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Simón Bolívar, the Spanish Constitution of 1812 and the Transatlantic Generation of the Nation

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In this article, I trace the mobile, transatlantic and relational processes defining the emergence of Eighteenth Century nation as a political body shaping itself against monarchical sovereignty and feudal vassalage in Europe and the Americas. I have coupled the relational emergence of the Spanish and Venezuelan nations. I follow the articulation of Spanish and Venezuelan conceptualizations of themselves as national bodies through the political and historical monsters against which they took shape: First, slavery and the slave-trade, Second, the residual ghost of feudalism and Third, the nation, a monster born of and haunted by monsters-the French Revolution, revolutionary thinking in Europe and the Haitian Revolution, offering hope to the movements of nationalization in both Spain and Venezuela.

My intention is to elaborate on the complexity of the transatlantic interrelations of nationalizing discourses by examining them against the collective cultural monsters against which they take shape. As I use it, the monstrous is a paradigm to explore the heterogenous mechanisms of nationalisms. I do not delineate physical and material monsters, but look through them to reveal the historical, political and cultural mechanisms that make the production of monsters an integral part of the way that we narrate and imagine ourselves as subjects. Postcolonial and subaltern theories and postnationalist studies have taught us to read the record against the grain for the traces, ghosts and memories of the stories silenced by the colonial and neocolonial ideologies that inform the ways we have told and continue to tell our multiple nations and our pasts and presents. Growing out of Benedict Anderson's concept of the "blue-print" as the vessel translating nationalisms from one space to another, the monstrous expands and complicates the concept of the blue-print model of the construction of nationalisms to attend more closely to the unstable transatlantic, mobile, heterogenous and transhistorical aspects of the generation of nationalisms which have been overlooked in postnationalist studies. I point out that the nations' main discursive and material acts of collective projection is the demonstification of their pasts of violence, vassalage, and feudalism in order to create a new political body—the nation—rid of the monsters of its past. This process of demonstification erases internal monsters to create external ones.

I insist upon the intimate interdependence of the monstrous and nationalist discourses: the constant demonstification of the internal monsters of the "nation" goes hand in hand with the creation of external monsters producing, reproducing and maintaining the "nation" as a collective of people, cultures, traditions and ideologies sharing and belonging in the political entity of the nation, always defining it and themselves against what does not belong. This process continues into the present. Demonstification and the creation of external monsters are mobile processes, not only in historical

and ideological terms (drawing on past monsters/nations/events in the process of understanding and imagining new ones, for instance) but also in very material terms.

Through reading the congressional debates leading up to the Spanish Constitution of 1812 and the political speeches and writings of Simón Bolívar during the process of nationalization and independence of Venezuela, I show that the discourse of the formation of nations in both the recorded debates of Cádiz and Bolívar's campaign rely on a language making monsters of the racialized masses. Their voice is given at best a symbolic weight, their particular interests and material contexts subsumed into the larger nationalist projects. [1] I read the Spanish congressional debates as records of the incipient national impulse later to be confirmed in the Venezuelan movements of independence, expressed in Bolívar's speeches and letters (1815-1825). These articulations resound with the echos, re-productions and erasures of indigenous and African peoples of Europe and the Americas.

Mobile Monsters

The monster of the successful revolt leading to the Independence of Haiti informs the later transatlantic nationalisms that would take shape. In the congressional debates of Cádiz, the rising monster of the independence of the American colonies looms as a potential repetition of the emergence of the Haitian nation against French domination. However, given the difference in geographical expanse in the Spanish Americas, anti-colonial revolution would look very different and was perhaps, at this moment, almost unimaginable.

Speaking of monsters haunting nations, I begin by drawing out one of the strands of the Haitian revolution and Independence. I trace the movement of one body of people who cross from Haiti into Spanish Santo Domingo, attempt to settle in various sites of the Caribbean, eventually to be sent to Cádiz, Spain. Their “problematic behavior” makes their insertion into all the communities they approach difficult. This body of black soldiers and generals, Jean François and his attendant company, emerge from the Haitian struggle for Independence and seem to carry with them the inspiration and threat of revolution. Having fought with Toussaint L’Ouverture on the royalist side in Haiti, François crossed over to the Spanish side of the island to join forces with the Spaniards against the French royalists. The Spaniards eventually deported François from the island for his excessive violence and the threat of his fluctuating alliances. After being sent away from the island of Santo Domingo, François and his generals traveled to several Caribbean islands, in search of political protection. After attempting to negotiate their settlement on several islands, Spanish officials finally decide that the safest place for François to be sent is Cádiz, where he stays for a brief period. Eventually he is rejected from there also and is shipped back to the Caribbean, with a stop in Cuba, where he will come into contact with José Antonio Aponte, the future organizer of one of the biggest documented slave rebellions in Cuba, the Aponte Rebellion of 1812. The movements of and the local stories circulating about Jean François, known as the caudillo Juan Francisco in Cuba, drew and breathed radical change and revolution.

To follow the figure of Jean François will illustrate the way in which a nation takes shape in relation to a clearly identified monster, a body —of people, traditions, cultures, ideas—not belonging, exceeding the national boundaries being imagined. Before addressing the revolutionary debates and documents of Cádiz and Venezuela in which the nation was clearly emerging, I will address a series of official colonial letters written in relation to bodies whose excessive, multiple and contradictory

identification and belongings –black soldiers having fought against the French monarchical forces in favor of the French anti-monarchical revolution but who then “crossed over” to the Spanish side, to fight with the monarchical and colonial forces of Spain against the French—helped to define the boundaries of what would become the Spanish nation. I open by tracing the very physical and material steps and traces involved in the relational construction of the transatlantic American, Caribbean and Spanish peninsular national identities.

The steps of the historical insurgent general Jean François and the letters written and sent back and forth across the Atlantic concerning his activities and actions illuminate the intimate workings of the transatlantic monstrous paradigm. Jean François, an insurgent pro-monarchical general fighting against the French Napoleonic forces for Haitian Independence and the abolition of slavery in the Caribbean had inspired his troops to fight for their freedom by using royalist discourse. He claimed that the Haitian Revolution and the freedom of slaves was the will of the insurgent slaves and of the king of France, whose word was being overridden by the white pro-slavery and anti-monarchical masters. Jean François for the French and Haitian soldiers, and Juan Francisco for the Spanish and San Domingan population, Jean François eventually enlisted the military support of the Spanish military forces who aligned with him against the French anti-royalist troops who Napoleon eventually lead in the French invasion of Spain. Jean François used the support of the Spanish forces as a tactical device to gain military advantage over the French monarchical troops fighting to suppress the Haitian revolution. Jean-François’ engagement with the Spanish forces and colonial powers was central to the outcome of the Haitian revolution and independence, and, I argue, to the articulation and conception of national identity in the Caribbean Americas and in Spain. I will illustrate this process through readings of Spanish colonial military correspondence dealing specifically with the figure of Jean-François. [2]

The military documents of the Spanish colonial concerns centering on Jean-François give a tangible, material and historical perspective to the paradigms of the discourse of the monstrous and the transatlantic movement of this process of nationalization. Jean-François can be understood to exemplify, at the material level, the rhetoric and process of nationalization and monstrification in political debates, speeches and constitutional documents. Jean François emerges from the military letters describing him and the events around him in the company of other revolutionary figures who haunt the descriptions, representations and transatlantic, transcultural and transtextual movements of Jean- François.

My reading of Jean-François' figure in these colonial letters serves as a shadow reading of the more remote figure of the Surinamian rebel Neptune (1774-1779), whose story appears not in colonial military letters or in colonial history, but as a marginal anecdote in a colonial soldier's document of travel and military feats. To put Jean François' figure before Neptune's, and to show that one story/figure is contained in the other, historicizes Neptune's story and underlines the crucial role that subordinate "stories" and "narratives" should play in casting new lights and shadows on the shape of history. Furthermore, to read Neptune and Jean-François as shadows of each other highlights the importance of a transatlantic relational understanding of the conception and construction of nations as a highly complex process that weaves and represents the stories of the now distinct "nations" of France, Spain and Britain in the late Eighteenth Century with interconnecting echoes and shadows of each other.

Jean François eventually enlists the military support of the Spanish army on the Spanish side of Santo Domingo by offering his services to "protect" the Spaniards from the French anti-monarchical revolutionaries. The incident with which his trajectory begins, not surprisingly, is recorded in the

language of horror, terror and monstrosity so prevalent in the colonial descriptions of revolutionary violence at the time. The military correspondence concerning Jean François emerges out of concern at an event of collective and terrible violence he and his troops commit on the Spanish side of the Island against French people. Letter number 2, written in January of 1794 to the Spanish Audiencia of Santo Domingo, describes the event as a “horroroso atentado cometido por los Negros que llevó consigo el General Juan Francisco a la Plaza de Bahíajá.”[3] Consecutive letters re-inscribe the event with a similar rhetoric of horror at the unleashed and unrestrained violence that is, according to the colonial historiographic tradition of [mis]perception and [mis]documentation, a type of violence specific to the *Negros*. The Regente of Santo Domingo responds to this letter, giving orders to ask for English troops to help the Spanish side in the conflict that this event has caused between the French and the Spanish, and ending his letter with specific orders of how these violent *Negros* should be punished for their excessively violent behavior:

De todos modos conviene que Vuestra Excelencia dé cuenta al rey y que se trate sobre la importante máxima de no fiarse de los negros remitiendo las fuerzas necesarias para contenerlos, reprimirlos o arrojarlos... (Archivo General de Simancas, *Legajo 7162*, Letter 2)

The sense of outrage communicated in the above letter at the act Jean François and his men committed against the French is informed by an implicit racial alliance and understanding that such violence by blacks against whites is monstrous and unacceptable, regardless of the other political and ideological alliances that may be at play on this island where three nationalisms are taking shape. Letter number 4 of the same Legajo is marked “Reservada,” indicating the event to be a military secret and describes the incident in detail:

El General Juan Francisco acaba de cometer el más horrendo crimen y diabólico hecho [...] Entró en Bahijá con unos 450 hombres armados de infantería [...] y se dirigió a la plaza—ocurrieron muchos Franceses Blancos y a pocos instantes empezó un gran alboroto de Viva el Rey de España [...] se dividieron por las calles los negros matando a todo Frances blanco, entrando a las casas a saqueo y sacrificando sus vidas [...] (*Archivo General de Simancas*, Legajo 7162, hoja ilegible)

The black troops are described in this letter and subsequent letters in terms that denying them their humanity, with descriptors such as “diabolical” and “devourers of humanity.” Their act is constructed from the beginning as diabolical, irrational and without any political or ideological motivation. In fact, as the letters describing the event will show, the character of the black general and troops themselves becomes essentially irrational and never to be trusted.

Creating the Monstrous by Repetition, Excess and Excision

Interestingly, the sequence of the letters shows the construction of the adjectives to be used as unquestioned epithets of the black troops. The letters build on one another, taking the epithets “horrendo acontecimiento” and “negros devoradores” and repeating them, attaching, through repetition, the condemning epithet to the blackness and intrinsic monstrosity of the crime reflecting in turn on the monstrosity of the soldiers. The event is inscribed as excessively violent, committed by monstrous, inhuman figures. But what is most intriguing about the monstrous rhetoric surrounding this particular event is the insistence on the excess of the violence, the uncontainability of the monstrous violent black soldiers. The real and threatened excessive violence seems to justify all the necessary means to control these monstrously violent bodies, and requires that measures be taken to

contain them: either they must be physically enclosed, repressed or ex-communicated, thrown off the island. [4] The monstrosity of their crime is judged by the color, not the political or ideological affiliations of the victims. However, other means of punishment were used, as we know. The crime of the pro-monarchical and royalist black soldiers against white bodies, no matter their politics, calls for the mirroring of the crime of the “human-devouring Negros” by the setting of starving dogs upon them. The letters go on to describe the mercenary spirit of the blacks, in terms that point to their perceived interest only in the present moment, negating the history of Jean François and his troops as well as their vision of a different future.

In the face of such excessive and monstrous violence, the question arises in the letters that follow_What should the Spanish colonial system do with Jean François? Inherent in this problem is the monstrosity of the General, the violent crime his figure contains and the political body against which the offense has been committed: processing a judgment requires the definition of the position from which it is judged. The question suggests the problem of incorporating a figure whose existence and military knowledge has been indispensable to the continued existence of Spanish power on Santo Domingo; nevertheless, his incorporation is uneven and itself violent, requiring the erasure, excision, explanation and legal and narrative justification for the intimate relation of this figure to Spanish colonial power in Santo Domingo.

The process of excision and incorporation involves several interlocking elements, one of which is the rejection and monstrification of the violent massacre in Bahíajá led by Jean François. Both the event and the General require ideological whitening and correction, but not without inflections of awe and desire and even the very real political need for Jean François and his ability to defeat and fend off the French promonarchical and anti-Revolutionary forces. Another element indirectly reflected in the

letters is the monstrous colonial violence to which the urgency of the General and his troops were responding. The open acknowledgement of the colonial responsibility and direct involvement in this violence would lead to the impossible—for the logic of the colonial system-- acknowledgement of the humanity of Jean François and the black revolutionary troops and their right to challenge the monstrous colonial system in their own terms and without the justification of the Spanish-French conflict. In fact, the negation of the humanity and political narrative and history of the black troops is what enables colonial officials to describe “them” as so uncontainably violent. The violence would not seem so monstrous if it were held against the monstrous background of historical violence from which it arose.

Nearing the Spanish Nation: Pacification and de-Monstrification

Two years after the event of Bahíajá, the letters show that Jean François had made himself indispensable to the Spanish, making it necessary for the colonial apparatus to justify its need to “protect” him. Jean François had successfully protected Spanish colonial territory in Santo Domingo from the military advances of the French army. The obligation of the Spanish to protect Jean François in turn for his protection of them expresses itself uncomfortably in the exchanges of that year. The letters express horror and at the same time awe at the collective military force of Jean François and his troops, and yet also voicing the colonial need to “civilize” them and subject them to the laws of Catholicism, a condition that Jean François promises to accept in exchange for protection from the Spanish crown (1795, legajo 7161) The discomfort and unease the Spanish colonial documents express toward the figure of Jean François are contrasted with the acknowledgement that their continued presence as a colonial and economic power in the Caribbean depends to a large extent on their continued engagement and collaboration with Jean François. The Spanish system

must “incorporate” him and his generals somehow into the military and also into the Spanish colonial civil system, but the discourse is uneasy about where, how and in what official capacity they are to be integrated. In a letter of 1796, written by Fernando de Arizpa in Santo Domingo to the King of Spain, the problem of the fitting or finding a suitable “place” for Jean François is the main concern. The quest for a physical location for them is paralleled by the struggle to place them in relation to the ideological construction of the emerging nations.

This ideological and material “placement” depends upon the process of (de) monstrification of Jean François. Arizpa’s plea to the King is based on the re-inscription of Jean François’ violent behavior in Bahíajá (described as excessively violent at first) as a necessity to the survival of the Spanish Caribbean colony. Keeping in mind that the American colonies would be integral in the Cádiz debates to the ideological conceptualization of Spain, the fact that Jean François’ military endeavors kept Spain from her French enemy in the Caribbean is of national import to Spain.

Juan Francisco se ha vindicado [...] de toda duda su fidelidad; debo representarle a Vuestra Excelencia por si la piedad del Rey quisiere dispensarle su protección y a su gente [...]. Al haber sido el que conquistó con sus persuaciones, al servicio de su majestad este jefe negro, y ser inegable que casi solo contuvo con sus conquistas los progresos que sobre nosotros habían podido hacer los enemigos en el tiempo.

The monstrosity of this group of black soldiers is the focus of the rhetoric of integration: there is nothing to be done about their color, but their behavior can be altered and whitened-- hence, Jean François’ written promise to abide by the laws of the Spanish Audiencia in the colonies and to

respect the wishes of the Spanish generals and the King. Jean François writes to the Spanish King on the 26th of October 1795 confirming his promises to

Rendre dans cette île à Votre Majeste le témoignage, obéissance—mes drapeaux, chefs et mes armes afin que VM les destine selon sa volonté royale à la défense et la conservation de ses domains [et] conserver sa loi et d’acquérir les lumières de la religion.

However apparently submissive, this promise contains the unmistakable yet unnamed threat of vodun and the “pagan” practices fueling the success of the slave revolution and haunting the imaginary of the colonial records.

“Spanishness” and the monstrous colonial “Other”

The problem of this figure travels in letters between the island of Santo Domingo and the Spanish metropole, from the officials of the Audiencia to the King of Spain. As the letters travel, Jean François and his generals are shipped from one port to another, from Havana, to Guatemala to Trinidad, encountering repeated resistance by the residents to their establishment in those communities. Letter number 227, sent from Cuba to Spain, expresses great concern, not only at the problem of location but also at the problem of the rather large number of people who are appearing:

Al capitán general participo que en 9 de dicho mes llegaron aquí a Puerto del de Bahiájá las embarcaciones que condujeron al general Juan Francisco con los demás caudillos y tropa de los negros auxiliaries nuestros en la isla de sto domingo[...] Que algunos días antes había llegado tambien allí Jorgel Biasou otro jefe de los mismos auxiliaries que discorde con Juan

Francisco se embarcó en el navío de Guerra San Lorenzo [...] cuio total de personas asciende a 707 individuos (Legajo 7161, letter number 227, illegible signature)

Upon their arrival, there is an immediate rejection of these bodies from the island, quickly justified in official discourse. The captain general states this in no uncertain terms, “Manifiesta el capitán general que no pudiendo admitir esta gente por la orden muy reservada que lo prohíbe.” (AGS, 7162, Letter 227)

The same letter records that it had been offered to Juan Francisco that he should be sent to Spain while his subordinates should be sent to Trinidad as settlers [at the service of the Spanish crown] but that he chose to stay in Trinidad with the rest of his troops. Again in Trinidad, the settlers already there had been resistant to allowing Juan Francisco to settle on the island. They had rejected him, fearing him because of the “horrendo acontecimiento de Bahiajá” (sic, again) and accusing him of being “orgullosa, artificioso y audaz” (proud, full of artifice and bold)—characteristics clearly not acceptable and in fact monstrous when attached to the black revolutionary figure. (AGS, 7162, Letter 227)

After being denied entrance to Trinidad, Juan Francisco and all of his troops are taken to Spain. Nevertheless, the letter dated October 17th, 1796, expresses continued discomfort, this time in Cádiz, at the presence of Juan Francisco and his troops, and the continued need to remove them to yet another space.

Hace ya algunos meses que se hallan en Cádiz el Jefe de los Negros Auxiliares de la Isla de Santo Domingo Juan Francisco y otros 12 compañeros suyos con sus familias que

componen entre todos 142 individuos de ambos sexos y deseando SM emplearles en algún paraje de sus dominios de América me diga VE si podrá destinarles a dichos jefes negros con sus familias en Puerto Rico o otra de las posesiones del Rey que no sea la Isla de Cuba ni la de Trinidad de Barlovento. (AGS, Legajo 7162)

Letter after letter, the focus on their monstrosity shifts away from the problem of violent behavior: as the immediate presence of the event_ “la terrible novedad ocurrida”_ dissipates with time, it becomes sublimated into a future possibility– “funestas consecuencias que amenazan los negros”_ and the possible return of the monstrous act. The intrinsic untrustworthiness of the black soldiers and the spiritually and morally unacceptable aspects of the black community in Cádiz become symbolically identified with identified the prevalent “licentious behavior” of which they are accused.

The Monstrous Family and the Nation

Their questionable spiritual persuasions join their socially and morally unacceptable behavior in a general accusation of “licentiousness.” Within their spiritual and moral licentiousness lies the “problem” of their numbers, so letter after letter lists meticulously the exact number of men, women and children, even including a chart with the names of all of them, their positions and an attempt to map out family units, and how they “belong” to one another. The difficulty of placing them in easily identifiable and contained family units causes great concern in the documenting hands, as can be seen in the continued listings of the men, women and children, and the family groups. Letter 270 contains a condensed expression of the various concerns that have been expressed in several letters whose individual concerns in relation to the black revolutionary community in Cádiz. These letters cross the ocean several times, finally summed up in this urgent statement of the need to remove them again to

the colonies on account of their uncontrollable and licentious behavior. The uncontrollability and licentiousness is never materially described in clear terms, but is undoubtedly related to the question of their unfamiliar “disorderly” family structures, relations and “licentious” sexual connections as we can see from the following letter excerpt:

He dado cuenta al Rey [...] sobre el desorden y licencia en el modo de vivir que ha observado en los negros auxiliaries que vinieron de Sto Domingo y enterado Su Majestad ha resuelto que Vuestra Excelencia procure el medio de que estos individuos se reduzcan a vivir bajo las reglas del catolicismo y tome las providencias más prudentes [...] en el supuesto de que aunque sirvieron como tropas auxiliaries de su color en la expresada isla y ninguno de ellos tiene el carácter de official del ejército y quando más puede considerárseles como los de las milicias de pardos y morenos de América y bajo este concepto deben ser trasladados.
(Letter 270, Legajo 7159)

The urgent and insistent tone of this letter suggests the deep discomfort caused in Cádiz, one of the principal economic and political centers of Spain, by the presence of this large group of revolutionary ex-slaves. The colonial and official account of their presence on the Peninsula is charged with a sense of urgency requiring the re-articulation of their status within Spain and of the status of Spanishness in relation to them. Spanishness is identified against the excessive otherness and monstrosity of the black general. Interestingly, the unfamiliarity of the shape and behaviour of the family is what seems to drive the final resolution that these people must not be present in the city of Cádiz or in Spain. The urgent repression of this image suggests the central function of the family as symbol of the nation, another trope that was prevalent in the articulation of early nationalisms. The deviant monstrosity of this family finally pushes the matter to the final solution of deportation to the

colonies. It is interesting that the reality of the monstrous family was excessive and had to be pushed out of the very city where, a few years later in the congressional debates, the body of “Spanishness” would take on in theory, an extremely varied and heterogenous shape.

Monstrous forms of Worship

The centrality of religion in the “pacification” and spiritual, moral and ideological whitening process of these Revolutionaries speaks directly to the central role paganism and vodun had played in the success of the Haitian Revolution. To insist that the General, his officers and the hundreds of black people troops, women and children in Cádiz with Jean François should adhere to the precepts of religion but especially to the requirement of marriage is a direct reflection, I believe, of the colonial fear of the revolutionary force of the unfamiliar and monstrous patterns of social and “moral” behavior that somehow echo the excessive and monstrous violence of which these black bodies are also capable. Surely, the logic seems to go, if they are monstrous in these identifiable ways, there will be more monstrous manifestations of their monstrosity that the system will not be able to manipulate, justify or contain. This collective of people, representing a foreign, unfamiliar and threatening social order and force, must be deported back to America, the final stop of the traveling community of black revolutionaries against which the Spanish, Haitian and Venezuelan nationalisms had begun to take shape.

The Great Historical Monsters: Feudalism, Slavery, Empire and Nation

This chapter examines the discourses of nation-formation being produced in Spain and Venezuela at a historical juncture in which both Spain and the Americas were in crisis in relation to a more

dominating political force. The rhetorical trope of the monstrous emerges in relation to the communities struggling for Independence as well as in relation to the political structures against which they struggle. In the case of Venezuela and the figure of Simón Bolívar, the monstrous serves to illuminate the way he perceives the struggle for independence as well as the Spanish colonial institution he wishes to depose. Faced with the need to shape and assert independent subjectivity in the face of the alternative of continued subordination to Spain in the case of the Americas and of the loss of sovereignty to Napoleon in the case of Spain, both the Spanish Americas and Spain were intensively producing a discourse of nationalization.

Both Venezuela and Spain found themselves at a moment of political instability, indetermination and violence as they imagined the nation as the collective construction of cohesion, sovereignty and coherence. As in the earlier case of France and the rise of French nationalism as a response to the anti-monarchical movement of the revolutionary imagination and culture in Europe, the production of the nation as an alternative to the monarchical and colonial regimes was generated in the process of emergence, one of the key characteristics of the monstrous discourse. This chapter focuses on the generative aspects of the monstrous as I place it in relation to the emergence of Venezuelan and Spanish nationalisms. If understood as a productive process, the nation fits within the monstrous in that it produces something new. This newness emerges as a monstrous figure, present in the discourse producing this newness, the nation.

Occupied by Napoleonic forces, Spain was dependent on British naval forces for the maintenance of symbolic sovereignty; in this context of emergency, the leading political and ecclesiastical leaders gathered in constitutional congress_the *Cortes*. Here, these institutional leaders would debate the formulation of a Spanish government in the absence of the Spanish monarch who was at the time a

prisoner in France. The congress was to define a new set of relations between the Spanish state and the people, at a moment when the concepts of who the “people” were and their relation to the state and the monarch was unstable. In addition to the destabilizing threat of Napoleon, the status of the connection between Spanish “state” and the “people” was considerably complicated by the overseas colonies of the Americas and their complex populations. The Spanish liberals saw this context of emergency and the absence of the monarch as an opportunity to argue for the political assertion of the Spanish people through their relation to a sovereign nation as opposed to their relation to an absolute monarch. The clerics aimed to maintain the power of the Church within the Spanish state. The transcriptions of the debates held in Cádiz during the years leading up to the promulgation of the Constitution in 1812, published as the *Actas*, are of great interest because of the tensions they document around Spanish nationalism, subjectivity and the potential loss of the American colonies.

Like the *Actas*, the letters and documents written by the American revolutionary Simón Bolívar show evidence of a process in which both Spain and the Americas were conceiving of national subjectivities in relation to their respective political struggles. [5] In Venezuela, Simón Bolívar was actively forging a nationalist and anticolonial campaign against Spanish domination at a moment when Spain was under the threat of the loss of sovereignty to Napoleonic expansion. Reflecting the theoretical background of the nationalizing discourse in the *Actas*, Bolívar’s perspectives on independence, representative of the *criollo* intelligentsia, were inscribed by the political paradigms of Enlightenment discourse and thought as well as by an incipient sense of an “American” consciousness discrete from the Spanish, to be more fully developed later in the Nineteenth Century.

Both the Enlightenment and the movement of Americanismo connote a parallel and perhaps related process of cultural and collective coming into being of one of the culturally, politically self-conscious

“nation.” The emergence of these self-perceiving nations can be read in both the Venezuelan and the Spanish discourses of nationalism through the monstrous, a discursive figure in which can be seen different moments of the nation’s coming-into-being. I do not use the concept of emergence as one moment in teleological process of development, but rather as Raymond Williams outlines it in *Marxism and Literature* where the dominant, pre-emergent, emergent and residual elements of culture co-exist and are articulated in dynamic interrelation. The concept of the nation as a political formation contesting the structures of colonial, monarchical and imperial rule has already been clearly articulated in the instance of Haiti and France. In the instance of incipient Spanish nationalism, the emergent nation unfolds into its future as it remembers and turns away from the monsters of the Haitian and French Revolutions. The emergent Spanish and Venezuelan nations echo and move away from their French and Haitian predecessors, in an intricately related yet vastly different trans-atlantic emergence of national imaginaries. The emergence of the Spanish and Venezuelan nation are at once specific and relational, shadow-movements/moments of each other, each facing the other across space, time and the Atlantic. They lie in dialectical relation not only to each other but also to the generation before them, the political monsters of the Haitian and French Revolutions in whose shadows they follow.

In the prologue to his edition of the speeches of Cádiz, Enrique Tierno Galván reminds his readers of the context in which these were delivered, putting into perspective the conditions surrounding this discourse. While Madrid and most of the peninsula were under the control of French armies, the Cortes were held in the southern city of Cádiz, which was itself under attack. [6] Although the Spanish colonies in the Americas were not at this time a source of military support in Spain’s struggle against Napoleon, what is quite clear in the *Actas* is that they did constitute a major ideological and rhetorical crutch in the articulation of a Spanish nationalism: in the *Actas*, the Américas act as an

integral defining element of Spain and Spanish-ness at a moment when the peninsula was ideologically and physically under siege. [7] Besides representatives from the Catholic hierarchy, the landowning aristocracy and the bourgeoisie, the speakers of the *Cortes* included Spanish American creole representatives summoned from Cuba, Mexico and Peru in order to deliberate the pressing questions pertaining to the colonies that were at that time also in revolutionary upheaval. [8]

The legal texts I examine are inhabited by disparate manifestations of the monstrous paradigm of self-conscious coming into being, newness, rearticulation and imagination. Besides being the discursive currency in which newness is often articulated, monstrous moments erupt around and in relation to major hegemonic shifts but also in the emergent, pre-emergent and residual elements of these shifts. Political and ideological changes give rise to monstrous events of violence as well as monstrous moments and spaces within discourse, so that the event is expressed, documented and remembered in a language that holds the violence, memories, hopes and bodies that are not necessarily documented or known as part of the event, but that nevertheless haunt the moment. Bolívar articulates a nation independent from the Spanish monarchy although entirely dependent for its economy on the labor of its black and racially heterogeneous American populations. While the Spanish national identity articulated in the *Actas* bespeaks its dependence on the continued economic exploitation of the colonies, it brings itself forth as a nation in intimate relation to the heterogeneous populations of the Americas, upon whose support they count in order to combat the Bolivarian revolution and independence movement.

At the time the *Actas* were being debated, this continued exploitation was contingent on the successful continuation of the dynamics of colonial-metropolitan relations in which the location of power was beginning to shift as the metropole's dependence on its colonies and the colonial system

was evident in the conflict with France. On the other hand, the success of Haiti against France and its geographical proximity to Venezuela, one of the centers of revolutionary activity against Spain, inspired revolutionary sentiment and concrete action as the slave populations perceived what seemed to be a successful revolt against the colonial system. The monstrous moment here could be identified as connected to both the past and the future, so that the monster of the Haitian revolution promises the Bolivarian movement the possibility of success, while it threatens the metropolitan government a repetition or a return of the monstrous past anticolonial success of the Haitian Revolution.

Both the Spanish and American documents inscribing nationalization show evidence of common concepts of race, subject formation and nation that erase Europe's cultural and racial others; at the same time, both sets of texts show that the threat of revolutionary power of Europe's colonial and racial Other was integral to the development of the national subject in the Spanish *Actas* of 1812 as well as in Bolívar's revolutionary tracts and independist legislations between 1815 and 1817. Haitian independence from France was still fresh in both the American and Spanish memories and had made it quite clear in both the Americas and in Spain that the nonwhite populations in the Americas were a political force to contend with. Although the process of the creation of a national subject relied theoretically and practically on the effacement of the non-white races, these texts show that the nationalizing articulations still had to contend with the reality of the racially heterogeneous populations of people with which the Spanish and American articulations of nationalisms had to negotiate. In fact, not only did they address the heterogenous presence, but placed it at the center of the political, cultural and racial contours of what would become the national "subject."

Although one of the ways to read these documents together would be to read the American articulation in chronological tension and relation to the Spanish articulation of nationalist

consciousness as Benedict Anderson might have us do, I would like to examine the interactive process of violence to and erasure of the racialized exploited “other” within the nationalist discourses of Spain and the Americas. I argue that the dominant acknowledgement of the “other”—whether to oppress or negate its presence—works to complicate the assumption of a homogenous universal national subject. As can be seen in the outcome of Bolívar’s project, despite its recognition and use of the potential subversiveness of the racially subjected and exploited figure, the overall nationalizing project ultimately effaces the reality of the racialized “other” as it only nominally or symbolically incorporates it into the Americanizing and nationalizing discourses. [9] In terms of the monstrous paradigm, this process of effacing or negating that which is identified as threatening and monstrous can be narrated in terms of movement, whereby what is recognized by the dominant paradigm—the Bolivarian nationalist discourse or the emerging Spanish nationalism— as the threatening or powerful component of the monstrous body is already standing in for the subversive energy that has moved elsewhere. The monstrosity itself is multiple, signifying in several disparate directions and contexts at once: as race is the monstrous component needing to be erased in the Bolivarian discourse of nationalism, in the case of the emergent Spanish nationalism race is the component whose incorporation into the definition of the national subject is necessary. Thus we see the monstrous racialized bodies serving nationalizing discourses across the Atlantic in different ways: in Spain, the *castas* must be incorporated into the body of the Spanish “subject,” in order for Spain not to lose its chance at maintaining control over the Americas; in Venezuela, Bolívar’s discourse of American subjectivity whitens the body of the American, thus submerging its heterogeneous populations.

Susan Kirkpatrick’s article “Constituting the Subject: Race, Gender and Nation in the Early Nineteenth Century,” focuses on the liberal discourse marking Spain’s development toward a liberal state. Kirkpatrick shows the ways in which the supposedly unified idea of “nation” outlined in the

Actas relies on class and gender-driven differentiations among national subjects who were accorded different relations to the state (Kirkpatrick 226). While Tierno Galván points out that the function of the *Actas* and the Constitution of 1812 was primarily to define the nation, Kirkpatrick underlines that within the constitutional blueprint for the reformed nation, there was no place for the female subject except perhaps under the category of subjects needing protection (230); furthermore, Kirkpatrick's article points out the contradiction that Spanish nationality –as defined by the 5th Article of the Constitution—“includes free men of all races born on Spanish territory or naturalized by legal procedures or ten year's residence” while citizenship was granted only to those who were able to trace their origins back to the dominions of Spain either on the peninsula or in America: those whose origins were traced to Africa on either the maternal or paternal side were excluded from automatic citizenship and could only gain it by practicing exemplary virtue and morality (233). Building on Kirkpatrick's close analysis of legal as well as literary texts pointing out the gender and racial exclusions built into the production of the nation and its subjects, it is necessary to continue exploring the ways these exclusions are enacted in the literary and visual tropes of the language in which they are expressed.

Negation and Desire

Racial exclusion required by the nationalizing discourse in its delineation of citizenship and the nation emerges in the rhetoric of negation and desire, where certain bodies are negated and others desired. The monstrous enters this language through the traces and excesses left behind. Negation is never without trace, for it is always productive and generative of something which is the excess of negation, of that which exceeds the oppressive structures tending to its erasure. Denial of humanity often occurs within the discourse of the monstrous, which monstrifies bodies in order to, supposedly, take

away the agency and the possibility for resistance. But in the elision there is always left a trace, a memory or a scar out of which arises the promise and possibility that change and newness can explode out of erasure. Sometimes the possibility of newness is evident only in the struggles and traces left by the adjustments dominant discourses have had to make when challenged. These marks and traces are evidence of excess, of the incompleteness of the adjustments made.

The adjustments the dominant nationalizing discourses make around the bodies, events and issues identified as monstrous stand as evidence of the imprints of the struggles produced by the intense historical moment of conceiving and writing down the inclusions and exclusions of the nation. In the case of Spain at this moment, the conflicts and adjustments occur at multiple levels, including the level of where Spain stood at all as a political body. The debates in Cádiz show that the categories dividing nation from empire and colony were entirely confounded in relation to Spain, where the political status of Spain was in question. Due to the imminent loss of the Americas, Spain's status as Empire was under a severe strain; the overwhelming French military presence on the peninsula was threatening the invasion of Spain and a potential annexation to the Napoleonic Empire, making the concept of Spanishness entirely unstable, its boundaries bleeding into a hardly conceivable political monster combining the almost incommensurable shapes of empire, colony and nation.

It is hardly surprising that these speeches are haunted by monsters, in view of the conflicted multiple subjectivity doubling as empire, nation and colony. The monsters haunting the question of Spanishness at this moment had to do with the uncertainty of the monstrous unknown future – would they be nation, empire, or a colony of France?-- and the fear of the repetition of the monstrous feared past, --the past of feudalism-- a past resurrected for Spain as it faced the loss of sovereignty to a French dictator who would, if he could, turn them into vassals at the service of his

Empire. Besides being physically under invasion, the question of Spanish nationality and subjectivity was also being debated. The debates in Cádiz were conducted by a number of politicians, both Peninsular and American, who proposed and debated the contents of the constitution around which the Spanish nation would be shaped. [10] The large group of politicians engaged in this debate reflected perspectives ranging from conservative to progressive, many quite radical in terms of the limited options available in the context of the political situation and the debate.

My analysis concentrates on a few speeches, inscribing the fluctuating tensions, threats and monstrous possibilities arising out of the colonies' demands for increased autonomy; from demands for greater trading freedom under the aegis of Spain to demands of outright independence. I examine the speeches of Argüelles, a Spanish liberal and influential orator from Asturias; Mejía, a Neogranadan; Alcocer, a Mexican; the peninsular ultraliberal Quintana and Guridi y Alcocer, also from Mexico. Chust Calero describes the American deputies as quite liberal, pointing out that their aspirations for American autonomy passed from a stance in which the colonies were understood to be integral parts of Spanish territories to a position—visible already in the speeches they deliver in Cádiz—seeking complete political independence from Spain. [11] In terms of the monstrous, the unimagined and the new, the demands of the colonies pointed to unimagined re-articulations, to the monstrous suggestion of a new political body—America-- and to a previously unimagined extremely vulnerable Spain.

Feudalism, Nationalism, Slavery and the Slave-trade

Mejía and Argüelles use the language of desire and negation to delineate the nation they conceive. I will point out the monsters informing the articulation of the nation in their speeches. The orators

attempt to delineate the political body of Spain in relation to and against various monsters, which inhabit the material and institutional world as well as the ideological and imaginary world. Europe has apparently grown into enlightenment leaving behind the ghosts of its feudal past. But this past is not entirely overcome, and Europe still is struggling with its ghosts; in the case of Spain these ghosts are not just from a past of feudalism but are also oracles speaking of a future threatening to repeat—under Napoleonic Empire, if Spain is conquered-- the monstrous subservience of the feudal past. The specific monsters: the institutions of slavery, the slave trade and the nation. The evasive and slippery monsters: the repressed monster, the returning monster, and the desired/yet feared monster of an imagined future. The monster coming from the future holds the promise of alternatives but the threat of the repetition of monsters past.

Mejía, Slaves and the Slave-trade

The continuation of the slave trade is presented as a source of danger to an already precarious Spanish state and its abolition in England as an event achieved by a nation more advanced than Spain at the time. The following speech by the American deputy from Nueva Granada Mejía suggests that the abolition of the slave trade is considered as a means to maintain necessary political alliances with England. The language of alliance masks the language of monstrosity, subsuming the remnants of feudal monstrosity of Spain in terms of the nation's enlightenment, its people's sensibility and its political aspirations and alliances with England. The appearance of Spain as a nation both to itself and to England hinges on the question of the numbers of bodies being introduced into the Americas, bodies who could turn into rebelling bodies rather than subjects, and a sense of pride, "backwardness" and shame at having to wait to be told to abolish slavery.

Las proposiciones del señor Alcocer [...] encierran [el caso de] abolir la esclavitud, negocio que requiere mucha meditación, pulso y tino, porque el libertar de una vez una *inmensa multitud de esclavos*, a más de arruinar sus dueños, podría traer desgraciadas consecuencias al Estado; pero *impedir la nueva introducción de ellos es una cosa urgentísima*. Yo no haré más que apuntar dos razones. Primera, hay muchas provincias en América cuya *existencia es precaria, por los muchos esclavos* que con nuevas introducciones se *aumentan a un número indefinido*. Segunda, hay una ley en Inglaterra que prohíbe el comercio de negros en todos los dominios de Su Majestad británica, a quién se le ha encargado por el Parlamento que en todos los tratados que haga con las demás potencias las induzca a lo mismo. [...] *Aguardaremos* a que nuestros aliados nos lo vengán a enseñar y exigir? (*Actas 58, my emphasis*).

As I have shown, Mejía's speech points to two main monstrous entities against which the Spanish Nation must articulate itself: first, the slave-trade and how Spain's position on these issues presents it to its neighbouring nations, and second, the bodies of the slaves themselves, whose growing numbers and distance exceed control.

To All, a Monster

I have already suggested that the rhetorical construction of the material monsters of the slave-trade and the innumerable bodies of slaves in the Americas reflects on the internal monsters being avoided. The two great unspoken monsters of Spain are, at this moment, the Napoleonic presence and the monstrous, excessive and unknown outlines of the Spanish national, colonial and imperial body. Imagining itself is already an unwieldy task for the Spanish imaginary. In the eyes of its neighbor, Spain is also perceived as monstrous, ridden with the disease of monarchy, targeted intensively by

Napoleon. Mejía's argument demonstries Spain, so that Spain should not be rejected from, but welcomed into the circle of enlightened nations. Mejía's concern with the delicate position of Spain in relation to abolition shows the precariousness of Spain, not only on the eyes of its obvious enemy, France, but also in the eyes of its political ally, England. Even in the words of its spokespeople, Spain emerges in relation to its self-definition as a nation whose contours are multiple and excessive if they extend to the Americas and, under the Napoleonic invasion, are at risk of being erased altogether. Mejía's words communicate urgency, anxiety and excitement at the sheer numbers, excess, reproduction of the bodies whose monstrosity and out-of-the-ordinariness has not yet been put in order within the state.

Thus arises the impulse to abolish slavery and the slave-trade: it does not result from the desire for a more just society but from the need to reproduce the discourse expected of what were then conceived to be politically advanced nations. This reproduction involves the repression of what is considered to be the monster of a repressed feudal past still present in the form of an economic network and non-humanitarian behavior presumed surpassed by the perceived "more enlightened" nation of England.

Repression and Repetition

The rhetorical steps connecting the three different moments of the monstrous in this section – repression, negation of a past, and the threat of a return or repetition of the negated past – are evident in the language the speech uses to create, delimit and look forward to a new and enlightened Spanish nation after the example of England. The language in the *Actas* does conceive of nationalization as a teleological process, of the more advanced, enlightened nations and those nations such as Spain, still

lagging, dragged back to its unenlightened feudal past by the monstrous “burdens” of slavery and the slave-trade. These institutions contain remnants of a feudal past whose repressed violence and unenlightened monstrosity bleeds into the new nation being imagined. To complicate the fluidity between past and future through the paradigm of the monstrous, we can see in the speech that the repression of the monstrous slavery is not only a thing of the past for Spain, but a fear with material significance to a nation whose people face imminent subjection and loss of sovereignty to the expanding Napoleonic Empire. Thus, the desire to emulate the ideology of England is related to the material dependence of Spain on the military and naval protection of England against the Napoleonic forces.

Distant Monsters: Past Ghosts, Future Promises

The more distant monster of the potential loss of the colonies due to slave-led revolutions in the tradition of Haiti is also present. However, given the difference in geographical expanse in the Spanish Americas, anti-colonial revolution would look very different and was perhaps, at this moment, almost unimaginable. Nevertheless, the language of revolution and independence is incipient in the speeches of the American deputies, as I will show in the implicit and explicit awareness in the *Actas* of the direct relation between the presence of slaves and the potential for the materialization of revolution; the threat of the monstrous re-enactment of the slave-rebellions whose success had led to the formation of Haiti. The need for this modification in the structure of Spanish Empire is impressed by the fear of the volatile combination of the numbers of Africans being introduced into the American slave-colonies, the intense and violent exploitation they were experiencing and the repeated shows of organization and revolt of slave-populations in the preceding decades. According to the logic equating the increased potential for organization and revolt with the

increased number of slaves being introduced from Africa, it follows that the areas where this revolt had the best possibility of spreading were those of the Caribbean and the Greater Caribbean, precisely the areas where revolutionary activity was rising. [12]

Languages of the Nation

Argüelles, De-Monstrification and Enlightenment

The speeches delivered in Cádiz are as careful to map a structured transition from absolute monarchy to the sovereign nation as they are aware that the revolts in the Americas could materialize into successful movements of independence from Spain. [13] The speech following Mejía's, by the Asturian liberal Argüelles, presents even more clearly the proposal to abolish the slave-trade in the Spanish American colonies as an act that emulates a nation regarded as politically superior. His speech is also informed by the monstrous Revolution, expressing fear of an uprising like that of Santo Domingo. Argüelles echoes Mejía's speech, suggesting that the immediate abolition of slavery might be disastrous to Spanish interests and should be reached only after a gradual transition marked by the abolition of the slave trade.

Argüelles outlines the political developments in Britain, implying the precarious situation of Spain and presenting the need for complete reform of the politically undefined relations between the Spanish metropole and the colonies. The supposition is that if this relation, primary to the ability of Spain to imagine itself at all, could be clarified, then what it would mean to be a Spaniard would take on clearer contours and lose the monstrous multiplicity it had acquired as it struggled to define itself. [14] Argüelles constructs the slave-trade, slavery and torture as a means to extract legal evidence as monstrous remnants of an unenlightened society lacking in the more

refined and advanced sensibilities of England, where the institutions of slavery and the slave-trade are well on the way to becoming a thing of the past. Argüelles uses the language of negation and desire to accept and reject specific patterns of nation formation. According to his discourse, the new Spanish nation must not contain remnants of the monstrous feudal past, if it is to remain abreast of the also newly emerging yet somehow already more enlightened nation, England. Argüelles repeatedly invokes England and not France as the example of nation-forming to be emulated. Implicit in his rhetoric of desire for a revolutionizing process following the specific example of England, he negates or turns away from the monster too close for comfort, the monster he will not name. [15]

Generation and Prescription

The monster desired_revolution at an ideological and political level_remains a monster because of the possibility that revolution could spiral into the terror and violence already brought onto the Spanish peninsula by the French Napoleonic forces. The Haitian Revolution also looms large in Argüelles' speech: its dangerous proximity to the Spanish Americas could and_in fact very soon after_would "spread" its monstrous breath to the Spanish American continent. [16] In relation to these two monsters, one on Spanish soil and the other in the Americas, the Spanish nation attempts to define itself. [17]

The connection I want to highlight between the movements of Nationalism, Enlightenment and Revolution of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries is the element of collective cultural, affective and ideological generation, newness and production contained in these three pivotal concepts. [18]

Violence and Productivity

Because Argüelles was known at the time as one of Spain's most powerful orators, his speeches offer especially interesting examples of the dominant and persuasive power of a rhetoric whose logic depended upon the implicit violence of the economic rationalization and affective sensibility. The argument foregrounds the humanitarian concerns as if wishing to prescribe and perform the sensibility assigned exclusively to enlightened nations. It is implied that it is through the collective performance of these emotions and sensibilities that the Spanish people will gain access to the desired status of enlightened nation and empire against the monster of Napoleon. The performance of prescribed sensibility calls on noble reasons to abolish the trade as well as on an implied collective sense of shame. Echoing Mejía's formulation of the abolition as well as the monstrous shame at not following in England's footsteps, Argüelles establishes that noble sentiments (including that of shame) indicative of an enlightened nation should join Spain to the enlightened nation of England in the abolition of the slave-trade:[19]

Los términos en que se halla concebida [la proposición de la abolición del comercio de esclavos] manifiestan que no se trata en ella de manumitir los esclavos de las posesiones de América, asunto que merece la mayor circunspección, atendido el doloroso ejemplar acaecido en Santo Domingo. En [la proposición] me limito por ahora a que se prohíba solamente el comercio de los esclavos. Para tranquilizar a algunos señores que hayan podido dar a la proposición sentido diferente, expondré a Vuestra Majestad mis ideas. El tráfico, señor, de esclavos, no solo es opuesto a la pureza y liberalidad de los sentimientos de la nación Española, sino al espíritu de su religión. Comerciar con la sangre de nuestros

hermanos es horrendo, es atroz, es inhumano, y no puede el Congreso nacional vacilar un momento entre comprometer sus sublimes principios o el interés de algunos particulares.

(*Actas* 59)

The dynamics of power and violence implicit in this argument are quite complex. A close reading of this excerpt points out the generation of a national collectivity through a discourse relying on the logic of desire and negation in which the negated element is the monstrous and the desired element the refined qualities of enlightened nations. The language of enlightenment and the monstrous are combined in this articulation of the nation as follows: the monstrosity of the nation being imagined lies in its shameful reliance on the violent exploitation of slave populations in the colonies. The argument of this speech depends on the logic of enlightened sensibility, in which the subject of an enlightened nation must First, have the power to impose or deflect violence and Second, maintain and condemn a relation of domination and subjection with a population of oppressed people, in which the power to impose or deflect _to extol or condemn_ violence on the oppressed populations must always remain within the hands of the nation seeking to be ranked as one of the advanced, enlightened nations.

The paradigm of the monstrous also generates other forms and uses of power: the sensibilities and monsters necessary for the construction and delineation of an enlightened subject and nation do not exist independently from the experience, hopes, desires, fears, monsters and suffering of others. The rhetorical tensions in the debates about the abolition of slavery arise from the idea that while the economic profit derived from the institution of slavery is necessary for the material existence of the European nation, it is necessary at a symbolic level for the nation to proclaim the injustice of the system of exploitation. This contradiction becomes resolved historically by the development of

neocolonial economic relations; the establishment of neocolonial institutions and relations allow the slave-trade (and later slavery) to be abolished so that the aspiring European nation fulfills the requirement of power and benevolence in theory; in practice, the neocolonial relations ensure the continuation of exploited racialized labor that made possible the various revolutions in Europe that lead it through the processes of nation-formation. Thus, the rhetoric of the nation proclaims the injustice of the slave trade and exerts the power to abolish it while the economic structure of the colonial system still depends on the continued violent subjection and exploitation of a group of people.

However, in the interest of constructing Spain as an enlightened nation, its continued relations of exploitation must not be perceived as monstrous, and need to be redefined as humanitarian. Hence, Argüelles insists that the slaves will be happier under a regime where the banning of new importations of slaves would humanize the relations between the plantation owners and slaves. This argument which would gather force through its connection to the colonial fantasy of the good and nourishing relationships between mythical masters and slaves. [20] Argüelles' argument continues as he reassures the audience that not even the economic interests of the plantation owners in the colonies would be negatively affected by the abolition, but quite the contrary:

Pero todavía se puede asegurar que ni [los intereses] de [los plantadores] será perjudicado.

Entre varias reflexiones alegadas por los que sostuvieron tan digna y gloriosamente en

Inglaterra la abolición de este comercio, una de ellas era profetizar que los mismos

plantadores y dueños de esclavos experimentarían un beneficio con la abolición, a causa de

que, no pudiendo introducir en adelante nuevos negros, habrían de darles mejor trato para

conservar los individuos; de lo que se seguiría necesariamente que, mejorada la condición de

aquellos infelices, se multiplicarían entre sí con ventaja suya y de sus dueños. [...] Esto mismo sucederá a los dueños de nuestros ingenios y a otros agricultores de La Habana, Puerto Rico, Costa Firme, etcétera (*Actas* 59-60)

This rhetorical and political move is quite astounding: while at the same time that the abolition of the slave-trade is presented as being in the interest of the citizens of a nation of sublime and noble intentions, it reaffirms the power of the owners of slave-plantations for it will allow the exploitation to continue in a politically sanctioned form. The continued subjection, or more precisely in this case, the monstrification of others necessary for the production of the sensibility required of an aspiring nation coexists with the abolition of the trade.

The argument for the beneficial effects of the abolition of the trade for the property-owners and investors in the Spanish American colonies becomes embedded in a double discourse of economic interest as well as of noble and glorious sentiment; Argüelles's speech deliberately echoes the noble intentions of English abolitionists while it reassures the colonial investors that their economic interests will not be affected because of increased productivity due to improved relations between plantation owners and slaves. This speech illuminates the process of the discursive adjustment resulting from the conflicts between the heterogenous American populations and the national collectivity that would rest on them. The national articulation and its continued financial and political support from colonial investors depends upon the ability of the struggling Spanish hegemonic structure to reformulate its relation to the swelling power of American leaders as well as to the enslaved populations. In other words, the survival of the Spanish Empire and its emergence as a nation depends upon the process of hegemonic dominance that would frame the institutionalized exploitation not as a system of monstrous coercion but of consent. Argüelles's speech shows the

hegemonic discourse shifting and adjusting in its attempt to transform the institution of coercion into consent. As has been extensively documented, the process of the violent physical subjection of the Americas has gone hand in hand with the imposition and privileging of European structures of language and thought: even when the imposing structures had to accommodate racially and culturally heterogenous communities, the processes of transculturation, hybridization and mestizaje always privileged the process of Westernization or “whitening.”[21]

“Spooks” of the Nation: Re-defining the Nation’s Monsters

Argüelles’ speech shows the way in which conceptually as well as institutionally, the patently monstrous and violent subjection and exploitation of the racial other was replaced by a more subtle subjection that occurred through the imposition of European systems of thought and education. This imposition was not regarded, however, as a transformation of physical subjection but was articulated as a radical move laden with humanitarian intent. Argüelles describes the resolution to abolish the slave-trade in England in terms that praise highly the enlightened and philanthropic spirit of the abolition:

Jamás olvidaré, señor, la memorable noche del 5 de febrero de 1807, en que tuve la dulce satisfacción de presenciar en la Cámara de los Lores el triunfo de las luces y de la filosofía, noche en que se aprobó el bill de abolición del comercio de esclavos. En consecuencia de tan filantrópica resolución, se formó en Londres una asociación compuesta de los defensores de aquel bill y varias otras personas respetables para desagrarar por cuantos medios fuese posible e indemnizar a las naciones de Africa del ultraje y vejamen que han sufrido con semejante trato.

Su objeto es formar establecimientos científicos y artísticos en los mismos parajes que eran antes el Mercado de la especie humana, llevándoles de esta suerte toda especie de cultura y civilización (*Actas* 60)

These enlightened institutions would promote the institutionalized whitening and continued subjection of Africa, marking the explosion of Europe's colonization of the African continent in the Nineteenth Century.

The debate on the abolition of slavery and the attendant humanitarian intentions pointed equally importantly to the question of the political status of the rest of the free populations of mixed race, called *castas* in the terminology of the period. As the speeches that follow will show, the *castas* were differentiated from the other racial and political classification of *indios*. [22] The impulse to accord the *castas* the status of citizenship followed the logic of expediency behind the proposal to abolish the trade. If the constitutional formulation of Spain accepted the *castas* as citizens of the Spanish nation, the logic pointed to the idea that then these *castas* would have no reason to align themselves with the revolutionary independentists and would continue to support the Spanish monarchy. In January 1811 the proposition for the national representation of the *castas* was discussed. Quintana, the ultraliberal orator arguing in favor of freedom, frames his requests in terms that contain and control the extent to which equality and their right to vote for a congressional representative is accorded to the non-European populations. He enumerates the steps in the process he envisions:

Primera. Se separarán las clases de habitantes en el censo de población que se haga, a saber: indios, criollos, mestizos y europeos, y cada una de las cuatro será representada por el número de diputados que la quepa; es decir, que el indio ha de ser precisamente

representado por indio, el criollo, por criollo; el mestizo por mestizo; y el europeo, por europeo. Segunda. Los pardos y morenos libres nacidos en América y Asia, como igualmente las demás castas tendrán padrón aparte en que conste con distinción el número de cada una; y todas gozarán de voz activa pero no pasiva, en la elección de representantes nacionales, acudiendo a la que se haga en la clase de mestizos y no a otra. Tercera. Se pensará, mediante planes juiciosos, que eviten prejuicios, en *desterrar para siempre hasta la memoria de la esclavitud* [...];y mientras ésto se verifica, los esclavos tendrán un apoderado en el Congreso, que en sus negocios privativos hable por ellos en derecho de la soberanía, y este poder lo tendrá uno de los representantes europeos [...] Los esclavos se juntarán para elegir el que haya de ser de los representantes europeos nombrados. (*Actas 94 my emphasis*) [23]

Guridi y Alcocer, a deputy from Mexico, supported these propositions, pointing to their fulfillment as the only way that the Americas would not be lost to Spain. In the following excerpt the Americas and their revolutions are interestingly described in images that echo other dominant historiographical accounts of political upheaval in colonial contexts. Revolutionary upheavals are described as uncontrollable monsters of nature, causing unimaginable ravages over vast and unending spaces: [24]

Todos los diputados de América estamos conformes en las proposiciones presentadas a Vuestra Majestad. El blanco principal, el fin último a que aspiran, es el bien de la metrópoli. Mas su prosperidad no puede conseguirse sino procurando el de las Américas. El fuego que se ha encendido en aquellas vastas regiones, y que a la manera de un torrente va abrasando provincias enteras, no puede apagarse sino del modo que se expresa en las proposiciones. Las Américas van a perderse, y éste es el único medio de atajar este grave mal (*Actas 96*)

Unnamed, inarticulate and a formless monster of the imagination, the revolutionary force is described in terms that do not grant it human nor perhaps any defined shape. The effect of this non-naming generates an amorphous body of possibility, the unimagined otherwise, the violence, losses, fears, and hopes of a moment of collective imagining. The racially mixed and enslaved populations that are ready to emulate the example set in Santo Domingo propel the revolutionary force. However, at this particular moment this event remains nameless. The reference to the revolutionary force here described could be either the campaigns of Bolívar or the widespread violent unrest that Bolívar's campaign was able to use for his own political purposes. The revolutionary populations are used at the level of discourse to forward arguments in the interest of the metropole and on behalf of the moderate Americans demanding increased political autonomy for the Americas from the monarchical regime. Much of the strategic weight in the argument of the American deputy for the *castas* lies in the knowledge that the revolutionary movements in the Americas could well lead to independence, as exemplified by Haiti. The monster/memory of the Haitian Revolution and the Spanish involvement in it is called up by the Mexican representative as a strategic threat to elicit consent for increased independence of the American Colonies.

Although the pressure of revolutionary activities in the Americas imposed itself in the rhetorical official re-formulations of the relations between colony and metropole, where there is specific reference to the populations on which the power of that revolutionary activity rested, the official discourse shows itself resistant to giving these populations the practical political representation that they seemed to carry at the discursive level. Again, the revolutionary populations were symbolically useful to the political agendas being pursued in Cádiz as well as later by Simón Bolívar but their material conditions and specific needs were not taken into account within the new political paradigms. We see, then, a coupling of contradictory moves in the formulation of the new

subjectivities –both Spanish and Spanish American—where the indigenous and slave populations are used as a political tool only to be effaced from the larger paradigm of subjectivity. My analysis of both the Spanish and American documents follows this double process of theoretical inclusion and erasure that parallels at a symbolic level the physical process of subject production and erasure in the Americas and Spain.

The final text of the Consitution of 1812, to which I turn now, presents a modified version of the arguments put forth by the American and Spanish deputies in Cádiz during the congressional debates. The 22nd article of the Constitution under discussion deals specifically with the question of how and whether these bodies of people could be inserted into the concept of the nation that would include both the peninsula and the American colonies in its boundaries. The Constitution under construction, eventually altered and ratified by the Cortes in 1812, contained the following article:

A los españoles que por cualquier linea traen origen de Africa, para aspirar a ser ciudadanos les queda abierta la puerta de la virtud y del merecimiento, y en su consecuencia las Cortes podrán conceder carta de ciudadano a los que hayan hecho servicios eminentes a la patria o a los que se distingan por sus talentos, su aplicación y su conducta; bajo condición respecto a estos últimos de que sean hijos de legítimo matrimonio, de padres ingenuos, de que estén ellos mismos casados con mujer ingenua y avecindados en los dominios de España, y de que ejerzan alguna profesión, oficio o industria útil con un capital propio, suficiente a mantener su casa y educar a sus hijos con honradez. (162)

In the debates preceding ratification the injustice of the path to citizenship for the *castas* had been pointed out and it was argued that if the Americas were truly to be given equal standing under the

Constitution as the peninsula, it did not follow that the *castas* in the Americas should have to fulfill such strict requirements in order to be considered citizens. In the excerpt that follows, Uría, an American deputy from Mexico, holds up as a reminder that on the peninsula the only requirement for access to citizenship is that the person—no matter the lineage—should be born on Spanish territory. Uría proceeds to point out that the means by which the article allows the possibility to achieve citizenship are accessible to only a very few Americans and argues that the prosperity of the Americas depends on the labor and physical productivity of the *castas*:

[Las castas son las que] proporcionan a la patria la abundancia; que mantienen a la sociedad con el sudor de su rostro; que la suministran los géneros para vestirse, los útiles para adornarse y cuanto es necesario, útil y cómodo para la sociedad. [...] Nuestras castas [...] nos suministran *brazos que cultivan la tierra que produce sus abundantes frutos*, los que *nos extraen de sus entrañas*, a costa de imponderables afanes, la plata que anima el comercio y que enriquece a Vuestra Majestad. Salen de ellas los artesanos, se prestan a cualquier trabajo público y particular, dan [...] el servicio de las armas y son en la actualidad la robusta columna de nuestra defensa y de los dominios de Vuestra Majestad, donde se estrellan los formidables tiros de la insurrección de algunos de nuestros hermanos (165 *my emphasis*)

What is of crucial interest about Uría's representation of the *castas* is the way in which he describes them as being very physically and intimately tied into the soil of the Americas, from which the laboring bodies and arms of the *castas* extract the riches and economic fortune sustaining Spain. Although this passage points to the productive activity of the laboring bodies, they are presented as rising out of the American earth, inseparable from it as they labor in its *entrails*, their bodies and

hands generating the productiveness of the American soil. They cultivate its riches and fruit, themselves generative of, although not owning, profit and productivity.

There are several discursive levels that need to be examined in the symbolic language used by Uría. Delivered in a forum where the Americas and their peoples defined in terms of their relation to the Spanish nation, this speech makes a very smooth rhetorical move: the *castas* are symbolically set alongside the indigenous populations of America_who, unlike the *castas*, do have easier access to Spanish citizenship_in order to place them alongside the autochthonous beings of the Americas and hence grant them (by proxy) the political weight of the already validated indigenous American. In terms of the articulation of the Spanish subject, the radical discursive move here lies in the idea that the same debate giving shape to the Spanish national subject articulates, reproduces and echoes the discourse of American independent subjectivity and nationhood, its *Americanismo*, thus placing the question of Americanness within the delineation of the Spanish subject; in a dialectical turn, the delineation of the Spanish subject occurs within the bounds of Americanness in such a way that the indigenous Americans, would have been considered naturally Spanish since they would have born on “Spanish” soil.[25]

Uría’s symbolic representation draws a direct relation between the existence of this organic figure and the political and economic health of the Spanish nation. This formulation of nationhood takes place in transatlantic relation, the Spanish nation dependent on the American subject and the organic American as integral to the Spanish nation. What we have here is an instance where Americanness is being articulated within the official discourse of the production of the Spanish nation. Even considering that this speech is given from the perspective of the American representative, it is crucial to note that the conception of independent nationhood arises in a transatlantic dialectic.

The working of this dialectic is further complicated when we take into consideration that the laboring bodies under debate in both national formulations represent the other monster, only briefly named: Africa. The articulations of these nationhoods emerge in relation to each other as well as through the negation of their intimate and historical ties to Africa, which in turn informs the monstrosity of the Haitian Revolution, for it is not just the result of a successful slave revolution-- it emerges as and continues to be represented as an African nation in the “Northern” hemisphere. [26]

But even if the strategic placement of this articulation is radical, it nevertheless is itself oppressive. The gesture of describing and capturing the American subject within the delineation of Spanishness occurs in relation to the processes of political and material erasure: first, because citizenship for the *castas* would increase proportionally the American representation in the *Cortes*, the American organic subject signifies in this discourse only symbolically as a tool with which to forward the political perspectives of Alcocer, Uría and other moderate Americans; next, the move to insert the organic subject into the formulation of the Spanish and the American occurs with the erasure of the Africanness of the *castas*. The rights to autochtony are allowed to the *castas* by the rhetorical proximity to the race of the *indios*, which erases the problem of their blackness. In addition to the erasure of color, these words seem to remember the substitution of the *indios* as laboring bodies by the more productive African bodies, in effect enacting an erasure upon an erasure. In a speech following Uría’s, Alcocer argues for the Americanness of the *castas* in terms that underline the relative lightness of their skin, terms functioning to de-monstrify Africa and blackness in a rhetoric of whitening:

¿Qué fundamento hay para que les dañe semejante origen? ¿Será acaso precisamente por de Africa? No, porque esta parte del mundo no desmerece respeto de las otras, y en ella tenemos territorios cuyos naturales son españoles. ¿Será en odio de los cartaginenses que nos

dominaron en otro tiempo, o de los moros que por ocho siglos ocuparon la Península? No, porque los pueblos de que descenden nuestras castas jamás nos han hostilizado, y más bien hemos sido nosotros sus enemigos, esclavizando sus habitantes. ¿Será por el *color oscuro*? No, porque las castas tienen *un color moreno como el de los indios*, a quienes no se les excluye por ésto al derecho de ciudad; *algunos lo tienen más claro que los indios y otros son tan blancos como los españoles* (168 *my emphasis*)

The blackness of the *castas* is deliberately denied and erased as they are described in terms of the lightness of their color in a discursive logic privileging ideological whitening. [27] The possibility of the status of subjects for the *castas* is contingent on their de-monstrification, a process submerging and redefining the monstrosity of race. As the blackness is identified as the monstrous element, it is simultaneously diluted, classified and explained in order for the nationalizing discourse to refuse its own racial monstrosity. In fact, the excerpt that follows there is a fascinating instance of discursive passing, where the Africa being referred to moves from the West Africa of the slave-trade to the North Africa, the Africa of the Maghreb, an Africa more culturally familiar, palatable and less monstrous to the Spanish imaginary. In the excerpt of Alcocer's speech that follows, we see that the insertion of these *castas* into the nationalizing paradigm of the constitution—and implicitly in the Americanizing discourse that informed the perspectives of the struggle for American independence—costs them their blackness and denies the violence of enslavement in the same breath that it acknowledges it. This denial is made evident in the generational distance from enslavement required for citizenship; it can also be found in Alcocer's argument that the term "*casta*", which by definition will exclude the possibility of citizenship, should be applied exclusively to those people born in or directly descending from Africa; it also describes freed mulattos and their children, who

are excluded from citizenship because of their proximity to the condition of enslavement, the monstrous condition that accompanies color:

Solo se llamarán castas los que han nacido en Africa o enteramente traen de ella su origen, que son *los negros, cuya cara no les dejara ocultar su calidad*; los *mulattos libertos*, porque *consta la esclavitud de la que han salido, y los hijos de éstos, como tan próximos a aquel origen de servidumbre* (*Actas*,172, my emphasis)

Alcocer's delineation of the category of *castas* prescribes the term only for those people whose blackness has not been sufficiently de-monstrified and whose physical appearance "doesn't allow them to hide" it. In addition, it is not only the darkness of the skin that places a person in the category of *casta*, but also the proximity to the condition of slavery. Thus, even a light-skinned "liberto" or freedman, is still classified as *casta*. Alcocer proposes a redefinition of the term *casta* that releases those of "brown color like that of the indians" (as in the excerpt of 168) from that classification: the new definition of *casta* refers only to those of black skin or those still too close for comfort to the condition of slavery, thus releasing the rest of the mixed population to the category of citizens.

In a rhetorical echo of the reassurance that the abolition of slavery would not cause any hindrance to the economic prosperity of the plantation owners in the Americas, Alcocer shows that the citizenship of the castas won't *color* the composition of the politically white and dominant population in the Americas:

[A]ún concediendo el derecho de ciudad a las castas, no por eso obtendrán los empleos ni entrarán a las corporaciones que exigen limpieza y nobleza de sangre; como el plebeyo en Roma, a pesar de ser ciudadano, no optaba los destinos del orden senatorio y ecuestre (170)

Thus, even in the views of the liberal Alcocer, the right to political voice in the Americas was firmly placed within the European nobility, a move to be echoed in Bolívar's legislations.

"Spanish" or "American"?

Alcocer's speech has shown the negation of blackness, which is also the negation of the violence of slavery and the monstrous progeny it produces, namely revolution and African independent nations, all of which are necessary negations for his nationalizing and whitening discourse. I return now to examine some of the theoretical implications of the articulations of Alcocer, whose delineation of the indigenous subject as the organic American echoes the discourse of Americanization that the American independence was producing. I will show that Bolívar's legislations regarding the indigenous populations would also reproduce the exclusions and erasures that can be discerned in Alcocer's discourse. I will map out a relation of echo and shadow between, first, Uría and Alcocer's interestingly paradoxical arguments for the organic subjects' right to Spanish citizenship through proof of their Americanness and second, the Americanizing rhetoric of Bolívar's independist discourse. Both haunted by monsters, they shadow each other, contained by and containing each other and the monsters of revolution, enslavement and Africa.

Concerned with the question of defining or finding a paradigm within which to describe a specifically Latin American literature, Antonio Cornejo-Polar uses the binary of homogeneity and heterogeneity

in describing literatures of organic production in opposition to literatures that are formed with influence from outside the immediately organic literary circle. [28] Placing this concern to define literary production in this way within the context of the continuing impulse to describe what is organically American at the level of literary production, one can read the concern to describe and define literary traditions of the Americas against or within external influences in relation to the much earlier concern –evidenced in the speeches of Argüelles and Alcocer-- to define the American organic subject against or within European or Spanish formulations of subjectivity. Interestingly, in tracing the different instances and currents of literary production of the Americas, Cornejo-Polar defines as American literary discourse the early *crónicas*, where Spanish perceptions came into contact with American subject-matter to produce what he defines as a non-organic American literature. Although his objective is to divide clearly between homogenous –organic—and heterogeneous --non-organic— literary productions, what is useful to me in his formulation is the possibility his paradigm offers of reading the debates on the Constitution of 1812 as articulations of American subjectivity.

Focusing on the symbolic use and representation of the *castas* and enslaved populations and the way in which they are integral in the rhetoric around them to the articulation of the Spanish nation as well as to the discourse of Americanness, I will look at the ways in which Bolívar's articulations of Americanness –here not within but against the Spanish nation—show a parallel systematic dependence upon and erasure of the indigenous and enslaved populations. This interdependent exchange occurs through the paradigm of the monstrous, as it emerges, disappears and transforms itself into something that will pass unrecognized by the censoring and oppressive eye. My analysis of Bolívar's text focuses on his articulations of the nation and its subjects in which I point out the simultaneous invocation and erasure of the racialized American subject.

In the debates in Cádiz about the accommodation of the political demands for greater autonomy in the Americas, the monstrous threat of revolt in the slave populations constituted one of the axes around which the dynamic of power and colonial support for the metropole turned. In the legislations proposed by Bolívar around the issue of independence and the forging of American nationalism against Spain there can be seen a parallel tension in Bolívar's negotiations with the Haitian president Peiton regarding the slave populations of continental America in relation to the potential for organization and revolt that had been exemplified most recently by Haitian independence; the strength of Bolívar's discourse of independence from Spain wishes to embrace the monstrosity of the Haitian Revolution in as far as it serves Bolívar's purposes well; however, Bolívar's language and strategy is one that whitens and demonstries the process of revolution and nationalism as he wants to delineate it. Bolívar desires independence but does not want the political and economic power to be in the hands of the black, *mestizo* and *mulatto* populations. Haitian independence not only served as a source of inspiration for enslaved populations but also provided a very close and palpable alternative. [29] Reflecting the awareness of the alternative Haiti offers as well as the need to retain the racialized labor population on which the economic prosperity of the Americas depend, Bolívar's legislations and speeches are concerned with incorporating the political needs of the heterogeneous American populations. Despite the political move to abolish slavery and accommodate the native and racially mixed populations of America, their incorporation into the nationalizing project remains a violent event of silencing upon which the larger nationalizing project depends. The monstrous example of the Haitian Revolution infuses Bolívar's nationalism with the force of a real, palpable threat, while at the repression of the Haitian Revolution, its blackness, provides an alternative emergence implicitly and explicitly imitating, shadowing and mirroring the French and North American Revolutions.

If Peiton's support of Bolívar's campaign for independence can be seen as central to Bolívar's success, what we see here is a dynamic of power and nationalist articulation in which Haiti, the nation of blacks and freed slaves, is inserted into Bolívar's nationalizing articulation: what could conceptually be termed, drawing on the discourse of the process of whitening that I have shown was inherent in the articulation of what was American, a tactical blackening of the Bolivarian nationalizing impulse. But just as Bolívar inserts Peiton and Haiti's political blackness into his nationalist articulation to satisfy his need for military and political support, in a fascinating rhetorical move, Bolívar proceeds to erase the political blackness from the figure of Peiton in a gesture that validates and makes palatable Bolívar's political proximity to the figure and country whose blackness is perceived as a threat. [30] Reading one of Bolívar's letters to Peiton in the light of their political engagement, it is not difficult to see a flattery whose logic subverts its purpose. Congratulating Peiton for his success in the presidential election, Bolívar writes in a letter dated October 1816:

Vuestra excelencia acaba de ser elevado a la dignidad perpetua de jefe de la República por la aclamación libre de sus conciudadanos, única fuente legitima de todo poder humano. Está, pues, destinado vuestra excelencia a hacer olvidar la memoria del gran Washington, franqueándose una carrera la más ilustre, cuyos obstáculos son superiores a todos los medios. El heroe del Norte solo encontró soldados enemigos que vencer y su mayor triunfo fue el de su ambición. Vuestra excelencia tiene que vencerlo todo, enemigos y amigos, extranjeros y nacionales [...] (*Cartas de Bolívar*, 169)

This erasure of blackness occurs in Bolívar's comparison and exaltation of Peiton in direct relation to the figure of George Washington. The need to praise Peiton in terms of his superiority to George Washington validates and makes acceptable Bolívar's dependence on him and rhetorically whitens

what might otherwise be perceived as an alliance that would blacken a discourse of nationalization and Americanization that, as we have seen, privileges the move toward whiteness. Three years after this letter to Peiton, Bolívar would attempt to deny a political voice to mixed race people with a lineage of enslavement.

The whitening impulse in Bolívar's nationalizing discourse is evident in his inaugural speech delivered at the Angostura Congress in February 1819 in which he outlines his overarching political ideology; his specific references to the question of the racially heterogeneous peoples echo surprisingly faithfully the discourse of the moderate American Alcocer in Cádiz a few years before, in a rhetorical move that reassures the dominant group that the recently freed slaves and the racially mixed populations still would not have access to high political office. He outlines a political strategy toward two classes of citizens that would ensure that these populations will not be easily admitted into the nation-producing political circles. Although the racially heterogeneous and the enslaved populations had signified quite heavily in the acquisition of the external help of Peiton, and hence in the articulation of the Americas as a national formation, Bolívar reasserts the order of racial privilege and oppression that had already been the ruling paradigm. Bolívar validates and affirms the heterogeneity of the American people as its defining quality:

Séame permitido llamar la atención del Congreso sobre una materia que puede ser de una importancia vital. Tengamos presente que nuestro pueblo no es el europeo, ni el americano del Norte, que más bien es un compuesto de Africa y de América, que una emanación de la Europa; pues que hasta la España misma deja de ser Europea por su sangre africana, por sus instituciones y por su carácter. [...] La mayor parte del indígena se ha aniquilado, el europeo se ha mezclado con el americano y con el africano, y éste se ha mezclado con el indio y con

el europeo. Nacidos todos del seno de una misma madre, nuestros padres, diferentes en origen y en sangre, son extranjeros, y todos difieren visiblemente en la epidermis; esta desemejanza trae un reato de la mayor transcendencia. (*Legislador*, 173-174)

Based on this image of the racial heterogeneity of the American people, Bolívar then establishes that all the citizens of the Greater Colombia are recipients of “una perfecta igualdad política,” namely that they are all perfect political equals. However, the meaning of this political equality has to be modified in order to re-establish the race-driven hierarchy that the declaration of political rights to everyone might signify. Bolívar qualifies this political right:

Que los hombres nacen todos con derechos iguales a los bienes de la sociedad, está sancionado por la pluralidad de los sabios; como también lo está que no todos los hombres nacen igualmente aptos a la obtención de todos los rangos; pues todos deben practicar la virtud y no todos la practican; todos deben ser valerosos y todos no lo son; todos deben poseer talentos y todos no los poseen. De aquí viene la distinción que se observa entre los individuos de la sociedad más liberalmente establecida. Si el principio de la igualdad política es generalmente reconocido, no lo es menos el de la desigualdad física y moral. La naturaleza hace a los hombres desiguales en genio, temperamento, fuerzas y caracteres. Las leyes corrigen esta diferencia porque colocan al individuo en la sociedad para que la educación, la industria, las artes, los servicios, las virtudes, le den una igualdad ficticia, propiamente llamada política y social. [...]

Habiendo ya cumplido con la justicia, con la humanidad, cumplamos ahora con la política, con la sociedad [..] La diversidad de origen requiere un pulso infinitamente firme, un tacto

infinitamente delicado para manejar esta sociedad heterogenea cuyo complicado artificio se disloca, se divide, se disuelve con la más ligera alteración. (174-175)

Bolívar establishes that, although all the citizens are accorded equal rights as citizens, there must be a way to control the heterogeneous population, which is described in terms of inconstancy and suspicion based on the racial heritages. In order to avoid the dangers involved in governing such a changeable and morphing body of people, Bolívar looks away from the monstrous present back into European history, to the examples of Rome and Athens in order to hold up those empires as the supreme examples of government that are to be followed.

When Bolívar invokes the ancient European civilizations, city-states and empires as the examples against which he shapes his own nationalizing paradigms, he engages in rhetorical whitening:

Roma y la Gran Bretaña son las naciones que más han sobresalido entre las antiguas y las modernas; ambas nacieron para mandar y ser libres; pero ambas se constituyeron no con brillantes formas de libertad, sino con establecimientos sólidos.(180)

As if enacting at the rhetorical level the physical exclusion of the indigenous and racially mixed populations that he has legislated, Bolívar does not once make mention of the civilizations from which are descended the indigenous and black populations of the Americas. His argument builds toward the idea that the general public is not qualified to make political decisions and that an institution must be devised whereby the apparently inevitably antagonistic –and necessarily uninformed masses—can be controlled. Bolívar’s argument accords political sense to some citizens

and not to others: “[L]os más de los hombres desconocen sus verdaderos intereses, y constantemente procuran asaltarlos[...]: el individuo pugna contra la masa y la masa contra la autoridad.” (183)

It is clear that the people to whom Bolívar refers as unaware of their own interests are the same people he has described as an unruly and heterogeneous mass not fit for high political office and whose ascent into the political realm must be controlled. To mediate between these monstrous masses and the government, Bolívar proposes an intermediate body, the Senate that will be elected once by Congress. Bolívar stipulates, drawing authority from the examples of Greece, Rome and England, that the power of the Senate will be passed on through heredity rather than by vote, thus ensuring that the heterogeneous populations will not rise easily to political power. The posterity of Venezuela as an independent Republic depends on the maintenance of this political body and the separation of the heterogeneous masses from its leading elite:

De ningún modo sería una violación de la igualdad política la creación de un Senado hereditario; *no es una nobleza la que pretendo establecer* porque, [...] sería destruir a la vez la igualdad y la libertad. Es un oficio para el cual se deben preparar los candidatos, y es un *oficio que exige mucho saber y los medios proporcionados para adquirir su instrucción*. Todo no se debe dejar al *acaso y a la ventura de las elecciones: el pueblo se engaña más fácilmente que la naturaleza perfeccionada por el arte*; y aunque es verdad que *estos senadores no saldrían del seno de las virtudes, también es verdad que saldrían del seno de una educación ilustrada*. [...] [E]s del *interés público* [...] es del *honor nacional conservar con gloria hasta la última posteridad una raza de hombres virtuosos, prudentes y esforzados que superando todos los obstáculos, han fundado la República a costa de los más heroicos sacrificios*. Y *si el pueblo de Venezuela no aplaude la elevación de sus bienhechores, es indigno de ser libre y no lo será jamás*.(183)

Bolívar's discourse resonates painfully with the neocolonialist ideology that itself rests on the logic of ideological as well as physical whitening. This whitening impulse is central to the nationalism that Bolívar prescribes through the institutionalization of European structures from which the masses are explicitly barred because of the financial cost of acquiring the learning necessary to hold this Senatorial rank. However, this isn't enough: to ensure the whiteness of the government of Venezuela, the Senate would only be elected once by the Congress and then would be passed on by heredity. Bolívar thus effectively excludes the heterogeneous populations from electing its representatives and by extension from the articulation of the Venezuelan nation. Bolívar's speech at Angostura is a document in which he is very deliberately writing the nation and the American subject as he sees it: in his perspective, the American thinking subject is entirely exclusive of the masses. Bolívar's repeated representation of the masses as unconscious or unaware of their political needs must be understood as yet another move of dominant historiography to invalidate the voice of the revolting masses. The speeches of Argüelles and the American deputies Alcocer, Uría, Guridi y Alcocer and Mejía, as well as Bolívar's articulations, have shown that the paradigm of the nation and its subjects rested upon the collective formation of the monstrous, the discursive and imaginary repository where newness can be imagined and generated. This ideological repository and construction of the monstrous mirrors the material, historical and physical exclusions of the monstrous unformed heterogeneous masses that lent material, political and economic strength to the American call for Independence and the Spanish self-conception as nation.

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Notes

[1] I will elucidate this point with a reference to a contemporary indigenized representation of Simón Bolívar referred to in Michael Taussig's article "La Magia del Estado: María Lionza y Simón Bolívar en la Venezuela Contemporánea." In this article, Taussig examines the process of appropriation and erasure of the figure of the indigenous American in the contemporary narration of Venezuelan history as it is being taught in school-curricula in Venezuela today (492-494). He contrasts this with the indigenous narration and ritual representation of Simón Bolívar in a certain area of the interior of Venezuela, known as the mountain of María Lionza. Taussig notes that the cultural and spiritual activity that is to be found around Simón Bolívar places him within an indigenous, or racialized

narration of the nation. (499-500) This analysis is an example of one way to read the disruption or re-narration of the dominant discourses through examples of popular cultural expressions where evidence of popular interventions into or manipulations of the dominant paradigms is visible. What seems to be at stake here is the importance of reading projects of syncretisation as much for evidence of erasure of race as for evidence of racialization if one is to be consequent with the need to read official historiography against the grain. It is important to keep in mind the idea that dominant institutional discourses whose rhetorical impulse may be to whiten or erase indigenous and black cultures and pasts are continually re-written and re-narrated by alternative discourses outside of the dominant paradigms that in turn modify, manipulate and re-articulate the dominant discourses in a symbolic process that runs counter to the whitening impulse.

[2] See *Avengers of the New World*, by Laurent Dubois.

[3] All letters I am referring to from this archive are sorted in large bundles tied together with string, *Legajos*, and numbered by various archivists in different ways. I will refer to the original system of sorting them. For example, *Legajo* 7159 refers to bundle number 7159 –military and colonial letters of the Caribbean colonies. The numbering of the letters seems to follow at times better than others, the order in which they must have been written, according to the order of events that they follow. The writing of the letters itself is fascinating: one can trace and recognize the letter-writers eventually by their hand-writing and their specific ways of abbreviating certain words. Perhaps most fascinating of all is to see the physical and material process—ink on paper, certain scribes’ adjectives being taken up and used by other letter-writers-- whereby certain adjectives become habitual in relation to the violent events of the slave rebellions and the insurgent generals. One sees the process in writing, the and the choice of recurring adjectives that move literally in letters across space and time, whereby certain events, peoples, come to be remembered in certain ways and not in others. For instance, the event in Bahía de San Sebastián eventually becomes inevitably attached to the adjective “horrendo” used in the initial letter that describes it.

[4] CLR James’ *Black Jacobins* highlights the terms of excessive violence used to describe the insurgent methods in the colonial descriptions of the French. A study of the Spanish and French documentations of the insurgent violence is necessary to trace the progress and development of the specific language used to describe this particular revolution.

[5] In the debates surrounding the articulation of these discourses at the time, some moderates understood the nationalizing impulse of the Creole communities in the Americas not as an anti-colonial move toward independence but as a gesture in support of the Spanish monarchy’s struggle against Napoleon. See José Blanco-White’s *Conversaciones Americanas*.

[6] See Tierno Galván’s Prologue to his edition of the *Actas*, as well as Manuel Chust Calero’s “La Cuestión Nacional Americana en el Doceañismo Español.” Chust Calero points out that the Napoleonic invasion of 1808 had given the incipient nationalist movement in Spain the opportunity to begin the process of eliminating the structures of the monarchical regime and articulate an incipient nationalism. (224)

[7] The requested increased autonomy pointed toward the right to establish trade with other countries independently of the tight control of Spanish ports and tariffs as well as toward the need for governmental institutions in the Americas run by Creole Americans that understood and were more familiar with the political and social dynamics than the Spanish courts.

[8] According to Galván, the *Cortes* were composed of 90 ecclesiastes, 56 lawyers, 15 *catedráticos*, 39 military, 49 public servants, 14 noblemen, 8 merchants and 20 deputies, of which a certain number were American.

[9] This process is evident in some of the legislations of Bolívar as well as in the literary documentations of the racialized other in the literary and political movements of Americanismo, realismo, regionalismo and indigenismo.

[10] In “La Cuestión Nacional Americana en el Doceañismo Español” Chust Calero specifies that in 1810 the metropolitan administration granted the colonial administrations the right to dispose autonomously of American agriculture, industry and commerce and had extended to the colonies the status of an integral part of the Spanish monarchy. (217)

[11] See Chust Calero 218-226.

[12] The slave-revolt of San Domingue (1789) and the consequent independence of Haiti in 1803 was one of the political contexts in which the debate around the abolition of the slave trade had been conducted both in England and, by extension, in Spain; the success of the revolt in Haiti and the success of the overturning of the monarchy in France were two strands of political development that were undeniably present in the context of the debates.

[13] See *Bolívar en Las Antillas*.

[14] Spain was not the only nation working through the conflicts and transitions from nation to empire in a way that these two political bodies overlapped: another example of this fluid line between nation and empire is France after the Revolution and during its Napoleonic expansions. However, in postcolonial movements of independence of the late 19th and mid 20th Centuries, the concepts of nation and empire will be clearly in conflict, each ruling out, at least in practice, the existence of the other.

[15] The French Revolution is the unnamed monster throughout the debates, since Napoleon’s invasion of Spain is a direct result of the political aftermath of Napoleon’s victory against the French monarchy. For Spain, this had meant the disastrous loss to the French of a great part of Spanish territory_both in the Caribbean and on the Peninsula_the threat to the sovereignty of the Spanish monarch, and widespread terror at the hands of Napoleonic forces against the Spanish populations.

[16] Interestingly, the image of Napoleon haunts Argüelles’ speech, at once the symbol of what most threatens Spain and its sovereignty in 1810, (the monster most feared) as well as the embodiment of the successful revolutionary (the monster most desired). Cultural examples of the monstrous imprint of the Napoleonic invasion of Spain are Goya’s representations of the massacres in Madrid on the 2nd and 3rd of May at the hands of the Napoleonic forces. There is still much room for exploration of the monstrous in the Spanish cultural imaginary during the Napoleonic invasions and the Congressional debates in Cádiz before the 1812 Constitution.

[17] The larger paradigm of Enlightenment discourse on national character is relevant to the nationalizing texts of Spain and the Americas, not because of any necessary direct influence but because of the implicit concern and investment of the Enlightenment with the colonial processes occurring between Europe and the Americas at the time. These processes had fueled, in the

collective political imaginary of those subjects with the political and economic power to do so, the collective possibility to imagine otherwise (the external monsters of fantasy and other worlds as well as the internal monsters of monstrous births and prodigies of nature) which was connected intimately to the process of defining the colors and contours of the enlightened subject.

[18] The generative, truly powerful element of the monstrous discourse is the possibility it offers to imagine otherwise; what the collective imaginary produces with this generative possibility reflects the cultural and political position of the collectivity at the moment it produces the monster.

[19] Interestingly, this sense of shame is prevalent also in David Bryon-Davis' history of American slavery, a question discussed at length in Page duBois' fabulous seminar entitled "Violence, Subjectivity and the Body," taught in the Fall of 2003. It is crucial to note here that the discourse of a prescribed sense of shame required of "enlightened" nations continues to be present in dominant contemporary political rhetoric of the United Nations, Europe and US current policy.

[20] The alleged happiness of the slaves here echoes the representations of the myths of happy African and native slave-populations of America that were widespread at this time. These narratives of imposed "community happiness" were an intimate part of the process of the erasure of the violent reality of the subjects.

[21] I am thinking here of texts ranging from the traditional mythological text *Popol Vuh* to the poems of Nicolás Guillén ("Los Abuelos") and to Fernando Ortiz's *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar*

[22] It is important to note that this term is quite fluid and seems itself to be in flux throughout the debates. However, in the speeches at hand, it is quite clear that the castas refer not to non-Spanish Europeans or native *indios*, but quite specifically to the populations that contain African lineage.

[23] The active vote gave individuals the right to be elected to office while the passive vote only allowed individuals to vote for an active citizen.

[24] See Ranajit Guha's *The Prose of Counterinsurgency*, where she argues that revolutionary activity from the peasants was consistently represented in the official historiography of the British Empire in terms of natural disaster and uncontrollable and irrational events. Concrete examples of this can be found in Edmund Burke's descriptions of India as a vast, uncontrollable space. The vastness of the space described also invokes Kant's description of the mathematical sublime, where the sublime is what can't be measured or conceived of by the mind.

[25] The language of Americanismo was produced by American intellectuals as varied as El Inca Garcilaso, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz and was being written by the contemporary poet-thinker Andrés Bello, whose writings were formative in the production of the American subject.

[26] Depending on who is representing, Haiti is delineated as the monster of promise or the monster of threat along with all the possible combinations.

[27] The impediments attached to the color of the skin also reflect the Constitution's disqualification of dependents—women and servants—from the status of citizen. As Alcocer shows, the color of the

castas does not threaten their access to citizenship but their proximity to the condition of slavery, evidenced by the color of their skin. This will be very clearly articulated in Bolívar's legislation.

[28] See "El indigenismo y las literaturas heterogéneas: su doble estatuto socio-cultural," *Revista de Crítica Literaria Latinoamericana* IV, 7-8 1978 (7-21) Cornejo-Polar's discussion can be situated within a larger theoretical discussion that looks to outline a Latinamerican literary tradition against the critical paradigms that trace back to Europe many of the literary movements of Latinamerica. While Cornejo-Polar's discussion revolves around the concern with literary texts and movements, other Latinamerican theorists concerned with delineating the theoretical paradigms that shape Latinamerica look to the production of culture and how it somehow occurs always within the tensions of the colonial dynamic of colony and metropole, or in the era of globalization within the tensions between center and periphery. Literary and cultural theorists engaged in this discussion include Ángel Rama, Doris Sommers, Antonio Cándido and Carlos Fuentes.

[29] Haiti's governmental institution would re-assert the racist foundations of the colonial system, but at the moment that the independence of the Americas was being formulated, Haiti was perceived as an example of the subversion of the system.

[30] This gesture mirrors Alcocer's whitening of the Africa that is central to the Spanish self-articulation as a nation.