Table 2: Drinking Patterns Among Mexican American by Occupation

Quantity/Frequency Category	%Homemakers (N=76)	%BlueCollar (N=92)	%Professionals (N=101)
Abstainer	22	23	11
Infrequent	63	61	20
Less Frequent/ Low Maximum	11	12	22
Less Frequent/ High Maximum	1	4	7
Frequent/Low Max.	1	0	26
Frequent/High Max.	1	0	11
Frequent/Heavy	1	0	3

The Other's (Inappropriate) Other: Racial Ambiguity and the Multiple Marginaliztions of Puertorriqueñas in the Northeastern United States

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---Hegemony works at leveling out differences and standardizing contexts and expectations in the smallest details of our daily lives. Uncovering this leveling of differences is, therefore, resisting that very notion of difference which defined in the master's terms often resorts to the simplicity of essences (Minh-ha 1990, 372).

---When I learn about Afro-American history I treat it as my own, as part of my identity as a Black woman. I see the accomplishments and survival as a testimony to all people of color. I hope that Black Americans can find pride and strength in Puerto Rican and other Afro-Latin histories, but I know that it will take time for people to see this global Pan-Africanist view (Brady 1988, 47).

---Dialogues among and coalitions with a range of groups, each with its own distinctive set of experiences and specialized thought embedded in those experiences form the larger, more general terrain of intellectual and political discourse necessary for furthering Black feminism. Through dialogues exploring how relations of domination and subordination are maintained and changed, parallels between Black women's experiences and those of other groups become the focus of investigation (Collins, 1990, 36).

In Black Feminist Thought (1989), Patricia Hill Collins argues that African American women have a special angle of vision of "outsiders within" based on their social location in the political economy of domination and their historical relationship to European Americans. Collins' analysis of a standpoint epistemology grounded in the lived experiences of African American women has caused me to reflect upon the position of Puertorriqueñas in the United States in relation to notions of

power and difference, especially regarding their racialized ethnic identities.[1] Given their particular structural, and historical circumstances, what might their unique angle of vision be? This essay attempts a preliminary analysis of the position of Puertorriqueñas within the United Stated racial ecology, point out some of the limitations of theorizing about their racial identities without prior knowlege of their mixed raical and ethnic heritage. I briefly examine the multiple racial and ethnic social location of Puertorriqueñas in the Northeast, their location within the political economy of domination, and their relation to "other" racial ethnic groups. By exploring their "other's other" status I uncover some of the specifities of how they experience the relationality of race, class, gender, and culture from a "non-white, non-black" perspective for what in can tell us about the construction of racialized identities in the United States.

As women who have experienced dual colonization,[2] it is their mixed racial and cultural heritages that is the most salient aspects of their socio-political reality in the United States, especially as this mixed-ness is lived out within its bipolar racial order.[3] Because of their mixed or multiple heritage, Puertorriqueñas remain invisible within the racial ecology of the United States, erased from contemporary discussions of race relations that reinforces their multiple levels of marginality.[4] Their racial ambiguity, however, that provides them with a distinctive angle of vision that is constructed in relation to both dominant and "othered" racialized groups and individuals in the United States.[5] I argue that the racial ambiguity Puertorriqueñas have come to symbolize not only results in their national and regional invisiblity regarding racial matters, but is also connected to their location within a political economy of domination and as well as in their historical relationship to both European American and to other racialized ethnic groups.

The Multiracial Context of Puertorriqueñas: Racial Categorization and the Racial Ambience Key

As a collective group Puertorriqueñas embody a unique historical legacy of racial mixing that distinguishes them from other racialized ethnic groups in the United States, and even from

other Latino groups. Widespread racial mixing is a charactersitic of most Latin American societies, but for Puertorriqueñas racial mixing has particular implications, both in Puerto Rico as well as in the communities they helped to establish in the United States.[6] The distinctive "mixed" or mulatto character of Puerto Rican racial and ethnic history that is often overlooked helps unlock all of the elusive nuances of the racialization they have experienced in the Northeastern United States. Without an understanding about the implications of this extensive racial mixing in Puerto Rico itself, any analysis of the multiple marginalization inherent in their racialized ethnic identities on this side of the ocean will be significantly distorted.[7]

Racial identities in the United States are constructed within a bipolar racial order where ethnicity is subsumed under the larger classification of race, and one's racial identity is often determined by one's cultural or ethnic identity (Rodriguez, 1991; Omi and Winant, 1986). In this type of social order racial boundaries are constructed to serve the needs and interest of the economically and socially priveleged (Nakashima, 1992; Roots, 1992). The dominant group can and does manipulate notions of race while concealing the political and economic motivations of racist ideologies by establishing racialized categories of social identity (Bradshaw, 1992). In the Northeastern United States, racial categories tend to be polarized into "white" and "black" within this bi-polar racial order, invalidating anything that falls outside its clearly demarcated boundaries.[8]

The presence of multiracial individuals within the United States historically challenged bi-polar racial order because they blur established racial categories, deconstructing the notion of "race" as a discrete, fixed, stable category by exposing the arbitrary nature of such categorization.[9] In fact, because multiracial people have never fit neatly into racial categories, they have either been placed within the category of "black," and subjected to the rules of hypodescent,[10] or else entirely erased and denied by the racial order. The suppression and denial of its own history of racial mixing has allowed the dominant socity to perpetuate and maintain the myth that race is a fixed and immutable aspect of society. It has also enable the maintenance of a

"political economy of domination"[11] that conceals the economic motives, class privilege, and white supremacist values of the racial status quo (Collins, 1992; Nakashima, 1992).

Because multiracial individuals contest the "biological, moral, and social meaning of race," they are often in the doubly marginal position of rejection by both groups from which they claim heritage, but for quite different reasons (Roots, 1992).[12] Most clearly articulated in the question "which one are you?" typical posed to multiracial individuals is the implicit notion that they must and can only align themselves with only one of the groups from which they derive their heritages.[13] Their intermediary position within racial ecology results in their denial or erasure from discourses about "race" in the United States, which are often cast solely in "black" and "white" terms. For Puertorriqueñas who as individuals may claim either "black" or "white" racial identities, but who are collectively a multiracial group, living out their multiraciality within the Northeastern United States opens up some interesting dilemmas. As multiracial women, they have not escaped hegemonic racist ideolgies, nor the scrutiny of both dominant and subordinated groups. From their perspective, one possible answer to the question "which one are you?" can be found in the unexamined history of racial mixing of Puerto Rico.

Fernandez (1992: 126) is correct in asserting that "the great majority of Latinos are 'mixed race' people." Certainly, Puertorriqueñas exemplify this historical multiraciality of Latin America. Their intermediary location in the racial ecology of the United States results from their very complex and paradoxical location within these arenas. Precariously perched "between black and white" within the Untied States, Puertorriqueñas inherently embody the many contradictions embedded in this multiple positionality. By understanding the racial ambience that migrated with them from Puerto Rico, and how it is perceived within the context of the United States, it is possible to unravel the complexities and contradictions their multiracial identities represent within this context.

Puertorriqueñas arrived in the United States with a Latin American racial orientation but one that was decisively based on

Puerto Rico's historical realities. The extensive racial mixing in Puerto Rico during the first four hundred years of the island's socio-political and economic evolution, particularly among the working classes, determined to a large part, the content of racial ideology and classifications.[14] By the end of the nineteenth century, racial mixing was so prevalent that few clearly identifiable racial groups were recognized.[15] Puerto Rico became a uniquely mulatto country where racial categorization became characterized by white and non-whites and a distinctive racial ambiance evolved (Jimenez Munoz, 1994; Rodriguez, 1991; Jorge, 1986). An important feature of this racial ambiance was that because they come from a racially mixed country they tended to recognize several different racial types using various different situations and contextual physiological and social features to determine an individual's racial classification. It is this often neglected understanding of their racial orientation that sets the tone for their engagement with the racial order of the United States.

In contrast to Anglo American racial ideologies, the approach to race relations in Puerto Rico is bound more by social factors such as physical appearance and class then by the one drop rule of descendant governing race relations in North America.[16] Racial identities are structured along a spectrum of possible racial types including *blanca, india, morenas, negras, prietas, jabas, trigueños,* and *grifas* that tend to be evaluated in a more fluid manner than in the United States (Rodriguez, 1991; Jorge, 1986). In effect, how racial meanings, consciousness, ideologies, and identities unfold for Puertorriqueñas is based more on set of ideologies and practices that are socially constructed and historically specific than more essentialist conceptualizations of race it the United States.[17] The fact that Puerto Rican society devised ways to institutionalize a variety of racial types evaluated both contextually and situationally depicts the different nature of its racial ideology and the ways it perceives of and constructs racial identities (Rodriguez, 1990).

The racial ambiance Puerto Ricans stepped into as migrants to the United States during the early part of the century was already cast in a discourse of "black" versus "white," a polariza-

tion that immediately invalidated their mulitple framework.[18] Even more fundamental is the fact that they tended to operate out of a racially heterogeneous context and not from an either/or proposition regarding their racial identities.[19] They migrated to the United States with a racial ambiance that provided various possibilities for racial identification and it helped to determine how their experiences with racism would differ from other subordinated groups.[20] While colonization left an indelible mark on all Latin American societies from which Puerto Rico has not been spared,[21] the existence of this racial spectrum illustrates how different geographical regions developed different racial orders, each with its own accents and inflections.[22]

Originating from a society where racial identities were situational and contextual, Puertorriqueñas stepped into a geopolitical region where the racial order contained only two rigidly structured possibilities for racial identification, one "white" and one "black." As a multiracial ethnic groups, they represented a dilemma for the United States. Rodriguez describes how they are perceived within this racial order, pointing out that:

> within the U.S. perspective, Puerto Ricans, racially speaking, belonged to both groups; however, ethnically, they belonged to neither. Thus placed, Puerto Ricans soon found themselves caught between two polarities and dialectically at a distance from both. Puerto Ricans were White and Black; Puerto Ricans were more than White or Black (1991, 51).

The first Puerto Rican colonias that developed in New York City explicitly and self-consciously mandated the maintenance of linguistic and cultural identity (Sanchez Korrol, 1983). This mandate was handed over to the women who were expected to accomplish the task through their roles as wives and mothers. Very early on, and acting out of their own understanding of the world, Puertorriqueñas in the new colonias promoted ethnic identities as their most significant identifier. Hence, while in the United States one's racial identification was the most important social identifier, Puerto Ricans identified themselves first in terms of their ethnicity and culture, and only secondly in terms of

race. Cultural identity was not meant to replace their racialized ethnic identities, but merely to reinforce their historical and cultural distinctiveness as an ethnic group.

The promotion of a cultural identity as primary over a racial identity meant that Puertorriqueñas immediately subverted the bipolar racial order by implicitly exploding its boundaries in several ways. Not only did they defy racial categorizations in the United States, but their obstinancy regarding racial self-definitions directly confronted the ways dominant ideologies shaped the meaning of race and ethnicity in the United States (Rodriguez, 1990: 61). The tacit understanding of dominant racial ideology that Puertorriqueñas in the United States depart from is underscored by the growth of the "other," or intermediate racial category among Puerto Ricans, which is a major category of racial identification today. In fact, there is a tendency among Puerto Ricans in the Northeast to racialize themselves in opposition to assimilationist pulls, and what has been designated the "browning tendency," is an increasing trend among Puerto Ricans, one that is not "black" or "white" but self-consciously "brown" (Rodriquez, 1990). In resisting externally imposed definitions of racial identities, they open up a site where the possibilities for the construction of multiple identities can be nurtured within a sociopolitical and cultural framework.

Self-consciously embracing their racial ambiguity provides a competing paradigm of identity to the racial status quo, one that also resists hegemonic racial thinking in its subversion of established racial categorizations. Puertorriqueñas reveal how one group of multiracial women experience, negotiate, and renegotiate their identities and subjectivities in situational and contextual ways. They also differ from mulitracial individuals because they constitute a multiracial group. Whereas multiracial individuals feel they belong to neither group from which they derive their heritages (Miller, 1992), Puertorriqueños are in the advantageous position of both embracing their multiracial heritages as a collectivity, while simultaneously naming themselves anew. The collective aspects of their multiraciality provides a reference point from which to foster a creative, collective subversion of dominant power structures not necessarily available to individuals of multiracial backgrounds.

Against the backdrop of this multiracial context they bring their own special angel of vision to contemporary discussions of race, class, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, identity, difference, and power relations in the United States. As liminal, "mixed" women, they decenter ideological notions of race by refusing externally imposed and defined identities. Despite their continual racialization[23] by hegemonic social and political practices and policies, they force North Americans to respond to their self-definition as Puertorriqueñas, with all of its intricacies and complexities.

Puertorriqueñas in the Political Economy of Domination: Their Liminal Social Location

In recent essay that explores the elusiveness of African heritage among Puertorriqueñas in Puerto Rico, Puerto Rican historian Gladys Jimenez Muñoz (1993) asks "what have women who do recognized their African heritage...taught us in terms of being women of color in the U.S. in general and being a Latina in particular?" As women of color in the United States, they have learned that their "blackness is directly related to their environment and culture" (Brady, 1988: 47). Stradling the borderlands of racialized ethnic identities, their multiple otherness is reinforced by their liminal structural location within the United States political economy of domination. In evaluating the different ways Puertorriqueñas experience otherness, their location within this political economy of domination has implications for the ways they interact with and are perceived by racialized "others" within this same system.

As a conquered people, Puertorriqueñas share the experience of subjugation and exploitation with African American women. The shared legacy of struggle against their collective subjugation as women of color highlights the different ways racism and sexism converge in the lives of racialized ethnic women in the United States.[24] An important point of contrast between the two groups of women, however, revolves around how each has been incorporated into a political economy of

domination in the United States that determines their historical and social location within this society. While both African American women and Puertorriqueñas were included into systems of exploited labor that benefit the economically and socially privileged, there are some critical differences in how each group has been incorporated into economic structures which centers around their status as free and/or exploited labor. Slavery, as the collective, historical organizing experience of African American women, denigrated their labor and their person through structural processes articulated as racial differences. As a separate institution it was characterized by the ownership of the labor of African American women and their children (Collins, 1990; Jone, 1985).

For Puertorriqueñas, the collective organizing experience of incorporation into the political economy of domination was one of dual colonization, which immediately set them apart from other colonized groups.[25] Spanish colonization resulted in the displacement of indigenous peoples and their lifeways that led to the development of a particular racial ambience. The economic, political, cultural, and social displacement resulting from United States colonization included a denigration of Puerto Rican labor and personhood based on structural and geopolitical processes but articulated as national and cultural differences. The displacement of the labor of Puerto Rican women was mediated somewhat by their position as waged laborers despite the incredible exploitation they still suffered as surplus labor within the political economy (Ortiz, 1985). This important factor created the basis for the incorporation of Puerto Rican women into the political economy of domination on different terms then African American women.

After emancipation, African American women were increasingly incorporated into waged labor primarily as domestics for European American households. It was within this structural location that they developed their "outsider within" status. Establishing the special angle of vision of African American women, Patricia Hill Collins explains that:

> Black women's position in the political economy, particularly ghettoization in domestic work, comprised another contradictory location where economic and political subordination created the conditions for Black women's resistance...The results was a curious outsider-within stance, a peculiar marginality that stimulated a special Black women's perspective (1990, 11).

Puertorriqueñas, however, do not share the "outsider within" status of African American women for two reasons. First, they were not enslaved within the context of the United States. As slaves, they toiled on their own land for the Spanish colonizers and their *criollo* collaborators. Thus, while they may have created cultures of resistance similar to those developed by African American women in the United States, they did so in relation to Puerto Rico and then transplanted and renegotiated these relationships in their migration to the United States.

A second reason they differ from African American women is that African American women were already located in the occupational niche of domestic work. Puertorriqueñas, however, did not enter domestic work in the United States in large numbers[26] but worked as surplus, low-waged labor in manufacturing sectors of the economy (Rivera, 1986; Ortiz, 1984). Their labor force participation, until very recently, has been concentrated primarily in the garment industry of the Northeastern industrial belt (Ortiz, 1984; Rios, 1985). When they did work as domestics, they nurtured the families of European settlers, foreign-born and *criollo*, in Puerto Rico. The context of their othering in relation to established racialized groups occurred within a structural location of the manufacturing industry, which differed significantly from the occupational experiences of the majority of African American women up until mid-century.[27]

As a surplus, mobile labor force located in heavily "female" occupations of the manufacturing industry, the journey of Puertorriqueñas to the "other side of the ocean" resulted in the immediate racialization in terms of the dominant group but also occurred in relationship to the subordinated groups most commonly found in the region they migrated to---in this case

African Americans. Never acceptable as equal citizens by the European Americans who colonized them nor the white ethnics they labored next to, they were also viewed as foreign by African Americans with whom they shared communities, problems, and political struggles but from whom they differed in linguistic, historical, and cultural ways. Their position in the United States, especially in relation to other subordinated groups, is one in which they are "inside in an outside way" (Cuadraz, 1992) and thus, always liminal both in relation to European Americans as well as to their "other," that is African Americans. This liminal position reflects a multiple consciousness that acknowledges the historical and structural processes which helped to shape their collective racial experiences in the region. Thus, their ambiguous position within the political economy of domination of the United States.

Their "other's other" status results from their interaction with both dominant political and economic structures and state policies as well as with subordinated and marginalized groups.[28] As surplus labor, Puertorriqueñas remain doubly marginalized in a political economy that views them as dispensable as well as from a racial order that structures and hierarchizes racial and ethnic groups within a segmented labor market. The recent decreased labor force participation of Puertorriqueñas in Northeastern manufacturing industries is the best indication of their ambiguous position within this political economy of domination (Benmayor, et al. 1992; Torres & Bonilla, 1993) since only Puertorriqueñas have experienced such a decline.[29]

As "others" to African Americans, they are doubly marginalized not only in terms of their intermediate position between "black" and "white" within this racial ecology, but also because their Caribbean and Latino Africanness is measured against Africanness as constructed by African Americans. As multiracial women, they are pitted against the two extremes, perpetually within a quandary where:

> the experience of being seen in a way different from the way you see yourself, particularly as it pertains to race, is clearly an unsettling process. Indeed, it has often been maintained that

> for the migrating Puerto Ricans, the experience of racial reclassification, and its attendant racism frequently undermines the sense of autonomy and intiative...and leaves a residue of self-doubt and inadequacy (Rodriguez, 1990, 76).

Finally, as Latinos who have been simultaneously liberated and conquered by the United States, their multiple marginality means continually a negotiation and renegotiation of their social, political, and cultural positions in relation to both United States and to Puerto Rico.[30]

The liminal positionality of Puertorriqueñas provides them with a particular angle of vision about racialized ethnic identities, which is more fluid and less fixed then the dichotomous frameworks operating within the dominant society. Their racial ambiguity, related as much to their historical multiraciality as to the ambiguity of their structural, social, and political location both in the United States and Puerto Rico creates the material conditions for their objectification by the political economy of domination that places them in a position of subordination similar to that of African Americans. On the other hand, their multiraciality makes them unlike African Americans in some significant ways. Aside from the cultural, linguistic, and historical differences are differences based on their structural location within the political relationship of Puerto Rico to the United States. It is precisely this ambiguity that demarcates their "other's other" status within the United States. And it is precisely this ambiguity that renders them invisible within its racial ecology.

Puertorriqueñas, as well as a vast majority of other "mixed" people, remain problematic for the categories of a bi-polar racial order, decentering the either/or frameworks that characterizes racial thinking in the United States. To acknowledge the multiraciality within bi-polar racial order requires acknowledging the vast majority of "mixed race" people within its own history, dissolving its neatly constructed hierarchy of racial dichotomy which effectively ignores mixed race peoples, thus Puertorriqueñas.

Not You/Like You: The Special Angle of An Other's Inappropriate Other[31]

Puertorriqueñas embody a resistance to the dichotomous framework implicit in dualistic thinking (of we/they, insider/outsider, native/other, male/female, god/man) because their cultural and historical realities present them with multiple possiblities for constructing identities (African, Indian, Asian, Jew, Arab, Immigrant, Latino, Hispano, Hispanic, people of color). Their social location as an ethnic group in the United States resolves a fundamental issue that individuals of mixed-race heritage do not escape, that of the "ambiguity of belongingness," which is mediated by the fact that they come from a geopolitical region where racial mixing is common. This provides them with the privilege of collectively positioning themselves in order to name and (re)define themselves.

The special angle of vision that Puertorriqueñas bring to discussions of race, class, gender, sexuality, and ethnicity within the United States is the negotiation and renegotiation of this liminality within the different arenas where they are multiply marginalized. Their liminality is most evident when using a both/and conceptual framework regarding their location and identities within these different societies. For example, they are both Puertorriqueñas and American, both African and European descent, they are both "black" and "white," both migrants and immigrants. They are liminal in Puerto Rico because they are born and/or raised in the United States and do not fit into island definitions of Puertorriqueñidad. Yet, they also tend to be liminal within the United States because they are seen as an "other" by European, African, and even Native Americans. As labor migrants from a neo-colony, they configured as nonwhite whereas on the island they would be configured as white. Their dark bodies place them in the nonwhite racial category, but they are also not "black" in the same ways that African Americans are configured and configure their "blackness." They are simultaneously American and Puerto Ricans in this arena but also something else, something new.[32]

In various social arenas, the multiple identities of Puertorriqueñas take on different meanings as well as creating an entirely new identity depending on whether one is on the island, in United States, or positioned as working-class Puertorriqueñas in Puerto Rico, as working-class persons of color in the United States, in relation to new immigrants on the island or new immigrants in the Untied States, and so on. Their multiple marginality not only provides them with several different standpoints from which to view the world, but is also a significant aspect of how they configure themselves.[33] That is, they depart from the premise of multiple identities and positionalities, carrying this very distinctive perspective with them into the external world as they interact with the raical ideology of the dominant society.

Since multiraciality is denied and suppressed in the United States, dark-skinned as well as light-skinned Puertorriqueñas feel pressured to choose between a Puerto Rican ethnic identity and a "black" or "white" racial identity. Vivian Brady highlights the pressure to identify with either one group or the other, and in either ethnic or racial terms:

> I have been told that it is impossible for me to continue being both Puerto Rican and Black and that I will inevitably need to choose sides, perhaps as a way to show my allegiance to my chosen community. But, I like many other Hispanics, know that the blood I share with Afro-Americans links me to the survival and work necessary in both communities equally (1988, 47).

However, the expectation that Puertorriqueñas accept existing constructions of "blackness" formulated by African Americans within their own historical and cultural trajectories is as problematic for them as the expectation of assimilation into a European American culture identity. By asserting their own definitions of racialized ethnic identities, Puertorriqueñas do not necessarily negate their Africanness, though surely this may be the case for some individuals, but affirm and reinforce their Puerto Ricanness, which is inextricably connected to their Africanness. In the

United States, Puerto Rican Africanness, is subsumed under African Americans definitions of Africanness just as Americanness is defined from a European American perspective.[34] Their own Africanness, in contrast, is rooted in Latin American cultural and historical trajectories; it is a different kind of Africanness developed within a particular geopolitical and local context. In a similar manner, dominant definitions of "Americanness" present a dilemma for Puertorriqueñas here, especially in light of the political economic relationship of Puerto Rico to the United States.

Because Puertorriqueñas are pressured to conform to externally-defined and historically-specific notions of Africanness constructed in the United States, they are forced to negate the multiracial, multiethnic history of Puerto Rico in ways that undermines their own self-determination. By invalidating their multiracial, multicultural identities, Puertorriqueñas are cheated out of their own very vibrant history and culture. Brady further observes:

> I have always found the restriction only one choice incredibly frustrating. As someone who describes herself as Black-Puerto Rican, there never seems to be any category that acknowledges the strong African heritage of Hispanic people in the Caribbean and Latin America. We, as Hispanics, are isolated as if we were a separate race unto ourselves. Unlike English and French-speaking people of the Caribbean, the kinship ties of Puerto Ricans to the Black American community are often ignored or denied. Our common bond of African heritage as people of color in this hemisphere and our implicit sisterhood and brotherhood are often left unrecognized...(1988, 44).

While very light-skinned and dark-skinned Puertorriqueñas both experience some very specific tensions ina society that operates on a bi-polar racial order, it is those women who fit somewhere in the middle, the so-called "brown" or "tan" Puertorriqueñas, who cause the most discomfort and anxiety for both African and European Americans who have difficulty understanding their

multiraciality. And it is this intermediate group that causes the most confusion and is most often mutilated in the bi-directional assimilationist tugs of the racial status quo. Because all Americans, African Americans included, are subjected to the same essentialist notions of racialized identity, Puerto Rican ethnic identity is evaluated without prior knowledge of Puerto Rican history and culture, or any understanding about the politics of Puerto Rican racial realities.

This poses an especially interesting problematic for African Americans upon whose bodies and psyche's the discourse of racialized identity have been defined. Confronted with the multiraciality of Puertorriqueñas, they often respond by inverting the "immigrant analogy" use by European Americans to objectify Puerto Ricans.[35] Their mulitraciality is interpreted as either not knowing "who they are" or as a denial of their Africanness (Brady, 1988: 47). This response highlights the ways that African Americans, as North Americans, are hegemonic in relation to the rest of the African Diaspora regarding racial matters in the United States. While African Americans understand how race is ideologically constructed in relation to themselves, they often misunderstand how this same dynamic works within a Puerto Rican context. For example, African Americans know that they come in different shades and colors but that they are still African American. Yet, despite their own experiences with racial mixing, or perhaps because of it, they are often perplexed about how Puertorriqueñas who come in different shades and color still identify themselves as Puerto Rican, but not as either "black" or "white."

What is often missed here, from the standpoint of Puertorriqueñas, is that both these categories have particular culturally and historical specific meanings that ignore or exclude their experiences. While there are some important similarities and points of convergence for all women within the African Diaspora, there are also many differences. Puertorriqueñas are, thus, not African Americans but like African Americans. The question "Which one are you?" posed to Puertorriqueñas, has similar disconcerting repercussions as with multiracial

individuals. By subsuming their own history and culture under the rubric of African American identity, Puertorriqueñas are forced to suppress and negate a very specific cultural and historical identity rooted in Caribbean/Puerto Rican Africanness. But as the new Caribbean and Latin American transnational migration to the United States increases, the complexities and variations of the Africanness within the diaspora are accentuated in some fascinating ways.

Just as African American women have articulated an epistemological standpoint where being Black and a woman is not mutually exclusive (hooks, 1989; Lorde, 1984; Collins, 1960), being Puertorriqueña and African descent is also not mutually exclusive. For "it is Puerto Rican to acknowledge our mixed heritage" (Brady, 1988:47)but while African heritage is a fundamental and integral aspect of the racialized borderland of Puertorriqueñas, its meaning, how it has evolved in the United States, and the way it is structured within various Puerto Rican communities and lives needs to be more precisely understood from the perspectives of Puertorriqueñas.

When the racial category "black" is interrogated from the perspective of African American historical and cultural traditions and trajectories, the notion of race is exposed anew as a socially constructed concept. Only when difference among people of color is defined in terms of conflict and separatism can essentialist notions of race inadvertantly support the racial status quo. Discussing how difference is often perceived only in terms of conflict, Trinh Minh-ha explains that:

> difference as understood in many feminist and non-Western contexts..is not opposed to sameness, nor synonymous with separateness. Difference, in other words, does not necessarily give rise to separatism. There are differences as well as similarities within the concept of difference. One can further say that difference is not what makes conflicts. It is beyond and alongside conflict. This is where confusion often arises and where the challenge can be issued. Many of us still hold on the concept of difference not as a tool of creativity to question multiple forms of repression and dominance, but as

> a tool of segregation, to exert power on the basis of racial and sexual essences.The apartheid type of difference (1990, 372)

Clearly, the use of a both/and lens for understanding racial difference among Puertorriqueñas opens up different dimensions of their liminality. Their inside/outside multiplicity shatters all conventional formulations of identity and difference, clearing a space for differences within the notion of difference, one that is inclusive, critical, and multiple. The both/and conceptual framework also opens up a space which includes those identities and people on the margins as well as those who are pivoting the center. It lends legitimacy to the "mixed" background of Puertorriqueñas, of being African, Amerindian, and European, or Caribbean, Puerto Rican and American, or of being white, black and brown and in multiple, complex, and contradictory ways.

By uncritically accepting a "white" or "black" racialized identity Puertorriqueñas risk surrendering to an essentialist notion of racial identity that erases their multiple realities and denies their existence, where they assist in their own subjugation because they are still, ultimately, defined by others. While many Puertorriqueñas implicitly understand the political implications of the either/or framework of the dominant society, they hold tightly to their cultural and historical realities, knowing well from their dual colonial experience that resistance within this context means not only resisting essentialist notions of race but of ensuring their survival as multiple historical subjects. For as bell hook notes "oppressed People resist by identifying themselves as subject, by defining their reality, shaping their new identity, naming their history, telling their story" (1989, 43).

The Penalties and Privileges of Living Marginalized Multiplicities: A Concluding Note

Since Puertorriqueñas fall outside of the established racial order, they implicitly possess the power to disentangle themselves from dominant power structures. Through the process of self-definition they avoid recreating systems of domination in counter-stance to oppressive structures. Instead of raising consciousness, they affirm their consciousness by naming and identifying themselves and their particular realities; they affirm their right to their cultures and to their histories. Their disidentification with official discourses of social identity also compels the dominant society to re-examine its own position of domination of the "other" in both ways.

Using a both/and conceptual stance with Puertorriqueñas reveals the varying degrees of penalties and privileges they experience within the political economy of domination. Patricia Hill Collins suggests that:

> placing African American women and other excluded groups in the center of analysis opens up possibilities for a both/and conceptual stance, one in which all groups possess varying amounts of penalty and privilege in one historically created system. In this system, for example, white women are penalized by their gender but privileged by their race. Depending on the context, an individual may be an oppressor or, a member of an oppressed group, or simultaneously oppressor an oppressed (1991, 225).

As multiracial women, Puertorriqueñas are penalized because they are rendered invisible in a system that refuses to acknowledge anything that is neither "white" or "black". Their multiracial identities often cause North Americans ambivalence and anxiety because they are not clearly definable or categorizable into existing frameworks.

The "privileges" of being "not exactly black" in a society that devalues "blackness" may come in the form of light-skinned privilege, especially if a Puertorriqueña approximates Eurocentric, masculinist standards of beauty and femininity. Here, they are placed in a similar situation to that of light-skinned African American women and are treated with the same approach-avoidance attitude by African Americans and Puerto Ricans alike. Yet, privilege needs to be evaluated in a contextual manner in order to disentangle the subtle ways that dominant power relations bestow racial privileges to light-skinned women, and

the ways it may harm and undermine women of color, individually and collectively.

In some ways, the social position of Puertorriqueñas in the United States, because of their lighter shades of dark, can be characterized as one of privilege. But, once among European Americans they must speak English, drop their accent, and look, act and dress to approximate Anglo American standards of womanhood if they are to maintain their position and succeed within this realm.[36] In this instance, privilege as defined in the service of Eurocentric, heterosexist, masculinist standpoint has various dimensions that include a bleaching process where Puertorriqueñas must deculturate themselves to fit in. Thus, while Puertorriqueñas may be "privileged" by color, they may just as easily be penalized by class, culture, sexuality, language, education, migrant status, and national origin. By analyzing the difference dimensions of privilege, the interlocking nature of difference oppressions, like class, cultural, or sexuality becomes more clearly evident.[37]

While the potential to "pass" is always present, and some individual women may indeed engage in "passing" behavior,[38] it is more likely that Puertorriqueñas will choose not to pass and to align themselves with their ethnic group and in coalitions with other racialized ethnic groups.[39] They understand the nature of oppression, of racism, and of domination in the United States all too well. And because they pay a double penalty as women who "straddle the fence," they will always remain suspect. They also pay a double penalty because membership among either "whites" or "blacks" means giving up a culture and history of their own for the uncertain status of membership among cultures and histories that do not belong to them.

In exposing the arbitrariness of racial categorization, the "mixedness" of Puertorriqueñas results in their erasure, along with all those others who do not fit into the configuration of power and domination in the United States. In this instance, erasure is also a double-edged sword because it places them outside the racial formula, thereby freeing them to dis identify with racial structures and ideologies of domination. They have greater reign to rethink and rename themselves as women of color

without the added baggage that comes with strategies of counter-identification already implicit in the positionality of "others," especially in relation to the dominant society. Erasure, then, is not only a source of oppression but can be inverted into a subversive source of strength, regeneration, and creativity. Herein lies the crux of how Puertorriqueñas live "within the crucibles of their other's other status."

In rethinking assumptions about the racial identities of Puertorriqueñas it is importance to ethnicize and historicize their collective identities. Without a sense of the historical and cultural meanings they act from and out of, it is virtually impossible to understand the complexities and multiple positionalities of their lives in the United States. In a similar manner that multiracial individuals blurs racial and ethnic boundaries, challenging "generally accepted proscriptions and prescriptions regarding intergroup relations" (Root, 1992:3), Puertorriqueñas too challenge us to reevaluate essentialist categories such as Black, African, Mixed even. They share with other multiracial individuals and groups that they embody difference on several different borders, moving outward from that position of multiplicity to engage the social and political realities of living in the United States.

By rejecting their history and culture, Puertorriqueñas are faced with their own historical, psychic, and symbolic annihilation. Only through their self-definition and by telling their stories will they be able to negotiate their multiplicities in ways that are liberatory. Exploring the connection between self-definition and empowerment, Patricia Hill Collins writes that "self-definition is the key to the individual and group empowerment, using an epistemology that cedes the power of self-defintion to other groups, no matter how well-meaning, in essence perpetuates...subordination" (1990, 34). In legitimating their multiple marginality Puertorriqueñas are able to envision the world from a non-white/non-black perspective, where, I suspect, many "others" may also live.

Endnotes

[1]For purposes of this paper, I will limit my comments to Puertorriqueñas either born and/or raised in the Northeastern United States whose main orientation is the United States. Cognizant of the complexity of circular migration and the historical trajectories of social, cultural, and political realities on the Island, analyzing the positionalities of women in Puerto Rico is beyond the scope of this essay. For a discussion of race regarding Puerto Rican women on the island see essay by Gladys Jimenez-Muñoz "The Elusive Sign of Africanness," Border/Lines, 29/30, 1993, Pp. 9-15.

[2]Puerto Rico was first colonized by the Spanish until 1898, when the Island was ceded to the United States as war booty after the Spanish-American war. This dual colonization, a distinctive feature of Puerto Rican reality, establishes their multiple marginalization on the island as well as in the United States. For a concise discussion of the dual colonization of Puerto Rico see Arturo Morales Carrion, et. al (1983) and Melendez (1993) for more recent analysis that includes the Puerto Rican Diaspora.

[3]I would like to thank my colleague Doris Correa Capello for bringing this point to my attention.

[4]Puertorriqueñas are women of African, Native American and European descent.

[5]The "other" for many Puertorriqueñas is strictly racialized ethnic terms tend to be African Americans. This is especially true because of the historical geographic concentration of Puerto Ricans in the Northeastern urban centers, mainly New York, Philadelphia, and Boston, and Chicago where many African Americans are also concentrated. There is an added dimension here related to the cultural affinities between groups as peoples of the African Diaspora.

[6]While Cuba, Dominican Republic, and other Latin American countries can be said to be "mixed" race countries, Puerto Rico is by far the one that has the greatest amount of blending. Known as the first truly Creole nation, racial mixing has occurred to such a great extent among the working classes that identifiable subcultures of Indigenous, African, and Immigrant Europeans is difficult to determine. See

Duany (1985) for an excellent discussion of how economic structures have influenced the construction of identity.

[7]Puertorriqueñas are usually discussed either within the island context or within the "immigrant analogy" framework in the United States. The first approach ignores the historical and cultural contributions of communities in the United States. The second approach overlooks how they have been racialized in the United States.

[8]While in other regions of the country these polarized categories may change, such as in the Southwestern United States where a tripartite racial ecology is assumed, whenever race is discussed in the Northeastern part of the country only the relations between descendants of African and European Americans are inferred. A most recent example is the book, Race Matters, by the African American scholar Cornell West who focuses his analysis solely on African Americans when the Los Angeles rebellions have taught us that when race matters, it usually does in a more complex way than merely in white/black terms.

[9]A bipolar racial order negates their existence, either by compressing them into the "nonwhite" category, which in the United States has become synonymous with "black", or inserting them into the "white" category by default. Thus, it is common to find throughout the twentieth century that different racial-ethnic groups have been placed into the "white" or "nonwhite" racial categories during different decades.

[10]The rule of hypo-descent in the United States holds that one drop of black blood makes you black.

[11]See Patricia Hill Collins (1993) for discussion of the notion of the political economy of domination within the context of African American women's lives.

[12]From the perspective of the dominant group, resentment occurs because of the perception that an individual gains false access to unearned racial privilege and status. From the perspective of the subordinate group, the potential for rejection of the lower status group causes resentment. Passing is seen as the concealment of "true" identity and the compromising of integrity. Both perspectives are locked into value judgments about the inherent differences between

racial and cultural groups. Since mixed racial people embody both groups, they remain eternally marginal in relation to both dominant and subordinate groups

[13]This is especially true if the individual derives their heritage from a dominant or powerful group and a subordinated or disempowered group, as in individuals of European American and African American descent. While it is seemingly less so in the mixture of subordinated racial and ethnic groups, anecdotal evidence among Latinos who are, and define themselves, as African descent indicate otherwise.

[14]The extensive mixing in Puerto Rico resulted in its designation as a truly "Creole" society. The 19th century census data shows that only about 10% of the population was "black", another 10% was white and the remainder were "mixed people of color."

[15]See Adalberto López (1980) for demographic figures that demonstrates how Puerto Rican society had a large mixed population throughout the nineteenth century and only a small percentage of either black or whites. While whites, negros, and personas de colores or pardos were recognized, what became an even more important designation was free versus slave.

[16]In Puerto Rico, as in many Latin American countries, race is a social concept, connected to other social concepts like class and gender (Rodriguez, 1991:53; Fernandez, 1992: 126). Though race in the US. is often equated with biological notions of race, Spickard (1992) argues that race is actually a sociocultural and political construct rather than one of biology. He shows how ancestry which is most clearly defined in social and cultural terms is the fundamental basis of racial classification in the US. Recognizing that there is considerable overlap in biological notions of race he asserts that "all of this is not to argue that there is no biological aspect to race, only that biology is not fundamental." (p.18).

[17]Rodriguez (1991:52) points out that "one's class, facial features, educational background and the social context" was more important to racial classification then if one grandparent was African descent or not.

[18]Interestingly, it was at the very moment when Puerto Ricans began to arrive in more significant numbers during the early part of the century that African and European Americans were engaged in some of the most intense racial confrontations.

[19]This is evident in the development of the Spanish caste system which attempted to accommodate racially mixed people into a taxonomy of racial classification that has numerous possibilities. See O'Crowley (1972) and Woolbridge (1948) for a glossaries of names in colonial Latin America. Anglo American societies did not develop, nor officially recognize, such an extensive racial taxonomy because they discouraged miscegenation and adhered to a very strict color line. What is more important about the racial classification system of Latin America is that while in the US. integration may occur within neighborhoods or streets; in Latin American, it is an issue of having, as Clara Rodriguez (1991) puts it, a "black-looking" brother and a "white-looking" sister.

[20]The spectrum of racial classification in Latin American societies was mistakenly assumed to denote the relative ease of slavery or the existence of racial democracies in Latin America by European and North American scholars. See Frank Tannenbaum (1947) and Stanley Elkins (1959) for elaboration on the "more humanistic" treatment of slaves in Latin America. Gilberto Freyre (1946) similarly argued that Brazilian slavery was a racial democracy. For a refutation of what became known as the Tannenbaum thesis see C.R. Boxer (1963). One has to travel along Latin American's racial hierarchy to see that at the bottom one is more likely to encounter people of color.

[21]Rodriguez (1973, 1974) found "a preference for white" among Puertorriqueñas that other scholars have called the bleaching process, "blanquiamento" or "mejorando la raza." While racism and discrimination are not absent from Puerto Rican society, it is experienced differently by Puertorriqueñas on the island.

[22]For example, Spickard (1992:18) shows how the 1870 US census bureau listed white, colored (blacks), colored (mulatto), Chinese, and Indian as racial categories. In 1950, the census listed white, Black and other. In 1980 the racial categories included White, Black, Hispanic, Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, Indian, Hawaiian, Guaminian, Samoan, Eskimo, Aleut, and other. In Britain, racial categories include White, West Indian, African Arab, Turkish, Chinese, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladesh, Sri Lankan, and other. South Africa lists White, Black, Colored, and , Asian. Brazil includes Black and White gradations of "preto, cabra, escuro, mulato escuro, mulato clara, pardo, sararia, moreno, and branco de tena.

[23]For the term, racialization, see Omi and Winant.

[24]I am drawing on Norma Alarcon's (1990) use of the term "raced" to designate women who have been racialized by political and economic processes in the United States.

[25]This not only includes the imposition of one economic system over another but also one cultural system over another.

[26]In Puerto Rico, domestic service was the second most important occupation for women. Manufacturing was the first. See Marcia Rivera's "The Development of Capitalism in Puerto Rico and the Incorporation of Women into the Labor Force," Pp. 46-58, and Blanca Silvestrini's "Women As Workers: The Experience of the Puerto Rican Woman in the 1930's" Pp. 59-74, in The Puerto Rican Woman: Perspectives on Culture, History, and Society, ed. by Edna Acosta-Belen, (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1986).

[27]Their point of entry and the timing of the arrival of Puertorriqueñas may have something to do with how they were incorporated into the political economy of domination.

[28]The proximity of African American communities to Puerto Rican communities throughout the Northeast has been an integral feature of the Puerto Rican experience in the United States. Vivian Brady asserts that:

Our shared experience is not just the oppression that we have had to survive in this country, although it is of crucial importance and should serve to bind us together politically in order to create change and support each other's self-determination. We live together in some of the poorest communities, are racked by a drug epidemic, inadequate housing, and an educational system that leaves us unqualified and intellectually stifled. We ride the subways together every day, feeling much the same anger and despair, yet there is uncertainty between us (1988:47).

[29]In fact, this same period has seen an increase in the labor force participation of European American women in unprecedented numbers.

[30]Their initial interaction with Americans was an ambivalent one since they were simultaneously conquered and liberated. Americans were first perceived of as progressive and enlightened, especially because of the labor unions and Lincoln's republicanism, in stark contrast to the repressive Spanish colonial regime and complicitous Criollos. Puerto Ricans quickly realized that they had traded one colonial master for another. Resistant to another imposed culture, they fought long and hard for their right to self-determination, their culture and their dignity.

For my ideas about how Puertorriqueñas are constantly negotiating re negotiating their identities, I am indebted to my discussions and interaction with my compañera, Luz del Alba Acevedo, from whose insightful and penetrating comments and analysis I always benefit.

[31]The Like You/Not You theoretical formulation is taken from Trihn Minh-ha's essay with a similar title "Like You/Not You: Post-Colonial Women and the Interlocking Questions of Identity and Difference, In Making Face, Making Soul, Haciendo Caras: Creative and Critical Perspectives by Feminists of Color, ed. Gloria Andaluzua, (San Francisco, 1990).

[32]On the Island, American is defined as foreign, not born on the Island or else born to Anglo American parents. While citizenship was conferred to all Puertorriqueños in 1917, most Puertorriqueños, whether on the Island or in the Diaspora, see themselves as Puerto Rican. However, what this means in each setting changes depending on environmental, regional, class and cultural contexts.

[33]I am drawing on Patricia Hill Collins' (1990) use of standpoint epistemologies which, in turn, draws on Haraways (1988) reformulated use of the concept.

[34]Americanness in the United States means white privilege and is constructed in relation to a subjugated "other." In Puerto Rico, American means foreigner and is constructed in relation to a colonized, semi-autonomous Puerto Rican majority.

[35]This model of ethnic group interaction was used by North American scholars to measure the "progress" of racialized ethnic groups in the United States by comparing them to European immigrants. In explaining the behavior of Puertorriqueños, this model was used to rationalize their failure to assimilate into American society. Curiously, African Americans invert the lens of the "immigrant analogy" in relation to Puertorriqueños, viewing them as similar to themselves because of the strong African heritage of Puertorriqueños but also as foreign.

[36]An interesting recent example of how Latinas are forced to Anglocizing themselves within the corporate structure comes from an article by Hispanic Magazine (1991). This article instructs Latinas on appropriate attire at the office. Dangling earrings, open-toed shoes, long hair and too much make up are described as fashion faux pas in the corporate world. In effect, the article is a subtle message to Latinas that their cultural norms regarding fashion and aesthetic sensibility is "too Other" for corporate America. The "privilege" of a corporate job, in this context, is always subject to the whims and desires to Anglo bosses.

[37]Puertorriqueñas are often viewed as too passionate, ill-tempered, with an unbounded sexuality, or alternately as passive, docile, and submissive women.

[38]It is important to acknowledge that the "passing" behavior Puertorriqueñas exhibit occurs in two directions, towards European American and African American cultures.

[39]Evidence of this has already been uncovered by Clara Rodriguez's (1991) research on the experience of race among Puertorriqueños.

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