Looking at Blackness in Latin@ Literature

What are normative depictions and attitudes towards blackness in Latin@ culture?

Moving Beyond the Norm: Multiple Depictions of Blackness in Latin@ Literature

- Beyond typical views of blackness, what other depictions of blackness exist in Latin@ literature?
- Blackness is often depicted in negative terms in Latin@ culture, how does Latin@ literature reinforce these views or help re-shape them?

"I had grown tired of my curly hair being called "nappy," pasas (raisins), or pelo malo (bad hair)."

"The Konk" by Piri Thomas

Ex-slaves in Puerto Rico, 1898

Cover of Mexican songbook, 1893

Haitian-Dominicans asserting their citizenship, 2015

Sammy Sosa & the lightening of his skin, 2009

RE-DEFINING & CLAIMING BLACKNESS

"I considered myself Dominican, not black in the sense of African-American. "Latino" and "black" didn't have to be such oxymorons. I refused to accept blackness on African-American terms, as if they had a patent on the concept."

"On Becoming" by Nelly Rosario

BLACKNESS AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE CULTURE

Ay, ay, ay, my black race flees/ and with the white runs to become bronzed;/to be one for the future, fraternity of America!

"Ay, Ay, Ay of the Kinky-Haired Negress" by Julia de Burgos

BENEFITS OF ALIGNING WITH BLACKNESS

"It was from black Americans that we learned about black colleges…I don't know any black Cuban college graduate of my generation, and of all preceding desegregation, who is not a graduate of a historically black college."

Black Cuban, Black American by Evelio Grillo

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