu Campos' diagnosis by chance. Nor did the psychiatrist strictly adhere to the mandates of his profession to uncover diagnosis. This has led scholar Pedro Aponte Vázquez to suggest that Albizu Campos endured a scientific inquisition. The demand for this inquisition came from PPD top brass who deemed a revived Nationalist Party as a major threat to the nascent populist status quo. The island Justice Department wanted an "expert opinion" to confirm the government's "just" stance.¹⁶⁵ Troyano's psychiatric evaluations served this purpose. Troyano would not examine the nationalist again until March 1954, however, when Albizu Campos returned to prison.¹⁶⁶ Governor Muñoz Marín had revoked the nationalist's clemency for his alleged role in plotting an armed attack on the U.S. House of Representatives during which multiple congressmen were shot.

While Troyano, journalists, Muñoz Marín, and other observers scrambled to diagnose Albizu Campos as "crazy," in part due to his exposure to communists, the nationalist leader was aware of the medico-legal "mechanisms" on which the government counted to "repress dissidents," including psychiatry.¹⁶⁷ As early as May 1953, he relayed to another imprisoned nationalist that the state would trivialize opposition, weaponize science, and arbitrarily assign madness. This overweening biopsychiatric medicine prone to error and very much married to political power would prove to be as much about traumatic suffering and disenfranchisement as

¹⁶⁵ Albizu Campos had been sentenced in mid-1951 for conspiring to violently overthrow the government and violating the island's anti-democratic "Gag Law," which targeted and suppressed the independence movement in Puerto Rico. The Gag Law was enacted in 1948 and made it a crime to own or display a Puerto Rican flag, sing a patriotic tune, speak or write of independence, or hold an assembly in favor of island independence. The law reinforced the PPD project of obtaining a political status that preserved a relationship with the U.S. Jesús T. Piñero, a U.S.-appointed governor, signed the bill into law. The legislation remained in force until 1957, when it was repealed based on its unconstitutionality. See Ivonne Acosta, *La mordaza: Puerto Rico, 1948-1957* (Río Piedras: Editorial Edil, 1987); Bosque Pérez and Colón Morera, *Puerto Rico under Colonial Rule*; and Denis, *War against all Puerto Ricans*.

¹⁶⁶ Aponte Vázquez, *Locura por decreto*, 33-34.

¹⁶⁷ See, for example, Tierrason, "Drew Pearson interviews Gov. Luis Muñoz Marín," October 17, 2010, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GWU9o5xjfKQ>.

about healing.¹⁶⁸ Prison authorities intercepted the letter, however, which Troyano accessed about a month later. It read in part: “The court’s decision to examine your mental state indicates a desire on its part to declare you crazy and irresponsible. In this way, it destroys [and alters] the meaning of your actions. Outbursts of anger are used to prove your alleged insanity.”¹⁶⁹ The consequences of this were “grave,” Albizu Campos noted. In effect, the state “takes advantage of the situation to condemn you for life without ever having sentenced you to life.”¹⁷⁰

The scientific inquisition against Albizu Campos illustrates that Troyano’s political ideals had changed since leaving the Dominican Republic. In adapting to the Puerto Rican context, he defaced much of what he held sacred. Whereas in the Dominican Republic Troyano protested dictatorship and its methods, in Puerto Rico his “expert opinion” served the interests of an equally egregious, though electorally legitimate, state. It helped validate the U.S. and PPD government’s silencing of the island political opposition and the atomic lynching of Albizu Campos. It is possible that Troyano self-justified his position by linking the nationalist leader’s “reactionary” brand of Catholicism to Trujillo’s and Franco’s. Even if this was the case, Troyano and Trujillo consorted with Freemasons, a bond that would have presumably transcended national politics and other “profane” relationships or discord. On the other hand, Muñoz Marín articulated an evangelical populist platform, one that connected divinity and secularism in ways Troyano would have appreciated given his Krausist background and familiarity with Masonic principles. Either way, in Puerto Rico Troyano contributed to legitimizing a discourse of political criminal insanity. This

¹⁶⁸ Keller, *Colonial Madness*; and Anderson, Jenson, and Keller, eds., *Unconscious Dominions*, 14.

¹⁶⁹ Aponte Vázquez, *Locura por decreto*, 18-19.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 19.

discourse had real consequences for many island nationalists.¹⁷¹ Concurrently, Zaglul lamented the same discourse in the Dominican Republic vis-à-vis the Trujillo regime.¹⁷²

Troyano embodied a powerful contradiction. He was willing to work for the Puerto Rican government and treat political prisoners despite having to (perhaps unknowingly) “sacrifice” his values. This was not lost upon Trujillo, who before he died urged the Dominican Congress to pass a resolution condemning the imprisonment of nationalists like Albizu Campos. A journalist named Rutherford Poats condemned the resolution as “a simple smoke screen which will not have the desired effect.” According to Poats, Puerto Ricans knew there was “a noticeable difference between Justice as exercised in the Dominican Republic [a dictatorship]” and justice as exercised in a “truly free country” such as Puerto Rico (by this time a commonwealth democracy).¹⁷³ As Troyano’s activities indicate, however, “justice,” like “freedom,” “equality,” and the uses of psychiatry, cut in multiple, inconsistent directions.

Troyano’s Caribbean odyssey ended well in advance of the Franco regime. He resigned his post at Oso Blanco in summer 1957. Instead of returning to the insular mental hospital of Río Piedras, where he had previously labored, Troyano departed for Spain later in the year.¹⁷⁴ Several factors may have informed Troyano’s decision, including missing his *patria* and family, his potential crisis of conscience in the Puerto Rican field, and Franco’s possible revival of Spanish

¹⁷¹ Francisco Matos Paoli experienced a mental/nervous breakdown and allegedly suffered from hallucinations while imprisoned. He wrote a series of classic poems after being transferred from prison to a psychiatric hospital. Consult, for example, Wanda Rivera Rivera, “The Politics of Madness in Francisco Matos Paoli’s Prison Poem, *Canto de Locura*,” *Revista Hispánica Moderna* 61, 2 (December 2008): 197-213.

¹⁷² In general, see Zaglul, *Mis 500 locos*.

¹⁷³ Rutherford Poats, “U.S. Denies Violating Rights in Albizu Campos’ Case: Rejects Charges Made by Santo Domingo,” *El Mundo*, February 13, 1960, 1 and 12.

¹⁷⁴ F. Cancel Hernández, “Doctor Troyano dimite cargo en el Presidio,” *El Mundo*, 31 julio 1957, 32; and Otero Carvajal, *La destrucción de la ciencia en España*, 109.

science. But it is notable that Troyano left the island around the time the Gag Law perished, Albizu Campos suffered a stroke behind bars, and when several other jailed nationalists came forward claiming that they too had felt the effects of radiation on their bodies. His exodus also coincided with Cuban physician Orlando Daumy's inspection of Albizu Campos. Daumy, a radiologist and president of the Cuban Cancer Association, found that the nationalist leader's burns and sores were consistent with radiation.¹⁷⁵ Importantly, however, knowledge of atomic radiation was still a guarded secret at the time given the global Cold War and the "arms race" between the U.S. and the Soviet Union.

Daumy's findings framed Troyano's departure. Leaving Puerto Rico behind offered Troyano an escape, a way to distance himself from a virtue-signaling populist state. There were also institutional problems to consider. These began to interfere with Troyano's work. For example, in 1957 another imprisoned nationalist named José Enamorado Cuesta openly declared that not even "hell" was consolation for the unsanitary conditions that defined Oso Blanco under democratic rule. He wondered if Troyano, as penitentiary medical chief, had even lifted a finger to stop the "terrible sewer mist" that the institution "exhales through its principal entrance." The mist permeated the psychiatrist's office, the prison hospital, and nearby cellblocks. If Troyano had tried to resolve the issue, he "failed miserably."¹⁷⁶ On the other hand, some nationalists subsequently praised Troyano for orienting them and facilitating their communication with the outside world and their wider networks while they were jailed in Oso Blanco.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁵ Denis, *War against all Puerto Ricans*, 237-38.

¹⁷⁶ José Enamorado Cuesta, *Fuera de la ley: denuncia de la hipócrita tiranía 'democrática' en Puerto Rico* (San Juan: Editorial Puerto Rico Libre, 1957), 1-2.

¹⁷⁷ See Heriberto Marín Torres, *Eran ellos* (Río Piedras: publisher not identified, 2000), 60, 69, and 73.

Conclusion

Social health experts in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic understood penitentiaries and asylums as living laboratories through which they could socially redeem inmates. Doing so contributed to the resolution of longstanding national problems. While psychiatry was a highly medicalized and biological field at the time, it overlapped a great deal with social science, especially those disciplines specific to crime and punishment and understanding cultural “others,” such as criminology, anthropology, sociology, psychology, and social work. Social scientists built on the foundation laid by physicians and nurses, whose approaches to redemptive practice primarily rested on mapping and restoring the physical bodies of inmates. Their activities ran parallel to those of physicians, but emphasized more of a social redemption than a bodily one. In the 1940s and 1950s, they used specific tools, such as interviews, mental tests and drugs, to chart the convict mind and its relation to behavior, social etiquette, and politics. Before they could fix the broken brains of convicts, social health experts forecasted the redeemability of prisoners, infantilizing them in the process.

In Puerto Rico, the populist state eagerly embraced mental and social health. Social workers complemented the efforts of psychiatrists, psychologists, and others by caring for the overall social wellbeing of convicts and attempting to readjust them to life beyond prison walls. Together, these liberal intellectuals experimented with creating case-specific formulas for social redemption. Their collective examination of convicts yielded insights about the “sickly” and “deviant” nature of urban and rural prisoners, and chronicled how inmates could be mentally gauged, socially uplifted, and returned to society as model citizens. This activity largely explains the thick archival vein that provides a window into the culture of classification, treatment, and parole in Oso Blanco.

In terms of producing modern sanitary citizens, the social sciences were much more powerful east of the Mona Passage than west of it. In Puerto Rico, a revamped, populist university assigned a redemptive, awakening function to socio-scientific understandings of island society, one that was becoming less rural and increasingly industrial. In Oso Blanco, socially redeeming prisoners revolved around diagnosing their mental health, quantifying their intelligence, and cultivating a culture of social uplift that sharpened convict minds. However, as Troyano's concerns about Rodríguez Galarza's body confirm, biology lingered. In this context, neuropsychiatry contributed to the normalization of representations of unintellectual jíbaros, a group that alongside other rural communities, the urban poor, and radical nationalists comprised the bulk of Oso Blanco's population at the time.

Preoccupied with consolidating its political and economic control, the Trujillo government established more centralized and intrusive mechanisms of surveillance. This allowed the Dominican state to not only monopolize violence but also to abuse that power. In the 1930s, while Puerto Rican authorities celebrated the modern and redemptive potential of Oso Blanco, accusations of despotic political violence tainted Nigua's regenerative premise. That the Nigua penitentiary became an asylum in 1940 was a major gesture, as it signaled that the Trujillo regime trusted social scientists enough to improve prison/asylum conditions and properly classify and treat inmates. But like the humanistic physicians who preceded them, confrontational social scientists eventually troubled Trujillo. He responded by restricting the free exercise of science.

West of the Mona Passage, Trujillo's government strove to keep Dominican peasants and the urban and working poor stuck in the past and tied to the land, regimented labor, and the populism of the dictator. The modernizing, "liberating" potential of psychiatry and science contradicted Trujillo's goals. The Trujillo regime's political rigidity straitjacketed the impact of

psychiatry by restricting its application to hospitals, venues where citizen-making and the production of scientific knowledge could be channeled into the political economy of the state. The sociological problems ailing society at large persisted and were obscured by a broader contest between many dissident scientists and the government.

Troyano's experiences, specifically, showcase science-making in the modern Caribbean, the transfer of ideas from one corner of the Atlantic to another, and how these processes were politically contradictory. Troyano also allows us to see beyond a generic comparison between the countries serving as the backdrop of his odyssey. Instead, his case points to a braided history, one requiring that we trace the routes of physical movement as well as the cultures forged and the lessons learned. Overall, however, the cosmopolitan Troyano was caught between two polities and societies. He was an in-between figure who adapted to a political dialectic that imprisoned him much like the penitentiaries in which he worked caged men and women of less fortunate origins and persuasions. This in-betweenness manifested itself in Troyano's Masonic background, the biopsychiatric discipline he pursued, and the Caribbean societies and institutions he bridged.

Throughout his Caribbean odyssey, Troyano was neither here nor there. While building a narrative around his transnational life has its limits, namely missing out on subaltern perspectives, tracing his footsteps still allows for a parceling of what (dis)connected two polities and societies within a subregion of the modern Caribbean. By rehydrating subregion in transnational context, subalterns start to come into view. A crucial shared legacy, for example, is the extent to which penitentiaries in both Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic valued labor therapy as a rehabilitative tool. A key difference between these societies surfaces as well, one that would remain invisible were it not for the comparative/transnational method. Whereas Oso Blanco

enjoyed a robust psychiatric and social science infrastructure, Nigua had to become a psychiatric hospital to reap such benefits, even if only superficially.

In adapting to the penitentiary cultures of Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, Troyano reconciled two seemingly irreconcilable institutions and political systems. His transnational life reveals the links between eugenics and sociology, science and belief, clinical and colonial psychiatry, Nigua and Oso Blanco, and dictatorship and democracy. Shifting local dynamics inspired him to create an adaptive praxis based on his beliefs, profession, and what he encountered in the Caribbean field. This praxis positioned Troyano to contest, if not deface, the political structures compromising the free exercise of science in both the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico. But these structures outlasted Troyano, partially hastening his Caribbean exodus and return to Spain. Although Dominican and Puerto Rican approaches to penitentiary psychiatry emerged and congealed largely independent of one another, Troyano's role in the production of each and his eventual dissatisfaction with them is suggestive of the similar scaffolding underpinning populism, science, and crime and punishment in both societies. The binaries that held Troyano back were unstable, and much more mutually malleable than we might otherwise assume. Perhaps most importantly, Troyano helps us inch closer to the history of other convict intellectualities, which are the focus of the following chapters.

CHAPTER 4

Los vivos muertos: The Many Meanings of Death and Awakening

In November 1947, the Mayagüez District Court sentenced a notionally white industrial day laborer in his thirties named Rufino Inglés Caraballo to a few years in prison for extortion. Oso Blanco's Classification and Treatment Board reviewed his case in June 1948, and subsequently assigned him to the prison carpentry workshop, a skill that would benefit him when he reentered society. Board members also recommended that he enroll in evening primary school, for his civic future largely depended on literacy. The Board complemented Inglés Caraballo's vocational training and formal education by granting him access to the prison library and recreational activities like volleyball. Concerning the library, officials noted, "He likes to read; he can borrow books." Classification and treatment officials believed that these cumulative activities would reform Inglés Caraballo's habits, such as gambling, drinking, smoking, and keeping "suspect" company. They determined he was a "good" case for rehabilitation.¹

Growing up, Inglés Caraballo worked in the "sugar and coffee industries." He also "bought and sold birds and animals." Broadly speaking, prison authorities viewed these occupations as typical "jíbaro work" more in line with the decadent Spanish past than the progressive U.S. present and future. In 1936, Inglés Caraballo experienced his first run-ins with the law (for theft and assault). This partially motivated him to join the U.S. National Guard, through which he hoped to take advantage of "veteran benefits" and education. Although Inglés Caraballo continued having trouble with the law and never got around to pursuing education, World War II granted him new social life. The U.S. Army drafted him and he served during the latter bookend of the war (May 1944-October 1945). In the U.S. and Austria, Inglés Caraballo lived much like he did in Puerto

¹ Expediente del confinado Rufino Inglés Caraballo, Caja 481, SEC, FDI, AGPR.

Rico. He smoked and had sex with prostitutes. The soldier even sustained a relationship with a “Polak woman for months.”²

When Inglés Caraballo’s inverted imperial adventure concluded, he returned to Puerto Rico and became a homebody. Catholic marriage and children, specifically, contributed to changing his behavior and outlook. He cultivated an interest in basic reading, garnering what he could from newspapers. Indeed, Inglés Caraballo discarded social gatherings and leisure settings altogether. He stopped frequenting theaters and brothels. Still, prison scientists thought he was “slick” and should be “watched carefully” to ensure his “treatment” stayed on course. After all, he had fallen back into crime. The Classification and Treatment Board believed this merited swift intervention.³

Inglés Caraballo was a “good” case for “redeemability” because he was receptive to the rehabilitative model of Puerto Rico’s emerging technocratic populist state, one willing to use science in democratic and authoritarian ways. Although he did not “understand” sports, which were central to physical fitness and the type of citizen prison authorities wanted to produce, at least Inglés Caraballo embraced material standards of evidence. According to the Classification and Treatment Board, this made it possible for the state to address his civic or social death.⁴ To breathe new life into the convict, he had to be “awakened,” which meant reshaping his understandings of reality and himself through penitentiary science and giving him the tools he “needed” to thrive

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ My understanding of social death builds on scholar Orlando Patterson’s, who uses the concept in the context of enslavement to signal natal alienation and processes of socialization, ostracism, and eventual symbolic or real death on the margins of society. The experiences of slaves and convicts are similar. While not always entirely alienated from a homeland, convicts must endure extended periods of time away from their immediate communities. The prison resocializes them while diminishing their worth in the eyes of society at large. Like slaves, convicts have no rights under the law, and are therefore less than human for the duration of their sentences. Concurrently, their labor power is exploited. Upon release from prison, a sort of manumission, convicts are socially reborn. They can try to recover their rights, but bear the discursive scars of incarceration. Moreover, they often return to empty homes and communities without labor prospects, reminders of how the prison “killed” them. Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982).

under the prevailing order of things. It was a patronizing, subtle indoctrination feigning as activism, but a clever one that was often successful and that had real consequences for convicts, the preservation of their health and sanity, and the cultivation of their intelligence and skill sets.

In mid-twentieth-century Puerto Rico, dealing with living death through the humanities was a cornerstone of penitentiary science and redemptive practice. Prison authorities and convicts alike underscored the empowering aspects of the humanities behind bars and how these could help “awaken” convicts from their civic apathy. Inglés Caraballo, for example, appreciated reading. In 1949, he borrowed 47 books from Oso Blanco’s library, an average of almost one per week for the year. He mostly read literature, especially history and novels about adventure and romance.⁵ What he read partially reflected the life he led in Austria and before marriage in Puerto Rico, when his love affairs, for instance, were especially intense. If nothing else, literature offered Inglés Caraballo an escape of sorts, an opportunity for time travel and freedom of imagination and play. That he could read characters, stories, and lessons into his life and circumstances was a bonus.

Like many other convicts, Inglés Caraballo was caged and subject to real and discursive violence, to a series of assumptions about his nature and the perceived limits of his intellect. But his story did not end there. To conclude the nightmare of “living death” and salvage a sense of dignity and personhood, to reconnect with the outside world, to “civilize” and discipline himself, he looked to literature. He committed to becoming literate as defined by the state. What Inglés Caraballo read said a lot about him without his really having to put anything into words. Convicts

⁵ Inglés Caraballo’s imaginary bookshelf spanned novels, biography, history, religion, poetry, and collections of songs and catechisms. Some of the works he consulted were about Spanish romantic painter Francisco de Goya and Venezuelan military and political leader Simón Bolívar, one of the fathers of Latin American independence. He engaged the work of Spanish Catholic scholar Domingo Lázaro, including *Doctrina y vida cristiana* (1918), a text that establishes the basic precepts of Marian spirituality for a modern lay audience. He borrowed U.S.-American and European classics like Mark Twain’s *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, William Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, and Walter Scott’s *Ivanhoe*. He also read travel literature, like Spanish writer Justo González Garrido’s *Bajo el cielo del oriente* (1935), a text about Mediterranean cities. See fn. 1.

filled their minds with certain texts because they were patterned or wanted to be patterned in specific ways. Their personal histories reflected the themes and content they encountered in books and other humanistic practices behind bars, which concurrently awakened and tamed convicts.

If inmates rejected the state-provided tools at their collective disposal to awaken and become law-abiding citizens and “better” human beings, then they resigned themselves to living death. To be “living dead” in the twentieth century was to be socially or civically dead, to be largely alienated from family, community, and high politics, to lead a bare life economically and socially with some recourse to new life but in a predetermined form. If prisoners wanted to shed social or civic death, to “succeed” in society and life, they had to conform to someone else’s definition of who they were, where they had gone wrong, and what was best for them. On a Shakespearean level, prisoners were “living dead” because they died over and over behind bars. They died thousands of mental deaths, and endured harsh material conditions. Many convicts suffered hunger, dehydration, degrading treatment, and abuse. They lacked clothing, shoes, and medicine. Their weak bodies literally resembled “living dead.” This was especially true in the Dominican Republic, where Trujillo hesitated to equip convicts with the scientific and humanistic tools they “needed” to awaken. At the height of rehabilitative corrections in Puerto Rico (i.e., midcentury), however, many convicts had these resources at the ready, at least for a time.

In the Caribbean, the notion of “living death” can be traced to colonial times. It originally invoked scripture and racial slavery, only to recur in the middle decades of the twentieth century as a literary and popular trope about convicts.⁶ Literature was one way “living death” became a

⁶ On living death across time, consult passages about spiritual death in the Bible; Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*; Marcus Rediker, *The Slave Ship* (Penguin: New York, 2007); Stephanie E. Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), chs. 5 and 7; Brown, “Social Death and Political Life in the Study of Slavery,” *The American Historical Review* 114, 5 (December 2009): 1231-49; and Eduardo Zamacois, *Los vivos muertos* (Madrid: Renacimiento, 1929).

modern brand. Given the paradoxical nature of the concept, this chapter attempts to reconcile (im)material understandings of death by examining the life-death dialectic in Puerto Rican and Dominican prisons in the mid-twentieth century. At the time, disease and violence claimed the lives of scores of convicts on both sides of the Mona Passage. However, this did not mean that narrow understandings monopolized what historian Vincent Brown has called “mortuary politics,” the activities and social meanings derived from beliefs and practices associated with death that people employ toward particular ends.⁷

In the case of Puerto Rico, the chapter specifically examines literal and figurative forms of death, and how island convicts used the humanities to awaken intellectually. To awaken represented a way to partially annul the social and civic death prescribed by the prison. Although humanistic self-help was the last rehabilitation therapy to be fully implemented in Oso Blanco, it was one of the most productive. The period 1949-1950 represented a renaissance in this regard, a time when impactful penal reform contributed to the expansion of an increasingly legitimate and technocratic populist state; and after the political violence of October 1950, to the making of commonwealth status. In the Dominican Republic, social uplift through the humanities was not as common among inmates. Instead, political and common prisoners used testimony and literature to reflect on the hyper-violence of Nigua and the civic future of the country.

This chapter traces the varied ways in which death occupied a dynamic, generative, even renewing place in the popular imaginaries and institutional lives of convicts. While convicts exercised mock freedom behind bars, beyond the walls of the prison society and the state thought of them as “living dead.” To examine death and the humanities in Nigua and Oso Blanco between the 1930s and midcentury, I use prison records, a non-commercial periodical called *El Despertar*

⁷ Brown, *The Reaper's Garden*, 5.

(produced by Puerto Rican inmates), convict reading lists like Inglés Caraballo's, and other (un)published sources. These materials chronicle the humanistic activities of convicts and the complicated and variegated meanings they assigned to incarceration, death, and awakening.

In the mid-twentieth century, convicts on both sides of the Mona Passage defied real, social, and civic death by digging up their mental graves through intellectual awakening. In the context of incarceration, the idea of death represented a possible new beginning, a Lazarus-like rekindling of life inside oneself. And while at the time mortality rates were declining in both Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, most people still had a better chance of achieving mental rebirth than physical improvement. Behind bars, convicts empowered themselves by engaging literature and the performing and visual arts. Literacy and spectacle expression were among the range of tools and practices convicts used to pursue and prove their "rehabilitation," to cultivate or refine their political voice, and to put themselves in position to exercise meaningful citizenship when they exited prison. By disciplining themselves to conform, convicts blurred the boundary between citizen and prisoner.

Although the Puerto Rican and Dominican states cast convicts as subject-citizens requiring prolonged "civilized" contact, many prisoners adapted to state systems of control and used the humanities to refine their individual and collective consciousness. Prison officials believed cultural contact through the humanities would remake inmates and help purge their "nefarious" behavior. Many convicts supported this notion. Others, however, questioned the emerging state-science-university monopoly on intellectuality and problem-solving. For some inmates, to awaken meant to chase freedom and pursue a free dome (mind) on their own terms. At the heart of this pursuit were the helixing dialectics at the core of this dissertation—life and death, (un)freedom, science

and religion, and democracy and dictatorship. These dialectics encapsulated a double-imperative. Life and death were locked in productive tension. One was irreducible to the other.

Death in the Caribbean

Death is a fundamental construct of modern societies. It helps (re)produce culture and transform social order.⁸ Death is a vital force with political consequences that structures societies, and is as generative as it is destructive.⁹ Indeed, it has haunted the Caribbean since the early modern period, when Westward expansion, disease and violence, and the introduction of racial slavery devastated the region apace. Death is one of the Caribbean's "ancient" features, a legacy it shares with the U.S.¹⁰ Historians have shown how this is also true of Jamaica and the broader Atlantic world, particularly of peoples consumed by cannibalistic and racialized political economies.¹¹ More than can possibly be noted here went into killing and remaking enslaved populations during the Atlantic slave trade and on American soil: the exploitation of war, the cultivation of resentment among kin, the destruction of communities, the separation of families, the terror of the slave ship, hunger and dehydration, disease, sexual violence, resistance, social death, and so on.¹² These factors and others contributed to the production of truths, fictions, and tropes about death in subsequent centuries, including modern "living death."

⁸ Claudio Lomnitz, *Idea de la muerte en México* (México: FCE, 2006); João José Reis, *Death is a Festival: Funeral Rites and Rebellion in Nineteenth-Century Brazil* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1991 [2003]); and Ann Fabian, *The Skull Collectors: Race, Science, and America's Unburied Dead* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

⁹ Brown, *The Reaper's Garden*, 4.

¹⁰ Mintz, *Three Ancient Colonies*; and Brown, *The Reaper's Garden*.

¹¹ Brown, *The Reaper's Garden*; and James H. Sweet, *Recreating Africa: Culture, Kinship, and Religion in the African-Portuguese World, 1441-1770* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2003).

¹² For example, see the previous fn. and Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*; Rediker, *The Slave Ship*; and Mwalimu Bomani Baruti, *Homosexuality and the Effeminization of Afrikan Males* (Atlanta: Aboken House, 2003).

Puerto Ricans in the early twentieth century understood death in a certain way. Several scholars have stressed the importance of the gallows in the first decades of U.S. rule, for instance.¹³ Others have thought more broadly about the theme. Trujillo Pagán, for example, suggests that death in Puerto Rico at the time was linked to transitional colonial processes. While understanding colonialism as a matter of life and death is common in the way scholars think about early modern colonization, it is rare in how we think about the modern period. Trujillo Pagán illustrates that U.S. medical science in Puerto Rico was a matter of life and death. As these states of being took on new symbolic meanings, U.S. officials increasingly depended on island mortality to measure progress in the colony.¹⁴

U.S. colonial authorities used death to pathologize Puerto Ricans and to promote their own legitimacy in the conquest of the tropics. The U.S. narrative of death on the island rejected the Spanish past by projecting it as decadent. U.S. officials and their creole collaborators contrasted death under Spanish rule with the life-preserving productivity of U.S. rule. Spanish colonialism led the masses to believe that hunger pains and death were normal, for instance.¹⁵ To make (dis)connections with the previous colonial order clear, U.S. authorities and their supporters focused on island children, schools, families, and sexuality.¹⁶ The U.S. narrative of death also centered on U.S. officials' and Puerto Rican physicians' shared vision of progress and their mutual

¹³ See Jacobo Córdoba Chirino, *Los que murieron en la horca* (San Juan: Editorial Cordillera, 1954 [2007]); and Baerga Santini, "History and the Contours of Meaning."

¹⁴ Trujillo Pagán, *Modern Colonization by Medical Intervention*, 1.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 3; and Miguel Ángel Urrego, "Cambio de soberanía y confrontación moral en Puerto Rico, 1898-1920," *Revista Mexicana del Caribe* 7, 13 (2002): 125-52.

¹⁶ Trujillo Pagán, *Modern Colonization by Medical Intervention*, 4-7; Briggs, *Reproducing Empire*; Iris López, *Matters of Choice: Puerto Rican Women's Struggle for Reproductive Freedom* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2008); and José E. Flores Collazo, "Mujer, familia y prostitución: la construcción del género bajo la hegemonía del Partido Popular Democrático, 1940-1968," Doctoral Dissertation, Department of History, University of Puerto Rico-Río Piedras, 2002.

targeting of workers. They adapted medical discourse to public health interventions against diseases like anemia (uncinariasis or hookworm), which involved “regenerating” the male labor pool.¹⁷

In this context, cemeteries were a potent symbol for rejecting Puerto Rico’s Spanish colonial past and consolidating the U.S. order of things.¹⁸ Natural disasters also contributed to the “transition.” Hurricanes, for example, devastated lives by increasing morbidity and mortality. The resulting hunger and protest revived the specter of death and disrupted the narrative of a sanitary U.S. conquest. Even the dead could not escape the path of storms. In 1899, San Ciriaco crushed Utuado: “[B]odies were left to the dogs...one body already having been consumed by these animals... human remains are seen scattered on the ground. Numberless clothes of the deceased, coffins, etc., are also visible.” In Hatillo, “the roads [or paths] are white with human bones.”¹⁹

U.S. colonization by medical intervention in Puerto Rico coincided with some of the most devastating storms to ever hit the island. Hurricane San Ciriaco destroyed coffee producing areas. As a result, day laborers’ and farmers’ wages perished. The storm temporarily froze the labor market and the desire of investors to act on the island economy.²⁰ This allowed authorities to focus on health problems, such as hookworm, and to promote a message of “salvation” that alternated between economic, military, and religious frames.²¹ These processes repeated themselves in Puerto Rico in 1928 and 1932, with hurricanes San Felipe II and San Ciprián respectively. The storm San

¹⁷ Trujillo Pagán, *Modern Colonization by Medical Intervention*, 5, 7, and 19-21.

¹⁸ On the Spanish era in this vein, see Goenaga y Olza, *Los sepultureros de España en Puerto Rico, o sea, Macías, su ayudante Cervera, Camó y su tiempo* (San Juan: Imprenta de Boada, 1899).

¹⁹ Trujillo Pagán, *Modern Colonization by Medical Intervention*, 11.

²⁰ Subsequently, much investment flowed into the island from the U.S., as well as from local sources.

²¹ Trujillo Pagán, *Modern Colonization by Medical Intervention*, 11-15.

Zenón similarly occasioned the remaking of order and infrastructure in the Dominican Republic in 1930.²²

In Puerto Rico, San Felipe II destroyed sugar mills and refineries that had cost millions of dollars to build. More than 24,000 homes were destroyed and more than 192,000 were partially destroyed. The storm flooded sugarcane fields, ruining the year's crops. Half of the coffee plants and half of the shade trees were lost; and almost all the coffee harvest. Tobacco farms also suffered great losses. After San Felipe II, Puerto Rico never regained its position as a major coffee exporter. Fallen trees, landslides, and damaged bridges impacted communications and mobility. Some 800 school buildings were damaged. According to some estimates, total damages reached \$85 million and over 500,000 people were left homeless.²³

A few years later, San Ciprián devastated Puerto Rico. The hurricane's winds destroyed many homes in outlying villages, killing more than 100 people. The highest death toll came from Río Piedras. Though the penitentiary under construction avoided major damage due to the reinforced concrete used to build it, many of the homes in Río Piedras were too poor to withstand the vicious winds. Damage to roads and power lines disrupted communications and access to the interior part of the island. The storm damaged or destroyed much of the citrus, sugar, coffee, tobacco, and honey harvests. Overall crop damage totaled some \$20 million. In addition, over 400,000 livestock perished. Hundreds of thousands of people were homeless. At Oso Blanco, the

²² Derby, *The Dictator's Seduction*, ch. 2. On the death and destruction precipitated by the mentioned Caribbean storms, see Stuart Schwartz, *Sea of Storms: A History of Hurricanes in the Greater Caribbean from Columbus to Katrina* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), especially chs. 6-7.

²³ Schwartz, "The 1928 Hurricane and the Shaping of the Circum-Caribbean Region," *ReVista: Harvard Review of Latin America* (Winter 2007): 3-7; and Frank Mújica Baker, *Hurricanes y tormentas tropicales que han afectado a Puerto Rico* (San Juan: Estado Libre Asociado, Agencia Estatal para el Manejo de Emergencias y Administración de Desastres, 2010), 4, 9, and 10.

storm destroyed all tree, vegetable, and grain crops on about 50 acres of land.²⁴ Between the Great Depression and hurricanes San Felipe II, San Zenón, and San Ciprián, opportunities emerged for the remaking of national order and authority on both sides of the Mona Passage.

Storms aside, however, the dominant narrative of the Puerto Rican hookworm campaigns entailed a medical discourse of conquering death. But this general narrative ignores that hookworm and other diseases were not fatal in other parts of the world, including the U.S. South.²⁵ Mortality rates from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Puerto Rico indicate that the hookworm campaigns did not conquer disease and death on the island. When the campaigns started there, colonial medicine was in fact losing the war against death. Progress occurred in the form of emergency medicine, basic surgery, vaccinations, and the use of quinine against malaria, but little else. Mortality rates also showcase the distinction between colony and U.S. metropole, where mortality rates declined during the same period.²⁶ When Oso Blanco opened in 1933, island mortality stood at 22 percent. Between 1934 and midcentury, it steadily declined, hovering between 20 and ten percent.²⁷ The improvement corresponded with advances in diet, sanitation, medicine, and standards of living.

Although statistics could not pinpoint the primary cause of death in Puerto Rico, islanders still understood anemia as “natural death.” Death was a metaphor that promoted physicians’ interventions on jíbaro or other bodies. It served a purpose in the war against soil pollution and to

²⁴ *Thirty-Third Annual Report of the Governor of Puerto Rico* (San Juan: Bureau of Supplies, Printing, and Transportation, 1933): 1-6 and 157-59; and *Report of the Attorney General of Puerto Rico* (1933), 23.

²⁵ Trujillo Pagán, *Modern Colonization by Medical Intervention*, 171; W. H. Crosby, “The Deadly Hookworm: Why Did the Puerto Ricans Die?” *Archives of Internal Medicine* 147 (March 1987): 577-78; and Mariola Espinosa, *Epidemic Invasions: Yellow Fever and the Limits of Cuban Independence, 1878-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

²⁶ Trujillo Pagán, *Modern Colonization by Medical Intervention*, 203.

²⁷ Costa Mandry, *Apuntes para la historia de la medicina en Puerto Rico*, 107.

compel public support for U.S. empire. By linking workers' production and contaminated soil, U.S. and creole authorities displaced attention from the full range of factors contributing to death on the island.²⁸ Prisons reinforced these medico-colonial processes. In Puerto Rico, convict cadavers landed on the autopsy tables of the School of Tropical Medicine in San Juan, the clinics of Santurce, and elsewhere. Living convicts developed strategies to deal with death in all its forms.

Death in Oso Blanco

In mid-twentieth-century Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, prison professionals and intersecting communities understood death through convict corpses. Death in Oso Blanco spanned (im)material expressions and social life after incarceration. No matter how death was made manifest, the dead became active participants in the living world.²⁹ When convicts died, prison authorities inherited and cared for their bodies. They determined causes of death, reached out to convict families, and deposited cadavers in nearby cemeteries. Four cemeteries received the bulk of inmate bodies; one in Santurce (likely Villa Palmeras), and three in Río Piedras (likely Capital, Viejo, and Villa Nevárez) near Oso Blanco. Aside from providing these services, individual convict bodies meant little to those who serviced them. Everyone initially invested in them rapidly moved on to other things, including caring for additional corpses. The dedication of prisoner family members and extended networks similarly dwindled. Life went on.

Death played out medically and forensically on Puerto Rican convict bodies. Many Oso Blanco inmate files preserve death certificates. Figuring out why convicts died was the first step of the post-mortem process, as stipulated by Articles 27 and 30 of the island's civil registry law.

²⁸ Factors included the collapse of the coffee economy, hunger, suffering, natural disasters, and U.S. policies. See Trujillo Pagán, *Modern Colonization by Medical Intervention*, 204.

²⁹ Brown, *The Reaper's Garden*, 4.

Article 27 prohibited the burial of bodies until they showed “signs of rigor mortis and decomposition.” Article 30 required physicians or forensic experts to “certify” the death. Prison physicians who performed this duty over the years included Leandro López de la Rosa. By the mid-1930s, F. Ferraiouli of Miramar Clinic also carried out the duty. Several others contributed in this vein between the 1930s and midcentury, including Mario C. Fernández, J. B. Kodesh, Ceferino Méndez Polo, and J. R. Rolenson. In the Dominican Republic, Jimenes Grullón recalled that a “medical examiner” named “Dr. Román” issued death certificates.³⁰

Oso Blanco death certificates shed light on some of the meanings and responses linked to tangible death. Puerto Rico’s Health Department played a key role in bureaucratizing the penitentiary death process. In part, health officials did so to collect statistics about island mortality. State and prison authorities expressed concern about how long convicts had been incarcerated before dying. This allowed officials to determine whether causes of death were specific to Oso Blanco or to communities beyond the wall. Death certificates processed by the Health Department identified ten major causes of death.³¹ These categories reflected many of the diseases, conditions, and scenarios impacting the wellbeing of convicts and society at large at the time.

The death certificates featured convict personal data and statistics. The relevant sections identified one’s sex, “color or race,” civil status, birth date, place and “legitimacy,” age, occupation, and parental lineage. Certificates specified the cemeteries where convict bodies were buried and noted a funerary agent, if available. Another section provided medical information. Specifically, it logged when convicts died, what killed them, and how long they had been sick.

³⁰ Jimenes Grullón, *Una gestapo en América*, 112.

³¹ Causes of death included 1) tuberculosis, 2) anemia, 3) paralysis, 4) meningitis, 5) cancer, 6) convulsions, 7) hemorrhages and abscesses, 8) rickets and malnutrition, 9) pneumonia, and 10) asphyxia, blunt-force objects, or weapons-related traumas.

This section also pinpointed where the illness or condition leading to death had been contracted, detailed laboratory analysis, and noted if violence (e.g., accidental, homicidal, or suicidal) precipitated cause of death. A forensic pathologist or physician signed the death certificate and identified themselves and their clinics. Medical scientists working out of nearby institutions also reported their findings about convicts.³²

Before inmates died, prison officials tried to alert convict families and communities. Wardens Saldaña, P. Toledo Márquez, J. Antonio Alvarado, and Félix R. Rivera carried out this task over the years. With the establishment of the Classification and Treatment Board in 1946, however, the task increasingly fell on the shoulders of other penitentiary professionals. Social workers, for instance, helped prison administrators and police officers speed up the process of making families conscious of dying or dead loved ones.³³ This gave convict communities a chance to provide succor and/or facilitate certain services, like religious last rites. Spanish folklorist Pablo Garrido recorded that the funerary rituals of the era included wakes, music, singing, prayers, dramas, and processions.³⁴ Sometimes convict family members and other contacts responded to the outreach of prison authorities; sometimes they did not.

On the other hand, convicts often left the prison to attend funerals. Funerary practices in mid-twentieth-century Puerto Rico were quite sophisticated. Entire communities invested in performing death rituals for adults and children. Prison administrators granted convicts several hours to immerse themselves in these moments. Convicts attended wakes, rosaries, processions,

³² Expediente del confinado Santiago Ramos, Caja 221, SEC, FDJ, AGPR.

³³ Expediente del confinado Sixto Manuel Carmona Suya, Caja 240, SEC, FDJ, AGPR.

³⁴ Garrido, *Esoteria y fervor populares de Puerto Rico*, 183-85. In Loíza Aldea, for example, a “brotherhood” (*Hermandad*) used a “train” to carry the dead. It was a table with black corduroy skirting its sides. The table transported the dead to the local cemetery, where members of the brotherhood emptied the casket holding the deceased and buried him. They returned the empty casket on the table to their base so that the same ritual could be repeated later.

and burials accompanied by armed guards.³⁵ Geography influenced whether convicts could participate in domestic or communal mortuary politics. The farther away the community from Río Piedras, the less likely such petitions would be approved. While prison transfers sometimes accommodated certain inmates, they could take too long to materialize.

The difficulties associated with contacting convict families cannot be stressed enough. Prison officials wrote letters and sent telegrams to prisoner family members and sent them messages through local police officers. Once in contact with the relevant parties, prison authorities conveyed the news of loss. They communicated with whomever they could reach: parents, aunts and uncles, siblings, children, nieces and nephews, cousins, in-laws, friends, neighbors, and so on. This communication relayed news of sickness, death, and/or burial. Family members did not always respond, but some did. For example, Jesús Rosario, the uncle of a convict, contacted Warden Saldaña about his sick nephew. The family could not go see him because of distance. They lived in faraway Juana Díaz. The prisoner's father resided at *Central* Mercedita, a sugarcane mill in Ponce. However, they hoped Saldaña would write Rosario back, who in turn would convey the news—good or bad—to the rest of the family.³⁶ This was especially the case for prisoners whose loved ones were seasonal laborers. Contacting out of the way places like *hacienda* Mogote in Yauco, *colonia* Fortuna in Fajardo, or barrio Los Ángeles in Utuado limited not only the exchange of data but also whether corpses could even make return journeys home.

Families seldom had the resources to collect the remains of their incarcerated loved ones. Distance, transportation, and cost were some of the factors that kept families from retrieving convict bodies. Thus, Oso Blanco cadavers landed in nearby cemeteries. Prison authorities deemed

³⁵ *Ibid*; and Expediente del confinado Delfín Vázquez, Caja 226, SEC, FDJ, AGPR.

³⁶ Expediente del confinado Ángel Rosario Morel, Caja 181, SEC, FDJ, AGPR.

cemeteries in Río Piedras and Santurce as appropriate destinations for convict corpses. For example, in January 1930 Warden Saldaña contacted the brother of a sick convict named Antonio Peña Morales, a young black *bracero* (farm laborer). After several spells of illness while stationed at encampments in Trujillo Alto and Carolina, Peña Morales succumbed to celiac sprue and syphilis.³⁷ Prison officials sent his body to “the cadaver deposit in Santurce cemetery.”³⁸ When a white convict named Eugenio Colón Ortiz died, authorities had him buried in one of Río Piedras’ cemeteries.³⁹ On July 21, 1931, Warden Saldaña sent a telegram to Juan Alvira in Humacao, the father of a mixed-race convict in his 20s named Venancio. The “body is at the Santurce cemetery. He will be buried tomorrow at 12PM.”⁴⁰ A white inmate in his 30s named Pedro Cruz Santana died November 2, 1947. He had spent 282 days in the prison hospital before capitulating to tuberculosis. Authorities had him buried in Río Piedras the next day.⁴¹

When news of death failed to reach families, relatives inquired about their loved ones. For example, in late April 1929 Rubén Cruz López suffered a work accident while cleaning a machine in the prison bakery. He trapped his hand in a machine used to turn bread yeast. Unable to move it, he turned awkwardly and struck his head against the iron lever kneading the yeast, breaking several vertebrae in a matter of seconds. Cruz López’s family traveled from “Las Cruces,” Cayey to the prison “on a Sunday” to inquire about the “life or death” of their relative. The Superintendent of Prisons ordered a delegation of convicts close to Cruz López to accompany his body and family

³⁷ Celiac sprue is a disease of the digestive tract that interferes with the digestion and absorption of food nutrients.

³⁸ Expediente del confinado Antonio M. Peña, Caja 181, SEC, FDJ, AGPR.

³⁹ Expediente del confinado Eugenio Colón Ortiz, Caja 184, SEC, FDJ, AGPR.

⁴⁰ Expediente del confinado Venancio Alvira Díaz, Caja 223, SEC, FDJ, AGPR.

⁴¹ Expediente del confinado Pedro Cruz Santana, Caja 240, SEC, FDJ, AGPR.

to the cemetery in Santurce. They took the penitentiary bus to the burial. The body rode in the municipal ambulance, “as per custom.”⁴²

In another case, news of convict Antonio Díaz Texidor’s death reached Guayama sometime in November 1929. His family consulted a “literate neighbor,” who in turn sent a letter on their behalf to Warden Saldaña in early December. In the letter, they subtly critiqued the government for having them chase the facts of this case. They wondered why district prison officials were not in the bureaucratic loop when they originally visited Guayama jail in search of data about the health and wellbeing of their son. Díaz Texidor’s parents wanted to “calm” their “sufferings.” The “uncertainty” was killing them. They had reason to be upset. Their son had died the previous September.⁴³ The highest levels of government also learned of convict deaths after the fact. For instance, Facundo Lasanta Merced died of pneumonia on November 21, 1929. A week later, the Attorney General and Governor denied his clemency petition, which insulted his memory.⁴⁴

Assessed collectively, Oso Blanco inmate files provide a cursory profile of dead convicts. They were often young men between their 20s and 40s who worked as *braceros*, *jornaleros* (day laborers), carpenters, bricklayers, construction workers, mechanics, and a host of other occupations. Some were labeled “peons” and “vagrants.” Their racial backgrounds varied: black, white, mulatto, trigueño, blanco-trigueño, and so on. Their roots could be traced to all corners of the island, from coastal lowlands to the mountainous interior. Common causes of death included tuberculosis, syphilis, pneumonia, dysentery, and malnutrition. A broad consultation of the record series suggests that between the 1920s and 1940s, tuberculosis in particular claimed hundreds of

⁴² Expediente del confinado Ruben Cruz López, Caja 180, SEC, FDJ, AGPR.

⁴³ Expediente del confinado Antonio Díaz Texidor, Caja 181, SEC, FDJ, AGPR.

⁴⁴ Expediente del confinado Facundo Lasanta Merced, Caja 181, SEC, FDJ, AGPR.

convict lives. In terms of overall death, dozens perished in Oso Blanco and other island prisons every year.⁴⁵

Some convicts tried to commit suicide or successfully did so. In one gruesome incident in 1929, a “psychotic” convict acquired barbershop razors and attempted to cut his neck. The prompt action of other inmates prevented this. When the convict died of pneumonia in July 1931, insane asylum officials asked Warden Saldaña whether they should bury the body or if other arrangements were going to be made. No one claimed the body so authorities buried it in one of Río Piedras’ cemeteries.⁴⁶ The suicides of other convicts made front-page news. This happened to the “syphilitic rabbit” Luis Vázquez Irizarry, who prison officials found dangling from a belt in an Oso Blanco cell mere months after the institution opened (Figure 1 below). Prison officials and the press portrayed Vázquez Irizarry as a “habitual thief” and an “abnormal” sexual deviant. The sensationalization of his case by the press was the kind of life after death no one deserved.

Clashes between prisoners and guards led to inmate deaths. In August 1931, for example, guard Rafael Fort allegedly shot a convict named Juan Antero Marrero. Within a few days, the convict died of “internal hemorrhaging.” Antero Marrero’s mother Altagracia reached out to prison officials after she received word of her son’s death. Warden Toledo Márquez conveyed to her that he had left behind belongings, including \$6.13, which she could claim by filling out and notarizing some paperwork. He also left behind clothing and other domestic items, all of which he wanted her to have and some of which he made himself: striped underwear, blue socks, a shirt, used yellow shoes, a knitted bag, knitted women’s socks, a knitted tablecloth, a painted suitcase, two pillows, and a blanket. Toledo Márquez offered Altagracia the clothing and domestic items but she would

⁴⁵ See *Report of the Attorney General of Porto/Puerto Rico (1930-1945)*.

⁴⁶ Expediente del confinado Augusto Rodríguez Jiménez, Caja 223, SEC, FDJ, AGPR.

have to pay for mail service. She eagerly accepted the materials, as they were in short supply at home.⁴⁷ This case and many others confirm that Puerto Rican convicts and their communities faced what medical anthropologist Nancy Scheper-Hughes has called the “violence of everyday life.”⁴⁸ Their lives dominated by scarcity, sickness, and death, prisoners and their families often resorted to mundane strategies just to get by and survive.



Figure 1: Suicide of Luis Vázquez Irizarry, *El Imparcial*, August 2, 1933.

In another powerful case, the aftermath of convict Benito Aponte’s physical death mobilized his family on behalf of his belongings and memory. Several months after Aponte passed away in January 1929, his mother Agustina, a resident of the “Paris” neighborhood of Mayagüez,

⁴⁷ Expediente del confinado Juan Antero Marrero, Caja 223, SEC, FDJ, AGPR.

⁴⁸ Nancy Scheper-Hughes, *Death Without Weeping: The Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

started writing letters to Warden Saldaña and other government officials. In a letter dated January 18, Agustina subtly scolded justice officials for making it difficult to learn about the fate of her son. She inquired about the earnings he had accumulated behind bars (\$8) and requested a photo of him, which she wanted to reproduce because “I have no other memory of him.” Agustina told Saldaña not to forget about the picture. She was sick, lacked medicine and succor, and simply had to have the photo.⁴⁹

Several months later, on March 27, Agustina reached out to Oso Blanco officials again. She reiterated her previous request for a photograph of her dead son, which she offered to send back: “It is just that I do not have one of him.” In exchange, “I will be grateful and send you a gift [payment]... I want to have my son’s photo before I die.” Benito was Agustina’s only child, with whom she “shared a soul.” She claimed that she could not die in peace without the image. She also wanted the photo so that she could pass Benito’s memory on to his infant son. Saldaña sent her the photograph on April 22, 1929: “You can keep this photograph. No gift [payment] is required in return.”⁵⁰ As this case clearly illustrates, convict deaths had (im)material implications. They could also be at the center of historical memory for different generations, both the elderly and recently born. In this instance, Agustina planted a genealogical seed for her grandson. She did not have the luxury to plant others.

Some convicts left behind large sums of money. Warden Saldaña noted in a 1931 letter to Alejandrina Muñoz, the wife of a deceased prisoner, that her husband had built a fund of \$23.91. She and her children were legally entitled to it.⁵¹ Other families were not as lucky, and received

⁴⁹ Expediente del confinado Benito Aponte, Caja 180, SEC, FDJ, AGPR.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Expediente del confinado Pablo Muñiz Sepúlveda, Caja 223, SEC, FDJ, AGPR.

little to nothing. In April 1935, the mother of a convict inquired about material possessions that survived her son. She specifically asked about “a letter,” “civilian clothing,” and “a few cents.” Several days later, Warden Saldaña responded that she inherited “nothing of the sort.”⁵²

Prisoners who died in Oso Blanco were not always Puerto Rican. Several hailed from other corners of the Caribbean, including across the Mona Passage. One such convict was a black day laborer named Octavio Montilla (Figure 2 below). He was from San Cristóbal, Dominican Republic—Trujillo’s place of birth and partial residence. Details about the lazy-eyed Montilla’s activities on Dominican soil are hard to come by, but he seems to have been a sailor. It is difficult to say what drew him to Puerto Rico (e.g., work, love, children, etc.). In September 1933, authorities deported him for violating immigration laws. The “alien” reentered the U.S. at the port of San Juan as a “stowaway” in October 1937, but was caught in the act.⁵³

Warden Rivera noted that Montilla entered Oso Blanco in April 1938. While there, medical staff observed him for more than a year. Physicians López de la Rosa and Kodesh examined and treated Montilla. Kodesh recalled: “Mr. Montilla was at the time suffering from neuro-syphilis and a chronic gonorrhoeal urethritis. Treatment was administered in the form of neosalvarsan, tryparsamide, bismuth, mercury, and iodide injections.” Some of the medications Kodesh prescribed, like the arsenic-based compounds neosalvarsan and tryparsamide, were more hazardous than therapeutic.⁵⁴ Montilla’s health gradually deteriorated until he reached a stage of complete paralysis of the lower extremities. Kodesh last saw him alive on June 10, 1939, at which time the patient was in a “critical condition” and a “semi-conscious state.” Montilla died ten days

⁵² Expediente del confinado Fidel Rodríguez Soliván, Caja 184, SEC, FDJ, AGPR.

⁵³ Expediente del confinado Octavio Montilla, Caja 221, SEC, FDJ, AGPR.

⁵⁴ On tryparsamide and its development in colonial Africa, see E. Bediner, “Louise Pearce: A ‘magic bullet’ for African Sleeping Sickness,” *Hospital Practice* 27 (1992): 207-21. Also, see George Washington Corner, *A History of the Rockefeller Institute, 1901-1953* (New York: Rockefeller Institute Press, 1964), 144-48.

later of cerebral-spinal syphilis.⁵⁵ Kodesh confirmed the death. It is unclear where authorities buried Montilla, though it is likely they did so in a nearby cemetery, for shipping his body back to the Dominican Republic was apparently beyond his means.⁵⁶

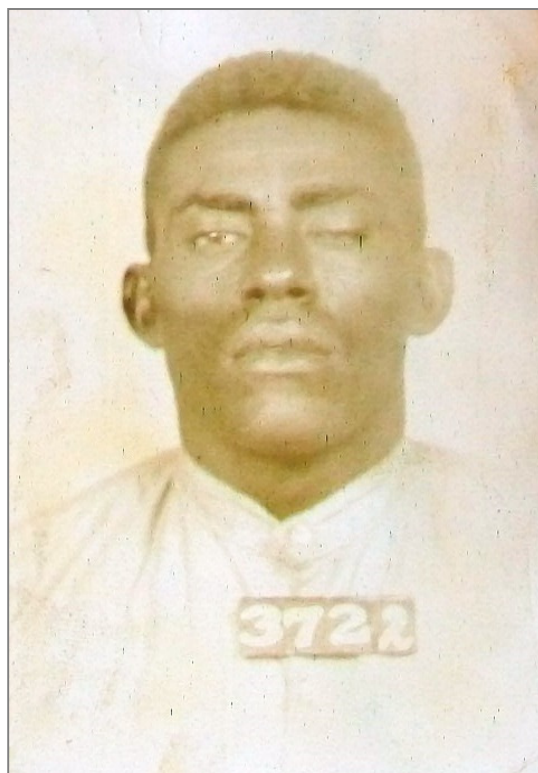


Figure 2: Mug shot of Octavio Montilla, April 1938, AGPR.

Oso Blanco prison records with death certificates date through the end of World War II, some of which shed light on the mental conditions of inmates. For example, a black shoemaker in his 30s from San Germán named Jesus Anastasio Santiago Vendrel died April 22, 1944. He passed away in the Río Piedras mental asylum of syphilis, tuberculosis, and advanced pneumonia. On the eve of his death he had been suffering from psychosis for eight days. It was characterized by “psycho-motor excitement, violent spells, mental confusion, disorientation in all spheres, and

⁵⁵ Expediente del confinado Octavio Montilla.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

affective dullness.” Santiago Vendrel’s condition was so grave that prison psychiatrists had no choice but to transfer him to the insane asylum.⁵⁷

Postwar records reveal that homicides also occurred behind bars. In the mid-1940s, a middle-aged mixed-race mechanic named Ramón Ríos Roldán died under mysterious circumstances. He suffered “intracranial hemorrhage shocks” due to a “compound fracture of the skull.” His mother Encarnación wrote to Warden Alvarado about his death. Instead of inquiring about the circumstances of the homicide, however, she mentioned hearing a rumor that when convicts died they “left money on the table.” But the only way she could claim the cash was if she visited the prison in person. She wanted to know if Ramón had left her anything before making the trip. To her relief, he did.⁵⁸ In this case and others, economic and material concerns and the comfort they potentially provided were more important to people than death itself.

Convict deaths also unfolded transnationally. Before an elderly inmate named Sixto Manuel Carmona Suya died of cancer in August 1948, he asked to see Oso Blanco’s “Second Chief” Susano Ortiz, the Director of Socio-Penal Services. Carmona Suya wanted to talk about a “personal matter.” He must have shared sensitive information about his family situation with Ortiz because the next document in his inmate file is a letter from his niece Petruca Valencia. Petruca wrote to Carmona Suya from New York City. She told him that the family understood his “days are numbered” but he had to realize why they left the island. To convey to him that poverty on the island was intolerable, she used weight gain as a rhetorical device. When she arrived in New York, she weighed 75 pounds. She now weighed 102 pounds.⁵⁹ Carmona Suya seems to have died alone.

⁵⁷ Expediente del confinado Jesús Anastasio Santiago Vendrel, Caja 240, SEC, FDJ, AGPR.

⁵⁸ Expediente del confinado Ramón Ríos Roldán, Caja 240, SEC, FDJ, AGPR.

⁵⁹ Expediente del confinado Sixto Manuel Carmona Suya, Caja 240, SEC, FDJ, AGPR.

Death in Oso Blanco came in many forms. Inmates succumbed to disease, work accidents, and violence, among other forces. Prison authorities buried dead convicts in the closest cemeteries. It was less likely for a corpse to make it home. Many people simply did not have the resources to secure such services. The closer convict families were to prisons, the better their chances to claim cadavers for their own purposes. Even after physical death, dead prisoners remained at the center of social life. Their families contacted officials about funds, belongings, and photos. Death announced endings and beginnings. It arrived to “finish the living” and to sow the seeds of “social renewal.” The dead remained players in society as “objects of contention and struggle.”⁶⁰

Death in Nigua

In the Dominican Republic, death played out more violently on the bodies of convicts. The nature of Nigua’s cemetery, Camunguí, throws this point into sharp relief. Camunguí is located in San Cristóbal. In the 1930s, the outskirts of the town served as the prison cemetery. The cemetery was 500 meters from Nigua. According to some observers, massacres occurred there frequently. Jimenes Grullón noted that when he arrived at Nigua, “They made me write my will... Later, in the middle of the night, they escorted me to Camunguí, along with the firing squad.” He also linked the cemetery to a “tree of death.” One time, he witnessed a procession there: “Executioners escorted tortured and furious inmates to Camunguí,” where they were “tied to the tree,” killed, and dumped into open mass graves.⁶¹

Dominican authorities released Jimenes Grullón from prison in late October 1935. He landed in neighboring Puerto Rico, where local writer and activist Francisco Girona Pérez

⁶⁰ Brown, *The Reaper’s Garden*, 5.

⁶¹ Jimenes Grullón, *Una gestapo en América*, 80, 260, and 315.

collaborated with him and other Dominican exiles to document and condemn how punishment was administered during the era of Trujillo. These conversations took place in Puerto Rican and U.S. newspapers. For example, the periodical *San Antonio Light* published an intimate portrait and critique of Trujillo in 1938 in which exiled Dominicans provided a window into the nature of life and death behind bars in the country. Journalist Carleton Beals gathered testimony from the likes of Jimenes Grullón, who remembered Nigua and Camunguí in a negative light: “Nigua Prison, the black hole of torture and death... a malarial hole, celebrated for the horrible treatment prisoners receive there when forced to labor on public works, roads and nearby farms, has its own cemetery” named Camunguí, “where hundreds of bodies are buried” in mass graves.⁶²

Jimenes Grullón linked the rise of Trujillo in the 1930s to Juan Manuel de Rosas’ tyranny in Argentina and Manuel Estrada Cabrera’s despotism in Guatemala. He called Nigua and Ozama “dens of misery.” “Screams,” “martyrs,” and “firing squads” characterized Nigua, specifically. All convicts lived under the “same misery and slavery.” In such a context, death was “preferable,” a “welcome” development and a kind of “freedom” thanks to the political violence associated with the prison. Nigua’s firing squads were real, but Jimenes Grullón recalled them being “simulated” as well. Prison authorities staged killings to instill fear in the convict population and society at large, and to “extract data” from prisoners.⁶³

Although Jimenes Grullón resisted the Trujillo government, he acknowledged Nigua’s complexity. He analyzed the penitentiary’s ambiance, his captors, and other convicts, noting that

⁶² Beals added that Trujillo’s brother Virgilio threw elites into prison “until they signed over their property.” In general, authorities subjected convicts “to physical and moral tortures to force them to disclose their supposed conspiracies.” They were “flogged with knotted electric light cables or with dried bull-hide, and then sent out on public work,” where armed guards educated them “with gun-butt blows” every time they took a breath. Everyone had to work even if “sick with fever... [and] even then they are ‘cured’ with gun-butts.” Suicide and disease were also leading causes of death in Nigua. See Carleton Beals, “Peculiar People,” *San Antonio Light*, July 31, 1938, 86-87 and 90.

⁶³ Jimenes Grullón, *Una gestapo en América*, 51, 54, 140, 275, 317, and 335.

many inmates became “agnostic” when confronted with death. They “questioned God” and “his justice.” Further, reminders of death abounded in Nigua. Camunguí’s “tree of death” marked the spot where authorities executed convicts. As for the living dead, some political prisoners fit the bill. For example, Jimenes Grullón called physician Ramón de Lara “dead in life.” And more broadly, most convicts “looked like human machines: the movement of their arms, the firmness of their collective gaze toward the ground, the monorhythmic cadence of their legs, and the same pain squeezing the life out of each soul, infused in the spirits of spectators the desolate impression of the living dead.”⁶⁴

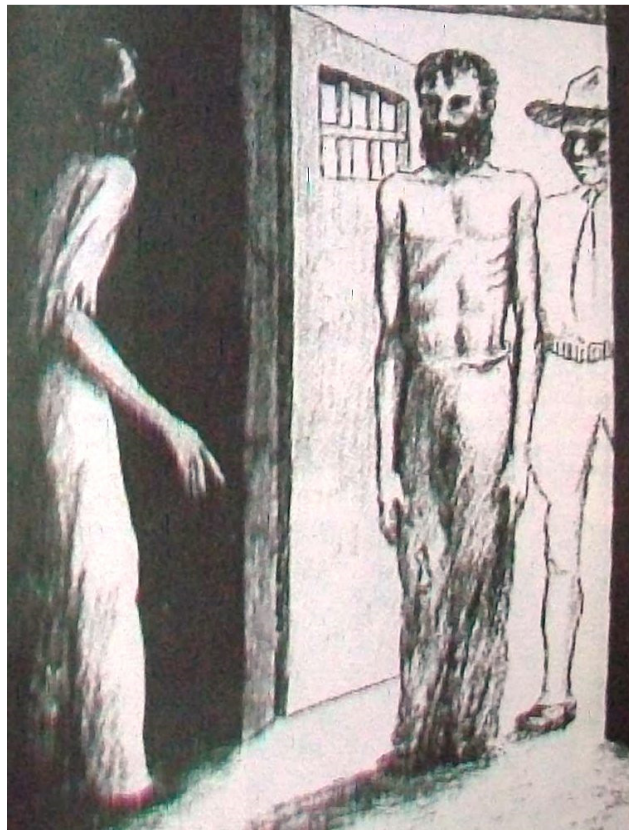


Figure 3: Living death in Nigua; adapted from Girona Pérez, *Las fechorías del bandolero Trujillo*, 1937 [2013].

Indeed, convicts died slowly. In Girona Pérez’s critique of Trujillo, he included artist portraits about living death in Nigua. Figure 3 above is one such image. It portrays convicts

⁶⁴ Jimenes Grullón, *Una gestapo en América*, 48, 223, and 255.

residing in darkness, their bodies undernourished and ghoulish. The caption reads: “Human skeletons encounter Chapita’s [Trujillo’s] henchman, as he opens a dungeon door in Nigua... [this] is the mission of that odious prison, where illustrious Dominicans have given their lives.”⁶⁵ In this vein, Jimenes Grullón estimated that nearly 1,000 convicts died during his stay at Nigua. He compared the loss of life behind bars to the thousands of Haitians slaughtered on the borderland in 1937. He also theorized about “dead time,” and wrote “against metaphysics.” Time was dead because its “substance” was “negative.” On the other hand, discussing existential and political themes sparked convict minds. Some counted on jokes and games. But these latter activities “left the soul empty.” For their part, common convicts sang popular songs. This was an example of how something, in this case music, could “destroy” linear time, for music revived convict memories. Engaging music behind bars allowed them to “reconstruct time” and remember a range of emotions, to wax nostalgic, and to hold on to their souls.⁶⁶

Jimenes Grullón contended that the prison “distorted time.” Convicts lost their sense of “social etiquette and interaction” behind bars. They “reimagined the world in themselves.” Silence and other forced aspects of the prison ambiance (the rules) “kill[ed] creativity and happiness.” Assessing the living death of others was Jimenes Grullón’s way of “transcending” time, staying alive, and coping with his predicament: “Time makes me think all things are relative. It is like an infinite plane around which the worlds revolve.” It “is the foundation, the guarantee, of material expression.” But while matter “perpetually evolves,” time also “dies.”⁶⁷ Jimenes Grullón underscored that the prison warped time and one’s sense of reality. However, Camunguá and the

⁶⁵ Girona Pérez, *Las fechorías del bandolero Trujillo*, 171.

⁶⁶ Jimenes Grullón, *Una gestapo en América*, 93, 289, 313, and 318; and Beals, *San Antonio Light*, 86-87.

⁶⁷ Jimenes Grullón, *Una gestapo en América*, 26, 56, and 175-76.

lives consumed by Nigua's cemetery brought him and other likeminded convicts back down to earth.

Jimenes Grullón witnessed death on numerous occasions while incarcerated. One time, he shared the story of two convicts sentenced to death because they had insulted prison authorities. The two convicts had gotten “fresh,” or talked back to and challenged the masculinity of prison guards. This prompted prison personnel to defend their honor by beating the convicts to a bloody pulp. Guards hit the convicts with “*cantaclaros*” (torture instruments). In addition to cursing at the guards, one of the convicts spit in an officer's face. He was shot on the spot. Four onlooking convicts then proceeded to carry the body to Camunguí, where it was buried.⁶⁸

A notable episode in Nigua's history of death concerns the conspiracy of Enrique Blanco (Bravo), a Dominican colonel turned democratic revolutionary and bandit. According to several published sources, Blanco had fought against U.S. marines. During the era of Trujillo, he conspired against the government. He collaborated with members of the Dominican military and exile community in Puerto Rico. When the plot was foiled, authorities captured some 80 of Blanco's co-conspirators and sent them to prison. Jimenes Grullón noted that at night, “the guards took them out of their cells and subjected them to infinite tortures. At dawn, they escorted them to Camunguí.” It is believed that Blanco was either betrayed or killed himself somewhere in the Cibao region, the “white heartland” of the country.⁶⁹ When Dominican authorities acquired his

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 328.

⁶⁹ The Cibao region in the Dominican Republic is comparable to São Paulo in Brazil, where elites and popular sectors embraced a regional identity that underscored their modernity, progress, and therefore whiteness. This racialized regionalism normalized and perpetuated regional inequalities. In the Dominican Republic, the Cibao became synonymous with prosperity while the borderland, southern, and eastern parts of the country came to represent the “Other.” Consult Barbara Weinstein, *The Color of Modernity: São Paulo and the Making of Race and Nation in Brazil* (Durham: Duke, 2015). Also see San Miguel, *Los campesinos del Cibao: economía de mercado y transformación agraria en la República Dominicana, 1880-1960* (San Juan: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1995).

body, they riddled it with bullets. They subsequently mocked and abused the body while parading it through several towns and forcing locals to participate in the festivities.⁷⁰

Nigua penitentiary closed in spring 1938. Political dissidents like Jimenes Grullón provided eager audiences with testimony about the horrors he and others endured behind bars. But when the prison closed so did the circulation of stories about Nigua's dark side, at least for a while. Accounts of Camunguá reemerged in the 1950s. Spanish exile José Almoína, a politician and writer who settled in the Dominican Republic after the Spanish Civil War, recalled Camunguá as one of the "final destinations" of the political opposition. He insisted that violence spilled beyond the borders of the cemetery, leading to burials in nearby forests, pathways, and beaches. Similar to Jimenes Grullón, Almoína likened Dominican prisons and agricultural colonies to the concentration camps of the Nazis.⁷¹ Several years later a Dominican judge named M. R. Cruz Díaz alleged that the chaos of some cemeteries in the country, like Nigua's, could be attributed to the absence of a presiding spirit, a "*Varón del cementerio*."⁷²

⁷⁰ Jimenes Grullón sheds light on the extraordinary circumstances surrounding Blanco's impromptu funeral. The festivities started when Dominican soldiers escorted the body to Santiago: "...pasearon el cadáver en el camión, por las calles más centrícas, bajo un sol de fuego. Iba sentado en una silla en el centro del carruaje. Varios soldados lo mantenían erecto y lo profonaban con burlas. Y movían a diestra y siniestra su cabeza, tirando de los cabellos ensortijados y largos." Authorities then proceeded to Blanco's hometown, Mao: "Obligarón a una familia a ceder su casa y despojaron a las tiendas de las bebidas alcohólicas. Hicieron venir de otro sitio a una orquesta campesina y ordenaron a todos los vecinos del contorno asistir a los báquicos funerales. En el mejor salón de la casa sentaron el cadáver. Colocaron un largo tabaco en su boca entreabierto, y alrededor del occiso, como si hubiera sido un ídolo de religiones primitivas, bailaron durante toda la noche, aquellos soldados ebrios, campesinos y campesinas. Todos los residentes asistieron a la macabra fiesta... Se bailó hasta el amanecer. El ritmo de los güiros y tambores era a veces roto por los gritos de júbilo de los victoriosos... Las parejas se acercaban al cadáver y el militar abofeteaba su cara lívida. O le cambiaba la posición al tabaco, entre sarcasmos e imprecaciones." The purpose, Jimenes Grullón asserted, was to "terrorize" everyone who set eyes on the spectacle to curtail conspiracies and rebellions. See Jimenes Grullón, *Una gestapo en América*, 79-81 and 144-47; and Beals, *San Antonio Light*, 87.

⁷¹ Almoína served as Trujillo's secretary. They had a falling out, which led to Almoína's exodus to Mexico in 1947. He published in favor and against Trujillo until his assassination in Mexico City in May 1960. It is suspected that Trujillo ordered the hit. See José Almoína, *Una satrapía en el Caribe* (México: Siglo XXI, 1950), 145 and 221.

⁷² Cruz Díaz suggested that the "Man of the cemetery is materially represented by an old iron cross that time has slowly destroyed." The "Man of the cemetery is the first body buried" in a graveyard. The "soul" of the first body "has magical powers" and influences "everyone who enters." He has "the power to facilitate miracles." Much of this power, however, depends on the nature of his demise. Cruz Díaz, *Supersticiones criminológicas y médicas*, 227-31.

Cemeteries formed part of the Dominican political landscape in other ways. Almoína, for example, refers to the case of the Martínez family. The patriarch and a son of the family had conspired to detonate a bomb at a cemetery where Trujillo was scheduled to attend a burial. The bomb exploded ahead of schedule. The son died at Nigua “reciting paragraphs from [Hostos’] *Moral social* from memory.” Prison authorities forced the elder Martínez to endure the loss of his child behind bars, where he also died.⁷³ Not only did Puerto Ricans like Girona Pérez help exiled Dominicans get the word out about political violence in the Dominican Republic, Puerto Ricans like Hostos contributed to inspiring activism and resistance in the first place. Dominican political dissidents started stationing themselves in Puerto Rico in the 1930s. By midcentury, the exile community there had grown enough to worry Trujillo, who dispatched spies across the Mona Passage to detect conspiracies and invasions. Such was his distrust of political awakening.

Susano Ortiz and El Despertar

Whereas in the Dominican Republic Trujillo feared providing convicts with scientific and humanistic self-improvement tools, in Puerto Rico Muñoz Marín eagerly exposed convicts to the power of a scientific, humanistic education. In Oso Blanco, Muñoz Marín’s surrogates encouraged convicts to use science and the humanities to awaken from their citizenship slumber, sharpen their intellects, and rise from their mental graves. Puerto Rico was on the eve of self-government, and convicts had a role to play in the growth and hegemony of the PPD if they played their cards right. Prison official Susano Ortiz (Figure 4 below) helped advance this agenda. He was one of the architects of rehabilitation curriculum in Oso Blanco, and contributed to the establishment of the penitentiary Classification and Treatment Board in the mid-1940s. The Board made great strides

⁷³ Almoína, *Una satrapía en el Caribe*, 112.

through the fall of 1950, when an October prison insurgency led by dissatisfied convicts and radical nationalists brought “progress” to a halt.

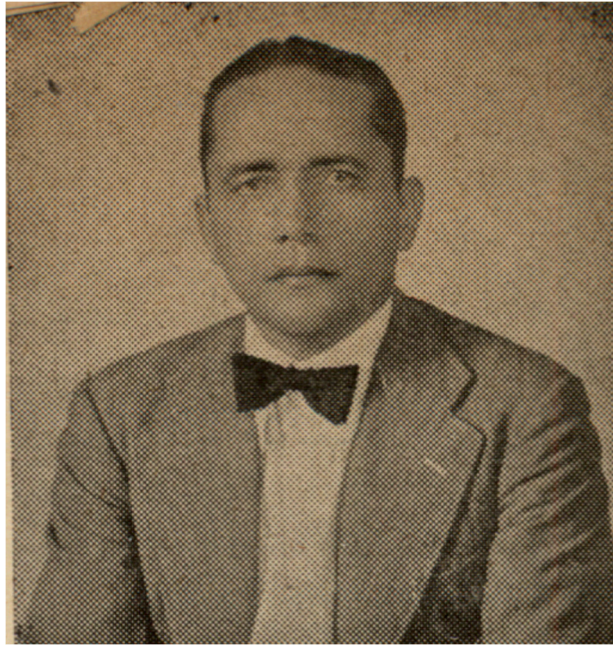


Figure 4: Susano Ortiz, *Revista de la Asociación de Maestros de Puerto Rico*, May 1949.

Although Ortiz moved on from Oso Blanco quickly, he launched innovative programming during his short tenure at the prison.⁷⁴ As a member of the Classification and Treatment Board, Ortiz published several articles in the island teachers’ association magazine. These articles concerned classification and treatment and the historical development of welfare institutions in Puerto Rico. The first article Ortiz published in December 1948 discussed the importance of classification and treatment behind bars. He engaged rehabilitative educational models emanating from New York State, specifically the American Prison Association’s *Handbook on Classification in Correctional Institutions* (1947).⁷⁵

⁷⁴ In the 1950s, Ortiz increasingly worked with juvenile delinquents instead of adult criminals. On his work in other justice venues, consult U.S. Children’s Bureau, *Directory of Public Training Schools Serving Delinquent Children* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare Administration, 1958), 69; and Puerto Rico Department of Health, *Annual Report* (San Juan: Department of Health, 1959), viii and 109.

⁷⁵ Susano Ortiz, “Clasificación de reclusos,” *Revista de la Asociación de Maestros de Puerto Rico* 7, 7 (diciembre 1948): 220.

In the article, Ortiz highlighted the different ways the criminal justice system understood classification. Whereas criminologists focused on segregation by crime, prison officials used classification as a theoretical and diagnostic technique. What classification ultimately meant, however, varied from prison to prison. The era of rehabilitative corrections, epitomized by a prison “warden surrounded by a professional staff accomplishing major goals,” was only a few decades old—the equivalent of a generation. The fundamental objective of the prison, Ortiz claimed, was the “protection of the common good.” To fulfill this task, prison authorities not only caged troublemakers, they hoped to return them to society in “better condition.” Improvement was multidimensional: educational, vocational, physical, and mental. Prison officials associated “progress” with changes in convict “attitudes and ideals.”⁷⁶

Ortiz estimated that 95 percent of convicts would return home. Therefore, their social and decision-making circuitry had to be rewired. It was the prison’s “responsibility” to make sure that all convicts were ready for release and that they would not morally wander once beyond the wall. This required a holistic approach spanning medicine, psychiatry, religion, and humanistic education. It was “impractical” and “counterproductive,” however, to provide everything to everyone. Some convicts did not require or want certain rehabilitation technologies. Further complicating things was that no single “scientific camp” established a “monopoly” on the best way to “treat” convicts.⁷⁷ Instead, disparate rehabilitative techniques reinforced one another.

Another problem was the gap between prison professionals and officials. Prison administrators often shelved or archived professional studies recommending treatment policy. The lack of coordination put convicts in “danger.” In this vein, Ortiz recalled the case of a young

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

epileptic prisoner assigned to Oso Blanco's industrial school. This confluence of factors—the lack of data, the lack of programmatic effort, and the necessity of diagnosis, treatment, and training—led to a redefinition of convict classification around midcentury. Prison authorities moved beyond analyzing prisoners (Foucault's medical gaze) to developing healing programs for convicts based on the information yielded from studying them. Programs were adapted to convict needs, monitored for progress, revisited periodically, and altered accordingly.⁷⁸

According to Ortiz, classification amounted to a coordinated path toward training and treatment that would help convicts identify and exploit their talents. However, he lamented the “imperfect development” of “the tools” required to “modify human conduct.” Crime could not be “cured,” only controlled through the modern prison. Therefore, the “constructive use of free time” through recreational activities and the humanities would positively serve rehabilitative corrections. It was in the prison warden's hands to implement cutting-edge “integrated programming,” but the warden was only as good as his team. Any “ongoing” programming had to aim to “correct deficiencies,” “develop talents,” “contribute to discipline,” and “lift spirits.”⁷⁹

Oso Blanco's warden presided over Classification and Treatment Board meetings, but he decentralized prison executive power by relegating some of it to the Director of Socio-Penal Services. Ortiz filled this post around midcentury. He interviewed convicts, studied their histories, and presented cases before the Board. When the Board deliberated, he recommended treatment regimens and proposed changes. Ortiz was concerned with the problems of convict custody and conduct. Most importantly, he sought to make sure that treatment programs were followed.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 220-21.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 221 and 243.

⁸⁰ Susano Ortiz, “Clasificación de reclusos II,” *Revista de la Asociación de Maestros de Puerto Rico* 8, 4 (mayo 1949): 124.

Ortiz trusted New York State's approach because it had firsthand experience dealing with Puerto Rican criminals. Not only did New York receive island migrants, scores of first-generation Puerto Ricans were also born in the state. Thus, New York officials "knew" how to deal with the problem. The island *Revista de Servicio Social*, for example, reproduced an article by German social scientist Erwin Schepes, who reported that Puerto Rican juvenile delinquents in New York came from poor, broken homes. Their rates of malnutrition and familial histories of tuberculosis, mental illness, and alcoholism were high. Schepes claimed that they did not pose a "serious problem." However, they had higher rates of delinquency as a group when compared to other ethnic groups.⁸¹ This kind of scholarship framed Ortiz's initiatives.

In summer 1949, Ortiz started offering convicts a course on "institutional and parole problems." The course was based on Price Chenault's and George Jennings' recently published text on these issues in Sing-Sing penitentiary in Ossining, New York. Chenault and Jennings tried to explain to convicts exactly what they needed to do to regain their freedom and thrive beyond the wall. Prisoners had to make the most of institutional life. Part of this meant they had to conform to the prevailing rules of the prison and common sense standards for adult behavior. Otherwise, firmer measures would be taken. Convicts had to understand their needs and desires, the parole system, occupational training prospects, and interacting with others. This was the purpose of corrections education: "...to make you a better person by training so that when you are released you will know how to work and get along well with other people and never come back." The intention was not to preach, but to propose basic facts about the journey to becoming "qualified"

⁸¹ Erwin Schepes, "Niños Puertorriqueños en la Ciudad de Nueva York," *Revista de Servicio Social* 11, 1 (enero 1950): 28-29. Also see his "Puerto Rican Delinquent Boys in New York City," *Social Science Review* 23, 1 (March 1949): 51-61.

and “better.”⁸² Ortiz translated and adopted Chenault’s and Jennings’ text in Oso Blanco. It was “full of informative data” about life after social and civic death. These handbooks circulated as much as Bibles and other literature in Oso Blanco.⁸³ In late 1949, the *Revista de Servicio Social* reported that Ortiz’s course had “awakened the interest and enthusiasm of the prison population.”⁸⁴

Ortiz’s model for rehabilitation blended different approaches to secular healing. A convict named Max P. reflected on this “missionary labor.” He especially singled out the contributions of social workers: “I personally have received aid from the Honorable Classification and Treatment Board and I have learned to benefit from the scientific interpretations of [social worker] Mercedes Ossorio de Giráldez. I owe my mental orientation and adjustment to normal life to her.” Max P. concluded that “living on the margins of society is not life.” Alongside Ortiz, social workers like Ossorio de Giráldez attempted to persuade convicts to become “useful for society.” They believed that beyond a religiously-inspired sense of guilt, to be “offended by one’s transgressions” truly represented rehabilitation.⁸⁵

The “missionary labor” of the Classification and Treatment Board reached thousands of prisoners. In September 1949, Ortiz disclosed rehabilitation statistics for the fiscal year. The Classification and Treatment Board met 57 times and reviewed 574 cases. They classified 477 convicts. Board members debated 20 cases about transfers to the Guavate agricultural colony in Cayey. They eventually sent 56 convicts to Guavate and one to the minor’s prison in Ponce. The Board recommended only five convicts for parole. Two hundred seventy inmates visited the prison

⁸² Price Chenault and George Jennings, *Institutional and Parole Problems of Inmates* (New York State Department of Corrections: Sing-Sing School of Printing, 1945).

⁸³ “Una nueva actividad del Sr. Ortiz,” *El Despertar* (junio 1949): inside front cover.

⁸⁴ “Visitando las agencias,” *Revista de Servicio Social* 10, 4 (octubre 1949): 23.

⁸⁵ Max P., “En torno a la clasificación,” *El Despertar* (junio 1949): 16. More broadly, see Lydia Esther Santiago, “Experiencia de una trabajadora médico-social evangélica,” *Puerto Rico Evangélico* 37 (25 abril 1949): 6-7.

recreation room. The library received 240 convicts regularly. One hundred forty-nine participated in prison sports, 53 of these beyond the wall. These latter prisoners were deemed talented enough to warrant exposure to island-wide competition and traveling leagues.⁸⁶

Ortiz was proud of the “progress” made by the Classification and Treatment Board. Several benefits were already apparent, including: convict segregation by crime, the improved supervision and control of convicts, efficient institutional discipline and convict productivity, and a more organized, coordinated, and integrated treatment regime. These changes resulted in “receptive” inmates. Like Max P., Ortiz referred to the labors of the Classification and Treatment Board as missionary work. He noted that the Board wanted “to be judged” by the public. The people “can encourage or stone us.”⁸⁷ His crown jewel, however, was *El Despertar*. Ortiz welcomed inmate interest in developing the prison magazine. The periodical was one of the more consequential initiatives island prison authorities launched to keep the penitentiary from unraveling, at least among the literate population of Oso Blanco. *El Despertar* chronicled ongoing penal reform and ceased operation in fall 1950. This coincided with the events of late October, when nationalists tried to start a revolution in the mountainous interior of the island.

A parallel insurgency in Oso Blanco had fatal consequences and dozens of prisoners escaped.⁸⁸ After the violence, there was a moratorium on *El Despertar*. While it existed, however, the prisoner magazine was vibrant and full of rich content. Initially, convicts edited the periodical under the supervision of Ortiz and Warden Rivera. By the end of 1949, inmates worked with a

⁸⁶ Susano Ortiz, “Clasificación de reclusos III,” *Revista de la Asociación de Maestros de Puerto Rico* 8, 5 (septiembre 1949): 147.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 153.

⁸⁸ See late October and early November 1950 editions of mainstream newspapers like *El Imparcial* and *El Mundo* for articles about the insurgencies and the recovery of escaped inmates. The *Report of the Attorney General of Puerto Rico* (1951) suggests that 108 convicts escaped. All of them were captured except one. Two guards died. A subsequent mutiny by inmates led to a fire. Thereafter, the National Guard intervened to restore order. See p. 57 and 59.

“censorship board” comprised of prison guards, teachers, and social workers. *El Despertar* was filled with anecdotes, analyses, and drawings about prison life. Its pages included poetry, sonnets, sayings, short stories, and community histories. Folklore and storytelling were popular themes, especially “Typical Dominican stories” by Yoryi Lockward.⁸⁹ *El Despertar* had regular columns like “Looking onto the patio” and institutional news. Prison authorities and convicts regularly contributed articles about medicine, classification and treatment, and recreation. Magazine articles reflected on people and places, religion and science, infidelity and indifference, problems like alcoholism, deeds like charity, and the holiday season. The periodical also included sections on prison sports leagues. Humor, puzzles, and cartoons littered the pages of *El Despertar* as well.

If anything, *El Despertar* proved to prisoners that it was worth their while to pursue awakening as defined by the state. From the perspective of the prison, to awaken meant to conform to the prevailing order, to follow a colonially-inspired blueprint for populist citizenship, which included literacy, spectacle expression, and political participation beyond the wall. To dig up their mental graves, convicts engaged the humanities specifically. Music, dance, theatre, and film were but a few of the many disciplines they accessed. Choirs and musicians visited Oso Blanco and gave performances. Artistic troupes made appearances. Prison authorities screened movies. Convicts even started groups that responded to their own humanistic interests, including painting, literature, and drama. While not all prisoners indulged in the humanities orgy, that they had humanistic options in the first place was pivotal.

Ortiz submitted the following statistics about Oso Blanco’s emerging culture of awakening in November 1949. In a prison accommodating more than 1,600 inmates, officials conducted 1,833 “social orientation” interviews; treated 205 inmates “in the educational aspect”; and interviewed

⁸⁹ Sonny, “Cuentos típicos dominicanos (Yoryi Lockward): Pum poi la boca,” *El Despertar* (agosto 1949): 12.

795 about reading programs. Seven hundred sixteen borrowed books from the library, while 683 visited. Twenty-seven convicts prepared to take correspondence courses. Two hundred nineteen were interviewed about music programs. Thirty-six inmates participated in live performances in prison. Twelve participated on radio shows transmitted from Oso Blanco. Officials interviewed 987 about religious programming, and 876 about movies. Almost 1,100 attended movie screenings and cultural events; 589 joined sport and game communities; and six painted.⁹⁰ As these numbers indicate, the humanities were an experientially-rich component of Oso Blanco's constellation of redemptive practices. Although a significant number of inmates never had occasion to embrace them, many did and reveled in freedom of expression, imagination, and play in the process. Indeed, the broader humanities gave penitentiary science a formal educational dimension and outlet.

Film and Art Behind Bars

If the humanities were a tree, then the visual arts would be a branch of said tree. Media types like film, drawing, and painting were among the smorgasbord of humanities available to convicts in Oso Blanco. In February 1933, the island's leading English-language periodical, *Porto Rico Progress*, published an article called "The Presidio." The article shed light on the role of film in convict recreation and the rehabilitation process. It also outlined how prisons like Oso Blanco obtained the latest blockbuster movies and how inmates reacted to them. Island motion picture dealers sometimes provided films to prison administrators free of charge. Urban creole elites also lent a fiscal hand. Each film cost \$3, "a government expense of less than a penny for every three prisoners."⁹¹

⁹⁰ Susano Ortiz, "Estadísticas," *El Despertar* (noviembre 1949): 4 and 14.

⁹¹ See "The Presidio," *Porto Rico Progress* 31, 5 (February 2, 1933): 8-9.

Prison authorities screened silent movies to remind convicts of a freedom lost, of a time when they could choose to frequent the theater, a place that led to other adventures and heightened the sensation of doing what one wanted. But behind bars the theater and all that entailed were out of the question. Escaping reality through film took on new meaning when one was confined. As *Porto Rico Progress* editors put it, prison officials teased and taught inmates about the meaning of freedom and getting better through movies. Film addressed two “grim” prison realities: societal prejudice against (ex)convicts and inhumane living conditions. In contrast to Spanish colonial times, “Americanism” suggested a new prison “with cells and other improvements,” including recreational opportunities and steady access to film and the humanities.⁹²

While deteriorating conditions permeated prisons like La Princesa, “cheap” luxuries like film still formed part of prison culture. *Porto Rico Progress* editors observed that convicts waxed poetic after watching movies. They also followed theatre, another branch of the humanistic tree, and knew about certain actors: “The *cine* at el Presidio does not talk. Greta Garbo and the elder Douglas Fairbanks are favorites.” Journalists watched the silent film *Over the Hill* with prisoners. They observed convicts as the film swept “a wave of emotion” over them. Inmates “hated” the “reverend villain,” who spent the money the protagonist had sent to his mother. Convicts “cried” when the hero’s mother went to the poorhouse to scrub floors. And there was pride “by no means different from the enthusiastic pride in the free man’s eyes” when “the good-bad brother met the bad-good brother over the hill.”⁹³

Additional favorites at the prison cinema included Nick Stuart and Lois Moran in *Joy Street*. Convicts “smiled” at Victor McLaglen’s performance in *The River Pirate*. They were

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ *Ibid.*

“proud” watching Helen Twelvetrees in *Blue Skies*. They “laughed” with Sammy Cohen learning *Why Sailors Go Wrong*. They “enjoyed” Barry Norton in *The Exalted Flapper* and Will Rogers in *They Had to See Paris*. Charles Farrell and Mary Duncan were “lovely” in *City Girl*. However, convicts alleged Farrell and Janet Gaynor “did it better” in *Lucky Stars*. Frank Borzage’s “great silent picture,” *The River*, caused a “sensation” among inmates.⁹⁴

Of all the film stars of the era, La Princesa convicts singled out Englishman Charlie Chaplin. Chaplin “has never received a token of admiration in his life equal to that bestowed on him by the living dead at El Presidio,” *Porto Rico Progress* exclaimed.⁹⁵ Convicts considered him “the greatest figure in film.” They “regretted” the “long intervals” between his movies but praised him nonetheless. The themes of Chaplin’s films piqued the curiosity of inmates while entertaining and challenging them intellectually. Between the late 1920s and 1940 alone, inmates would have been exposed to films like *Metropolis* (1927), *City Lights* (1931), *Modern Times* (1936), and *The Great Dictator* (1940), films that reflected changing and increasingly technological times.⁹⁶ Prison authorities screened movies for hundreds of inmates on the penitentiary patio through midcentury, as evidenced by the convict drawing in Figure 5 below.

On the other hand, it took simpler expressions of art longer to gain an official foothold in Oso Blanco. Even so, several convicts aspired to become artists. They pursued art by producing it for *El Despertar*. Convicts drew pictures of the classification and treatment process, publishing portraits every edition. Some convicts also wrote articles about art. Before arriving at the penitentiary, for example, convict José M. N. wondered if the prison contained makeshift or formal

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

art studios. He believed prisoners could use art to rethink their personal narratives. However, when he arrived at Oso Blanco, he learned that the prison lacked artistic spaces. He pointed to the fact that North American prisons had art facilities, and found it hard to believe that Puerto Rico's did not.⁹⁷ The island's colonial status was implied in this remark.

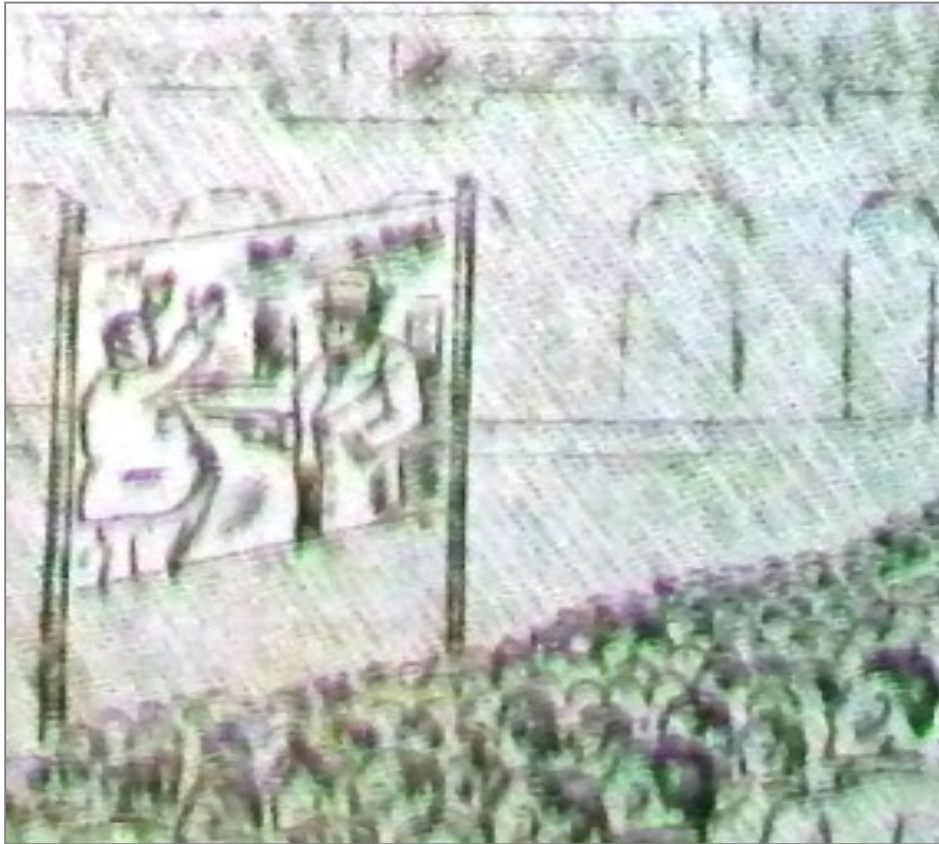


Figure 5: José M. N. and/or Ángel L. R. R., Oso Blanco movie screening, *El Despertar*, July-August 1950.

José M. N. did not self-censor or hold back. He questioned why a “civilized” place like Puerto Rico, under the auspices of the U.S., did not take its rightful place among the rest of the global north. Prison guards and officials, including Warden Rivera, liked art. Further, convicts produced art where they could, even on prison walls. These circumstances inspired José M. N. to question why convicts lacked a formal space to cultivate their artistic talents. An image also

⁹⁷ José M. N., “La penitenciaría y el arte de la pintura,” *El Despertar* (enero 1950): 27.

accompanies his article. In the image, a convict paints a woman. The portrait-in-progress stands on an easel about equal in height to the convict. He has everything he needs within arm's reach: brushes, paint, and rags. Two paintings adorn the wall. The window is barricaded.⁹⁸ The image's subtext infers whether enclosed bodies can be free. This is a reminder of the dialectics embedded in practices of artistic liberation behind bars. Such practices confirm the elusive and illusory nature of freedom.

Perhaps most importantly, José M. N. recalled the prison library as a potential hub of institutional creativity and congregation. He viewed it as more than a repository of books. Indeed, artists planned to gather there on February 18, 1950 to discuss their aspirations, but in the end met in a nearby hallway. They asked prison authorities for materials, some of which were available. Finding a space inside the prison to pursue art remained an obstacle, however. José M. N. proposed projects wherever the island Justice Department needed labor, including outside the prison. Art, he insisted, could offer convicts an honest wage, a form of vocational training, and humanistic treatment.⁹⁹ These cumulative activities, authorities believed, prepared convicts for life after social death and the difficult task of altering public perceptions when released.

Libraries and Literature

While film was among the most popular of the humanities behind bars, Oso Blanco staff could withhold it as a luxury. They had the law behind them. Oso Blanco's 1933 rulebook did not stipulate film. But it did decree three articles on the institutional library. Article 110 established that "official" and "specific donations" of books formed the basis of the library. Prison authorities

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ José M. N., "El Arte," *El Despertar* (febrero 1950): 24.

purchased texts and kept them under lock and key. Article 111 gave the warden the power to “exclude” certain books, magazines, and newspapers, especially those having “nothing to do with the educational and moral rehabilitation” of convicts. Officials examined all books entering the prison. They censored the library and adjusted it to the nascent populist state’s standards. Article 112 detailed the post of librarian, which was filled by a “trusted” convict who created a registry and supervised the overall flow of books.¹⁰⁰

Despite the early attention prison authorities granted the humanities in island prisons, it took more than a decade for a culture of awakening to bear fruit. In 1933, *Porto Rico Progress* reported that the prospects of humanistic rehabilitation were “stranger than fiction.” La Princesa’s library, for example, lacked texts. Among the most popular available books were novels about the politics of incarceration and redemption. Convicts read Victor Hugo’s *Les Misérables* and Eduardo Zamacois’ *Los vivos muertos*. Hugo’s was “probably the best-known novel at El Presidio.”¹⁰¹ Zamacois’ novel details prison life in Miguel Primo de Rivera’s Spain and the limits of convict redemption. One Puerto Rican prisoner observed that “except for the unavoidable differences on account of environment, conditions in the Insular Penitentiary are like those described by Zamacois.”¹⁰² Zamacois’ book was relatively new to Puerto Rican convicts. The Cuban-Spanish writer had published the novel a few years earlier. To write *Los vivos muertos*, he visited and lived in Spanish prisons. The novel formed part of a series of works chronicling the foundations of the Spanish Civil War. It interrogated Spain’s criminal justice system and estimated that 30 percent of

¹⁰⁰ *Reglamento para el régimen y gobierno de la Penitenciaría de Puerto Rico en Río Piedras*, 22.

¹⁰¹ “The Presidio,” 8-9; and Colombán Rosario, *Problema de la criminalidad*, 170. *Les Misérables* is a French historical novel first published in 1862. The story begins in 1815 and culminates in the 1832 June Rebellion in Paris. It follows the struggles of Jean Valjean, an ex-convict, and his experience of redemption. Examining the nature of law and grace, the novel sheds light on French history, urban design, politics, moral philosophy, antimonarchism, justice, religion, and romantic and familial love.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

prisoners in the country did not belong behind bars.¹⁰³ Zamacois' methods earned him the respect of Puerto Rican convicts. His evenhanded portrayal of their experience struck a chord with them.

Puerto Rican convicts enjoyed reading *Los vivos muertos* in the 1930s not only because it accurately narrated prison conditions, but because it illustrated that a superfluous desire for justice in an unjust society and political system could land one in prison. The text also shows the extent to which convicts depend on nostalgia, memory, and faith to get through their incarceration. Tragically, the protagonist of *Los vivos muertos*, Martín Santoyo, exits prison after serving 28 years only to learn that the bulk of his family and friends are dead and that he has no employment prospects. He returns to San Miguel de los Reyes prison in Valencia in search of work. Only then does he realize that "The prison had killed him and he did not even know it."¹⁰⁴

"Living death" was not restricted to the Spanish Atlantic. René Belbenoit's *Dry Guillotine* (1938) projected a similar view of convicts. This memoir recounts Belbenoit's 15-year prison term at Devil's Island (Cayenne) in French Guiana, a penal colony notorious for being used for the internal exile of political prisoners and from which he tried to escape five times. *Dry Guillotine* portrays the horrid conditions in which prisoners live exposed to disease, wildlife, hunger, torture, and leprosy. Of the 80,000 men sentenced to the French penal colony, some 65,000 (or 80 percent) died there.¹⁰⁵ The notion of "living dead," as imagined by Zamacois and Belbenoit, contrasts sharply with how convicts like Inglés Caraballo sought to overcome social and civic death. But the works of these cosmopolitan intellectuals also increased awareness about the collective plight of convicts in the Caribbean and around the Atlantic. Without their contributions, it is difficult to

¹⁰³ Zamacois, *Los vivos muertos*; and José Ignacio Cordero Gómez, "La obra literaria de Eduardo Zamacois," Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Departamento de Literatura Española, 2007, 35, 66, 121, and 436.

¹⁰⁴ Cordero Gómez, "La obra literaria de Eduardo Zamacois," 436-39.

¹⁰⁵ René Belbenoit, *Dry Guillotine: Fifteen Years among the Living Dead* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1938).

imagine the culture of awakening that came to define rehabilitation in prisons like Oso Blanco around midcentury.

Despite these potentially redeeming services, Oso Blanco convicts did not enjoy a solid library until the late 1940s. The *Revista de Servicio Social* reported in July 1949 that a group of students from Puerto Rico's Polytechnic Institute had visited Oso Blanco and determined that the institutional library warranted expansion.¹⁰⁶ In the September 1949 edition of *El Despertar*, magazine editors included a list of newly acquired prison library books. Twenty-two books by French novelist, playwright, and poet Jules Verne had arrived.¹⁰⁷ Verne's adventure and science fiction novels appealed to Oso Blanco convicts because of the way they warped time and afforded them an imaginary reprieve from their sentences. In addition to novels by Verne, several works by self-help guru Orison Swett Marden arrived.¹⁰⁸ Religious texts also circulated in Oso Blanco. One prisoner read a book about the life of the Islamic prophet Muhammad.¹⁰⁹ However, religious texts tended to reflect the hegemonic island faith, Roman Catholicism. Director of Recreation Manuel López de Victoria promoted a religious book called *El deseado de todas las gentes*, for example. An Oso Blanco cellblock leader read the book aloud every night so that convicts could have "spiritual edification." His doing so facilitated their contemplation of biblical precepts and lore.

¹⁰⁶ "Visitando las agencias," *Revista de Servicio Social* 10, 3 (julio 1949): 27.

¹⁰⁷ *El Despertar* (septiembre 1949): 24. Spanish translations included: *Cinco semanas en globo*; *De la tierra a la luna*; *Dos años de vacaciones*; *En el país de las pieles*; *Héctor Servadac*; *La vuelta al mundo en 80 días*; *Los hijos del Capitán Grant*; *Miguel Strogoff*; *El soberbio Orinoco*; *Escuela de los Robinsones*; *El naufragio de Cynthia*; *El chancellor*; *Claudio Bombarnac*; *La esfinge de los hielos*; *La caza del meteoro*; *Los hermanos Kip*; *La casa de vapor*; *La jangada*; *Matías Sandorf*; *Ante la bandera*; *Clovis Dardentor*; and *Aventuras del Capitán Hatteras*.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.* Works included: *Actitud victoriosa*; *Energía mental*; *Paz, poder y abundancia*; *Perfeccionamiento individual*; *La alegría del vivir*; *Abrirse paso*; *Los caminos del amor*; *Atractivos personales*; *La vida optimista*; *Defiende tus energías*; and *La mujer y el hogar*. Swett Marden was a U.S.-based inspirational author who wrote about achieving success in life through common-sense principles and virtues. Many of his ideas were rooted in New Thought philosophy. He published more than 50 books and booklets. See Margaret Connolly, *The Life Story of Orison Swett Marden: A Man Who Benefited Men* (New York: Thomas Crowell Co., 1925).

¹⁰⁹ Expediente del confinado Ramón Rosa Rodríguez, Caja 480, SEC, FDJ, AGPR.

Convicts wanted to expand the practice of common reading to all prison galleries. They proposed diversifying what was read during these sessions as well.¹¹⁰

Oso Blanco's library grew rapidly in 1949. By summer 1950, the library was thriving, as the convict drawing in Figure 6 below suggests. Book classification and distribution improved. Texts of all kinds entertained, educated, and counseled convicts.¹¹¹ In a summer 1950 article in *El Despertar*, inmate Joaquín R. B. V. suggested that this was a sign of a "good library," a diverse "collection of books, newspapers and magazines, enough to meet the needs of the attending public." He reported that convicts visited the library to forget "what brings them down" and to expand their "mental horizons." Thus, he hoped the prison library would continue to grow.¹¹²

Convicts understood the library as a focal point of psychological orientation and rehabilitation. In the September 1950 edition of *El Despertar*, prisoner José A. M. S. noted that the "individual who pursues concrete reform [through the humanities] can be compared to a spiritual traveler wandering the desert." This traveler "is a victim of the inclement sun and the difficulty of finding the liquid gold that will quench his thirst. The sun that burns his body is repentance, the missing water is the lack of stimulus and miseducation, and the desert is the heart's desire." These travelers found "refuge" in the prison library, a place that turned men away from "perverted thoughts" and redirected them towards "renaissance thinking" and the "recovery of

¹¹⁰ "Nota del Director Recreativo," *El Despertar* (octubre 1949): 27. Chapters of *El deseado de todas las gentes* included "Dios con nosotros," "El pueblo escogido," "La niñez de Cristo," "En las bodas de Canaan," "Encarcelamiento y muerte de Juan," "La visita de Pascua," "El bautismo," "La tentación," "La victoria," "Junto al pozo de Jacob," and "El sermón del monte."

¹¹¹ In Frank Darabont's 1994 film *The Shawshank Redemption*, while organizing the prison library several convicts played by Tim Robbins (Andy Dufresne), Morgan Freeman (Ellis Boyd Redding), and others discuss Alexandre Dumas' *The Count of Monte Cristo*, an adventure novel published in 1844. It takes place in Mediterranean Europe and centers around a man who is wrongfully imprisoned, escapes from jail, acquires a fortune, and seeks revenge on those responsible for his imprisonment. Once Andy identifies the book and explains it is about a prison break, Ellis asks if they should file the book under educational. Oso Blanco convicts read this book around midcentury.

¹¹² Joaquín R. B. V., "Orientación sobre el plan de clasificación y tratamiento," 21-24.

their innocence.” The library was a “fountain of wisdom,” José A. M. S. stressed. Whoever “bathed in its waters with faith and love” could change, for “big ideas dwell in libraries.” A “good book is humanity’s best friend.” Books served as “advisers” in the absence of parents who were not “cultured” enough to teach their children. José A. M. S. praised the “ancient teachers” in whose works rested the culture of past, current, and future generations.¹¹³



Figure 6: José M. N. and/or Ángel L. R. R., Oso Blanco library, *El Despertar*, July-August 1950.

The knowledge and wisdom of antiquity could be found in Oso Blanco library books. Inglés Caraballo, for example, read widely about the Spanish colonial past. His imaginary bookshelf included Santa Teresa de Jesús’ *El libro de la vida*, the reflections of a sixteenth-century nun in Spain, and a text about Santa Rosa de Lima, a beautiful seventeenth-century Puerto Rican-Peruvian colonist and charitable lay member of the Dominican Order.¹¹⁴ A young mixed-race

¹¹³ José A. M. S., “En torno a la biblioteca,” *El Despertar* (septiembre 1950): 11-12.

¹¹⁴ See fn. 1.

convict named Enrique Morales Carrasquillo similarly “rediscovered” the Spanish colonial past through physician Manuel Zeno Gandía’s *La charca*, a historical novel about impoverished life in the remote and mountainous coffee regions of Puerto Rico. This novel details the injustices suffered by poor farmhands under rich landowners. It formed part of Zeno Gandía’s “chronicles of a sick world,” a series of books about Puerto Rico in the late nineteenth century.¹¹⁵ Other convicts read the classic novels of French-Caribbean author Alexandre Dumas and Colombian writer Jorge Isaacs.

José A. M. S. pondered whether readers would find his notion of ancient intellectual genealogies absurd, especially given that Oso Blanco offered other materially beneficial vocations to pursue. He argued that one could make themselves “a new man” in the prison library. It allowed men to “confront their passions.” Books were of no value if they did not teach one how to do this. Convicts with “will” could learn to read and write and therefore control and express their passions. The library made this possible by making the “products of the immortalized” available to convicts in “good faith”: “We are each born with a ray of light which serves as our guide, and it is will. When our will wavers, the efforts of noble pedagogues emerge and help us deal with contempt.” José A. M. S. found intellectual freedom in the library and hoped others would also.¹¹⁶

Meanwhile, across the Mona Passage in the Dominican Republic convicts had less access to library books. But Dominicans were as curious about the literary tradition of living death as their Puerto Rican counterparts. Intellectuals like Jimenes Grullón and Cruz Díaz, for instance, recalled a late-nineteenth-century autobiographical novel by Fyodor Dostoevsky called *La casa de los muertos* (1862). The novel portrays convict life in a Siberian labor camp. It is a loosely-knit

¹¹⁵ Expediente del confinado Enrique Morales Carrasquillo, Caja 478, SEC, FDJ, AGPR.

¹¹⁶ José A. M. S., “En torno a la biblioteca,” 11-12.

collection of facts, events, and philosophical discussion organized by theme rather than a linear narrative. Dostoevsky himself experienced exile in a prison labor camp following his involvement in the Petrashevsky Circle.¹¹⁷ These experiences allowed him to describe with great authenticity the conditions of prison life and the characters of convicts.¹¹⁸

Cruz Díaz used Dostoevsky to understand Dominican problems. Both writers underscored the “horror” of convict “cohabitation.” They interpreted the “loss of freedom” as “terrible.” This hit convicts in the most mundane and intimate of ways: in having to share cells, hygienic facilities, and other prison spaces. As Cruz Díaz put it, “In the prison there are men with whom no one wants to live.” The mingling of “common” and “habitual” prisoners meant that convicts would be more capable of crime when released. Cruz Díaz also connected Russian penal colonies to Dominican prison labor camps specializing in agriculture. To him, these were the “best penitentiary regime.” Drawing comparisons with Russia positioned the Dominican Republic among the first- and second-world nations of the global north while subtly praising Trujillo’s prison policies.¹¹⁹

Agricultural colonies allowed prisoners to keep a portion of what they produced. Otherwise one ran the risk of killing worker enthusiasm. Cruz Díaz suggested that such transactions energized convicts because economy was central to one’s sanity and freedom. Citing Dostoevsky, he noted that currency “is priceless for a man completely deprived of real freedom.” Having something in

¹¹⁷ The Petrashevsky Circle was a secret group of progressive commoner-intellectuals based in St. Petersburg organized by supporters of French utopian socialist ideals who were opposed to tsarist autocracy. Together they formed a cross-class coalition of writers, teachers, students, petty government officials, and military servicemen.

¹¹⁸ Like Dostoevsky, the narrator of *The House of the Dead*, Aleksandr Petrovich Goryanchikov, is of noble lineage. This causes him trouble behind bars, especially with the peasant majority. He witnesses horrifying episodes of administrative brutality and hears the crime stories of other convicts. Gradually, Goryanchikov overcomes his circumstances and disdain for the lower classes. He undergoes a spiritual reawakening that culminates in his release from the prison camp. By the end of the novel, he sympathizes with the plight of convicts, expressing admiration for their energy, ingenuity, and talent. Goryanchikov concludes that the prison is not only tragic but cannibalistic.

¹¹⁹ Cruz Díaz, *Supersticiones criminológicas y médicas*, 318 and 323.

their pockets “consoled” convicts, even if they could not spend it. Cruz Díaz understood Argentine agricultural penal colonies in the same vein. He discussed Tucumán and praised the colony for “the relative freedom” it offered convicts, including conjugal living arrangements. On the other hand, Jimenes Grullón distinguished between Dostoevsky’s novel and the Dominican criminal justice system. He believed Dominicans had a better “communion of ideas” compared to the Russians.¹²⁰ Unsurprisingly, living death varied geographically, culturally, and politically.

Dangerous Libraries

Compared to Puerto Rico, there is less evidence about the nature of Dominican classification and treatment in Nigua, let alone the books prisoners read. Unlike Puerto Rican convicts, who had access to a robust penitentiary library, most Dominican convicts did not. Nor did they seem to have a deep interest in reading as defined by elites and the state. Some convicts managed to read extensively behind bars, namely political prisoners. Jimenes Grullón, for instance, suggests that political prisoners were more likely to read than “common” convicts. Common prisoners, however, helped smuggle books into prison for “cultured” inmates. Thanks to their efforts, Jimenes Grullón could overcome civic death. Literature kept him productive and from obsessing over the real death that permeated Dominican prisons in the 1930s.

Behind bars, Jimenes Grullón read positivist-tinged scholarship in the fields of history, constitutional law, and sociology. He consulted Guillermo Ferrero’s *Grandeza y decadencia de los romanos*. Reading Friedrich Nietzsche, he claimed, led him to certain conclusions about the political work he and others had to do to “save” the country. This work required unifying

¹²⁰ *Ibid*, 17-18, 308, and 324.

“spiritually liberal traditionalists” and a “renewed youth.”¹²¹ Jimenes Grullón also read extensively about what it meant to be a political prisoner. He did so to understand not only how they overcame the odds but to identify points of similarity and contrast with his own experiences. His imaginary bookshelf included Cuban nationalist José Martí’s *El presidio político en Cuba*; Dostoevsky’s *La casa de los muertos*; Russian revolutionary and Marxist writer Victor Serge’s *Los hombres en la cárcel*; Puerto Rican-Cuban journalist Pablo de la Torriente Brau’s *Presidio modelo* (Cuba); and Irish novelist, playwright, and poet Oscar Wilde’s *La balada de la cárcel de Reading*.¹²²

By midcentury, it had become harder for Dominican convicts to obtain sanctioned literature. The Trujillo government increased its scrutiny of publications, which had to be approved by the state before hitting the market or circulating in society at large. Dominican authorities deemed literature that failed to meet these criteria non-compliant and potentially seditious and dangerous. This coincided with some of the discourses of the early Cold War, namely the threat of communism and other subversive social and political forces. These forces shaped the trajectory of the Dominican political opposition as early as the 1930s.

The story of one convict and his mother sheds light on the culture of literary suspicion that characterized the Dominican Republic in the middle decades of the twentieth century. The case concerns the private libraries of feminist artist and writer Delia Weber (Figure 7 below) and her son Rodolfo Juan Coiscou Weber.¹²³ In fall 1952, Weber wrote to Trujillo on behalf of Rodolfo. Legal authorities had recently accused Rodolfo of clandestinely selling “illegal literature of subversive tendencies.” They sentenced him to two years behind bars and five years of police

¹²¹ Jimenes Grullón, *Una gestapo en América*, 224, 247, 265, and 299.

¹²² Jimenes Grullón also managed to read works by French novelist and communist Henri Barbusse, a close friend of Albert Einstein’s, and Panait Istrati, a Romanian working-class writer. See *Una gestapo en América*, 9.

¹²³ Delia Weber (1900-1982) married into the family of Dominican essayist, philosopher, humanist, philologist and literary critic Pedro Henríquez Ureña in the 1920s. Rodolfo Juan was one of four children.

supervision. In her letter, Delia insisted that Rodolfo was innocent and “loyal” to “the Chief.” Thanks to Trujillo, her children attended university and had professions. She and her family could never repay him.¹²⁴



Figure 7: Delia Weber, photo by Salvador Castillo C., 1950; adapted from Ylonka Nacidit Perdomo, <http://acento.com.do/2015/opinion/8230880-el-arte-de-delia-weber-iii/> [2015].

Weber claimed that Rodolfo always sold their books in “broad daylight and publicly.” None of the literature was “subversive.” Clients could confirm this. Editorial Américalee, a leftist publishing company based in Buenos Aires, was one of the flashpoints in the case against the Webers. So were the undercurrents of Soviet communism and Latin American Marxism “buried” in their books. In her letter to Trujillo, Weber deflected talk of subversion by admiring works

¹²⁴ See Secretario de Estado de la Presidencia Telésforo R. Calderón al Señor Procurador General de la República, “Caso del nombrado Rodolfo Coiscou Weber, Carta de la señora Delia Weber de Ciudad Trujillo y su anexo,” 20 noviembre 1952, Caja IT: 2903478, SEJIP, SPN, FP, AGN.

produced by government officials like future president Joaquín Balaguer, especially his book *El Cristo de la libertad*, an account of the life of national hero Juan Pablo Duarte. But Weber could not spin her way out of every text. She found herself defending Waldo Frank's *América hispana*, for example.¹²⁵ Referring to a recent scandal involving Frank in the Southern Cone, Weber posited that he was asked to leave Argentina because of his “aggressive political stance,” not because of his scholarship.¹²⁶ The two were not mutually exclusive from the point of view of the Dominican state, however.

Notwithstanding the “threat” Frank's scholarship posed to Trujillo's government, Weber noted that San Cristóbal library had a copy of *América hispana*. She encouraged authorities to conduct interviews there and elsewhere if necessary. Her singling out of San Cristóbal library was strategic. The town was Trujillo's birthplace. The dictator owned two houses in the community, one of which (Castle on the Hill) has since been converted to a police training academy, and fittingly, a national penitentiary school. By mentioning San Cristóbal library, Weber implied that Trujillo did not know his own backyard. This subtle insult to the dictator's intelligence partially explains why she and Rodolfo had to go to great lengths to prove his innocence. Rodolfo's prison experience did not result in physical death, however.¹²⁷

¹²⁵ *Ibid.* Frank was a Jewish-American novelist, historian, and literary and social critic known for his studies of Spanish and Latin American literature and culture. He envisioned an organic synthesis of the two Americas: North and South, Anglo and Hispanic. He is typically regarded as a cultural bridge between the U.S. and Latin America. See Michael A. Ogorzaly, *Waldo Frank: Prophet of Hispanic Regeneration* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1994).

¹²⁶ Frank's interest in the region dated to the 1920s, when he developed a thesis about the “spiritual strengths” of Spain and Latin America. It won him acclaim in Latin America when he toured there in 1929. His lecture tour was organized by the University of Mexico, Argentine editor Samuel Glusberg, and Peruvian cultural theorist José Carlos Mariátegui. Due to his successful reception in South America, the U.S. State Department asked him to tour the region in 1942 and discourage local governments from allying with the Nazi government during World War II. In Argentina, Frank denounced the pro-Nazi drift of the government. *Ibid.* Also see Frank A. Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideas: U.S. Foreign Policy and Cultural Relations, 1938-1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

¹²⁷ Rodolfo went on to become a major figure in Dominican letters later in the twentieth century. See *Historia de la cultura dominicana* (Santo Domingo: Editora Blanco Weber, 1983); *La generación del 48 en la literatura dominicana* (Santo Domingo: Casa Weber, 1985); *Se están comiendo a Margarita y otros canibalismos: cuentos, vivencias*,

The Webers had been on the government's radar since the early 1940s. In 1941, Delia and Rodolfo established the Alpha & Omega Recreational Literary Club. Held in their home, the club operated as a literary and music salon, where affiliates performed and critiqued artistic works. When a decade later Dominican police officers raided the Weber residence and its libraries, which eclipsed more than 3,000 total volumes, they confiscated Rodolfo's Frank-inspired thesis along with other materials. Among the texts seized, Weber stressed "Promesas de un revolucionario," an unpublished collection of nationalist poems. It was a "poetic and creative collaboration between mother and son." Weber also mentioned two copies of Gustav Landauer's *Incitación al socialismo* (Editorial Américalee, 1947). Landauer's work especially alarmed authorities, as he was one of the leading theorists on anarchism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Weber, however, suggested that *Incitación* contained "a criticism of communism and anarchism." And most fundamentally, it concerned "German problems," not Dominican ones.¹²⁸

Rodolfo's "small library" consisted of bills, love letters, and books. Dominican police seized nine books from his quarters. One of them was Frank's *América hispana*. Six others were written by John Roderigo dos Passos, an American novelist and artist of Madeiran-Portuguese descent active in the first half of the twentieth century. These included *Rosinante vuelve al camino* (1922); *El gran dinero* (1936); *Hombre joven a la ventura* (1939); *El número uno* (1943); and two other titles.¹²⁹ The content of these novels must have concerned the Trujillo dictatorship. *El gran*

poemas (Santo Domingo: Casa Weber, 1986); and *Homenaje a Eugenio María de Hostos en el 150 aniversario de su nacimiento* (Santo Domingo: Casa Weber, 1989).

¹²⁸ Consult fn. 124. Scholar Richard J. F. Day has noted that Landauer was an anarchist, anti-capitalist revolutionary who was killed for what he believed. He called for "'socialism here and now,' for the creation of positive radical alternatives to the dominant order—within, and on the margins of this order. He felt that this was the only way to make the kind of lasting difference that was necessary if things were really going to change." See Landauer, *Revolution and Other Writings: A Political Reader*, edited and translated by Gabriel Kuhn (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2010), 7.

¹²⁹ Consult fn. 124.

dinero, for example, portrays the everyday situations and struggles of characters, paying attention to the socioeconomic forces that drive them. Dos Passos does not show much sympathy for upwardly mobile characters who succeed, but is sympathetic to the victims of capitalist society. This might have struck a nerve with Trujillo, who was upwardly mobile given his humble origins. Authorities also seized a book called *La vida de un compositor soviético: Shostakovich* (1943), by Victor Seroff and Nadejda Galli Shohat.¹³⁰ The last text they confiscated was a compilation of poems by Chilean diplomat Pablo Neruda.

Citing Morton Dauwen Zabel, a scholar from Minnesota who taught in universities in the U.S. Midwest, California and Brazil, Weber defended the texts seized from Rodolfo's library. Just because Rodolfo cited Frank's *América hispana* in his thesis did not mean he endorsed Frank's views. *Rosinante* "is about travel impressions." *El gran dinero* "is a history of the U.S.," where the lives of men and women intertwined with public events in ways worthy of emulation. *Shostakovich* "does not refer to social types." It developed issues related to "family," the "social climate" of the musician's life, and offered a window into Russian history through the experiences of the composer's grandparents. Weber suggested to Dominican officials that Shostakovich became "disenchanted" with the Soviet regime because they banned his music. His work exhibited a "formalist political tendency" that "went against the Russian Revolution." As for Neruda, he "clearly is not subversive."¹³¹

¹³⁰ Shostakovich was a Soviet composer and pianist, a prominent figure of twentieth-century music and opera. He had a complex and difficult relationship with the Soviet government, which forced him conform to genres favored by Stalin. Shostakovich suffered several denunciations in his lifetime. After World War II, when an anti-Semitic campaign was underway, his works were banned and his family's privileges withdrawn. Shostakovich's love-hate relationship with Russia under Stalin changed when the leader died in 1953. Stalin's death marked a major step for Shostakovich toward rehabilitation as a creative artist. See Elizabeth Wilson, *Shostakovich: A Life Remembered* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).

¹³¹ See fn. 124.

During the raid, Dominican police also confiscated 25 books from Weber's library. She assured officials that she had purchased most of the texts in local bookstores. In this vein, she cited her copy of labor leader and "dean of Mexican Marxism" Manuel Limbardo's *Ética*, a book based on Hostos' *Moral social*. These works outlined a system and methods for teaching secular morality in elementary and professional schools. Officials also seized books on Russian poetry and a history of Russian literature and culture. Weber named some of the "ancient possessions" they took as well: a book on Bolshevik theory and practice; *El Maestro*, a Mexican magazine dedicated to Russian writer Leo Tolstoy, who chronicled the fall of the czars; and *El doble*, a novel by Dostoevsky. Weber said she owned the books for historical purposes.¹³²

Weber mounted a clever defense. Not only could the books be traced to local libraries and bookstores, she used them to expand "my knowledge and competence as a magistrate, a post I held for ten years in the schools" of Ciudad Trujillo. So even if the books were provocative, Weber consulted them for the benefit of the Dominican nation. She also detailed how she obtained international texts. Suppliers in cities like New York mailed the books directly to her home, "alarming no one." Delia and Rodolfo subsequently counted, labeled, and distributed the books. After laying out this context, Weber asked government officials a series of sarcastic questions, the answers to which were obvious. She called them out for making a fuss of "subversive" texts "sitting on shelves collecting dust."¹³³

Despite their differences, both the Puerto Rican and Dominican cases are suggestive of the importance of understanding what convicts put into their minds and why. Awakening in the Dominican Republic reflected a broader culture of political suspicion in which reading freely and

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ *Ibid.*

critically was considered dangerous. Meanwhile, in Puerto Rico awakening intersected with a state eager to give its convicts sanitized access to scientific tools like humanistic self-help. However, prison authorities reserved the “right” to censor books and other materials before they entered Oso Blanco. Despite the real and imagined gulf between democracy and dictatorship, when it came to literature at least, in both societies convicts lacked true freedom of choice and taste. Still, they could decide to turn the page of what they read.

Performing Arts: Theatre, Music, Dance

By midcentury, Oso Blanco was overcrowded. Prison conditions had worsened. The slow pace of penal reform hindered state rehabilitation efforts. Convicts lost trust in the populist state’s vision for their health, sanity, and wellbeing. Through *El Despertar* and other innovations pioneered by prison staff, inmates had a chance to gain terrain in the battle for their hearts and minds. Many of them encountered certain kinds of knowledge for the first time behind bars. They also had occasion to indulge in knowledge and tropes intimate to them. For those less inclined to read books, there were the performing arts.

Oso Blanco convicts created a “drama club” in summer 1949. Prisoner Carmelo Ch. M., an aspiring playwright and the club president, insisted that the group’s establishment benefited the “spiritual outlook” of inmates. The club already had a stage. Acting, music, and dance—what Carmelo Ch. M. called “high manifestations of art”—impacted convicts’ “senses” in profound ways. This was the next step for penal reform, he argued.¹³⁴ That October, the drama club offered performances in Oso Blanco for three weeks. Director of Recreation López de Victoria, who helped start the group, supervised its activities. As Carmelo Ch. M. saw it, the drama club served

¹³⁴ Carmelo Ch. M., “Retazo,” *El Despertar* (agosto 1949): 10.

a dual purpose. It contributed to penal reform and the “development of our culture.” The club also provided convicts with the space to pursue “spiritual expansion” through their own work.¹³⁵

In addition to theatre, Oso Blanco’s humanistic ambiance included music. The University of Puerto Rico choir visited in July 1944 and sang their “best selections” on the penitentiary patio. Twelve hundred prisoners, officials, and visitors experienced the spectacle. The choir sang religious songs in Latin like sixteenth-century sacred music composer Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina’s “Tenebrae factas sunt” (Darkness) and “Adoremus te, Christe” (We Adore You, Christ). They also performed folkloric Spanish selections like “A los árboles altos”; popular U.S. songs like Stephen Foster’s “Old Black Joe”; *danzas* like Juan Morel Campos’ “No me toques”; and nationalistic selections like Rafael Hernández’s “Los carreteros” and Félix Astol’s “La Borinqueña.”¹³⁶ The choir’s musical range was cosmopolitan and encapsulated the cultural roots of Puerto Ricans as a people. In addition to secular and church choirs, inmates also welcomed artists from radio station WENA in Bayamón. On October 15, 1949, violinist Juan Ramón Figueroa performed several compositions on the penitentiary patio. López de Victoria had previously given Figueroa a copy of *El Despertar*, which moved him to write a piece called “Mi despertar” (My Awakening). He presented a version-in-progress for convicts.¹³⁷

Dance troupes with a theatrical and musical focus also visited Oso Blanco. Puerto Rican “bombshell” María del Carmen Mejía’s (Figure 8 below) ensemble performed for convicts several times. Carmen Mejía was a beautiful exotic dancer who worked with the orchestra of Arturo Somohano, the founder of the San Juan Symphony Orchestra. This was a significant achievement

¹³⁵ *Ibid*, 25.

¹³⁶ “El coro universitario visita la Penitenciaría Insular,” *Revista de Servicio Social* 5, 3 (julio 1944): 22-23.

¹³⁷ Carmelo Ch. M., “Retazo,” 25.

for Carmen Mejía, as Somohano was an accomplished classical music composer and pianist. *El Despertar* chronicled one of Carmen Mejía’s visits to Oso Blanco in January 1950. Although Carmen Mejía was the voluptuous apple in the eye of many convicts—a predecessor to someone like Iris Chacón—*El Despertar* portrayed her not as a cabaret attraction but as a talented artist and variety performer.

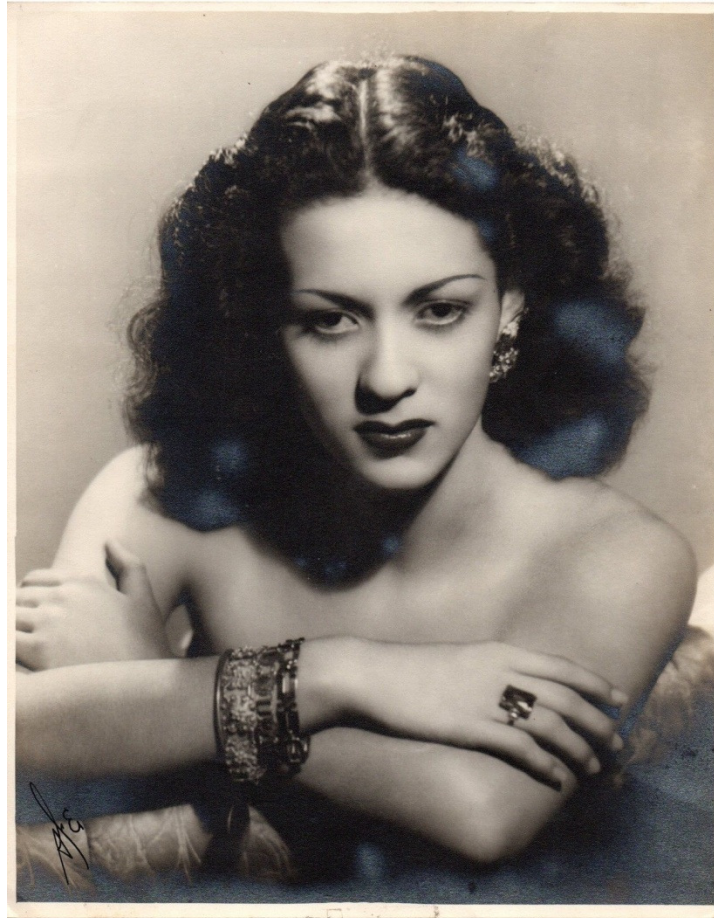


Figure 8: María del Carmen Mejía, Orquesta Sinfónica de Puerto Rico, December 1951; adapted from <http://www.ebay.es/itm/1951-Foto-Original-Maria-Del-Carmen-Mejia-Puerto-Rico-Bailarina-Vedette-/201490530857> and Google Images [2016].

Carmen Mejía visited Oso Blanco during the holidays and reminded convicts of what they had “lost”—freedom, families, and frivolities. Only “special” people abandoned “the heat” and “affection of home” during the holidays to be with convicts, *El Despertar* reported. Two thousand prisoners packed the penitentiary patio to see Carmen Mejía. Convicts were “stunned” by the

“theatrical” arrival of her “art caravan,” which announced hours of “happiness.” When the show commenced, they listened and bore witness religiously. They called Carmen Mejía a “crown jewel.” She had “fiery lips” and “eyes that explain why after 50 years of U.S. rule we still speak Castellano.” Thanks to their self-described “intellectual frailty,” convicts could not begin to explain “the exhilarating range of liberating emotions” sparked by her routine. Seeing her live proved Puerto Ricans had “nothing to envy” on a world stage.¹³⁸

Carmen Mejía interpreted selections from Spaniard Enrique Granados’ piano suite “Goyescas.” She performed traditional Apache dance. Her rendition of Russian Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky’s classic ballet *El lago de los cisnes* (*Swan Lake*) captivated the audience.¹³⁹ She did fun and sensual numbers like “Fantasía torero” (“Bullfighter Fantasy”). This latter number may have been reminiscent of, though less ribald than, the show put on by Brazilian bombshell Rita Cadillac in the 2003 film *Carandiru*. In the film, the “diva of dance” performs for São Paulo convicts. She sings and dances sensually over a bottle while simulating protected intercourse with it.¹⁴⁰ Oso Blanco convicts declared that Carmen Mejía’s routines made them remember “forgotten moments.” The power of her art inspired even the “humblest of hearts.”¹⁴¹

El Despertar assured readers they would continue to follow Carmen Mejía’s career. She subsequently became representative of the Miss Puerto Rico Scholarship Program in 1955. Lareño writer Gaspar Gerena Brás, who dedicated a poem to her in 1959, praised Carmen Mejía’s interpretation of Oscar Wilde’s play *Salome*.¹⁴² The play is a tragedy that tells the story of Salome,

¹³⁸ “Página de arte,” *El Despertar* (enero 1950): 11.

¹³⁹ Tchaikovsky is also known for *Sleeping Beauty* (1889) and *The Nutcracker* (1892).

¹⁴⁰ *Carandiru*, directed by Héctor Babenco, DVD, 147 mins., Sony Pictures Classics/Globo Filmes, 2003.

¹⁴¹ “Página de arte,” 11 and 14.

¹⁴² Gaspar Gerena Brás, *Aljibe: poemas* (San Juan: Editorial Club de la Prensa, 1959), 76-77.

the stepdaughter of the tetrarch Herod Antipas. She requests the head of John the Baptist on a silver platter as a reward for performing the Dance of the Seven Veils.¹⁴³ Scholar Carmen Skaggs expands on the significance of the dance in Wilde's play, which can be extended to some of Carmen Mejía's dance routines behind bars. Wilde, a decadent writer, "develops the themes of Orientalism and counter-cultural ethics. He enters the chasm of human emotion and reveals both the savage and noble heights to which humanity ascends. He explores the ingrained gender ideologies of modernity and the sexual perversities of modern culture."¹⁴⁴ Carmen Mejía exposed convicts to complex ideas, the depths of which some of them likely fathomed and understood.

For most convicts, however, Carmen Mejía represented more than lust and sophisticated thought. She reminded them of life beyond the wall. She also embodied the most appealing aspects of the populist state's rehabilitative project, such as the cultivation of self-confidence. For a moment in the mid-twentieth century, this project successfully blended scientific and religious approaches to awakening with the humanities serving as a bridge. At a more elementary level, Carmen Mejía sparked convicts to refine their drama club. Voice training, acting fundamentals, stage discipline, script analysis, and auditioning became points of renewed emphasis for interested convicts. In May 1950, the drama club echoed a previous call for the pursuit of awakening outside the prison. Club members wanted to perform for nearby welfare institutions. They believed engaging the outside world was the next step in penal reform.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ Wilde originally published the play in 1891 in French. The first English edition was published in 1893. In 1923, Charles Bryant directed a silent film version of *Salome*. In 1953, Columbia Pictures revived the franchise and adopted the biblical epic in Technicolor. See "The Shadow Stage," *Photoplay* 22, 3 (August 1922): 60-61.

¹⁴⁴ Carmen Trammell Skaggs, "Modernity's Revision of the Dancing Daughter: The *Salome* Narrative of Wilde and Strauss," *College Literature* 29, 3 (Summer 2002): 124-39.

¹⁴⁵ They hoped Director of Socio-Penal Services Ortiz would consider their request. See Carmelo Ch. M., "Nota del club dramático," *El Despertar* (mayo 1950): 22.

José M. N.'s vision of rehabilitative programming beyond the wall would not be realized, however. Several months later, starting with the Revolution of 1950, violent prison insurgencies created the conditions for a moratorium on *El Despertar*, the drama club, and many other expressions of prison humanities. In so doing, Oso Blanco officials shackled artistic practices of liberation. In turn, convicts lost access to state-sponsored awakening, and in its place, they confronted an ambiance of suspicion comparable to what one would have found in the Dominican Republic at the time.

The Case of Lazarus

Not all Puerto Rican prisoners put their eggs in the state rehabilitative basket. As the other chapters of this study illustrate, many found little solace in the academic humanities and looked to science, religiosity, and interpersonal relationships instead. Some convicts had entirely different ways of seeing and being. The budding state-science-university monopoly on intellectuality characteristic of the Puerto Rican populist state under Muñoz Marín simply did not apply to some people. These radical thinkers piqued the curiosity of fellow convicts. *El Despertar* documented a few of these cases.

For example, in September 1950, convict Carlos D. A. took advantage of the “solitude” of his cell to write an article called “Lazarus Resurrected.” The “wings of my thoughts” led “to my conscience,” where “I communicate with the Infinite” and “that Great Unknown merges with my mind.” The result “is not of my hand, but of HIS.” A “ray of light” set this in motion and “illuminated my conscience.” Carlos D. A. asserted that convicts needed to demand more from penal reform. He offered reflections on the “once dead but now living” Eugenio C. H., also known

as Lazarus, an example of someone who sought to serve ideas rather than patent them: “Man does not own ideas; does not create them... Ideas outlive men.”¹⁴⁶

To tell the story of Lazarus, Carlos D. A. went back to 1945, when he was serving time in the San Juan district jail. This “is where I first encountered Lazarus (dead). He was as dead as me.” Shortly after this initial encounter, Lazarus went “into the ministry.” The two crossed paths again at the “University” (Oso Blanco). In the penitentiary, Carlos D. A. always found Lazarus glued to “sacred writings” and performing “psychological, psychic and metaphysical experiments.”¹⁴⁷ Lazarus had enrolled in the “Unity School of Christianity,” a fringe Christian group founded in Missouri in 1931 by a Spiritist-Methodist who claimed that Christian Science produced healing. By midcentury, however, the growing “mind science cult” had evolved.¹⁴⁸

Through the Unity School, Lazarus elevated his “spiritual consciousness” to heights he never knew. He conducted at least two “experiments” in Oso Blanco. The first time, “the Divine Master told him to rise.” Lazarus proceeded to communicate “telepathically” with another inmate, commanding his target to share pineapple with him. Carlos D. A. recalled the two were separated by a “considerable distance.” Moments later, “the thoughts of Lazarus manifested themselves” in the target inmate. This “is how he discovered the development of his mental faculties.” The second time, Lazarus’ brother visited him in Oso Blanco. Lazarus asked him to bring rice pudding on his next visit. Three months later, the convict meditated for 15 minutes. “Through the window of his

¹⁴⁶ Carlos D. A., “Resucitó Lázaro,” *El Despertar* (septiembre 1950): 13-14.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ For example, they taught the “realities” of “matter” and “reincarnation,” and wove many “Hindu principles” into their philosophy. They denied many of the basic tenets of Christianity: the Trinity, the necessity of Jesus’ sacrifice for the sins of mankind, heaven and hell, and the existence of the devil. The Unity School believed that striving to be in tune with the infinite was worthier than following the instructions of the Bible. To them, God was divine universal consciousness and man formed part of that consciousness. Consult Charles Fillmore, *Christian Healing: The Science of Being* (Kansas City: Unity School of Christianity, 1947).

soul” he saw his brother acquiring the food. A week later, Lazarus’ brother brought the rice pudding.¹⁴⁹

Dreams were important to convicts like Lazarus. In one dream, he was before a dark sky. But there was “splendor” in that “blue canopy of heaven.” Several bright stars appeared before him and conveyed the following message: “Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of Heaven... Blessed are those poor in spirit, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs... The Kingdom of God is in you all.” The stars descended upon Lazarus with “great velocity” until he “awakened.” Carlos D. A. interpreted the dream. The blue sky was a vast continent, North America. The bright stars were people of “purified mind” from the “Unity School” that disseminated “evangelical messages.” The descending stars meant they were “completing a mission” in response to a letter Lazarus had mailed them.¹⁵⁰

Lazarus’ “prophetic revelation” became flesh on June 24, 1950, when Carlos Manuel Castillo, an island representative of the Unity School, and other “illuminated” school members from abroad visited the convict. They brought him “pamphlets filled with inspirational phrases” and named him leader of the Unity School chapter in Oso Blanco. He had the “privilege of sending spiritual messages” via radio station WKAQ in San Juan. Carlos D. A. concluded that all of this made Lazarus “a model prisoner.” Somehow Lazarus could develop his mental energy enough to “inject his will and thoughts into other people.” He “is a righteous thief” who died on a cross. He was “dead” but now “he is alive” and wide awake.¹⁵¹ For every Lazarus, however, there was a Victor F. F., who believed anyone could awaken if they committed to snapping out of their

¹⁴⁹ Carlos D. A., “Resucitó Lázaro,” 13-14.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

daydreams. To him this meant distancing oneself from negative things and thoughts, sacrificing one's ego, and thinking "righteously" and "correctly."¹⁵²

Lazarus' approach to healing contemplated the life-death dichotomy. It coexisted with the many other forms of redemptive practice circulating in Oso Blanco, including medical and social science, religiosity, and kin-based support networks. On the other hand, another convict named José P. B. M. referred to death as the starting point of life, a binary that could be "collapsed" through religious conversion and a specific kind of spiritual reflection.¹⁵³ Many convicts pursued humanistic awakening, but this redemptive renaissance was short-lived. The nationalist insurrection of 1950 and subsequent prison insurgencies derailed many reform initiatives and opportunities behind bars, including the production of *El Despertar*. In the early 1950s, Puerto Rican officials started abandoning rehabilitative principles in favor of security amid an escalating Cold War. With commonwealth status, Puerto Rico continued down this path and prison authorities curtailed transformative humanistic programming. In the decades to come, Oso Blanco descended into the violence it is known for today.

Conclusion

In mid-twentieth-century Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, the helixing dialectic of life and death played out on the bodies, minds, and souls of convicts. In the Dominican Republic, prison authorities directed convicts to the grave literally and figuratively, dumping bodies into mass graves and driving many more inmates mad. Political prisoners, specifically, tried to lead humanistic lives behind bars. In both societies, convicts read broadly, wrote about their

¹⁵² Victor F. F., "Todos podemos despertar," *El Despertar* (marzo 1950): 29.

¹⁵³ José P. B. M., "Morir es vivir," *El Despertar* (septiembre 1950): 16.

incarceration experiences in relation to state politics, and held academic court behind bars to determine how to mold the next generation of citizens. But Puerto Rican officials also offered prisoners a science-based humanistic path to respectable, sanitary citizenship. In Puerto Rico, convicts eagerly tapped into the state model for rehabilitation and awakening, especially the humanities. Through the pages of *El Despertar*, books, and other humanistic practices, convicts tested the limits of what they could say and do behind bars.

Although Puerto Rican inmates had more of a chance to chase freedom behind bars, they were just as enclosed as their Dominican counterparts. Artistic practices of liberation were fleeting in the larger scheme of things. Being caged set the overall tone in Oso Blanco and Nigua. But there were greater prizes to be won. Convicts understood this. Many realized it behind bars. The path to freedom could lead to social justice and a say in, if not control of, high politics. While the dream of a full awakening became a reality for some convicts, especially those identifying with political parties in power, at every turn their freedom was predicated on thought systems and material structures beyond their making. Ultimately, authorship and ownership of penitentiary science rested in the hands of a state deeply invested in socially engineering convicts and turning them into healthy, smart, secular citizens.

What made a good citizen was determined by the extent to which convicts conformed to the behavioral and intellectual standards of the state, the state's definition of freedom and political participation, and what authorities construed as insightful. Prison officials used the humanities as a corrective tool in this regard. Reading, writing, drawing, performing, and so on improved the communication and literacy skills that officials believed would successfully reinsert convicts into society. The hope was that educational programs would reduce recidivism. Educational opportunities, however, had a particular source. Certain people and institutions shaped them and

lent their authority to legitimizing them. Indeed, the notion of “programming” encapsulated the primary goal of prison and state authorities. The programming was ultimately deceptive because it pointed to the contradictions of unequal structures without altering or abolishing them.

Transitioning convicts from living death to awakened entailed humanistic stimulation. The notion of living death captured the essence of incarceration from the point of view of authority, whether the state or penitentiary officials. Convict culture proved to be quite lively and dynamic, however, even in death. Individuals deemed criminals and irredeemable by society could make society think. They reminded society that they were people who, like everyone else, changed throughout the course of their lives. In Oso Blanco, specifically, creative experiences had the potential to transform both artists and audiences. This transformative potential elevated the arts to the level of high politics, where they could give voice to the living dead. While in Oso Blanco this only lasted for a few years, an important experiment had played out in the work of the early Classification and Treatment Board and in the pages of *El Despertar*. These were major precedents in establishing political stakes that went beyond the emotional and intellectual freedom inmates found in the humanities.

Humanities initiatives behind bars are relatively common today. They are celebrated for bringing out the voices and expressions of convicts, for making them more visible and present to others. This automatically puts limits on convict freedom, however, as facilitators and observers can easily block what they do not want to see from view. Further, where they do exist, humanities initiatives tend to, but not always, serve the gazers and providers more than bring meaningful change to the convict condition. In other words, convicts, their families, and immediate networks are more likely to equate humanities programs behind bars to a temporary visitor’s careerism than their own progress and improvement. The stereotype of the out-of-touch scholar remains strong,

for example, because they come and go and do little to help solve the problems of familial/communal disintegration and convict reintegration. When humanities programs behind bars emphasize education to help convicts gain the skills they “need” to be employed, this simply reiterates the conforming imperative of institutional approaches to incarceration: that there is a “proper” or “correct” approach to rehabilitation and success.

In Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, death claimed the lives of many convicts due to disease and violence. Convicts also advocated prison reform through the humanities. Showing a different side of the prison system, where they unveiled their humanity through the humanities, represented a key stage of prison reform. For convicts, the endgame went beyond being seen or heard, sharing their creativity, or showing that they were doing something constructive and useful while jailed. For many of them, awakening transcended conforming to the standards of the state. Rather, it was ultimately about seizing reform efforts from the patronizing hands of those who wanted to control their consciousness. Indeed, to pursue awakening was to chase freedom and have the power to sculpt one’s own consciousness. Perhaps most importantly, however, the struggles waged around awakening in Oso Blanco and Nigua illustrate that living death was not only about endings, but also new beginnings. Social and civic death could be shed, and give way to new political life.

CHAPTER 5

Performing Faith: Sacred Knowledge and the Experiential

On September 9, 1957, an inmate of Puerto Rico's women's prison in Vega Alta (*Escuela Industrial para Mujeres*) named Nereida Ribot composed a letter to her lover Rafi.¹ In the letter, she told him that their love was “unforgettable.” But Ribot also took shots at Rafi, lambasting him for avoiding commitment. What devastated her the most was that she did not see him at a recent prison dance. She regretted this because prison authorities planned to ship her to a welfare institution for girls in Ponce. Most importantly, however, Ribot informed Rafi that her letter was accompanied by a “song” and “some saints,” which she deposited in another envelope and sealed.²

Prison officials seized the love letter and sealed envelope from Ribot before she had a chance to deliver them to Rafi. When I first came across the sealed envelope, specifically, I hesitated to open it. I eventually did, and a strong, bittersweet smell meant for Rafi escaped the packet. The sealed envelope's material contents included a “song,” “some saints” (including an image of a Greco-Roman Jesus Christ), and a small figurine of the Virgin Mary, all of which had lent themselves to the realization of an elaborate ritual. Ribot blended religious iconography with a perfume smell designed to elicit romantic meanings. Figure 1 below shows some of these artifacts and the envelope in which I found them.

The “song” to Rafi was based on Mexican composer Wello Rivas' *bolero/mariachi* “Cenizas.”³ The lyrics indicate the extent to which Ribot was emotionally invested in Rafi.

¹ The construction of Puerto Rico's Women's Industrial School started in 1952. It officially opened in 1954. See Nahomi Galindo Malavé, “Cuerpos truculentos y ‘desviados’: las confinadas de la Escuela Industrial para Mujeres de Vega Alta,” *Identidades* 8 (noviembre 2010): 11-34.

² Expediente de la confinada Nereida Ribot, Caja 7, SFEIM, FDJ, AGPR.

³ Between the 1950s and 1970s, this song was a major hit, especially in the Hispanophone Caribbean. It was popularly interpreted by singers of color, including Mexicans Javier Solís and Toña la Negra and Cuban Xiomara Alfaro. On the social and cultural history of music in Latin America, the Caribbean, and elsewhere, see David F. García, *Arsenio*

Through song lyrics, she warned him that if he realized their love was real too late, then he might just return and “find ashes” in her stead.⁴ Ribot did not quote “Cenizas” word for word, however. She interpreted the song in conjunction with her sacred knowledge and made it the center of a ritual meant to seduce Rafi. Ribot recorded her lyrics and apparently kissed the paper on which she wrote twice, for she left traces of pink lipstick behind. She subsequently sealed an image of the Virgin Mary to the song with a waxy substance, a remnant of which is on the extreme right of Figure 1 below.



Figure 1: “Evidence seized/taken from the prisoner [Nereida Ribot],” 1957, AGPR.

Rodríguez and the Transnational Flows of Latin Popular Music (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006); César Miguel Rondón, *The Book of Salsa: A Chronicle of Urban Music from the Caribbean to New York City* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2008); Robin D. Moore, *Music in the Hispanic Caribbean: Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); Hertzman, *Making Samba: A New History of Race and Music in Brazil* (Durham: Duke, 2013); and Frederick Schenker, “Performing Empire: Music and Race in Colonial Asia’s Jazz Age,” Doctoral Dissertation, Department of Ethnomusicology, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2016.

⁴ The lyrics read: “Te di el corazón, el alma entera; mi vida y mi amor te las llevaste[,] dejando en mi ser tanta amargura, que ni quisiera [rec]ordar[,] quisiera más aún mi vida te espera y el corazón cansado de aguardarte, puede [ser] muy bien, que cuando vuelvas sólo encuentres cenizas de lo que dejaste...Fin.” Ribot closed the song to Rafi emphasizing her eternal care for him: “Esta canción es para ti de una mujer que te quiere y no te olvidará nunca.” See Expediente de la confinada Nereida Ribot.

Ribot meant for Rafi to read the love letter and open the sealed envelope. She certainly expected him to inhale the smell that escaped from the packet, to open and read the song inside, and to have the religious artifacts fall into his hands or lap. Just as Ribot put time and energy into bringing these elements together through ritual, she also assumed that Rafi would follow certain steps to access the (im)material messages of the sealed package. Ribot hoped to “caress” Rafi through the letter, song, and saints. Her intricate ritual showcases how far she was willing to go to shape her fortune, even if everything transpired behind bars. Indeed, the contents of the package encapsulated a powerful subjective performance. Smell and sensory experience allowed the convict to narrate history on her own terms, to cook in metaphorical pots and cultivate specific tastes in others.⁵

The “saints,” or spirits, that played a central role in Ribot’s ritual can be understood as expressions of religiosity, whether diasporic, popular Catholicism, a blend of Catholicism and Spiritism, or some other combination. Ribot deployed sacred knowledge and iconography to impact Rafi emotionally. She drew a figurative line between belief, love, and the (in)tangible. The artifacts she used functioned as power objects that made her fortune, but they were also inspirational, as they represented a way for her to get by and ahead behind bars. While saintly intermediaries could be “bad” or “undeveloped” and bring harm to the living, there were also “enlightened” spirits that could nudge people, especially loved ones, in a certain direction.⁶ Although the colonial legacies associated with Western religiosities no doubt shaped Ribot’s brand of Catholicism-Spiritism, she deployed these beliefs on her own terms to meet her individual needs and to exercise power over Rafi.

⁵ Palmié, *The Cooking of History*.

⁶ Joan Koss-Chioino, *Women as Healers, Women as Patients: Mental Health Care and Traditional Healing in Puerto Rico* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1992), 13.

Contrary to what one might expect, Ribot's beliefs and ritual were valuable not because they were esoteric, but because they narrated mundane circumstances. When considering popular expressions of belief systems like "witchcraft" or Spiritism, the scholarly impulse to overexplain can obscure what was important about them in certain contexts. Convicts like Ribot understood belief and ritual as gateways to the senses, which in turn were central to materializing fortune and redemption. As several scholars have suggested, tracing the experiential makes it possible to capture the complexity of religious epistemologies and ontologies without reducing them to folly.⁷ In this chapter, I contrast different religious and spiritual experiences in mid-twentieth-century Puerto Rican prisons to comprehend how inmates narrated living in a "time out of time" through sacred knowledge and ritual.⁸ The liminal space of the prison facilitated a collective rite of passage that convicts went through together, one that intensified their solidarity but also revealed the sociocultural fault lines between them.

Rites capable of generating a sense of belonging, creating community, and producing penitence were readily available to Puerto Rican prisoners in the middle decades of the twentieth century. Inmates welcomed cathartic narratives and practices of all kinds, including medical and social science, but particularly embraced religiosity and spirituality.⁹ This chapter considers the experiential and redemptive aspects of belief from the perspectives of prisoners, nationalists, and

⁷ Mario A. Núñez Molina, "Toward an Experiential Approach for Researching Religious Experiences," *Revista Puertorriqueña de Psicología* 10 (1995): 248; Román, *Governing Spirits*; and Gómez, *The Experiential Caribbean*.

⁸ On liminality from an anthropological point of view, see Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, translated by Carol Cosman (New York: Oxford University Press, 1912 [2001]); and Conrad Phillip Kottak, *Mirror for Humanity* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2012), 191-94.

⁹ In this chapter, I build on scholar Harold G. Koenig's definitions of religion and spirituality. He proposes that spirituality tends to be more individualistic, self-determined, and autonomous. Religion typically entails links to a community of shared beliefs and rituals. I vacillate between the terms in this chapter because the two often worked in unison in places like Oso Blanco. Consult Koenig, "Religion, Spirituality, and Medicine: Research Findings and Implications for Clinical Practice," *Southern Medical Journal* 97, 12 (December 2004): 1194-1200.

missionaries. In tracing the beliefs and practices of convicts like Ribot, I unearth “subjugated knowledges” that both reflected and challenged the religious status quo. I do so to understand the prisoners’ lines of argument and to illustrate the diversity of sensory experience behind bars.¹⁰

This chapter examines religious activities and experiences in Puerto Rican prisons in the mid-twentieth century. It takes stock of the penetration of organized religion into Oso Blanco. Using prison records, the press, convict reflections on the sacred, and other sources, I argue that experientially-based ways of understanding redemption allowed convicts to transcend the morally superior knowledge of the state and society that caged them despite their status as socially or civically dead. Inmates used belief systems to not only cultivate and harvest social power and build community behind bars, but also to recast those very systems as their own. Common and political prisoners alike clung to belief because it offered them a way to perform, prove, and feel what they believed, and to encourage others to follow suit. While Oso Blanco’s rehabilitative regime at the time officially revolved around convict minds, bodies, and souls, comparatively the hegemony of science-based approaches limited prisoners’ potential to redeem themselves on their own terms. Belief systems expanded convict options. Religiosities stimulated convicts’ senses in ways medicine, social science, and the humanities could not, though inmates used all these systems of knowledge production to fashion their political voices.

For many Puerto Rican prisoners, the intimacy of religiosity was not seamlessly duplicated by mainstream medicine. While convicts did exercise interpretive agency when confronted with official medical and social science, these were largely out of their hands. In contrast, inmates could tap into religion all the time, in the privacy of their hearts, minds, and cells. Many convicts leaned on spectacle and technologies like the radio to resolve spiritual problems and to secure belonging

¹⁰ See Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977* (New York: Vintage, 1980); and Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge* (New York: Vintage, 1992).

and community behind bars. Procuring spiritual uplift through sacred knowledge and practices meant that, when released, convicts could move forward with their lives as “new creatures,” presumably unburdened by their pasts. This contrasts with the religious guilt that Foucault suggests is an inescapable part of incarceration. Importantly, however, there also were prisoners who doubted the power of the sacred or otherwise had indecipherable beliefs.

Spiritual Empire

Ribot’s brand of popular Catholicism formed part of Puerto Rico’s broader twentieth-century moral landscape. The island’s ecology of belief rested on a hybridized or syncretic (i.e., indigenous, African, and European) foundation.¹¹ Under Spanish rule in the nineteenth century, the Catholic Church primarily cornered Puerto Rico’s religious marketplace.¹² Groups including Protestants, Spiritists, and Freemasons suffered political persecution at the hands of the colonial government.¹³ By the early twentieth century, U.S. colonial empire had pushed Puerto Rico’s theological frontiers into Evangelical Protestant terrain, altering local political, economic, and sociocultural landscapes in the process. Through “moral reform,” one historian has suggested, the

¹¹ Ángel G. Quintero Rivera, “Vueltila, con mantilla, al primer piso: sociología de los santos,” in Quintero Rivera, ed., *Virgenes, magos y escapularios: imagería, etnicidad y religiosidad popular en Puerto Rico* (San Juan: Centro de Investigaciones Sociales, Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1998); and José Luis González, *Puerto Rico: The Four-Storeyed Country and Other Essays*, translated by Gerald Guinness (Princeton: Markus Wiener, 2013).

¹² Here I mean the Catholic “monopoly” on religious, spiritual, and to an extent, legal and scientific matters during the Spanish colonial period in Latin America and the Caribbean. See R. Andrew Chestnut, *Competitive Spirits: Latin America’s New Religious Economy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), ch. 2.

¹³ Historian José M. García Leduc suggests that in the nineteenth century Protestants, Spiritists, and Freemasons lived under Spanish Catholic hegemony and persecution. Facing intolerance, censorship, imprisonment, and even a tiered afterlife, these different groups cultivated “heterodox” ideas about government and how freedom, justice, and equality could and should be realized. In short, these groups were harbingers of modern democracy in Puerto Rico. In claiming a social space, they asserted and defined certain rights and set the stage for their ideological absorption into the island’s broader body politic. See García Leduc, *Intolerancia y heterodoxias en Puerto Rico*. By the mid-twentieth century, these elite “heretics” had become potent political forces, arms of the state, and co-designers of the penitentiary experience. The victims of the past became the next century’s real and discursive elite.

U.S. became “a transnational arbiter of righteous power.”¹⁴ Further, as sociologist Samuel Silva Gotay shows, several Christian denominations participated in the “spiritual (re)conquest” of Puerto Rico. Resembling the European partitioning of Africa on the eve of the twentieth century, U.S.-based Christian denominations divided the island into spheres of influence.¹⁵ Figure 2 below illustrates which denominations operated where in Puerto Rico in the early twentieth century.



Figure 2: Map of the division of Puerto Rico by various Christian denominations; adapted from Silva Gotay, *Protestantismo y política en Puerto Rico*, 1899 [1998].

The spiritual (re)conquest of Puerto Rico under U.S. auspices coincided with the rise of modern medicine. Religion and medicine were mutually reinforcing tools of colonial enterprise. They provided philanthropists, physicians, nurses, and others with opportunities to carve spaces for themselves within Puerto Rico’s emerging healthcare system, all the while shaping the consciousness of “unintellectual” locals. Many of the spiritual crusaders active on the island in the early twentieth century were medical scientists *and* members of clubs, fraternities, and secret

¹⁴ Ian Tyrrell, “Empire in American History,” in Scarano and McCoy, eds., *Colonial Crucible*, 546-56.

¹⁵ On the spiritual partitioning of Puerto Rico, consult Samuel Silva Gotay, *Protestantismo y política en Puerto Rico, 1898-1930: hacia una historia del protestantismo evangélico en Puerto Rico*, Primera edición (San Juan: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1997), ch. 2.

societies that valued science. They founded dispensaries, hospitals, and nursing schools—venues that facilitated teaching, healing, and preaching, especially the “gospels” of work and hygiene.¹⁶

Christian denominations, civic associations, and a diversifying medical class helped colonize Puerto Rican hearts, bodies, and minds.¹⁷ But as Trujillo Pagán has observed, in this context there were intense conflicts between American scientific medicine, French-style sociological medicine, Puerto Rican experts, and local “quacks.” These different health communities had been at the core of American-Puerto Rican relations since the beginning of the occupation.¹⁸ Other scholars have argued that the roots of such interactions in colonial Caribbean societies run much deeper.¹⁹ However, what historians have not traced as powerfully are the roles played by religion and spirituality in the making of hemispheric medicine and regional or local medical fields, including the work carried out in penitentiaries. This is a crucial issue in Puerto Rican Studies, for example, especially given that physicians and nurses associated with different Christian denominations and secret societies helped build the island’s early-twentieth-century healthcare infrastructure.²⁰

¹⁶ See Silva Gotay, *Protestantismo y política en Puerto Rico*, 219-23; Walsh, ““Advancing the Kingdom,”” chs. 3 and 5; and Warwick Anderson, “Pacific Crossings: Imperial Logics in United States’ Public Health Programs,” in Scarano and McCoy, eds., *Colonial Crucible*, 281-82.

¹⁷ Walsh, ““Advancing the Kingdom,”” 10; Thomas O. Beidelman, *Colonial Evangelism: A Socio-Cultural Study of an East African Mission at the Grassroots* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1982); Trujillo Pagán, *Modern Colonization by Medical Intervention*; and Amador, *Medicine and Nation-Building in the Americas*.

¹⁸ Trujillo Pagán, *Modern Colonization by Medical Intervention*.

¹⁹ Scarano, “Doctors and Peasants at the Intersection of Empires: Prologue to the Hookworm Campaigns in Puerto Rico,” paper presented at the “Dimensions of Empire and Resistance” conference in San Juan, Puerto Rico, November 2012; Rodríguez Silva, *Silencing Race*, ch. 2; and Bronfman, “On Swelling.”

²⁰ The Adventist church, for example, poured considerable resources into the Caribbean and Puerto Rico, specifically. “No more fruitful investment in souls can be found anywhere,” missionaries often asserted in the 1940s. In 1946, for instance, church officials sought to raise \$7,500 for an island sanatorium and hospital. Missionary W. E. Murray laid out the vision for the Adventist medical institution in Puerto Rico, one with a 50-bed capacity that would focus on the “worthy and needy poor.” The institution would be in Mayagüez, an important trade hub with Santo Domingo where several Adventist physicians had already established successful private practices (e.g., Drs. C. W. Dunscombe and Charles Moore). Partially inspiring this plan was the fact that U.S.-educated physicians and nurses could practice in

Belief was important to many of the physicians and nurses living, working, and providing missionary services in Puerto Rico. As physician-missionaries brought “progress” to and “saved” Puerto Rican communities, the island itself emerged as an outpost of U.S. empire for the medico-spiritual conquest of other countries in the region, including the Dominican Republic. Writing from Ponce in October 1918, United Brethren in Christ minister Philip Drury explained to colleagues in Ohio “how important [it] is that the principles of the Gospel be embedded in the life of the [Dominican] people, furnishing them a substantial basis on which to found their material property and their intellectual development.” The medico-spiritual occupancy of Santo Domingo from Puerto Rico was desirable because of geographic and economic proximity, the presence of Evangelical Puerto Ricans in Santo Domingo, and “the inspiration that will come to our Porto Rican churches in being linked to this enterprise.”²¹ Many Evangelical groups embraced this cross-border medico-spiritual vision both within and beyond the Caribbean.²²

In addition to medicine, belief-inspired “associations for social progress” also accelerated the colonization of Puerto Rico. The associations profiled in the island bluebook (1923) included Freemasonry, Spiritists, the Red Cross, and rotary clubs, among other organizations.²³ Orphanages,

Puerto Rico with ease. They did not have to jump through the bureaucratic hoops that hindered similar work in other countries. Locally, health workers could visit people in their homes and teach them how to care for the health of their children. Murray estimated the Mayagüez Adventist medical center would cost \$50-60,000. He envisioned the hospital in Puerto Rico as a “training center” for missionary workers assigned to other Latin American countries. See “Mission Extension Projects,” *The Church Officers’ Gazette* 33, 9 (September 1946): 21; and W. E. Murray, “A Medical Institution for Puerto Rico,” *The Church Officers’ Gazette* 33, 9 (September 1946): 23-24. Also see Walsh, ““Advancing the Kingdom.””

²¹ Philip Drury to the Board of Directors of the Foreign Missionary Society of the United Brethren in Christ at Lima, Ohio, October 10, 1918, p. 5-6, expediente “Hermanos Unidos: Informes del Superintendente a las Conferencias Anuales, 1909-1929,” IEU-010, Seminario Evangélico de Puerto Rico, Río Piedras (SEPR).

²² See Silva Gotay, *Protestantismo y política en Puerto Rico*, 219-22.

²³ Fernández y García, et al. eds., *The Book of Porto Rico*, 868-919. Masonic lodges, for example, first appeared in Puerto Rico in the early nineteenth century. Western and southwestern towns like Añasco, Cabo Rojo, Mayagüez, Sabana Grande, and San Germán were hubs of Masonic activity. Many lodges in the area operated under the auspices of the Grand Lodge of Santo Domingo. See, for instance, José A. Ayala, “La masonería de obediencia española ante el conflicto colonial puertorriqueño,” *Cuadernos de Investigación Histórica* 17 (1991): 21-36; Jossianna Arroyo,

hospitals, shoes and asylums for the poor, free lunch programs, insurance and banking, and print shops were but a few of the ways that these groups materially invested in their communities. Civic associations partially sustained the networks that allowed many Puerto Ricans to cope with or flourish in their environments. These efforts extended to Oso Blanco, where convicts interacted with multiple charitable entities.

Between the 1930s and 1950s, as social science became integrated into statecraft, sound developmentalism, and institutions like Oso Blanco, the Puerto Rican government increasingly espoused the civil religion of secularism. According to Román, during this period the populist government built “shrine[s] to good administration” and “the miracle of order.” Island journalists, politicians, and the public engaged in complex exchanges over the administration of competing forms of belief. State officials and their professional collaborators were content to extract “proper public conduct” from Puerto Ricans. They remained noncommittal about religious claims and practices if these did not violently challenge the hegemony of the state or the interests under government protection, such as the activities of faith-driven medical and social scientists.²⁴ However, the groundwork for populist order was laid earlier in the twentieth century, when the U.S. invaded and annexed Puerto Rico, and (re)introduced charismatic belief to state politics.

Later in the century, representatives of the new faiths invested in Oso Blanco. In 1933, the insular government approved an office for a chaplain, who in collaboration with other believers served healthy and dying prisoners and their families.²⁵ Non-Catholic convicts, specifically,

Writing Secrecy in Caribbean Freemasonry (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); and Paul Estrade, “Betances: masón inconforme,” in José Antonio Ferrer Benimeli, ed., *La masonería española en la época de Sagasta, 1825-1903* (Zaragoza: Gobierno de Aragón, 2007), 559-70. On the black associational life in the modern Caribbean, see Putnam, *Radical Moves: Caribbean Migrants and the Politics of Race in the Jazz Age* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2013).

²⁴ Román, *Governing Spirits*, 17.

²⁵ *Reglamento para el régimen y gobierno de la Penitenciaría de Puerto Rico en Río Piedras*, 14.

identified with the denominations that had “jurisdiction” over their municipalities of origin. The various belief systems circulating in Oso Blanco reflected patterns in society at large and blended (im)material approaches to health and healing. Adventists, for example, offered Bible courses and opportunities to share testimony. They also expanded radio programming for convicts, in the process enhancing inmate sensory experiences. These elements enriched how convicts understood their faiths and revolutionized how denominations went about “winning” and “redeeming” souls.

Religious Affiliation and Catholicism

In the mid-twentieth century, missionaries mainly carried out spiritual work in Oso Blanco. Clergymen and women from all walks of life established the contours of the penitentiary’s religious marketplace and competed for souls. Christianity was particularly well-represented behind bars, especially given the preexisting monopoly of the Catholic Church, and since the turn of the twentieth century, the arrival of U.S. colonial Protestant missionaries. Surviving inmate files, parole records, and other sources make the religious worlds of Puerto Rican convicts visible. These sources link prisoners to a range of religious communities both behind and beyond bars.

Ribot’s popular Catholicism represented just one of many religious options in island prisons between the 1930s and midcentury. The social histories compiled by Oso Blanco’s Classification and Treatment Board confirm the breadth of the penitentiary’s belief spectrum. Groups active in Oso Blanco at the time included: Catholics, Protestants, Evangelicals, Adventists, Defenders of the Faith, Baptists, Methodists, Lutherans, Pentecostals, Spiritists, Free and Occult Thinkers, and so on. Although Catholicism predominated in Oso Blanco overall, other Christian groups were equally up to the task of “winning,” “saving,” and “redeeming” souls. For example,

in 1938 the U.S.-based Women's Christian Temperance Union presented some "1,000 gospels" to Oso Blanco inmates.²⁶

Most Oso Blanco convicts veered toward Catholicism. About two-thirds of all prisoners in the penitentiary at any given time between 1917 and 1956 identified as Catholic.²⁷ The remaining third or so during these years connected with other belief systems, including Creedless, Protestantism, and Spiritism, in this order. Importantly, "creedless" convicts consistently totaled the second highest number of "believers" behind bars throughout the period in question, only in their case they shared in *not* having an exact formula of religious belief. This category was likely a catchall term, one that included everything from marginal Christianities to Freemasons to the belief systems of foreign prisoners from China, the Arab world, the circum-Caribbean world, Hawaii, and elsewhere. One theosophist served time in the penitentiary in 1929 and 1933, and nine did in 1934. Figure 3 below confirms these patterns. The decline across most religiosities in the early 1940s was likely due to World War II, selective service, and migration to the U.S. mainland. It is equally important to note that during and after the war, Pentecostals, for example, began to arrive in Puerto Rico in large numbers and made great inroads. Therefore, the gap between Catholicism and Protestantism likely shrank in the 1950s and beyond considering conversions.²⁸

Oso Blanco convicts came from all walks of religious life. Their socioeconomic, racial, and regional backgrounds also varied. Many lived in or near cities when they committed crimes,

²⁶ Women's Christian Temperance Union, *Report of the Annual Convention of the National Women's Christian Temperance Union* (S.I.: s.n., 1938): 182.

²⁷ Catholicism has continued to dominate the island's religious landscape, with some 2.67 million Puerto Ricans identifying as such in some way as of December 2013. See Gerardo E. Alvarado León, "Fenómeno religioso: gana terreno en la isla la 'iglesia electrónica,'" *El Nuevo Día*, 21 diciembre 2013, 43-44.

²⁸ This was the case in barrio Jauca, Santa Isabel, for example, where Don Taso Zayas and other members of the community converted to Evangelical Christianity. See Mintz, *Worker in the Cane*.

but had rural roots.²⁹ In general, they attended mass every Sunday. Others attended less frequently, if at all. This depended on how “active” or “passive” (i.e., committed) they were to their religiosity, regardless of denomination.³⁰ Several prisoners only activated their Catholicism during the holiday season. For example, a 20-year-old black freelance “peon” from Mayagüez (born in Yauco) named Santiago Casiano Ortiz only went to mass during Christmas and Holy Week.³¹ The editors of *El Despertar* were similarly selective about when they engaged Catholicism. Drawings of nativity scenes and major Christian personas like the Three Kings usually filled the pages of the periodical during the winter holiday season.³²

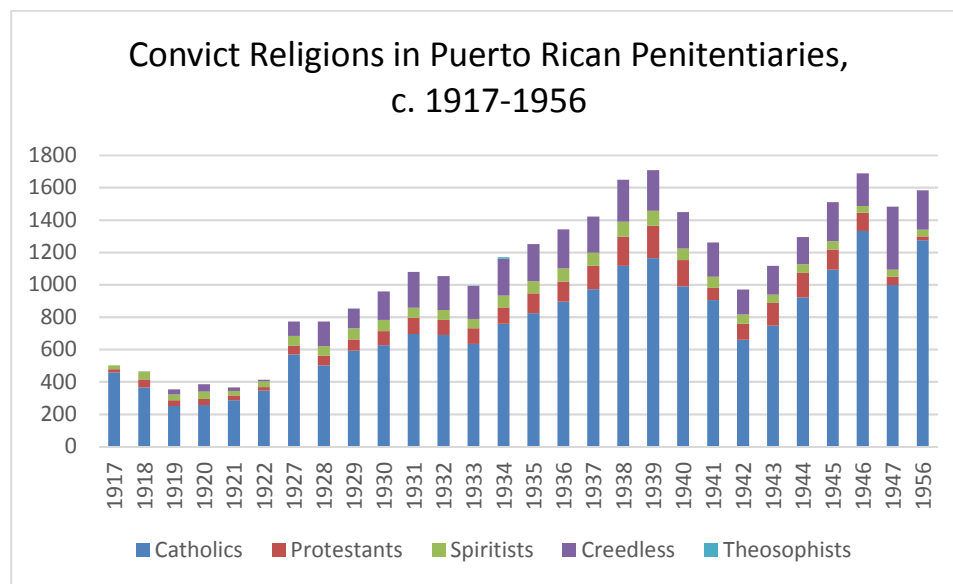


Figure 3: Comparative Religious Classifications of Convicts in La Princesa and Oso Blanco, c. 1917-1956; adapted from *Reports of the Attorney General of Porto/Puerto Rico*, AGPR.

Some prisoners simply highlighted the ritual base of their devotion to Catholicism. A 40-year-old white day laborer from Ponce (born in Lares) named Carlos Pagán Hernández, for

²⁹ On crime and rural-to-urban migration in Puerto Rico during this period, see Santiago Valles, “*Subject People*” and *Colonial Discourses*.

³⁰ The Classification and Treatment Board used these terms to express the degree of convict commitment to religion.

³¹ Expediente del confinado Santiago Casiano Ortiz, Caja 133, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

³² For example, see the December 1949 issue of *El Despertar*.

instance, qualified his Catholicism by referring to communion.³³ A 17-year-old mulatto aniseed and rum packager from Santurce (born in Bayamón) named Miguel Ángel Estrada Sánchez also referenced his communion.³⁴ Other convicts underscored the power of prayer. A 39-year-old trigüeño day laborer from Santa Isabel (born in Juana Díaz) named Amador Mangual Toro was an “active Catholic.” He told classification and treatment official Ligia I. Dávila that praying at night made him “feel so good” that he forgot he was in prison.³⁵ Official Carmín Bravo Abreu noted that Juan del Valle Serrano, a 45-year-old mulatto goods peddler from Mayagüez (born in Isabela), prayed every night before going to bed.³⁶ A lifelong resident of San Sebastián, jíbaro Eustaquio Pérez González, did the same.³⁷ A 71-year-old black convict knowledgeable about sugar centrifuges from Vega Alta named Juan López Monge also prayed every night.³⁸ While prayer was not exclusive to Catholics by any means, they consistently emphasized the practice in their interviews with classification and treatment bureaucrats.³⁹

Several convicts insisted they had deep histories with Catholicism. Antonio Palmer Crespo, a 21-year-old white carpenter from Río Piedras (born in Bayamón), professed to prison board officials that he punctually attended mass and rosary services both inside and outside of Oso

³³ Expediente del confinado Carlos Pagán Hernández, Caja 154, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

³⁴ Expediente del confinado Miguel Ángel Estrada Sánchez, Caja 200, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

³⁵ Expediente del confinado Amador Mangual Toro, Caja 130, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

³⁶ Expediente del confinado Juan del Valle Serrano, Caja 134, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

³⁷ Expediente del confinado Eustaquio Pérez González, Caja 161, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

³⁸ Expediente del confinado Juan López Monge, Caja 175, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

³⁹ The theme of prayer also emerged in *El Despertar*. For example, in the April 1950 edition of the magazine, female community activist and Christian leader Carmelina G. Freyre discussed prayer. She suggested that it was not about “letting God know your desires,” for “material things,” or to “satisfy the ego.” Rather, it was about “finding harmony with God,” to secure his “guidance and protection.” See “Colaboración de la Sra. Carmelina G. Freyre,” *El Despertar* (abril 1950): 30.

Blanco. Growing up he served as an altar boy, and his godfather was a sacristan. Palmer Crespo also noted that community priests intended to secure his release.⁴⁰ A few prisoners had more ambiguous relationships with Catholicism. For instance, a 16-year-old white shoeshiner and paperboy from Vega Baja named Justino Curbelo Mercado was Catholic “by tradition.” However, board officials observed, he was also “superstitious.” Curbelo Mercado believed that “envious neighbors” had sent “witchcraft” his mother’s way, driving her mad.⁴¹

In this particular case, both penitentiary technocrats *and* the convict used flat language to describe “witchcraft” when in fact more specific ideas and beliefs were at the center of such philosophical doctrines based in different understandings of science, morality, and healing. Curbelo Mercado’s vague Catholicism somewhat aligned with Ribot’s. Both convicts invoked a spirituality beyond the purview of Catholicism proper.⁴² Curbelo Mercado’s parallel belief in “witchcraft” and Ribot’s saint-centric rite-making are at the very least suggestive of syncretic beliefs and practices. However, prison officials did not recognize folk Catholic forms as separate religions (e.g., Haitian vodou, Cuban *santería*, and Brazilian *candomblé*). In the Dominican Republic, the Trujillo regime likewise collapsed diverse black belief systems into an uncomplicated whole. Nonetheless, these examples draw attention to the layers of Catholicism in Puerto Rican prisons, if not the precise genealogy and manifestation of each individual strand.

For centuries, the Catholic Church managed official religious policy on the island. As imprisonment was intimately linked to Spanish colonial governance, Catholics contributed to

⁴⁰ A sacristan is an officer charged with the care of the sacristy, the church, and their contents. A sacristy is a room near the main altar of a church for keeping vestments, furnishings, sacred vessels, and parish records. Expediente del confinado Antonio Palmer Crespo, Caja 205, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

⁴¹ Expediente del confinado Justino Curbelo Mercado, Caja 90, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

⁴² Meaning that the things they said and did contradicted the dogma of the Roman Catholic Church but not enough to warrant total disavowal.

meeting the spiritual needs of convicts. In the nineteenth century, priests frequently performed death rites for sick inmates, arranging for their remains to be interred on the one hand while participating in the persecution of heterodox thinkers on the other.⁴³ By the mid-twentieth century, the roles of priests had evolved. For example, in 1946, Catholic chaplains in the San Juan district jail presided over “religious conferences.” In the Ponce district prison, a chaplain “organized the institution’s first library.”⁴⁴ Priests also led mass (the main act of worship in the Catholic Church) and other rites behind bars.

Catholic leaders and citizens collaborated in organizing and executing Catholic masses in Oso Blanco. In late July 1946, for example, Catholics organized a spectacle mass subsequently performed on the penitentiary’s patio. *El Imparcial* reported that to plan the event a group of Catholic leaders, including Father Juan Díaz Mesón (of Sacred Heart church in Santurce), Father José (of the Redemptorist Fathers⁴⁵ and chaplain of the Catholic mission in Oso Blanco), and Father J. Ortiz del Rivero (of the Carmelite Sisters⁴⁶), met in the Santurce residence of a couple involved in prisoners’ affairs. The group hoped the event would address “vice and crime” on the island. Singers Delia Quiñones de Meyner and Alfonso Álvarez Torres, who hosted the Catholic officials in their home, interpreted the vocal portion of the program. Two musicians—violinist Jaime Pedró and organist Francisco Vidal Tarraza—provided instrumentation.⁴⁷ Everyone involved wanted to offer attendees a sensory experience they could see, hear, and feel.

⁴³ For example, see Cajas 151-165, SEC, FDJ, AGPR; and García Leduc, *Intolerancia y heterodoxias en Puerto Rico*.

⁴⁴ *Report of the Attorney General of Puerto Rico* (1946), 42.

⁴⁵ A society of priests that serves neglected rural populations.

⁴⁶ A society of nuns that serves the elderly and infirm.

⁴⁷ “Misa en la penitenciaría,” *El Imparcial*, 1 agosto 1946, 20.

Experiencing religiosity through sight and sound registers materialized belief. Singing and music helped capture and keep the attention of prisoners. These activities enhanced the overall quality of Catholic mass.⁴⁸ Further, participating in the rites of Catholic mass (e.g., sermons, prayers, and communion) appealed to many Oso Blanco inmates who appreciated the exposure to a redemptive practice that tried to bridge bodily and spiritual healing. While prison medicine was generally out of convicts' hands, the institution of the church never left them. They carried it with them wherever they went, whether the institutional patio, vocational workshops, outside the penitentiary on labor assignments, or their cells.

Island journalists chronicled Catholic masses held at the penitentiary. *El Mundo* chronicled the mass organized by Díaz Mesón and company. In mid-August 1946, the newspaper published photographs of the Catholic mission. These images say more than words possibly can about the mundane, community-building, and experiential aspects of Catholicism in Oso Blanco. Díaz Mesón led the religious ceremony from an elevated position. A microphone communicated his sermon to a large, multiracial crowd of visibly thin prisoners. During the mass, inmates received Bibles and catechisms. Reporters recorded that the prisoners “listened eagerly” to Díaz Mesón, and when the time came to pray and reflect, they all fell in line.⁴⁹

Figure 4 below is from the *El Mundo* press release on the Catholic mission of August 1946. It captures when Oso Blanco inmates received Bibles and catechisms from mission representatives. At the bottom of the image, an inmate distributes religious texts. A veiled woman shielding herself from the sun with a hand fan stands behind him. The convict distributing texts is in the midst of

⁴⁸ Religious and secular choirs often visited Oso Blanco. See, for example, “El coro universitario visita la Penitenciaría Insular,” 22-23; and *Actas de la quincuagésima quinta asamblea de la Asociación de Iglesias Bautistas de Puerto Rico, celebrada en Ponce*, 7-10 febrero 1957, 68-69.

⁴⁹ “Una misa en el Presidio Insular,” *El Mundo*, 13 agosto 1946, 7.

exchanging words with another prisoner. The light-skinned and middle-aged distributor has a book in his right hand, but it is hard to tell whether he is withholding it or about to extend it. The young inmate of color hoping to receive the text, on the other hand, lightly touches his chest as if inferring that he sincerely wants a text or should not be denied one. His facial expression seems to corroborate this line of analysis. Then again, perhaps the text distributor's gesture is inquisitive, or he is seeking reassurance and the recipient is responding accordingly. Meanwhile, several other convicts are affixed to the unraveling situation. A few look directly at the camera. Some of them reach for Bibles and catechisms.



Figure 4: "Una misa en el Presidio Insular," *El Mundo*, August 13, 1946.

Notwithstanding whether prisoners were *actually* Catholic or simply wanted to kill time, Figure 4 above corroborates that many inmates sought out meaningful sensory experiences. They gravitated toward religious activities and tried to get something out of them. In this case, convicts presumably wanted to read or follow along during the service. After the service, they could enjoy the Bible or catechisms in their cells. More broadly, the spectacle mass gave inmates a chance to congregate, listen to God's word, pray, sing, and taste spiritual bread. In short, inmates were exposed to a sensory experience of faith that offered them inclusion, community, and uplift at best, or a chance to break the monotony of prison life at minimum.

Catholic priests carried out several spectacle masses in Oso Blanco around midcentury. It was their preferred method of outreach. In September 1949, *El Despertar* announced a Catholic mission scheduled for that October (16th-23rd). *Los Padres Redentoristas* advertised the event, which focused on inmates completing their first communion. In conjunction, *Las Hermanas del Buen Pastor* agreed to give afternoon dogma classes to convicts for several weeks throughout the month. Each morning, prisoners had the option of attending mass and communion classes. They had access to confessionals, rosary prayers, and blessings every night. The mission concluded with a mass officiated by Bishop Jaime P. Davis of the Archdiocese of San Juan. *El Despertar* declared that the Catholic mission was "a special time to receive God's grace. It is of utmost importance for your life and salvation."⁵⁰

El Despertar published an article about the mission in late October. Magazine editors printed the first page of the article in the form of a cross. The highlight of the mission, convicts agreed, was Friday the 21st, when prisoners and priests performed the "Via Crucis" (Stations of the Cross) ritual. This rite pays homage to a series of images or scenes that depict the story of

⁵⁰ Padres Redentoristas, "Misión Católica en la Penitenciaría Insular," *El Despertar* (septiembre 1949): 31.

Christ's crucifixion.⁵¹ Much of the inmate population participated in this “solemn act bursting with religious fervor.” The procession was unlike anything *El Despertar* contributors had ever seen. Convicts demonstrated “true spiritual retreat” during this part of the mission, as they clustered in several outposts representative of scenes of the Passion awaiting their turn to carry a depiction of Christ. Figure 5 below is an image of what the Via Crucis procession would have looked like in action during the September 1949 mission in Oso Blanco, although it is from the early 1970s.



Figure 5: “Via crucis en el Presidio,” *El Mundo*, April 19, 1973.

⁵¹ In the ritual, believers travel between “stations” and contemplate the sacred images or scenes. The images are arranged around a church nave or along a path. The faithful travel from image to image, in order, stopping at each to recite prayers. This can be done individually or in groups. The faithful might perform the ritual without any images. It is unclear whether images were used in the Oso Blanco procession. On the history of Via Crucis, see Herbert Thurston, *The Stations of the Cross: An Account of Their History and Devotional Purpose* (Charleston, SC: Nabu Press, 2010). On the redefinition of the ritual in Brazil, see Scheper-Hughes, *Death Without Weeping*.

While many prisoners seriously observed the Via Crucis ritual, some inmates certainly seized the opportunity just to socialize or momentarily escape the “panoptic” eye of the prison. Perhaps most importantly, convicts were exposed to Puerto Rico’s political and cultural elite through the mission. On Sunday, October 23, for example, “distinguished personalities” attended mass, including: female philanthropists and social workers, prominent attorneys, civic club leaders, parole board and justice officials, university intellectuals, secular and church choirs, and so on. Several priests and government bureaucrats delivered speeches. Bishop Davis’ “solemn mass” emphasized the “great spiritual significance” of the mission and exhorted prisoners “to maintain the spark” the mission had lit in their hearts and minds. During the mission, some 800 inmates received the “sacred communion,” as depicted by convict José M. N. in Figure 6 below. The cartoon portrays the bishop of San Juan feeding convicts symbolic holy bread. Inmates kneel next to one another in anticipation of the sacrament.⁵² Further, 700 convicts enrolled in the prison chapter of *La Sociedad del Santo Nombre*.⁵³ And in one of Oso Blanco’s toughest cellblocks, convicts agreed to “pray the Holy Rosary every night.” In subsequent weeks, six additional cellblocks joined the rosary, chanting aloud in unison every night before “lights out.”⁵⁴

Catholic priests continued to promote their faith in island prisons in the 1950s. They collaborated with their Protestant counterparts regarding the “moral education” of prisoners. In the San Juan district jail, for example, Father Juan Vicente Rafael Rivera lectured about spiritual uplift,

⁵² In the July-August 1950 edition of *El Despertar*, convicts recorded a similar scene. The only differences are that prisoners receive the sacrament individually, and a piano player sets the mood of the ritual through music. See Joaquín R. B. V., “Orientación sobre el plan de clasificación y tratamiento,” 22.

⁵³ The Society of the Most Holy Name of God and Jesus is a Roman Catholic confraternity of the laity and is one of several which are under the care of the Dominican Order. It is open to all Catholic adults. A 39-year-old white truck driver from San Germán named Ángel Rivera Vázquez revealed to classification and treatment official Luz M. Lladó that he was a member of this group. Expediente del confinado Ángel Rivera Vázquez, Caja 173, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

⁵⁴ “Misión Católica en la Penitenciaría,” *El Despertar* (octubre 1949): 15 and 24.

namely “feeling restored” through religious services. Rivera exposed prisoners to rooms adorned with sacred effigies, where they learned “how to live” spiritually. In addition to leading traditional rites, he also provided individual counsel to convicts and had them reflect on the poetry of Spanish philosopher Ramón de Campoamor.⁵⁵ Participating in rituals and talking to priests like Rivera in spaces decorated for the occasion afforded prisoners opportunities for spiritual uplift. Performing faith mattered to inmates not only because they could materialize what they believed in but because doing so was fulfilling and even therapeutic. Harvesting feelings of certainty through religious instruction and ritual helped convicts overcome being buried alive by incarceration.



Figure 6: José M. N., Oso Blanco holy communion, *El Despertar*, November 1949.

In addition to ritual and education, Catholic priests and nuns also assisted inmates when it came to transcending prison walls for the sake of their families. In January 1958 in Vega Alta prison, for example, Assistant Director Crucita Arzuaga Algarín wrote to Director Lydia Peña de Planas to complain about Catholic Sister Imelda’s “direct intervention” in prison bureaucratic

⁵⁵ J. Estades Rigau, “Siembran esperanza y consuelo tras las rejas: un sacerdote católico y un ministro protestante hacen obra de ajuste moral y espiritual en nuestras prisiones,” *Puerto Rico Ilustrado*, 11 octubre 1952, 30-33, 35 and 38.

affairs. This “confused” inmates about “norms and procedures,” and who really exercised power. Instead of sticking to a religious message, Imelda tried to usurp the duties of classification and treatment officials and other administrators. Further, she “mistakenly” trusted the information she collected from prisoners, most of whom were “mentally deficient.” Similarly, she gave them inaccurate information. One time, she sought authorization to transfer inmate Lucia Ortiz’s daughters from a welfare institution in Santurce to another in Ponce, where the girls would receive “better care.” However, this conflicted with Ortiz’s desires, who wanted the girls close so that she could see them under the supervision of a social worker.⁵⁶ Imelda had forgotten that in the twentieth century religious authority played second fiddle to secular authority.

Although in Puerto Rico Catholicism predominated behind bars, the Catholic Church did not have a lock on convicts’ spirituality. This contrasted sharply with developments in the Dominican Republic, where Catholic priests controlled prison religious life and curtailed the activities and influence of Evangelical Protestants.⁵⁷ In the late 1920s, President Horacio Vásquez occasionally visited Nigua to attend Catholic mass and observe other rites with convicts.⁵⁸ In the late 1930s, high-ranking clergy led mass in prisons. Jimenes Grullón, for instance, recalled the presence of Italian Archbishop Ricardo Pittini, whose holiday and Sunday cell visits he deemed “hypocritical” because of the priest’s acquiescence to the Trujillo regime.⁵⁹ Despite Catholic oversight, convicts had limited access to the iconography of the church behind bars. Diógenes

⁵⁶ Expediente de la Confinada Lucia Ortíz, Caja 7, SFEIM, FDJ, AGPR.

⁵⁷ “Carta del Can. Pérez Sánchez a Virgilio Trujillo Molina, Secretario de Interior, Policía, Guerra y Marina, sobre visitas de evangélicos a la cárceles de San Cristóbal,” 1 septiembre 1932, in José Luis Sáez, ed., *La sumisión bien pagada: la iglesia dominicana bajo la era de Trujillo, 1930-1961*, Tomo I (Santo Domingo: Archivo General de la Nación, 2008), 127.

⁵⁸ “Acto religioso en la Penitenciaría de Nigua,” *La Opinión*, 11 mayo 1928, 1; and *La Opinión*, 14 mayo 1928, 7.

⁵⁹ Jimenes Grullón, *Una gestapo en América*, 136-37, 171, and 195.

improvised his altar, for example.⁶⁰ One Catholic official even petitioned Trujillo in the mid-1940s, asking him to supply “comforting” crosses and images of the Virgin of Altagracia for Nigua and other prisons across the country.⁶¹ Another prison priest active in the mid-1940s in Puerto Plata, José Molné, reiterated the values of the dictatorship in his sermons. He exhorted convicts to “regenerate” themselves by “changing” their lives. This would benefit society and their families. Molné made this appeal by underscoring some of the tropes of Trujillo’s working-class discourse: dignity, laboriousness, and hard work.⁶²

While the Dominican state restricted prisoner access to non-Catholic beliefs, after midcentury the Trujillo government’s grip on convicts’ religious affiliations gradually loosened. Meanwhile, in Puerto Rico the state let prisoners experiment with multiple belief systems. Of all the “stars,” or healing regimes, in the constellation of redemptive practices east of the Mona Passage, religiosity was more multidimensional and personally manipulable than most of the other available options, including science and the humanities. Non-Catholic religiosities also powerfully impacted Puerto Rican convicts in the mid-twentieth century.

Protestant Convicts, Nationalists, and Healers

Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, Evangelical Protestants worked alongside U.S. imperialism and laboratory medicine to “save” the island population from spiritual and bodily bankruptcy. Protestant-leaning groups were just as active in Oso Blanco as Catholics. And whereas Catholics comprised most of the penitentiary population during the interwar period,

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 181-82.

⁶¹ “Sugerencia de que se efectúe la colocación del crucifijo en las cárceles,” 28-30 enero 1946, Caja IT: 2903478, SEJIP, SPN, FP, AGN.

⁶² Samuel Lightbourne, “Informe de la labor realizada durante el año 1944, en la cárcel de Puerto Plata,” 31 diciembre 1944, Caja IT: 8/006064, legajo 12, año 1940, FEN, AGN.

the remaining third of so of prisoners identified with other belief systems. The ranks of Oso Blanco Protestants fluctuated around five and 15 percent of the total penitentiary population during these years. Considering the statistics above, particularly the preponderance of Catholics, these numbers indicate that convicts possibly manipulated this information, especially if they thought that they could curry favor from authorities they believed to be Catholic or Evangelical. Therefore, the high percentages of certain groups compared to others may not be entirely accurate.

Evangelical Protestant denominations vigorously performed spiritual work in Oso Blanco. Administratively, the Baptist Church led the pack.⁶³ This was no coincidence. As Figure 2 above corroborates, by 1915 Baptists had spiritual “jurisdiction” over the San Juan metropolitan area, including the municipality where Oso Blanco stood (Río Piedras). Thus, Baptists spearheaded interdenominational church efforts in Oso Blanco after 1933. More broadly, in the middle decades of the twentieth century, Baptists held annual conferences in collaboration with Freemasons, physicians, and other Christian denominations. These conferences advanced an agenda for collaborative prison work, assigned a chaplain to the penitentiary and set his salary, and documented spiritual uplift efforts in all the institutions of the Río Piedras medico-legal complex. They provided prison chaplains and missionaries with opportunities to statistically and qualitatively chronicle their efforts.⁶⁴

⁶³ Baptists get their name from their doctrinal position on baptism, which claims that the ritual requires complete immersion in a body of water during adulthood rather than the sprinkling Catholic infants receive. While Baptist churches are widely considered to be Protestant churches, some Baptists disavow this identity. They never left the Catholic Church like Protestants did because they never formed part of it. In fact, many Baptists suggest that their doctrine predates the Reformation by at least several hundred years. Consult William H. Brackney, *A Genetic History of Baptist Thought, with Special Reference to Baptists in Britain and North America* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 2004); and Bill J. Leonard, *Baptists in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005). On Baptists in Puerto Rico, see Silva Gotay, *Protestantismo y política en Puerto Rico*, 124-27.

⁶⁴ In December 1933, missionary Laura Fish discussed Christmas programming in Oso Blanco, for example. Baptists performed the drama “Who Gives This Feast?” Fish noted that the stage was made of two large dining tables and the curtain was a sheet. But the program was, “if anything, better than when given in the church. A large group of church members attended, the prisoners seemed most appreciative, and many of them deeply moved.” See Fish, “Christmas

Church conference minutes for some years even briefly refer to ex-prisoners who attended annual meetings. These ex-convicts shared testimonies about the “saving power” of Christ. In one particularly telling example from March 1938, an ex-convict named Julio Rodríguez (also known as “Charlemagne”) participated in the 35th Annual Assembly of Baptist Churches celebrated in Caguas. Rodríguez converted to Baptism while in Oso Blanco. He credited the Gospel for his transformation. According to observers, at the convention he gave “beautiful testimony” of his life as a new creature in Christ.⁶⁵

By midcentury, the Baptist-appointed interdenominational chaplain at Oso Blanco increasingly dedicated his time to collecting funds and reporting on developments in the field. In a November 1947 edition of *Puerto Rico Evangélico*, the island’s leading periodical on religion, education and sociology, chaplain Juan Sánchez Padilla reported what made spiritual work in Oso Blanco unique. “All the members of this congregation,” he asserted, previously professed another “faith or rite” but had since “converted.”⁶⁶ A decade later, in winter 1957, he was still evangelizing at Oso Blanco. Sánchez Padilla published one of his lengthiest reports ever this year. He summarized his work as guiding inmates to “salvation” and “eternity.” Christmas in Oso Blanco, specifically, was about feeding convicts “spiritual bread.” Sánchez Padilla booked preachers and choirs for holiday services. He recalled “winning many souls,” that numerous prisoners openly “repented,” and that some 100 inmates “came to Christ’s feet” and began a Bible study group.⁶⁷

in the Río Piedras Penitentiary,” *Missions* 24, 10 (December 1933): 600. Also see the minutes of the Annual Convention of Baptist churches, especially those from the late 1940s and 1950s, SEPR.

⁶⁵ *Actas de la trigésimoquinta asamblea anual de la convención de Iglesias Bautistas de Puerto Rico, celebrada en Caguas*, 10-13 marzo 1938, 20-21.

⁶⁶ J. Sánchez Padilla, “El pastor evangélico en las instituciones del gobierno,” *Puerto Rico Evangélico* 36 (10 noviembre 1947): 10-11.

⁶⁷ In his 1957 report, Sánchez Padilla also shed light on clashes with the Catholic mission at a youth prison in Miramar. Catholic priests had arranged an “altar” there comprised of “saint portraits” like the ones used by Ribot and Father

Evangelical Protestant leaders engaged a receptive and contradictory audience in Oso Blanco. Classification and Treatment Board social histories speak to these issues. For example, a 61-year-old white foreman from Arecibo (Central Cambalache) named Tomás Ramírez Santiago considered himself Pentecostal. He identified as a “fervent member of the religion.” In Oso Blanco, he attended services regularly. The convict planned to continue attending services when released from prison.⁶⁸ Rafael Muñoz Alvarado, a 29-year-old day laborer (with experience planting fruit trees and cutting sugarcane) from Santa Isabel, associated with the Pentecostal Church on the street. In Oso Blanco, he attended Pentecostal services but disapproved of how they were carried out and abandoned the religion.⁶⁹ Another convict who identified as Pentecostal, José Medina Berríos from Yabucoa, took “witchcraft” just as seriously. In his discussions with prison technocrats, he emphasized both systems’ commitment to understanding immaterial forces.⁷⁰

Other convicts claimed to be simply Evangelical. A 23-year-old black/trigueño plumber from Río Piedras named Gilberto Quiñones Quintero suggested that he was Catholic but started attending Evangelical services in Oso Blanco. He believed “this religion will help him avoid vice.”⁷¹ Roque Navarro Jiménez, a 37-year-old Evangelical carpenter from Adjuntas, “trusted this religion could help him in life.”⁷² A black inmate from Fajardo named José Luis Marrero called himself a “traditional Catholic” but “liked the Pentecostal religion” and attended their services in

Rivera. Sánchez Padilla claimed that the “images” made “the environment feel alien.” See *Actas de la quincuagésima quinta asamblea de la asociación de Iglesias Bautistas de Puerto Rico*, 67-70 and 89.

⁶⁸ Expediente del confinado Tomás Ramírez Santiago, Caja 125, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

⁶⁹ Expediente del confinado Rafael Muñoz Alvarado, Caja 86, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

⁷⁰ Expediente del confinado José Medina Berríos, Caja 146, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

⁷¹ Expediente del confinado Gilberto Quiñones Quintero, Caja 133, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

⁷² Expediente del confinado Roque Navarro Jiménez, Caja 175, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

prison.⁷³ These cases, and countless others, underscore the possibly common practice of convicts moving around denominations, not really sticking to the one to which they “belonged.” There were many advantages to this both behind and beyond bars, perhaps most importantly tapping into communities that assisted prisoners or might intervene on their behalf. For example, a 29-year-old mulatto/trigueño day laborer for Eastern Sugar Associates from Fajardo named Félix Medina Martínez reported to prison board officials that he was Adventist and his brother a pastor.⁷⁴ In another case, John Kenneth Vincent of the Vieques Island Mission of the Methodist Church wrote a letter to prison officials on behalf of convict Juan López Berríos, encouraging his parole.⁷⁵

Political prisoners were also open to the transformative power of non-Catholic Christianity. Many of them experienced “epiphanies” behind bars. Following the failure of the nationalist uprising of October 1950, which spilled into Oso Blanco, some nationalists transferred their faith in Catholicism to Evangelical Protestant beliefs. In October 1952, for example, *El Mundo* journalist Benjamin Santana wrote a series of articles about Albizuist nationalists who had converted to another branch of Christianity. The conversions, he declared, occurred not only in the wake of nationalist repression, but thanks to the labors of a British missionary born in New Zealand named Gladys B. Harrow (Figure 7 below).⁷⁶

⁷³ Expediente del confinado José Luis Marrero, Caja 283, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

⁷⁴ Expediente del confinado Félix Medina Martínez, Caja 168, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

⁷⁵ Expediente del confinado Juan López Berríos, Caja 175, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

⁷⁶ Harrow lived a transnational life. Her first mission in Puerto Rico spanned from 1929 to 1937. Harrow lived in Ponce during these years, where she collaborated with a denomination known as “The United Brothers” and counseled prisoners in the local district jail. She returned to Puerto Rico in October 1950 but did not start working with prisoners again until January 1951. By October 1952, she was being investigated by island immigration authorities for overstaying her visa. During both of her stays on the island, Harrow’s work largely consisted of distributing “evangelical literature” and having “conversations” with prisoners. Literature and discussions emphasized “biblical precepts.” She appears to have stayed in Puerto Rico until October 1953, when she and at least one ex-prisoner left to New Zealand. See Benjamin Santana, “El Alcaide Jones y los reclusos interceden por una evangelista: le piden al servicio de inmigración que permita a la inglesa Gladys B. Harrow quedarse aquí,” *El Mundo*, 8 octubre 1952, 12; and Helen V. Tooker, “Boricua indultado: empezará otra vida en Nueva Zelanda,” *El Mundo*, 16 octubre 1953, 14.



Figure 7: Protestant missionary Gladys B. Harrow, *El Mundo*, October 1, 1952.

Santana published at least three articles in *El Mundo* in October 1952 about Harrow and the nationalists she converted. On October 1, he reported that an alleged ringleader of Puerto Rico's October 1950 prison insurrection, Pedro Benejam Álvarez, had been taking a theology course offered by the Evangelical Seminary of San José, Costa Rica since July 1951. The convict shared his "testimony" with Santana, asserting that he and others converted to Christianity because of Harrow's "persuasive preaching."⁷⁷ He also underscored how being involved in the island underworld had inspired him to experiment with occult forms of religiosity. Benejam Álvarez told Santana that, for a time, he exploited "black magic" and "the terrible secrets of [this]

⁷⁷ Another convict named Germán Salgado Soto reported feeling "small" in her presence. "Tears streamed out of my eyes. I was defeated, not only by a woman, but by Christ, who looked at me through her [Harrow]." An Oso Blanco inmate named Antonio Rojas Cruz, serving a 33-year sentence, also revered Harrow. She was responsible for "planting a precious seed in me," one that "caused a radical change in my life that I cannot explain." See Santana, "Un líder del motín del Presidio revela cómo se hizo religioso: Salgado Soto dice urdiendo venganza conoció a la Señorita Harrow, quien logró convertirlo," *El Mundo*, 4 octubre 1952, 14; and Santana, "El Alcaide Jones y los reclusos interceden por una evangelista," 12.

diabolical art” to secure his wellbeing. Occult knowledge allowed him to operate on “the margins of the law” (as Cruz Díaz would have observed) and prompted him to kill a man with a submachine gun, the crime for which he was in Oso Blanco serving an extended sentence.⁷⁸

To avoid clustering radical nationalists in one place, prison authorities transferred Benejam Álvarez to another prison. While in solitary confinement there, he started reading the Bible and discussing its lessons with other inmates. He finally met Harrow on July 10, 1951. She gave him Evangelical pamphlets. “That memorable day,” he recounted to Santana, “this sinner surrendered himself and accepted Christ as his personal Savior.” Benejam Álvarez took “delight” in converting behind bars. “Praying” and “crying like never before,” he understood his experience the following way: “Those...were tears of repentance, forgiveness and redemption.” The convict credited God’s “mercy” and “saving power” for the remarkable changes in his life.⁷⁹ To prisoners like Benejam Álvarez, Evangelical Christianity offered a compelling option to exercise freedom of religious choice. Other Puerto Rican nationalists similarly appreciated the comfort and liberating power that Protestant-leaning doctrines provided. These gave them a renewed sense of purpose and deliverance, feelings the Catholic nationalist movement struggled to preserve, especially given setbacks like the failed revolution of fall 1950 and the state’s Gag Law campaign that lasted for a

⁷⁸ Having suffered the same upbringing as many other inmates, Benejam Álvarez came of age homeless and parentless. Until age 17, he was imprisoned in the Mayagüez Industrial School for Boys. He subsequently enlisted in the U.S. military, where he became an “expert marksman.” After being “honorably discharged,” the convict entered the Puerto Rican underworld and started stealing and trafficking weapons and drugs. In prison, Benejam Álvarez became acutely aware of “state injustice” and “societal complicity” in the abuse of inmates. See Santana, “Revelan Pedro Benejam estudia teología por correspondencia: el Cabecilla del motín en el Presidio, en el 1950, da detalles de su vida en testimonio escrito,” *El Mundo*, 1 octubre 1952, 14.

⁷⁹ For Benejam Álvarez, divine saving power facilitated spiritual healing, uplift, and redemption. He disregarded “earthly courts,” suggesting that in the larger scheme of things they were “insignificant.” Indeed, the convict did not fear “spending the rest of my life in prison” because he was sure that “my Savior [Christ] will return soon and take me by his side.” The prisoner also revealed to Santana that he did not lament the loss of former interlocutors, for “in Christ I have more than a friend. I have a Savior.” Further, he noted that he used to “hate his cell,” but now he would “miss” it if ever released because it was where his “life changed” and he became “a new man.” Benejam Álvarez concluded his testimony by encouraging secularly-minded “sinners” to “ask God to enlighten their hearts.” See Santana, “Revelan Pedro Benejam estudia teología por correspondencia,” 14.

decade.⁸⁰ That nationalist inmates could barely explain the changes in their lives is suggestive of the power of alternative forms of organized religion despite their colonial roots.

Although Baptists largely directed Evangelical Protestant efforts in Oso Blanco, other denominations were equally active in the prison and in society at large. As noted above, Puerto Ricans increasingly embraced the U.S.-based Pentecostal Church and its message of divine healing.⁸¹ As Silva Gotay observes, this reflected the historical moment, for in the middle decades of the twentieth century many islanders experienced profound economic and political crises. These included the Great Depression and political persecution at the hands of the colonial populist state.⁸² This was the context in which Oklahoman evangelist Tommy Lee Osborn led “healing revival” campaigns across Latin America and the Caribbean, including Peru, Chile, Cuba, and Puerto Rico.

Osborn visited Puerto Rico several times in 1950 and 1951.⁸³ In summer 1951, for example, he attracted at least 10,000 people to a revival service in Humacao; 15,000 to an event in “Charles

⁸⁰ Florencia Mallon chronicles a similar response by members of Mapuche communities in late-twentieth-century Chile. The circumstances surrounding Salvador Allende’s removal from power in September 1973 and the subsequent “dirty war” set the stage for activist “disenchantment” with radical politics. Some Mapuche turned to Evangelical Christianity after these defeats. They identified religious/spiritual experiences, including conversions in prisons, as key in the transformation of their political selves and to their self-preservation. Other Mapuche used the communal aspects of religion for solidarity-building. See Mallon, *Courage Tastes of Blood: The Mapuche Community of Nicolás Aillío and the Chilean State, 1906-2001* (Durham: Duke, 2005), 12, 79, 109-10, 150-57, and 229.

⁸¹ Pentecostalism is a renewal movement within Protestant Christianity that emphasizes a direct and personal experience of God through baptism with the Holy Spirit. This is evident when a Pentecostal “speaks in tongues,” for instance. The faith revolves around the notion of “God’s oneness” rather than the tiered Trinity of the Catholic Church. The first thirty years of the movement (1901-31) in the U.S. exhibited unparalleled interracial commitment. This likely resonated with Puerto Rico’s interracial population. Further, Pentecostals believe in apocalyptic prophecy and “divine healing.” Regarding the latter, they think medicine and doctors play an important role in staying healthy, but that God is the ultimate source for all healing. See Chestnut, *Competitive Spirits*, ch. 3; Thornton, “The Cultural Politics of Evangelical Christianity in the Dominican Republic”; Silva Gotay, *Protestantismo y política en Puerto Rico*, 143-48; and Talmadge L. French, *Early Interracial Oneness Pentecostalism: G.T. Haywood and the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, 1901-1931* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2014).

⁸² Silva Gotay, *Protestantismo y política en Puerto Rico*, 144.

⁸³ After returning home from a Christian mission in India in the mid-1940s, Osborn gained notoriety on the Tent Revival Circuit in the U.S. and Canada. He preached on fair grounds and in stadiums to audiences numbering in the thousands. Some of his contemporaries included evangelists Billy Graham, Oral Roberts, Jack Coe, and A. A. Allen. In the early 1950s, Osborn’s focus shifted toward international missions. He hosted large crusades in Latin America,

H. Terry” baseball park in Ponce; and 20,000 to Guancha beach in Ponce.⁸⁴ His sermons emphasized “God’s love and compassion” rather than the “apocalyptic” narrative commonly used by evangelists of the era.⁸⁵ Supernatural healing also permeated Osborn’s events. In June 1951, *The Voice of Healing* magazine reported that hundreds of Puerto Ricans “testified of having been completely healed of all manner of diseases during last year’s campaign and are still well today.”⁸⁶ Between the summers of 1950 and 1951, at least a dozen tuberculosis patients reported “complete restoration.” One former tubercular claimed that “believing” in the promise and message of “divine healing” immediately cured him when Osborn touched him.⁸⁷ *The Voice of Healing* documented Osborn’s Puerto Rican exploits by citing the testimonies of local physicians, clinicians, and those he healed. As one story put it in July 1951, the cases represented “healing from SERIOUS ORGANIC AILMENTS [original emphasis],” including blindness, ulcers, and cancer.⁸⁸

Osborn’s revival services in Puerto Rico attracted the ire of local Catholics. A smear campaign failed to develop, however, as “Catholic doctors themselves were willing to submit their confirmation of the miracles.” While physicians and other onlookers were dumbfounded by Osborn’s “remarkable” healing power and “spiritual influence,” the healed pointed to the power of faith, prayer, and the role of “God’s love” in the restoration of their bodies.⁸⁹ A woman healed

Asia, and Africa, attended by crowds of tens of thousands. See Tommy Lee Osborn, *Puerto Rico: Revival Harvest, With Miracles of Healing* (Tulsa, Oklahoma: Voice of Faith Ministries, 1951).

⁸⁴ “To the Regions Beyond: Authentic...Historic...Epics, Unprecedented Victory of Osborn’s Return to Ponce,” *The Voice of Healing* (June 1951): 8-9; and “Documented Healings Stop Opposition in Osborn Campaigns,” *The Voice of Healing* (July 1951): 3 and 10.

⁸⁵ This contrasted sharply with many Puerto Rican Pentecostal congregations of the past, and still does today.

⁸⁶ “To the Regions Beyond,” 8. Also see Mintz, *Worker in the Cane*, ch. 7.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ “Documented Healings,” 3 and 10.

⁸⁹ “To the Regions Beyond,” 9; and “Documented Healings,” 10.

by Osborn, for instance, affirmed that his mass prayer for “the sick” and “hand motions” erased an “inflamed gland” she had above her left breast. Dr. Pedro Conde, the physician who had examined the woman’s “cancerous spot” and recommended clinical treatment, subsequently declared her “perfectly healed.”⁹⁰ Those cured by Osborn understood him as a conduit for God’s grace. He may not have been a man-god like Mateo in the Dominican Republic or those discussed by Román, but many Puerto Ricans believed that he performed “miracles” on “God’s behalf” and thwarted “crime and evil” by preaching “the Gospel of Salvation for both soul and body.”⁹¹

There is some evidence that Osborn encountered convict believers. During his Ponce crusade, a disabled convict briefly “escaped” police custody. The inmate “on crutches” had convinced district prison officials to let him attend the event under armed guard. At the event, Osborn’s message captivated the guards and the prisoner. While the guards prayed, the inmate was healed, dropped his crutches, and “ran away through the crowd.” The guards asked for the crowd’s help to recapture the escapee, but then “the prisoner arrived at the podium, in tears.” Rather than escape, the man “simply put his faith into action.” He had been “miraculously healed” and sprinting was the only way he could express thanks to God. Osborn recalled citing Luke 5:17 during this episode: “One day Jesus was teaching, and Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there. They had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was with Jesus to heal the sick.”⁹² Osborn also depicted Christ as an “indwelling

⁹⁰ “Documented Healings,” 10.

⁹¹ Another believer from Santurce named Dionisio Bonilla, who was suffering from cancerous leg ulcers, praised God for Osborn’s “miraculous power.” After Osborn prayed for Bonilla, “both of my legs began to dry until they scarred and cicatrized completely.” The specialist who had previously treated Bonilla, Dr. Alfredo L. Bou, declared his former patient “perfectly healed” following Osborn’s visit. Not only did the editors of *The Voice of Healing* see “hundreds divinely healed” with their own eyes, they compiled “proof” of these episodes of “true healing” and the “real resurrection of COLLECTIVE FAITH IN GOD.” “To the Regions Beyond,” 8-9; and “Documented Healings,” 10.

⁹² Luke 5:17-26 concerns Jesus forgiving and healing a paralytic. Also see Osborn, *Personal Diary Notes: The Ponce, Puerto Rico Crusade and its Significance* (Tulsa, Oklahoma: Osborn Publishers, 2007), 11.

healer.” “Physical health,” he asserted, was “part of salvation.” The “healing of the body” and the “regeneration of the spirit” went hand in hand.⁹³ Osborn’s activities generated shockwaves that penetrated the hearts and minds of Puerto Ricans and impacted government and justice officials.

In the mid-twentieth century, missionaries like Osborn used the medium of sound to propagate knowledge about the unknowable. Convicts and other islanders increasingly depended on sound to access and benefit from this sacred knowledge. For example, in summer 1951, a man from Tallaboa, Peñuelas named Michael Toro offered “testimony” to *The Voice of Healing* about Osborn’s recent visit. Toro had heard one of Osborn’s messages on the radio. Referencing his daughter’s “crippled right leg,” he shared that “when I heard Bro. Osborn’s broadcast I put my child on the table by the radio and prayed, and God instantly healed her.” Toro added that Osborn similarly healed him later, but in the flesh, improving his sight and hearing.⁹⁴ This case illustrates how radio functioned as a spiritual gateway, one that led to a total sensory experience. Religious radio broadcasts contained messages that, from Toro’s point of view, expedited healing. The words, soundwaves, and vibrations associated with Osborn’s programming had a cathartic impact on Toro and his daughter. That Toro heard and felt spiritual power through the radio speaks to the importance of the blend between (im)material approaches to redemptive practice, and the use of technology to bridge the gap between the two.

Osborn acknowledged the significance of radio. Since large afternoon gatherings left people suffocating and fainting from heat exhaustion, the owner of a major radio station in Ponce offered Osborn time to preach via radio “so the entire area could hear the message daily.” The broadcasts became a “miracle-spectacle as people placed their radios in open windows or on their

⁹³ Osborn, *One Hundred Divine Healing Facts* (Tulsa, Oklahoma: Harrison House, 1983), 5.

⁹⁴ “To the Regions Beyond,” 9.

verandas, the volume turned loud, so that neighbors and people in the streets could hear.” Miracles took place in homes and on the streets, “as people believed and acted on God’s promises.” News of miracles quickly made it back to the radio station to be disseminated at large.⁹⁵ Osborn had a simple message: “Like all of Christ’s redemptive gifts, healing must be received by faith,” by natural means, and “must be consecrated for Christ’s service and glory alone.”⁹⁶

These developments impacted approaches to convict rehabilitation. Protestant-leaning justice officials and collaborators thought that charismatic Christianity could teach prisoners how to police themselves and expose them to “God’s truths.” Ministers like Gerardo López Rodríguez framed their work in La Princesa prison in this way, suggesting that spiritual uplift was among the “best things in life.” However, prisoners had to define this for themselves, whether it meant “pleasure,” “freedom,” “peace” or “God’s salvation,” all of which were sensations and conditions in tune with the infinite.⁹⁷ Protestant faiths supplied prisoners with routines and tools designed to stimulate specific perspectives and emotional responses. While the dramatic and energetic healing orientation of some Protestant spectacles contrasted sharply with those of Catholic missions, the moralizing impulse of each coincided. Catholics and Protestants did not monopolize faith-based work in Puerto Rican prisons, however.

Spiritists Behind Bars

Spiritists also shaped Oso Blanco’s belief ecology in the mid-twentieth century. Spiritism is a scientific philosophy from France introduced to Puerto Rico in the late nineteenth century by

⁹⁵ Osborn, *Personal Diary Notes*, 11 and 14.

⁹⁶ Osborn, *One Hundred Divine Healing Facts*, 26.

⁹⁷ Estades Rigau, “Siembran esperanza y consuelo tras las rejas,” 35.

local intellectuals who had studied in Madrid and Paris. The belief system's founder, Leon Hippolyte Denizarth Rivail (Allan Kardec) defined Spiritism as a "science" that studies the nature, origin, and destiny of spirits, as well as their relations with the corporeal world.⁹⁸ But even this definition is narrow and does not fully account for the varieties of Spiritism. Other versions were much more vernacular. As scholar Mario A. Núñez Molina notes, lower-class Puerto Ricans, for instance, viewed Spiritism as a "framework for understanding and healing illness." Like Ribot, they blended Spiritism with popular Catholicism, healing, herbal medicine, and other practices derived from indigenous and African heritage.⁹⁹

The history of Puerto Rican incarceration reveals that Spiritists have been on both sides of the prison experience—as inmates and as reformers. García Leduc shows that in the late nineteenth century the colonial state perceived of Spiritists as a threat.¹⁰⁰ At the time, the Catholic Church and Spanish medical licensing boards launched a real and symbolic assault on Spiritists, healers, and other heterodox groups.¹⁰¹ The spread of Spiritism coincided with the disenfranchisement of popular folk healers who dispensed herbs and prayers, acted as midwives, and called upon the saints on behalf of the physically and emotionally infirm.¹⁰² Thus, many Spiritists, Freemasons,

⁹⁸ Kardec was a French philosopher, scholar, and magnetist whose interest in spirit phenomena had been aroused by the popular response in England to the Fox sisters' discovery of spirit trappings in New York State. See Koss-Chioino, *Women as Healers, Women as Patients*, 12; and Núñez Molina, "Toward an Experiential Approach for Researching Religious Experiences," 248-49.

⁹⁹ According to Koss-Chioino, Spiritism promotes a two-tiered healing message available to "everyone who can understand: only in pain can one find lost parts of oneself, and one must submit and wait for direction and understanding rather than force or control the direction in which important events proceed and solutions emerge." Inner voices and spirits carry these messages between the material and immaterial realms. See Koss-Chioino, *Women as Healers, Women as Patients*, xiii and xviii; and Núñez-Molina, "Toward an Experiential Approach for Researching Religious Experiences," 248-49.

¹⁰⁰ García Leduc, *Intolerancia y heterodoxias en Puerto Rico*.

¹⁰¹ Koss-Chioino, *Women as Healers, Women as Patients*, 13.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

and others ended up behind bars.¹⁰³ This changed with U.S. intervention, when the ranks of Cuban and Puerto Rican Spiritists increasingly included reformers who campaigned for scientific education, the separation of church and state, and the freedom of worship.¹⁰⁴ Following the establishment of an island-wide federation in Puerto Rico, Spiritists mobilized to end capital punishment, reform prisons, and install “moral education” in public schools.¹⁰⁵

Spiritist activism behind bars in Puerto Rico dates to at least 1905. A government circular from this year addressed the “frequent,” disorderly “spiritist meetings” carried out in island prisons. With U.S.-American rule, Puerto Rico enjoyed religious freedom, but prisons were not permitted to operate under the same criteria as public Spiritist centers. The government circular limited who could carry out Spiritist work and when they could do it. It also emphasized that Spiritist meetings should take place in “neutral” spaces. The circular underscored that only “approved missionaries” could enter the prison, and that they should not deviate from a “moral” script.¹⁰⁶

By the mid-twentieth century, Spiritism was a common feature of penitentiary life. Spiritists visited and lectured in Oso Blanco on a regular basis. Although technically a “philosophy” and therefore “not religious,” Spiritism presented inmates with opportunities to embody their ideals much like Catholicism and Protestantism. All these belief systems relied on ritual to do so. The ranks of Spiritists in Oso Blanco were largely steady between the early 1920s

¹⁰³ García Leduc, *Intolerancia y heterodoxias en Puerto Rico*.

¹⁰⁴ Román, *Governing Spirits*, 5; and Koss-Chioino, “Religion and Science Divinely Related: A Case History of Spiritism in Puerto Rico,” *Caribbean Studies* 16, 1 (1976): 22-43.

¹⁰⁵ Román, *Governing Spirits*, 72.

¹⁰⁶ M. Camuñas, Director de Prisiones, Circular No. 1, “Sobre meetings espiritistas,” 2 agosto 1905, Circulares, División de Prisiones, Departamento de Trabajo, Beneficencia y Correcciones, Oficina del Procurador General, AGPR.

and early 1950s, suffering a light decline during the latter bookend of World War II. Spiritists fluctuated between three and six percent of the total penitentiary population during this period.¹⁰⁷

Several Oso Blanco convicts identified as Spiritists. A 22-year-old mulatto bricklayer and plumber from Aguadilla named Esteban Rodríguez Marrero, for example, recounted to the Classification and Treatment Board that he grew up in Spiritist centers.¹⁰⁸ A 16-year-old bohemian Spiritist from Añasco named Jesús Méndez Caraballo, on the other hand, came of age in an “unhealthy” environment. His mother “burned his hands and feet” for the slightest provocation. Therefore, he escaped to the “forest,” where he learned to “love fresh air, trees, and healthy fruit.” In the wilderness, he suffered from bug and rodent bites, as well as animal attacks. Méndez Caraballo “lived in the forest for three years,” leading the life of an “errant” and wandering Jew, the title of a popular novel circulating in Oso Blanco around midcentury. After release, Méndez Caraballo anticipated returning to the wild to live like “Tarzan in the jungle,” a reference to the pulp novels written by American Edgar Rice Burroughs between 1912 and the 1940s.¹⁰⁹

Other convicts felt less connected to Spiritism. A 25-year-old Spiritist peddler from Carolina named Ramón Carrasquillo González reconciled his Spiritist beliefs with monotheism.¹¹⁰ Miguel Ángel Martínez García, a 34-year-old mulatto/trigueño bohemian and former boxer from Santurce, identified as a Catholic but “sympathized” with Spiritism.¹¹¹ A 25 year-old white inmate

¹⁰⁷ Koss-Chioino contends that many Spiritists in modern Puerto Rico tended to be women. As she puts it, socially underprivileged and exploited women were drawn to traditional healing by their own suffering, adversity, and perseverance. Their early lives included a deep concern for the problems and illnesses of family members and were shaped by pervasive religious attitudes. See Koss-Chioino, *Women as Healers, Women as Patients*, xiv-xv and 18.

¹⁰⁸ Expediente del confinado Esteban Rodríguez Marrero, Caja 59, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

¹⁰⁹ Expediente del confinado Jesús Méndez Caraballo, Caja 175, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

¹¹⁰ Expediente del confinado Ramón Carrasquillo González, Caja 200, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

¹¹¹ Expediente del confinado Miguel Ángel Martínez García, Caja 205, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

from Yabucoa named Agapito Cruz Ramos recalled that when he was a child a Spiritist named Isidoro Colón, who died in prison while serving a life sentence, had “cured” him of epilepsy (*la gota*). Cruz Ramos remembered the Spiritist “physician” fondly even though he personally was a “practicing Catholic.”¹¹² A 49-year-old convict from Río Piedras named Mario A. Rivera del Palacio was a member of *La Casa de las Almas* (The House of Spirits) in Santurce, a major center of Spiritist worship on the island.¹¹³

Classification and Treatment Board social histories also disclose some of the attributes of convicted Spiritists. Before entering Oso Blanco, a 31-year-old white Spiritist from Carolina named Ramón Molina Avilés pursued “spiritual works in the countryside” for income. He contacted “ghosts from beyond the grave.” The convict frequently attended Spiritist centers. The father of his victim, Elías de Jesús, recalled that Molina Avilés arrived in barrio Trujillo Bajo “impersonating a great Spiritist.” As many community members were believers, they allowed him to “carry out soirees in their homes.” The convict charged Jesús \$6.75 for the “medicines and baths” required to “chase spirits away” from his abode. Molina Avilés also treated Jesús’ daughter’s “rose sickness.” He claimed that “hand passes” directed by his spiritual guide would cure the girl. However, Jesús stated, the convict took advantage of midnight visits to sexually exploit his daughter. Additionally, several neighbors insisted that Molina Avilés was a fraud.¹¹⁴

As tantalizing as these evidentiary fragments are, one must look beyond the documentary record for clues about what transpired at the Spiritist centers Molina Avilés and other convicts frequented. According to Núñez Molina, most Puerto Rican Spiritist centers have a similar

¹¹² Expediente del confinado Agapito Cruz Ramos, Caja 168, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

¹¹³ Expediente del confinado Mario A. Rivera del Palacio, Caja 275, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

¹¹⁴ Expediente del confinado Ramón Molina Avilés, Caja 173, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

arrangement. A long cloth sits on a table occupied by the group leader and spirit mediums. On the table, there may be a goblet of water, flowers, cigars, statues of Catholic saints, incense, and other paraphernalia. The room is also adorned with images of Christ, the Virgin Mary, and other religious personas. Sessions usually start with a reading from Kardec's *El evangelio según el espiritismo* or a collection of selected prayers that ask for the presence of spirit guides, for the education of ignorant spirits, and for the health of the sick. The mediums prepare for the working of "causas," or the actions and influences of spirits upon an individual. This leads to spirit possession and meaningful dialogue and exchanges between individual spirits, mediums, and affected people.¹¹⁵

Compared to their Catholic and denominational Christian counterparts, Spiritists played subdued roles in convict rehabilitation. Yet, prisoners eagerly anticipated Spiritist visits. In the June 1949 edition of *El Despertar*, for example, the magazine director interviewed Don Eduardo Rivera (Figure 8 below), the President of the House of Spirits. The interview transcript reveals that Spiritists offered orientation programs and lectures in Oso Blanco. Many prisoners embraced these "spiritually significant" activities. Rivera also underscored the "regenerative" purpose of Spiritist work behind bars. He suggested that "every person," including prisoners, "carries the divine spark." This "Creator-supplied faculty" needed only to be "discovered" and "stimulated" internally for the purposes of redemption.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ Núñez Molina, "Toward an Experiential Approach for Researching Religious Experiences," 250-51. In the Dominican Republic, Spiritist centers are the reserve of "medical cults," or places where patients consult practitioners. After performing healing rituals, grand public feasts are carried out in the centers to give thanks to the "mysteries" for bringing health to the infirm. Dominican Spiritist healing rituals typically involve herbs, religious altars and artifacts, prayers, spirit possession, bottle spells, numerology, and Kardecian concepts of anatomy, physiology, and necromancy. The living make promises to the dead or their favored saints to have their material needs met. This fusion between knowledge and belief is why vodú can be characterized as both popular religion and science. See Davis, *La otra ciencia*, 222-27, 230-31, 235-37, and 245.

¹¹⁶ "Nuestro Director entrevista a Don Eduardo Rivera," *El Despertar* (junio 1949): 5-7.

During the interview, Rivera portrayed Spiritism as the culmination of various religious and spiritual epistemologies. He called it a “philosophy” that explained the “development of life” and the “evolution of the self.” Spiritists “are not sectarian,” Rivera noted. All religions coexisted in Spiritism because “we do not attack dogmas or opposing beliefs. We know there is a God who exercises power over us and that we carry God within ourselves. We believe man has a soul and that soul belongs to eternity,” an eternity that was neither linear nor cyclical but “timeless.” If anything, Rivera emphasized, Spiritists were “peaceful crusaders.”¹¹⁷ Although Rivera explained Spiritism as non-religious, he and other Spiritists depended on rituals and religious language and symbolism to infuse it with meaning (just like the more dogmatic versions of belief he critiqued).



Figure 8: Don Eduardo Rivera, President of the House of Spirits, 1947-1962, House of Spirits Library.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*, 5.

The interview with Rivera concluded with his impressions of Oso Blanco's Classification and Treatment program. He found it "magnificent." Yet, he questioned the presumptions of light and dark, right and wrong, at the heart of the criminal justice system. Rivera believed that the factors contributing to malice "did not make a man naturally evil." "Many times," he added, "frustrations experienced in childhood create a sense of rebelliousness in man that motivates him to commit criminal acts." Because the "good in man falls into slumber," he affirmed, this made his "awakening" even more "necessary."¹¹⁸ Prisoners found Rivera's message compelling. They took it back to their cells and the communal areas of the penitentiary, where Spiritist ideas crossed paths with other beliefs and where convicts were exposed to other religious forms and sensory mediums, including religious radio.

Adventist Radio

Adventist work in Puerto Rican prisons dates to at least the mid-1920s, when missionaries started evangelizing in La Princesa.¹¹⁹ Their efforts in Oso Blanco started as early as 1934.¹²⁰ Around this time, an Afro-Puerto Rican pastor with missionary experience in Santo Domingo named Rufus W. Prince (Figure 9 below) secured permission from Puerto Rico's insular government to conduct a branch Sabbath school in the penitentiary.¹²¹ One missionary later called

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*, 7.

¹¹⁹ H. B. Lundquist, "Jottings from the Antillean Union," *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* (December 20, 1945): 14; and "Echoes from the Antilles," *The Inter-American Division Messenger* 24, 5 (July-August 1947): 2.

¹²⁰ Wesley Amundsen, "Look Upon the Fields," *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* (December 27, 1945): 13; and Glenn Calkins, "A Survey of our Work in Inter-America," *The Inter-American Division Messenger* 23, 3 (March 1946): 4.

¹²¹ Prince accepted Christ during World War I after building a Dutch mud oven with an Adventist missionary from California named D. D. Fitch. Before his conversion, Prince was "bitterly opposed" to the religious convictions of Adventists. Coproducing the mud oven brokered understanding between the two men, and Prince found a calling in "colporteur work." In the 1920s, Prince taught church school in Santo Domingo and informally fulfilled the duties of the Superintendent of the Puerto Rico mission there. He returned home nearly a decade later. Adventist officials

Oso Blanco's Sabbath school the "original small light in the darkness" of the prison.¹²² Prince built a thriving church while collaborating with island justice officials to offer religious programming in Oso Blanco. Adventist observers praised him for "holding meetings in the penitentiary and over the radio."¹²³



Figure 9: Pastor Rufus Prince and his wife (unnamed), *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, April 1943.

assigned him to lead the Río Piedras congregation, at the time a "church of seven members that met in a private home." He also edited the religious periodical *Heraldo Puertorriqueño*. Consult "Foreign Periodicals," in H. E. Rogers, *Yearbook of the Seventh-Day Adventist Denomination* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing, 1933), 273; "Our Foreign Missions," *The Church Officers' Gazette* 27, 4 (April 1940): 32; D. D. Fitch, "A Dutch Oven Produces a Soul Winner," *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 120, 16 (April 22, 1943): 18-19; and Robert M. Whitsett, "Outpouring of the Spirit in Puerto Rico," *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 122, 13 (March 29, 1945): 1.

¹²² Whitsett, "Outpouring of the Spirit in Puerto Rico," 2.

¹²³ By the early 1940s, Prince was traveling in the U.S. visiting welfare institutions there and charged with reviving the Adventist presence in Mayagüez. He also led Spanish-language church work in Harlem, New York. Prince is a figure to inquire more about given his links to Santo Domingo and diasporic activities, let alone his last name, which has English Caribbean connotations. Fitch, "A Dutch Oven Produces a Soul Winner," 18-19; and D. A. McAdams, "Spanish Work in New York City," *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 123, 58 (December 19, 1946): 18.

Before the rise of Adventist radio, however, church work in the penitentiary was hands-on. A U.S. missionary named A. R. Ogden noted this when he visited one of Prince's prison classes in fall 1932. Ogden "related the experience of Joseph" to inmates during his visit to illustrate that convicts could be "true to God" despite the unfreedom of the prison. The missionary's lesson revolved around Daniel 2, which is about the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dreams. It outlines "the history of the world and shows that we are living...in the time when the God of Heaven is about to establish His everlasting kingdom of peace and righteousness upon the earth." Ogden reported that Oso Blanco convicts told him that they liked the Adventist religion because it "teaches us to keep the law of God." They also took to heart Christ's maxim: "I was in prison and ye came unto me."¹²⁴

Ministers like Prince quickly realized that radio was an effective way to engage island prisoners and society at large. While Puerto Rican convicts used radio to get closer to religion, the broader Adventist Church hoped to "win souls," fill coffers, and develop transnational streams of influence. Indeed, the Inter-American Division of the Adventist Church relied on radio programming to gain a foothold across Latin America and the Caribbean. The "Voice of Prophecy" broadcast, for instance, hit Dominican and Puerto Rican airwaves in 1943 (in San Juan, via WKAQ).¹²⁵ Missionaries established the program's Bible Correspondence Course in Oso Blanco

¹²⁴ Matthew 25:36 reads, "I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me." The notion that visiting prisoners "is done for and to Him [Christ]" framed Adventist efforts in Oso Blanco through midcentury. For example, in 1945, missionary M. L. Rice stressed this point by invoking Isaiah 42:6-7, which reads "I the Lord have called thee in righteousness; and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light to the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house." A. R. Ogden, "Working for Prisoners," *The Inter-American Division Messenger* 9, 10 (October 1932): 5; M. L. Rice, "Puerto Rico Penitentiary," *Atlantic Union Gleaner* 44, 19 (May 11, 1945): 1-2; and the same article in *Australasian Record* 49, 37 (September 10, 1945): 7.

¹²⁵ More broadly, English-language Voice of Prophecy radio broadcasts commenced on foreign soil in Panama City in October 1942. The first Spanish-language broadcast in Latin America was on LU4 Comodoro Rivadavia (Patagonia, Argentina). Portuguese-language broadcasts started simultaneously over five Brazilian radio stations, including one in Rio de Janeiro. Six followed suit the next week. See Paul Wickman, "The Voice of Prophecy," *The Advent Review*

soon thereafter.¹²⁶ As one Adventist put it, the “light” of the penitentiary Sabbath school began to “shine even more brightly” when the Voice of Prophecy program commenced.¹²⁷ A few years later, in 1946, missionary Glenn Calkins announced that a great example of “preaching the message by radio” emerged in Oso Blanco, where many convicts “are systematically studying the Bible under the direction of competent teachers, with many of the students asking for baptism.”¹²⁸

Adventists argued that convict conversions displayed the mighty way in which God worked through the radio. Sound changed the sensory experience of religion, all the while reinforcing more traditional rituals, such as congregation, Bible study, prayer, and baptism. One time, in early 1946, Calkins visited Oso Blanco and found some 300 men “gathered together in one large room, all earnestly intent upon one thing—the study of the Scriptures.” Many of the convicts had Bibles in their possession. Calkins watched and observed the “evidence that they were finding the way to a new life and...being delivered from the bondage of sin and superstition and ignorance.” Several could not control their emotions, their eyes “wet with tears.” That day, a total of 83 prisoners confirmed that they were preparing for baptism. An additional 20 joined the class thereafter. This represented about 15 percent of the total penitentiary population, a lot more than expected given the preponderance of other beliefs in the prison. These convicts could not get their fill of the Word of God.¹²⁹ Missionaries credited radio accordingly.

and *Sabbath Herald* 123, 27 (June 11, 1946): 100; and “From Behind Prison Walls,” *Church Officers’ Gazette* 33, 2 (February 1946): 20.

¹²⁶ Rice, “Puerto Rico Penitentiary,” 1-2 and 7; Whitsett, “Outpouring of the Spirit in Puerto Rico,” 1; and Amundsen, “Look Upon the Fields,” 13.

¹²⁷ Whitsett, “Outpouring of the Spirit in Puerto Rico,” 2.

¹²⁸ Calkins, “The Inter-American Division,” *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 123, 27 (June 11, 1946): 109.

¹²⁹ “From Behind Prison Walls,” 20.

As radios became increasingly common in Puerto Rican homes in the 1930s and 1940s, Adventist officials seized the opportunity to expand their brand. Other denominations did as well, including Baptists, who had been monitoring the progress of island radio since the 1930s. One Baptist official estimated that in 1934 Puerto Rico had more than 20,000 radios, and that on average five people listened to the radio in each household. Basic arithmetic suggested that at least 100,000 people interacted with radio daily.¹³⁰ By 1957, Baptists used radio extensively. They were on stations WKVM, WLAC, and WAPA. These stations transmitted more than 60 Baptist news programs in 1957.¹³¹ Before Baptists partially cornered the island radio market in the 1950s, however, Adventists helped lay the foundation for radio in places like Oso Blanco.

When Adventist radio landed in Oso Blanco in the mid-1940s, the denomination already had 23 organized churches across the island. Their membership exceeded 2,000. Officials estimated \$60,000 in tithes for the year 1945. Baptisms stood at 238, with 188 on que. Indeed, between 1942 and 1946, Adventists performed more than 1,000 baptisms.¹³² By the early 1950s, the Adventist Church in San Juan had some 300 members. It was organized into 25 bands that held meetings in patios, homes, schoolhouses, halls, and on street corners.¹³³ As for radio, missionary E. F. Hackman proclaimed in 1948 that Adventists supported 70 radio stations broadcasting in English, Spanish, and French across the Caribbean. More than 140,000 people had enrolled in the Voice of Prophecy Bible Correspondence Course, hundreds of which could be traced to Oso

¹³⁰ *Actas de la trigésimoprimer a asamblea de la asociación de Iglesias Bautistas de Puerto Rico, celebrada en Coamo, 8-11 marzo 1934*, 13.

¹³¹ *Actas de la quincuagésima quinta asamblea de la asociación de Iglesias Bautistas de Puerto Rico*, 89.

¹³² In 1942, they performed 225; in 1943, 288; in 1944, 315; in 1945, 377; and in 1946, 428. See Lundquist, "Jottings from the Antillean Union," 13-14; and "News from the Antillean Union," *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 124, 16 (April 17, 1947): 24.

¹³³ J. Ernest Edwards, "Arise, Get Thee Down unto The Host," *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 130, 45 (November 5, 1953): 38-39.

Blanco. Prisoners completed the radio courses in strong numbers. They also comprised the prison choir and had their own orchestra, which played for singers and at times rendered special music.¹³⁴ Convicts pursued baptisms and spread the good news behind bars. Several committed to similar work after their release from prison.

Radio opened convict hearts and minds to the Adventist message. A radio broadcast transcript from the mid-1940s confirms this specific impact. President of the Antillean Union College Manuel Carballal, for example, shared a story about Sergeant Benito Rivera, who discovered the Voice of Prophecy program while in a Puerto Rican military hospital in August 1943. The “beautiful music” and message he heard moved him. He sent for the free Bible lessons offered by the program, started observing the Sabbath, and in early 1944 decided to get baptized. So religiously fervent did he become that his military superiors stripped him of his rank and sent him to an airbase in Dutch Guiana to forget his “crazy notions.” There, he refused to bear arms and was imprisoned. What is more, when Rivera went before a military tribunal to answer for his intransigence, he testified for Christ: “I am a soldier of Jesus, and I will follow Him to the end.” Authorities sentenced Rivera to five years in prison in Puerto Rico. His Adventist interlocutors tried to secure his freedom.¹³⁵

Radio airwaves traversed prison walls, and relayed messages that energized many convicts, instilling in them a sense of purpose, belonging, and community. In October 1945, for instance, missionary Robert M. Whitsett explained to his U.S. colleagues the extent to which radio pierced Oso Blanco’s walls. The Voice of Prophecy radio program and its Bible Correspondence Course

¹³⁴ See Amundsen, “Look Upon the Fields,” 13; and E. F. Hackman, “The Inter-American Division,” *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 125, 48 (November 25, 1948): 12-13.

¹³⁵ This process took a few years. Eventually, Rivera was honorably discharged. He enrolled in Southwestern Junior College, for “He has seen the ripening harvest, and he wants to bring sheaves to the Master when He comes.” See C. L. Torrey, “An Evening with the Inter-American Division,” *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 123, 27 (June 11, 1946), 112-13.

reached convicts like Ángel Robles Padilla, a young man serving time for attempted murder. Robles Padilla heard the program by chance. Impressed by the announcement for the free Bible class, he immediately wrote to the radio office, “asking that lessons be sent to him in the penitentiary.” Robles Padilla gave “earnest study” to the lessons while “continuing to listen each week.” Further, he started attending Oso Blanco’s Saturday Sabbath school, which was conducted by a member of the Río Piedras congregation. As the convict’s commitment deepened, he “began to interest other convicts.” Soon he had “recruited a large class.” He continued his involvement even after completing his sentence. Robles Padilla rushed to the mission office in Santurce to “make personal contact with the men in charge of the radio work.”¹³⁶ The radio program had saved him, and he sought to preserve the community that incarceration had helped him develop.

Robles Padilla viewed the church as a home away from home, as a place where he could share his story and be heard. Indeed, it was a place where he could perform and feel his faith. After exiting Oso Blanco, Padilla attended church services with his wife and children. At the close of one of these services, Whitsett chronicled, he bore “public testimony concerning what the Lord had done for him, and with tears streaming down his face he testified to the saving power of Jesus.” The ex-convict thanked those who made it possible for “this blessed truth to reach him through the great stone walls of the penitentiary.” Technology, in the form of radio, cut through Oso Blanco’s walls, helped forge certain relationships, and set in motion Robles Padilla’s process of spiritual awakening and redemption. Church rituals, including giving testimony and eventually baptism, allowed him to make his beliefs flesh.¹³⁷

¹³⁶ S. L. Folkenberg, “A Voice of Prophecy Experience from Puerto Rico,” *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 121, 37 (September 14, 1944): 16; and Whitsett, “The Radio Penetrates Behind Prison Bars,” *The Church Officers’ Gazette* 32, 10 (October 1945): 19.

¹³⁷ Padilla also started a branch Sabbath school in the community where he lived. Whitsett confirmed, “A large number there have already learned through his influence and his teachings.” Padilla’s friends and neighbors could not help but see “the great change in the life of this ex-convict.” And although he had left the penitentiary, interest among remaining

Between the late 1930s and midcentury, enrollment in Oso Blanco's Voice of Prophecy Bible Correspondence Course grew exponentially, from a handful to several hundred. The Sabbath school also expanded thanks to the efforts of Prince, and later, a female Adventist missionary named Blanca Santiago. Santiago co-supervised the "Bible School of the Air" alongside missionary S. L. Folkenberg, and served as the radio office secretary.¹³⁸ She and her husband, a police detective named Justino, spent most Sabbaths with prisoners, sharing the message of Christ's saving power with them. Justino aided Blanca in carrying out the penitentiary Sabbath school. A typical Sabbath included a Bible lesson led by Blanca. She mingled among the prisoners, helping them find verses and with pronunciation as they read the various scriptures. One missionary recalled: "I noticed a complete absence of foolishness of any kind; there were no smirking smiles, and the face of every man denoted serious interest and respect." Blanca also collected tithes and administered the penitentiary baptismal class.¹³⁹ Figure 10 below is a photo of her baptismal class from early 1945.

Not only did Blanca and Justino Santiago lead classes and utilize radio effectively, they also understood the importance of giving testimony, performing rituals, and achieving spiritual uplift in a context of unfreedom. For example, in December 1945, Blanca shared a convict letter with missionary Glenn Calkins. In the letter, the prisoner suggested that he was a "wicked man" but had "found for the first time the only source of true freedom, which is Jesus Christ." His

convicts did not lessen. In October 1945, at least 60 prisoners were enrolled in Bible courses. Whitsett, "The Radio Penetrates Behind Prison Bars," 19.

¹³⁸ W. E. Murray, "Radio in Puerto Rico," *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 121, 31 (August 3, 1944): 17; and Whitsett, "Outpouring of the Spirit in Puerto Rico," 1.

¹³⁹ Rice, "Puerto Rico Penitentiary," 7; Whitsett, "Outpouring of the Spirit in Puerto Rico," 2; Paul Wickman, "Radio Knows No Bounds," *Australasian Record* 56, 20 (May 19, 1952): 2-3; Folkenberg, "A Voice of Prophecy Experience from Puerto Rico," 16; and M. V. Campbell, "Puerto Rico Visited," *Northern Union Outlook* 9, 41 (March 19, 1946): 1-2.

“testimony” concerned “what God has done for me.” He underscored the themes of spiritual rebirth, renewed history, and the battle between light and darkness. As a young man, he “looked upon the world through rose-colored glasses.” He had little schooling and desired to “dress well” and “go [out] with friends.” But he was poor. He did some dark things to obtain what he desired. In Oso Blanco, the convict experienced several trials, some beyond comprehension. However, Christ “has extended His arms toward me, accepting me as a humble sinner.” The prisoner credited Christ for changing his “thoughts,” for bringing Blanca and the Voice of Prophecy Bible course to the penitentiary. Through them, he learned that the “things of the Lord” were about more than flesh and terrestrial authority. They were about spiritual warfare. To make this point, the prisoner cited Ephesians 6:12.¹⁴⁰

Not only did this convict draw a moral line in the sand because he was certain about his faith, he cultivated a specific intellectual perspective while in prison. In this case, religion—not science—provided him with the tools he needed to stand his ground against anyone or thing wanting to shatter his lost but now found moral compass. Like convicts and missionaries, prison officials used notions of light and darkness to understand and measure the success of spiritual outposts like Oso Blanco. The penitentiary warden in 1945, for instance, admitted that he had parted ways with God and dwelled in “darkness.” But he did not want to be “a hypocrite in the eyes of the Lord.” He hoped “the Lord...will lead and inspire me to the salvation of my soul.” What makes the warden’s reflections even more significant is that he embraced religiosity even though he and his wife were trained social workers. This is suggestive of the synergy between science and religion, at least from the vantage point of the state and its surrogates. Radio and the

¹⁴⁰ “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” Calkins, “Puerto Rico Penitentiary Interest Continues,” *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 122, 51 (December 20, 1945): 17-18.

work of the Santiagos and others made these transformations possible. Together, they set Puerto Rico “ablaze with interest.”¹⁴¹



Figure 10: Baptismal class in Oso Blanco, *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, March 1945; Sister Blanca Santiago, the teacher, is kneeling at the right end of the front row.

Church testimonials and baptisms offered inmates personal, yet public, ways to perform faith. In the process, they earned the respect of the communities they hoped to join. Giving testimony about the saving power of God normally preceded prisoner baptisms. Inmates had to receive special permission from justice officials to be released under armed guard for group baptismal service, which for most denominations required extra-institutional bodies of water. In December 1946, for example, pastor Samuel Weiss of the Santurce church led a group baptism for

¹⁴¹ By comparison, in the Dominican Republic interest in Adventist radio took a bit longer to develop. See Whitsett, “Outpouring of the Spirit in Puerto Rico,” 2; and H. A. B. Robinson, “Radio Work in Santo Domingo,” *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 128, 33 (August 16, 1951): 20. On debates between religion and science, see A. M. Renwick, “La religión y la ciencia,” *Puerto Rico Evangélico* 36 (25 julio 1946): 6-8.

convicts. The Superintendent of Prisons, “already famous for his radical prison reforms,” attended the ceremony. The event caused “tears of joy” to course “down his cheeks as three of his ‘boys’ entered the baptismal fount to bury their old sin-plagued lives and to proclaim to the world the beginning of a new life in Christ.” Weiss presented baptismal certificates to these men in a great spectacle on Oso Blanco’s patio. The warden urged other inmates to “follow their footsteps” and embrace the “Voice of Prophecy Church.”¹⁴² Radio could lead them away from social and civic death, and toward political and spiritual life.

The Voice of Prophecy radio program reached thousands of prisoners the world over. It brought them a message of hope. On radio airwaves and in the flesh, Adventists invoked specific Bible verses to leave an impression on convict hearts and minds. The Book of Isaiah’s focus on the themes of judgement and salvation resonated with prisoners, for instance. Isaiah 61:1 conveys one of several predictive visions chronicled by the prophet Isaiah that imagined a glorious future for Zion, a lesson that in the mid-twentieth century prisoners applied to their own futures as well as that of the Puerto Rican nation.¹⁴³ In the verse, the anointment and mission of the Messiah is laid out, and convicts are centrally implicated in Christ’s task. Criminals of every description “are frequently chosen material for Christ, the Master Architect, to fashion and shape by His providence into lively stones for His temple.”¹⁴⁴ This also speaks to the broader significance of the Bible to many convicts. It had all the moral data they needed to get by and better, and to redeem themselves

¹⁴² Lylon H. Lindbeck, “Penitentiary Inmates Continue to Hear Messages,” *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 124, 39 (September 25, 1947): 22.

¹⁴³ “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to *them that are bound.*”

¹⁴⁴ “From Behind Prison Walls,” 20.

spiritually. They simply had to free themselves of what they had been in the past and challenge society's attempts to never let them forget.

While radio exposed convicts to religion through a new sensorial register, traditional experiential approaches persisted. Some of these coincided with the work of Oso Blanco's Classification and Treatment Board, which permitted well-behaved prisoners to visit their homes for days at a time. In April 1946, for example, Folkenberg summarized the experience of an Evangelical convict who had been granted permission to go home for two days the previous Christmas. One of the things that distinguished the convict from his peers was that he listened to the Voice of Prophecy radio program and had taken the Bible Correspondence Course. Further, he was a member of the weekly Sabbath school in Oso Blanco. The convict did not know what to do when his "taste of freedom" commenced. There was home, but it was not Christian. Therefore, the first place he visited was the Adventist church in Río Piedras. He found the Sabbath school, entered, and "drank in every word of truth that was given."¹⁴⁵

The convict proceeded to give "ringing testimony" about his path to Christ. He stayed in Río Piedras with his spiritual siblings for most of that first day of freedom. Feeling triply free—in mind, body, *and* soul—the prisoner then went home to Juncos. However, he did not feel comfortable there, presumably because of the irreconcilability of his new faith and nameless old religion, which his family still embraced. As he went down the street, he entered a small Pentecostal church. Before long, he asked to share his testimony. The convict detailed his past life, the laws he had broken, and his experiences in prison before finding Christ. Folkenberg recounted:

Then he told of what the Lord had done for him—how he had begun to study the Bible, the conviction that came to him that there is a higher law, and the necessity that we all have to obey. He then told them how hard it is to obey in our own strength, and how only through the assistance of our Lord can we live in harmony with His divine law. The point was then brought even closer home, that it is only

¹⁴⁵ Folkenberg, "Two Days of Liberty," *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 123, 16 (April 18, 1946): 14.

through obedience to all the commandments that we shall be saved. He told them that we are going to have to serve our sentence for our transgression of God's law just as surely as he himself was even now serving his sentence for breaking the law of Puerto Rico.

The convict subsequently returned to Oso Blanco, where his "light" continued to shine "just as brightly." He was proof of the power of God and the radio. Soon he would go into the world a "living fire," eager to share the good news of Christ's impending return.¹⁴⁶

Adventist literature also allowed convicts and societies at large to experience their beliefs. In late 1945, for instance, missionary H. B. Lundquist estimated that soon more than \$50,000 in books would land in the hands of an "anxious buying public." A book called *Esta hora decisiva* facilitated the baptisms of at least 21 believers.¹⁴⁷ In early 1946, pastor Prince found that near Sabana Grande several people had become "interested in the truth through the reading of one of our books." He sent an assistant there to investigate. After three meetings with locals, Prince's liaison organized a Sabbath school of 48 members and a baptismal class of 23 candidates.¹⁴⁸ Indeed, Adventist literature was available in penitentiaries across Latin America, from San Luis Potosí penitentiary in central Mexico to Cuba's Presidio Modelo on the Isle of Pines.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ Lundquist, "Jottings from the Antillean Union," 14.

¹⁴⁸ E. E. Franklin, "Antillean Union Publishing," *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 123, 16 (April 18, 1946): 18.

¹⁴⁹ For example, convict Manuel Suárez was "the means of awakening an interest in our message among the inmates" of Cuba's penitentiary. This facility held up to 3,500 convicts at the time. Missionary Alvin J. Stewart compared Suárez's incarceration to the biblical Joseph's experience with the chief servants in Pharaoh's Egyptian court. Suárez served as the prison baker. He generated an interest in the Bible and religion thanks to the Voice of Prophecy radio program. He also owned several books by Elder R. L. Odom, which he purchased from a colporteur. Other texts Suárez obtained included copies of *Steps to Christ*, some old editions of *Centinelas* (an Adventist magazine) and *Inter-American Division Messengers*, and *Missions Quarterlies* that relatives had sent him. Further, Suárez led meetings every Sunday in the prison hospital or bakery, during which participants sang and read the Bible. A group of over 100 convicts regularly attended. Prison officials permitted Suárez to use a piano and two song books during the meetings. All who went enjoyed a "rousing" service. C. E. Wood, "A Penitentiary Sabbath School," *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 116, 52 (December 28, 1939): 17; and Alvin J. Stewart, "Sunday School in Prison," *The Inter-American Division Messenger* 22, 12 (December 1945): 3-4.

Regardless of denomination, convicts absorbed religious literature. A 38-year-old white trailer driver from Cataño named Miguel Muñoz Guzmán, for example, “only read the New Testament.”¹⁵⁰ Domingo Rosario, a 27-year-old mulatto day laborer from Cayey, avidly read the entire Bible.¹⁵¹ A 36-year-old white popular musician from San Juan named Rafael Urbistondo Ruíz enjoyed borrowing “religious literature” from the prison library.¹⁵² Sometimes convicts blurred the boundary between light and dark in this vein. A 28-year-old white fisherman from Arecibo named Fernando López Vargas identified as Catholic but also consulted “infernal books.” Prison technocrats noted the “eccentric” way in which he discussed these demonological and occult texts.¹⁵³

Reading, singing, testimony, baptism, and radio were but a few of the mediums and practices through which convicts performed their beliefs in and beyond Oso Blanco. Two songs that have withstood the test of time, for example, are “Cristo rompe las cadenas” (“Christ breaks chains”) and “En el principio el espíritu de Dios, se movía sobre las aguas” (In the beginning, the Spirit of God hovered over the waters). Through these activities, convicts performed and felt their faiths. Radio facilitated spiritual progress in ways other experiential registers could not. This was primarily because technology reached masses of people at once, in shorter periods of time, and through a more mysterious, entertaining format. Although the radio could be a double-edged sword, many islanders and especially convicts considered it a harbinger of spiritual change.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁰ Expediente del confinado Miguel Muñoz Guzmán, Caja 172, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

¹⁵¹ Expediente del confinado Domingo Rosario, Caja 300, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

¹⁵² Expediente del confinado Rafael Urbistondo Ruíz, Caja 175, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

¹⁵³ Books likely included “Libro de San Cipriano,” “La Clavícula de Salomón,” “El Dragón Rojo,” “La cabra Infernal,” “La Gallina Negra,” “El Gran Grimorio,” “Magía Caldea,” “Los Secretos de Alberto el Grande,” and “Sugestión, Hipnotismo, Magnetismo.” Expediente del confinado Fernando López Vargas, Caja 168, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

¹⁵⁴ Jorge Cintrón, “Editorial: Radio-Evangelismo,” *Puerto Rico Evangélico* 36 (25 julio 1947): 3.

Belief and Awakening

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, convicts approached belief from myriad angles. Many prisoners viewed religion as a healthy and useful extension of penitentiary science. They embraced religious practices and found meaning, belonging, and community in performing them. As the November 1949 edition of *El Despertar* confirms, prison authorities interviewed hundreds of convicts about religion, signing them up for programming or resolving issues related to religious assignments. More than a thousand convicts participated in religious acts this month alone.¹⁵⁵ On the other hand, some convicts questioned religion. They used the pages of *El Despertar* or their meetings with Oso Blanco's Classification and Treatment Board to inform authorities, other convicts, and society at large about their reservations.

While most convicts typically chose a faith, some had to be “guided” or “oriented.”¹⁵⁶ A few inmates declared a belief in God and visited different churches inside and beyond prison walls, but did not allow “sects” to court them.¹⁵⁷ For example, a 35-year-old white construction worker from Guayama named Francisco Pica Rodríguez told prison board official C. S. García that he believed in and “loved” God but did not commit to a church. Importantly, the convict also distinguished himself from atheists.¹⁵⁸ A 46-year-old white electrician from Santurce named Jaime Álvarez Martínez identified as a “free thinker.” He told prison board officials that he believed in “God” and thought just as highly of “nature.”¹⁵⁹ It is unclear whether justice officials collapsed

¹⁵⁵ Ortiz, “Estadísticas,” 14.

¹⁵⁶ Expediente del confinado Guillermo Pérez García, Caja 200, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

¹⁵⁷ Expediente del confinado Arturo de León Reyes, Caja 144, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR; and Expediente del confinado Luciano Pabón Alvarado, Caja 154, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

¹⁵⁸ Expediente del confinado Francisco Pica Rodríguez, Caja 154, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

¹⁵⁹ Expediente del confinado Jaime Álvarez Martínez, Caja 182, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

convicts like Pica Rodríguez and Álvarez Martínez into the broad category of “creedless.” This was likely the case given the limited options outlined in Figure 3 above.

Some prisoners expressed clear cynicism about religion. A 22-year-old convict from Arecibo named Iván Graciano Núñez, for example, believed in a Higher Power. However, he did not join a religious community because he thought too many convicts had shallow or lukewarm faith. They converted in prison and feigned being new creatures, but forgot about God once released.¹⁶⁰ Similarly, a 26-year-old mixed-race inmate from Arecibo named Narciso Álvarez Colón refrained from identifying with a specific religion but claimed to believe in God. This convict relativized the good-bad binary when he relayed to classification and treatment officials that “one is bad only to the extent that they think so.”¹⁶¹

Convicts also found community in marginal religious “sects” like the Defenders of the Faith. Luis Antonio Marrero Olivo, a 20-year-old trigueño with curly hair from San Juan, was a member of this group. When interviewed by prison professionals, members of his family stressed that a “destiny” like his awaited those who “stray from God,” as he did.¹⁶² Hipólito Rodríguez Oquendo, a 47-year-old sugar mill laborer from Añasco indicated that he was Catholic, but did not attend mass in Oso Blanco. As he put it, too many convicts exploited religion for “speculative” purposes. He did not want to give the impression that he was like this, for there were things he simply did not know or understand.¹⁶³

Other prisoners were not as ambiguous about their feelings toward religion. In the September 1949 edition of *El Despertar*, for example, convict Sergio R. N. discussed why religion

¹⁶⁰ Expediente del confinado Iván Graciano Núñez, Caja 205, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

¹⁶¹ Expediente del confinado Narciso Álvarez Colón, Caja 220, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

¹⁶² Expediente del confinado Luis Antonio Marrero Olivo, Caja 168, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

¹⁶³ Expediente del confinado Hipólito Rodríguez Oquendo, Caja 200, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

rarely made it into the magazine. In an article called “Religión,” the convict suggested that illiteracy represented a major obstacle in this vein. He recalled arriving in Oso Blanco and being recruited by Protestant-leaning convicts to enroll in the Voice of Prophecy radio course. However, because he could not read, inmate missionaries seemed to lose interest in him. The same prison evangelist subsequently invited him to take classes in the penitentiary’s primary school, where he learned to read and write. Becoming literate made him a “friend of all religions.”¹⁶⁴

Although one of Oso Blanco’s Christian elementary school teachers, Bonifacio Colón, had taught Sergio R. N. to read and write, and to love his neighbors, the convict understood this to mean that all religions were relative. Sergio R. N. used theosophy to make his case. He cited a book called *Perfeccionamiento de sí mismo*, by English yogi, theosophist, and Sanskrit scholar Ernest Wood. Drawing extensively from this work, Sergio R. N. tried to convince convicts that only they could shape their destinies. He criticized religion for insinuating that accidents were acts of divine intervention beyond human control. At one point, he suggested that religion “is for the idle man.” He went so far as to claim that people could gain “divinity” by conquering the natural world, but first one had to understand the power of “voluntary consciousness.” To do this, convicts had to “unlearn” that there was a “spook” in the sky that could not be seen with the physical eye. This created the conditions for sculpting secular national consciousness, and for forging the foundation of a utopic society where one could “forget the dread of hell,” which was a “ghost.”¹⁶⁵ In calling hell a ghost, Sergio R. N. denied its existence.

Several convicts critiqued religion more subtly. Instead of trivializing the entire premise of religiosity, like Sergio R. N., a few inmates disenchanted with religion underscored the hypocrisy

¹⁶⁴ Sergio R. N., “Religión,” *El Despertar* (septiembre 1949): 18 and 23.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.* Other convicts struggled with whether there was an afterlife. Several had no doubt about it. See Colombán Rosario, *Problema de la criminalidad*, 188, 194, 199, and 201.

of less-than-understanding Christians. For example, in November 1949 convict Frank M. Q. wrote an essay called “El que no tenga pecado.” In the article, he laid out Oso Blanco’s procedure to achieve the wellbeing and societal reincorporation of convicts. He considered medical services the “prelude” of the state-sanctioned rehabilitative process. Addressing mental health followed.¹⁶⁶ For Frank M. Q., science was the foundation of rehabilitative corrections, and religion should be relegated to a secondary, if any, role. Still, he did not consider science ironclad.

While state agents and surrogates aspired to cure the sick to prevent contagion from threatening the public good, this approach isolated certain communities, namely convicts. Frank M. Q. likened these circumstances to the centuries-old “humoral” technique of bloodletting, the withdrawal of blood (convicts) from patients (society) to cure or prevent illness and disease. Those who believed in a clear path to convict regeneration simply failed to understand certain realities, he asserted. The “inhibitions of childhood” and “frustrations of adolescence” hardened in man, engendering hostility toward the social order. “Spiritual disorder” emerged thanks to “miserable” experiences, such as childhood traumas and marital tragedies. These scenarios inspired “psychological problems” bodily medicine could not address. Thus, “awakening” convict consciousness and rehydrating their sense of “utility” would help remedy these issues.¹⁶⁷

Frank M. Q. believed in a holistic approach to convict rehabilitation. This approach included scientific classification, education, and social treatment, “in short a structure” premised on labor and “the sources of light” that allow “ignorant” convicts to “discover” life’s possibilities for themselves. The difficulties associated with this journey prompted convicts to pray, sometimes out of “fear that there is something else out there,” another world or an afterlife where the entrails

¹⁶⁶ Frank M. Q., “El que no tenga pecado,” *El Despertar* (noviembre 1949): 7.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 8.

of one's consciousness would be "laid bare" for all the inhabitants of the immaterial realm to see. But this fear was misplaced, for Christian preaching about sin and repentance did little to really change convicts. As Frank M. Q. put it, the messages of evangelists were like "drops of water." They slid down the crystal exterior of "our souls without leaving a trace."¹⁶⁸

Like Sergio R. N. and Jimenes Grullón, Frank M. Q. was a materialist. He avoided discussion of the afterlife. For example, he reflected on the appropriateness of the "talion," or eye-for-an-eye doctrine, a principle developed in Babylonian, Roman, and biblical law. He contemplated the efforts of thinkers like Sigmund Freud, John William Atkinson, and Maurice Maeterlinck to map human behavior and creativity. Perhaps most importantly, Frank M. Q. also pondered how social workers overexerted themselves in textually analyzing a science that "aspired to correct the incorrigible and remedy the irredeemable" when "cultivating consciousness" would be a more fruitful enterprise.¹⁶⁹

Indifference to penal reform held convicts and society back, however. Instead of investing in "saving" salvageable convicts, the populist state squandered funds on expanding prisons. Meanwhile, circumspect social workers—important foot soldiers of state redemptive practice—visited different corners of the island "discovering" ethnographic "motives" and looking to "free" convicts, but state decision-making hampered their secular "ministry." Not only was Frank M. Q. referring to government prison policy, though. He also pinned blame on society's judgmental attitude toward prisoners. Convicts may have committed terrible deeds, but as Christ, who came to know the human heart in the flesh, reminded everyone in John 8:7: "Let he who is without sin

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 9-10.

cast the first stone.”¹⁷⁰ Importantly, Frank M. Q. failed to recognize the passages that followed, namely the last one: “Go now and leave your life of sin” (John 8: 11).

On the other hand, several *El Despertar* contributors reflected on being in communion with God. Religion gave prisoners a way to narrate their problems, angst, and suffering.¹⁷¹ It had reformatory power and produced “useful citizens.” Indeed, it was a “civilizing tool” that had unified and toppled kingdoms, one that could challenge “atheist hordes” and the “mythical rites of antiquity,” such as the worship of Osiris and other “pagan” traditions.¹⁷² Religion also paved the way to spiritual reincarnation. As one convict put it, in prison “dying is living,” a reference to the paradox of living death, the transition from social or civic death to intellectual and spiritual awakening, and a belief in Christ.¹⁷³ Activist Carmelina Freyre, for her part, reminded prisoners that “Christ resides in every child of God,” including them. Therefore, it was necessary to strive for spiritual equilibrium using religion as a tool.¹⁷⁴

Some *El Despertar* contributors turned the periodical into an informal religious seminary by contributing regular columns. These included “Vida de Alturas.” In this column, penitentiary educator Cayetano Hernández Delgado underscored the notions of a “living God” and “eternal life” through Christ’s sacrifice. He referenced scripture several times in this vein (selections from the books of John, Matthew, and Psalms). Further, the Christian educator added, although walking the “righteous” path was difficult, convicts simply had to strive to be like Christ, no matter how

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 16.

¹⁷¹ Luis C. S., “En comunión con Dios,” *El Despertar* (abril 1950): 28.

¹⁷² Rogelio M. C., “Algo sobre religión: como afecta nuestras vidas en la penitenciaría,” *El Despertar* (enero 1950): 23-24.

¹⁷³ José P. B. M., “Morir es vivir,” 16.

¹⁷⁴ Carmelina Freyre, “Colaboración,” *El Despertar* (febrero 1950): 16.

many times they slipped back into their lower natures. It was not enough “to be good,” Hernández Delgado insisted, one had “to be good for something.”¹⁷⁵ Transnational lessons about communion with God, and that encapsulated a key dimension of the ideological struggle at the heart of the Cold War (e.g., Christianity versus atheism), also permeated Oso Blanco. M. E. Mortz of Cleveland, Ohio, a member of the International League Against Communism, conveyed to penitentiary administrators and convicts that, to strengthen community, penitence required that inmates contact their victims or their victims’ families for closure.¹⁷⁶ In Oso Blanco, belief complemented but also offered convicts a powerful redemptive alternative to science. Religion did not simply generate guilt in convicts for what they had done in the past, it was a sensory mechanism through which they came to terms with their actions and looked to the future. It even afforded opportunities for the refinement of one’s political voice.

Conclusion

Multiple paths led to spiritual redemption in Oso Blanco in the middle decades of the twentieth century. Such redemption was a divine reward dangling just beyond the reach of most prisoners. If anyone could save convicts from themselves in the primarily Christian colony of Puerto Rico, it was God, Christ, and their orthodox earthly representatives. But sacred knowledge only marked the beginning of the redemptive process. Experiential activities like ritual, congregational spectacle, and religious radio made redemption tangible for prisoners. They uplifted inmates by offering belonging, community, and a degree of empowerment in unfree settings. Religious experiences also provided convicts with ways to blend into the prison

¹⁷⁵ Cayetano Hernández Delgado, “Vida de alturas,” *El Despertar* (enero 1950): 21-22; (febrero 1950): 17-18 and 26.

¹⁷⁶ “Nos visitan,” *El Despertar* (enero 1950): 25. Also see William F. Santiago, “¿Puede un cristiano ser comunista?” *Puerto Rico Evangélico* 40 (25 septiembre 1951): 7 and 15.

environment without drawing much attention or scrutiny. Prisoners used religion to check and balance penitentiary science, to neutralize modern forms of surveillance and disparity.

A diverse ecology of belief-based discourses, rituals, and feelings refined prisoner consciousness. Sacred knowledge and ritual gave many convicts the tools to pursue redemption on their own ontological terms. Inmates embraced belief for spiritual uplift and healing, to adapt to the prison universe.¹⁷⁷ Ribot's devotion to Catholic saints, popular music, and Rafi, for example, had progressive aspects while being deeply rooted in island traditions. Her interaction with prison officials and other inmates revolved around the making of interpersonal and individual meaning. Therefore, tracing the performative dimensions of religiosity behind bars illustrates the links between power, the performance of belief, and the materialization of culture.¹⁷⁸ Cases like Ribot's also suggest that convicts depended on the senses to shape their circumstances and address their problems. Sacred knowledge and ritual formed the bedrock of how many convicts made their beliefs flesh, proved them to be true, and presumably felt them.

As this chapter illustrates, the plurality of belief in Puerto Rican prisons in the 1940s and 1950s shows how prisoners and others resorted to religious epistemologies and rites to carve sociocultural spaces for themselves. The materialization of belief behind bars, manifested in rites, spectacles and technology, reflected that many prisoners had a thirst for something more certain than state policies and associated mainstream discourses could offer. Scientism proposed the beginnings of an evolving certainty but it was largely removed from the ontologies prisoners

¹⁷⁷ As psychologist Victor Johnson suggests, feelings are initially ideas residing in people's minds until they achieve affective expression through performance. Sensory experiences bridge the internal self and external environments, generating feelings in the process. Victor S. Johnson, *Why We Feel: The Science of Human Emotions* (Cambridge: Perseus Books, 1999), 61.

¹⁷⁸ Several recent studies have emphasized performative/sensorial historical experiences. For example, see Yeidy M. Rivero, *Tuning out Blackness: Race and Nation in the History of Puerto Rican Television* (Durham: Duke, 2005); Román, *Governing Spirits*; Derby, *The Dictator's Seduction*; and Gómez, *The Experiential Caribbean*.

“controlled.” Once one accepted the flexible certainty proposed by scientists, reconciling science with worldviews and practices bordering on the inerrant relativized the effects of cultural pressure. This is partially why so many inmates embraced traditional belief systems rather than science, even though historically religion had played a colonial, imperial, and programming role.

Inmates turned to and appropriated belief systems because of their cathartic potential. Prisoners used sacred knowledge, which to many of them had greater moral authority than science, to transcend prison walls, even if only symbolically. Through ritual, prisoners performed and presumably felt their faith. This, in turn, signaled that one could access spiritual uplift, save and cleanse their soul, and achieve redemption. While prison authorities often deemed the mysteries of faith as “irrational,” inmates understood them strategically. Only a Higher Power, typically identified as God or some other divine entity, could realistically explain individual prisoners’ claims to advanced understandings about the sacred and profane.

Prisoners used performance to build upon the knowledge base at their disposal. To them, faith was beyond the comprehension of positivist science. Many inmates embraced belief systems because they could materialize them through practice. This contrasted with what medical and social science offered prisoners, both of which left little room for productive exchange and instead sought to impose certain healing regimes *on* inmates. By performing and feeling faith, prisoners exercised a modicum of power. Belief could bring them relief and gave them something to look forward to after prison. Some belief systems even allowed prisoners to experience “divine” healing, which let them distance themselves from a state that tirelessly tried to bring them into a mainstream way of thinking about health and wellbeing. On the other hand, belief also gave state officials and institutional authorities leverage in socially and culturally domesticating prisoners. After all, religion had been a cornerstone of colonial and imperial enterprise in Puerto Rico since

the Spanish era. With U.S. intervention, however, non-Catholic, mystical-secular, and Evangelical Protestant groups earned a deeper legitimacy.

Convicts interfaced with different intellectual communities committed to the perpetuation of cathartic narratives behind bars; namely, that there were various ways to understand and experience healing, well-being, and community. Ribot's case—and the smell defining it—suggests that complex epistemologies and sensory experiences were central to how many, if not most, prisoners negotiated changes in culture and their everyday lives. This was also true of transformations of the political self. While prisoners like Ribot looked to sacred knowledge and ritual to get by and better, other inmates unknowingly, informally, or openly collaborated with what was quickly becoming a scientific prison system and technocratic state. Such prisoners appreciated tangible scientific progress the way Ribot sought the intervention of intangible saints.

Tracing convicts' understandings of the experiential rehydrates not only their perspectives and experiences but also those of the diverse population caught up in their social and cultural circumference. In Oso Blanco, this included local and transnational missionaries. Catholic and Protestant Evangelical missionaries disseminated religious and spiritual knowledge and practices that inmates often deployed to rationalize or counteract the less desirable aspects of imprisonment, to transcend prison walls and the presumed superiority of science and the law. By tapping into a spectrum of rites and mediums ranging from religious processions and mass spectacles to testimonies and radio, prisoners exploited the various sensory registers at their fingertips to achieve spiritual uplift. Unlike most secular science, which rested primarily in the hands of physicians, psychiatrists, and other professionals, belief systems encouraged prisoners to define wellbeing, community, and redemption on their own terms.

The fusion of technology and religious practice represented a breakthrough for prisoners seeking a belief system they could feel. Radio mattered because it offered inmates extensions of their sensory selves. It put them in touch with the wider world, and depending on the programming, a Higher Power. In society and in prisons like Oso Blanco, radios linked prisoners to various religious communities and forms of sacred knowledge. Through radios, prisoners consumed messages that they visualized in their minds and sensed frequencies that they believed propagated healing. The power of the words and sounds that reached inmates via radio airwaves sparked sensations in convicts like those engendered by the spectacles led by priests and preachers. Yet, the emergence of radio also signaled broader social engineering. Inmates were accessories to the product. As capitalist lifestyles became increasingly premised on disposable things, radios were another product commoditizing people's lives. While radio disseminated programmable philosophies that inmates downloaded straight into their consciousness, it also elevated prisoners' hopes for uplift.

Cathartic narratives and rituals had a "civilizing" effect on prisoners, but not simply in the colonial and white supremacist way one might expect. Sacred knowledge and rite-making helped convicts police themselves on one level and look toward the future on another. Paradoxically, whereas scientists wanted prisoners to remember their moral transgressions, religiosity did more to free them, as it represented a chance to renew their histories. The "do what thou wilt" ethic at the center of modern democratic tradition did not perfectly align with the post-conviction thinking of most prisoners, as many of them had already submitted to their individualism and gained little. Sensory experiences and the prospect of spiritual redemption reminded prisoners, or taught them for the first time, that "we shan't do what we wilt because we have to live responsibly." This was also a state goal in terms of muting internal differences to make the modern nation.

Although Puerto Rican and Dominican prison scientists increasingly viewed traditional belief systems as ontological fallacies as the twentieth century unfolded, prisoners held that faith had a redemptive purpose. While many scientists often interpreted belief-based therapies as self-defeating, in terms of rehabilitative corrections they eventually accepted the utility of religion as a complementary force. Scientists and religious believers forged narratives about material realities that only they could communicate. And even though different forms of cathartic knowledge crashed into one another in Oso Blanco, they coexisted in a constellation of redemptive practices, some stars shining brighter than others depending on one's commitments. The matter went beyond seeing and experiencing things differently, however. It was about who claimed certain types of authority and on what grounds. The point is not who gave prisoners the authority to articulate the sacred and profane. Rather, convicts gave themselves the authority to do so.

Sacred knowledge and ritual behind bars have powerfully shaped convicts' experiences across time. Ribot's invocation of "dead" saints and her use of music and iconography for therapy and to make her emotional fortune, while in dialogue with diasporic currents,¹⁷⁹ illustrates the significance of the experiential to inmates. In "popularizing" Catholicism for healing and strategic purposes, prisoners like Ribot deployed religiosity as a living force, one that provided care and redemption on a variety of levels—mind, body, and soul. This was true of all the religious traditions circulating in Puerto Rican prisons in the mid-twentieth century. What made this specific moment "exceptional," however, was the role of radio technology. But belief-based redemptive practices were not limited to the prison. They spilled into political and intellectual communities beyond the wall, as the next chapter will showcase.

¹⁷⁹ By diasporic, I mean broader Afro-Caribbean approaches to healing that had much in common with Ribot's brand of saint worship/spiritism. The *madama* saint/spirit, for example, is a frequent guide-protector of female healers in Puerto Rico. It has a counterpart in Afro-Caribbean obeah, a belief system with a West African pantheon of spirits. Koss-Chioino, *Women as Healers, Women as Patients*, 41-42.

CHAPTER 6

Sharing the Sun: Clemency, Redemptive Networks, and Populism

The constellation of redemptive practices that shaped incarceration in mid-twentieth-century Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic appear to have been isolated worlds unto themselves. But as this dissertation proposes, this was not always the case. They orbited and impacted one another in powerful ways. Science and spirituality especially intersected in the context of the penitentiary. Embracing them opened doors for convicts to potentially secure freedom. Inmates used science and spirituality as defined by the state and their communities to pursue “rehabilitation” and position themselves to exercise meaningful citizenship when they exited prison. Executive clemency was a key mechanism through which convicts and their extended networks chased these ends. It linked the different intellectual communities—scientific, religious, common, nationalist, and so on—committed to redeeming convict bodies and souls.

Despite the prevalence of different political systems in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic in the mid-twentieth century, executive clemency influenced statecraft on both sides of the Mona Passage. Governments granted convicts clemency to build and maintain constituencies; to offer disenfranchised and marginalized people a legal medium through which they could be heard, make claims and demands, and seek justice; and to relieve the pressures that, if left unaddressed, threatened to dissolve the state monopoly on violence. Certainly, conspicuous inequalities were built into executive clemency. In the Dominican Republic during the era of Trujillo, for example, privileged access to the dictator helped some convicts navigate the labyrinth of clemency much faster and more efficiently than those outside his circle. Transnational intelligence agent Octavio Barrous Álvarez (Figure 1 below) is but one example of someone who fit this profile.



Figure 1: Octavio Barrous Álvarez, July 1940, AGN.

During the era of Trujillo, Barrous Álvarez led a mobile life and lived between Santiago, Ciudad Trujillo, and Puerto Rico. In the 1930s, he worked as a municipal police officer. He worked his way up to intelligence agent. By the late 1930s and early 1940s, he returned home and served as an officer in the Dominican national police. Barrous Álvarez earned this post thanks to his efforts in Puerto Rico, where he operated out of the Condado Hotel and a fruit business in Ponce. While east of the Mona Passage, he sent Trujillo newspaper clippings and reports about political intrigue and the activities of exiled activists.¹

¹ Expediente de Octavio Barrous Álvarez, Caja IT: 2905142, Correspondencias Particulares, SPN, FP, AGN.

In his writings, Barrous Álvarez projected Trujillo as the spiritual father of the Dominican nation. He was not alone in doing so between the 1930s and midcentury, when numerous prisoners and their families seeking executive clemency also identified Trujillo as a father figure.² In May 1938, Barrous Álvarez dedicated a poem to Trujillo. He wrote it in Ponce. The poem portrays the Dominican people as “sun’s rays,” each one symbolic of a central tenet of the nation: rectitude, laboriousness, and honesty, for instance. The sun itself, the source from which Dominican national rays emanated, represented Trujillo and his surrogates. In the poem, Barrous Álvarez also outlines Trujillo’s “titanic,” “patriotic,” and fatherly feats. Trujillo is the “pride” of the “race” and nation, a leader worthy of sacrifice.³ The poem’s most powerful line is when he urges Trujillo to “Talk how your people talk; your people, who listen to you.”⁴

Barrous Álvarez admired Trujillo. The dictator, in turn, respected the country, a nation rooted in Hispanic-Catholic heritage and resistance to black “radical” traditions like Haitian imperialism, Afro-Caribbean religiosities, and traditional folk medicine. Indeed, the “beauty” of life under the white sun Trujillo is something one would expect to hear from a regime apologist like Barrous Álvarez. His poem anticipates a future nostalgia and anxiety, however, a time when Trujillo would be gone, when one would have to adulate the dictator’s “greatness” and works in

² For example, Martina Fulgencio of San Pedro de Macorís wrote to Trujillo in June 1941 pleading for the pardon of her son Félix E. Cardy. The absence of Cardy’s labor power negatively impacted Fulgencio, as she was a sick widow. She recommended that he be freed on June 22, Dominican Military Day, and called Trujillo the “father of all Dominicans.” Clemency letters like this one appear repeatedly in the Dominican archive. See Martina Fulgencio a Rafael Trujillo, 12 junio 1941, Caja IT: 2902020, SEJIP, SPN, FP, AGN.

³ Numerous clemency letters indicate that loyalty to the death characterized the discourse of Trujillo supporters. For example, in October 1949 a prisoner from Santiago named Eliseo Quezada wrote to the dictator. A day laborer and father, Quezada endured prison knowing that his family did not have a provider. He was such an “admirer” of Trujillo’s politics that he and his family were “willing to give their last drop of blood” in service to “the Chief.” Eliseo Quezada a Rafael Trujillo, 15 octubre 1949, Caja IT: 2903710, SEJIP, SPN, FP, AGN.

⁴ See fn. 1.

the closet. The sun Barrous Álvarez and others expected to rise everyday (Trujillo) might not be around tomorrow.⁵

By the mid-1940s, Barrous Álvarez was a veteran lieutenant of the Dominican national police. However, disaster struck for him in August 1946, when a female minor's guardian accused him of seduction and abduction. In response, Barrous Álvarez immediately tapped into his interpersonal network, as anyone would. Five days into his stay at Ciudad Trujillo prison, authorities transferred him to a facility in Barahona (in the southwestern part of the country). He secured bond in little more than a week. In November 1946, further details about his indiscretions emerged. Barrous Álvarez explained to Trujillo that it all started because of Lila Vázquez, who “thinks I have a thing” for her adopted daughter. “You...know Vázquez, the former owner of numerous cabarets in Ciudad Trujillo, an activity to which you dedicate much of your time.”⁶ Barrous Álvarez's casual reference to Trujillo's personal knowledge of cabarets illustrates the fraternity of the men. His oratory also spoke to the relationship between inmates and Trujillo more broadly. Like Barrous Álvarez, most clemency petitioners depended on their extended networks for counsel and support during trying times. Unlike most prisoners, however, Barrous Álvarez's immediate network included Trujillo himself. Access to the dictator ensured that he would not have to overexert himself to regain his freedom.

Contrary to most Dominicans and Puerto Ricans for that matter, Barrous Álvarez and others like him could get out of prison early and have their criminal records expunged, or at the

⁵ Former regime supporters later contended with the likes of Juan Bosch and Joaquín Balaguer, both of whom had Puerto Rican ancestry. Paul Lewis, “Juan Bosch, 92, Freely Elected Dominican President, Dies,” *The New York Times*, November 2, 2001; Jorge Duany, “La migración dominicana hacia Puerto Rico: una perspectiva transnacional,” in Margarita Estrada Iguíniz and Pascal Labazée, eds., *Globalización y localidad: espacios, actores, moviidades e identidades* (Mexico City: La Casa Chata, 2007), 400; Milagros Iturrondo, *Voces Quisqueyanas en Borinquen* (San Juan: Ediciones Camila, 2000), 139; and Nancy Pereyra de Martínez, “La emigración puertorriqueña hacia la República Dominicana, siglos XIX y XX,” MA Thesis, University of Puerto Rico-Río Piedras, 2004, 180.

⁶ See fn. 1.

very least ignored. Such convicts were extensions of state enterprise. This partially explains why Barrous Álvarez continued to ask Trujillo for financial assistance and other favors even after his release from prison.⁷ Not all Dominican inmates possessed this political capital. Yet, Barrous Álvarez's story allows us to trace the imaginary that informed how many "ordinary" Dominicans approached the state for clemency. Barrous Álvarez had political connections, which facilitated his speedy pardon compared to most inmates, but all convicts—even common prisoners—were political prisoners in the sense that nudging the state for something is a political act.

This chapter examines executive clemency in the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico in the middle decades of the twentieth century. It follows the footsteps of convicts and their immediate networks—family and other interlocutors—to shed light on the symbolic politics of clemency and how the process was negotiated. In the mid-twentieth century, clemency was a pillar in the exercise of freedom and (re)production of citizens. Convicts took different populist routes to freedom and "acceptable" citizenship: in Puerto Rico, via a populism premised on U.S. colonial democracy, and in the Dominican Republic, the populism of a dictator. The chapter builds on the body of scholarship that underscores the relationship between marginalized populations, gender, and the state on the one hand, and racial identities, mobility, and associational life on the other.⁸

Several scholars have shown how gender politics and racially inflected discourses shaped Puerto Rican workers, intellectuals, and political cultures between the Spanish and U.S. colonial periods.⁹ The growing literature on Caribbean migratory experiences, specifically, clarifies the

⁷ The last we hear of Barrous Álvarez in the archive is in 1953, when he contacted Trujillo seeking money because his latest endeavor, "speculating beef," was about to fail. *Ibid.*

⁸ Suárez Findlay, *We Are Left Without a Father Here*; Nancy Appelbaum, Anne Macpherson, and Karin Roseblatt, eds., *Race and Nation in Modern Latin America* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2003); and Putnam, *Radical Moves*.

⁹ This literature is vast. Consult, for example, Suárez Findlay, *Imposing Decency*; Rodríguez Silva, *Silencing Race*; and Scarano, "Liberal Pacts and Hierarchies of Rule: Approaching the Imperial Transition in Cuba and Puerto Rico," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 78, 4 (November 1998): 583-601.

routes taken by working black people, associations, and other migrants to survive, prosper, and maintain and create new bonds.¹⁰ Executive clemency in this context, particularly its role in the rise of intersecting Caribbean populisms, is underexplored terrain. Tracing clemency illustrates the ways in which convicts and their communities made themselves politically visible, and shows how redemptive networks contributed to the project of rescinding unfreedom.

Using clemency petitions, personal letters, and other sources, I contend that inmates and their networks employed a range of tools and strategies to bend the law in their favor. While they did not always succeed, these communities were persistent in their efforts to convince state officials of the merits of their demands. Empowered by different models of populism, they sought remediation from the notionally white “fathers” (“suns”) of the Puerto Rican and Dominican nations by raising problems and proposing solutions, typically in the form of pleas, prayers, and political support. Convicts and their communities tapped into a range of networks that navigated the state’s increasingly sophisticated machinery. To achieve executive clemency, inmates and their supporters invoked material conditions, religiosity, national holidays, notions of community, and other identities and cherished values. In the process, people educated themselves about how to engage states invested in redefining the meanings of nation, inclusion, and belonging.

Clemency Petitions, Letters, and Outcomes

Diverse voices narrated clemency experiences in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic in the mid-twentieth century. Pardon petitions and letters offer a collage of these voices. Prisoners, their families, and their extended communities petitioned and wrote letters to force the state and its surrogates to live up to their populist rhetoric. The clemency process brought convicts and heads

¹⁰ Putnam, *Radical Moves*.

of state together for days, months, and even years. To earn clemency, convicts relied on a variety of interpersonal networks. No network was the same. And for all their internal differences, most convicts, the communities with which they interacted, and the state agreed that the law set the parameters of punishment and redemption.

Interested parties submitted clemency petitions and letters to government officials with increasing frequency as the mid-twentieth century unfolded. Concurrently, convicts and their interlocutors learned how to effectively engage the state clemency process. Pardon pleas arrived from everywhere in terms of geography and place: foreign countries, national regions, cities and rural areas, prisons and hospitals, churches and associations, humble and affluent homes, and so on. In contrast to Barrous Álvarez, most petitioners and letter writers were salt-of-the-earth types, the bone and sinew of colonial, imperial, and national Caribbean legacies and traditions.¹¹ Such groups included jíbaros, monteros, *guajíros*, the urban poor, and the working classes.

Between the 1930s and midcentury, penitentiaries in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic proved to be impressive and productive social laboratories. They played important roles in turning rural peasants, the urban poor, and other notionally deplorable individuals and communities into members of broader political constituencies. As Salvatore and Aguirre contend, this citizen-making imperative informed the penitentiary project in Latin America since the nineteenth century, but arrived late to the Caribbean.¹² The simple act of engaging the clemency process meant that incarceration helped certain individuals turn a civic corner. While during these years most convicts across societies were poor or working-class and rural or urban mixed-race people, they came from all walks of life. Further, they were serving time for a range of infractions,

¹¹ See Putnam, *Radical Moves*, 76.

¹² See Salvatore and Aguirre, eds., *The Birth of the Penitentiary*.

including disturbing the peace, assault, theft, burglary, homicide, sex crimes, weapons violations, automobile accidents, and political conspiracies, among other offenses. But everyone was salvageable, even the most morally compromised or dubious.

Clemency letters had a basic anatomy. They identified petitioners, where they came from, and for whom they approached authorities. The letters tended to be short, on average a few paragraphs and no more than a page or two long. Most were handwritten but subsequently transcribed by executive officials. The letters provided cursory details about the crimes and sentences of convicts. The bulk of clemency letters, however, explained why specific inmates merited pardon and freedom. These explanations revolved around pleas, prayers, and political support. Letter writers often mixed and matched these broad categories, depending on their individual experiences and investment in specific cases.

For the dozens of boxes of preserved clemency petitions and letters, what remains are stories about irreparable loss and violent discontinuity, the debris of broken lives and families, and flashes of optimism, perseverance, and empowerment. As several historians observe, “Records of deep collective loss often ‘subvert the state-centered authority of the conventional archive.’”¹³ Yet, few people remain or yearn to recount such tales. Therefore, one must simultaneously trust and creatively interrogate the documentary record by reading “along” and “against” the archival grain to “rehydrate” the meanings people likely assigned to experiences as complicated as imprisonment.¹⁴ Scholars need not abandon traditional prison records for trendier sources like

¹³ Suárez Findlay, *We Are Left Without a Father Here*, 19; and Peter Fritzsche, “The Archive and the Case of the German Nation,” in Antoinette Burton, ed., *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History* (Durham: Duke, 2005), 184-208.

¹⁴ See Mallon, “The Promise and Dilemma of Subaltern Studies: Perspectives from Latin American History,” *The American Historical Review* 99, 5 (December 1994): 1491-1515; Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” in Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, eds., *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*

convict tattoos, which ironically reinforce Lombrosian tropes, when we still have not exhausted existing printed materials.¹⁵ Clemency records, specifically, preserve pardon tales. They provide windows into popular and convict memories, motifs, and techniques. Examining the fictional aspects of these sources sheds light on the crafting of narrative, cultural exchange between officials and subalterns, and how the lower orders construct truth, self-deception, and redemption.¹⁶

Prisoners and their redemptive networks in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic petitioned and sent letters to their respective national fathers (whether agency officials or heads of state). They praised, prayed for, and pled with government officials for pardon, and in the process expressed how they defined deviance, forgiveness, mutual aid, and honorable behavior. Petitioners and letter writers acknowledged the “disgrace” of incarceration but felt that the debt to society could be paid. The civic education convicts obtained through incarceration and clemency made them (re)eligible for the benefits and privileges of citizenship, and intensified the citizenship of their interlocutors. Many ex-prisoners sought the reinstatement of their civil rights after reentering society. Convict activism of this kind made freedom seem less elusive and illusory.

The burden of managing clemency often fell on women. It was typical for heads of state like Trujillo and Muñoz Marín to receive mail from a multigenerational body of women who lauded and beseeched them to pardon their loved ones in exchange for prayers and political support. Other groups typically joined the cause on the heels of activist women. The initial letters of many mothers, wives, sisters, daughters, and nieces had a desperate tone. They explained their daily misery by highlighting material misfortune, latent job opportunities, nonexistent wages,

(Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 271-313; and Natalie Zemon Davis, *Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and Their Tellers in Sixteenth-Century France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987).

¹⁵ This methodological rush is visible in Robinson Herrera, “The Ambulatory Archive: Santa Muerte Tattoos as Historical Sources,” *The Appendix* 1, 1 (December 2012): 85-88.

¹⁶ Zemon Davis, *Fiction in the Archives*, vii-viii, 1-6, and 111-14.

hunger and disease, and the nakedness of their children. For instance, in March 1952 Avelina Placencio, the wife of a convict, wrote to Trujillo pleading for her husband's pardon. She discussed how their sick children were always "feverish" because insects constantly munched on their "naked bodies." They lived where there were "many divine plagues." Placencio begged for her husband's release, or at the very least, some financial help.¹⁷ Dominican women often used the modern argument of the naked, not the desired, body to remind the state of its self-assigned responsibility for the wellbeing of the national flock. Overall, they proved to be quite resourceful. Women pulled from what they knew best to serve them best.

Puerto Rican women appealed to national father figures in much the same way as their Dominican counterparts. For example, the circumstances and rationale embedded in the following November 1937 letter from Obdulia Aldahondo of Aguadilla to U.S. Governor Blanton Winship emerge repeatedly in the archive:

In the name of the Highest Justice, I do hereby apply to you. I am the wife of Manuel Domenech [Robledo], a prisoner that is in jail condemned to three years of prison and in whose power and justice I beg you for his pardon. As his wife, both my children and me are starving [and] hungry; all naked because I am sick in bed, [it] being impossible for me to work. Think, as a father and as a mother[,] of your own children starving to death. This is the situation I am describing and in their faces the story is told. Again I beg in the name of the "Highest Justice" and in the name of God; that this case will be considered. Hoping that it will be heard for my children.¹⁸

Aldahondo submitted her letter in English, which illustrated her awareness of who was in power and her desire to be heard by the U.S. official without intervention. To do so, not only did she linguistically conform (possibly through a translator in the Office of the Governor), but she also appealed to the sacred sensibilities that she and Winship shared. Most importantly, Aldahondo

¹⁷ Avelina Placencio a Rafael Trujillo, 22 marzo 1952, Caja IT: 2901038, SEJIP, SPN, FP, AGN.

¹⁸ Expediente del confinado Manuel Domenech Robledo, Caja 55, SCE, FOG, AGPR.

believed words were unnecessary to communicate her plight. In the faces of her children “the story is told.” The power of her message resided not in explanatory excess, something the government and contemporary intellectuals would have appreciated, but in the experiential dimensions of her family’s suffering. These included the family’s separation from Manuel and their hunger, nakedness, poor health, and lack of income.

To reinforce this position, Aldahondo submitted a touched-up photograph as evidence of her assertions. Figure 2 below is the image she sent to Winship. Aldahondo and her children are visibly thin and humbly dressed. Her two sons are barefoot, although she and her daughter are not. The photographer applied cosmetics to the faces of everyone in the picture, the traces of which are especially noticeable around their eyes. The image suggests that clemency petitioners and letter writers felt compelled to meet certain standards of appearance or beauty just to be taken seriously by national fathers. They did so even if it meant pouring the few resources they had into a staged photograph.

Aldahondo’s letter and photograph yielded no immediate results. In fact, she did not receive a response from the Governor’s executive secretary, C. Gallardo, until June 1938. The middle-aged and mixed-race merchant Domenech Robledo, who was serving time for voluntary manslaughter, exited Oso Blanco in late 1939. He had earned good conduct time, which reduced his three-year sentence, but it took him another six years to shed civic death and regain his “civil rights” and “political privileges.” His attorneys and several property-owning neighbors vouched for him, calling the ex-convict “laborious,” a “good citizen,” and “well-behaved.”¹⁹ Domenech Robledo’s redemptive network started with family, and spanned the legal and socioeconomic communities respected by the state. These groups jointly exploited their political and social capital.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*



Figure 2: Obdulia Aldahondo and children, November 1937, AGPR.

Whereas health and social scientists understood the penitentiary as a biosocial laboratory and spiritual experts understood it as a soul-saving venue, prisoner networks reveal that redemptive practice could transcend mainstream science and religion. States developed a template for and hoped to christen certain kinds of citizens in penitentiaries, but prisoners and their kin tested the state's populist rhetoric and signaled the kind of citizenship they wanted and needed. Redemptive networks offered the best prospects for individual clemency, for they allowed convicts to make accountable the range of ideas and people to whom they entrusted their wellbeing. As Aldahondo's case confirms, the deeper and more diverse the convict network, the better chance they had of securing pardon.

While this may all seem like an imposition—that is, the notion that the prison was (is) a site of labor exploitation and a factory of citizenship where evolving standards of virtue and morality were (are) fabricated²⁰—it is important to recall that many prisoners and their immediate networks were often already civically engaged. They did not always need to be encouraged by someone in high power to understand or exercise their rights. Rather, they eagerly sought out and talked to the state, shedding light on specific episodes of deviance while broadcasting their own grievances, intellectual proclivities, and problem-solving ingenuity. On the other hand, the Dominican and Puerto Ricans states intended to produce certain constituencies—an agro-industrial, despotic, and xenophobic populism on Dominican soil and an agro-industrial, “democratic,” and technocratic populism in Puerto Rico where a quieter racism prevailed.

Executive clemency has framed the experiences of marginalized populations since the early modern period. One of the consequences of clemency, which is still a pervasive practice the world over today, is that it gives convicts and their communities opportunities to empower themselves and tell their stories within systems designed to control them. Historically, individuals and groups have used clemency to not only respond to the legal authority of the state, but to navigate and win concessions or protection from it.²¹ In nineteenth-century Puerto Rico, the Spanish Crown granted periodic amnesty to political and ordinary prisoners alike. Sectors of the press responded negatively to the release of prisoners during these years, and questioned the motives of Spanish authorities, especially given increases in both common and seditious crime.²²

²⁰ Consult Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*; and Evans, *The Fabrication of Virtue*.

²¹ For example, see María Elena Díaz, *The Royal Slaves of El Cobre: Negotiating Freedom in Colonial Cuba, 1670-1780* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001); and Bianca Premo, *Children of the Father King: Youth, Authority, and Legal Minority in Colonial Lima* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2005).

²² Picó, *El día menos pensado*, 178-79.

With the establishment of U.S. rule in Puerto Rico, requests for executive clemency increased. Picó notes that in 1902, Hoosier Attorney General James S. Harlan oversaw 285 pardon petitions. Governor William H. Hunt eventually approved 24 of them; reduced three prison sentences; remitted 24 fines paid in jail time; and reduced 36 additional fines. As the twentieth century unfolded, island convicts increasingly depended on clemency when they failed to meet parole standards. State officials often approved pardon petitions during the holiday season (e.g., December-January, headlined by the winter solstice, Christmas, New Year's Day, and Three Kings' Day). Mainstream Puerto Rican newspapers did not receive government press releases specifying who had been freed.²³ This contrasted sharply with the Dominican experience, where during the era of Trujillo the government regularly issued lists of pardoned convicts to the press.

Compared to Puerto Rico, historians know less about Dominican clemency. A 1942 decree helps fill this void. That December, judicial consultant Manuel A. Amiama sent Trujillo a draft of rules to govern the clemency process. Amiama worked closely with the Dominican Congress in drafting the law, which built on the one in effect when Horacio Vásquez was in power. This signaled some continuity between regimes. It was a “cooperative” venture between different government agencies. At the time, these were the main framers of state redemptive practice in the Dominican Republic. Further, the law was constitutionally sound and had “teeth,” a fact that several petitioners and letter writers relished.²⁴

Article 49 of the Dominican Constitution granted state executives the power to totally or partially pardon prisoners. Clemency rules stipulated that pardon should happen seasonally on

²³ *Ibid*, 179-80.

²⁴ For example, Dominican convicts invoked the “sacred Constitution” and even the British Magna Carta as clemency precedents. See Amelio Rojas Antigua a Rafael Trujillo, 10 agosto 1952, Caja IT: 2903713, SEJIP, SPN, FP, AGN. On the law, see Consultor Jurídico del Poder Ejecutivo Manuel A. Amiama al Honorable Señor Presidente de la República Rafael Trujillo, “Reglamento sobre indultos,” 7 diciembre 1942, Caja IT: 2901038, SEJIP, SPN, FP, AGN.

important national holidays: February 27th (Independence from Haiti), August 16th (Restoration of Independence), September 24th (Our Lady of Las Mercedes), and December 23rd (Eve of Christmas Eve). These holidays corresponded to national historical memories that chronicled people-defining events and anxieties in Dominican history—moments of salvation, rupture, persecution, and awakening. Projecting alternative explanations and visions of historical time amounts to untying “memory knots,” as several scholars have suggested.²⁵ Trujillo later added layers of meaning to these and other national dates through parallel commemorations for himself, his “divinity,” and his inner circle.

The 1942 law’s sensitivity to overlapping times cannot be understated: 99 years since independence from Haiti (1843-44), 80 years since the beginning of the Dominican Restoration War (1862-63), and the 13th year of Trujillo’s rule.²⁶ Even these dates, however, were uncertain. For example, while most Dominicans consider 1844 to be the year Haitian occupation of the Dominican Republic ended, Dominican-Haitian skirmishes persisted well into the 1850s.²⁷ Trujillo’s commemoration of 1844 is indicative of a time strategically useful not only to the population at large in terms of clemency, but also to the designs and intentions of a state determined to differentiate itself from neighboring Haiti.

Clemency lists for select months and years offer a picture of the total number of Dominican convicts who earned and failed to win pardon. For example, on December 20, 1941, Attorney General and President of the Clemency Board Antonio E. Alfau approved a Christmas Eve pardon list of 85 convicts from all corners of the country. These convicts had been jailed for contraband

²⁵ On the notion of memory knots, see Steve J. Stern, *Remembering Pinochet’s Chile: On the Eve of London, 1998* (Durham: Duke, 2004); Stern, *Battling for Hearts and Minds: Memory Struggles in Pinochet’s Chile, 1973-1988* (Durham: Duke, 2006); and Mallon, *Courage Tastes of Blood*.

²⁶ See “Reglamento sobre indultos.”

²⁷ Despradel Cabral and Reyes Sánchez, *La guerra dominico-haitiana*.

smuggling, the possession of unlicensed firearms, the violation of immigration and fishing laws, theft, robbery, homicide, fraud, embezzlement, arson, assault, and rape.²⁸ Several years later, in December 1948, Attorney General H. Herrera Billini authorized a list of 108 convicts from across the country. Of these, 42 received clemency.²⁹ A few years later, in August 1952, Amiama released a clemency list of 218 convicts. Seventy-three inmates were pardoned.³⁰ In February 1953, Attorney General Porfirio Basora R. approved a list of 140 convicts. About a quarter of them earned clemency.³¹

These numbers make clear there was little consistency in terms of clemency eligibility and reception. If the clemency lists are indicative of island-wide patterns, then one can assume that erratic numbers prevailed over extended periods. Also, as noted above, Dominican authorities granted clemency at least four times a year. This was a political calculation, for the spectacle would only resonate if constituencies felt they got something, real or imagined, from the commemoration of national holidays. Making a political show of clemency literally helped reproduce the nation. Several hundred convicts and their families engaged the clemency process administered by the Dominican state every year. This was also the case in Puerto Rico.

Clemency was one of the most intimate concessions heads of state supplied inmates. The power to pardon implied the power to judge, to preside over ethical norms, and to give people new civic life. However, to exercise this power fruitfully, national fathers and their surrogates had to be accountable. They had to familiarize themselves with the customs of target populations, and

²⁸ “Informe que la Junta de Gracia y Perdón rinde al Honorable Señor Presidente de la República respecto de las peticiones de indulto recibidas,” 24 diciembre 1941, Caja IT: 2902019, SEJIP, SPN, FP, AGN.

²⁹ “Indultos para el 24 diciembre de 1948,” 18 diciembre 1948, Caja IT: 2903709, SEJIP, SPN, FP, AGN.

³⁰ “Indultos para el 16 agosto de 1952,” 15 agosto 1952, Caja IT: 2903713, SEJIP, SPN, FP, AGN.

³¹ “Indultos para el 27 febrero de 1953,” 25 febrero 1953, Caja IT: 2903713, SEJIP, SPN, FP, AGN.

commit to helping these groups get by and better. The material and symbolic benefits of executive clemency—literally a new day for those under its purview—guided the trajectories of Hispanophone Caribbean populisms in the middle decades of the twentieth century.

The Sun is God

In the mid-twentieth century, notionally white national fathers like Trujillo and Muñoz Marín used celestial symbols and imagery to chronicle their competing versions of populism. Not only did the likes of Barroux Álvarez see the sun in Trujillo, heads of state employed the sun symbolically. Trujillo saw himself as the sun, powerful enough to corral the Dominican national herd and garner public affection. He assigned himself the sun's "life-giving" attributes, and claimed for himself the solar orb's unfathomable magnetic attraction. In other words, Trujillo the sun was the manifestation of a Supreme Being, at least from his own point of view. His successor, Joaquín Balaguer, went so far as to identify him as a "redeeming Christ."³²

On the other hand, Muñoz Marín hid his association with the sun from plain view. "Humbler" and more discreet than Trujillo, Muñoz Marín embedded the power of the sun in his evangelical politics, work ethic, and focus on "saving" salt-of-the-earth types. He was a different kind of sun, one who propagated a more humanistic political message and moral code of conduct, much like the "Son of the Father" (Jesus Christ) of Christian lore. The "*son* of God was [is] the *sun* God."³³ As one convict's father put it, Muñoz Marín's "spiritual crown of laurels" signified

³² By fabricating contrived analogies between Jesus Christ and Trujillo, Balaguer sought to consecrate Trujillo's birth and life. According to Balaguer, Trujillo was an "apostle" or a "messiah" sent by Providence to "save" and "free" all Dominicans. See López Calvo, "*God and Trujillo*," 11-12.

³³ This is the central argument of scholar David Fideler's *Jesus Christ, Sun of God: Ancient Cosmology and Early Christian Symbolism*, (Wheaton, IL: Quest, 1993). Fideler suggests that the Christian symbolism of the "Spiritual Sun" came from numerology and the "ancient divinities" of the "mystery schools." He links the longevity of the Hellenistic doctrine of the "Solar Logos" to early Christian symbolism, which depicted Christ as a spiritual sun and the source of order, harmony, and insight.

secular divinity and timeless authority.³⁴ To this clemency letter writer, the Governor embodied all the positive values of Puerto Rican-U.S. hybridity.

Puerto Rican and Dominican heads of state used the symbolic power of the sun to legitimize and advance their political agendas, to redefine their nations, and to order the worlds around them. The sun has attracted the attention and adoration of humanity from the beginning of human history. The prominence of the sun, its importance in the creation and maintenance of life, its unchanging role in the cosmos, and the mystery surrounding it has secured the sun “cult” followings rivaled by few other objects or forces.³⁵ Christ and the sun overlapped, forming what historian James M. Taggart has called “a composite personality” and the “masculine creative force in the universe.”³⁶ Applied to modern Caribbean state-building and populisms, Taggart’s assessment rings true in terms of the “heteronormative” and patriarchal national family. Trujillo and Muñoz Marín were suns themselves. Numerous people (other celestial bodies) orbited and relied on them to thrive. The clemency process reiterated this order of things.

In the mid-twentieth century, political leaders like Trujillo and Muñoz Marín invoked “deep antiquity” in the making of national identities.³⁷ Consequences included the creation of national cults and politically active constituencies. Muñoz Marín’s approach to constituency-building distinguished him from Trujillo. He went to the people, and developed a rapport with them. In Christian parlance, he traveled and taught like Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father (God).

³⁴ Expediente del confinado Juan Ramón Maysonet Colón, Caja 67, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

³⁵ V.C. Srivastava, *Sun Worship in Ancient India*, First edition (Allahabad: Indological Publications, 1972), xi.

³⁶ See James M. Taggart, *Nahuat Myth and Social Structure* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997), 57.

³⁷ On the concept of “deep antiquity” in Latin American history, consult Carlyne Ryan Larson, *Our Indigenous Ancestors: A Cultural History of Museums, Science, and Identity in Argentina, 1877-1943* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2015); and Rebecca A. Earle, *The Return of the Native: Indians and Myth-Making in Spanish America, 1810-1930* (Durham: Duke, 2007).

But in some ways Muñoz Marín was not unique. His populist platform provided fresh dressings for old wounds. Many of the governors who served before him—U.S. and local, appointed and elected, and interim or lieutenant—were similarly identified as fathers by clemency petitioners.

Muñoz Marín positioned himself as the great father of the modern Puerto Rican nation. Historian Eileen J. Suárez Findlay claims he was “visionary, empathetic and generous,” and reserved a “paternal, teaching role for himself.” Holding informal talks with peasant men and women on rural roads, embracing the elderly, and caring for bereft widows and wives, Muñoz Marín “appeared as an honorable, knowledgeable father,” one on whom the people could depend.³⁸ The image of the father of the nation as a state builder, provider, protector, and listener characterized mid-twentieth-century populism in Puerto Rico and elsewhere.³⁹ Figure 3 below is typical PPD propaganda from the mid-1940s. Called “Promesa Cumplida” (“Fulfilled Promise”), it highlights the blend of paternalism and identity politics Muñoz Marín used to link Puerto Ricans, the PPD, and himself. PPD supporters distributed posters and postcards of “Fulfilled Promise” to the population at large, especially to people in rural areas.⁴⁰

In the upper-left corner of the poster floats the small image of a malnourished white peasant dressed humbly and sporting a classic *pava* hat. The *jíbaro* rests his arm over a horse and looks ahead and down. Muñoz Marín occupies the rest of the image, a cigarette hidden in his lower (right) hand as he leans against the palm wall of a *bohío* in a pose like the floating *jíbaro*. He is thinking of the *jíbaro* while looking to the horizon and presumably the “future” of the island.

³⁸ Suárez Findlay, *We Are Left Without a Father Here*, 42.

³⁹ Karen Kampwirth, ed., *Gender and Populism in Latin America: Passionate Politics* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2010), 12-13; Patrick McNamara, *Sons of the Sierra: Juárez, Díaz, and the People of Ixtlán, Oaxaca, 1855-1920* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2007); Turits, *Foundations of Despotism*, 206-31; Derby, *The Dictator's Seduction*, 23-24; and Karin Alejandra Roseblatt, *Gendered Compromises: Political Cultures and the State in Chile, 1920-1950* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2000).

⁴⁰ Suárez Findlay, *We Are Left Without a Father Here*, 43-45.

Indeed, Muñoz Marín projects himself as a visionary, yet approachable, leader. He is like the jíbaro but not quite a rural hillbilly. Findlay puts it best when she sums up the intimacy of the soon-to-be Governor's political platform: "Leader, father, teacher, and preacher, in this image Muñoz Marín both embodies and leads the people."⁴¹

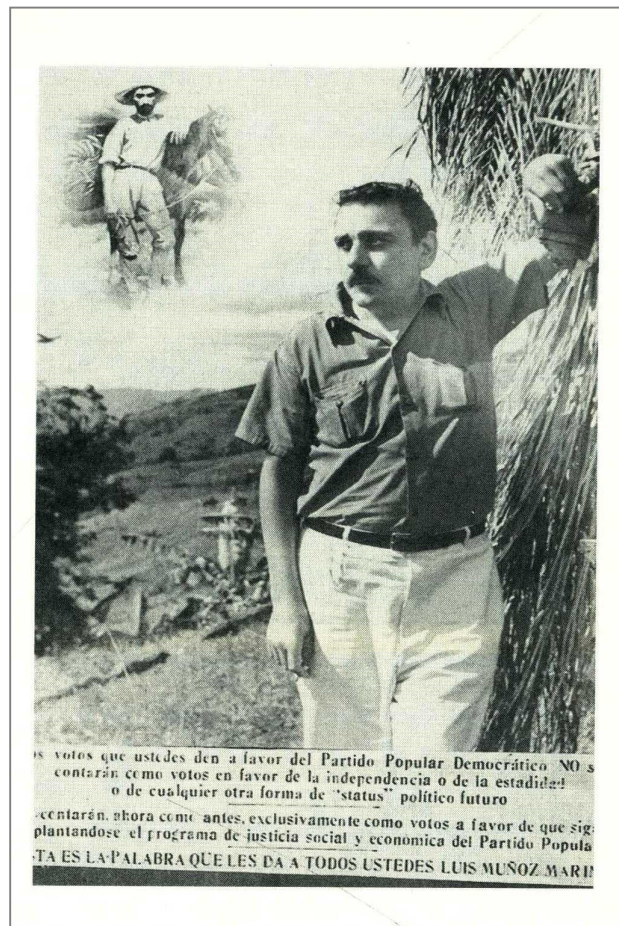


Figure 3: PPD, "Fulfilled Promise," mid-1940s; adapted from Suárez Findlay, *We Are Left Without a Father Here* [2014]. The caption reads: "The votes which you give to the Popular Democratic Party will NOT count as votes for independence nor for statehood, nor for any other form of future political 'status.' They will count, now as always, only as votes in favor of implementing the Popular Party's social justice and economic program. THIS IS LUIS MUÑOZ MARÍN'S WORD WHICH HE GIVES TO ALL OF YOU."

Muñoz Marín imitated Jesus the Son in how he disseminated his message. He promoted himself as a consummate politician, one who met dwellers in the desert and talked to shepherds

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 46-47. Historian Daniel James discusses how the early Peronist movement in Argentina similarly sought to rehabilitate understandings of the working classes. See his *Resistance and Integration: Peronism and the Argentine Working Class, 1946-1976* (Cambridge: Oxford, 1988), 31-34.

but found himself in the mouths of many critics. He refined the PPD program by crisscrossing Puerto Rico's mountainous interior while interacting with peasants and other autonomous people, groups critical to his political success. In "Fulfilled Promise," Muñoz Marín is a political physician on a cure mission to revive and awaken the national body and redeem its soul. The style in which he performed this miracle in a colonial setting was Christ-like because he knew some form of Christ rested in the hearts and minds of his constituents.

Like the apostle Thomas, Muñoz Marín saw Christ in the next intelligent believer.⁴² As Findlay suggests, he structured many of his articles and speeches as "didactic catechisms." One time he told an adoring and listening public:

God has seen fit to give me intelligence... The intelligence which God has given me, I transfer to you! Through my words, all of you can see as clearly as I do! God gave me intelligence so that the humble ones of my people could see, not to blind them or confuse them! God did not give me land, but he gave me intelligence. And the intelligence that he gave me, I turn it over to you, all of a piece. Use it! Use it! Good God, use it!⁴³

Sharpening the mind was a cornerstone of state redemptive practice in Puerto Rico at the time. In Oso Blanco, psychologists, psychiatrists, educators, and other technocrats tried to position convicts to refine their intelligence. The logic was that prisoners required intelligence to truly appreciate freedom and become exemplary citizens. They sharpened their minds not only through literacy and prison humanities, but through the civic education afforded by executive clemency. For a time, these goals and the broader imagery framing them contrasted sharply with representations of Trujillo's "celestiality," some of which depicted Trujillo in the sky and peasants on the ground.

Like the PPD, the mainstream Dominican press also disseminated state iconography with celestial symbolism. Figure 4 below is from the May 16, 1942 edition of *La Opinión*. It underscores

⁴² Elaine Pagels, *Beyond Belief: The Secret Gospel of Thomas* (New York: Random House, 2003).

⁴³ Suárez Findlay, *We Are Left Without a Father Here*, 43-46.

Trujillo's prominent position in the collective social imaginary of Dominican campesinos just as his regime entered its prime. Transnational artist Darío Suro drew the image. He called it "Protector y Protegido" ("Protector and Protected"). In the upper-left corner of the image floats Trujillo, the all-seeing man-god in the sky, the material and spiritual father of the Dominican national family. He is the ultimate "life-giver," evidenced by the infinite sunrays he exudes. These warm both the soil and the humbly dressed and barefoot peasant below him. Meanwhile, the campesino on the ground contemplates Trujillo's presence, pava hat in hand. There are tools and trees nearby, and a structure on the horizon. The thin peasant stands in the middle of a field and looks to the sky where the sun is shining. He is a Hispanicized indio, the prevailing ethno-racial identity developed by Trujillo and the PD at the time.

Suro's image suggests that Trujillo is the protector and peasants are the protected. Trujillo looked like Franco standing before an Andalusian peasant. The caption at the bottom of the image reads: "The national peasantry knows that Trujillo never abandoned them. First, he brought them peace and serenity. Later: through land partitioning and the gift of agricultural tools, he gave them their heart, which already beat for the Patria. Now, gratitude makes it so that Trujillo dawns each day in the thoughts of rural men." With each rising sun, before going off to work, Trujillo was the first thing to enter the minds of Dominican peasants. They owed him everything, or so the story goes. This, of course, is a romanticized reading and expectation. Surely, campesinos could cover the sun with the palm of their hands if they wanted. Rather than the power of syrupy words or pretentious oratory, which had a place during the era of Trujillo, what mattered in this instance was the power of imagery and symbolism, and how these hooked the rural "masses." Moreover, there is a certain stylized form of address to leaders that is at work in both the Dominican and

Puerto Rican cases. Some of it can be traced back to the colonial era, when petitioners addressed the king in highly stylized form—as a father, benefactor, and protector.⁴⁴

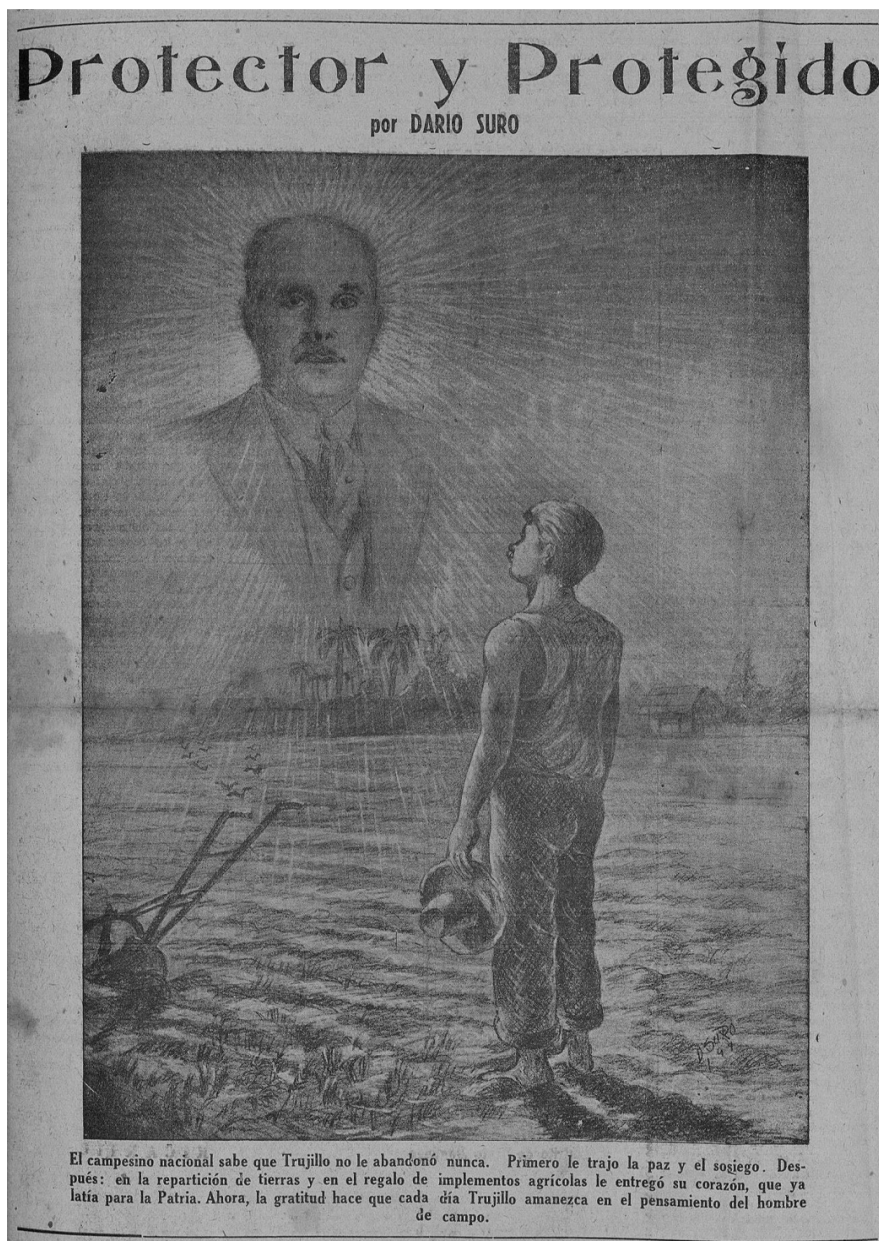


Figure 4: Darío Suro, “Protector and Protected,” *La Opinión*, May 16, 1942.

Although Muñoz Marín and Trujillo were similar in the sense that they and their parties propagated the good political word to the masses and enacted needed land reforms, each leader

⁴⁴ See Cynthia Milton, *The Many Meanings of Poverty: Colonialism, Social Compacts, and Assistance in Eighteenth-Century Ecuador* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007).

went about establishing his respective social compact and populist monopoly in a different way. The two men presented themselves as diametrically opposed, each of them espousing a vision of modernity that crashed into its opposite. They shared a corner of the Caribbean but the waters between them—and the colonial legacies and national aspirations separating them—reinforced their differences, especially how locals experienced their evolving political systems and the ways in which they managed imprisonment and clemency. Despite their conflictual relationship and mutual critiques of one another, Trujillo and Muñoz Marín became more similar than they were willing to admit.⁴⁵ By 1949 (several years after the dissemination of “Fulfilled Promise”), the PPD and mainstream Puerto Rican press portrayed the now Governor-elect in the same way Suro imagined Trujillo, as “undeniably omnipotent, leading the masses of hardworking, unimaginative, unquestioning [and racially ambiguous] people toward their inexorable progress.”⁴⁶

Both the PPD and the PD formed part of convict networks. In the Dominican Republic, multiple prisoners and their extended communities confirmed their dedication to the PD. Many pardon seekers discussed their relationship with the party in clemency letters. For example, in July 1938, a convict serving time in San Pedro de Macorís prison named José Pineda asked Trujillo for clemency and noted that he was a registered member of the PD. His name was in “Book M-1,” entry “No. 226.”⁴⁷ Around the same time, nine brothers from Neyba submitted a clemency letter to Trujillo on behalf of their brother Marcelino del Valle. They expressed their “pride” for simply “belonging to the PD.”⁴⁸ On August 7, 1948, an “unhappy peasant” convict serving time in Elías

⁴⁵ Jorge Rodríguez Beruff, “Una pugna caribeña: Muñoz Marín y Trujillo,” *Revista del Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña* 4, 7 (enero-junio 2003): 26-39.

⁴⁶ Suárez Findlay, *We Are Left Without a Father Here*, 56-57.

⁴⁷ José Pineda a Rafael Trujillo, 15 julio 1938, Caja IT: 2902016, SEJIP, SPN, FP, AGN.

⁴⁸ Hermanos del Valle a Rafael Trujillo, 9 julio 1938, Caja IT: 2902016, SEJIP, SPN, FP, AGN.

Piña prison named Heriberto Alcantara sent a clemency letter to Trujillo. He stressed his PD membership since the party's establishment.⁴⁹ A 29-year-old pharmacist named Juan A. Giralá reached out to Trujillo from Santiago prison on June 12, 1950. Serving a year for illegally selling narcotics, Giralá underscored that he joined the “powerful Dominican Party” at age 16.⁵⁰ In July 1952, Sara B. de Billini, the wife of land surveyor and accused communist Miguel Emilio Billini, insisted that her husband's “devotion” to the PD was “unbreakable.”⁵¹

In Puerto Rico, convicts similarly expressed their commitment to the PPD. The PPD itself even intervened on behalf of convicts to help them shed civic death. Sometimes clemency petitioners and letter writers used PPD letterhead, which included the party's emblem, a silhouette of a rural jíbaro wearing a straw hat with the words “bread, land [and] liberty.”⁵² The case of a white ex-convict from Lares in his late 40s named Luis Millán Domey is insightful in this vein. On January 31, 1946, José Berríos Berdecía of the PPD wrote to surrogate sun (Attorney General) E. Campos del Toro.⁵³ Berríos Berdecía explained that Millán Domey had recently initiated a legal request for the restitution of his civil and political rights, some 20 years after his original conviction for having sexually assaulted a minor. Neighbors claimed that the ex-convict's conduct was “excellent.” He was “appreciated” in Lares. These factors, in conjunction with Millán Domey's

⁴⁹ Heriberto Alcantara a Rafael Trujillo, 7 agosto 1948, Caja IT: 2903478, SEJIP, SPN, FP, AGN.

⁵⁰ Juan A. Giralá a Rafael Trujillo, 12 junio 1950, Caja IT: 2903478, SEJIP, SPN, FP, AGN.

⁵¹ Sara B. de Billini a Rafael Trujillo, 29 julio 1952, Caja IT: 2903479, SEJIP, SPN, FP, AGN.

⁵² As Suárez Findlay notes, Muñoz Marín took “working-class consciousness, habits, lifestyles, and values...and affirmed their sufficiency and value.” The PPD transformed the jíbaro into a pillar of Puerto Rican identity. The large pava hat worn by rural jíbaro men became the symbol of the PPD. Muñoz Marín and other party leaders often declared that the insignia of the party “is the face of a human being just like you.” Poor rural people's customs, worldviews, and experiences, which had long been trivialized by the powerful, became central to the language of politics in the mid-twentieth century. See *We Are Left Without a Father Here*, 36-37.

⁵³ Berríos Berdecía was a former senator, and by 1946, the secretary of the island House of Representatives. See Carlos Zapata Oliveras, “Luis Muñoz Marín, Antonio Fernós Isern y el asunto del status político en la reunión de Barranquitas del 3 de julio de 1946,” *Ceiba* 10, 1 (agosto 2010-mayo 2011): 68.

affiliation with the PPD, prompted Berríos Berdecía to request a speedy review of the case. He stressed that Millán Domey had the PPD and by extension, Muñoz Marín, in his corner.⁵⁴ The PPD's involvement in petitioning for convict clemency proved that the party's word was its bond, which helped build trust in the institution and expanded its membership.

Several other clemency letters showcase the active role of the PPD on behalf of convicts. PPD municipal treasurer in Vega Baja, Juan García Martínez, wrote a brief note on the party's letterhead in November 1943 about a trigueño ex-convict in his 40s named Antero Matos Ayala. He confirmed the convict's "good conduct" since his release. While the treasurer's note did not have the desired impact immediately, justice officials celebrated it a few years later, in late 1946 and early 1947, when Matos Ayala legally requested the restoration of his civil and political rights.⁵⁵ The emphasis on reacquiring rights suggests that the PPD valued convicts as a potential voting block and did everything in their power to make sure such men and women were eligible for the next election. On another occasion in the early-to-mid 1940s, the PPD municipal committee in Aguadilla contacted Attorney General Gutiérrez Franqui regarding a 62-year-old female inmate named Ramona Rodríguez Sosa, an unhealthy mulatta who was serving time for violating the "bolipool law." Her elderly and sick husband, in conjunction with Senator Luis Alfredo Colón, petitioned the government for the woman's pardon. The couple enjoyed a fine reputation in their community "in addition to being co-religionists of ours," meaning PPD supporters.⁵⁶

Politicians from across the political spectrum submitted letters of support on behalf of convicts, including socialist and PPD legislators. For example, socialist house representative Jorge

⁵⁴ Expediente del confinado Luis Millán Domey, Caja 107, SCE, FOG, AGPR.

⁵⁵ Expediente del confinado Antero Matos Ayala, Caja 65, SCE, FOG, AGPR.

⁵⁶ Expediente de la confinada Ramona Rodríguez Sosa, Caja 225, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

Gauthier corresponded with Governor Winship in March 1934 about Juan Concepción Guerrido, a 33-year-old black boxer from San Juan serving a 12-year sentence for second-degree murder. Gauthier noted that he “personally knew” the prisoner’s father, an elderly and sickly man unable to provide for himself. He was certain that Concepción Guerrido “would not pose a threat to society” when pardoned and released.⁵⁷ In May and July 1951, PPD senator Heraclio H. Rivera Colón contacted government officials about an 18-year-old convict from Corozal named Antonio Lafontaine Nieves, who was serving his sentence at the Zarzal agricultural colony in Río Grande. The senator emphasized that Lafontaine Nieves had “magnificent parents,” people “linked to me by old ties of friendship.”⁵⁸ In March 1952, PPD senator Luis A. Negrón López inquired about the status of a petition submitted by “numerous barrio friends” of a prisoner named Luis Casiano Cruz. About two weeks later government official José A. Benítez confirmed everything was in motion and that “All our effort to please you is small when faced with the greatness of your person.”⁵⁹ As these cases confirm, convict redemptive practices transcended mainstream science and religion. Family networks and those that breached high politics were just as important.

Vibrant Redemptive Networks

Executive clemency was an important pillar of redemptive practice in modern Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. It benefitted state governments as well as convicts and their communities. Echoing Barrous Álvarez’s experience, social circles especially shaped convicts’ options. Besides family, legal interlocutors, and politicians, Dominican and Puerto Rican inmates

⁵⁷ Expediente del confinado Juan Concepción Guerrido, Caja 34, SCE, FOG, AGPR.

⁵⁸ Expediente del confinado Antonio Lafontaine Nieves, Caja 208, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

⁵⁹ Expediente del confinado Luis Casiano Cruz, Caja 210, SJLBP, FDJ, AGPR.

counted on support from mutual aid societies, labor unions, communities of worship, employers, work peers, scientists, healthcare officials and movements, and municipal governments. Civic associations were also committed to securing convict freedom.

Secular fraternal orders, specifically, abounded across the Puerto Rico-Dominican Republic subregion. They regularly sought the freedom of their incarcerated brothers by using the symbolic politics of the sun to their advantage. In the Dominican Republic, Masonic and Odd Fellows lodges were among the most active organizations in this regard. On October 11, 1940, Lodge “Luz del Porvenir” No. 8681, based in Salcedo, contacted Trujillo about a young inmate named Guarionex Paralta, who was serving time in Moca prison. The Freemasons explained that military personnel had seized an old, dilapidated gun from him. Despite this, Paralta had “praiseworthy qualities.” He was a distinguished member of the lodge, shining “light” wherever he went. Lodge members reminded Trujillo about their (and by extension his) motto of “FRIENDSHIP, HONOR, AND TRUTH [original emphasis].” These “conditions link us,” especially when dealing with “a brother’s misfortune.” They requested that Trujillo intervene on October 24, when Dominicans celebrated the dictator’s “name day.” In exchange, lodge members offered “devotion,” prayer “tribute,” and further collaboration to “consolidate the security and wellbeing of the nation.”⁶⁰

Freemasons were as deeply invested in the Dominican nation as its great architect Trujillo. Notwithstanding Trujillo’s involvement with the Craft, he did not immediately act on Paralta’s petition. His inaction inspired another letter from “Luz del Porvenir” on December 18. This time, lodge members wrote to other officials in addition to Trujillo, including surrogate sun and puppet president Manuel de Js. Troncoso de la Concha. They appealed to Trujillo’s and Troncoso’s “noble

⁶⁰ Miembros de la Logia “Luz del Porvenir” No. 8681 a Rafael Trujillo, 11 octubre 1940, Caja IT: 2902018, SEJIP, SPN, FP, AGN.

hearts,” confiding in the leaders’ capacities as “interpreters of justice.” The time was ripe, as it was solstice season. Further, lodge members insisted that Peralta “is a model of laboriousness,” as well as “an enthusiastic and dedicated collaborator of our institution of FRIENDSHIP, LOVE, AND TRUTH.” Grand Master Nicolás Camilo R. stressed that their shared cosmology required that the dictator pardon Paralta. Not to mention, through clemency “you offer happiness to a good and honorable mother who anxiously anticipates her dear son’s freedom.”⁶¹

Another Masonic lodge reached out to Trujillo in similar terms. On October 10, 1941, “Esperanza” No. 8033, located in San Francisco de Macorís, sent a letter to “the Liberator” Trujillo in which they wished him “SALUD [original emphasis]” for each day he had left under the sun. They contacted the dictator to request the pardon of Francisco Antonio Guillén, who was serving a two-year sentence in the local prison and whose wife and children suffered in his absence. Lodge members asked that Guillén be granted clemency on Trujillo’s birthday. They expected the dictator’s benevolence because he was “a faithful interpreter of human emotions and intentions,” a central tenet of their shared cosmology. Most importantly, the Freemasons recalled Trujillo’s Masonic initiation: “You know the night of your initiation someone mysteriously present made you hear the following words: A disgraced friend is a true friend.” Grand Master Rafael Quero and Secretary Juan F. Santos encouraged Trujillo to “interpret these phrases” in “A. A. y V.” (*amistad, amor, y verdad*).⁶²

Another example of Freemason activism on behalf of their incarcerated brothers occurred in February 1952. Members of “Fraternity” No. 8398, Inc., of the United Order of American Odd Fellows in La Vega, reached out to Trujillo in the spirit of “love” and “truth.” They demanded

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² Miembros de la Logia “Esperanza” No. 8033 a Rafael Trujillo, 10 octubre 1941, Caja IT: 2902019, SEJIP, SPN, FP, AGN.

Trujillo's "magnanimity" in relation to Medardo Balcacer Díaz, who was serving time in La Vega prison for breaking tax laws. Lodge members identified Balcacer Díaz as a "humble and laborious father" who while "battling for daily bread" committed crimes "out of material necessity." They also called him a "supporter of your politics" and "one of the founders of the Great Dominican Party." His registration card confirmed this: entry "No. 27" in "Book B" of the La Vega Communal Council. Grand Master Nicanor Ramírez and Secretary Pedro Román Fleury trusted Trujillo would consider their "pious plea" before Independence Day (February 27).⁶³ As these Masonic cases corroborate, fraternity and fatherhood were central components of clemency and redemptive practice. They also shaped how affect was mobilized and used as social and political currency.

Puerto Rican convicts similarly enjoyed the support of civic associations. Compared to the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico's groups were less surreptitious than Dominican Freemasons. They enjoyed deeper ties to U.S.-based evangelical and military organizations like the Salvation Army and the American Legion, as well as the U.S. armed forces more broadly. Red Cross influence, for example, permeated island prisons. In the late 1920s, Red Cross representatives visited the island penitentiary and inquired about a young white ex-convict named Juan González Santiago. The investigating agent, Margarita Muñoz, and Executive Secretary of the San Juan chapter of the organization, Beatriz Lassalle, wanted to learn everything they could about their unemployed "client." Warden Saldaña revealed that the ex-prisoner had served a sentence for burglary in the first degree; that authorities had released him for good conduct; and that he suffered from a "chronic leg condition." After González Santiago's release, he did not contact justice authorities again until February 1944, when he sought the restitution of his rights.⁶⁴

⁶³ Miembros de Logia "Fraternidad" No. 8398 a Rafael Trujillo, 17 febrero 1952, Caja IT: 2903712, SEJIP, SPN, FP, AGN.

⁶⁴ Expediente del confinado Juan González Santiago, Caja 230, SEC, FDJ, AGPR.

Sometimes entire communities petitioned heads of state on behalf of convicts. It was not farfetched for ten or more people (even as many as a hundred) to demand someone's clemency. Puerto Rican psychiatrist José R. Maymí Nevares, for example, participated in such coalition-building. In June 1937, Maymí Nevares co-petitioned for the pardon of a mixed-race convict in his late 30s named Pablo Pacheco Cuevas. Forty other Health Department workers (female and male) formed part of Pacheco Cuevas' extended network, and signed the clemency letter attesting to his "laboriousness" and "work efficiency."⁶⁵ Maymí Nevares' scientific duties also determined whether convicts earned parole or clemency. His November 1942 neuropsychiatric exam of inmate Gervasio Troche Torres, for instance, all but assured the convict's January 1943 release.⁶⁶

In addition to providing healthcare to convicts, physicians contributed to the clemency process by writing favorable letters to government officials. In October 1940, surgeon and Lions Club member Armando Antommattei of Yauco endorsed the clemency petition of a white crane operator in his late 20s named José Santos Vélez.⁶⁷ The physician stressed that he knew the convict for several years, and that granted the opportunity, Santos Vélez "would respond carefully."⁶⁸ Indeed, physicians played leading roles in the clemency letters of convict family members. In July 1936, for example, Juana Benellán, the mother of a 50-year-old white convict named Agustín Bermonte Benellán, corresponded with Governor Winship. She underscored her son's "honor," "laboriousness," and societal "utility." Physicians López de la Rosa and López Antongiorgi could confirm his character and conduct, she added, as they "know him well."⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Expediente del confinado Pablo Pacheco Cuevas, Caja 51, SCE, FOG, AGPR.

⁶⁶ Expediente del confinado Gervasio Troche Torres, Caja 86, SCE, FOG, AGPR.

⁶⁷ The Lions Club is an international, secular, non-political service organization that emerged during World War I.

⁶⁸ Expediente del confinado José Santos Vélez, Caja 70, SCE, FOG, AGPR.

⁶⁹ Expediente del confinado Agustín Bermonte Benellán, Caja 32, SCE, FOG, AGPR.

Physicians joined other healthcare workers in seeking the clemency of convicts. They corroborated the “laboriousness” of inmates who worked at hospitals. In February 1934, Martín O. de la Rosa, the Director of the Quarantine Hospital in San Juan, certified that a trigueño convict in his mid-30s named Alberto Castro worked there in “cleaning and sanitation” efforts. He carried himself with “honor” and was “hard-working.”⁷⁰ Similarly, in October 1934, an administrator and the resident physician of the tuberculosis hospital in Río Piedras, Ramón Aneses and José R. Vivas, wrote to Governors Horton and Winship in support of a convict named Santiago Aponte Vargas, whom they had known for years. He worked “efficiently” and was a “man who at all times has proven to be a person with an impeccable reputation.”⁷¹ As these cases show, laboriousness and the language of honor pervaded scientific communities and impacted the clemency process.

Healthcare and social welfare workers mobilized on behalf of trusted convicts. On March 19, 1947, a group of six health professionals wrote to Governor Jesus T. Piñero in favor of restoring the civil and political rights of a mixed-race inmate in his 30s named Graciano Arroyo Rivera, who was serving 15 years for murder in the second degree. Arroyo Rivera’s redemptive network consisted of a disability hospital official, an agronomist engineer stationed at the insular orphanage, a superintendent of nurses, two graduate nurses, and the dietitian of a children’s tuberculosis hospital. They confirmed that since his release in 1941, Arroyo Rivera worked with them and they could vouch for his “exemplary conduct.” He “respected the LAW [original emphasis]” and was “a moral citizen useful to his family and the community at large.”⁷² Arroyo Rivera’s deep network of scientific support translated politically.

⁷⁰ Expediente del confinado Alberto Castro, Caja 35, SCE, FOG, AGPR.

⁷¹ Expediente del confinado Santiago Aponte Vargas, Caja 34, SCE, FOG, AGPR.

⁷² Expediente del confinado Graciano Arroyo Rivera, Caja 55, SCE, FOG, AGPR.

One of the reasons why Arroyo Rivera earned an early release from prison in August 1941 and subsequently regained his rights was because of the support he received from José Culpeper, a Health Department engineer. On October 8, 1940, Culpeper wrote to Governor William D. Leahy asking for Arroyo Rivera's parole. He pledged to provide Arroyo Rivera with a job and to serve as his mentor, and did so because of the convict's "affable character, laboriousness, morality, and honor." These "virtues, upon his return to the heart of society, will make him useful not only to his family and peers but also to the Patria." Thanks to his relationship with Culpeper, Arroyo Rivera became a concrete specialist for drainage projects with the island Health Department. Importantly, sanitation was a major component of the PPD's modern vision for Puerto Rico at the time. His support among healthcare workers ran so deep that even when he suffered spells of "psychomotor excitement" in late 1941 and early 1942, his family, peers, and employer mobilized on his behalf.⁷³ These bonds prevented the convict from serving his entire sentence between Oso Blanco and the neighboring insane asylum.

Besides medical and social health experts, healers and their communities chased executive clemency. This was especially true of the Dominican Republic, where the "scourge" of black "superstition" persisted well into the twentieth century. For example, on August 4, 1941 in Ciudad Trujillo, Manuela Silfa Vda. de González addressed a letter to surrogate sun Troncoso de la Concha on behalf of her incarcerated child, Rafael González Silfa, who was serving time for "exercising illegal medicine." Silfa approached him with an "aching heart," as a "defenseless" mother. She also noted that Rafael had lost the use of his legs due to a work accident, which made state intervention even more pressing. Complicating her request, however, was the fact that González

⁷³ Physician and psychiatrist Carlos L. Massanet and Superintendent of the Río Piedras Insane Asylum Dolores M. Piñero communicated to justice officials in April 1942 that Arroyo Rivera's condition was characterized by "fleeting ideas," "diminishing attention span," and "emotional elation." *Ibid.*

Silfa lived in Barahona in the southwestern part of the country, an area close to the Haitian border and known for its proximity to autonomous medico-religious and political movements. González Silfa's alias was "Manta Roja" (Red Blanket). Justice officials associated the alias with black belief systems and rituals, observing that colorful blankets and handkerchiefs materially facilitated heterodox forms of healing reinforced by "magic spells and charms." Authorities feared releasing González Silfa because they believed he would "encourage healing" in Barahona, "where it needs to be extirpated."⁷⁴ Anxieties along the Dominican-Haitian border helped fuel this kind of thinking. As this case confirms, denials of clemency on grounds that people engaged in "superstitious" practices—that they would go back into the population and "infect" others—belied a belief in the power of clemency as universal redemptive practice. In the Dominican Republic, political power and authority were racialized in such a way that made it difficult for certain blacks, namely those who raised the specter of Haiti, to secure state lenience.

The revolutionary political cultures and black radical traditions of the deep and recent past resurfaced as criminalized medico-religiosity in the mid-twentieth century, and played out in the clemency process. As Dominican authorities intensified their surveillance of illegal medicine, healers continued to pour into the country's prisons. On November 9, 1948 in La Romana, a domestic worker serving a one-year sentence for practicing illegal medicine named Enriqueta Mejía petitioned Trujillo for clemency. To prove her identity and Dominican citizenship, she provided her cédula number. This offset the potential allegation that she was Haitian, which might undermine her efforts. Mejía admitted to "treating physical ailments with spiritism and sorcery." Although she healed in heterodox ways, she was still human, and most importantly, a mother. Her children suffered in her absence: "Without someone to guide them along the path of good they will

⁷⁴ Manuela Silfa Vda. de González a Manuel de Js. Troncoso, 4 agosto, 1941, Caja IT: 2902020, SEJIP, SPN, FP, AGN.

become the dregs of society.” Initially, she failed to realize this. Thus, she “sank in prison without awareness of the weight of my actions.” Every day she was away from her family, her home came “undone.” Now, “fully repented,” she appealed to the “father of the needy and abandoned,” Trujillo, who would give her new civic life.⁷⁵

Healers and their extended networks petitioned for clemency well into the twilight of the Trujillo regime. In a case dating from February 1955, a woman from Ciudad Trujillo named Lola Díaz sought the pardon of her son, a physician named Américo Cuevas Díaz, who was serving a two-year sentence for “visiting a sorcerer.” In her clemency letter, Díaz explained that she tried to keep Américo on the straight and narrow. Her poor health, inability to work, and the fact that Américo grew up without a father made this difficult. The two years Américo had to serve seemed like “a thousand,” something a “divine” figure like Trujillo should understand (2 Peter 3:8). Díaz also called herself Trujillo’s “loyal” and “authentic” friend and prayed to the “Supreme Creator” for his health and happiness. In exchange, she wanted her son pardoned on February 27, which commemorated independence from Haiti, a day of “glory” and “comfort.”⁷⁶ Given the charges against Américo, it was not by chance that she invoked this specific day.

The way in which Díaz concluded her clemency letter illustrates the strategic ways in which ordinary Dominicans merged the worlds of religion and science. She prayed to “God Almighty” and the Virgin Mary “from the heart,” and expected these “psalms of appreciation” to generate results and refuge. But Díaz also cited Américo’s medical experience. He served as a physician at the Caja Dominicana de Seguro Social in the *común* of Jánico, “where he is loved by all” because of his “exemplary conduct” and “good treatment of the poor.” Therefore, Díaz urged

⁷⁵ Enriqueta Mejía a Rafael Trujillo, 9 noviembre 1948, Caja IT: 2903709, SEJIP, SPN, FP, AGN.

⁷⁶ Lola Díaz a Rafael Trujillo, 4 febrero 1955, Caja IT: 030201-10 (No. 15180), Indultos, SPN, FP, AGN.

Trujillo to investigate Américo's activities if he really believed that her son was capable of sorcery while working to advance the state's scientific interests.⁷⁷

Beyond sorcery, religious authorities from across the Christian spectrum also attempted to mediate the clemency process. In Puerto Rico, Catholic officials often participated. However, they failed to corner the market. Non-Catholic denominations were especially active in raising the clemency concerns of their incarcerated flock. For example, a Pentecostal preacher answered the call of a trigueño brother in Christ in his mid-30s named Emilio Arroyo Rivera, who was serving a five-year sentence for illegal gambling and a sex crime. This convict only served about two years of his sentence. He spent the remainder on parole for several reasons, including the efforts of his common-law wife and pastor.

Arroyo Rivera's common-law wife Emilia Cantre consistently made her physical presence known at La Fortaleza in Old San Juan. The "poor woman...has been coming to the Executive Mansion for some time" to plead for her husband's freedom, often "accompanied by her three children. They all appear undernourished and the woman herself as if she is suffering from some disease."⁷⁸ Cantre's frequent visits eventually paid off. By 1940, Arroyo Rivera was back on the streets. That July, he felt comfortable enough to approach the government to "humbly demand" the return of his rights, which were of "vital importance" for his "future." He was a "father of four children" and believed "a person without their rights amounts to nothing whatsoever."⁷⁹

The next month, Pentecostal preacher Ramón Fontaine Morales joined Arroyo Rivera's clemency crusade. He confirmed that the ex-convict had "professed faith" in the doctrine of the

⁷⁷*Ibid.*

⁷⁸ Expediente del confinado Emilio Arroyo Rivera, Caja 2, SCE, FOG, AGPR.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

Evangelical Pentecostal Church shortly after his original release from prison. The family attended a Pentecostal church on Comerío Street in Bayamón. And as far as the pastor could tell, Arroyo Rivera was an “exemplary Christian, today occupying an official post in our church.” The ex-convict lived “honestly” with his wife and children and worked as a bricklayer and carpenter, occupations in line with Christ himself. He even lent these skills to the construction of the local temple of the Pentecostal Church of God.⁸⁰

Arroyo Rivera again appealed to the Office of the Governor for the restoration of his rights in December 1940. This time he used the letterhead of the Iglesia de Dios Pentecostal, Inc., which referenced Philippians 4:19: “And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.” Arroyo Rivera identified himself as a “humble servant” of the government. He explained that he had done everything asked of him for the return of his rights, including submitting letters of good conduct and support from legal, justice, and religious officials. Although Arroyo Rivera was literally free, his rights were not automatic. The state had to (re)legitimize them. Still, he expected a favorable outcome given that he was a father and responsible for a family. The restoration of his rights, he argued, would allow him to “support them and himself.”⁸¹ Arroyo Rivera’s circumstances echoed the male-centered and evangelical populist discourse of the Puerto Rican state. On the other hand, in the Dominican Republic evangelical denominations had a harder time breaking the Catholic monopoly on convict souls. Prisoners aspiring to regain their freedom mainly counted on priests and bishops, and even then, Catholic officials were not as active.

Dominican convicts and their redemptive networks invoked religious figures and used sacred iconography when applying for clemency. References to biblical geography, personalities,

⁸⁰ *Ibid.* On the importance of spiritual advisors at the time, see Jorge Cintrón, “El pastor como consejero,” *Puerto Rico Evangélico* 36 (10 abril 1948): 8-9.

⁸¹ See fn. 78.

and verses emerge repeatedly in Dominican clemency letters. Convicts and their interlocutors brought up holy places like Galilee, Nazareth, and Samaria, and revered figures like Mary and baby and adult Jesus. In one case, a prisoner's mother dedicated Bible verses to Trujillo. They came from Matilda Nolzco Vda. de Romanence of San Francisco de Macorís. She contacted Trujillo in July 1950, asking for the transfer of her son Yonatan from Pedernales to Santiago prison. Romanence also requested funds to acquire a bus that would provide services for the local Free Evangelical Methodist Church. In exchange, she offered to "fast" in honor of Trujillo "so that God will crown you king of the Republic." Romanence attached a variation of Psalm 91:1-4 to her clemency letter. This Psalm is usually invoked in times of hardship, and is about God's protection:

He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, *He is* my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him I will trust. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, *and* from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth *shall be thy* shield and buckler.⁸²

Holy objects also landed in Trujillo's hands. On January 13, 1938, Elisa González of San Pedro de Macorís wrote to the dictator and cited his spirit of "maternal love" and how he paid attention to "motherly claims." She "wept" for her son, Chichi Bobadilla, who was serving a six-month sentence for producing clandestine rum. González asked Trujillo to pardon Bobadilla on January 21, the Day of Our Lady of Altagracia, a sacred entity she identified as the "light" of the "Dominican nation." She blessed a postcard of the Virgin and attached it to the clemency letter. González hoped Trujillo would accept the image, and claimed that she always prayed to the Virgin to protect him from malevolent forces. González also implored Our Lady of Altagracia to "illuminate" how Trujillo governed, and to vouch for the dictator's immortality before God.⁸³

⁸² Matilda Nolzco Vda. de Romanence a Rafael Trujillo, 17 junio 1950, Caja IT: 2901038, SEJIP, SPN, FP, AGN.

⁸³ Elisa González a Rafael Trujillo, 13 enero 1938, Caja IT: 2902016, SEJIP, SPN, FP, AGN.



Figure 5: Our Lady of Altagracia postcard, January 1938, AGN.

Figure 5 above is the postcard Díaz mailed to Trujillo. Its Greco-Roman elements are evident. Baby Jesus, Our Lady of Altagracia, and Joseph are positioned near arches and a pillar in a stone building. The three figures are visibly white; the latter two have halos. A five-pointed star in the sky shines light on the Virgin through an open window. Our Lady of Altagracia is wearing a jewel-encrusted crown topped with a cross. She is also sporting a multicolored cape covered in stars. Her fingertips barely touch as she prays over baby Jesus, who is resting on a blanket between two flowering plants. The inscription beneath the image reads: “Our Lady of Altagracia, pray for us!” This expression surfaces in many of the clemency letters authored by Dominican convicts and their wider networks.

Religiosity, however, was but one dimension—albeit quite influential—of how convicts and their communities experienced clemency in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. Indeed, prisoners built coalitions that spanned the immediate family and close kin, politicians, civic associations, healthcare providers, and many other groups. Convict redemptive networks mainly reflected and gravitated toward science and hegemonic religiosity because these were two of the primary languages of the state and convict reform. Although the Puerto Rican and Dominican states increasingly valued science, medicine, and technology, clemency letters indicate that associational life and religiosity played key roles in national politics, in the construction of norms of comportment, and in the lives of convicts and their families. Viewed in this light, executive clemency proved to be a dynamic forum and cultural contact zone that granted “apolitical” convicts a political voice. Yet, paradoxically, the legal system on which clemency rested also operated as an extended arm of (neo)coloniality.

Common and Political Prisoners

Compared to common prisoners, Puerto Rican and Dominican political prisoners appear to have received fewer opportunities for clemency. When it happened, it was usually because of flash events or crises like the polemics surrounding the closing of Nigua penitentiary in the mid-to-late 1930s, the aftermath of the failed Cayo Confites and Luperón invasions in the late 1940s, and the revolutionary upheaval in Puerto Rico in the early 1950s. On one level, ordinary convicts enjoyed greater access to clemency simply because so many more of them (thousands) languished behind bars compared to the total number of political prisoners (hundreds). But on another level, political prisoners tapped into emerging transnational networks more often, which legitimized their voices and dissent internationally. This was out of reach for most common convicts. Since political

prisoners were typically not prophets in their own lands, merely traveling abroad or the condition of exile itself made them “more” than common inmates.⁸⁴ Cosmopolitanism granted them a privileged respect and made their words and suffering “more important.”

Still, common and political convicts shared the universe of the penitentiary. Regardless of the global scale or reach of one’s political consciousness, inmates of all persuasions relied on the succor of communities of care for resources and other forms of mutual aid. Further, the experience of incarceration equalized prisoners and dissolved their differences, at least temporarily, no matter how they lived or who they were on the outside. On the other hand, the simultaneous cooperation and tensions between the two groups cannot be ignored. In the Dominican Republic, Jimenes Grullón, Cruz Díaz, and others considered such internal differentiation.

Jimenes Grullón, for instance, recalled that common inmates facilitated political prisoners’ contact with the world beyond the wall. They helped maintain lines of communication between political prisoners and their families by delivering messages, food, and medicine, and provided much needed social and intellectual interaction in the prison. Common convicts were equally vulnerable to poor living conditions, mistreatment at the hands of guards, disease, and death. However, Jimenes Grullón also observed that they enjoyed benefits political prisoners did not, such as preferential work assignments and statuses (e.g., the post of “trusted” convict), as well as more fluid access to recreation. Common convicts even “spied” on political prisoners for authorities. But all of this depended on place. Circumstances changed for each convict group depending on the nature of the prison they inhabited, and the relations between inmates there.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ In Luke 4:23-24, Jesus tells the people of Nazareth, where he grew up, “no prophet is accepted in his hometown.” They refused to believe in his teaching at the synagogue because they considered him one of themselves and thus without authority to preach to them. Mark 6:3-4 also considers this predicament: “A prophet is not without honor except in his own town, among his relatives and in his own home.”

⁸⁵ Jimenes Grullón, *Una gestapo en América*, 34, 61, 76, 85, 91, 101, 124, 133-34, 139, 152-53, 161, and 209-10.

According to Jimenes Grullón, common prisoners understood prison politics. Common convicts watched the plight of political prisoners and knew when the latter would be transported elsewhere. Whereas political prisoners “revered one another’s company,” however, common prisoners were more aloof and “isolated.” They “lacked family ties” and were “incapable of differentiating between vice and virtue.” But regardless of their differences, common and political prisoners of all backgrounds shared moments of solidarity. These moments generated “fraternal affect,” Jimenes Grullón asserted.⁸⁶ As social laboratories, then, Nigua and Ozama provided convicts with opportunities to build allegiances or accentuate difference, distance, and mistrust.

Like Jimenes Grullón, Cruz Díaz similarly distinguished between Dominican civil society and prison society. As late as midcentury, the Dominican prison system still had not embraced individual cells. Rather, communal cells predominated. While there was a distinction between misdemeanor, criminal, and correctional legalities, there were none between prisoners. Overcrowded communal prison cells, which forced people of different ideological, class, and criminal backgrounds to coexist, complicated everyday prison administration. Only when political prisoners started to fill prisons at alarming rates were the “defects” of Dominican prisons thrown into sharp relief.⁸⁷

Cruz Díaz underlined the fact that people had to suffer under certain conditions behind bars before the problem of imprisonment became visible to all Dominicans. The people in question were political prisoners, most of whom had enjoyed upper-class and professional lifestyles. It was not that political prisoners were more capable than common prisoners to demand better treatment behind bars. Rather, it was that they had access to the resources and networks necessary that could

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 124, 139, 152-55, 209, 241, 251, 288, 293, 297, 300, 314, and 319.

⁸⁷ Cruz Díaz, *Supersticiones criminológicas y médicas*, 315-16 and 318-19.

make a difference. The purpose of the prison was to “reform,” but incarceration created “martyrs” and “perverts” along arbitrary political and common lines.⁸⁸

These somewhat nuanced assessments of convict relations contrast with the dichotomous vision of Trujillo supporter Lic. Félix W. Bernardino, who claimed that common and political prisoners did not get along. Nothing was more “dangerous” to political prisoners than their common counterparts. Common convicts wanted “nothing to do” with them. They did not tolerate the shenanigans of “disruptive” and “resistant” political prisoners. Trujillo was their “idol” because he “modernized” and “humanized” punishment (e.g., by eliminating corporal and diet-related penalties, improving access to healthcare and clemency, etc.). Trujillo was “their religion and their God.” This “is why civil prisoners hate anyone who plots against Trujillo and the Government.”⁸⁹ The dictator protected and did good by them, whereas diminished politicians like Jimenes Grullón simply wanted to (re)socialize them on their own terms.

Dominican convicts and their family members often identified Trujillo as a man-god in their clemency letters. In July 1941, an inmate serving time in Ciudad Trujillo prison named Augusto Gustavo likened Trujillo to the “Almighty.”⁹⁰ In February 1949, a convict serving time in San Luis prison in Santiago named Ramón Cepín suggested that “silver” and “diamond” jewels were the only tools that could record Trujillo’s grandeur.⁹¹ A few years later, in August 1952, a

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 317-18 and 320-24; and Alejandro Paniagua, “Un ejemplo del deficiente sistema carcelario del país,” *Listín Diario*, 1 agosto 1964. After Trujillo’s death, the voices of Dominican political prisoners continued to be privileged. Some incarcerated physicians, however—for example Dr. José Dionisio Bautista—drew attention to the joint plight of political and common prisoners. Yet, forcing both groups to share the same space generated conflicts. Common convicts had politics, just not the kind that animated political prisoners.

⁸⁹ Lic. Félix W. Bernardino, “La penitenciaría nacional de ‘Boca Nigua’ vista por dentro,” 2 junio 1937, legajo 5, Caja IT: 8/005483, FEN, AGN.

⁹⁰ Augusto Gustavo a Antonio Alfau, 30 julio 1941, Caja IT: 2902020, SEJIP, SPN, FP, AGN.

⁹¹ Ramón Cepín a Rafael Trujillo, 7 febrero 1949, Caja IT: 2903710, SEJIP, SPN, FP, AGN.

prisoner serving time in San Francisco de Macorís prison named Joaquín Guzmán Tejada approached Trujillo for clemency as if he were “knocking on heaven’s door.”⁹² “God and Trujillo” was the motto of many convicts and their extended networks. Some even dubbed Trujillo “Creator of the renewed patria.” The power of the cult of Trujillo among common prisoners depended on the fact that the regime took seriously popular idioms, practices, and sensibilities.

On the surface, conspiracies and invasions deepened the fault lines between common and political prisoners. The attempted Cayo Confites and Luperón invasions (1947 and 1949) out of Cuba, for example, alerted the Trujillo government.⁹³ In late February 1949, Dominican authorities compiled a list of 85 political prisoners pending release. They investigated the convicts, who came from across the country, and entrusted mothers, wives, and sisters with their care. These prisoners were not just defined by their politics and the resourceful women who assisted them, however. For instance, several physicians were among those listed as family or kin of political inmates. One convict, Oscar González Pichardo, planned to work for the periodical *Voz Dominicana* once free. Another, Juan María Ramírez, planned to stay with his mother-in-law, who lived behind “the Virgin’s well” in Higüey—a site of reverence, offerings, and miracles.⁹⁴ For political and common prisoners alike, clemency bridged multiple interpersonal, intellectual, and affective communities.

Meanwhile, in Puerto Rico radical nationalist political prisoners similarly relied on family and kin networks to get by and ahead. Several formerly incarcerated nationalists have chronicled the ways in which this support was made manifest. Heriberto Marín Torres, who participated in the revolution of fall 1950 and served time in island prisons, noted that his mother sent him

⁹² Joaquín Guzmán Tejada a Rafael Trujillo, 6 agosto 1952, Caja IT: 2903713, SEJIP, SPN, FP, AGN.

⁹³ Charles D. Ameringer, *The Caribbean Legion: Patriots, Politicians, Soldiers of Fortune, 1946-1950* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 1996), ch. 2; and Humberto Vázquez García, *La expedición de Cayo Confites* (Santiago de Cuba: Editorial Oriente, 2012).

⁹⁴ “Lista de presos políticos,” febrero 1949, Caja IT: 2903710, SEJIP, SPN, FP, AGN.

handkerchiefs, socks, and cigarettes, although sometimes he never received the items.⁹⁵ Christian teacher and social worker Isabel Rosado Morales, jailed in La Princesa penitentiary in January 1951 for her political ideology and affiliation with the nationalist movement, recorded that she and other inmates anticipated packages of fruit, *papaya* candies, and sunflower cake, as well as humorous letters from family members.⁹⁶ Indeed, nationalists formed tightknit communities both behind and beyond bars.

In prison, nationalists occupied the same cellblocks, shared resources, and endured scientific experimentation and mourned their dead together.⁹⁷ On occasion, they even celebrated collective clemency. Outside of prison, they grew up, lived, and protested together; fed, hid, and financially or logistically assisted one another; and attacked the agents and symbols of U.S. colonial empire. Most importantly, when the PPD implemented the undemocratic Gag Law, most nationalists experienced the same state terror. In part, this was because couples, entire families, and communities openly identified as nationalists. For example, the Díaz family of barrio Santana in Arecibo fit this profile. Male and female members of the family landed in different island prisons, filling several cellblocks at a time. The family matriarch, Doña Leonides, was jailed for having cooked for nationalists the night before the start of the insurrection of 1950 and for her audacious response to authorities' inquiries about the whereabouts of her children: "They are where they should be, carrying out the revolution!"⁹⁸ Behind bars, Doña Leonides improvised a

⁹⁵ Marín Torres, *Eran ellos*, 16.

⁹⁶ Isabel Rosado Morales, *Mis testimonios* (Río Piedras: Biblioteca Albizu Campos, 2007), 30 and 34-35.

⁹⁷ On some of these themes, see Telemundo (Sylvia Gómez), "Asesinatos eran la comidilla del día," 4 abril 2015, <http://www.telemundopr.com/videos/noticias/Relatos-de-oso-blanco.html>.

⁹⁸ Marín Torres, *Eran ellos*, 13, 43, 45-47, 49, 53-57, 63, 65-73, 77, 79, 82, 97, 101, and 125. For other brief accounts of nationalist families, community-building and activism, and consciousness-making, see Lamadrid Navarro, *Los indómitos* 33, 50, 58, 61, 71-72, and 111.

stove to prepare coffee, hot chocolate, and soup for herself and other incarcerated female activists.⁹⁹

Puerto Rican nationalists also highlighted the similarities and differences between common and political prisoners. Marín Torres noted that both groups lamented the wormy pig feet, raw rice, and small portions of bread they received. They endured the same poor living conditions, such as minimal access to potable water, and lacked necessities like blankets, towels, and toilet paper. Everyday forms of solidarity included common convicts bringing nationalists their food, sharing institutional gossip with them, and relaying messages from nationalist leaders. Common prisoners even compiled the poems given to them by Francisco Matos Paoli so that they could be sent to his wife. One time, prison authorities moved a young common prisoner sexually threatened by a seasoned convict to the nationalist cellblock, where Marín Torres and others “cultivated his consciousness.” Conversely, nationalists also noticed that common prisoners enjoyed steady visitation rights compared to theirs. Yet, what they lost in terms of visitation, they gained in other ways. Many nationalists became “trusted” convicts charged with supervising the penitentiary hospital ward, pharmacy, archive, and radio and television studios, among other spaces. They could also access medical staff much faster. But overall, “common prisoners were always friendly and cooperated with political prisoners.”¹⁰⁰

Other communities interacted with and supported political prisoners. Guards and medical staff, for example, delivered family messages and letters. Psychiatrist Rafael Troyano de Ríos, who was torn about his role in the scientific inquisition of island nationalists, often facilitated such transfers of information. Religious groups tried to ease the burdens of political prisoners. During

⁹⁹ Rosado Morales, *Mis testimonies*, 35-36.

¹⁰⁰ Marín Torres, *Eran ellos*, 17, 19, 21, 24-25, 27, 33, 37, 48-49, 51, and 60.

the winter holiday season, for instance, Catholic nuns provided nationalists with gifts and sang Christmas carols. The *Hermanitas de la Caridad* brought them news of the outside world and from elsewhere in the penitentiary. Marín Torres recalled that he even used the nuns as cover to see Albizu Campos in the prison infirmary.¹⁰¹ Rosado Morales noted the visits of an American priest who offered female convicts opportunities for confessions.¹⁰² When the island government initiated a communist witch-hunt, nationalists formed partnerships with these individuals behind bars. Marín Torres developed a rapport with a communist social worker named Deusdedit Marrero, for example, a young convict who purportedly went insane after months of physical and emotional abuse in prison. Marrero and other nationalists often debated ideology and revolutionary tactics, which threw into sharp relief the differences between political prisoners themselves.¹⁰³

While both common and political prisoners depended on redemptive networks to survive incarceration, the latter group enjoyed more transnational support when it came to clemency. Several nationalists took seriously the duty of transitioning their formerly jailed comrades to life beyond the wall. This entailed fundraising, feeding them, and finding them jobs and places to live. It also meant finding forums and spaces for their colleagues to deliver the nationalist message, such as Catholic and Protestant churches or Masonic and Odd Fellows lodges.¹⁰⁴ When common prisoners' networks exhibited transnational aspects, this was due to justice officials in Puerto Rico reaching out to their counterparts in the U.S., or prisoners and their families based in cities like New York or Chicago pressuring the island government to address their grievances.

¹⁰¹ Marín Torres, *Eran ellos*, 25, 32, and 60-62.

¹⁰² Rosado Morales, *Mis testimonios*, 35.

¹⁰³ Marín Torres, *Eran ellos*, 106; Denis, *War against All Puerto Ricans*, 7. On communists in female island prisons, see Rosado Morales, *Mis testimonios*, 49. On worker-nationalist-communist cross-fertilization in Puerto Rican society at large, consult Lamadrid Navarro, *Los indómitos*, 30-32.

¹⁰⁴ Lamadrid Navarro, *Los indómitos*, 20-21.

Albizu Campos' clemency network stretched across the Americas. During his second prison stint, this time on the island (the first had transpired in Georgia) and often characterized by hunger strikes, the Masonic Council of Mexico based in Veracruz wrote to Governor Muñoz Marín on Christmas Eve 1956. President of the Council, Enrique Rivera Bertrand, told the Governor that his group knew Albizu Campos and other nationalists were in prison for "externalizing their liberal ideas and desiring to see their patria, Puerto Rico, free." He appealed to Muñoz Marín's "basic humanity," "piety," and "respect" for oppositional ideas when requesting clemency for the nationalist leader. "Good engenders good," Bertrand noted, especially during the holiday season. The families of political prisoners, he added, would surely feel empty and abandoned if forced to celebrate holidays representing "noble action" but denied in the flesh. In exchange, Muñoz Marín and his family would be "blessed by greater [immaterial] powers."¹⁰⁵

The Secretariado Latinoamericano de la Internacional Socialista based in Montevideo, Uruguay also contacted Muñoz Marín about Albizu Campos' incarceration. Delegations from Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay participated in drafting a clemency letter for Albizu Campos. The secretary of the group, Humberto Maiztegui, cited the nationalist leader's "delicate health" and noted that "humanitarianism" should trump politics given the nature of the case.¹⁰⁶ Albizu Campos' prompt release pleased Maiztegui and his colleagues. This illustrated "political

¹⁰⁵ Enrique Rivera Bertrand a Luis Muñoz Marín, 24 diciembre 1956, Caja 116, SCE, FOG, AGPR. On Albizu Campos' incarceration in Georgia, see Carmelo Rosario Natal, *Albizu Campos, preso en Atlanta: historia del reo #51298-A, correspondencia* (San Juan: Producciones Históricas, 2001).

¹⁰⁶ Members of the Secretariado met for their second conference in Buenos Aires, Argentina a few days before Christmas 1956. The conference focused on the challenges facing Socialists in the Southern Cone, but also created a space for attendees to hear from activists from other countries, including Paraguay, Venezuela, and Peru. Overall, conference participants called for a "continental movement to confront dictatorships" in Colombia, Cuba, Guatemala, Paraguay, Venezuela, the Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua. They also repudiated what they called "the regressive function of Latin American dictatorships," meaning the feudal, oligarchic, and foreign capital and Catholic orientation of these regimes. See Humberto Maiztegui a Luis Muñoz Marín, 4 enero 1957, Caja 116, SCE, FOG, AGPR.

tolerance” and Puerto Rico’s adherence to “real” democracy, something to be “applauded.”¹⁰⁷ The pardon revived and elevated island democracy, and earned the recognition of Latin American democracies.¹⁰⁸

As the Secretariado’s language indicates, Socialists linked political violence, arbitrary governance, and judicial disparity in Puerto Rico to dictatorships elsewhere, including the Dominican Republic. Albizu Campos’ clemency amounted to a symbolic victory for the Secretariado and other cosmopolitan entities, but their unwillingness to strike a confrontational tone says more about their own utopianism, the duplicity of the democracy-dictatorship dyad, and the continuation of the political status quo on a hemispheric scale than it does about political imprisonment in general. This explains the Secretariado’s excitement to announce that Puerto Rico’s government met democratic standards by releasing Albizu Campos, even though this came on the heels of decades of colonialism, repression, and the fact that one pardon did not solve the problem of subjective incarceration on the island. The ambivalence of the Puerto Rican state was clear for all to see as it teetered between colonial and “true” democracy. Even with a dictatorship across the Mona Passage, Puerto Rican democracy was not self-evident.

Nationalist political prisoners did not always look to other nationalists or humanitarian activists for clemency support. For example, a member of the U.S. armed forces stationed at Fort Churchill in Manitoba, Canada named Justo Guzmán Mendoza contacted Muñoz Marín in October 1956 to request the pardon of his father. Island authorities had jailed Justo Sr. during the insurrection of October 1950. “The fact that my father is a nationalist,” the soldier proclaimed, “is not reason enough for him to be punished.” That “is why in Puerto Rico freedom of speech exists!”

¹⁰⁷ Humberto Maiztegui a Luis Muñoz Marín, 17 enero 1957, Caja 116, SCE, FOG, AGPR.

¹⁰⁸ Humberto Maiztegui al Presidente del Partido Popular Democrático, 17 enero 1957, SCE, FOG, AGPR.

“Being a nationalist,” Guzmán Mendoza declared, “is not a crime.”¹⁰⁹ He explained that his “saint father” did not participate in the insurgency, and that he had a stellar reputation in Arecibo and would never bring harm his community. The soldier knew this because he had been the personal recipient of “thousands of [his father’s] sermons” over the years. Moreover, no one from Arecibo dared to openly slander or accuse Justo Sr. A consequence of his incarceration was that Guzmán Mendoza’s mother and siblings now suffered unnecessary (im)material burdens: “...they wake up without the *calor* and *consejos* of their father.”¹¹⁰ Using the symbolic language and moral codes of the state, Guzmán Mendoza demanded action.

It is unclear whether Muñoz Marín approved Guzmán Mendoza’s petition. What is clear is that around midcentury the prison itself was increasingly elastic and porous. Such stories about the faults in the stars of common and political prisoners and their redemptive networks illustrate the parallels of clemency processes on both sides of the Mona Passage, and the extent to which notions of family and community shaped them. They also showcase that ordinary inmates could be just as political as those jailed for their politics. Although clearly hierarchical and different, the experiences of common and political convicts were much more aligned than we might otherwise assume.

Sub-Regionalizing an Integrated Caribbean

In mid-twentieth-century Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, clemency processes often spilled across national borders. In these two societies, the political bookends of the clemency spectrum were democracy and dictatorship. Convicts like Barrous Álvarez straddled these two

¹⁰⁹ Justo Guzmán Mendoza a Luis Muñoz Marín, 29 octubre 1956, Caja 116, SCE, FOG, AGPR.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

systems. Their clemency experiences evince a portable praxis for making claims and harnessing power. This circulating praxis was also mutable and embedded in penitentiaries. More than a series of walls cut off from society, prisons were sites of dynamic sociocultural production and exchange.

During the interwar period, Puerto Rican and Dominican prisons hosted several convicts whose roots or lives extended to communities across the Mona Passage. Dominicans served time in Puerto Rican prisons and Puerto Ricans served time in Dominican prisons. In such cases, convicts deferred to the forces and politics of the hosting country in their attempts to earn executive clemency. They also depended on the symbols and traditions of the host society, some of which intersected with their own. Migrant redemptive networks proved to be just as impactful as common, national or global ones, and flowed between these levels of activism.

Clemency petitions and letters came from largely deferent sources, people who presented their cases eloquently and within the parameters of the law. These people often tried to cajole the state, justice officials, and other interested parties by telling them what they wanted to hear. The process of clemency depended on the motives and actions of intersecting communities—executive and judicial officials, prisoners and their kin, and so on. The cultural work performed by these people (in this case writing letters and filing petitions), as well as their politics and worldviews, were fundamental to redemptive practice. Clemency amounted to a secular ritual under the organized purview of national cults dedicated to the likes of Trujillo and Muñoz Marín. But the subtext of clemency is also one of people trying to get by, better, and ahead considering material circumstances, political systems and national traditions, and local tyrannies.

These elements emerge in the cases of Dominicans imprisoned in Puerto Rico and vice versa. For example, the story of a 32-year-old mulatto convict from Mayagüez named Isabelo Figueroa Pizarro is instructive in this regard. Figueroa Pizarro (Figure 6 below), an educated

Spiritist with a “round” nose, “sunken cheeks,” and no previous criminal history, was serving a ten-year sentence in Oso Blanco for second-degree murder. On August 4, 1936, his father Juan Pizarro Rodón wrote a letter from Ciudad Trujillo to Warden Saldaña, who throughout his lengthy tenure at the penitentiary served as a surrogate sun for several island governors. Though he did not know Saldaña personally, the convict’s father nonetheless “appreciated” him and expected that he would take Isabelo under his wing. He wanted the warden to consider Isabelo “as if he were a son of yours.”¹¹¹



Figure 6: Mug shot of Isabelo Figueroa Pizarro, June 1934, AGPR.

Pizarro Rodón’s interpersonal network ran deep in Puerto Rico, and he conveyed this to Saldaña. He was the “master of works” on several construction projects in Ciudad Trujillo, including the port of Santo Domingo and George Washington Avenue. Puerto Rican architect and

¹¹¹ Expediente del confinado Isabelo Figueroa Pizarro, Caja 243, SEC, FDJ, AGPR.

engineer Félix Benítez Rexach, a friend of Trujillo’s “who I believe is a good friend of yours” and “wrote to you about my son,” had contracted Pizarro Rodón.¹¹² Pizarro Rodón also mentioned that he would be visiting Puerto Rico (and Oso Blanco) with Benítez Rexach. He expressed gratitude to Saldaña for the supervisory post his son held “in charge of other prisoners,” and anticipated Isabelo would keep the job, “not because he is my son” but because “he is respectful and can play any role you give him.”¹¹³

Saldaña reassured Pizarro Rodón that Isabelo was doing fine. This pleased the convict’s father, who contacted Saldaña again later in August. He revealed to the warden that he would be visiting in September and wanted to see Isabelo. To celebrate their new friendship, Pizarro Rodón asked Saldaña if he liked roosters so that he could take him “some good ones as a gift” and “you can keep them in my name.” This would help the warden remember their recently forged and honorable bond. Pizarro Rodón used symbolic social capital (i.e., being gentlemanly, roosters, and the concept of honor) to establish and maintain a relationship with a surrogate father of the Puerto Rican colonial state.¹¹⁴ He deployed roosters, specifically, not to play out human conflict, but to mitigate any potential differences or discord between them and to navigate Isabelo’s suffering.¹¹⁵ Later, assistant warden Félix R. Rivera identified Isabelo as a “first-class” prisoner, which echoes the differentiated imprisonment so conspicuous in Barrous Álvarez’s case.¹¹⁶ In the end, while it

¹¹² *Ibid.* Not only was Benítez Rexach a friend of Trujillo’s, he was also a passionate patriot and friend of Albizu Campos. This is suggestive of the fluidity between democracy and dictatorship, for at the time the Puerto Rican colonial state cast Albizu Campos as a radical terrorist and fascist. Under the democratic rule of Muñoz Marín, Albizu Campos was persecuted, akin to the approach the Trujillo regime used to eradicate its own problem of political dissent.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ On the importance of roosters to Caribbean cultures and societies, see Michele Wucker, *Why the Cocks Fight: Dominicans, Haitians, and the Struggle for Hispaniola* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1999).

¹¹⁶ See fn. 111.

took some time, Isabelo's father managed to build and exploit a redemptive network that might free him one day.

Puerto Ricans in the Dominican Republic also experienced the highs and lows of the clemency process. An insightful case in this vein occurred in August 1952. Between August 7th and 9th, several constituencies in Cayey, Puerto Rico mobilized on behalf of a young convict named Jaime Wallace Moux. They sent a series of telegrams to Trujillo. Radio Corporation of America Communications, Inc., based in Ciudad Trujillo, serviced the data transfer. In all the messages, petitioners invoked Trujillo's titles and called for the freedom of Moux, a "son of this city [Cayey]." Local government officials, parent-teacher council and association members, Lions Club affiliates, and the Ladies of the Chapter "Faith" No. 8 of the Order of the Eastern Star organized on behalf of a "distraught" Ana María Aponte de Moux, mother of the prisoner. They collectively asked for Trujillo's "mercy."¹¹⁷ The diversity and institutional legitimacy of the communities backing Wallace Moux helped convince Dominican Secretary of State Telésforo R. Calderón to reach out to the Attorney General and recommend that he greenlight clemency.

Several other cases of cross-border incarceration confirm the migratory fluidity of crime and punishment in the modern Caribbean. For example, in spring 1952, Dominican immigration authorities reported capturing a young "stowaway" named Jorge García Tejada, who had violated a law barring "clandestine departures to foreign locales." García Tejada had been illegally sailing on schooners like "La Americana" and disembarking between the ports of San Juan and Ciudad Trujillo since 1945, when his documents expired. He avoided detection for about seven years. In his absence, García Tejada violated other laws, including failing to register for military service and not renewing his identification card. Jorge's wife, Sra. Cruz Betancourt, wrote to Trujillo in

¹¹⁷ "Solicitud de indulto (Jaime Wallace Moux)," 9 agosto 1952, Caja IT: 2903713, SEJIP, SPN, FP, AGN.

March 1952 from Carolina, Puerto Rico, inquiring about his legal status. Trujillo surrogate Attorney General Porfirio Basora R. responded, insisting an investigation would be carried out to ascertain the facts of the case. The next month, Dominican officials reported that “perverse parties” led Cruz Betancourt to believe that Jorge had been imprisoned and “murdered.” Knowing this was not true, she wanted to reunite with her husband and live on Dominican soil.¹¹⁸

It is unclear who coaxed Cruz Betancourt to believe that the Dominican prison system killed her husband. Perhaps the increasingly militant exile community in Puerto Rico fed her the narrative, or perhaps she read the damning accounts of Jimenes Grullón and Girona Pérez, who chronicled the violence and death permeating prisons like Nigua and Ozama. Since the late 1930s, Dominicans had been nurturing an exile community in Puerto Rico. They founded political parties and arts academies, published short works, and performed poetry in theaters in Río Piedras, Mayagüez, and other municipalities.¹¹⁹ The Dominican Revolutionary Party was one of the first anti-Trujillo movements to be established in exile (Cuba). In 1952, its members commemorated Independence Day at the Ateneo Puertorriqueño in San Juan. By 1956, Dominicans founded the Vanguardia Revolucionaria Dominicana and the Frente Unido Dominicano, organizations that operated extensively in Puerto Rico.¹²⁰

Dominicans and Puerto Ricans were present in one another’s cultures in fascinating and telling ways. Cross-germination seeped into daily life in both societies. A non-penal case from late August 1940 underscores these points. An eighth-grade student from Guayama, Puerto Rico named Agustín Portugués contacted Trujillo and requested scholarly texts written by Dominicans.

¹¹⁸ “Exposición de Sra. Cruz-Betancourt, desde Carolina,” 12 abril 1952, Caja IT: 2903478, SEJIP, SPN, FP, AGN.

¹¹⁹ Herrera Mora, *Mujeres dominicanas*, chs. 3-4, 222-23, 227, and 229-49.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, ch. 3, 225-26, 229-33, 243, and 249.

With colonial democracy in the air and Muñoz Marín just starting to bring the PPD full circle, Portugués called on Trujillo as a fellow “lover of knowledge and wisdom.” He knew of the dictator’s charity everywhere, from San Juan to Mississippi. Portugués desired “heavenly blessings” for Trujillo, echoing the sensibilities of many convicts and families who petitioned the dictator for clemency.¹²¹ Despite their diverging histories and political systems, Portugués and Trujillo were just celestial bodies floating in space. In their orbiting one another, they forgot about their nations and shared the sun, at least for a moment. However, although the stars aligned and inclined, they did not always oblige. What Puerto Ricans and Dominicans shared could also set them apart.

Conclusion

This chapter shows how clemency and convict networks can be a useful lens for understanding the twentieth-century Caribbean as an interconnected subregion. The Dominican and Puerto Rican cases were similar on the issues of populist leadership, the purposes and operations of clemency, and their larger political meaning. On both sides of the Mona Passage, convict and state discourses borrowed from notions of race and gender to mobilize redemptive networks. Representations like “Fulfilled Promise” and “Protector and Protected” formed part of a range of cultural expressions at the heart of ethno-racial political parties like the PPD and PD. Gendered idioms and expectations especially permeated the clemency process. Clemency offered emasculated convicts and their wider networks fathers to which they could turn or run since they were incapable of filling these shoes themselves. Indeed, convicts who happened to be fathers could partially, if not entirely, redeem themselves through clemency.

¹²¹ “Solicitud de obras de autores nacionales (Agustín Portugués),” 30 agosto 1940, Caja 2900642, SEJIP, SPN, FP, AGN.

It was a father's responsibility to put his children on the right path by signposting the direction they should take. Because so many fathers failed to meet this obligation, individuals, governments, and societies at large romanticized fatherhood. This was especially true at the highest levels of national power, through the figureheads and surrogates of trusted and productive political parties like the PPD and PD. Notionally white national fathers and "suns" like Trujillo and Muñoz Marín built their political systems and constituencies in the image of the Greco-Roman pater family. Convicts and their extended communities had much to gain or lose by reproducing these tropes. Despite the patriarchy and paternalism at the core of Puerto Rican and Dominican populisms in the mid-twentieth century, however, resourceful mothers were just as important to state enterprise and the popular imagination.

The redemptive networks highlighted in this chapter were largely extensions of family. Yet, as historian James Sweet has argued for another time and place, existing categories of kin are insufficient for understanding configurations of family in most settings. Historically, people defying social or civic death, such as convicts, have drawn inspiration from overlapping and interconnected communities. While blood ties were important to the formulation and sustenance of these communities, so were adoptive, corporate, spiritual, and intellectual alliances. Alliance-building and the resulting exchanges and productivity paved the way for groups to expand their worldviews and construct new notions of family, recognition, and belonging, often because devastating and trying times demanded such innovation.¹²² On the other hand, as historian James Green has noted, the family could be complicit in hurting, as much as helping, their loved ones.

¹²² James Sweet, "Defying Social Death: The Multiple Configurations of African Slave Family in the Atlantic World," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 70, 2 (April 2013): 251-72.

Families sometimes worked in conjunction with the medico-legal establishment to limit the freedom of their incarcerated relatives.¹²³

But reducing the historical experiences of convict networks to “traditional,” “heteronormative,” or “nuclear” notions of family obscures how much these mattered to convict communities. Therefore, scholars need to pay more attention to why people developed a taste for customary understandings of family in the first place. Clemency itself opened a space for the performance and consolidation of normative models. Puerto Ricans and Dominicans were skillful clemency petitioners not because they were consumed by identity politics, but because they needed to meet certain expectations to get what they wanted and so desperately needed. Herein lies what attracted people to “awakening” in a healthy domestic and national arrangement, to having mothers, fathers, and pater-families. These set a balanced and cumulative example, for everything, including survival, depended on it. But clemency supplicants did not always win their cases. In the Dominican Republic, for instance, racial fault lines linked to Haiti proved to be challenging and sometimes insurmountable for certain convicts and their families to overcome.

Beyond male or racial dominance, one of the goals of the pater-family in twentieth-century Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic was to give citizens a chance to procure food, clothing, shelter and justice, and in the case of convicts, to secure freedom and regain lost rights. As it turns out, these items, let alone wages and wellbeing, were not low-hanging fruit. For prisoners and their interlocutors to attain these things, they had to master redemptive practices like clemency petitioning and letter writing. Their efforts lent themselves to everyday forms of state formation, which linked the popular and the state, and increased the visibility of the clemency process, a

¹²³ James Green, *Beyond Carnival: Male Homosexuality in Twentieth-Century Brazil* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

political spectacle that persists today.¹²⁴ Yet, at the same time, clemency applicants sharpened their political voices. “Apolitical” convicts and their networks either became political for the first time or deepened their political consciousness by making legal claims and engaging the state. This resulted in a form of shared authority, a cornerstone of populist thought and praxis.

Clemency was central to redemptive practice. Letter writing and petitioning for executive pardon counted among the tools prisoners and their extended networks used to get by, better, and ahead. The empowering potential of clemency was not automatic, however. Unlike Barrous Álvarez, most people really had to work for it. Within the constellation of redemptive practices, some stars shined brighter than others. While empirical and belief-based medicine, social science, the humanities, and religious orthodoxies were powerful options for prisoners, activist redemptive networks linked these different options. Clemency-minded redemptive networks showcase the extent to which all prisoners were politically motivated. Still, at least one glaring difference prevailed. Anti-colonial and anti-authoritarian political prisoners were more confrontational than their common counterparts, who similarly talked back to power but within the rules established by the state. Paradoxically, for both groups clemency validated that they were freer behind bars than one might think. For it was in the prison where they were politically lost and found. Indeed, clemency demonstrates that it is best to understand the twentieth-century relationship between the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico along a spectrum, in which the comparison is not clearly feasible on one end and exceedingly comparable on the other.

¹²⁴ Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniel Nugent, eds., *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico* (Durham: Duke, 1994).

CONCLUSION

The Living Dead and Ambiguous Legacies

“*Muerto en vida, entre serpentinas, encerra’o y frustrado, así es mi vida*” (“Dead in life, between serpentines, enclosed and frustrated, such is my life”). These are the words of Frank “El Negro,” a Ñeta imprisoned in Oso Blanco on the eve of the institution’s closure in October 2007. He expressed the words in hip-hop form to filmmakers Ramiro Millán and Christian Suau, who finished a documentary about Oso Blanco that year. The documentary chronicles Oso Blanco’s history through the lens of two of the penitentiary’s most infamous “gangs” (the Ñetas and *Insectos*, or 27’s), and the relationship between a seasoned convict (Ángel Luis Feliciano Hernández, also known as Jíbaro) and a prison guard (César Flores).¹ El Negro’s bars would most certainly resonate with many inmates on the island and beyond today. But they also encapsulate the experience of incarceration in the deep and recent past, especially the notion of living death.

To be “dead in life” is a potent metaphor of incarceration, one that predates contemporary apocalyptic zombie television, El Negro’s performance, and even the official opening of Oso Blanco in 1933. In mid-twentieth-century Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, the notion of “living dead” circulated as a societal trope that made convict experiences legible. It was the problem that rehabilitative corrections, which emerged as penal welfarism in the 1930s around the globe, intended to resolve.² Cosmopolitan intellectuals, Puerto Rican journalists, Dominican judges, convicts, and others embraced and reconfigured the notion of living dead in the middle decades of the twentieth century. In the Spanish-speaking Atlantic, much of this activity revolved

¹ Millán and Suau, *Oso Blanco*.

² The mid-twentieth century witnessed the rise of rehabilitative corrections, or penal welfarism, which understood the penitentiary as a stable social enterprise, as both a cause and effect of power, behavior, emotions, and knowledge. See Eghigian, *The Corrigible and the Incurable*, 3, 9, and 208, fn. 12; and Garland, *The Culture of Control*, 35-41.

around the understanding of transnational writer Eduardo Zamacois' *Los vivos muertos* (1929), a novel about convict life, prison conditions, and the politicization of incarceration in Spain.³ Within the Caribbean and broader Americas, René Belbenoit's *Dry Guillotine* (1938), a memoir about the "living dead" and the lethal conditions they endured on the Devil's Island penal colony in French Guiana, similarly affected correctional and popular imaginaries.⁴

The genealogy of living death goes further back in time, however. One can trace it to the advent of the political economy of colonial labor, namely the institutions of racial slavery and coercive post-emancipation labor regimes. Historians have pointed to the slave ship and the social relations of the enslaved as repositories of living and social death.⁵ But in early modern slave societies, living death not only meant incorporation and marginalization on the margins of society, it also stood in stark contrast to the immaterial activities of the ancestors, or the dead living. While some scholars continue to cast living death as a basis through which vulnerable bodies can be taken and reshaped without explanation or justification, more recently historians have increasingly turned to underscoring the productivity of death and how it has generated social, cultural, and intellectual life.⁶

Limiting living death to early modern Westward expansion and its concomitant new world order is still not the whole story. One can see the concept's significance in biblical times, for instance. In the Bible, living death refers to the spiritually dead on the one hand, and the

³ Zamacois, *Los vivos muertos*. On living death and prison reform in Mediterranean/Latin Europe, see Susan B. Carrafiello, *The Tombs of the Living: Prisons and Prison Reform in Liberal Italy* (New York: P. Lang, 1998).

⁴ Belbenoit, *Dry Guillotine*.

⁵ Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*; Rediker, *The Slave Ship*; and Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery*, chs. 5 and 7.

⁶ Giorgio Agambem, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998); Brown, *The Reaper's Garden*; Gómez, *The Experiential Caribbean*; Reis, *Death is a Festival*; Fabian, *The Skull Collectors*; Carlos Navarrete, *San Pascualito Rey y el culto a la muerte en Chiapas* (México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1982).

resurrection of Jesus Christ on the other.⁷ The Bible complicates the distinction between the dead and the living. These are not simply two classes grounded in biological processes that exclude each other. Rather, the dead are the living, and they live while they die, especially if they believe that Christ is their Lord and Savior. What is more, after they physically depart, they live on forever somewhere in God's universe. The conviction that death is not a permanent state or condition, but a fleeting act or something that can be overcome, is an operative belief in Christian revelation. One can transcend death, sin and separation from God, and find redemption.

As modern science, medicine, and technology increasingly won converts in the twentieth century, however, individuals and societies in the global north started turning away from, or at the very least altering, traditional religiosities (as if these were always static in the first place). The living who lost their moral compasses amid all the change, or who believed they were refining morality by relativizing it, became the dead. In mid-twentieth-century Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, the spiritually dead often landed in prison, but so did the virtuous, the self-righteous, and others who only appeared to be living sanctified lives. But making a mistake or wallowing in filth did not preclude one's redemption. Penitentiaries afforded convicts with opportunities for secular-spiritual penitence; in fact, often obliged it. Nonetheless, scores of Puerto Rican and Dominican inmates defied social and civic death by digging up their mental and spiritual graves and by tapping into a range of redemptive practices designed to help them get by, better, and ahead. These practices brought different epistemological and ontological worlds together, yet also reflected the distance between them.

While in the middle decades of the twentieth century mortality rates on both sides of the Mona Passage started to decrease considering advances in tropical medicine, urban infrastructure,

⁷ For example, see Ephesians 2:1-10, Jeremiah 21:8, John 5:25, Luke 9:60, 15:11-32 and 24:5-6, Matthew 8:22, Revelation 3:1-3, and Romans 7:1-25 and 8:1-15. This, of course, is not an exhaustive list.

and public health measures, state governments increasingly invested in intellectually “awakening” notionally deplorable and living dead communities, including the urban poor, rural peasants, and political dissidents. These groups comprised the bulk of prison populations in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic at the time. Many Puerto Rican and Dominican convicts embraced the necromantic imperatives and wellbeing standards of populist governments regardless of political system. They used the ideas and tools provided by the state to pursue their “rehabilitation,” positioning themselves to exercise meaningful citizenship when they exited prison. By disciplining themselves to conform, inmates contested the exclusionary statist conditioning that formed part and parcel of modern penitentiary projects. In the process, they exposed the fragility of freedom and blurred the boundary between citizen and prisoner.

Citizenships on the edge on both sides of the Mona Passage developed within U.S. colonial purview. They were largely nationally defined, however.⁸ The experiences of the living dead, their families, and the intellectual communities with which they interacted in and beyond Oso Blanco, Nigua, and other prisons exhibit the importance of penitentiary science and spirituality in the construction of populist citizenships. They also illustrate how prisoners navigated the resulting race, class, and gender deficits and fault lines. Understanding the role of the penitentiary in the making of order, inequalities, and political voice sheds light on the material and symbolic power of several binaries, such as life and death, science and religion, democracy and dictatorship, and of course, (un)freedom.

Examining incarceration in this way enriches current scholarship and pushes it in a different direction. Critical studies about the prison gained momentum in the late twentieth century. Following Foucault’s work on the biopolitics of prisons, social histories of incarceration

⁸ Del Moral, *Negotiating Empire*.

burgeoned. The historiography on crime and punishment in Latin America and the Caribbean has grown, but it remains trapped by many of the same analytical frames.⁹ Therefore, this dissertation has emphasized another approach to intersections, one that underscores the relation between medicine(s), death and awakening, and redemption. Experiential *outcomes*, in addition to those rooted in expression, mattered to the many convicts who entered and exited Oso Blanco, Nigua, and other prisons in the mid-twentieth century. Another glaring breach in current scholarship is the lack of studies about modern Caribbean penitentiaries. Little has been written about Oso Blanco, Nigua, and even Cuba's Presidio Modelo. Further, most existing scholarship does not view the penitentiary as a window into the overlapping intellectual histories of convicts.

An exception would be Aguirre's study about the criminals of Lima and their worlds. However, even Aguirre's analysis is locked into a familiar trilogy: urbanization and the making of a criminal class, the birth of the penitentiary and a carceral archipelago, and the customary orders of prisons (and within them, the divide between common and political prisoners).¹⁰ He engages the scientific, humanistic, religious, and other experiential routines of convicts, but these do not form the core of his work. In this dissertation, I have tried to center convicts and their gaze beyond the wall to lay bare the significance of not just familiar trilogies, which are important, but also to project the penitentiary as a nexus of medicine(s), death and awakening, and redemption, all of which had implications for statecraft, politics, and individual or group agency. Convicts acted in their own interests, borrowed from elite discourses and practices, and articulated their own coherent political ideas, even when they were not political prisoners.¹¹

⁹ For instance, see Huertas, Lucero, and Swedberg, eds., *Voices of Crime*; and Salvatore and Aguirre, eds., *The Birth of the Penitentiary*.

¹⁰ Aguirre, *The Criminals of Lima and Their Worlds*.

¹¹ Feierman, *Peasant Intellectuals: Anthropology and History in Tanzania* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990).

In another vein, few studies have challenged the Foucauldian assumption that surveillance institutions simply (re)produce isolated and excluded subjects, or the more contemporary but equally ludicrous position that prisons singlehandedly breath political life into common convicts. As this dissertation shows, Oso Blanco and Nigua formed part of interactive complexes. Puerto Rican convicts often moved between the institutions of the Río Piedras scientific city as patients and laborers. More broadly, penitentiaries positioned convicts to (re)discover belonging and contribute to community (re)formation. Executive clemency, for instance, reinforced the links between penal populations and their extended networks, justice officials, and national communities. However, convicts did not always need penitentiaries to make them politically conscious. Common inmates often landed in prison already politicized, whether through exposure to domestic, family, neighborhood, municipal, workplace, or religious politics, among other possibilities. Because political prisoners were invested in the remaking of national politics did not make them any more intellectual than common inmates. Rather, they were arguably privileged, for they had access to the resources and networks that permitted them to frame debates about nations under reformation as they saw fit.

There are also colonial-imperial currents to consider. Contemporary racial issues on the U.S. mainland, as they relate to policing and criminal justice, shed light on but also conceal the experiential variety of incarceration in other corners of the U.S. and world. Rather than view these issues as symptomatic of U.S. exceptionalism or reducing them to a political show, this dissertation illustrates how they percolated in “America’s lake.” Therefore, in addition to emphasizing the Spanish-speaking Caribbean as a “cultural zone,” I also contemplate the subregion as an outpost of U.S. colonial empire and an endpost of blackness. This was visible in terms of who was most susceptible to incarceration. Despite the “impenetrable” national difference purportedly

characteristic of twentieth-century Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, in both societies young to middle-aged, poor to working-class, and drifting, misbelieving people of color from rural areas and urban shanties accounted for disproportionate numbers of convicts.

While the Dominican and Puerto Rican states by and large articulated their own approaches to rehabilitative corrections, they built on models introduced by U.S. authorities; in the case of the Dominican Republic during an occupation and in the case of Puerto Rico under the guise of citizenship. On both sides of the Mona Passage, these models were passed off by creole officials as less than colonial because they preserved stability and put locals in control. Still, empire did not monopolize volition or agency. Convicts and their interlocutors fashioned their own lives as seekers of knowledge, whether such knowledge was found within the empire or not.

In mid-twentieth-century Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, race, class, gender, sexual, generational, and intellectual positioning compromised the precarious hold of convicts and their communities on the legal and symbolic rights of citizenship. Prisoners and their kin struggled to gain or maintain their status as full citizens from the margins of society. However, by knowing the ledge convicts and their interlocutors innovated and pioneered. They mobilized to secure and exercise an elusive and increasingly illusory freedom. The energy convicts and their interlocutors invested in their circumstances and awakening transcended the prison and could impact their communities of origin. This prompted them to forge alliances, provide aid, and tap the experiential mediums and constitutional provisions that could alleviate or annul unfreedom. The living dead and their communities were inspired by a constellation of redemptive practices, an intricate web of social interactions and cultural activities used behind and beyond bars to ascribe meaning, heal, and empower. Medical and social science, orthodox and popular religiosities, the cultivation of prisoner consciousness via humanistic self-help, and executive clemency enthused inmates to get

by, better, and ahead. I have traced the scientific and religious routines of convicts and the communities of care with which they interfaced because these eminently shaped penitentiary initiatives and experiences in the modern Spanish-speaking Caribbean.

The Puerto Rican and Dominican states had occasion to victimize the living dead. Importantly, convicts also had occasion to victimize one another behind bars, as well as people with similar socioeconomic backgrounds before even landing in prison. However, this did not mean that convicts and their communities were any less forgiving, forgetful, or tenacious in trying to bend the law in their favor. That these scenarios played out in both democracies and dictatorships under U.S. auspices suggests that the relationship between incarceration, citizenship, and constitutional government not only surfaced similarly in contradictory settings, but that it was disrupted, maintained, and perverted by actors all along the ideological and experiential spectrum. Democracy and dictatorship and a range of other ostensibly incommensurable concepts and systems were in fact more mutually malleable than we might otherwise assume.

These intersections in the history of Puerto Rican and Dominican incarceration display diversity but are also indicative of an integrated Caribbean world. This dissertation compares the two societies to show that social, cultural, and political dynamism transcended colonial and national boundaries, and that redemptive practices lent themselves to the production of an integrated cosmopolitan subregion despite the contentious historical memories tearing at its seams. Such an approach reveals how penitentiaries were structured by complex transnational circuitry and asymmetrical power relations, and how they functioned as sites where cutting-edge sciences encountered traditional religiosities to generate fruitful and conflictual interactions. Still, there were important differences between the two societies I consider here. Most notably, the nature of political systems shaped understandings of deviance and the treatment of convicts. This was

evident in the extent to which state governments tried to monopolize penitentiary science and spirituality. The Puerto Rican and Dominican states had “modernizing” agendas and used planning, medicine, technology, and religion to materialize their redemptive projects. Who freely accessed science and religion, however, looked different in each country.

Whereas Oso Blanco enjoyed robust medical and social science, humanities, and religiosity, Nigua typically did not. In terms of producing modern sanitary citizens, penitentiary science and spirituality was much more powerful east of the Mona Passage than west of it. In Puerto Rico, a revamped, populist university and government assigned a redemptive, awakening function to socio-scientific understandings of island society, one that was becoming less rural and increasingly industrial. In Oso Blanco, prisoner redemption revolved around diagnosing and curing their physical and mental ailments, sharpening their intellects, and cultivating a culture of social, spiritual, and political uplift that helped them secure belonging and wellbeing. The populist state adapted to real and potential threats by domesticating rather than smothering them. One visible exception to this rule was the way in which Puerto Rico’s populist state dealt with nationalists, which resembled the political violence in other corners of the Caribbean and Latin America. When dealing with healers, religious peasants and other rural groups, however, the populist state calculated how it could coexist with popular power. For all intents and purposes, they seem to have figured it out.¹²

West of the Mona Passage, Trujillo’s government strove to keep Dominican convicts stuck in the past and tied to the land, regimented labor, and the populism of the dictator. The modernizing, “liberating” potential of penitentiary science and spirituality contradicted these goals. The Trujillo regime’s political rigidity straitjacketed the impact medical and social science,

¹² Román, *Governing Spirits*.

the humanities, and religiosity could have on convicts; instead, the dictator and his surrogates restricted their circulation behind bars and in society at large. They controlled citizen-making by channeling redemptive knowledge and practices into the political economy of the state in ways that often violated the sanctity and dignity of convict bodies and souls. Even so, the Dominican state enjoyed a base of support that included many prisoners and their families. Moreover, in urban centers, poor hillside communities, and in the countryside, Dominican authorities policed Afro-diasporic consciousness in confrontational ways. The Trujillo government did not try to domesticate black cultural forms. Rather, they strived to eliminate them. Historical legacies shaping the popular national imagination, especially the country's tense relationship with Haiti, contributed to affirming this stance in the modern period. On the surface, this distinguished the Dominican and Puerto Rican states and their respective approaches to crime, punishment, and rehabilitation.

Race and competing populisms do not entirely explain this history, however. The broader experiences of political and common prisoners were just as impactful. In Puerto Rico, political prisoners resisted a colonial criminal justice system. In the Dominican Republic, they rejected an authoritarian one. Meanwhile, on both sides of the Mona Passage, common prisoners tended to adhere to the legal power of the state. Puerto Rican and Dominican political convicts sought legitimacy outside of their respective criminal justice systems and nation-states. Common inmates across these societies often worked within the law. In both cases, redemptive practices provided each group with tools through which to sculpt or refine their political voice. Given all of this, it is noteworthy that contemporary politicians, observers, and activists—such as García Padilla, Millán, Suau, and many others—have defaced these imperfect legacies. Instead, they identify violence and exclusion as the true legacies of penitentiaries like Oso Blanco and Nigua. And while on a certain

level they are right, they sacrifice comprehensive understandings of these institutions to advance dramatic ones. In so doing, they privilege certain narratives over others, thereby reproducing the very hierarchies and inequalities they claim to challenge.

The tragedy of Oso Blanco or Nigua was not violence or exclusion per se, but rather the obsession of everyone involved—from state governments to prison administrators and professionals to political and common convicts—to set the terms of how incarceration should and would be experienced and remembered. In the *Oso Blanco* documentary, this point is thrown into sharp relief by how Millán and Suau imagine the history of the penitentiary to secure Jíbaro’s freedom. As this dissertation insists, however, Oso Blanco’s history did not begin and end with Jíbaro, or the Ñetas for that matter. Neither did the penitentiary’s legacies of violence and exclusion. In fact, one could argue that discursive violence and exclusion framed the original City of Science, designed as it was by U.S. colonial officials and their creole allies. Or one could point to the revolutionary and violent acts of midcentury, which resonated around the island, including Oso Blanco, and deepened the exclusion of nationalists and others from political life.

While Millán and Suau hint at these precedents and the importance of science and religion—for example, they mention that Ñeta leader Carlos Torres Iriarte called himself Ayatollah Khomeini, Pedro Albizu Campos, and Che Guevara; document a few of Jíbaro’s religious anecdotes; and refer to the transfer of Oso Blanco to Puerto Rico’s Science, Technology, and Research Trust—they double down on sensationalizing the overall history of the prison. In the process, they rightfully speak to but also embellish the penitentiary’s era of violence.¹³ Their

¹³ Millán and Suau, *Oso Blanco*. Another example of this is the “educational” use to which government officials subjected Oso Blanco after it was closed. As prison guard César Flores recalls, the short-lived penitentiary museum received students from around the island so they could learn about the historical importance of Oso Blanco. This education, however, revolved around crime prevention, not a comprehensive understanding of the institution. Consult Teresa Canino Rivera, “Las huellas de haber pasado 19 años en Oso Blanco,” *Primera Hora*, 1 junio 2014, <http://www.primerahora.com/noticias/puerto-rico/nota/lashuellasdehaberpasado19anosenosoblanco-1012804/>.

account parallels but also contrasts with a 1988 documentary about life in Puerto Rican prisons called *Casa sin ventanas*. In half the time, this latter film underscores the themes of prison administration, poor living conditions, abuse and marginalization, family relations and visits, rehabilitation, and perhaps most importantly, the hell that is feeling unheard. *Casa sin ventanas* also demonstrates the remarkable capacity and creativity of convicts who are both associated and dissociated with groups that dominate the prison. This is evidenced by the way they articulate themselves, critically analyze their situations, decorate their cells, and continually search for meaning despite being incarcerated.¹⁴

On another level, the architects, preservationists, and others who briefly mobilized (mainly through the press and social media) to challenge Oso Blanco's pending demolition in early 2014, did so conscious of *their* role in narrating the penitentiary's significance.¹⁵ The Puerto Rico Science, Technology, and Research Trust was equally oblivious to the history of the scores of people who had entered and exited the facility for different reasons in the previous eighty years, particularly the first few generations of convicts and how they engaged medicine, science, and technology. Nonetheless, Trust officials defended their assessment that Oso Blanco, as a structure, was unsafe, a threat to public safety, and therefore irreparable and irredeemable.¹⁶ Ironically, the

¹⁴ *Casa sin ventanas*, directed by Luis Collazo, DVD, 28 mins., Grupo de Desarrollo Fílmico-Cultural, Inc./Zaga Films, Inc., 1988.

¹⁵ See Miguel Rodríguez Casellas, "La impotencia del Oso," 9 mayo 2014, <http://www.80grados.net/la-impotencia-del-oso/>. Also see "Arquitectos se expresan contra la demolición de Oso Blanco," *El Nuevo Día*, 16 mayo 2014, <http://www.elnuevodia.com/noticias/locales/nota/arquitectosseexpresancontralademoliciondeosoblanco-1774365/>; "9 razones por las que deben detener la demolición de Oso Blanco," *El Nuevo Día*, 20 mayo 2014, <http://www.elnuevodia.com/noticias/locales/nota/9razonesporlasquedebendetenerdemoliciondeosoblanco-1776797/>; Canino Rivera, "Oso Blanco: la demolición de una era," *Primera Hora*, 22 mayo 2014, <http://www.primerahora.com/noticias/puerto-rico/nota/osoblancolademoliciondeunaera-1011031/>; "Sistema TV Informa: Demolición de Oso Blanco 1/2," 22 mayo 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eRthmA1-woE>; and Rodríguez Casellas, "Del Oso Blanco a la 'maraña,'" 13 junio 2014, <http://www.80grados.net/el-traspie-del-aracnido-en-torno-a-la-marana-de-jorge-rigau/>.

¹⁶ For instance, see "Sistema TV Informa: Demolición de Oso Blanco 2/2," 26 mayo 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2SfHi5Z_3rA.

discourses the Trust used to explain why Oso Blanco merited demolition mirrored the same discourses on which states and their surrogates have historically depended to condemn criminals, prisoners, and their communities.

Structural issues aside, the Trust also voiced that the grounds of the former penitentiary had tremendous economic potential. The prime real estate Oso Blanco occupied was simply too good to pass up, especially for a territory struggling with massive debt. And while U.S. federal government officials assured me and others (who wrote them letters inquiring about where they stood on the matter) that they were powerless to protect a site included in the federal register of historic places, the Barack H. Obama administration blessed the demolition and García Padilla's vision.¹⁷ Having a mixed-race president purportedly committed to activist causes, who for much of his presidency waxed poetic about and apologized for U.S. colonialism around the world, did not change Puerto Rico's colonial predicament. Nor did it facilitate any extended dialogue about the scientific, medical, humanistic, religious, and legal legacies of Oso Blanco.

These legacies are especially buried in the experiences of Oso Blanco's first and second generations. As this dissertation demonstrates, convicts and their interlocutors frequently expressed their consciousness of technologies of power and social exclusions. They articulated their own ethical and political categories in the face of changing state expectations that valued their bodies and souls most when they lent themselves to the projects and productivity of the state. To different degrees on both sides of the Mona Passage, governments and their surrogates attempted to come to terms with the reality that convict lives, like all lives, were biologically embodied but not merely biomedical. Prisoners also required broader social webs and cultural

¹⁷ For example, see "Gobierno federal se une a la demolición del 'Oso Blanco,'" *Noticel*, 31 mayo 2014, <http://www.noticel.com/noticia/161202/gobierno-federal-se-une-a-la-demolicion-del-oso-blanco.html>.

experiences to address their intangible wellbeing. For the most part, the Puerto Rican and Dominican states responded in kind.

Despite these links, another chronology prevailed in the Dominican Republic. After the Trujillo government closed the Nigua penitentiary in the late 1930s, narratives of control and political violence were transferred to the Nigua mental hospital. This was because the penitentiary-turned-asylum continued to house political dissidents.¹⁸ In 1959, Dominican authorities moved the mental hospital closer to Santo Domingo. Twenty-five years later, in 1984, the former penitentiary underwent another facelift and became the Escuela Padre Juan Zegrí, named after a Spanish priest who created the congregation *Hermanas Mercedarias de la Caridad*. These nuns manage the restored school grounds today.¹⁹

Although Nigua penitentiary closed in 1938, the Trujillo government did not establish another national penitentiary until 1952. La Victoria purportedly heralded a new era in Dominican corrections, but for the next generation of Dominican political prisoners, the “model prison” turned out to be a reincarnation of Nigua.²⁰ Audiovisual sources and national memory institutions, such as the Museo Memorial de la Resistencia Dominicana, reiterate the view of Nigua, La Victoria, and other prisons as violent and non-reformatory.²¹ Oral histories also project corrections under Trujillo in a similar light. This is suggestive of the difficulties associated with researching

¹⁸ Romero, *Historia de la psiquiatría*, 53-55.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 163-70.

²⁰ For example, see Ramón Alberto Ferreras, *Políticos presos* (Santo Domingo: Tall. Gráf. de Impresos Brenty, 1969); Nelson de León Mateo, *Días de libertad: memorias de un ex-presos político dominicano* (Santo Domingo: Impresión Tec. Enmanuel Morillo, 2009); Tallaj, *Un médico en la 40*; Bonnelly Valverde, *Mi paso por la 40*; and José D. Bautista Javier, *Celda once* (Santo Domingo: Editora Búho, 2007).

²¹ The “La 40” exhibit at the Museum, for example, underscores the torture experienced by political prisoners in one of the country’s infamous prisons. Also, see “Persecución y exilio durante el régimen de Trujillo,” DVD, 17 mins., Área de materiales audiovisuales, AGN, 2011.

incarceration in countries with unresolved histories of dictatorship. The narratives tend to cut one way. However, some Dominican oral histories also point to the empathy, support, and respect common prisoners showed to the families of political prisoners, as happened to one woman when, as a girl, she and her mother were taken into custody for the “seditious” acts her politically active brothers.²² Like the Puerto Rican case, there is more to the history of incarceration in the Dominican Republic than narratives of vulgar violence. But this nuance will remain lost so long as societies and governments fail to reconcile the recent past and present.

With Trujillo’s death in 1961, and the subsequent victory of Juan Bosch in the election of 1962, there was optimism in Dominican political and medico-legal circles that the time had finally come to modernize punishment in the country. However, reforms implemented by Bosch alienated the local oligarchy and the U.S.-American governments of John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson. In 1963, a coup led by Colonel Elías Wessin removed Bosch from power, replacing him with a military junta. When growing dissatisfaction generated another military rebellion in 1965, the U.S. invaded the country to restore order. Elections were held in 1966, which Balaguer won. During his seven months in power, however, Bosch developed a blueprint for reforming Dominican corrections.

Under Bosch’s brief leadership, the Dominican government looked to the global south for examples of depoliticized penitentiary science. After receiving grants for “penitentiary studies” from the Organization of American States, Bosch sent a team of lawyers to Chile. The Chilean Sub-Secretary of Justice, Jaime del Valle Allende, hosted the delegation and helped them develop a plan of action. Ex-General Director of Prisons in Chile, Eduardo Torres Armstrong, even forwarded Bosch his 1962 pamphlet, *Problemas sociales*, to get him started. Upon the legal team’s

²² Author interview with Giannella Perdomo, May 2014.

return to the Dominican Republic, officials intended to implement a health and social science pilot program at La Victoria.²³ But the mentioned political instability and U.S. intervention stopped this progress, effectively postponing its enactment until the turn of the twenty-first century. Attorney General Víctor Manuel Céspedes Martínez finally established the contours of the Escuela Nacional Penitenciaria, an education-oriented approach to corrections that emphasizes criminology and professional staff, in 2003. Before this corrections revival, however, the Dominican Republic fell into old penal habits. Dominicans appear to have endured another generation of politicized corrections under Balaguer before finally turning the page.

The Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico ended up in a similar place despite having taken different roads to get there. Medicine, religion, and state enforcement of legal codes went hand in hand with strictures of (neo)colonial governance on both sides of the Mona Passage. There was no clear shift from religiously-inspired (“premodern”) to scientifically-inspired (“modern”) punishment. Instead, the two ways of knowing came together in new cultures of rehabilitative corrections. But whereas the state especially looked to science and titular medicine, convicts embraced religion, the broader humanities, and heterodox healing for a variety of reasons. Political systems shaped correctional possibilities, though not exclusively. The Puerto Rican and Dominican states imagined ideal corrections systems, yet their visions often unraveled due to the contingencies of high politics and convict motivations. In both societies, redemptive practices within and beyond state purview permeated how prisoners responded to unequal structures of power. For their part, both democracy and dictatorship responded unevenly to the claims-making and misery of prisoners and their communities. To a degree, however, there was balance through opposite forces working in harmony. In this context, living death could be overcome, or it could

²³ “Informe al Presidente de la República sobre estudios realizados en el Ministerio de Justicia de Chile en ciencia penitenciaria y planes a desarrollar por los suscritos en el país,” 10 junio 1963, Caja 1635, SPN, FP, AGN.

be reinforced. Penitentiary science and spirituality could redeem convict bodies and souls, but also accentuate what made them wretched and different in the first place.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Archives

Puerto Rico

Architecture and Construction Archive, University of Puerto Rico-Río Piedras
Bennett, Parsons & Frost

Archivo General de Puerto Rico (San Juan)

Colección Robert Junghanns

Serie Impresos y Asuntos Generales

Fondo Departamento de Justicia

Oficina y Reportes del Procurador General de Porto/Puerto Rico

Serie Expedientes de Confinados

Serie Junta de Libertad Bajo Palabra

Serie Nacionalistas

Subfondo Escuela Industrial para Mujeres

Fondo Oficina del Gobernador

Serie Clemencia Ejecutiva

Biblioteca Asenjo, University of Puerto Rico-Río Piedras, Medical Sciences Campus

Biblioteca de la Casa de las Almas (Santurce)

Biblioteca Digital Puertorriqueña, University of Puerto Rico-Río Piedras

Biblioteca Lázaro, University of Puerto Rico-Río Piedras

Fundación Luis Muñoz Marín (San Juan)

Seminario Evangélico de Puerto Rico (Río Piedras)

Actas de las asambleas anuales de la Asociación de Iglesias Bautistas de Puerto Rico

Hermanos Unidos: Informes del Superintendente a las conferencias anuales

Spain

Archivo Histórico Nacional de España (Madrid/online)

The Dominican Republic

Archivo General de la Nación (Santo Domingo)

Agricultura

Biblioteca y Hemeroteca

Biblioteca Digital Dominicana

Colección Alejandro Paulino

Correspondencias Particulares

División de Fuentes Audiovisuales y Orales

Fondo Ejército Nacional

Fondo Gobierno Militar Norteamericano
 Fondo Presidencia
 Serie Palacio Nacional
 Juzgados
 Memorias de la Procuraduría General de la República
 Poder Legislativo

Newspapers and Periodicals

Australia

Australasian Record

Puerto Rico

Boletín de la Asociación Médica de Puerto Rico
El Despertar
El Imparcial
El Mundo
El Nuevo Día
La Correspondencia
La Democracia
Porto Rico Health Review
Porto Rico Progress
Primera Hora
Puerto Rico Ilustrado
Puerto Rico Evangélico
Revista de la Asociación de Maestros de Puerto Rico
Revista de Servicio Social
The Puerto Rico Journal of Public Health and Tropical Medicine

Spain

El País
Ideal Granada

The Dominican Republic

Diario Libre
Dominican Republic: A Bulletin of the Dominican Embassy
El Cable
El Caribe
El Liberal
Hoy
La Nación
La Opinión
La Prensa
La Tribuna
Listín Diario
Revista de Policía

Revista Policial

The United States

Atlantic Union Gleaner

Northern Union Outlook

San Antonio Light

The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald

The Church Officers' Gazette

The Inter-American Division Messenger

The New York Times

The New Yorker

The Voice of Healing

Printed and Published Sources

Acevedo, Héctor Luis, ed. *Dr. Antonio Fernós Isern: de médico a constituyente*. San Juan: Universidad Interamericana de Puerto Rico, CIEDP, 2014.

Acheson, Sam Hanna, Herbert P. Gambrell, Mary Carter Toomey, and Alex M. Acheson, Jr. *Texan Who's Who*. Volume 1. Dallas: Texan, 1937.

Acosta, Ivonne. *La mordaza: Puerto Rico, 1948-1957*. Río Piedras: Editorial Edil, 1987.

Agambem, Giorgio. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998.

Aguirre, Carlos. *The Criminals of Lima and Their Worlds: The Prison Experience, 1850-1935*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2005.

Alegría, Ricardo E. *El Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, 1955-1973: 18 años contribuyendo a fortalecer nuestra conciencia nacional*. San Juan: Instituto de Cultura, 1978-79.

Alix, Juan Antonio. *Décimas*. Edited by Joaquín Balaguer. Segunda edición. Ciudad Trujillo: Librería Dominicana, 1961.

Almoína, José. *Una satrapía en el Caribe*. México: Siglo XXI, 1950.

Álvarez Cureblo, Silvia. *Un país del porvenir: el afán de modernidad en Puerto Rico, siglo XIX*. San Juan: Ediciones Callejón, 2001.

Amador, José. *Medicine and Nation-Building in the Americas, 1890-1940*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2015.

Ameringer, Charles D. *The Caribbean Legion: Patriots, Politicians, Soldiers of Fortune, 1946-1950*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996.

- Amo, Julián and Charmion Shelby. *The Printed Work of Spanish Intellectuals in the Americas, 1936-1945*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1950.
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. New York: Verso, 1983 [2006].
- Anderson, Nancy C. *The Broken Brain: The Biological Revolution in Psychiatry*. New York: Harper & Row, 1984.
- Anderson, Warwick. *Colonial Pathologies: American Tropical Medicine, Race, and Hygiene in the Philippines*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.
- “Excremental Colonialism: Public Health and the Poetics of Pollution.” *Critical Inquiry* 21, 3 (Spring 1995): 640-69.
- “Pacific Crossings: Imperial Logics in United States’ Public Health Programs.” In McCoy and Scarano, eds. *Colonial Crucible*. Pages 277-87.
- Anderson, Warwick, Deborah Jenson, and Richard C. Keller, eds. *Unconscious Dominions: Psychoanalysis, Colonial Trauma, and Global Sovereignties*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2011.
- Andrade, Manuel J. *Folklore from the Dominican Republic*. New York: American Folklore Society, 1930.
- Aponte Vázquez, Pedro. *Locura por decreto: el papel de Luis Muñoz Marín y José Trías Monge en el diagnóstico de locura de don Pedro Albizu Campos*. San Juan: Publicaciones René, 1994 [2005].
- Appelbaum, Nancy P., Anne S. Macpherson, and Karin Alejandra Roseblatt, eds. *Race and Nation in Modern Latin America*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003.
- Arenal de García Carrasco, Concepción. *Estudios penitenciarios*. Madrid: Lib. de Victoriano Suárez, 1895.
- La Cárcel llamada Modelo*. Madrid: Imp. T. Fontanet, 1877.
- Las colonias penales de la Australia y la pena de deportación*. Madrid: Lib. de Victoriano Suárez, 1895.
- Armus, Diego, ed. *Entre médicos y curanderos: cultura, historia, y enfermedad en la América Latina moderna*. Buenos Aires: Grupo Editorial Norma, 2001.
- The Ailing City: Health, Tuberculosis, and Culture in Buenos Aires, 1870-1950*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2011.

- Arrigoitia, Delma S. *Puerto Rico por encima de todo: vida y obra de Antonio R. Barceló, 1868-1938*. San Juan: Ediciones Puerto, 2008.
- Arroyo, Jossianna. *Writing Secrecy in Caribbean Freemasonry*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.
- Asad, Talal. "Religion, Nation-State, Secularism." In van der Veer and Lehmann, eds. *Nation and Religion*. Pages 178-96.
- Asenjo, Conrado. *Quién es quién en Puerto Rico*. Primera edición. San Juan: Real Hermanos, 1933.
- Quién es quién en Puerto Rico*. Cuarta edición. San Juan: Imp. Venezuela, 1947.
- Ashford, Bailey K. *A Soldier in Science*. New York: W. Morrow and Company, 1934.
- Ayala, César J. and Rafael Bernabé. *Puerto Rico in the American Century: A History since 1898*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007.
- Ayala, José A. "La masonería de obediencia española ante el conflicto colonial puertorriqueño." *Cuadernos de Investigación Histórica* 17 (1991): 21-36.
- Babenco, Héctor, director. *Carandiru*. DVD, 147 mins. Sony Pictures Classics/Globo Filmes, 2003.
- Baca, George, Aisha Khan, and Stephan Palmié, eds. *Empirical Futures: Anthropologists and Historians Engage the Work of Sidney W. Mintz*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009.
- Baerga Santini, María del Carmen. "History and the Contours of Meaning: The Abjection of Luisa Nevárez, First Woman Condemned to the Gallows in Puerto Rico, 1905." *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 89, 4 (November 2009): 643-73.
- "Transgresiones corporales: el mejoramiento de la raza y los discursos eugenésicos en el Puerto Rico de finales del siglo XIX y principios del XX." *Op. Cit.* 19 (2009-10): 79-106.
- Balcells, Ignacio. *El tiempo en la costa*. Santiago de Chile: Editorial Andres Bello, 1999.
- Barbosa, José Celso. *Problemas de razas*. San Juan: Imprenta Venezuela, 1937.
- Bassi, Ernesto. *An Aqueous Territory: Sailor Geographies and New Granada's Transimperial Greater Caribbean World*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2017.
- "Beyond Compartmentalized Atlantics: A Case for Embracing the Atlantic from Spanish American Shores." *History Compass* 12, 9 (2014): 704-16.

- Bautista Javier, José D. *Celda once*. Santo Domingo: Editora Búho, 2007.
- Becker, Peter and Richard F. Wetzell, eds. *Criminals and Their Scientists: The History of Criminology in International Perspective*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- Bediner, E. "Louise Pearce: A 'magic bullet' for African Sleeping Sickness." *Hospital Practice* 27 (1992): 207-21.
- Beidelman, Thomas O. *Colonial Evangelism: A Socio-Cultural Study of an East African Mission at the Grassroots*. Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1982.
- Belbenoit, René. *Dry Guillotine: Fifteen Years among the Living Dead*. New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1938.
- Bergad, Laird W. "¿Dos alas del mismo pájaro? Notas sobre la historia económica comparativa de Cuba y Puerto Rico." *Historia y Sociedad* 1 (1988): 143-54.
- Berkin, Carol, et al. *Making America: A History of the United States to 1877*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2001.
- Bernal, Guillermo. "60 Years of Clinical Psychology in Puerto Rico." *Interamerican Journal of Psychology* 47, 2 (2013): 211-26.
- "La psicología clínica en Puerto Rico." *Revista Puertorriqueña de Psicología* 17 (2006): 341-88.
- Bernaldo de Quirós, Constanancio. *Criminología dominicana*. Edited by Wilfredo Mora. Santo Domingo: Editora Búho, 2000.
- Penalidad en el Código Negro de la isla Española*. Edited by Wilfredo Mora. Santo Domingo: Sociedad Dominicana de Criminología, 2006.
- Una pluma en el exilio: los artículos publicados por Constanancio Bernaldo de Quirós en República Dominicana*. Santo Domingo: Archivo General de la Nación, 2009.
- Bhabha, Homi K. "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse." In *The Location of Culture*. New York: Routledge, 1994. Pages 121-31.
- Blanc, Jacob. "The Last Political Prisoner: Juvêncio Mazzarollo and the Twilight of Brazil's Dictatorship." *Luso-Brazilian Review* 53, 1 (June 2016): 153-78.
- Blanco Díaz, Andrés, ed. *Obras selectas: Antonio Zaglul*. Volumes I-II. Santo Domingo: Archivo General de la Nación, Banreservas, 2011.
- Bomani Baruti, Mwalimu K. *Homosexuality and the Effeminization of Afrikan Males*. Atlanta:

Aboken House, 2003.

Bonita Radio (with Anibal Sepúlveda). "Oso Blanco Especial." 23 mayo 2014.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QBvU8qBjUAE>.

Bonnely Valverde, Freddy. *Mi paso por la 40: un testimonio*. Santo Domingo: Editora Mediabyte, 2009.

Borges, Dain. "Healing and Mischief: Witchcraft in Brazilian Law and Literature, 1890-1922." In Salvatore, Aguirre, and Joseph, eds. *Crime and Punishment in Latin America*. Pages 181-210.

Bosque Pérez, Ramón and José Javier Colón Morera. *Puerto Rico under Colonial Rule: Political Persecution and the Quest for Human Rights*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006.

Brackney, William H. *A Genetic History of Baptist Thought, with Special Reference to Baptists in Britain and North America*. Macon: Mercer University Press, 2004.

Brau, Salvador. *Ensayos: disquisiciones sociológicas*. Río Piedras: Editorial Edil, 1972.

-----*La campesina: disquisiciones sociológicas*. Puerto Rico: Imprenta de José González Font, 1886.

Briggs, Laura. *Reproducing Empire: Race, Sex, Science, and U.S. Imperialism in Puerto Rico*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.

Brito, Luis. *Evolución histórica del sistema penitenciario en la República Dominicana*. Santo Domingo: Editora Peña Nina, 2007.

Bronfman, Alejandra. *Measures of Equality: Social Science, Citizenship, and Race in Cuba, 1902-1940*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004.

-----"On Swelling: Slavery, Social Science, and Medicine in the Nineteenth Century." In Paton and Forde, eds. *Obeah and Other Powers*. Pages 103-20.

Brown, Vincent. *The Reaper's Garden: Death and Power in the World of Atlantic Slavery*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008.

-----"Social Death and Political Life in the Study of Slavery." *The American Historical Review* 114, 5 (December 2009): 1231-49.

Browne, Simone. *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2015.

Bryan, Patrick E. "La cuestión obrera en la industria azucarera dominicana a finales del siglo XIX y principios del XX." *Eme Emé* 7, 41 (marzo-abril 1979): 57-78.

- Buffington, Robert. *Criminal and Citizen in Modern Mexico*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000.
- Bulhan, Hussein Abdilahi. *Frantz Fanon and the Psychology of Oppression*. New York: Plenum, 1985.
- Burrow, G. N. "Clot Bey: Founder of Western Medical Practice in Egypt." *The Yale Journal of Biology and Medicine* 48, 3 (July 1975): 251-57.
- Burrows, Geoff. "The New Deal in Puerto Rico: Public Works, Public Health, and the Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration, 1935-1955." Doctoral Dissertation, Department of History, City University of New York, 2014.
- Burton, Antoinette, ed. *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2005.
- Caballero Pérez, Miguel. *Lorca en África: crónica de un viaje al protectorado español de Marruecos, 1931*. Granada: Diputación de Granada, Patronato Cultural Federico García Lorca, 2010.
- Caimari, Lila M. "Remembering Freedom: Life as Seen From the Prison Cell." In Salvatore, Aguirre, and Joseph, eds. *Crime and Punishment in Latin America*. Pages 391-414.
- Calder, Bruce. "Caudillos and Gavilleros versus the United States Marines: Guerrilla Insurgency during the Dominican Intervention, 1916-1924." *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 58, 4 (November 1978): 649-75.
- The Impact of Intervention: The Dominican Republic during the U.S. Occupation of 1916-1924*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984.
- Caldeira, Teresa P. R. *City of Walls: Crime, Segregation, and Citizenship in São Paulo*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.
- Candelario, Ginetta E. B. *Black behind the Ears: Dominican Racial Identity from Museums to Beauty Shops*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.
- Canizares, Raul and Eric Lerner. *Babalú Ayé: Santería and the Lord of Pestilence*. Plainview, NY: Original Pubs., 2000.
- Carlo Altieri, Gerardo A. *El sistema legal y los litigios de esclavos en Indias: Puerto Rico, siglo XIX*. Sevilla: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2010.
- Justicia y gobierno: la Audiencia de Puerto Rico, 1831-1861*. Sevilla: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Academia Puertorriqueña de la Historia, 2007.

- Carrafiello, Susan B. *The Tombs of the Living: Prisons and Prison Reform in Liberal Italy*. New York: P. Lang, 1998.
- Carrasquillo, Rosa E. *Our Landless Patria: Marginal Citizenship and Race in Caguas, Puerto Rico, 1880-1910*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006.
- Carrión Maduro, Tomás. *A vuela pluma: Haití, Plácido y Manuel Sanguily*. La Habana: Imprenta "La Constancia," 1864.
- Casa Árabe. "Presentación del libro 'Lorca en África,' de Miguel Caballero, en Casa Árabe." 23 mayo 2013. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X1V0aApOkvc>.
- Casanova, Teobaldo. *La tendencia criminal en Puerto Rico*. Río Piedras: Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1944.
- Cassá, Roberto. "El campesinado dominicano." *Boletín del Archivo General de la Nación* 30, 112 (mayo-agosto de 2005): 213-61.
- Historia social y económica de la República Dominicana*. Santo Domingo: Editora Alfa y Omega, 2006.
- Castoriadis, Cornelius. *The Imaginary Institution of Society*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987.
- Caswell, Michelle. *Archiving the Unspeakable: Silence, Memory, and the Photographic Record in Cambodia*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2014.
- Caulfield, Sueann. *In Defense of Honor: Sexual Morality, Modernity, and Nation in Early-Twentieth Century Brazil*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2000.
- Caulfield, Sueann, Sarah C. Chambers and Lara Putnam, eds. *Honor, Status, and Law in Modern Latin America*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2005.
- Chambers, Sarah. *From Subjects to Citizens: Honor, Gender, and Politics in Arequipa, Peru, 1780-1854*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999.
- Chazkel, Amy. "Social Life and Civic Education in the Rio de Janeiro City Jail." *Journal of Social History* 42, 3 (March 2009): 697-731.
- Chenault, Price and George Jennings. *Institutional and Parole Problems of Inmates*. New York State Department of Corrections: Sing-Sing School of Printing, 1945.
- Chester, Eric Thomas. *Rag-Tags, Scum, Riff-Raff, and Commies: The U.S. Intervention in the Dominican Republic, 1965-66*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 2001.
- Chestnut, R. Andrew. *Competitive Spirits: Latin America's New Religious Economy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.

- Chisholm, Hugh, ed. "Karl Christian Friedrich Krause." *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Eleventh edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911.
- Coiscou Weber, Rodolfo Juan. *Historia de la cultura dominicana*. Santo Domingo: Editora Blanco Weber, 1983.
- Homenaje a Eugenio María de Hostos en el 150 aniversario de su nacimiento*. Santo Domingo: Casa Weber, 1989.
- La generación del 48 en la literatura dominicana*. Santo Domingo: Casa Weber, 1985.
- Se están comiendo a Margarita y otros canibalismos: cuentos, vivencias, poemas*. Santo Domingo: Casa Weber, 1986.
- Collazo, Luis, director. *Casa sin ventanas*. DVD, 28 mins. Grupo de Desarrollo Fílmico-Cultural, Inc./Zaga Films, Inc., 1988.
- Colombán Rosario, José. *El problema de la criminalidad en Puerto Rico*. Río Piedras: Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1952.
- Colombán Rosario, José and Justina Carrión. *Problemas sociales: el negro*. San Juan: Negociado de Materiales, Imprenta y Transporte, 1940.
- Comaroff, Jean. "The Diseased Heart of Africa: Medicine, Colonialism, and the Black Body." In Lindenbaum and Lock, eds. *Knowledge, Power, and Practice*. Pages 305-29.
- Congreso Médico Dominicano. *Memoria del Congreso Médico Dominicano del Centenario*. Volume III. Ciudad Trujillo: Editorial El Diario, 1945.
- Connolly, Margaret. *The Life Story of Orison Swett Marden: A Man Who Benefited Men*. New York: Thomas Crowell Co., 1925.
- Cope, R. Douglas. *The Limits of Racial Domination: Plebeian Society in Colonial Mexico City, 1660-1720*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994.
- Cordero Gómez, José Ignacio. "La obra literaria de Eduardo Zamacois." Tesis Doctoral, Departamento de Literatura Española, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2007.
- Córdoba Chirino, Jacobo. *Los que murieron en la horca: historia del crimen, juicio y ajusticiamiento de los que en Puerto Rico murieron en la horca desde las Partidas Sediciosas (1898) a Pascual Ramos (15 de septiembre de 1927)*. San Juan: Editorial Cordillera, 1954 [2007].
- Corrêa, Mariza. *As ilusões da liberdade: Nina Rodrigues e a antropologia no Brasil*. Bragança Paulista: Ed. USF, 1998.

- Costra Mandry, Oscar. *Apuntes para la historia de la medicina en Puerto Rico: reseña histórica de las ciencias de la salud*. San Juan: Departamento de Salud, 1971.
- Crais, Clifton and Pamela Scully. *Sara Baartman and the Hottentot Venus: A Ghost Story and Biography*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009.
- Crosby, W. H. "The Deadly Hookworm: Why Did the Puerto Ricans Die?" *Archives of Internal Medicine* 147, 3 (March 1987): 577-78.
- Cruz Díaz, M. R. *Supersticiones criminológicas y médicas: apuntes folklóricos*. Santo Domingo: Editora Caribe, 1965.
- Cunha Miranda, Carlos Alberto. "A fatalidade biológica: a medição dos corpos, de Lombroso aos biotipologistas." In Nunes Maia, ed. *História das prisões no Brasil*, Volume 2. Chapter 9.
- Curet, L. Antonio. "The Earliest Settlers." In Scarano and Palmié, eds. *The Caribbean*. Pages 53-67.
- Curran, Andrew S. *The Anatomy of Blackness: Science and Slavery in an Age of Enlightenment*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013.
- Curtis, Isaac. "Masterless People: Maroons, Pirates, and Commoners." In Scarano and Palmié, eds. *The Caribbean*. Pages 149-62.
- Damousi, Joy. "Géza Róheim and the Australian Aborigine: Psychoanalytic Anthropology during the Interwar Years." In Anderson, Jenson, and Keller, eds. *Unconscious Dominions*. Pages 75-96.
- Daston, Lorraine J. "The Factual Sensibility." *Isis* 79, 3 (1988): 452-67.
- Davis, A. P., et al. "A Global Assessment of the Distribution, Diversity, Endemism, and Taxonomic Effort in the Rubiaceae." *Annals of the Missouri Botanical Garden* 96, 1 (2009): 68-78.
- Davis, David Brion. "Looking at Slavery from Broader Perspectives." *The American Historical Review* 105, 2 (April 2000): 452-66.
- Davis, Martha Ellen. "A Tire Blowout Gives Entry into the World of Spiritism." In Roorda, Derby, and González, eds. *The Dominican Republic Reader*. Pages 406-10.
- La otra ciencia: el vodú dominicano como religión y medicina popular*. Santo Domingo: Editora Universitaria, 1987.
- , ed. *La ruta hacia Liborio: mesianismo en el sur profundo dominicano*. Santo Domingo: Editora Manatí, 2004.

- , director. *Papá Liborio: el santo vivo de Maguana*. Video, 56 mins. Santo Domingo: Secretaría de Estado de Cultura, 2003.
- De Barros, Juanita, Steven Palmer, and David Wright, eds. *Health and Medicine in the circum-Caribbean, 1800-1968*. New York: Routledge, 2009.
- De Goenaga y Olza, Francisco Rufino. *Antropología médica y jurídica*. San Juan: Imprenta Venezuela, 1934.
- Desarrollo histórico del Asilo de Beneficencia y Manicomio de Puerto Rico*. San Juan: Cantero, Fernández & Co., 1929.
- Los sepultureros de España en Puerto Rico, o sea, Macías, su ayudante Cervera, Camó y su tiempo*. San Juan: Imprenta de Boada, 1899.
- De Hostos, Eugenio María. *Moral social*. Segunda edición. Madrid: Imprenta de Bailly-Bailliere é Hijos, 1906.
- De Jong, Lammert and Dirk Krujit, eds. *Extended Statehood in the Caribbean: Paradoxes of Quasi-Colonialism, Local Autonomy, and Extended Statehood in the USA, French, Dutch, and British Caribbean*. Amsterdam: Rozenberg Publishers, 2005.
- De la Fuente, Alejandro. *Havana and the Atlantic in the Sixteenth Century*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008.
- De la Torriente Brau, Pablo. *Presidio Modelo*. La Habana: Centro Cultural del autor, 1969 [2000].
- De Lara, Ramón. *Delincuente confeso y amnistiado agradecido*. Ciudad Trujillo: Partido Dominicano, 1945.
- De León Mateo, Nelson. *Días de libertad: memorias de un ex-presero político dominicano*. Santo Domingo: Impresión Tec. Enmanuel Morillo, 2009.
- Deive, Carlos E. "El Olivorismo: estudio de un movimiento mesiánico." *Boletín del Museo del Hombre Dominicano* 3 (1973): 235-59.
- Vodú y magia en Santo Domingo*. Santo Domingo: Fundación Cultural Dominicana, 1975 [1992].
- Del Moral, Solsirée. *Negotiating Empire: The Cultural Politics of Schools in Puerto Rico, 1898-1952*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2013.
- Del Valle Atilas, Francisco. *El campesino puertorriqueño: sus condiciones físicas, intelectuales y morales, causas que las determinan y medios para mejorarlas*. San Juan: Tipografía de José González Font, 1887.

Del Valle Correa, Justino. *Los muchachos de París*. Puerto Rico: el autor, 2003.

Denis, Nelson A. *War against All Puerto Ricans: Revolution and Terror in America's Colony*. New York: Nation Books, 2015.

Departamento de Justicia. Oficina del Procurador General (Charles E. Winter). *Reglamento para el régimen y gobierno de la Penitenciaría de Puerto Rico en Río Piedras*. San Juan: Negociado de Materiales, Imprenta y Transporte, 1933.

Derby, Lauren. *The Dictator's Seduction: Politics and the Popular Imagination in the Era of Trujillo*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2009.

-----“Trujillo, the Goat: Of Beasts, Men, and Politics in the Dominican Republic.” In Martha Few and Zeb Tortorici, eds. *Centering Animals in Latin American History*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2013. Pages 302-28.

-----“Male Heroism, Demonic Pigs, and Memories of Violence in the Haitian-Dominican Borderlands.” *UCLA Center for the Study of Women*. UCLA: UCLA Center for the Study of Women, 2010. Retrieved from: <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/1q5711vd>.

Despradel, Alberto and Miguel Reyes Sánchez. *La guerra dominico-haitiana: las cinco campañas de separación, 1844-1856*. Santo Domingo: Ediciones Senderos del Mundo, 2011.

Díaz, María Elena. *The Royal Slaves of El Cobre: Negotiating Freedom in Colonial Cuba, 1670-1780*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001.

Díaz Quiñones, Arcadio. *El arte de bregar: ensayos*. San Juan: Ediciones Callejón, 2000.

-----, ed. *El prejuicio racial en Puerto Rico*. Río Piedras: Ediciones Huracán, 1985.

Dieter Neuwinger, Hans. *African Ethnobotany: Poisons and Drugs, Chemistry, Pharmacology, Toxicology*. Stuttgart, Germany: Chapman & Hall, 1994.

Dikötter, Frank and Ian Brown, eds. *Cultures of Confinement: A History of the Prison in Africa, Asia, and Latin America*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007.

Dinzey Flores, Zaire Zenit. *Locked In, Locked Out: Gated Communities in a Puerto Rican City*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013.

Diouf, Sylviane A. *Servants of Allah: African Muslims Enslaved in the Americas*. New York: New York University Press, 1998 [2013].

División de Educación. *La ciencia contra la superstición*. San Juan: Departamento de Instrucción Pública, 1951.

- Dixon, Thomas. *Science and Religion: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford, 2008.
- Dostoevsky, Fyodor. *The House of the Dead*. New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1862 [1911].
- Drescher, Seymour. *From Slavery to Freedom: Comparative Studies in the Rise and Fall of Atlantic Slavery*. New York: New York University Press, 1999.
- Drost, M. P. "Sartre's Concept of a Person as a Project." *Dialogos* 23, 52 (1988): 97-108.
- Duany, Jorge. "La migración dominicana hacia Puerto Rico: una perspectiva transnacional." In Estrada Iguíniz and Labazée, eds. *Globalización y localidad*. Pages 397-430.
- Duany, Jorge and Emilio Pantojas García. "Fifty Years of Commonwealth: The Contradictions of Free Associated Statehood in Puerto Rico." In de Jong and Krujit, eds. *Extended Statehood in the Caribbean*. Pages 21-57.
- Duffy Burnett, Christina and Burke Marshall, eds. *Foreign in a Domestic Sense: Puerto Rico, American Expansion, and the Constitution*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2001.
- Dumont, Henri Joseph. *Ensayo de la historia médico-quirúrgica de la isla de Puerto Rico*. Volumes I-II. La Habana: Imprenta "La Antilla" de N. Cacho Negrete, 1875-76.
- Dunbabin, Jean. *Captivity and Imprisonment in Medieval Europe, 1000-1300*. New York: Palgrave, 2002.
- Durkheim, Emile. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. Translated by Carol Cosman. New York: Oxford University Press, 1912 [2001].
- Earle, Rebecca A. *The Return of the Native: Indians and Myth-Making in Spanish America, 1810-1930*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.
- Eckstein, Susan, ed. *Power and Popular Protest: Latin American Social Movements*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.
- Edwards, Ryan. "An Ecology of Exile: Earth and Elsewhere in Argentina's Ushuaia Penal Colony, 1860-1960." Doctoral Dissertation, Department of History, Cornell University, 2016.
- Eghigian, Greg. *The Corrigible and the Incurable: Science, Medicine, and the Convict in Twentieth-Century Germany*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2015.
- Eghigian, Greg, Andreas Killen, and Christine Leuenberger, eds. *The Self as Project: Politics and the Human Sciences*. Osiris 22. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.
- Enamorado Cuesta, José. *Fuera de la ley: denuncia de la hipócrita tiranía 'democrática' en Puerto Rico*. San Juan: Editorial Puerto Rico Libre, 1957.

- Engerman, Stanley L. *Slavery, Emancipation, and Freedom: Comparative Perspectives*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2007.
- Eraso, Yolanda. "'A Burden to the State': The Reception of German 'Active Therapy' in an Argentine 'Colony-Asylum' in the 1920s and 1930s." In Ernst and Mueller, eds. *Transnational Psychiatries*. Pages 51-79.
- Ergui, Martín. "Penal Institutions and Reform Schools." In Fernández y García, et al., eds. *The Book of Porto Rico*. Pages 278-81.
- "Puerto Rican Penitentiary." *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology (1931-1951)* 24, 6 (March-April 1934): 1118-20.
- Ernst, Waltraud. "Beyond East and West: From the History of Colonial Medicine to a Social History of Medicine(s) in South Asia." *Social History of Medicine* 20, 3 (October 2007): 505-24.
- Ernst, Waltraud and Thomas Mueller, eds. *Transnational Psychiatries: Social and Cultural Histories of Psychiatry in Comparative Perspective, c. 1800-2000*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010.
- Espinosa, Mariola. *Epidemic Invasions: Yellow Fever and the Limits of Cuban Independence, 1878-1930*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009.
- Estrada Iguíniz, Margarita and Pascal Labazée, eds. *Globalización y localidad: espacios, actores, moviidades e identidades*. Mexico City: La Casa Chata, 2007.
- Estrade, Paul. "Betances: masón inconforme." In Ferrer Benimeli, ed. *La masonería española en la época de Sagasta*. Pages 559-70.
- Evans, Robin. *The Fabrication of Virtue: English Prison Architecture, 1750-1840*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982.
- Fabbro, Franco and Yvan Lebrun. *Language and Epilepsy*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons, 2002.
- Fabian, Ann. *The Skull Collectors: Race, Science, and America's Unburied Dead*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010.
- Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. Translated by Charles Lam Markmann. New York: Grove Press, 1952 [1967].
- The Wretched of the Earth*. Translated by Richard Philcox. New York: Grove Press, 1961 [2004].
- Farmer, Paul. "On Suffering and Structural Violence: A View from Below." *Daedalus* 125, 1

(Winter 1996): 261-83.

- Feierman, Steven. *Peasant Intellectuals: Anthropology and History in Tanzania*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990.
- Feierman, Steven and John M. Janzen, eds. *The Social Basis of Health and Healing in Africa*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.
- Feinstein, Tamara. "Competing Visions of the 1986 Lima Prison Massacres: Memory and the Politics of War in Peru." *A Contracorriente* 11, 3 (Spring 2014): 1-40.
- Fernández y García, Eugenio, et al., eds. *The Book of Porto Rico*. San Juan: Libro Azul Publishing Co., 1923.
- Fernós Isern, Antonio. *Nosce te ipsum: conferencia pronunciada en la Logia "Caballeros de la Verdad."* San Juan: Tipografía "El Compas," 1923.
- Ferrer, Ada. *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation, and Revolution, 1868-1898*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999.
- Ferrer Benimeli, José Antonio, ed. *La masonería española en la época de Sagasta, 1825-1903*. Zaragoza: Gobierno de Aragón, 2007.
- Ferrerías, Ramón Alberto. *Políticos presos*. Santo Domingo: Tall. Gráf. de Impresos Brenty, 1969.
- Fideler, David. *Jesus Christ, Sun of God: Ancient Cosmology and Early Christian Symbolism*. Wheaton, IL: Quest, 1993.
- Figueroa, Luis A. *Sugar, Slavery, and Freedom in Nineteenth-Century Puerto Rico*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005.
- Fillmore, Charles. *Christian Healing: The Science of Being*. Kansas City: Unity School of Christianity, 1947.
- First Annual Report of Charles H. Allen, Governor of Porto Rico*. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1901.
- Fischer, Sibylle. *Modernity Disavowed: Haiti and the Cultures of Slavery in the Age of Revolution*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2004.
- Fish, Laura. "Christmas in the Río Piedras Penitentiary." *Missions* 24, 10 (December 1933): 600.
- Fitzgibbon, Russell H. "Continuismo: The Search for Political Longevity." In Hamill, ed. *Caudillos*. Pages 210-17.
- Flores Collazo, José E. "Mujer, familia y prostitución: la construcción del género bajo la

- hegemonía del Partido Popular Democrático, 1940-1968.” Doctoral Dissertation, Department of History, University of Puerto Rico-Río Piedras, 2002.
- Font y Guillot, Eliseo. “Public Health: Sanitary Development, Legislation, Board of Health.” In Fernández y García, et al., eds. *The Book of Porto Rico*. Pages 286-303.
- Foucault, Michel. *Abnormal: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1974-1975*. New York: Picador, 2003.
- Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Translated by Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage, 1995.
- Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*. New York: Vintage, 1980.
- The Archeology of Knowledge*. New York: Vintage, 1992.
- The Birth of the Clinic: An Archeology of Medical Perception*. New York: Vintage, 1994.
- The History of Sexuality: An Introduction, Vol. 1*. New York: Vintage, 1990.
- Fradera, Josep M. “The Caribbean between Empires: Colonists, Pirates, and Slaves.” In Scarano and Palmié, eds. *The Caribbean*. Pages 165-76.
- Franks, Julie. “The Gavilleros of the East: Social Banditry as Political Practice in the Dominican Sugar Region, 1900-1924.” *Journal of Historical Sociology* 8, 2 (October 2006): 158-81.
- Free Associated State of Puerto Rico. Department of Justice. *Annual Report of the Secretary of Justice for the Year Ending 30 June 1956*. San Juan: Servicio de Compra y Suministro, División de Imprenta, 1961.
- Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogia do oprimido*. Rio: Paz e Terra, 1970.
- Pedagogy of Freedom: Ethics, Democracy, and Civic Courage*. Translated by Patrick Clarke. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998.
- French, Talmadge L. *Early Interracial Oneness Pentecostalism: G.T. Haywood and the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, 1901-1931*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2014.
- Fritzche, Peter. “The Archive and the Case of the German Nation.” In Burton, ed. *Archive Stories*. Pages 184-208.
- Fuller, Stephen M. and Graham A. Cosmas. *Marines in the Dominican Republic, 1916-1924*. Washington D.C.: History and Museums Division, Headquarters of the U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Govt. Printing Office, 1974-75.

- Gaines, Kevin. *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995.
- Gala Aguilera, Santiago. "El Oso Blanco, Landmark of Penal Rehabilitation in the First Half of the Twentieth Century." State Penitentiary at Río Piedras, Correspondence. San Juan: State Historic Preservation Office, 2003.
- Galeano, Diego. "Identidade cifrada no corpo: o bertillonage e o gabinete antropométrico na polícia do Rio de Janeiro, 1894-1903." *Boletim do Museu Paraense Emílio Goeldi, Ciências Humanas* 7, 3 (2012): 721-42.
- Galindo Malavé, Nahomi. "Cuerpos truculentos y 'desviados': las confinadas de la Escuela Industrial para Mujeres de Vega Alta." *Identidades* 8 (noviembre 2010): 11-34.
- Ni un vaso de agua*. Independent Publishing, 2016.
- García, David F. *Arsenio Rodríguez and the Transnational Flows of Latin Popular Music*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006.
- García González, Armando and Consuelo Naranjo Orovio. "Antropología, 'raza' y población en Cuba en el último cuarto del siglo XIX." *Anuario de Estudios Americanos* 55, 1 (1998): 267-89.
- García Leduc, José M. *Intolerancia y heterodoxias en Puerto Rico, siglo XIX: protestantes, masones y espiritistas-kardecianos reclaman su espacio social, c. 1869-1898*. San Juan: Isla Negra Editores, 2009.
- García Muñiz, Humberto. *Sugar and Power in the Caribbean: The South Porto Rico Sugar Company in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, 1900-1921*. Miami: Ian Randle Publishers, 2010.
- "Sugar Land and *Gavillero* Warfare in the Eastern Dominican Republic: The Case of Central Romana, 1910-1924." *Historia y Sociedad* 12 (2000-2001): 3-47.
- García Selva, Sandra Sofía. "La razón de la sinrazón: paradigmas, tratamiento y encierro de los alienados en el Puerto Rico del siglo XIX, 1844-1898." Doctoral Dissertation, Department of History, University of Puerto Rico-Río Piedras, 2009.
- Garland, David. *Punishment and Modern Society: A Study in Social Theory*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990.
- The Culture of Control: Crime and Social Order in Contemporary Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001.
- Garrido, Pablo. *Esoteria y fervor populares de Puerto Rico*. Madrid: Ediciones Cultura Hispánica, 1952.

- Garrido, Victor. "Común de San Juan: datos acerca de la situación." In Rodríguez Demorizi, ed. *Lengua y folklore de Santo Domingo*. Pages 223-36.
- Garrido Puello, Emigdio O. *Olivorio: un ensayo histórico*. Santo Domingo: Librería Dominicana, 1963.
- Geltner, Guy. *The Medieval Prison: A Social History*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008.
- Gerardi, Steven. "The Dialectical Relationship between Religion and the Ideology of Science." *Sociology Mind* 2, 1 (2012): 50-52.
- Gerena Brás, Gaspar. *Aljibe: poemas*. San Juan: Editorial Club de la Prensa, 1959.
- Gibson, Ian. *The Assassination of Federico García Lorca*. New York: Penguin, 1983.
- Gibson, Mary. "Global Perspectives on the Birth of the Prison." *The American Historical Review* 116, 4 (October 2011): 1040-63.
- Gil de Lamadrid Navarro, Antonio. *Los indómitos*. Río Piedras: Editorial Edil, 1981.
- Giral, Francisco. *Ciencia española en el exilio (1939-1989): el exilio de los científicos españoles*. Madrid: Centro de Investigación y Estudios Republicanos, 1994.
- Girona Pérez, Francisco C. *Las fechorías del bandolero Trujillo*. Santo Domingo: Academia Dominicana de la Historia, 1937 [2013].
- Giusti Cordero, Juan. "Beyond Sugar Revolutions: Rethinking the Spanish Caribbean in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries." In Baca, Khan, and Palmié, eds. *Empirical Futures*. Pages 58–83.
- Godreau, Isar P. *Scripts of Blackness: Race, Cultural Nationalism, and U.S. Colonialism in Puerto Rico*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2015.
- Gómez, Amparo, Antonio Francisco Canales, and Brian Balmer, eds. *Science Policies and Twentieth-Century Dictatorships: Spain, Italy, and Argentina*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015.
- Gómez, Pablo F. *The Experiential Caribbean: Creating Knowledge and Healing in the Early Modern Atlantic*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017.
- "The Circulation of Bodily Knowledge in the Seventeenth-Century Black Spanish Caribbean." *Social History of Medicine* 26, 3 (2013): 383-402.
- González, José Luis. *Puerto Rico: The Four-Storeyed Country and Other Essays*. Translated by Gerald Guinness. Princeton: Markus Wiener, 2013.
- González, Raymundo. "Ideología del progreso y campesinado en el siglo XIX." *Ecos* 1, 2 (1993):

25-44.

-----“Notas sobre el pensamiento socio-político dominicano.” *Estudios Sociales* 20, 67 (1987): 1-22.

-----“The ‘People-Eater.’” In Roorda, Derby, and González, eds. *The Dominican Republic Reader*. Pages 102-108.

González Canalda, María Filomena. *Los gavilleros, 1904-1916*. Santo Domingo: Archivo General de la Nación, 2008.

González de la Peña, Raymundo Manuel. “La figura social del montero en la formación histórica del campesinado dominicano.” *Clío* 74, 168 (julio-diciembre de 2004): 75-96.

González Herrera, Julio. *Trementina, Clerén i Bongó*. Ciudad Trujillo: Editorial Pol Hermanos, 1943.

González Laureiro, Julio César and Francisco García González. *Presidio Modelo: temas escondidos*. La Habana: Ediciones El Abra, 2001.

Goode, Joshua. *Impurity of Blood: Defining Race in Spain*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2009.

Goodenough, Florence. *Measurement of Intelligence by Drawings*. New York: Arno Press, 1975.

Gordon Chipembere, Natasha, ed. *Representation and Black Womanhood: The Legacy of Sarah Baartman*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

Gould, Stephen Jay. *The Mismeasure of Man*. New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1981 [1996].

Government of Puerto Rico (Alejandro J. García Padilla). “Debts from the Past and Debts to the Future.” State of the Commonwealth Message. April 29, 2014.

Green, James. *Beyond Carnival: Male Homosexuality in Twentieth-Century Brazil*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999.

Guerra, Lillian. *Popular Expression and National Identity in Puerto Rico: The Struggle for Self, Community, and Nation*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998.

Guerrero, José G. *Cotuí: villa, carnaval, cofradía y palos*. Santo Domingo: Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo, 2005.

Guitar, Lynne A. “Negotiations of Conquest.” In Scarano and Palmié, eds. *The Caribbean*. Pages 115-29.

Hamill, Hugh M., ed. *Caudillos: Dictators in Spanish America*. Norman: University of Oklahoma

Press, 1992.

Hecht, Jennifer. *The End of the Soul: Scientific Modernity, Atheism, and Anthropology in France*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2012.

Hernández, Yadira Altagracia and Taurys Vanessa Guzmán Soto. “Estudio comparativo del modelo tradicional y el nuevo modelo de gestión penitenciaria.” Tesina por Licenciado en Derecho, Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo, 2010.

Hernández Soto, Carlos. *¡Kalunga eh! Los Congos de Villa Mella*. Santo Domingo: Editorial Letra Gráfica, 2004.

-----“To Die in Villa Mella.” In Roorda, Derby, and González, eds. *The Dominican Republic Reader*. Pages 403-405.

Herrera, Robinson. “The Ambulatory Archive: Santa Muerte Tattoos as Historical Sources.” *The Appendix* 1, 1 (December 2012): 85-88.

Herrera Mora, Myrna. *Mujeres dominicanas, 1930-1961: anti-Trujillistas y exiliadas en Puerto Rico*. San Juan: Isla Negra, 2008.

Hertzman, Marc A. *Making Samba: A New History of Race and Music in Brazil*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2013.

-----“The Promise and Challenge of Transnational History.” *A Contracorriente* 7, 1 (2009): 305-15.

Heywood, Paul. *Marxism and the Failure of Organized Socialism in Spain, 1879-1936*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Higgins, Martha Knisely. *From Slavery to Vagrancy in Brazil: Crime and Social Control in the Third World*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1985.

Holloway, Thomas H. *Policing Rio de Janeiro: Repression and Resistance in a 19th-Century City*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993.

Huertas, Luz E., Bonnie A. Lucero, and Gregory J. Swedberg, eds. *Voices of Crime: Constructing and Contesting Social Control in Latin America*. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2016.

Iturrondo, Milagros. *Voces Quisqueyanas en Borinquen*. San Juan: Ediciones Camila, 2000.

Jackson, Lynette. *Surfacing Up: Psychiatry and Social Order in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1908-1968*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005.

James, Daniel. *Resistance and Integration: Peronism and the Argentine Working Class, 1946-*

1976. Cambridge: Oxford University Press, 1988.
- Jilek-Aall, Louise. "Morbus Sacer in Africa: Some Religious Aspects of Epilepsy in Traditional Cultures." *Epilepsia* 40, 3 (March 1999): 382-86.
- Jimenes Grullón, Juan Isidro. *Una gestapo en América: vida, tortura, agonía y muerte de presos políticos bajo la tiranía de Trujillo*. Quinta edición. Santo Domingo: Editora Montalvo, 1948 [1962].
- Jiménez, Ramón Emilio. *Al amor del bohío: tradiciones y costumbres dominicanas*. Santo Domingo: Editora de Santo Domingo, 1927-29 [1975].
- Johnson, Sara E. *The Fear of French Negroes: Transcolonial Collaboration in the Revolutionary Americas*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012.
- Johnson, Victor S. *Why We Feel: The Science of Human Emotions*. Cambridge: Perseus Books, 1999.
- Joseph, Gilbert M. and Daniel Nugent, eds. *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1994.
- Kaluszynski, Martine. "The International Congresses of Criminal Anthropology: Shaping the French and International Criminological Movement (1886-1914)." In Becker and Wetzell, eds. *Criminals and Their Scientists*. Pages 301-16.
- Kampwirth, Karen, ed. *Gender and Populism in Latin America: Passionate Politics*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010.
- Keller, Richard C. *Colonial Madness: Psychiatry in French North Africa*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.
- Khanna, Ranjana. *Dark Continents: Psychoanalysis and Colonialism*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003.
- Kinsbruner, Jay. *Not of Pure Blood: The Free People of Color and Racial Prejudice in Nineteenth-Century Puerto Rico*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1996.
- Koenig, Harold G. "Religion, Spirituality, and Medicine: Research Findings and Implications for Clinical Practice." *Southern Medical Journal* 97, 12 (December 2004): 1194-200.
- Koss-Chioino, Joan. "Religion and Science Divinely Related: A Case History of Spiritism in Puerto Rico." *Caribbean Studies* 16, 1 (1976): 22-43.
- Women as Healers, Women as Patients: Mental Health Care and Traditional Healing in Puerto Rico*. Boulder, CO: Westview, 1992.

- Kottak, Conrad Phillip. *Mirror for Humanity*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2012.
- Laboy Pérez, Suset L. "Minor Problems: Juvenile Delinquents and the Construction of a Puerto Rican Subject, 1880-1938." Doctoral Dissertation, Department of History, University of Pittsburgh, 2014.
- Lambe, Jennifer. "Baptism by Fire: The Making and Remaking of Madness in Cuba, 1857-1980." Doctoral Dissertation, Department of History, Yale University, 2014.
- "Land Settlement: Homestead Experiments in Puerto Rico." *Monthly Labor Review* 35, 4 (October 1932): 814-17.
- Landauer, Gustav. *Revolution and Other Writings: A Political Reader*. Edited and translated by Gabriel Kuhn. Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2010.
- Landolfi, Ciricao. *Evolución cultural dominicana, 1844-1899*. Santo Domingo: Editora Universitaria, 1981.
- Landy, David. *Tropical Childhood: Cultural Transmission and Learning in a Puerto Rican Village*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1959.
- Lastra, Sarai. "Juan Bobo: A Folkloric Information System." *Literary Trends* 47, 3 (Winter 1999): 529-57.
- Lee Borges, José. *Los chinos en Puerto Rico*. San Juan: Ediciones Callejón, 2015.
- Lemke, Thomas. *Biopolitics: An Advanced Introduction*. Translated by Eric Frederick Trump. New York: New York University Press, 2011.
- Leonard, Bill J. *Baptists in America*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.
- Lindenbaum, Shirley and Margaret Lock, eds. *Knowledge, Power, and Practice: The Anthropology of Medicine and Everyday Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.
- Lluberes, Antonio. "Notas históricas sobre la enseñanza de la religión católica en las escuelas, 1795-1983." *Estudios Sociales* 16, 52 (junio-agosto 1983): 5-15.
- Lomas, Laura. *Translating Empire: José Martí, Migrant Latino Subjects, and American Modernities*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2008.
- Lombroso, Cesare. *Criminal Man*. Edited by Mary Gibson and Nicole Hahn Rafter. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.
- Lomnitz, Claudio. *Idea de la muerte en México*. México: FCE, 2006.
- London Science Museum. "Salvarsan treatment kit for syphilis." Accessed November 26, 2014.

<http://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/broughttolife/objects/display.aspx?id=5630>.

López, Iris Ofelia. *Matters of Choice: Puerto Rican Women's Struggle for Reproductive Freedom*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2008.

López Calvo, Ignacio. *"God and Trujillo": Literary and Cultural Representations of the Dominican Dictator*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005.

Loveman, Mara and Jeronimo O. Muniz. "How Puerto Rico Became White: Boundary Dynamics and Intercensus Racial Reclassification." *American Sociological Review* 72 (December 2007): 915-39.

Lubenow, William C. *Liberal Intellectuals and Public Culture in Modern Britain, 1815-1914: Making Words Flesh*. Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2010.

Lugo, Américo. *A punto largo*. Santo Domingo: Impresora la Cuna de América, 1901.

-----"El estado dominicano ante el derecho público." *Obras escogidas*. Volume 1. Santo Domingo: Ediciones de la Fundación Corripio, 1993.

Lundahl, Mats and Jan Lundius. *Peasants and Religion: A Socioeconomic Study of Dios Olivorio and the Palma Sola Movement in the Dominican Republic*. Hoboken, NJ: Taylor and Francis, 2012.

Mahone, Sloan and Megan Vaughan, eds. *Psychiatry and Empire*. New York: Palgrave, 2007.

Mainwaring, Scott and Aníbal Pérez Liñán, *Democracies and Dictatorships in Latin America: Emergence, Survival, and Fall*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Maldonado, Norman. "La psiquiatría en Puerto Rico: notas sobre su desarrollo." *Galenus* 20 (2010): 53-54.

Mallon, Florencia E. *Courage Tastes of Blood: The Mapuche Community of Nicolás Ailío and the Chilean State, 1906-2001*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2005.

-----*Peasant and Nation: The Making of Postcolonial Mexico and Peru*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.

-----"The Promise and Dilemma of Subaltern Studies: Perspectives from Latin American History." *The American Historical Review* 99, 5 (December 1994): 1491-1515.

-----"Time on the Wheel: Cycles of Revisionism and the 'New Cultural History.'" *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 79, 2 (May 1999): 331-53.

Manners, Robert A. "The Cultural Study of Contemporary Societies: Puerto Rico." *American Journal of Sociology* 59 (1954): 123-30.

- Mariátegui, Javier. "Prensa psiquiátrica latinoamericana." *Revista de Neuropsiquiatría del Perú* 63, 3-4 (septiembre-diciembre 2000): 138-52.
- Marín, Rosa Celeste, Awilda Paláu de López, and Gloria P. Barbosa de Chardón. *La efectividad de la rehabilitación en los delincuentes de Puerto Rico*. San Juan: Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1959.
- Marín Torres, Heriberto. *Eran ellos*. Río Piedras: publisher not identified, 2000.
- Martínez, Lusitania. "Un estudio preliminar acerca del movimiento de Palma Sola, como movimiento mesiánico y social campesino." *Revista Dominicana de Antropología e Historia* 10, 19-20 (1980): 83-209.
- Martínez, María Elena. *Genealogical Fictions: Limpieza de Sangre, Religion, and Gender in Colonial Mexico*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008.
- Martínez Vergne, Teresita. *Nation and Citizen in the Dominican Republic, 1880-1916*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005.
- *Shaping the Discourse on Space: Charity and Its Wards in Nineteenth-Century San Juan, Puerto Rico*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999.
- Maturano, Jorge. "Vampiros en la Habana: discursos intelectuales, políticas de la cultura y narrativas de encierro en la República (1934-1958)." Doctoral Dissertation, Department of Romance Languages, Duke University, 2006.
- Matías Ortiz, Andrés. "Evolutionary Populism in a Place Where Nothing Happens: Coamo, Puerto Rico, 1930-1969." Doctoral Dissertation, Department of History, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2009.
- Mayes, April J. *The Mulatto Republic: Class, Race, and Dominican National Identity*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2014.
- Maymí Nevares, José Rafael. "Démence précoce et tuberculose: la tuberculose comme facteur étiologique dans la pathogénie de la démence précoce." Medical Thesis, Paris, Centre Hospitalier Sainte Anne, L. Arnette, 1936.
- "La higiene de la formación de hábitos durante la primera infancia." In *Memoria del Primer Congreso del Niño de Puerto Rico, 1941*. San Juan: Negociado de Materiales, Imprenta y Transporte, 1943. Pages 318-22.
- Mayo Santana, Raúl, Annette B. Ramírez de Arellano, and José Rigau Pérez, eds. *A Sojourn in Tropical Medicine: Francis W. O'Connor's Diary of a Porto Rican Trip, 1927*. Río Piedras: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 2008.
- McAlister, Lyle N. "Dictators and the Military." In Hamill, ed. *Caudillos*. Pages 205-209.

- McCormick, Gladys. "The Last Door: Political Prisoners and the Use of Torture in Mexico's Dirty War." *The Americas* 74, 1 (January 2017): 57-81.
- McCoy, Alfred W. *Policing America's Empire: The United States, the Philippines, and the Rise of the Surveillance State*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009.
- McCoy, Alfred W. and Francisco A. Scarano, eds. *Colonial Crucible: Empire in the Making of the Modern American State*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009.
- McNamara, Patrick. *Sons of the Sierra: Juárez, Díaz, and the People of Ixtlán, Oaxaca, 1855-1920*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007.
- Mencía, Mario. *The Fertile Prison: Fidel Castro in Batista's Jails*. Melbourne, Australia: Ocean, 1993.
- Millán, Ramiro and Christian Suau, directors. *Oso Blanco: Puerto Rico State Penitentiary*. DVD, 82 mins. Miami: Ondamax Films, 2008.
- Milton, Cynthia. *The Many Meanings of Poverty: Colonialism, Social Compacts, and Assistance in Eighteenth-Century Ecuador*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007.
- Mintz, Sidney W. *Three Ancient Colonies: Caribbean Themes and Variations*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010.
- Worker in the Cane: A Puerto Rican Life History*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960.
- Mitchell, Michele. *Righteous Propagation: The Politics of Racial Destiny after Reconstruction*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004.
- Montijo, Josué. *Los Ñeta*. Río Piedras: Centro de Investigaciones Históricas, Universidad de Puerto Rico-Río Piedras, 2011.
- Moore, Robin D. *Music in the Hispanic Caribbean: Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Mora, Wilfredo. *Criminología y violencia urbana: un análisis de la criminología y de la violencia urbana en la República Dominicana*. Santo Domingo: Editora Búho, 2001.
- Moran, Brian. "Prison Reform in the United States Navy and the Dominican Republic: The Military Occupation and Prisons, 1900-1930." Doctoral Dissertation, Department of History, University of Illinois-Chicago, 2000.
- Moreno Fernández, Abel. "El régimen legal penitenciario." Santiago: Pontificia Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra, 2002.

- Moreno Friginals, Manuel, Frank Moya Pons, and Stanley L. Engerman, eds. *Between Slavery and Free Labor: The Spanish-Speaking Caribbean in the Nineteenth Century*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985.
- Moreno Vega, Marta. "Espiritismo in the Puerto Rican Community: A New World Recreation with the Elements of Kongo Ancestor Worship." *Journal of Black Studies* 29 (1999): 325-53.
- Moritz Schwarcz, Lilia. *The Spectacle of the Races: Scientists, Institutions, and the Race Question in Brazil, 1870-1930*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1999.
- Morris, Norval and David J. Rothman, eds. *The Oxford History of the Prison: The Practice of Punishment in Western Society*. New York: Oxford, 1995.
- Moya Pons, Frank. *La dominación haitiana, 1822-1844*. Santiago: Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra, 1973.
- Mújica Baker, Frank. *Huracanes y tormentas tropicales que han afectado a Puerto Rico*. San Juan: Estado Libre Asociado de Puerto Rico, Agencia Estatal para el Manejo de Emergencias y Administración de Desastres, 2010.
- Muñiz Vázquez, Francisco J. "Los locos de Ballajá y su entorno: la aparición de la locura en Puerto Rico, 1848-1898." Doctoral Dissertation, Department of History, University of Puerto Rico-Río Piedras, 2015.
- Naranjo Orovio, Consuelo. "De la esclavitud a la criminalización de un grupo: la población de color en Cuba." *Op. Cit.* 16 (2005): 137-79.
- "Las redes de un exilio errante: republicanos españoles en Santo Domingo, Puerto Rico y Cuba." In Rosario Fernández, ed. *El exilio republicano español en la sociedad dominicana*. Pages 131-60.
- Naranjo Orovio, Consuelo and Miguel Ángel Puig Samper. "De isla en isla: los españoles exiliados en República Dominicana, Puerto Rico y Cuba." *ARBOR Ciencia, Pensamiento y Cultura* CLXXXV, 735 (enero-febrero 2009): 87-112.
- National Council on Measurement in Education. *The Yearbook of the National Council on Measurements Used in Education* 11. Washington, D.C.: NCME, 1953-54.
- Navarrette, Carlos. *San Pascualito Rey y el culto a la muerte en Chiapas*. México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1982.
- Nelson, Cary and Lawrence Grossberg, eds. *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988.
- Ninkovich, Frank A. *The Diplomacy of Ideas: U.S. Foreign Policy and Cultural Relations, 1938-1950*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.

- Nistal Moret, Benjamin. *Esclavos, prófugos y cimarrones: Puerto Rico, 1770-1870*. San Juan: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1984 [2004].
- Nunes Maia, Clarissa, ed. *Historia das prisões no Brasil*. Volumes I-II. Rio: Rocco, 2009.
- Núñez Meléndez, Esteban. *Plantas medicinales de Puerto Rico: folklore y fundamentos científicos*. San Juan: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1982.
- Núñez Molina, Mario A. "Toward an Experiential Approach for Researching Religious Experiences." *Revista Puertorriqueña de Psicología* 10, 1 (1995): 247-65.
- Obregón, Liliana. "Black Codes in Latin America." *Encarta Africana*. Microsoft CD-Rom. 1999-2000.
- Ochoa, Todd Ramón. *Society of the Dead: Quita Manaquita and Palo Praise in Cuba*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010.
- Ogorzaly, Michael A. *Waldo Frank: Prophet of Hispanic Regeneration*. Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1994.
- Ojeda Reyes, Félix. *El desterrado de París: biografía del Dr. Ramón Emeterio Betances, 1827-1898*. San Juan: Ediciones Puerto, 2001.
- Oliver, José R. *Caciques and Cemí Idols: The Web Spun by Taíno Rulers between Hispaniola and Puerto Rico*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2009.
- Ontañón, Elvira. "El Instituto Escuela: una experiencia educativa ejemplar." *Circunstancia* 5, 14 (septiembre 2007).
- Ordoñez y Fernández, Fernando. *Influencia del instinto sexual sobre las facultades psíquicas: ensayo*. S.I.: s.n., 1936.
- Ortiz, Armando. "Colonia psiquiátrica: el tratamiento del enfermo por la laborterapia." In Congreso Médico Dominicano. *Memoria del Congreso Médico Dominicano*. Pages 216-17.
- Ortíz, Fernando. *Hampa afro-cubana: los negros brujos, apuntes para un estudio de etnología Criminal*. Miami: New House Publishers, 1906 [1973].
- Ortiz Díaz, Alberto. "The City and the Penitentiary: Urbanization and the Making of *Oso Blanco* in Río Piedras and San Juan, Puerto Rico, 1920-1940." MA Report, Department of History, University of Texas-Austin, 2008.
- Ortiz Minaya, Reynaldo. "From Plantation to Prison: Visual Economies of Slave Resistance, Criminal Justice, and Penal Exile in the Spanish Caribbean, 1820-1886." Doctoral Dissertation, Department of Sociology, Binghamton University, 2014.

Osborn, Tommy Lee. *One Hundred Divine Healing Facts*. Tulsa, OK: Harrison House, 1983.

-----*Personal Diary Notes: The Ponce, Puerto Rico Crusade and its Significance*.
Tulsa, OK: Osborn Publishers, 2007.

-----*Puerto Rico: Revival Harvest, With Miracles of Healing*. Tulsa, OK: Voice
of Faith Ministries, 1951.

Otero Carvajal, Luis Enrique, ed. *La destrucción de la ciencia en España: depuración
universitaria en el franquismo*. Madrid: Editorial Complutense, 2006.

Otero González, Luis A. "Brother John Will Harris: An Adopted Son from Texas." *The Scottish
Rite Journal* (January-February 2012).

-----"El hermano mason." In Acevedo, ed. *Dr. Antonio Fernós Isern*. Pages
284-342.

Pagels, Elaine. *Beyond Belief: The Secret Gospel of Thomas*. New York: Random House, 2003.

Palés Matos, Luis. *Tuntún de pasa y grifería*. San Juan: Biblioteca de autores puertorriqueños,
1937.

Palmié, Stephan. *The Cooking of History: How Not to Study Afro-Cuban Religion*. Chicago:
University of Chicago Press, 2013.

-----"Toward Sugar and Slavery." In Scarano and Palmié, eds. *The Caribbean*. Pages
131-47.

-----*Wizards and Scientists: Explorations in Afro-Cuban Modernity and Tradition*.
Durham: Duke University Press, 2002.

Pantojas García, Emilio. "Puerto Rican Populism Revisited: The PPD during the 1940s." *Journal
of Latin American Studies* 21, 3 (October 1989): 521-57.

Parés, Luis Nicolau and Roger Sansi, eds. *Sorcery in the Black Atlantic*. Chicago: University of
Chicago Press, 2011.

Paton, Diana. *No Bond But the Law: Punishment, Race, and Gender in Jamaican State Formation,
1780-1870*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2004.

-----*The Cultural Politics of Obeah: Religion, Colonialism, and Modernity in the
Caribbean World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

Paton, Diana and Maarit Forde, eds. *Obeah and Other Powers: The Politics of Caribbean Religion
and Healing*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2012.

- Patterson, Orlando. *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982.
- Pedreira, Antonio. *Insularismo*. Madrid: Tipografía Artística, 1934.
- Pedreira, Antonio Salvador. *El año terrible del 87: sus antecedentes y sus consecuencias*. Río Piedras: Editorial Edil, 1974.
- Peña Beltrán, Lydía. *30 años en las cárceles de Puerto Rico*. Río Piedras: Borikén Libros Inc., 1995.
- Pereyra de Martínez, Nancy. "La emigración puertorriqueña hacia la República Dominicana, siglos XIX y XX." MA Thesis, Department of History, University of Puerto Rico-Río Piedras, 2004.
- "Persecución y exilio durante el régimen de Trujillo." DVD, 17 mins. Área de materiales audiovisuales, Archivo General de la Nación, 2011.
- Peters, Edward M. "Prison Before the Prison: The Ancient and Medieval Worlds." In Morris and Rothman, eds. *The Oxford History of the Prison*. Pages 3-43.
- Piccato, Pablo. *City of Suspects: Crime in Mexico City, 1900-1931*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2001.
- Picó, Fernando. *Al filo del poder: subalternos y dominantes en Puerto Rico, 1739-1910*. San Juan: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1993.
- El día menos pensado: historia de los presidiarios en Puerto Rico, 1793-1993*. Río Piedras: Ediciones Huracán, 1994.
- Los gallos peleados*. Río Piedras: Ediciones Huracán, 1983.
- Plotkin, Mariano B., ed. *Argentina on the Couch: Psychiatry, State, and Society, 1880 to the Present*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003.
- Freud in the Pampas: The Emergence and Development of a Psychoanalytic Culture in Argentina*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001.
- Premo, Bianca. *Children of the Father King: Youth, Authority, and Legal Minority in Colonial Lima*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005.
- Prison Association of New York. *Sixty-Fourth Annual Report*. Albany: J. B. Lyon Co., 1909.
- Procuraduría General de la República. *Memoria de la Procuraduría General de la República*. Santiago: Editorial El Diario, 1944.

- Puerto Rico Department of Health. *Annual Report*. San Juan: Department of Health, 1959.
- Putnam, Lara. *Radical Moves: Caribbean Migrants and the Politics of Race in the Jazz Age*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013.
- The Company They Kept: Migrants and the Politics of Gender in Caribbean Costa Rica, 1870–1915*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002.
- “The Transnational and the Text-Searchable: Digitized Sources and the Shadows They Cast.” *The American Historical Review* 121, 2 (April 2016): 377-402.
- Quiles Calderín, Vivian, ed. *República Dominicana y Puerto Rico: Hermandad en la lucha emancipadora, correspondencia 1876-1902*. Río Piedras: Instituto de Estudios Hostianos, 2001.
- Quintero Rivera, Ángel G., ed. *Vírgenes, magos y escapularios: imagería, etnicidad y religiosidad popular en Puerto Rico*. San Juan: Centro de Investigaciones Sociales, Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1998.
- “Vuelta, con mantilla, al primer piso: sociología de los santos.” In *Vírgenes, magos y escapularios*. Pages 9-100.
- Rabinow, Paul and Nikolas Rose. “Biopower Today.” *Biosciences* 1, 2 (2006): 195-217.
- Ramírez López, Irio Leonel. “Dios Olivorio Mateo: The Living God.” In Roorda, Derby, and González, eds. *The Dominican Republic Reader*. Pages 411-14.
- Ramos, Leoncio. *Yo pasé un día en Sing-Sing y otros escritos*. Edited by Wilfredo Mora. Santo Domingo: Pensamiento Criminológico Dominicano, 2001.
- Ramos Perea, Roberto, ed. *Literatura puertorriqueña negra del siglo XIX escrita por negros*. San Juan: Ateneo Puertorriqueño, Editorial LEA, Archivo Nacional de Teatro y Cine, 2009.
- Ramsey, Kate. *The Spirits and the Law: Vodou and Power in Haiti*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011.
- Rediker, Marcus. *The Slave Ship*. Penguin: New York, 2007.
- Reis, João José. *Death is a Festival: Funeral Rites and Rebellion in Nineteenth-Century Brazil*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991 [2003].
- Rivera Garza, Cristina. *La Castañeda: narrativas dolientes desde el Manicomio General, 1910-1930*. México, D.F.: Tusquets, 2010.
- Rivera Ramos, Efrén. *American Colonialism in Puerto Rico: The Judicial and Social Legacy*. Princeton: Markus Wiener, 2007.

- Rivera Rivera, Wanda. "The Politics of Madness in Francisco Matos Paoli's Prison Poem, *Canto de Locura*." *Revista Hispánica Moderna* 61, 2 (December 2008): 197-213.
- Rivero, Yeidy M. *Tuning out Blackness: Race and Nation in the History of Puerto Rican Television*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2005.
- Rivero de la Calle, Manuel. "Henri J. Dumont, precursor de los estudios antropológicos en Cuba." *CEHOC* 4 (1978): 1-14.
- Roca de Torres, Irma. "Algunos precursores/as de la psicología en Puerto Rico: reseñas biográficas." *Revista Puertorriqueña de Psicología* 17 (2006): 61-88.
- Rodríguez, Julia. *Civilizing Argentina: Science, Medicine, and the Modern State*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006.
- Rodríguez Beruff, Jorge. "Una pugna caribeña: Muñoz Marín y Trujillo." *Revista del Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña* 4, 7 (enero-junio 2003): 26-39.
- Rodríguez Castro, José. *Cosas de Haití: notas de un viaje a éste país*. Ponce: Tip. El Telégrafo, 1893.
- Infanticidio: causa contra Isidora Gual, informe médico-legal*. Ponce: Imprenta "El Telégrafo," 1892.
- La embriaguez y la locura, ó consecuencias del alcoholismo*. San Juan: Imprenta del Boletín Mercantil, 1889.
- Rodríguez Castro, José and Ramón A. de Torres. *El crimen de "Las Lomas": informe pericial*. Ponce: Imprenta "El Vapor," 1893.
- Rodríguez Demorizi, Emilio, ed. *Lengua y folklore de Santo Domingo*. Santiago: Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra, 1975.
- Rodríguez Silva, Ileana. *Silencing Race: Disentangling Blackness, Colonialism, and National Identities in Puerto Rico*. New York: Palgrave, 2012.
- Rogers, H. E. *Yearbook of the Seventh-Day Adventist Denomination*. Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing, 1933.
- Román, Reinaldo L. *Governing Spirits: Religion, Miracles, and Spectacles in Cuba and Puerto Rico, 1898-1956*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007.
- Romberg, Raquel. "From Charlatans to Saviors: *Espiritistas, Curanderos, and Brujos* Inscribed in Discourses of Progress and Heritage." *Centro Journal* 15, 2 (Fall 2003): 146-73.
- Witchcraft and Welfare: Spiritual Capital and the Business of Magic in Modern*

- Puerto Rico*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003.
- Romero, Lino A. *Historia de la psiquiatría dominicana*. Santo Domingo: Editora Búho, 2005.
- Rondón, César Miguel. *The Book of Salsa: A Chronicle of Urban Music from the Caribbean to New York City*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008.
- Roodenburg, Herman and Pieter Spierenburg, eds. *Social Control in Europe, 1500-1800*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2004.
- Roorda, Eric Paul, Lauren Derby, and Raymundo González, eds. *The Dominican Republic Reader: History, Culture, Politics*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2014.
- Rosado Morales, Isabel. *Mis testimonios*. Río Piedras: Biblioteca Albizu Campos, 2007.
- Rosario Fernández, Reina C., ed. *El exilio republicano español en la sociedad dominicana*. Santo Domingo: Archivo General de la Nación, 2010.
- Rosario Natal, Carmelo. *Albizu Campos, preso en Atlanta: historia del reo #51298-A, correspondencia*. San Juan: Producciones Históricas, 2001.
- Exodo puertorriqueño: las emigraciones al Caribe y Hawaii, 1900-1910*. Río Piedras: Editorial Edil, 1983 [2001].
- Roseblatt, Karin Alejandra. *Gendered Compromises: Political Cultures and the State in Chile, 1920-1950*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000.
- Rosselló, Juan A. *Historia de la psiquiatría en Puerto Rico: siglo XIX*. Río Piedras: Universidad de Puerto Rico, Unidad de Investigación Científica, 1975.
- Historia de la psiquiatría en Puerto Rico, 1898-1988*. San Juan: Instituto de Relaciones Humanas, 1988.
- Rubin, Sol. "Protecting the Child in Juvenile Court." *The Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology, and Police Science* 43, 4 (November-December 1952): 425-40.
- Psychiatry and Criminal Law: Illusions, Fictions, and Myths*. Dobbs Ferry, NY: Oceana, 1965.
- "The Legal Character of Juvenile Delinquency." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 261 (January 1949): 1-8.
- "Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency: Illusions in a Research Project Using Matched Pairs." *American Journal of Sociology* 57, 2 (September 1951): 107-14.
- Ryan Larson, Carolyne. *Our Indigenous Ancestors: A Cultural History of Museums, Science, and*

- Identity in Argentina, 1877-1943*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2015.
- Sadowsky, Jonathan H. *Imperial Bedlam: Institutions of Madness in Colonial Southwest Nigeria*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.
- Sáez, José Luis, ed. *La sumisión bien pagada: la iglesia dominicana bajo la era de Trujillo, 1930-1961*. Volume I. Santo Domingo: Archivo General de la Nación, 2008.
- Salman, Michael. "The Prison That Makes Men Free: The Iwahig Penal Colony and the Simulacra of the American State in the Philippines." In McCoy and Scarano, eds. *Colonial Crucible*. Pages 116-28.
- Salvatore, Ricardo D. and Carlos Aguirre, eds. *The Birth of the Penitentiary in Latin America: Essays on Criminology, Prison Reform, and Social Control, 1830-1940*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996.
- "The Birth of the Penitentiary in Latin America: Toward an Interpretive Social History of Prisons." In Salvatore and Aguirre, eds. *The Birth of the Penitentiary in Latin America*. Pages 1-43.
- Salvatore, Ricardo D., Carlos Aguirre and Gilbert M. Joseph, eds. *Crime and Punishment in Latin America: Law and Society Since Late Colonial Times*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2001.
- San Miguel, Pedro L. "An Island in the Mirror: The Dominican Republic and Haiti." In Scarano and Palmié, eds. *The Caribbean*. Pages 553-70.
- Los campesinos del Cibao: economía de mercado y transformación agraria en la República Dominicana, 1880-1960*. San Juan: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1995.
- Sant'Anna, Marilene Antunes. "Trabalho e conflitos na Casa de Correção do Rio de Janeiro." In Nunes Maia, ed. *História das prisões no Brasil*. Volume I. Chapter 8.
- Santiago Valles, Kelvin. "American Penal Forms and Colonial Spanish Custodial-Regulatory Practices in Fin de Siècle Puerto Rico." In McCoy and Scarano, eds. *Colonial Crucible*. Pages 87-94.
- "Bloody Legislations,' 'Entombment,' and Race-Making in the Spanish Atlantic: Differentiated Spaces of General(ized) Confinement in Spain and Puerto Rico, 1750-1840." *Radical History Review* 96 (Fall 2006): 33-57.
- "Forcing Them to Work and Punishing Whoever Resisted': Servile Labor and Penal Servitude under Colonialism in Nineteenth-Century Puerto Rico." In Salvatore and Aguirre, eds. *The Birth of the Penitentiary in Latin America*. Pages 133-35.
- "Subject People" and Colonial Discourses: Economic Transformation

and Social Disorder in Puerto Rico, 1898-1947. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994.

-----“The Trans-Atlantic Instance within the Imperial Global Carceral Structures of the Late-1800s and the Turn-of-the-Century.” Paper presented at “Making Empire Visible in the Metropole: Comparative Imperial Transformations in America, Australia, England, and France.” Sydney University, Australia, July 3-4, 2008.

Scarano, Francisco A. “Congregate and Control: The Peasantry and Labor Coercion in Puerto Rico before the Age of Sugar, 1750-1820.” *Nieuwe West-Indische Gids/New West Indian Guide* 63, 1-2 (1989): 23-40.

-----“Doctors and Peasants at the Intersection of Empires: Prologue to the Hookworm Campaigns in Puerto Rico.” Paper presented at the “Dimensions of Empire and Resistance” seminar. San Juan, Puerto Rico, November 2012.

-----“Imperial Decline, Colonial Adaptation: The Spanish Islands during the Long 17th Century.” In Scarano and Palmié, eds. *The Caribbean*. Pages 177-89.

-----“Liberal Pacts and Hierarchies of Rule: Approaching the Imperial Transition in Cuba and Puerto Rico.” *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 78, 4 (November 1998): 583-601.

-----“The *Jíbaro* Masquerade and the Subaltern Politics of Creole Identity Formation in Puerto Rico, 1745-1823.” *The American Historical Review* 101, 5 (December 1996): 1398-1431.

Scarano, Francisco A. and Stephan Palmié, eds. *The Caribbean: A History of the Region and its Peoples*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011.

Schaposchnik, Ana. *The Lima Inquisition: The Plight of Crypto-Jews in Seventeenth-Century Peru*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2015.

Schenker, Frederick. “Performing Empire: Music and Race in Colonial Asia’s Jazz Age.” Doctoral Dissertation, Department of Ethnomusicology, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2016.

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. *Death Without Weeping: The Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.

Schepsses, Erwin. “Puerto Rican Delinquent Boys in New York City.” *Social Science Review* 23, 1 (March 1949): 51-61.

Schmidt Nowara, Christopher. *Empire and Antislavery: Spain, Cuba, and Puerto Rico, 1833-1874*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1999.

Schmitt, Aurore, Eugénia Cunha, and João Pinheiro, eds. *Forensic Anthropology and Medicine:*

- Complementary Sciences from Recovery to Cause of Death*. Totowa, NJ: Humana Press, 2006.
- Schwartz, Stuart. *Sea of Storms: A History of Hurricanes in the Greater Caribbean from Columbus to Katrina*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015.
- “The 1928 Hurricane and the Shaping of the Circum-Caribbean Region.” *ReVista: Harvard Review of Latin America* (Winter 2007): 3-7.
- Scott, James C. *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990.
- Scott, Rebecca. *Degrees of Freedom: Louisiana and Cuba after Slavery*. Cambridge: Belknap, 2005.
- Slave Emancipation in Cuba: The Transition to Free Labor, 1860-1899*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000.
- Second Annual Report of the Governor of Porto Rico*. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1902.
- Secretaría de Estado de Justicia, Educación Pública y Bellas Artes. “Clausuras de establecimientos penales.” In *Memoria de la Secretaría de Estado de Justicia, Educación Pública y Bellas Artes*. Ciudad Trujillo: Ed. La Nación, 1939.
- Seigel, Micol. “Beyond Compare: Comparative Method after the Transnational Turn.” *Radical History Review* 91 (Winter 2005): 62-90.
- Seijo Bruno, Miñi. *La insurrección nacionalista en Puerto Rico, 1950*. Río Piedras: Editorial Edil, 1997.
- Semple, Janet. *Bentham’s Prison: A Study of the Panopticon Penitentiary*. New York: Oxford, 1993.
- Senior, Clarence Ollson. *Strangers and Neighbors: The Story of our Puerto Rican Citizens*. New York: Anti-Defamation League, 1952.
- Serra, José María. *Apuntes para la historia de los Trinitarios*. Santo Domingo: Editora de Colores, 1998.
- Shapiro, Barbara J. *A Culture of Fact: England, 1550-1720*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000.
- Sheller, Mimi. *Democracy after Slavery: Black Publics and Peasant Radicalism in Haiti and Jamaica*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001.
- Shohat, Ella. *Race and Translation: Culture Wars around the Postcolonial Atlantic*. New York:

New York University Press, 2012.

Silva Gotay, Samuel. *Protestantismo y política en Puerto Rico, 1898-1930: hacia una historia del protestantismo evangélico en Puerto Rico*. Primera edición. San Juan: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1997.

Silvestrini, Blanca. *Violencia y criminalidad en Puerto Rico, 1898–1973: apuntes para un estudio de historia social*. Río Piedras: Editorial Universitaria, 1980.

Sistema TV Canal. “Sistema TV Informa: Demolición de Oso Blanco (1/2).” 22 mayo 2014.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eRthmA1-woE>.

-----“Sistema TV Informa: Demolición de Oso Blanco (2/2).” 26 mayo 2014.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2SfHi5Z_3rA.

Skinner, Jonathan. “Interning the Serpent: Witchcraft, Religion, and the Law on Montserrat in the 20th Century.” *History and Anthropology* 16, 2 (2005): 143-65.

Smallwood, Stephanie E. *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008.

Snodgrass, J. “William Healy (1869-1963): Pioneer Child Psychiatrist and Criminologist.” *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 20, 4 (October 1984): 332-39.

Spierenburg, Pieter. *The Prison Experience: Disciplinary Institutions and Their Inmates in Early Modern Europe*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2007.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. “Can the Subaltern Speak?” In Nelson and Lawrence, eds. *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. Pages 271-313.

Srivastava, V. C. *Sun Worship in Ancient India*. First edition. Allahabad: Indological Publications, 1972.

Stepan, Nancy Leys. “*The Hour of Eugenics*”: *Race, Gender, and Nation in Latin America*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991.

Stern, Alexandra M. “An Empire of Tests: Psychometrics and the Paradoxes of Nationalism in the Americas.” In Stoler, ed. *Haunted by Empire*. Pages 325-43.

-----*Eugenic Nation: Faults and Frontiers of Better Breeding in Modern America*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005.

Stern, Steve J. *Battling for Hearts and Minds: Memory Struggles in Pinochet’s Chile, 1973-1988*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.

-----*Remembering Pinochet’s Chile: On the Eve of London, 1998*. Durham: Duke

University Press, 2004.

-----*The Secret History of Gender: Men, Women, and Power in Late Colonial Mexico*.
Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995.

Steward, Julian H. *The People of Puerto Rico: A Study in Social Anthropology*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1956.

Stoler, Ann Laura. *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009.

-----*Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002 [2010].

-----, ed. *Haunted by Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.

Strauss, Claudia. "The Imaginary." *Anthropological Theory* 6 (2006): 322-44.

Suárez Findlay, Eileen. *Imposing Decency: The Politics of Sexuality and Race in Puerto Rico, 1870-1920*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2000.

-----*We Are Left Without a Father Here: Masculinity, Domesticity, and Migration in Postwar Puerto Rico*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2014.

Suárez y López Guazo, Laura Luz. *Eugenesia y racismo en México*. Coyoacán: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2005.

Sued Badillo, Jalil. "From Taínos to Africans in the Caribbean." In Scarano and Palmié, eds. *The Caribbean*. Pages 97-113.

Summers, Martin A. *Manliness and Its Discontents: The Black Middle Class and the Transformation of Masculinity, 1900-1930*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004.

Sweet, James H. "Defying Social Death: The Multiple Configurations of African Slave Family in the Atlantic World." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 70, 2 (April 2013): 251-72.

-----*Domingos Álvares, African Healing, and the Intellectual History of the Atlantic World*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011.

-----*Recreating Africa: Culture, Kinship, and Religion in the African-Portuguese World, 1441-1770*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003.

Tafunell, Xavier. "On the Origins of ISI: The Latin American Cement Industry, 1900-1930." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 39, 2 (May 2007): 299-328.

- Taggart, James M. *Nahuat Myth and Social Structure*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997.
- Tallaj, José. *Un médico en la 40: recuerdos de una conspiración*. Santiago: Editora Búho, 2006.
- Taylor, Charles. "Modern Social Imaginaries." *Public Culture* 14, 1 (2002): 91-124.
- Telemundo (Sylvia Gómez). "Asesinatos eran la comidilla del día." 4 abril 2015.
<http://www.telemundopr.com/videos/noticias/Relatos-de-oso-blanco.html>.
- "The Shadow Stage." *Photoplay* 22, 3 (August 1922): 60-65.
- Thirty-Third Annual Report of the Governor of Puerto Rico*. San Juan: Bureau of Supplies, Printing, and Transportation, 1933.
- Thornton, Brendan J. "The Cultural Politics of Evangelical Christianity in the Dominican Republic." Doctoral Dissertation, Department of Anthropology, University of California-San Diego, 2011.
- Thurston, Herbert. *The Stations of the Cross: An Account of Their History and Devotional Purpose*. Charleston, SC: Nabu Press, 2010.
- Tierrason. "Drew Pearson interviews Gov. Luis Muñoz Marín." October 17, 2010.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GWU9o5xfKQ>.
- Tillman, Ellen Davies. "Imperialism Revised: Military, Society, and U.S. Occupation in the Dominican Republic, 1880-1924." Doctoral Dissertation, Department of History, University of Illinois-Urbana Champaign, 2010.
- Tinsman, Heidi. *Buying into the Regime: Grapes and Consumption in Cold War Chile and the United States*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2014.
- Toro Calder, Jaime. "Personal Crime in Puerto Rico: A Study of the Cultural Elements in Personal Crime." MA Thesis, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1950.
- Trammell Skaggs, Carmen. "Modernity's Revision of the Dancing Daughter: The Salome Narrative of Wilde and Strauss." *College Literature* 29, 3 (Summer 2002): 124-39.
- "Transnational Lives in the Twentieth Century." *AHR Forum. The American Historical Review* 118, 1 (February 2013): 45-139.
- Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*. Boston: Beacon, 1995.
- Trujillo Pagán, Nicole. *Modern Colonization by Medical Intervention: U.S. Medicine in Puerto Rico*. Chicago: Haymarket, 2014.

Turits, Richard L. "A World Destroyed, A Nation Imposed: The 1937 Haitian Massacre in the Dominican Republic." *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 82, 3 (2002): 589-635.

-----*Foundations of Despotism: Peasants, the Trujillo Regime, and Modernity in Dominican History*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002.

Twenty-Ninth Annual Report of the Governor of Porto Rico. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1930.

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

Tyrrell, Ian. "Empire in American History." In McCoy and Scarano, eds. *Colonial Crucible*. Pages 541-56.

"Un bando de policía de 1845." *Eme Eme: estudios dominicanos* 5, 28 (enero-febrero 1977): 67-73.

Urrego, Miguel Ángel. "Cambio de soberanía y confrontación moral en Puerto Rico, 1898-1920." *Revista Mexicana del Caribe* 7, 13 (2002): 125-52.

U.S. Children's Bureau. *Directory of Public Training Schools Serving Delinquent Children*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare Administration, 1958.

Vales, Pedro A. "El impacto de la libertad bajo palabra en la rehabilitación de confinados y las características sociales de los confinados." In Centro de Investigaciones Sociales, *Primer ciclo de conferencias públicas sobre temas de investigación social*. Río Piedras: Centro de Investigaciones Sociales, Universidad de Puerto Rico-Río Piedras, 1969. Pages 29-53.

Van der Veer, Peter and Hartmut Lehmann, eds. *Nation and Religion: Perspectives on Europe and Asia*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999.

Vandercook, John W. *Black Majesty: The Life of Christophe, King of Haiti*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1928.

Vaughan, Megan. *Curing Their Ills: Colonial Power and African Illness*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991.

Vázquez García, Humberto. *La expedición de Cayo Confites*. Santiago de Cuba: Editorial Oriente, 2012.

Vega Ramos, Luis. *Pan, tierra y libertad: historia y filosofía del Partido Popular Democrático*. San Juan: EMS, 2006.

Vélez, Carlos, et al. *Crónicas de la educación para la salud en Puerto Rico*. Valencia, CA: Delta, 1994.

- Villaronga Sweet, Luis Gabriel. *Toward a Discourse of Consent: Mass Mobilization and Colonial Politics in Puerto Rico, 1932-1948*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004.
- Walsh, Ellen. "'Advancing the Kingdom': Missionaries and Americanization in Puerto Rico, 1898-1930s." Doctoral Dissertation, Department of History, University of Pittsburgh, 2007.
- Washington Corner, George. *A History of the Rockefeller Institute, 1901-1953*. New York: Rockefeller Institute Press, 1964.
- Weaver, Karol K. *Medical Revolutionaries: The Enslaved Healers of Eighteenth-Century Saint Domingue*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006.
- Weber, Benjamin. "America's Carceral Empire: Confinement, Punishment, and Work at Home and Abroad, 1865-1945." Doctoral Dissertation, Department of History, Harvard University, forthcoming.
- Weinstein, Barbara. *The Color of Modernity: São Paulo and the Making of Race and Nation in Brazil*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2015.
- Wells, Allen. *Tropical Zion: General Trujillo, FDR, and the Jews of Sosúa*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2009.
- Werner, Michael and Bénédicte Zimmerman. "Beyond Comparison: *Histoire Croisée* and the Challenge of Reflexivity." *History and Theory* 45, 1 (February 2006): 30-50.
- West Durán, Alan, ed. *African Caribbeans: A Reference Guide*. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2003.
- Wetzell, Richard F. *Inventing the Criminal: A History of German Criminology, 1880-1945*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000.
- Williford, Miriam. *Jeremy Bentham on Spanish America: An Account of His Letters and Proposals to the New World*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1980.
- Wilson, Elizabeth. *Shostakovich: A Life Remembered*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006.
- Wilson, Peter J. *Crab Antics: A Caribbean Study of the Conflict Between Reputation and Respectability*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland, 1973 [1995].
- Women's Christian Temperance Union. *Report of the Annual Convention of the National Women's Christian Temperance Union*. S.I.: s.n., 1938.
- Wright Mills, Charles, et al. *The Puerto Rican Journey: New York's Newest Migrants*. New York: publisher not identified, 1950.
- Wucker, Michele. *Why the Cocks Fight: Dominicans, Haitians, and the Struggle for Hispaniola*.

- New York: Hill and Wang, 1999.
- Zaglul, Antonio. *Mis 500 locos*. Santo Domingo: Ediciones Taller, 1966 [1998].
- Zamacois, Eduardo. *Los vivos muertos*. Madrid: Renacimiento, 1929.
- Zamora, Lacié. *El culto de San Lázaro en Cuba*. La Habana: Fundación Fernando Ortiz, 2000.
- Zapata Oliveras, Carlos. "Luis Muñoz Marín, Antonio Fernós Isern y el asunto del status político en la reunión de Barranquitas del 3 de julio de 1946." *Ceiba* 10, 1 (agosto 2010-mayo 2011): 56-81.
- Zemon Davis, Natalie. *Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and Their Tellers in Sixteenth-Century France*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987.
- Zeno Gandía, Manuel. *La charca*. Edited by Juan Flores. Río Piedras: Ediciones Huracán, 1999.
- Zimmerman, Matilde. *Sandinista: Carlos Fonseca and the Nicaraguan Revolution*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2001.
- Zulawski, Ann. *Unequal Cures: Public Health and Political Change in Bolivia, 1900-1950*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.