



The Latin American Identity and the African Diaspora: Ethnogenesis in Context

Antonio Olliz-Boyd

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There is extensive research found both in books and articles on the various topics of Afro Latinism/Afro Hispanism that is directed mainly at the non-native. Nonetheless, one still notices either cultural confusion or political reluctance to accept the identity of Blackness that the Latin American native lives with--for himself or for others--on a daily basis. For the average Cuban, Venezuelan, Peruvian, and so forth, along with their Latin counterparts, Blackness in racial terms surfaces as a matter of degrees of African-relatedness that is then counterbalanced by degrees of European and/or Amerindian genomic components. It is only in non-native cultures that one encounters such disparate comparisons as "statistics for Hispanics versus statistics for Blacks." But is it not possible to find persons that are ethn racially Black included in the demographics for Hispanics? The overarching aim of this book, then, is to determine whether it is possible to perceive a constituency within the Latin American whole who is also an integral part of the African Diaspora. It examines the concept of African-relatedness within the totality of the Latin American sphere--not just in one isolated country or region--through a careful process of literary analysis. By exploring the works of Latin American novelists, poets, and lyricists, this study shows how they creatively expose their most intimate feelings on ethnic Blackness through a semiotic reliance on the inner voice. At the same time, the reader becomes a witness to the writers' associations with a sense of Africanness as it artistically affects them and their communities in their formulations of self-identity. Unique to this volume is the scholarly presentation of the presence of a group of people in Ghana, West Africa, who owe their *raison d'être* as a clan to their ancestral origins in Brazil. Having been accepted and received by an endemic tribe of what was called the Gold Coast at an historical moment in the nineteenth century, a community of escaped slaves and deported ex-slaves from Brazilian bondage regrouped as an ethnic whole. The reality of their existence gives new meaning to the term African Diaspora. To this day, their descendants identify themselves as displaced Latin Americans in Africa. Undoubtedly, both this surprising feature of Latin Americans returning to the African continent and the book as a whole will stimulate further discussion on the issue of who is Black and who is Hispanic as well as generate continued, in-depth research on the relationship between two continents and their shared genotypology. The Latin American Identity and the African Diaspora is an important acquisition for collections in Latin American studies, literary criticism, Hispanic studies, ethnic studies, cultural anthropology, and the African diaspora.

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