

the flows of the diaspora. Hence the ideas of Mother Africa and Picasso. Hence the bucolic, idealized *andeyo* confronting the harsh clang and clash of Miami or New York. Hence the compositional structures that are grammatically Kreyol or French or English or a personal combination of two of them or all of them.

The few fully abstract works included in this book partake of another distinctive characteristic of Haitian art whether done in Haiti or in diaspora, and that is the use of color. Haitian art historian Michel Philippe Lerebours once spoke to me of that aspect of the art, asserting that from the earliest years there was something about the way Haitian artists use color that is exceptional. I believe he is right and that it is exemplified in this book right across all the various genres and styles. It goes beyond the usual description of Haitian art as "colorful." Yes, so is Mexican art or Indonesian art, but in a different way. What is the difference? When you read this book you can decide for yourself. What I see is a consistent play of color that results in a particular kind of resonance. It occurs with groups of bright, clear hues; or groups of deep-toned hues; warm or cool; primary, secondary, or tertiary; high or low contrast. Whatever the artist's palette of selected hues may be, the resulting combination in the works of accomplished artists like those in this book will be echoically resonant. There is a technical way to measure and describe this, but no matter. Go see for yourself. The resonant works of these sixteen artists place Haiti anywhere they are. Haiti is here, there, and everywhere.

***Dominican Cultures: The Making of a Caribbean Society.* Edited by Bernardo Vega and translated by Christine Ayorinde. Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener, 2007. ISBN: 978-1-55876-435-4. 259 pp. \$26.95 paper.**

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The book *Dominican Cultures: The Making of a Caribbean Society* is an English translation of the 1981 *Ensayos sobre Cultura Dominicana*, a collection of lectures presented from 1977 to 1981 at the Museo del Hombre Dominicano in Santo Domingo. As mentioned in the preface to *Dominican Cultures*, the original book, *Ensayos*, is widely used as a standard reference for cultural studies in the Dominican Republic. Bernardo Vega, the director of the Museo del Hombre Dominicano and editor of the original collection of essays, explains the impetus for *Dominican Cultures* this way: "Today, a sizeable proportion of the population of the Dominican Republic lives outside the country, particularly in North America. For this reason, it is

time to sponsor an English edition which will undoubtedly enable people in the Dominican Republic to better understand both their own culture and that of their forebears" (vii). To this end, *Dominican Cultures* accomplishes Vega's larger goal of increasing the amount of information available in English on Dominican cultural studies. However, as the publisher's note points out, *Dominican Cultures* reflects the same documentation inadequacies that are present in the original *Ensayos*. "Like the book from which it is translated, it reproduces the lectures as closely as possible. Because they were not necessarily accompanied by full documentation when they were presented, the documentation in this edition is, in some places, inevitably inconsistent or even missing" (ix). The translation itself from Spanish into English also suffers from a certain awkwardness in places that readers may stumble through.

*Dominican Cultures* is divided into seven chapters: "The Indigenous Inheritance in Dominican Culture" by Bernardo Vega; "Commentary on 'The Indigenous Inheritance in Dominican Culture'" by Marcio Veloz Maggiolo; "The Spanish Inheritance in Dominican Culture" by Carlos Dobral; "The African Inheritance in Dominican Culture" by Carlos Esteban Deive; "The Hato and the Conuco: The Emergence of Creole Culture" by Rubén Silié; "Immigration in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries and Its Contribution to Dominican Culture" by José del Castillo Pichardo; and "Modernization and Change in the Dominican Republic" by Frank Moya Pons. In terms of structure and content, the chapters by Vega, Veloz Maggiolo, Dobral, and Deive follow similar templates. These chapters detail lengthy lists of contributions to Dominican culture that the writers attribute to a specific cultural group. For example, Vega and Veloz Maggiolo outline more than 100 indigenous cultural items ranging from place names, farming techniques, food vocabulary, flora, fauna, and religious practices. In his chapter on Spanish influences, Dobral highlights democratic governing structures, Catholicism, literary and musical forms, art, and architecture as part of Spain's lasting legacy in the Dominican Republic. Deive continues this template in chapter four with dozens of references to African-based taxonomy found in Dominican culture, both past and present.

Deive, however, goes beyond a "laundry list" of names and concepts and begins his chapter by warning against a common error in the analysis of Dominican culture—overly privileging the influence of one cultural group with the purpose of intentionally diminishing the influence of another. Deive explains how this dynamic plays out when bias underpins the characterization of African and Spanish influences on Dominican culture. He writes, "Dominican Hispanophiles rarely speak of black people,

show any interest in them, or study their native cultures and contributions to the Creole culture ... The cloak-and-dagger Africanologists are no less extreme; as intellectuals, they reveal an anticolonial frenzy that makes them move away from anything reeking of Spain, as if anything Spanish were a plague" (87). In these beginning words of chapter four, Deive directly addresses one of the central ideas in understanding the complexities of Dominican culture: How does the African-Spanish (black-white) dynamic influence how Dominicans define their cultural identity? The clear presentation of this question is what may make it possible for *Dominican Cultures* to serve as an introductory reference to Dominican cultural studies for the English-speaking community, which is one of Vega's primary goals for this translated text.

Despite a strong structural similarity in the format of chapters one through four, one should avoid the impression that the authors express precisely the same opinion about the fundamental nature of the Dominican Republic's cultural legacies. Each writer agrees that the indigenous, Spanish, and African populations all influence Dominican cultural identity; however, the writers greatly diverge in opinion in their respective discussions about the inherent nature of cultural identity itself. Dobral makes a lengthy argument for linking specific personality traits to the Spanish legacy. "Three characteristics stand out prominently in the conduct of the Spanish *conquistadores*, and they are the same ones that later emerged in Dominican historical undertakings. They are individualism, ambition and pessimism" (74). He continues later in the chapter with a similar statement. "Two values that are legitimate offsprings of our Spanish ancestry stand out in the Dominican personality: personal courage and honor" (80). In sharp contrast to Dobral, Deive often emphasizes the notion that Dominican culture cannot be neatly characterized as being merely the sum of its parts. "Neither the indigenous culture, nor the Spanish culture, nor the African survived intact in Santo Domingo, as this was prevented by endogenous and exogenous factors. If the black and the indigenous people became partly Hispanicized, then the Spaniard also ended up becoming Africanized and indigenized" (127-128). Undoubtedly, some readers will find certain characterizations to be a puzzling twist on stereotype. For example, "The black contribution is, in some of its aspects, considered marginal and not essential. But the Spaniards in fact bequeathed to Dominicans for centuries many of the negative characteristics such as aggressiveness, sadness and laziness, typically attributed to the black element or the Taino element of Dominican idiosyncrasy" (86). With this statement, one has to wonder which cultural group Dobral actually intends to privilege and which he intends to disparage.

Rubén Silié's chapter on Creole culture marks a transition in the book's discussion about Dominican cultures—intentionally plural—and Dominican culture—intentionally singular. Here, Silié details ways in which white and black Creole populations negotiated their political, economic, and cultural interests for more than 300 years of Dominican history. "... Creole-ness can be understood as everything produced by the national Dominican society—and is undoubtedly an expression of the two main dimensions that have shaped Dominican idiosyncrasy over time: the white Creoles and the black Creoles, without leaving out the contributions of the indigenous peoples, filtered through the influence of those other elements" (159). Silié's characterization of "creole-ness" as being the essential Dominican self provides a coherent link among the book's previous chapters. Silié also creates an appropriate opening for the book's final two chapters on the cultural impact of immigration and modernization in the Dominican Republic.

The chapters by Del Castillo Pichardo and Moya Pons examine a fundamentally similar topic: what elements stand to shape the state of Dominican culture now and in the future. Chapter five serves as a useful source for understanding the very active role that less-studied immigrants groups have had on Dominican culture. The chapter includes an especially detailed discussion on trading and business immigration among Germans, Italians, Jews, and Arabs, as they are listed in the section title (190). Moya Pons concludes the panorama of the sugar mill industry, road construction, railway construction, and technological advances in weaponry, health care, and manufacturing spurred on by the military presence of the United States. Moya Pons's final chapter positions the reader to begin a further consideration of the profound impact that constant exchange between the United States and the Dominican Republic has on contemporary Dominican culture, and quite possibly bringing the discussion back to an exploration of Dominican cultures—intentionally plural, as the book's title proclaims.

In conclusion, this translation of *Ensayos sobre Cultura Dominicana* certainly reaches its primary goal of bringing a well-known and highly respected text in Spanish to an English-speaking body of readers. However, considering that these readers are likely unfamiliar with the attention and acclaim that *Ensayos* garnered with its first publication in 1981, the presentation of *Dominican Cultures*, on a minor note, would benefit from a richer introduction to the place of *Ensayos* within the historical development of Dominican cultural studies.