A Twenty-First Century Agenda for Teaching the History of Modern Afro-Latin America and the Caribbean

Dr. Julio César Pino Associate Professor Department of History Kent State University

"...Brazil, which is just an extension of Africa." Jorge Luis Borges 1

"In reference to the stratifying effects of racial ascription, race as a socially elaborated attribute may be conceptualized as related mainly to the subordinate aspect of the reproduction of social classes." Carlos Hasenbal g 2

Introduction

When I was an undergraduate on the West Coast of the United States in the early 1980s the African component of Latin American history was completely omitted from our survey course curriculum. Neither did my university feature a single graduate course on this topic. But in the 1990s came the revolution. There has been a veritable explosion in Afro-Latin studies in the past ten years, with a considerable number of colleges and universities offering courses and programs on "The African Diaspora" and "The Black Atlantic." My home institution, Kent State University, grants a degree in Pan-African Studies (PAS), which requires students to take courses on the geography, history, and culture of African and the black Caribbean. (But not the black presence in the Hispanic Caribbean, the Spanish American mainland, or Brazil, which is left up to me; this disjuncture between Diaspora and Latinamericanist scholars is an important reason for constructing the type of course I propose in this article). Communication and interexchange between North American, Latin American, African, and European scholars of this topic has also reached an all-time high, a development made much more simple and easier by greater travel and the use of the internet, in which numerous web-pages are devoted to Afro-Latin America and the Caribbean. 3 Contemporary Afro-Latins have indeed emerged from the shadows and margins of academia and, to quote the title of a seminal anthology, they are "No Longer Invisible" (Minority Rights Group, 1995). 4 But as yet we still lack a systematic methodology of how to introduce students to the complexities of modern Afro-Latin America and the Caribbean. The field lacks a pedagogical model with an interdisciplinary approach, one that joins history, anthropology, sociology, and gender studies to rediscover the lives of Afro-Latins following abolition.
A critical concern for me is that not enough students are drawn to courses on black Latin America, I suspect, because many instructors take for granted the definition of race they find at home, whether North American, Latin American or European. For readers of this journal, the gradual disappearance of social class from the study of race relations over the past decade poses the challenge of how to construct a Marxist paradigm of how Afro-Latin America and the Caribbean were historically constructed by imperialism and capitalism. Those who teach Latin American studies can see that the future of Post-Castro Cuba, Puerto Rican statehood, relations between Haiti and the Dominican Republic and other regional issues hinge to a large degree on race relations, and demonstrate that for Latin America, to paraphrase W.E.B. Dubois, the color line is the problem of the twenty-first-century; hence they must include it in their curricula, but that race, like gender, is an important modality through which social class is lived. Historians of Afro-Latin America must exit from the academic ghetto to which they are currently confined. Students who take American history can be attracted to an Afro-Latin history course with a little bit of prodding. Students in World History courses, now required at almost every university, can more readily appreciate the multicultural heritage of Latin America once instructors the move beyond the era of African slavery and give substantial coverage to the modern, post-abolition period, covering history, the arts, and black political-cultural movements such as Negritude (Davis, 1995). What is needed urgently is a curriculum for teaching Afro-Latin American history that makes it a richer experience for both instructors and students by exploring the concept of race by and exploding it into multiple particles. In this paper, I will sketch what such an agenda might look like, based on my experiences in organizing a colloquium, "Afro-Latin America", another colloquium on Brazil, starting from the pre-colonial period until the present day, which emphasizes race relations as the linchpin of Brazilian civilization, a graduate course on the history of Cuba built around the historical construction of the working classes through the blend of mestizo, Spanish, African, Creole and mulatto elements, in confrontation with the United States and the neocolonial white ruling class; and my experiment in devising a "Third World" segment for the undergraduate survey class "History of Civilization: 1500 to the Present". The Spectrum of Race and Class in the Americas
One way to demonstrate the historical interweaving of class, race, and revolution is to show the classic 1970 (U.S. release date) film B which takes place on the mythical, but all too historically real, island of Queimada. The film has been criticized by some Latinamericanists for depicting Afro-Latins as passive agents of the colonial and neo colonial powers. This is one reason why I assign Miguel Barnet's Biography of a Runaway Slave as a corrective (Barnet, 1994). The escaped slave Esteban's Montejo's story of how Afro-Cubans fought for their own liberation and then linked up with the mambises (Cubans, of all shades, who fought Spain) makes for an exciting adventure and a lesson on how race and nation in the nineteenth-century were forged in everyday life, on the plantation and the battlefield. Others see Bum as a period piece; the cinematographic incarnation of dependency theory, and a parable of Third World revolution with little meaning for today's student audience. These charges are debatable, but I employ Gillo Pontecorvo's film precisely because it is open to so many political interpretations and yields a flood of discussion questions: what divisions of race, caste and gender exist on Queimada that perpetuate dependence on outside powers? How can these divisions be overcome? The film argues that only revolution can destroy neocolonialism, but what kind of revolution is necessary? Is economic freedom enough, or must the revolution possess a program for racial liberation as well?

...The Caribbean: An Experiment in Race Making  I first tried out my approach to the history of race relations in Latin America and the Caribbean in the world history course I teach, "History of Civilization 11", which goes from 1700 until the end of the twentieth century. The students were asked to review the history of the Caribbean to search for examples of how the subalterns forged and continue to build on a complicated racial history through cultural resistance. In the wake of the European conquest that began with Columbus in 1492, a relationship between masters and slaves began that resulted not in the constant transfusion of numerous traditions derived from indigenous America, Europe, Africa and Asia. The colonial masters (Spanish, English, French, and Dutch) created a world whose crux was the sugar plantation. African and Indian slaves and their mixed-race offspring (mulattos and mestizos) resisted and negotiated to keep their own customs alive while superficially accepting the domination of the whites. The arrival of immigrants from
China and the Indian sub-continent in the nineteenth-century added one more strain. Out of this admixture arose a distinct Caribbean identity, which anthropologist Fernando Ortiz, alluding to the Cuban national soup, was first to dub the nature of New World plantation societies, which like his favorite dish, contains indigenous, African and European ingredients (Benitez-Rojo, 1996: 53). The master class carved out the Caribbean into rival spheres of influence: Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic form the Hispanic bloc; Haiti, Guadeloupe, and Martinique compose the French zone; Jamaica, Barbados, Trinidad and the Windward and Leeward islands make up the English contingent; the Dutch Antilles round out the picture; yet whether Latin or Anglo Saxon the conquerors shared certain cultural characteristics, derived from the need to protect the sugar plantation complex, that they passed on to their descendants: a monolithic religion (Catholicism, Anglicanism, Dutch Protestantism) preaching sharp notions of social status; military, political and religious power invested in a planter class which identified more closely with its metropolitan motherland than with the New World; and, finally, a formal ban on race-mixture, but often observed in the breach, making it possible for mulattos and mestizos to attain a degree of social acceptance unimaginable in the United States. All the Caribbean islands held black and mulatto majority populations by the nineteenth-century, and the culture of the masters could not remain undiluted. Today, even white upper-class families attend religious ceremonies conducted in praise of African deities or practice the game of cock fighting learned from the Indians; both denounced by the officers of church and state.

The most devastating legacy of the European conquest was ethnocide, the complete eradication of the Carib, Arawak and other indigenous peoples who occupied the islands until end of the fifteenth century. The Indoamerican culture, however, was not entirely wiped out. It survives today in place names such as Guanabacov,, in Cuba and the straw-patched hut called a *bohio*, which gives shelter to peasant farmers. Some Caribbean Indian gods, transformed into saints, have also entered the folk religions of the islands. The African culture of the Caribbean is preserved in its purest form in Haiti, composing one half of the island of Hispaniola. The religion called voodoo, which involves ritual magic and the physical possession of believers
by spirits, can be traced directly to the West Coast of Africa. The Haitian people, nearly all descended from slaves imported by the French and Spanish, have also developed their own language, Creole which preserves a largely African vocabulary while using French grammar. The other half of Hispaniola, The Dominican Republic, represents the best example of a Caribbean mulatto culture, blending African with European. Race-mixture has gone on for so long and to such an extent that nearly every Dominican qualifies as a mulatto. African languages have ceased to exist but Dominican Spanish carries its own Creole inflection. Voodoo here blends almost perfectly with Roman Catholicism, producing a cult of saints to whom believers attribute magical powers without invoking their African origin. The Anglo-Caribbean culture is exceptionally interesting. Two elements make the English-speaking Caribbean islands stand out from the rest. One is an Anglophile elite that regardless of skin color turns its eyes to London and tries to recreate the glory days of the British Empire in miniature form, whether in playing the game of cricket or strict adherence to mainstream British Protestantism. This fixation with the colonial metropolis has resulted in a more disparaging attitude towards race-mixture, although a not insignificant portion of the population is mulatto. The poems of Nobel-Prize winning author Derek Walcott cannily reconstruct the dilemma of race and culture in the English-speaking islands. An Afro-American culture survives here largely in opposition to the elite culture, as evidenced by the continued popularity of reggae music and religious sects such as the Rastafarians in Jamaica. The other unique feature of the Anglo-Caribbean is the sizeable presence of generations of women and men descended from migrants drawn from pre-independence India (including what are now Pakistan and Bangladesh). Tom between nostalgia for a homeland most have never known and a language and set of customs imposed by the British, East Indians in the Caribbean have produced their own subculture, mining elements of the Hindu, Moslem and English elements of their heritage. In the novels and essays of Trinidad-born author V.S. Naipaul the contradictions of East Indian identity in the New World are beautifully exposed (Knight, 1990). One resource I have found useful for illustrating the complexity of race, class and culture in the Caribbean is the popular Jamaican film, The Harder They Come (1973). Fans of reggae music will recognize the title from the best-selling
soundtrack composed by star Jimmy Cliff and others, but what makes the film invaluable is how it dissects the contradiction, conflict and sometimes symbiotic relationship between light-skinned rulers who drive fancy Jaguars and conk their hair, and the Afro-Jamaican majority, descendants of slaves, who form the working class. Black Jamaicans assert a separate racial identity through Africanizing evangelical Christianity, making their own music--reggae, inventing a new Afro-centric religion --- Rastafarianism, cultivating and smoking Gania or marijuana, and hailing the exploits of the outlaw hero of the film, Ivan Martin, who defies the oppressor's attempt to treat him like a "slave, puppet, and clown".

Afro-Latin America: Identity and Resistance Why have some Afro-Latin populations taken to politics to vent their grievances against white racism while others have remained on the political sidelines, sublimating discontent? Historians, sociologists, and anthropologists specializing in Latin America have proposed numerous typological constructs that would explain the means and ends of white domination in the Western Hemisphere by envisioning a spectrum that that runs from societies where repression and exclusion prevail as the principal means to contain black aspirations for equality, to the other extreme where inclusion and co-optation prove more efficacious. Obviously, no society would in reality fit either ideal, but the model for the first case would be the United States and the second Brazil. Using the United States as the starting reference point and foil for Latin American race relation is a spurious enterprise to begin with, but it does spark discussion. Yet, the differences in approaches to maintaining white rule in the New World should not be overstated; at both extremes and points in between a combination of legal and extra-legal force, accommodation, and limited social mobility, is practiced by the ruling classes to defuse black protest. The Minority Rights Group of Great Britain suggests distinguishing between political systems where one racial or ethnic group claims exclusive right to represent the entire nation (The United States, Puerto Rico, The Dominican Republic); those where elites of dubious pedigree promote the myths of "racial democracy" as a way of appeasing minorities (Brazil, pre-Castro Cuba, Colombia, Venezuela); and still others where numerous racial and ethnic groups share political and economic power more or less equally, through contestation or cooperation, a situation found in the
Anglophone circum-Caribbean (Belize, Guyana) but not in Latin America. (Minority Rights Group: 6-8) While at first there appears nothing controversial about this system of classification, a critical glance reveals that the criteria the authors utilize is still based on the official, i.e., the white ruling class view of history, where race relations are determined by decisions made by elites on whether and how to include non-whites in the nation. A more useful typology, in my point of view, examines history from the bottom up, weighing the factors of language, geography, residence, gender, race-mixture, the post-emancipation economy, and the white response to the entrenchment of black society; all must be analyzed to explicate whence black resistance to white domination originated, and in what form, whether through culture (religion; arts; defending family life) or organized politics. Coercion and co-optation, in this view, rather than being ruling class strategies formulated A . . , in reality form a diverse set of policies forced upon the dominant groups by the degree of the militancy of the subaltern. This method reintroduces social and cultural history into the debate over New World race relations, not by having class obliterates race but by acknowledging that being black or white or mulatto is a not a condition but a relation of power that is lived in a different manner according to class rankings. A tremendous problem that confronts the instructor of Afro-Latin history is nomenclature. The very words "Afro-Latin" or "Afro-Cuba", "Afro-Brazilian", etc. are of relatively recent vintage, at least in North American academia, and I am wary of using them anachronistically. Another paradox is that these words may have a different political meaning when used in North America rather than in Latin America and the Caribbean. Thus "Afro-Cuba" can be traced back to the nineteenth-century, alluding to the growing mulatto presence on the island and hopes for future biracial unity, but today the government of Fidel Castro considers it a combustible term, denoting separateness between the descendants of the two races. The words Negro and Negra, might at first sound seem empty of pejorative connotations, especially for visitors to Latin America from the United States, who are. accustomed too a much more violent use of linguistics in race relations. Nevertheless, such seemingly innocuous catchwords can hide racism by sublimating prejudice and reducing the category of Afro-Latin- to skin color. Negrito and negrita may be used by whites
towards blacks affectionately or in a condescending tone, depending on the
meeting place, the wealth and social status of those present, and the political
pretensions of the speaker. Sometimes even whites will call one other by these
diminutives, implying a child-like character to the non-present black man or woman
Likewise, social class and geography may be read into racial terminology. In Brazil,
the word *caipira*, referring to an individual of the rural poor masses, does not
necessarily ascribe a racial identity to the subject when uttered in the Northeast,
but conveys a double-meaning in the Southeast, implying that the bearer is not
only poor but also mulatto. The Puerto Rican slang term for peasant or rural worker has been gi
white-laced izua-yabara shirt worn to the enjoyment of tobacco, was born in the
sixteenth century, and borrowed freely from Europe, Indoamerica and Africa, but is
today officially designated "mestizo" (Stephens, 1998). Geography, topography,
and even climate and subsoil can influence the configuration of race and class.
Three case histories drive this point home. Peter Wade's 1993 study of the
Afro-Colombian population of the Chocó region makes a persuasive case that the
black inhabitants of this isolated mountain-valley zone came to see their common
interests in political opposition to the white elites only when migration in search of
work to Medellín and other cities of the interior transformed the black women and
men of the Pacific Coast temporarily from peasants into informal laborers, exposing
them to a racism based on color as well as geography. Interestingly,
Afro-Colombians were granted civil rights by the constitution of 1991 based on the
basis of both territoriality, i.e., traditionally black regions of the country, and skin
color (Wade, 1993). By way of contrast, the absence of any important physical
barriers to national integration in Cuba proved an enormous boon to the forging of
common economic and political interests among blacks and whites. No major
rivers, mountain ranges or other natural obstacles block communication and
transportation. Before the nineteenth century blacks were dispersed throughout the
island as laborers on tobacco farms and livestock ranches. The transition to
large-scale plantations at the end of the eighteenth century was not centered in
one region but occurred in all the provinces because the climate and soil of Cuba
allowed for sugar production, to one degree or another, in every province, and the
split between Orientales (Eastern) and Occidentales (Western) planters over the
abolition of slavery in the mid nineteenth-century hampered but did not fatally splinter the rebel ranks fighting for both abolition and independence (Knight, 1970: 67ff). Brazil represents an example of how race, class, and geography can demobilize the Afro-Latin population. The concentration of large numbers of blacks in the Northeast region of the country, particularly in the state of Bahía, has given the terms Nordestino and Bahiano a pejorative racial connotation when used by Brazilian whites. As any one who has visited the country, or read the novels of Jorge Amado can attest, Bahia's centuries-old reputation as the "capital of Black Brazil, exhibits the regional and racial pride of its residents, but this factor has also had negative consequences for Afro-Brazilians. The classic plantation-complex slavery found in the Northeast hindered the formation of both race and class identities, and ensured the victory of religious and cultural forms of resistance over politics. (Butler, 1998)

Even in those regions of Brazil where more "capitalistic" property relations prevailed, Afro-Brazilian political consciousness was slow to develop, a point driven home by Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Octavio Ianni in their analysis of race relations in the city of Florionopolis in the state of Rio de Janeiro during the 1950s (Cardoso and Ianni, 1960). The interconnection of race, class, geography, and culture is also evident in the case of Rio de Janeiro. From the 1930s onward Rio was inundated by hundreds of thousands of mostly Afro-Brazilian migrants from the interior who went on to form the core of the city's subproletariat --temporary laborers who toiled in menial occupations at subminimum wages, but who nevertheless performed a vital function to the city by lowering salaries for the entire working class. The failure of the city to incorporate them into the formal labor market forced many to abandon the search for tenement housing and instead move to the hills and suburbs and construct, favelas--squatter settlements that by 1960 housed the majority of Carioca (resident of Rio de Janeiro) blacks and mulattos. The spread of favelas throughout the city and into metropolitan Rio followed the movement of industrial jobs from downtown to the suburbs and to flourishing middle class neighborhoods such as Leblon and Copacabana. Ironically, this suburbanization of industry rearranged previous patterns of segregation in Rio by moving many Afro-Brazilians closer to the white population. Squatter
settlements, especially those erected after the war, were likely to spring up where prosperous whites built their homes and managed their factories. Rio thus acquired its own corner of "Black Brazil": the favelas came to be associated in the white mind with Afro-Brazilian life (though typically a shantytown might population might be one-third white), and the terms favelado (male squatter) and favelada (female squatter) became code words for the black underclass (Pinto, 1998). But favelados fighting to preserve their homes against removal by the city government and the real estate companies who coveted their terrain took their political identity from residential status rather than social class or race, preventing any possible unity between themselves and the organized labor movement or Afro-Brazilian political organizations. A New Look at Race, Gender, and Social Class Rather than trot out the tired triad of class-race-gender, how might these categories be deconstructed to grant students a more subtle vision of race-making? If we examine the ruling classes first, we note that class and race formation must go together in building a hegemonic bloc, and during the post-colonial era planters in the sugar-growing regions of Latin America and the Caribbean had differential capacities to define themselves as white vis-a-vis the black subaltern classes. Economic fortune, whether boom or bust, the pretext of a foreign "enemy" onto whom Negrophobia could be projected (Haiti played this role for the planters of the Dominican Republic; Jamaica suited nicely for Cuba and Central America), land distribution patterns by race, the presence of black migrant workers, whom allegedly stole jobs from locals, begetting an alliance between planters and trade unions composed of workers dubbed "white" by the state, the existence of an indigenous population, or even the legacy of such, which could become par-, of an intellectual and political program of imagining a community without blacks, only "Creoles" and mestizos all these factors came into play in societies where class struggle became entangled with racial conflict in manners more complicated than during the colonial period (Chomsky and Lauria-Santiago, 1998). After abolition Afro-Latins, women and men, faced not only a political and economic threat to their existence but a cultural and sociological one as well; their very raison d'être was called into question through elite attempts to "whiten" the
region through European immigration, the promotion of race-mixture between light-skinned blacks and those higher in the social and racial scale, and the denigration of the African element in history. This impulse to drive out the Afro-Latin from the nation was reinforced at the start of the twentieth century. From the elite point of view the growing number of blacks and mulattos foretold the transformation of their own nations into a "second Haiti". The response from whites took the form of an intellectual and political assault on the idea that Latin America was truly a multiracial society. Pseudo-scientific apologias were written to justify why Argentina or Brazil or Peru should remain white. Racist politicians, along with powerful economic interests, promoted a "whites only" immigration policy to stem the flow of Haitians and English-speaking West Indians into Cuba, Panama, and Costa Rica, among other nations. Black migrant laborers from the Caribbean were stigmatized with the taint of "voodoo" and charged with instigating anti-white racism (Graham, 1990). The question of how to classify and count blacks, whites, and mulattos in Latin America has always perplexed historians, but provides fuel for classroom debate. The mere existence of a third group between blacks and whites, no matter what its size, tells nothing about the reception of that population by the rest of society, and the historian must seek out the precise balance of forces that promote or hinder race-mixture --- patterns of power and codes of meaning which are forever evolving. The prevalence of mulattos among the population of some countries can be useful to the ruling classes in containing demands for racial equality by blacks, but the mulatto may be defined in a different manner by the lower classes, allowing for inter-race unity. Fernando Ortiz, in his monumental *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar* saw the mulatto more as a symbolic political ideal than the product of miscegenation. Cuba became a mulatto nation, a process he dubbed "transculturation", by conscientious political and economic decisions made by both rulers and subjects. For Ortiz the combination of capitalism, imperialism and racism would spell the death of Cuba unless *cubanidad* (the forging of the Cuban nation) was reconstituted on a new basis, which required both racial unity and class struggle (Ortiz, 1995). Only a few feminist scholars have bothered to study pre-conquest forms of gender relations in Africa using class analysis (Beneria, 1982).
received more attention. The transculturation of Iberian, Indo-American, and African peoples that produced Latin American civilization impacted on Afro-Latin women and legislation enacted by the Iberian monarchs to regulate their New World subjects prohibited the participation of women in political office, penalized wives but not husbands for adultery, and gave fathers the powers of the Roman paterfamilias. But the need to enforce European domination created a new climate in which to experiment with gender relations, now complicated by the factors of race and social class. Enslaved African females partook of multiple strategies to improve their wretched lot, learning European languages, religion and social customs much faster than male slaves. For this reason they were more often manumitted by their owners. Free black women in Spanish America and Brazil owned taverns, restaurants and inns (Kuznesof, 1986).

The Latin American wars for independence from the Iberian crowns and the growing abolition movement had mixed consequences for black and mulatta, women. The liberal assault on the Catholic Church weakened patriarchy through the elevation of individual property rights over corporate privileges and legal reforms inspired by the American and French revolutions loosened the bonds that had trapped women inside the family. Many of the new republics entrusted the registration of marriage to the national government instead of the clergy. The age of majority for women to marry without parental permission was lowered, patriarchal authority restricted to the nuclear family, and fathers lost the right to punish adulterous daughters. Widowed mothers, separated wives, and single women "of good reputation" were granted the pater potestas over children. In some cases mulattas and women of dubious lineage could take advantage of the contradictions between Church teachings and state laws on race-mixture to "marry upwards" and become officially a part of white society. But married women of mixed race still needed the husband's permission to perform public activities, and the sexual double standard was reinforced by making adulterous behavior by the wife grounds for divorce while a man's extramarital affairs had to cause "public scandal" in order for her to seek legal redress (Martinez-Alier, 1989). The modernization of agriculture in the nineteenth century actually degraded the status of many employed single women and working wives. Coffee production in the
Brazilian state of Sao Paulo provides one example. Wage labor broke the solidarity inside the household of men, women and children, and between households and kin groups. For blacks in Brazil modernization proved economically and socially disastrous. Agricultural occupations previously held by Afro-Brazilians in the Northeast were lost in the transformation of the plantation into the capital-intensive sugar factory. At the same time, immigrants denied them a place in the burgeoning industrial centers of Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. Black women, who had worked in the plantation fields or served as domestics saw their jobs vanish. Many turned to prostitution, and the post-abolition period witnessed a decline in their social position vis-A-vis black males. But marriage rates did not differ significantly from those of whites, far more black households stuck together than previously supposed by historians, and the nuclear family seems to have become the norm by the turn of the century (Andrews, 1991). The movement to emancipate women politically in the twentieth century ran afoul of the contradictions of social class and race. On a continent where the political rights of the underprivileged were regularly violated, gaining the vote for women of color seemed not only unrealistic but also futile. Feminist ranks were divided as to whether enfranchisement should be an end in itself, or only the first step in securing reformist legislation to uplift both sexes and all races. Middle and upper class women favored a campaign solely designed to secure the vote, while socialist feminists tried to link this cause with working class demands for labor legislation designed to protect women.

Regardless of their social background Latin American feminists, keeping in mind bourgeois public opinion, cast the struggle for political rights for women in terms of the defense of motherhood and public morality, thereby reinforcing machista stereotypes of the female as weak and in need of protection. Black and mulatta women were deemed more in need of social assistance than political representation. Put, campaigns by white feminists for the protection of prostitutes -often resulted in their having to consider race, and not just class and gender, in defending their clients and re-interpreting laws against prostitution in racial terms (Stoner, 1991). The urban working class expanded tremendously as a result of the rural exodus that followed the Great Depression of 1929, but Afro-Latin women benefited little. In many ways proletarianization further undermined their social
position. The extended family that once offered nominal protection to working women gradually vanished, and the nuclear family was under siege. Among the migrant poor living in the city marriage was much more unstable than in countryside. It was not uncommon for a husband to have two families, the "official" one left behind in the village of his birth, featuring a legal wife and children, and the "unofficial" one formed in the city through consensual unions and religious marriage without civil ceremony. The "unofficial" family functioned much like the legally constituted family, but with a greater degree of separation, polygamy, polyandry, and informal divorce. Looser family arrangements were partly the result of the absence of property, which eliminated the need to preserve any inheritance. Geographical mobility by workers also undermined the family unit. Employers valued workers for their capacity to shift from one job site to next, weakening any sense of identification with the home. Most Afro-Latin women plunged into a subproletariat composed of underpaid workers with only sporadic participation in the economy. Their usual occupations were found in domestic services (maids, laundresses, cooks) and street sales. The surge of industry after 1940 in the leading economies of the region---Mexico, Brazil, Argentina---enlarged their ranks and subsequent periods of economic growth which exaggerated income divisions between rural and urban areas brought new recruits. The combination of transience of employment and rising inflation in housing and rent, forcing many of the poor to invent their own forms of shelter, led to the growth of female-headed households inside the shantytown populations of the great Latin American cities by the 1960s (Pino, 1997). The Politics of Race and Racial Politics The prevailing wisdom among many historians holds that the betrayal of the hopes raised by the wars for independence and the confusion of who was "black" and "white" produced a withdrawal of Afro-Latins from organized politics and labor struggles after abolition. One recent example of this view is Anthony Marx's Making Race and Nation: A Comparison of the United States, South Africa and Brazil. (Marx 1997). Marx argues that where white elites remained at odds in the aftermath of intra-race war and t-aced the possibility of strong black resistance they reunited by enacting legal segregation to exclude non-whites (the United States, South Africa), whereas in those societies where white solidarity went unperturbed unofficial discrimination
and black political apathy prevailed. In the United States and South Africa black political organization was the unintended byproduct of discriminatory legislation, and political mobilization ultimately proved successful in abolishing Jim Crow and Apartheid, whereas in Brazil the absence of laws excluding blacks from employment, housing, and voting hampered the growth of an Afro-Brazilian civil rights movement. Recent scholarship challenges this simplistic and unwarranted assumption of Afro-Latin political passivity. Cuba offers the most dramatic example of black political protest at the start of the twentieth century. Rebecca Scott's research, on race, labor, and citizenship in the district of Cienfuegos from abolition in 1886 until 1909 finds that the Liberation of 1895, and that Afro-Cuban workers actively resisted attempts at disenfranchisement made by the American occupation authorities and the first republican government under president Tomás Estrada Palma after independence in 1902 (Scott, 1999). When their demands for legal equality and compensation for participating in the independence wars went unheeded, Afro-Cubans forged their own political party, the Partido Independiente de Color (PIC), founded in 1907. The P.I.C. was not envisioned by its leaders as a separatist organization, nor was membership open only to blacks. Rather, the Party aimed at proto-affirmative action programs that would secure proportional Afro-Cuban enrollment in the distribution of public jobs, and legislation making it easier for blacks to be elected to national office. Police records from Havana and Oriente provinces show the P.I.C. enjoyed a multi-class following. While army veterans filled top party ranks along with state employees, school teachers, tailors and, shoemakers were also represented. (Robaina, 1990) The savage suppression of the party by state authorities in 1912, with the connivance of the U.S., which dispatched warships and troops to Oriente did not drive Afro-Cubans out of politics; rather many turned towards either the Cuban Communist Party (PCC) or the left-leaning Trade Union Confederation (CTQ to press for both labor and civil rights (Helg, 1995; Carr; 1996). Other Afro-Latin nations lagged behind Cuba, but none showed a complete absence of black organized politics. The first significant black political organization in post-abolition Brazil, the Frente Negra. Brasileira (FNB) was fon-ned in 1931 and transformed into a political party in 1936. Like the PIC, it aimed at full integration, but Frente leaders understood this to mean some sort of
mystical harmony between all Brazilians rather than black and white socio-economic, equality. Instead of turning towards the political left, the FNB evolved during the 1930s in the direction of a quasi-fascist organization that mimicked dictator Getúlio Vargas' own taste for the theatrics of European totalitarianism. Significantly, whereas the Cuban PIC had a largely working-class base, the FNB mainly attracted black middle-class intellectuals (Hanchard, 1994). Afro-Cubans joined the Communist Party in large numbers after the Great Depression, but the Brazilian Communist Party (PCB) failed to gain any significant following among Afro-Brazilians. In 1935, as black Cubans were flocking to the PCC in opposition to the regime of Fulgencio Batista, the Brazilian party plotted the overthrow of Vargas under the banner of the National Liberation Alliance (ALN). Remarkably, the Alliance manifesto made no mention of the multiracial character of Brazilian society or the need to fight racism. Likewise, the Communist-directed General Workers' Confederation (CGT) founded in 1929 and headquartered in São Paulo, made no race-based demands in its platform nor did it recruit Afro-Brazilians in any noticeable numbers (Pacheco, 1984). In Venezuela, blacks, mulattos and mestizos, whose support had been courted by caudillos from José Antonio Páez after independence until the demise of Juan Vicente Gómez in 1935, formed the backbone of Romulo Gallego's Acción Democrática (AD) party in the 1940s, lending some credence to Venezuela's claim to racial democracy by way of café.con leche national origins. But appeals by AD for support from blacks, mulattos, and mestizos had to be couched in the coded language of "masses versus elites," less any person of color seriously question the myth and frighten the Creole elite (Wright, 1990). It was not only champions of democracy who deliberately conflated race and class based demands for political change during the first half of the twentieth century. Championing the cause of "El Pueblo" in Spanish America and "0 Povo in Brazil have always had a racial tinge, assuming that those who fall under that category are dark-skinned while "Los Priviligiados" (The Privileged) and "Os Elitês" (The Elites) are descended from the European conquerors. Such language was used by several populist dictators of the 1930s and 1940s to win support away from the left and the middle-class political opposition (Conniff, 1981; Whitney, 2000). The student of Afro Latin America must be made to appreciate that black women and
men from Cuba to Brazil to Peru have supported Communists, Socialists, Fascists, Christian Democrats and just about every other variety of political ideology, but rarely on the basis of race-specific demands. Appeals for Afro-Latin support by white politicians required the elaboration of a complex lexicon that would draw black votes by promising socio-economic amendments that explicitly prioritized social class, and implicitly addressed race. Yet, no one who aspires to public office in urbanized societies with large numbers of Afro-Latins, from slum-dwellers to middle class, can afford to be totally color-blind. Recently, in Brazil, some politicians, black and white, have pushed for an agenda for socio-economic change to exclusively benefit the black community, such as affirmative action or legal punishment for discrimination (Skidmore, 1993). Black political mobilization, in the courts, congressional halls and in the streets, is on the rise not only in Brazil, where Benedita da Silva sits in the Federal Senate, a black caucus of one, but also Colombia, where blacks, many of whom formerly accepted their position as an undifferentiated mass buried inside the country's "mestizo" population, have begun to mobilize as a distinct racial group akin to the indigenous population, and Central America, among the Garifuna ("Black Carib") populations of Nicaragua, Honduras and Belize (da Silva, 1999; Arocha, 1998; Whitten and Corr, 2001).

Lessons from the Classroom  In teaching modern Afro-Latin America and the Caribbean the instructor must reject the notion that "what's past is prologue", that race evolves according to set patterns easily traceable to culture, religion, racial ideology, or economics. The simplistic dichotomy which holds that in some New World societies race trumped class while in others class vanquished race must be replaced with a more sophisticated understanding of how both race and class are constantly being remade from above and below. Only in this way will we be able to reach out to our colleagues in related fields --- from anthropology to music--and help persuade them to incorporate Afro-Latin America in their courses. Only by this approach will we draw students on campuses in the United States, where African, and Hispanic and Afro-Hispanic and Caribbean students are still underrepresented and their pedagogical needs are often ignored, to take classes that deal with Latin America in which the instructor moves beyond tales of conquest, slavery and a seemingly intractable racism of Latin American society and instead paints a more
volatile picture of race relations, for good or ill, perhaps a mirror of the United States in the twenty-first century. "Afro-Latin America", which I taught for the first time in Fall. of 1998, drew more students than usually attend my upper division Latin America classes. Enrollment came to just under twenty students. Kent State University has very few Latino students, and none took part in this class. Interestingly, the single largest contingent of pupils was African-American women undergraduates, and one adult woman from Belize who was teaching Caribbean literature in Pan-African Studies. No African-American males enrolled, a major disappointment, since I had drawn some to my class on the history of Brazil. Focusing on the social and political life of the African population of Spanish America from the wane of slavery in the nineteenth century until the present day, I chose to underline the formation of largely (but not exclusively) white dominant classes and black working-class resistance to racism; race-mixture in multicultural societies, and how class can be utilized to enter or exit a certain racial group, thus miscegenation is crucial but insufficient in creating myths of "racial democracy"; and how employment, political participation, and family organization potentially both empower and marginalize Afro Latin women. The course alternated between presentations by the students on the geography, culture, and historical background of a particular country, taken from the chapters in No Longer Invisible, and class discussions based on essays dealing with the readings.

Bibliography

The bibliography for this article is available from Dr. Raschio. Due to several errors in the scanning process, it was not possible to include the bibliography with the actual document.