

RACE AND THE CRITICAL TRAJECTORY OF *ESPEJO DE PACIENCIA* (1608, 1838) IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

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Abstract: This article examines nineteenth-century citations of Silvestre de Balboa Troya y Quesada's *Espejo de paciencia* (1608, 1838) in Cuban histories and literary anthologies of that period. Although contemporary scholars reference these citations in their study of *Espejo*, they have not questioned the treatment of Salvador Golomón, the poem's enslaved epic hero, in these texts. Doing so not only elucidates concerns regarding race in Cuban nation building reflected in the trajectory of the nineteenth-century citations of the poem but also places race at the very center of any discussion of *Espejo*'s historical and literary authenticity by contemporary critics and scholars alike.

Supposedly written in 1608, *Espejo de paciencia* by Silvestre de Balboa Troya y Quesada (1563–1648?) was not “discovered” by the writer and politician José Antonio Echeverría until 1836. Considered the first literary achievement in Cuba, the poem and accompanying documentation were transcribed into the *Historia de la isla y catedral de Cuba* by Bishop Pedro Agustín Morell de Santa Cruz around 1760. Included was a prologue dedicated to the readers, a *carta-dedicatoria* to Bishop Juan de las Cabezas Altamirano; six sonnets by local townspeople praising Balboa's literary enterprise; and the actual epic poem, which was divided into two cantos with a concluding *motete*.

The first canto narrates the kidnapping of Bishop Juan de las Cabezas Altamirano by French pirates, the paying of his ransom by the townspeople, and the bishop's subsequent release. The blending of local fruits and fauna with mythological figures in this section has led critics to speak of an incipient *criollismo* in the poem (Arrom 1971, 205). The second canto relates the vengeance carried out by the townspeople of Bayamo against the pirates and recounts how the black slave Salvador Golomón kills the leader of the kidnapers, Gilberto Girón. The diversity of the townspeople in the second canto—Spaniards, Portuguese, *indios*, *canarios*, *negros*, and *criollos*—has led not only to multiple interpretations of the multicultural origins of Cuba's supposed first literary achievement but also to questions regarding a possible textual intervention by José Antonio Echeverría

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(for a detailed discussion of the transatlantic impact of *lo canario* on *Espejo*, see Santana 1988; González Sosa 1991; Castro Morales 1994, 1999; Merediz 2009).¹ Some critics concede that as a nationalist and abolitionist, he, along with other members of the Domingo Del Monte group, may have composed either the entire poem or, at a minimum, the stanzas on the black character Salvador.²

Although twentieth- and twenty-first-century critics mention the inclusion of *Espejo de paciencia* in nineteenth-century histories and anthologies, they underestimate the significance of these references in the critical trajectory of the poem. Reviewing these nineteenth-century texts shows that they reflect not only the historical moment in which they were published but also the authors' varying political agendas. Specifically, these citations index race and nation-based politics in Cuban history from a transamerican and transnational perspective. Further, tracing where, when, and how references to *Espejo* occurred in the nineteenth century explains how questions surrounding the authenticity of the first literary achievement in Cuba continue to hinge on the black enslaved hero of the poem, Salvador Golomón. A survey of nineteenth-century references to *Espejo* therefore reveals that the questioning of the authenticity of the poem by contemporary scholarship echoes nineteenth-century concerns regarding race in Cuba.

The origin of the enigma can be traced to 1942, when the authenticity of *Espejo* was first directly questioned in the prologue to a critical edition of *Espejo* compiled by Felipe Pichardo Moya.³ He writes, "Alguna vez se ha supuesto que el *Espejo* pudo ser creación del propio José Antonio Echeverría, o de algún otro escritor cubano de su tiempo, y que la causa de tal mixtificación fuese el deseo de encontrar una vieja literatura cubana, o también, una broma literaria" (Pichardo Moya 1942/1961, 32).⁴ Pichardo Moya (1942/1961, 33n5) then footnotes a conversation with Carolina Poncet y de Cárdenas, who had questioned the authenticity of *Espejo* in an endnote in her 1914 dissertation *El romance en Cuba*. She had written: "De aceptarse—como hasta ahora se ha hecho—la autenticidad de dicha historia, este motete sería la primera composición escrita conservada en Cuba" (Poncet y de Cárdenas 1914, 164n7). Pichardo Moya concedes that, because of the lack of formal education in Cuba in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the authenticity of *Espejo* can be questioned (for arguments refuting the lack of a literary culture in seventeenth-century Cuba, see Castro Morales 1991; Moreno

1. Balboa was born in Las Palmas (Canary Islands) in 1563 and emigrated to Cuba in his late twenties (Castro Morales 1992, 357–59).

2. Echeverría participated in a *tertulia* organized by Domingo Del Monte in Havana. Many of the writers and intellectuals that gathered opposed the slave trade and slavery.

3. The Republican period (1902–1959) witnessed four publications of *Espejo* by Trelles (1927), Carbonell (1929), the Academia de la Historia de Cuba (Paula Coronado 1929), and Pichardo Moya (1942). In literary anthologies and articles published during that period, *Espejo* is referred to on multiple occasions as Cuba's first literary achievement, including mention in oft-cited works by Chacón y Calvo (1913, 1921), Boza Masdival (1917), and Salazar (1929). Referred to as Cuba's first literary achievement in those texts, *Espejo* became integral to the construction of Cuban national culture.

4. Pichardo Moya (1942) speaks of a possible literary joke because Domingo Del Monte had created a fictive text in 1829, crediting it to one Sánchez de Almodovar from 1779 (Saínz 1982 45n18). Joaquín José García likewise referenced a false comedy, *Los buenos en el cielo y los malos en el suelo*, in 1845, crediting it to a Hernando de la Parra. In the nineteenth century, this comedy was erroneously considered Cuba's first theatrical production (Pérez Cabrera 1962, 29–34; Henríquez Ureña 1963, 33–34).

Fraginals 1995; Marrero-Fente 2002, 2008). That said, he then tells the reader that contextualizing *Espejo* in its historical moment affirms that it was written by Balboa and was not simply a literary joke of the Del Monte circle (Pichardo Moya 1942/1961, 32–33). Neither Poncet y de Cardenas nor Pichardo Moya addresses race directly in questioning the authenticity of Balboa's poem; however, when Pichardo Moya signals the possibility of a literary joke by the Del Monte circle, he squarely places race at the center of the enigma.

Like other members of the sugarocracy in Cuba, Domingo Del Monte opposed the slave trade and slavery without supporting outright emancipation. In 1844, he was accused of conspiring to free Cuban slaves and topple Spanish rule in Cuba. Even though this involvement was never proven, in an 1843 letter to his friend, the American diplomat Alexander Hill Everett, Del Monte revealed such a plot led by the British consul in Havana and asked for American intervention. Scholars such as Martínez Carmenate (1997, 323–54) rely on this letter to blame Del Monte for the reprisals of the Spanish authorities against slaves and free blacks known as *La Escalera* (in 1844), in which more than three thousand slaves and free blacks were killed. Martínez Carmenate (1997, 366) explains that, under torture, the free black poet Gabriel de la Concepción, known as Plácido, confessed to Del Monte's involvement in the conspiracy, whereas Juan Francisco Manzano, whose freedom was sponsored by the Del Monte group, unequivocally argued that Del Monte remained uninvolved. Regardless of the rumors, Del Monte left Cuba in 1843 and failed to clear his name until his death in 1853. Consequently, race imbues any association between Del Monte and *Espejo*.

José Antonio Echeverría, a member of the Del Monte circle, left Cuba permanently in 1868 because of his separatist leanings; he died in exile in New York in 1882. Other writers affiliated with Del Monte, such as José María Heredia and Cirilo Villaverde, were separatists or annexationists. Members of this group also wrote pro-abolition literature.⁵ In other words, when Pichardo Moya alludes to a literary joke by the Del Monte circle, the character of Salvador Golomón and his possible fabrication by this group locates race at the very center of the enigma. Likewise, Poncet y de Cárdenas (1914) presents her suspicions regarding *Espejo's* authenticity in *El romance en Cuba*, in which she establishes a literary genealogy of Cuba's nineteenth-century appropriation of the Spanish *romancero* of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In seeking a foundation for Cuban popular poetry, she pursues a Spanish origin to Cuba's poetic heritage, partially reflecting anti-United States attitudes of the time. Because Cuba's war for independence had been thwarted by the American intervention in 1898, leading to what was called a mediated republic, scholars such as Poncet y de Cárdenas aligned themselves with a Spanish cultural heritage to distance themselves from the United States. Yet her position also reflects the fears of some Cuban intellectuals of the large

5. Examples include Tanco y Bosmeniel's (1838/1980) *Petrona y Rosalía*, Suárez y Romero's (1839/1947) *Francisco o las delicias del campo*, and Echeverría's (1839) *Antonelli*. For studies on the paradoxical nature of these pro-abolition novels, see Rivas 1990; Luis 1990; Kutzinski 1993; Williams 1994. Aguirre (1990) delineates the different political positions and varying beliefs regarding slavery and the slave trade of Cuban intellectuals during this era.

number of black Cubans who were integral to the new Cuban Republic, as she blatantly excludes African influence from the development of the same poetic heritage (see Helg 1995; Fuente 2001; Duno Gottberg 2003). Consequently, race, through its absence, is conspicuously present in her endnote on *Espejo*.

Questions regarding a textual intervention by nineteenth-century nationalists continue to emerge in the study of the poem, reflecting, as I show, the enduring presence of race in recent scholarship on *Espejo*. For example, Saínz (1982) believes that only two stanzas—those that petition Salvador's freedom—are apocryphal; González Echevarría (1987) ascribes any Cubanness in *Espejo* to the critic's desire and/or political agenda, insisting that a baroque perspective is what causes the so-called Cuban characterizations in the poem; García del Pino (1975), Marrero (1972–1976), Castro Morales (1991, 1994), Aguirre (1990), and Rivas (1992) elucidate new documentation proving the authenticity of the events and characters in *Espejo*; Goergen (1993, 1998) affirms there is no intervention but then concedes that it may be possible because petitioning a slave's freedom was atypical in 1608; Marrero-Fente (2002) uses the form of the epic and its need for a hero to prove that the request for Salvador's freedom was a necessary measure by Balboa to adhere to epic norms;⁶ and Esteban (2005) goes as far as suggesting that one can replace *Espejo* with *La Florida*, an epic poem from 1598, to base Cuban literature on a work whose origin is not disputed. Finally, Cruz-Taura (2009, 62–65) notes that a textual intervention may have occurred by Echeverría because Balboa should have petitioned the bishop for Salvador's freedom instead of petitioning the townspeople of Bayamo to purchase Salvador's freedom, the former reflecting nineteenth-century norms and concerns.⁷

Three foundational documents fuel the poem's enigma. No one knew of the poem's existence until Ramón de Palma published "creative" fragments of *Espejo* in *Aguinaldo Habanero* in 1837. In "Un episodio de la historia de la isla de Cuba," Palma historically contextualizes the poem when he relates the history of piracy and contraband in the Spanish colonies. He begins to "create" the story of *Espejo* when he describes the pirate ship, naming it *El Gavilán*. After describing the pirate Girón, the bishop, and the pacific nature of the townspeople, he recounts Salvador's actions (Palma 1837, 51). Then, Palma states that he does not have the actual poem but sees its value as a marker of the state of Cuban poetry at that time. Notably, his phrase "nuestros literati" to describe the readers of *Aguinaldo Habanero* identifies a Cuban literary community; further, including *Espejo* in *la poesía cubana* frames it as Cuban. When referring to it as an *antigualla*, he casts the poem as not simply an antique curiosity but also a Cuban cultural heirloom. Finally, he includes the sonnet by Juan Rodríguez Sinfuentes, then regidor of Bayamo, which was not part of Echeverría's later article, leading subsequent readers to assume either that Palma did possess the poem but chose "creatively" to reconstruct the

6. Studies of the black hero in Spanish epic poetry, specifically as related to Lope de Vega y Carpio's (1562–1635) *La Dragontea* (1598), are numerous. Sánchez Jiménez (2007) provides a helpful summary of past and recent scholarship on this theme.

7. No critic has declared outright that the entire poem is a fabrication; however, criticism surrounding the poem continues to address its authenticity. Apart from those critics listed here, see, among others, Schulman (1988, 1992).

events leading to the death of the pirate for his own political purposes or that the poem may have been a work-in-progress by Palma and the Del Monte circle.⁸ Whether Palma had access to the poem, added to the text, or created it with other contemporaneous writers, Salvador carried political significance in his article given the multiple slave uprisings occurring at that time in Cuba and the concurrent discussions on abolition between England and Spain.

In "Morell de Santa Cruz," an article in the series "Historiadores de Cuba" published in *El Plantel*, a Havana newspaper founded and edited by Palma and Echeverría in 1838, Echeverría explained how the poem *Espejo de paciencia* was transcribed in Bishop Agustín Morell de Santa Cruz's (1694–1768) *Historia de la isla y catedral de Cuba*. He explains that he chose to write about Morell's *Historia* to preserve it for history (Echeverría 1960, 97). Echeverría then cites passages on contraband and the unjust actions of the president of the audiencia in Santo Domingo against subjects of the Crown, because Morell believed his extreme actions did not reflect the intention of Phillip III. Echeverría's quotations from Morell's *Historia* replicate the tension between the church, the Crown, and the latter's colonial representatives, thus suggesting a parallel among contraband, its victims and participants, and the political and economic situation in Cuba when Echeverría wrote the article.

Describing at length pirating in the New World by Morell was not unusual, because it was a constant threat to Spain's empire in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Countries such as Britain, France, Portugal, and the Netherlands regularly attempted to pirate Spain's new resources (for an explanation of the different terms and the legal status of pirates, buccaneers, corsairs, filibusterers, and the like, see Gerassi-Navarro 1999). Because of trading restrictions and high rates of taxation set by Spain, as well as the distance from the towns in the interior to the port of Havana, contraband provided a livelihood for many in Cuba. References to these activities signal resistance to imperial mandates both from without and within the empire. Thus, when Echeverría cites Morell's multiple references to these activities in Cuba, these references parallel the various challenges facing Spain in the early nineteenth century.

Apart from Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines, Spain had lost its empire by the 1830s. The financial consequences of the war fell primarily on Cuba, catalyzing economic policies that benefited the metropolis but hurt Cuban planters, who therefore sought reforms to maintain their financial security. Moreover, slaves and freedmen in Saint-Domingue had led a successful revolution against France that culminated in Hispaniola's emancipation from Spain in 1804 (see Trouillot 1995; Buscaglia-Salgado 2003; González-Ripoll et al. 2004). Hence, the fear of a slave-led rebellion, along with the numerous Cuban slave uprisings and multiple conspiracies (including those of the British) in the 1820s and 1830s, culminated

8. According to Vitier (1962, 7), there are two surviving copies of the poem transcribed by different authors. The first is a complete transcription of Morell's *Historia*, including *Espejo*. The second is a lone transcription of *Espejo* in handwriting different from that of the first manuscript. According to Cruz-Taura (2009, 91–93), both of these manuscripts are now lost, as only photographs of the transcriptions exist.

in La Escalera of 1844 (for slave uprisings from the 1790s to the 1840s, see García Rodríguez 2004; for a detailed study of the La Escalera conspiracy, see Paquette 1988; Martínez Carmenate 1997). Thus, the six stanzas on Salvador that Echeverría transcribes in his article, including a request for Salvador's freedom, may be interpreted as a textual intervention on Echeverría's part or even the possible complete fabrication of the poem by Echeverría and/or the Del Monte group.⁹ It is curious that Echeverría does not comment on the significance of the black character in his article while including these six of the many stanzas that make up the poem (for a transcription of these stanzas, see the appendix).

If we believe that Echeverría or the Del Monte group wrote the poem, these stanzas pose a direct threat to Spanish loyalists regarding the future of empire in Cuba. Girón symbolizes Spain, suggesting that this tyrant oppresses Cuban planters with strict taxation and tariff laws. Moreover, Echeverría recounts the violent action of a black slave against an oppressor, thereby warning Spain that enslaved Cubans could join freed Cubans in fighting their unjust oppressor. The poet praises Salvador's actions and petitions his freedom, suggesting that Cuban planters would support such violent action against Spain. Furthermore, in introducing his proposed series "Historiadores de Cuba," Echeverría (1838) calls for the establishment of a distinctly Cuban, as opposed to colonial, history "porque a la verdad, un pueblo sin historia, es como un mozo sin padres, que no sabe quién es, de dónde viene, por qué no lo han educado, ni cuál podrá ser su porvenir" (85). Finally, only Echeverría's transcription of Morell's *Historia* exists, which adds to the suspicion of the poem's questionable authenticity. Regardless of the text's authenticity, however, an enslaved black criollo stands at the origin of a Cuban national culture.

After Echeverría's fragmentary publication of *Espejo*, several works that are considered integral to the Cuban historical canon and frequently cited by contemporary critics directly reference the poem in the nineteenth century: Jacobo de la Pezuela's *Diccionario geográfico, estadístico e histórico de la isla de Cuba* (1863–1866), Francisco Calcagno's *Diccionario biográfico cubano* (1878a), Antonio López Prieto's *Parnaso cubano* (1881), Aurelio Mitjans's posthumously published *Sobre el movimiento científico y literario en Cuba* (1890/1963), and a lecture on Cuban poetry given by the exile and well-known Cuban publisher Néstor Ponce de León in New York City in 1892 titled "Los primeros poetas de Cuba." Other infrequently cited references to the poem (or the events in the poem) have gone largely unnoticed.¹⁰ Pezuela (1868–1878) cited the events depicted in the poem in his *Historia de la isla de Cuba*, published in Spain, and Pedro Guiteras did so in his own *Historia de la isla*

9. Domingo Del Monte along with members of his *tertulia* purchased Juan Francisco Manzano's freedom by selling subscriptions for Manzano's autobiography, considered the first slave autobiography (1840) in the Spanish colonies. For the controversy behind the composition and publication of this work, see Luis 2007.

10. In *Historia* Morell wrote about the events in the poem, apart from including the poem. He does not name Salvador directly in his narrative but says "un negro con la tropa española, supo humillar sus bríos, dándole una lanzada con que le quitó la vida á este malvado" (Morell 1760s, 142). I consider citing the events to be the equivalent of citing the poem, given the implication of the heroic actions of Salvador.

de Cuba (1865–1866), published in the United States. Calcagno also wrote a novel about the *Espejo* episode titled *S.I.*, published in Cuba in 1895 and named after “Su Ilustración,” the Bishop Juan de las Cabezas Altamirano. In all of the references cited here, Salvador and race constitute an integral part of the Cuban culture and history these nineteenth-century intellectuals establish when constructing a Cuban history and literary tradition, a fact contemporary scholars ignore. A chronological review of these citations exposes this lacuna and its significance.

Jacobo de la Pezuela twice addresses the events of 1604 in his four-volume *Diccionario* (for concerns on Pezuela’s plagiarism of José de Jesús Quintiliano García’s geographic research, and Morell’s plagiarism of Pierre François Xavier de Charlevoix’s 1733 *Histoire de l’isle espagnole de Saint-Domingue*, see Henríquez Ureña 1963; Pérez Cabrera 1962). His entry on Bayamo concentrates on illegal trafficking in the area and names two of the participants (Gregorio Ramos and Jácome Milanés), mentioning that “los vecinos” and “españoles” (Pezuela 1863–1866, 165) killed twenty-six of the pirates, including Girón. Although he alludes to the real cause behind Cabezas Altamirano’s visit—to absolve the parishioners of participating in contraband—, he does not cite the poem or include Salvador’s participation. In the entry for Morell de Santa Cruz, he lists the townspeople mentioned by Echeverría as participating in the poem’s events, and includes Salvador’s involvement, leaving out that Salvador is a slave: “Se distinguió en la pelea el negro criollo de Bayamo, Salvador, que mató al mismo Giron” (Pezuela 1863–1866, 105).¹¹ He then quotes the first three stanzas from the Salvador episode transcribed by Echeverría in his article, excluding Balboa’s praise of Salvador or the request for Salvador’s freedom.

In the second volume of his *Historia de la isla de Cuba* (1868–1878, 346–347), Pezuela addresses the events depicted in Morell’s *Historia* and *Espejo* without any mention of Salvador at all. Notably, when referencing Girón’s death, he inadvertently footnotes Salvador, but the enslaved hero is not named in the reference: “En la biografía del Obispo de Cuba, D. Pedro Morell de Santa Cruz, publicada en las págs. 104 y 105 de nuestro *Dic. Geo., Est., Hist. de la Isla*, incluimos algunos detalles sobre el rescate del obispo Cabezas y la muerte de Giron” (Pezuela 1868–1878, 347).

Born in Cádiz in 1811 and part of the Spanish elite—his uncle Juan de la Pezuela was *capitán general* of Cuba from December 1853 to August 1854¹²—Pezuela arrived in Cuba in 1841 and held high-ranking posts such as colonel of the regiment in Matanzas. Forced to return to Spain in 1850 because of frictions with Cuba’s new governor, José Gutiérrez de la Concha, Pezuela then traveled between Spain and Cuba, collecting documents for his histories of the island. From Spain, he wrote his *Diccionario*, commissioned by the Real Junta de Fomento de la Isla de

11. All spelling, punctuation, and diacritical marks in nineteenth-century citations reflect those found in the originals.

12. During Juan de la Pezuela’s time as *capitán general*, he tried to enforce certain reforms related to slavery in Cuba, including the registration of all slaves on the island, a measure that threatened illegal slave traders and those planters who had illegally acquired slaves. Cuban planters, annexationists in exile, and Catalan slave traders opposed Pezuela’s attempts at enforcing these mandates, fearing the effect of the eventual emancipation of all slaves on their own economic well-being (Urban 1957, 33).

Cuba because the earlier *Diccionario de España y sus posesiones de Ultramar* (1848–1850) did not include Cuba, Puerto Rico, or the Philippines. Pezuela's (1868–1878) four-volume *Historia de la isla de Cuba* was also written and published in Spain. Even though Pezuela could be regarded as a moderate liberal because he proposed political reforms for Cuba, he was a Spanish loyalist. He originally considered the slave trade, not slavery itself, a problem and published his views on the subject in *Ensayo histórico de la isla de Cuba* (1842) in a Spanish press in New York. In later works, however, he considers slavery and the slave trade necessary and freed slaves a serious problem for Cuba (Pezuela 1865).¹³

Pezuela's shifting vision of the slave trade and Cuba's future, with each publication, illustrates the hardening of his pro-trade and pro-slavery positions, along with his support of Spanish rule in Cuba. His view of the conquest also takes on a parallel conservative spin: even though in his *Ensayo* he portrays the conquistadores as heartless, in his later works, he transforms the conquest into a seemingly benign process in which slavery and the eradication of the indigenous in Cuba appear necessary and appropriate. Consequently, that he cites three stanzas on Salvador in his *Diccionario* but suppresses black participation altogether in his *Historia* cannot be viewed as merely coincidental or idiosyncratic. Moreover, it is important to recall that he wrote *Historia* from Spain, precisely when Cuba was in the midst of an armed insurrection against the mother country: the first volume was published when the war began (1868) and the fourth volume the last year of the war (1878). As Ferrer (1999, 43–69) has shown, slaves and freed blacks began to join the Ten Years' Wars in the early 1870s as the white criollos abandoned the war effort. Therefore, that Pezuela consciously seeks to exclude black Cubans from Cuba's first literary achievement by suppressing Salvador's actions signals the importance of race in this citation of the poem (for a more detailed account of Pezuela's shifting political views, see Funtanellas 1948; Pérez Cabrera 1962).

In *Historia de la isla de Cuba* (1865–1866) Pedro Guiteras references the events in *Espejo* but not Morell's *Historia* or the poem directly. Guiteras excludes Salvador from the events, crediting Gregorio Ramos and his leadership with the eventual killing of Girón instead (93). Writing his *Historia* from the United States, Guiteras did not have access to Cuban or Spanish archives. However, he was a member of the Del Monte group, and he did not go into exile until 1851, after serving time for seditious activities. In his travels throughout continental Europe, he must have continued to associate with members of the Del Monte group. Moreover, at the time of his death in 1883, he had completed the second edition of his *Historia*, newly titled *Historia de Cuba* (1882–1883). Even though this appeared posthumously, if he did not have access to details regarding Morell's *Historia* and *Espejo* when he drafted his own *Historia* twenty years earlier, by the 1880s Guiteras was likely to have spoken with Echeverría, who arrived in New York in 1868. Finally, Echeverría's "Historiadores de Cuba" was republished in *Revista de Cuba* in 1880, a journal to which Guiteras had access.

As noted in Fernando Ortiz's (1927–1928) introduction to Guiteras's second edi-

13. How the U.S. Civil War impacted the work of historians like Pezuela and Guiteras, among others, and how these histories of Cuba affected how U.S. historians wrote about Cuba still requires attention.

tion (1882–1883), Guiteras may have dropped the word *island* from the title because Cuba's political future was still unresolved, thereby reflecting Guiteras's separatist aspirations and/or because *isla* reflected a geographic assignation used by Spain for its colony, something from which Guiteras wanted to distance himself. Ortiz (1927–1928, iii–iv) also explains that Guiteras avoids “historia general,” which would have reflected a national history or the history of a country with its own political identity. Consequently, although it remains unclear why Guiteras chose to exclude Salvador from both of his *Historias*, nation building is integral to his text, especially in light of his long exile in the United States.¹⁴ Therefore, issues of race, via the blatant omission of Salvador, are conspicuously present in both of Guiteras's *Historias*.

Francisco Calcagno was a member of the Del Monte group. In 1878, he published the first edition of his *Diccionario biográfico cubano* in New York through Néstor Ponce de León's press, and the second edition in 1895 in Havana. In his *Diccionario*, Calcagno refers to *Espejo de paciencia* on multiple occasions. The most telling detail of this work is an entry for Salvador in which he writes:

GOLOMON (Salvador)—Natural de Bayamo: negro esclavo que, en 1604, fué el héroe principal en la refriega que dieron los bayameses, capitaneados por Gregorio Ramos, contra Gilberto Girón. Atacó con un machete de calabozo al mismo pirata, y le dió muerte [Morell de Sta. Cruz]. Seis octavas dedica el poeta épico Silvestre de Balboa Troy y Quesada, para describir el heroico hecho con que el Golomón alcanzó su libertad: “Oh! Salvador, criollo negro honrado —Vuele tu fama y nunca se consuma,— Que en alabanza de tan buen soldado —Es bien que no se cansen lengua y pluma.” (1878a, 302)

Granting Salvador a biographical entry inserts the black enslaved hero into Cuban history. Yet Calcagno takes the figure of Salvador much further by writing a novel¹⁵ about the events depicted in *Espejo* in which Calcagno presents the reader with his Autonomist vision for Cuba and the role of black Cubans in Cuba's political future.¹⁶

S.I. (1895) recounts the story of Jácome Milanés and Don Cristóbal Perdomo de Cuéllar, both featured in *Espejo*.¹⁷ Jácome Milanés—who, Calcagno reminds us, is the forefather of the romantic poet José Jacinto Milanés—is poor but of good

14. Even though a detailed study of how the production of histories, in both Spanish and English, was a part of the political strategies of Cubans in exile exceeds the scope of this essay, one can safely assume that in the midst of the U.S. Civil War and later Reconstruction, as well as the continued fight by Cubans and Puerto Ricans for independence, Caribbean historians living in the United States during the 1860s and 1870s were very aware that their audience lay beyond the Caribbean, European, and Latin American borders. Works by Poyo (1989), Gruesz (2002), Brickhouse (2004), Lazo (2005), and Lomas (2008) show how nineteenth-century exiles deployed different political strategies to affect U.S. foreign policy toward their home countries.

15. Other fictive works that include *Espejo*, its events, and/or its characters as part of the plot include Carpentier's *Concierto barroco* (1974), Benítez Rojo's *El enigma de los esterlines* (1980), Padura's *La novela de mi vida* (2002), and Díaz Pimienta's *Salvador Golomón* (2005).

16. Autonomists considered emancipation inevitable and sought to whiten Cuba through Spanish immigration. For details of how Autonomists sought reforms from Spain, including representation in the Cortes, see Elorza and Hernández Sandoica 1998; Bizcarrondo and Elorza 2001.

17. The one reference to a Don Cristóbal in *Espejo* is to the sonnet writer Don Cristóbal de la Coba Machicao. He is not Spanish born but a native of Puerto Príncipe. Jácome Milanés is a character-participant in the events depicted in the poem.

Cuban lineage. Jácome is in love with the rich Jacinta Figueroa. However, Don Jacinto, Jacinta's wealthy father, has chosen the well-to-do Spaniard Don Cristóbal to be his daughter's husband instead. Meanwhile, Don Cristóbal is in love with Hortensia, Jácome's cousin (for a study of the development of nineteenth-century nationalism in Latin America based on the family romance, see Sommer 1991).

The plot of the novel revolves around Jácome's angst over the fact that he is not wealthy enough to gain the approval of Don Jacinto. Jácome is also jealous of Don Cristóbal, who repeatedly comes to Jácome's rescue regardless of Jácome's public resentment of his rival. Apart from this romantic twist, the novel closely follows the events in the poem. Bishop Altamirano is kidnapped by pirates, and the townspeople, including Jácome and Don Cristóbal, gather the ransom to free the bishop and work together to avenge the kidnapping. As in Balboa's poem, Calcagno reflects extensively on Salvador and his role in the unraveling of the plot.¹⁸

To begin with, Calcagno aligns Salvador with past heroes, highlighting the value of Salvador and, by extension, of blacks in Cuba. In "Los dos rivales" he writes that among the slaves of Don Cristóbal and Don Jacinto existed "el más tarde famoso Salvador Golomón que de esclavo pasó a héroe, ni más ni menos que como Viriato pasó de pastor a bandolero y luego 'jefe fué a los romanos ominosos'" (1895, 57). Viriato's story unfolds circa 150 B.C., when Viriato was sold into slavery by the Romans; he later defeated them in 149 B.C. In this comparison, Spain is the Roman Empire, in its imperialist mission, transforming Salvador into Viriato, a threat to the Spanish Empire.

Furthermore, in the chapter titled "Golomón," a veiled warning appears against the potentially negative consequences of Salvador's valor. Calcagno likewise recounts the vengeance of the men of Bayamo against the pirates, beginning with a stanza on Salvador as cited by Echeverría: "¡Oh Salvador, criollo honrado [. . .] un negro esclavo y sin razón cautivo" (1895, 66). Immediately following this statement, Calcagno hyperbolically describes Salvador's bloody actions:

Golomón marchaba en las filas, o sea grupo de don Cristóbal; con su tosco machete de calabozo acometió, hirió, deshizo, atropelló, mató y al presentársele un pirata muy grande y muy feo, se precipitó a él, levantó su hierro de chapear y le partió el cráneo: aunque el Homero de ese Aquiles, horrorizado ante el prosaismo del machete de calabozo, prefiere decir: "que le apuntó derecho, metiéndole la lanza por el pecho." ¿Pretendió el Golomón tanta gloria? ¿sabía a quién había dado muerte, o fué un piraticidio casual e inintencionado? La historia no resuelve estas preguntas. (1895, 66–67)

Though humorous, Calcagno's florid description warns readers that Salvador may or may not have known "whom" he was killing. Then, the chapter concludes, stating that "la manumisión del valeroso esclavo era cosa muy justa, según pensamos el poeta Balboa y el autor de esta obra" (66), asserting that Salvador received his freedom after his slaying of the pirate. Historically, Calcagno could not have known whether this happened. Yet to remove all doubt about Salvador's freedom,

18. Although Calcagno knew Echeverría, it appears from both his *Diccionario* and *S.I.* that he did not have a copy of *Historia* but cites Echeverría's article when he refers to the events in the poem, because he limits himself to what Echeverría has written.

Calcagno emphasizes that the word *ahorrar* in the cited stanza is an active verb meaning “to liberate”; consequently, Salvador was granted his freedom.

Interpreting or translating the language of the period for the reader is a way for Calcagno to authorize his own expertise on the matters at hand while warning Spain and white Cubans to take control in delineating the role of black Cubans in the nation’s future. Ultimately, Calcagno praises Salvador for killing Girón but likewise criticizes him for not understanding for what he is fighting. In mentioning Viriato and passive individuals turned into violent heroes as a result of the unjust circumstances they have experienced, Calcagno implicitly alludes to the Ten Years’ War, in which black Cubans who fought in the war were given their freedom as part of the Pacto de Zanjón. Calcagno also warns Spain and white Cubans about the potential repercussions of not addressing race in Cuba in light of a new armed insurrection for independence, whose success would depend on black Cubans. Salvador’s lack of awareness, even though he killed the pirate, confirms Calcagno’s anxieties regarding race and Cuba’s future.

Calcagno’s beliefs about slavery, the slave trade, abolition, and emancipation have been documented by such figures as Manuel de la Cruz (1892) and Calcagno himself. The “Advertencia” (1883/1887) to Calcagno’s novel *Los crímenes de Concha* (1863/1887) states that emancipation should be given only to those slaves qualified to handle the responsibility of freedom. This leads Manuel de la Cruz to write, “aboliconista individual, sincero y consecuente, ha ganado equívoca reputación: fué un filántropo medroso y calculista, no un verdadero abolicionista” (1889/1918, 230). Even though Calcagno wrote a pro-abolition novel, *Romualdo: Uno de tantos, Novela cubana* (1891), published an anthology of black writers titled *Poetas de color* (1878b) to purchase the freedom of a slave, and freed his own slaves when he inherited them, he nevertheless belittles black characters in his novel *En busca del eslabón* (1888/1983), whose title in English could be rendered as “In Search of the Missing Link.” The story of a group of scientists who are looking for “Miss Link,” the novel explores the connection between human beings and anthropomorphs.¹⁹ As in the introduction to *Los crímenes de Concha*, Calcagno repeatedly asserts the inferiority of blacks.

“Golomón” is embedded between chapters titled “Milanés” and “Don Cristóbal.” In “Milanés” Jácome saves two pirates who fall into quicksand in battle, explaining that “la hospitalidad en nuestra raza iguala [. . .] al valor de nuestra raza” (65). The French pirates are eventually set free and become a part of the Bayamo populace, clarifying why there are still people with French last names residing in the area. In this instance, racial affinity trumps nationality. Then, the chapter “Don Cristóbal” explains that Don Cristóbal, as Milanés’s long-term benefactor, enabled Jácome to receive a slave for free and to secure a lucrative job to support his widowed mother. Don Cristóbal also enabled Jácome’s revenge against the pirates so that he could marry the wealthy Jacinta even though he was

19. The limits of the present article do not allow us to delve into this complex, often humorous, and ironic scientific novel, but suffice it to say that Calcagno suggests whites are superior to Africans and only education could allow blacks to better themselves.

poor. In fact, Don Cristóbal saved Jácome's life when Jácome could not fight off one of the pirates. Finally, Don Cristóbal makes arrangements with the bishop to force Don Jacinto to consent to the marriage between Jácome and Jacinta.

An Autonomist, Calcagno often refers to the debt owed by Cubans to the Spanish, this most clearly in the last scene of the novel. When Jácome realizes what a benefactor Don Cristóbal has been, he falls to his feet, begging forgiveness. Calcagno writes, "su rival lo detuvo y lo estrechó contra su pecho" (75), reuniting the two through their love of two Cuban women and through the physical union of their hearts and bodies. The very last sentence gives the full name of Don Cristóbal, which alerts the reader to his long Spanish heritage. The jovial tone makes Calcagno a precursor to "el choteo erudito," as Friol notes (1983, 10), ultimately giving the Spanish the last laugh.

Like Calcagno, Antonio López Prieto accesses Echeverría's article and not a complete version of the poem in discussing *Espejo* in his *Paranaso cubano* (1881).²⁰ Furthermore, he reprints the crucial six stanzas. Ignoring the significance of Salvador's racial identity for the events in the poem, he does speak to the potentially political nature of poetry writ large (xiv). However, by locating *Espejo* in the introduction and not in the body of the work, López Prieto characterizes it as an aspect of the island's early literary production but excludes it from Cuban literary culture (x–xv). The literary critic and historian Enrique Saínz—who has also written a book on *Espejo*—takes issue with this exclusion.

While admitting to the importance of *Parnaso cubano*, Saínz criticizes López Prieto's unwillingness to establish a clear link between the development of Cuban poetry and the ideological tenets that developed concurrently. Saínz (1989, 65) explains that his position as a Spanish bureaucrat led to his pro-Spanish stance. It is difficult to disagree with Saínz. However, Schmidt-Nowara (2006, 89–90) writes of the political ambivalence of such Autonomists as López Prieto, explaining that López Prieto's oscillating political beliefs appear in two pamphlets written upon the discovery of Christopher Columbus's bones in Santo Domingo in 1876. López Prieto was commissioned by Spanish officials to investigate and report to them his findings. In the first pamphlet (1877), he characterizes Columbus as a victim of Spain—a familiar strategy taken up by Latin American nationalists to present Spain as tyrannical; conversely, in the second pamphlet (1878), which was used officially by Spain, he was more pro-Spanish, including Columbus in the Spanish empire-building enterprise. Although Saínz (1989) considers these minor works (66), Schmidt-Nowara disagrees. For him, they represent the ambivalence about empire experienced by Autonomists in Cuba and Puerto Rico (Schmidt-Nowara 2006, 89–95). Furthermore, when López Prieto wrote the first pamphlet in 1877, the Ten Years' War was still under way. By 1878, when López Prieto wrote the more pro-Spanish pamphlet, Cuban defeat was formalized with the Pacto de Zanjón, a fact that may likewise explain López Prieto's shifting position.

López Prieto was born in Cádiz in 1847 and moved to Cuba with his mother when he was an adolescent. Because of financial constraints, he became a statistician and worked on his literary interests part-time. He founded such newspapers

20. Citing Echeverría's article verbatim, he puts the entire article in quotations.

as *La Fe* (1868) and *La Familia* (1878–1880) (Saínz 1989, 65–66) and collaborated on numerous others, including *Revista de Cuba*, which was edited by the well-known Cuban intellectual and the Autonomist José Enrique Varona. Like Pezuela, Guiteras, and Calcagno, López Prieto wrote and published his *Parnaso cubano* during a turbulent time in Cuban history that included the Ten Years' War (1868–1878) and the Guerra Chiquita (1879–1880), a mainly black military movement that also ended in defeat. Consequently, Salvador's absence from his commentary, despite his inclusion of the six stanzas on Salvador, signals his ambivalence about race.

Tellingly, Aurelio Mitjans, who also had access only to Echeverría's article, excludes Salvador from his literary history of Cuba altogether. Mitjans began *Estudio sobre el movimiento científico y literario de Cuba* (1890) as a series of installments in the newspaper *La Habana Elegante*. That Mitjans writes of "movements" makes one wonder whether he believed an authentic Cuban literary tradition existed apart from that of Spain, or whether he felt that Cuba could not boast of an independent literary tradition until it achieved autonomy. As with López Prieto, in the act of anthologizing Cuba's literary and cultural heritage, Mitjans asserts a Cuban national culture separate from that of Spain because, regardless of his intention, when constructing a Cuban literary history he inadvertently describes Cuba's ongoing quest for nationhood and, by extension, the role of black Cubans in that history.

In *Movimiento* Mitjans treats the events in the poem as historical fact, yet Salvador is conspicuously absent from his description. He writes, "entrando en el siglo xvii se encuentra ya un poema en octava rima" (1890/1963, 56). When using such words as *ya*, Mitjans locates *Espejo* at the origin of Cuba's literary tradition and of an emerging Cuban nation. Although Mitjans does not cite the actual poem, only alluding to Echeverría's article, he does refer to the characters in the poem as "el pueblo," "los bayameses," and "los valientes vecinos." Even though he does not link the poem to a specific political agenda or to any beliefs about race, Salvador and black Cubans appear in his collective framing, positively as part of the nation and negatively as simultaneously excluded from that same nation. Moreover, that Mitjans wrote an article titled "El negro libre en Cuba" that was published in *La Habana Elegante* (referenced in Cruz 1889/1918, 369) affirms his attention to race.²¹ That the ardent Autonomist Rafael Montoro published and wrote the prologue to Mitjans's *Movimiento* (1890/1918) after Mitjan's untimely death in 1889 further signals the complex relationship between race and the political experiences of such Autonomists as Mitjans.

The next reference to *Espejo* occurs two years later. When Echeverría died in exile in the United States in 1882, his transcription of Morell's *Historia* and the poem had traveled with him. Echeverría willed these texts to the Cuban publisher Néstor Ponce de León, who delivered a lecture on the poem titled "Los primeros poetas de Cuba" at a meeting of the Sociedad de Literatura Hispanoamericana in 1892. In his presentation, Ponce de León introduces the six sonnet writers to the public (as a point of comparison, Echeverría had not done this in *El Plantel*),

21. Although I currently do not have access to that article, its existence affirms Mitjans's attention to race in Cuba.

emphasizing their Cubanness. Simultaneously, he cites the six stanzas that recount the killing of Girón by Salvador, thereby equating Salvador with the sonnet writers. When introducing the stanzas on Salvador, he comments, “Balboa se complace en descrear las hazañas particulares de cada uno de los bravos bayameses, —notablemente las de Ramos, Herrera, Milanés, Batista y los Tamayo— pero pasemos a *los* [emphasis mine] más importante, a la muerte de Girón, y dejamos al autor relatarla” (1892, 395). This emphasis on the death of the pirate and the use of *los* identifies the black hero as the most important character of the poem. Yet if the slave Salvador kills the pirate and Ponce de León considers him, along with Girón, the most important character in the poem, why, then, would he fail to discuss Salvador in detail?

This was a pivotal interpretative moment given that this lecture coincides with the founding of the Partido Revolucionario Cubano by José Martí in the same year. The simultaneous need for black soldiers in a new revolutionary effort and the underlying fear of Cuba becoming a black republic were two conflicting challenges facing Cuban leaders both on the island and, in particular, in exile (Ferrer 1999). Martí, the president of the Partido Revolucionario Cubano and the Sociedad de Literatura Hispanoamericana, believed that transcending racial difference was necessary for Cuba’s liberation (for varying perspectives on Martí’s attitude toward race in Cuba, see Foner 1977; Ripoll 1984; Belnap and Fernández 1998; Guerra 2005; Lomas 2008). Thus, he was negotiating the various demands of powerful black leaders in New York, Tampa, and Cuba, as well as those of white criollos, both on and off the island.²² At the same time, how racial discrimination and the legacy of slavery would impact the new republic produced hot debates by white and black Cubans in the United States and Cuba.²³ Also, black participation on the island was crucial for the war effort, but many white Cubans on both sides of the Florida Straits remained anxious about what would become of the black Cuban masses once independence was achieved. That Ponce de León cites the poem but does not discuss Salvador signals various political positions regarding the presence of black Cubans and their participation in Cuban independence and the future Republican project.

In the end, the nineteenth-century historians and critics examined here represent many of the various positions on race and nationhood held by members of the Cuban sugarocracy, bourgeoisie, and intellectual class, with varying and at times shifting political views. When, where, and how *Espejo* and Salvador appear in their respective histories, anthologies, and novels cannot be considered coincidental. Even though their histories and anthologies marginalized the significance of black participation in Cuba’s political realities, black Cubans, by reference to *Espejo* and what its black hero symbolized, continued to counter this false marginalization. These writers knew that whether Cuba’s future was to be Spanish, Autonomist, republican, or annexed to the United States, black Cubans were part of the Cuban nation and had to be taken into account when imagining Cuba’s

22. Slavery was abolished in Cuba in 1878, but full emancipation did not occur until 1886.

23. As Poyo (1989, 84–86) notes about Key West, Florida, tensions were high between white and black Cubans in exile because of issues of fair pay in tobacco factories.

past, present, and future. Their various treatments of *Espejo* directly reflect their political and social views of race and slavery in Cuba.

As a result, twentieth- and twenty-first-century critics who merely footnote nineteenth-century references to *Espejo* cannot escape the question of race in the nineteenth-century reception of the poem, especially in the treatment of Salvador. Most notably, the all-important question regarding the authenticity of the poem in the twentieth- and twenty-first centuries hinges on the very stanzas that proved pivotal in nineteenth-century arguments about race and slavery. Significantly, contemporary questions of authenticity (e.g., questions of whether the stanzas on Salvador should be included in *Espejo*) echo the nineteenth-century authors' treatment of Salvador, as they excluded or marginalized reference to him in varying degrees in their histories and anthologies. To argue over the authenticity of the poem, then, is to argue over the proper historical place for the contents of the passage in question, which insinuates that the agency it gives a black slave is inconceivable in Cuba of the early seventeenth century.

As in the nineteenth-century citations and references to the poem—and regardless of where critics fall in relation to the text's authenticity—Salvador Golomón speaks to us from 1604. His presence reminds us that an enslaved black hero stands at the very birth of a national cultural and literary tradition, paralleling the participation of black Cubans in the construction of the Cuban nation. Arguments over the authenticity of the poem cannot help but implicitly invoke the very issues of race that follow *Espejo* and the nineteenth-century authors whose quotations of *Espejo* inform current scholarly views of the same.

APPENDIX

Andaba entre los nuestros diligente
un etíope digno de alabanza,
llamado Salvador, negro valiente,
de los que tiene Yara en su labranza,
hijo de Golomón, viejo prudente:
el cual armado de machete y lanza,
cuando vido á Gilberto andar brioso,
arremete contra él cual león furioso.

Don Gilberto que vido al etíope,
se puso luego á punto de batalla,
y se encontraron; mas quedó del golpe
desnudo el negro, y el francés con malla.
[¡Oh tú, divina musa Caliope
permite, y tú, bella ninfa Aglaya,
que pueda dibujar la pluma mía
de este negro el valor y valentía!]²⁴

Andaba don Gilberto ya cansado,
Y ofendido de un negro con vergüenza,

24. Echeverría leaves out four lines that I have put in brackets. These four lines, as well as the rest of the poem cited by Echeverría, come from Vitier's 1962 critical edition with facsimile of *Espejo*. All spelling, punctuation, and diacritical marks reflect that edition.

que las más veces vemos que un pecado
al hombre trae á lo que nunca piensa;
y viéndolo el buen negro desmayado,
sin que perdiese punto en su defensa,
hízose afuera, y le apuntó derecho,
metiéndole la lanza por el pecho.

Mas no la hubo sacado, cuando al punto
el alma se salió por esta herida,
dejando el cuerpo pálido y difunto,
pagando las maldades que hizo en vida.
Luego uno de los nuestros que allí junto
estaba con la mano prevenida,
le corta la cabeza; y con tal gloria
a voces aclamaron la victoria.

¡Oh, Salvador criollo, negro honrado!
¡Vuele tu fama, y nunca se consuma;
que en alabanza de tan buen soldado
es bien que no se censan lengua y pluma!
Y no porque te doy este dictado,
ningun mordaz entienda ni presume
que es afición que tengo en lo que escribo
a un negro esclavo, y sin razón cautivo.

Y tú, claro Bayamo peregrino,
ostenta ese blasón que te engrandece;
y á este etíope, de memoria digno,
dale la libertad, pues la merece.
De las arenas de tu río divino
el pálido metal que te enriquece
saca, y ahorra antes que el vulgo hable,
á Salvador el negro memorable.

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