

ing to interpret race relations, racism, and capitalism in the United States. William Julius Wilson's *The Declining Significance of Race* and Mario Barrera's *Race and Class in the Southwest* examine capitalism and American racism upon the lives of blacks and Mexican/Mexican Americans. The research while addressing racism and economic labor exploitation does not focus on ethnic group identity or hidden problems associated with the groups studied. The one drop rule in the United States categorizing people along black or white racial axis has created a genre of literature and social science studies concerning mulattos, miscegenation, and "passing." The significance of Martinez's article is his presentation of a comparative analysis of race and class issues in terms of the effect American white values have had on Puerto Ricans living in the United States and those living in Puerto Rico.

The genre of literature focusing on the "tragic mulatta" theme in such works as William Wells Brown's *Clotelle* and Nella Larsen's *Passing* clearly illustrate psychological problems inherent in a "white-superior" "colored-inferior" American value system. Within a capitalist economy, island Puerto Ricans perceive themselves as being white and aspiring upper class status. Few families openly admitted to Afro-hispanic race mixture. The fear of cryptomelanism is a little-explored psychological development in Puerto Rican identity formation. In future studies, Martinez or others might address directly with their respondents the notion of cryptomelanism and examine the validity and reasons for the "fear of hidden blood of color." Are these values self imposed or externally derived?

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## Critique

When the first Dutch missionaries reached the far shores of Java, they heard rumors of a recently captured large white monkey being held in a remote village. By the time the missionaries reached the village, however, the mysterious monkey had vanished. They found only the post where it had been tied. Chiseled in stone nearby in Latin, English and Dutch were these words: "Help! I am a Dutch sailor."

No white monkeys are found in zoos today. Similarly, a papal decree declaring Indians in the Western Hemisphere to be human beings is no longer required. Nevertheless, folk classificatory systems based upon observable human racial attributes continue to be important. Puerto Rican distinctions between white, black, mulatto(a), and trigueno(a) are current examples.

Questions of race and of racial identity have contradictory places in American and Puerto Rican societies. Robert Martinez points out correctly that we remain confused or perhaps self-deluded about the importance of biological racial variation and about the role of race in society. Martinez's survey illuminates well how race is defined in biological classificatory terms for social purposes. The Puerto Ricans, whom he studied in New York City and in Puerto Rico, understand very well the social basis for race relations, while feigning ignorance in polite company.

Racial variation is a primary means for identifying and classifying human groups and individuals. But racial variation among our species is no longer a vital area of study in anthropology or in biology. Except for quite specific problems in human biology, for example, the distribution of sickle cell anemia, the biological question of race is moot.

Notwithstanding our knowledge of human biology, however, observable racial attributes and racial identity remain primary elements of overt and covert folk taxonomies. We "know" biological differences do not matter; abundant civil rights laws and regulations state that political, economic, and social differences based on race ought not or cannot matter. But race matters and everyone knows it. It is the way in which we classify racial differences that changes, not the ability or the willingness to draw distinctions.

Interestingly, all of Martinez's respondents classified themselves as white or as trigueno(a). There were no intermediate categories. "Hispanic" and "Spanish surname," the all encompassing terms for governmental nose counters, did not appear. Martinez suggests many historical and social reasons for his results, for the absence of intermediate categories, for the absence of any self-classification as a black or as a mulatto(a), and for differences in race relations generally in Puerto Rico and in New York. Certainly, racial identity, self-image, self-worth, attitudes toward interracial marriages, economic status, class consciousness, and class mobility are partial explanations of racial perceptions in Puerto Rican society.

Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of Martinez's study for the general reader is the contrast between Puerto Rican self-classification in New York City and in Puerto Rico. While the ratio of white to trigueno men

was the same, only twelve percent of Puerto Rican women in New York considered themselves as *triguena* in Puerto Rico. As Martinez suggests, these results reflect the contrasts between a relatively homogeneous society in Puerto Rico and an ethnically diverse New York society, where Puerto Ricans are a distinct ethnic minority and are associated with blacks.

The questionnaire used in New York City was in English; “*trigueno(a)*” is a category used in Latin America, but not in North America. Perhaps, many *trigueno(a)* have simply “translated” their identity into the local idiom? More important, why does American society not use the term or its functional equivalent? Why are there few, if any, racial categories for “mixed races,” at least in society at large? Putting aside any implicit or explicit inferences of “fear of hidden blood of color,” why are there no common racial subcategories in American society? There are no *trigueno(a)*; “dark” Mediterranean Italians and Spaniards, and “light” Nordic Swedes and Germans are all equally white. Interestingly, Mediterranean, Nordic and *trigueno(a)* are not parallel vernacular terms. The Puerto Rican experience aside, what do American folk taxonomic categories concerning race and racial identity tell us about American society as a whole?

Do white monkeys from Java reside at the zoo still?

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