Jorge Pineda's Queer Visualities? Postcolonial Sexualities and Antinormativity

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The question of the usefulness of *queer* for the Caribbean is far from settled, and scholars analyzing Caribbean same-sex desires and non-heteronormative subjects tend to weigh carefully the possibilities and limits of *queer* for apprehending them. For example, Lawrence La Fountain-Stokes, in *Queer Ricans: Cultures and Sexualities in the Diaspora*, employs the term *queer* but also notes how he is "painfully aware of the bind or limitation of using 'queer' or LGBT as stand-ins for practices, identities, and experiences that are much more complex and diffuse," especially since such "vernacular specificities" are "captured in Spanish-language words" but not in English.[1] Rosamund S. King, in *Island Bodies: Transgressive Sexualities in the Caribbean Imagination*, entirely eschews the term *queer* and instead uses *sexual minority* as a term "to refer to those who engage in (or who want to engage in) consensual erotic relationships that are not heterosexual."[2] In a similar vein, Omise'eke Natasha Tinsley, in *Thiefing Sugar: Eroticism between Women in Caribbean Literature*, prefers the phrase "women who love women" (rather than *queer* or *lesbian*); yet at the same time, Tinsley points to the increasingly transnationalized field of queer studies and argues for "dialoguing with concepts of decolonization, queerness, and theory," so that "queer and postcolonial theory will not only come in different colors and genders but will also come to be decolonized."[3] I am similarly wary of the uses of the English term *queer* in the Caribbean, perhaps especially so for the nonanglophone Antilles, but, along with Tinsley, I believe there are important and productive dialogues to be had between queer and postcolonial studies for which the project "Caribbean Queer Visualities" offers a useful space and a much-needed opportunity for cross-regional dialogue.

Notably, the meaning of *queer* is hardly settled in the global North either. Recently, the question of the primary impulse of queer studies, specifically its relation to the "anti-normative," provoked new scholarly debate. In a recent issue of the feminist cultural studies journal *differences*, Robyn Wiegman and Elizabeth A. Wilson describe how "antinormativity reflects a broad understanding that the critical force of queer inquiry lies in its capacity to undermine norms, challenge normativity, and interrupt the processes of normalization," and they question precisely queer studies' "primary commitment to antinormativity."[4] Their attempt to untether the close link between queer and antinormativity was met with a pointedly critical response by Jack Halberstam. For Halberstam, "The answer . . . to the question posed by this volume of *differences* . . . , namely[,] 'what is queer studies without antinormativity,' [is that] it is disciplinary, neoliberal, no stakes, straight thinking."[5] Halberstam outlines here, at least implicitly, a certain normative US landscape (neoliberal, heteronormative, disciplinary, nonchallenging) that *queer* should challenge and resist. I in turn would like to consider how this debate and the critical questions it raises pose themselves in colonial and postcolonial contexts and how they may be (re-) phrased and troubled there. I suggest that histories of colonialism inevitably complicate further the relation between the queer and normativity/antinormativity, given the particularly violent and forceful ways through which colonialism introduced competing forms of normativity and, hence, antinormativity in colonized societies. While every society, including in the global North, has various normative structures, colonialism has undeniably produced a more incisive clash of differing normative systems with profound and lasting consequences.

The relation between postcolonial normative structures and sexualities emerges as one of the thematic threads in Jorge Pineda's ample body of work. Pineda is one of the most important contemporary Dominican artists—if not *the* most relevant Dominican visual artist—who has for more than two decades creatively addressed the Dominican reality produced by the clashing and knitting together of different normative local and global structures. In fact, Pineda's work, I contend, is precisely so compelling because of how his oeuvre incisively maps the expected and unexpected intersections of local and globalized normative structures, including those regulating sexuality. Sexuality is broached in Pineda's artwork—at times directly but often more obliquely—in ways that are missed if one solely were to look for "queer" in the form of explicit representations of same-sex desire. Instead, tracing more broadly the relations between sexuality and differing normative protocols in Pineda's evocative oeuvre not only better captures his nuanced and multifaceted exploration of Caribbean sexualities but also helps to open new inroads into thinking queer and postcolonial studies together.

Jorge Pineda, born in 1961, was raised and educated in the Dominican Republic. Today he is a nationally and internationally renowned multifaceted visual artist known for his work in print, drawing, and installation. His artwork has been shown in many individual and collective exhibits in the Dominican Republic since the 1980s, and he has won some of the most important national art prizes. His works also have been exhibited widely internationally in solo exhibits in France, Spain, and the United States and at international art fairs such as ARCO in Madrid, Art Basel in Miami, and the Scope and VOLTA art fairs in New York City, among others. Pineda came of age during the protracted Joaquín Balaguer presidency years (1965–78, 1986–96), a political period that for many Dominicans signifies the disappointment and loss of hope for meaningful political change after the end of the Rafael L. Trujillo dictatorship (1930–61). I will address now at some length the late-twentieth-century Dominican political, social, and economic landscape and its reconfigurations and continuities—these not only were the context from which artists of Pineda's generation emerged but also were often their artworks' principal critical concern.

Joaquín Balaguer, the country's reigning political figure of the late twentieth century, is generally considered as Trujillo's heir. Especially during Balaguer's first twelve years in power, from 1966 to 1978, he perpetuated many of the political practices of the *Trujillato* (Trujillo era), including wielding extensive presidential powers while brutally repressing the political opposition. This resulted in what political scientist Jonathan Hartlyn describes as a continued "vacuum of institutions and organizations" that could have challenged the government and the political status quo in the Dominican Republic. The "combination of weak social forces and national institutions" fostered enduring patterns of patrimonialism and a "legacy of conspirational, distrustful, and cynical politics" that characterizes the Dominican political landscape even until today.[6] Hence, many of the normative political protocols put in place by the Trujillato persisted throughout the *Balaguerato* (Balaguer era) and beyond, even as the broader economic and social circumstances were rapidly changing in the late twentieth century.

The best chance for significant political change came with the 1978 elections and the coming into power of the Partido Revolucionario Dominicano (Dominican Revolutionary Party; PRD). As the Dominican political sociologist Rosario Espinal describes, “Given the PRD’s democratic record and reformist platform, expectations were high that once in power that party would promote the much needed social reforms. But would it? In the 1978 there were signs of hope that it would.” However, the PRD confronted—as did most of the Caribbean at the time—a period of economic crisis and new restrictive cost-cutting agreements with the International Monetary Fund, and so, rather than addressing “problems of social and economic inequality,” the PRD placed “the emphasis . . . on austerity and not on redistribution,” disappointing those who had placed hope in new government.[7] The result of austerity measures, such as rising food prices, created increasing popular discontent and produced a surge of popular and civic movements that made “social protest a key feature of Dominican politics in the 1980s.”[8] In sum, the period of the PRD government saw the emergence of new social actors and forms of political protest and mobilizations from “below”; yet the political response from “above” hardly changed, and the government remained largely unresponsive to popular demands. As Espinal describes, “The absence of an effective government response was a main feature of the policymaking process and the democracy that prevailed in the Dominican Republic in the 1980s.”[9] Hence, the PRD years were ultimately not the kind of political rupture that so many Dominicans had hoped for, and this sense of political stagnancy was cemented with the return of Balaguer to the presidency from 1986 to 1996.

These notable political continuities contrast starkly with the radical changes that Dominican society and the economy were undergoing. As Hartlyn describes, “Changes in international economic conditions and in the policies both of the country’s major trading partner and of international institutions helped induce dramatic overall transformations in the structure of the Dominican economy and society.” These dramatic changes included Dominicans moving en masse from rural areas to urban ones, so that “by 1990, it was estimated that 60.4 percent of [the Dominican Republic’s] 7.2 million people lived in urban areas.”[10] At the same time Dominicans also began to migrate massively to the United States, and a “complex pattern of flows and counterflows of funds, peoples, goods, and services . . . between the two countries” was established. Nonetheless, Hartlyn concludes that, ultimately, “the country’s dramatic societal transformation did not centrally affect the country’s high level of inequality nor the extent and nature of organization in society.”[11] This continues to hold true today and explains the palpable political cynicism of many Dominicans with regard to politics and their lack of faith in the possibility that it caneffect positive change for the majority of the populations, especially for those unaffiliated with the political party in power.

The coexistence of radical economic and social transformation and dogged political persistence in the Dominican Republic is often described simply as “paradoxical.” Indeed, the vocabulary and conceptual apparatus for explaining such patterns of continuity and change—as well as of complicity/resistance or normativity/antinormativity—often obscure rather than illuminate them. Namely, they are often apprehended through too simplistic notions of “tradition” and “modernity,” as well as of the “local” and the “global.” For example, the political reconfiguration of 1978, when Balaguer was forced out and the PRD came into power, is generally thought of as the country’s arrival at full “modern democracy” and the superseding of a longstanding “traditional authoritarian” politics.[12] “Traditional” politics in the Spanish-speaking Americas, including that of the Dominican Republic, are generally associated with strongman politics, sometimes referred to as *caudillismo* (thought to have deep roots in Spanish colonialism); however, along with other scholars, I emphasize that while the Trujillo dictatorship (and the Balaguer sequel) certainly drew from preexisting “traditional” normative political and cultural structures, ultimately it represented a notable break and reconfiguration of Dominican hegemonic power structures, as much in the political as in the social realm, including in gender and sexual norms, that was made possible by US imperialist practices, including the US occupation of the country from 1916 to 1924. Simply put, the Trujillato was neither as “traditional” nor as “local”—and, hence, neither were its political sequels—as generally thought. Indeed, it can be argued that the political change in 1978 represented a *modern* authoritarian structure (partially) giving way to an existing Dominican popular *tradition* of democratizing forces. Ultimately, the shorthand of “tradition” and “modernity” tend to obscure more than reveal changing social and political patterns, as much when it comes to politics as when it comes to gender and sexuality.

These Dominican patterns are rarely approached through the lens of postcoloniality. This may be because, in contrast to the anglophone Caribbean (and other former British colonies), the Dominican Republic's final independence dates much farther back, to the nineteenth century. Yet approaching these through the lens of postcoloniality would help to forestall an all too ready and reductionist evocation of Dominican "tradition" and "traditional politics" and would open up to questioning the horizon and trajectory of the modern in productive ways. For example, Dipesh Chakrabarty, in *Provincializing Europe*: *Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, usefully complicates these vectors by emphasizing that postcolonial collectivities cannot be solely understood or defined by "the rituals of citizenship nor by the nightmare of 'tradition' that 'modernity' creates." Instead of a "summary narrative of transition from premodern stage to modernity," Chakrabarty points to the recognition of forms of "mutual supplementation" and to the "heterotemporality of the modern subject."[13]

There is indeed no better way to describe Pineda's and his generation's approach to late-twentieth- and early-twenty-first-century Dominican society: their artworks explore precisely the fundamental heterotemporality of Dominican society as well as the mutual forms of supplementation of that which are often thought of as incommensurate: tradition/modernity, authoritarianism/democracy, local/global. Their critical departure from previous Dominican artistic tendencies was made possible in part precisely by the hopeful period of the PRD political interlude in the 1980s during which the Dominican cultural landscape, and perhaps especially the visual arts, underwent significant change. While for many Dominican writers and intellectuals the only "secure" form of employment was government-sponsored positions, visual artists had more economic opportunities through new national and international art markets and hence could remain more independent from the Dominican state and its clientelist politics. During this time, as the Dominican art critic and writer Jeannette Miller describes, Dominican art essentially became divided "en complaciente y disidente."[14] "Dissident" expressions of Dominican art are strongly associated with the new generation of the 1980s that emerged with the 1983 collective exhibit "La Generación del 80, sus inicios" ("The 1980s Generation, Its Beginnings"), which also featured Pineda's work.[15]

By all accounts this generation represented a starkly new direction for the Dominican arts scene. Miller describes this time as "un período que trata de romper con lo anterior en todos los planos y niveles."[16] The former director of the Centro Cultural de España in Santo Domingo, Ricardo Ramón Jarne, in *Arte contemporáneo dominicano*, speaks of these new tendencies as "una ruptura ejemplar de la tendencias folkloristas y fácilmente exóticas que acaparan el comercio del arte en La Hispaniola."[17] The important Dominican art critic Marianne de Tolentino similarly notes how, while various different artistic generations (working with "diferentes esquemas, formas y estilos") coexisted, an incisive reconfiguration was achieved with "las ideas nuevas y los valores comprometidos . . . que se han desarrollado fundamentalmente a partir de los años 80."[18] Many of these artists chose to articulate their ideas and critical commitments through new aesthetic strategies and artistic media, and, though there had been a few precursors, they turned installations into one of the most important contemporary Dominican artistic media.[19]

This novel aesthetic direction in the Dominican visual arts went hand in hand with new critical perspectives on some of the fundamental problems of Dominican society. Many artists foregrounded in their works the new social actors and popular subjects that emerged after the end of the first Balaguer presidency in 1978 and portrayed the growing urbanization and mass migration. Their works thus attest to how new "modern" forces tied to globalizing processes, especially the negative impact of neo-liberalism, erupted in the country. They showed how these changes, rather than empowering Dominican subjects, further constrained them, especially those already marginalized by their class, race, or gender. This artistic generation and their works thus raised new questions about Dominican subjectivities and identity, about power and subjugation, and they offered strong visual challenges to hegemonic social and cultural norms. Tolentino therefore calls these "obras para la consciencia," while Miller describes them as having "una fuerte agresión visual," concluding that "entrando al tercer milenio . . . la conciencia crítica permanece."[20]

I now turn to the critical perspective that Pineda's works bring to bear on Dominican sexualities specifically and on questions of normativity more broadly. To begin with, I turn to one of Pineda's earliest individual exhibits, shown in 1992 in Casa de Teatro in Santo Domingo. The telling title, *Internamiento* (*Internment*), alludes to forms of confinement, including of being hospitalized or institutionalized for illness. Indeed, the works, many of them drawings, offer explorations of various and often overlapping structures of confinement in Dominican society, many of which relate to

sexuality. In fact, it can be argued, *Internamiento* foregrounds sexuality more insistently than any other later exhibit. The drawing *Del otro lado del paraíso*, for example, speaks of the "other" side of the Caribbean popularly known as a paradisical place of escape and tropical fantasy (fig. 1). The confining nature of this stereotype is evoked by palm tree trunks that stretch across the entire length of the drawing, hence resembling prison bars rather than evoking a lush tropical life. In between these palm trees there are many differently shaped human figures: women and men of different white, gray, and black coloring, some lighter, some darker, and some with both black and white body parts, who stand, walk, and kneel. While some are dressed, most figures are naked, and their genitals are (re)marked on by dark circles or triangles covering them. Many also have traced on their bodies symbolic elements such as numbers, labyrinths, and arrows. At the same time, many figures lack arms and hands. This work thus suggests how prevalent globalized views of "paradisical" Caribbean societies are inherently and problematically tied to processes of sexualization of Caribbean subjects—as their genitalia accentuated through their censorship suggests—along with a concomitant lack of agency alluded to by their missing arms and hands.

Other drawings in the exhibit reiterate such representations of constrained and yet highly sexualized subjectivity, including, for example, *Canto de Sirena* (*Siren's Song*), *Toda esa gente allí* (*All Those People There*), and *Angel que me guarda* (*Angel Who Guards Me*). All these drawings show nude subjects with their genitalia emphasized and yet marked with black censoring strips, speaking both to a rampant sexualization *and* to forms of sexual censorship and hence hypocrisy; notably, the few dressed figures

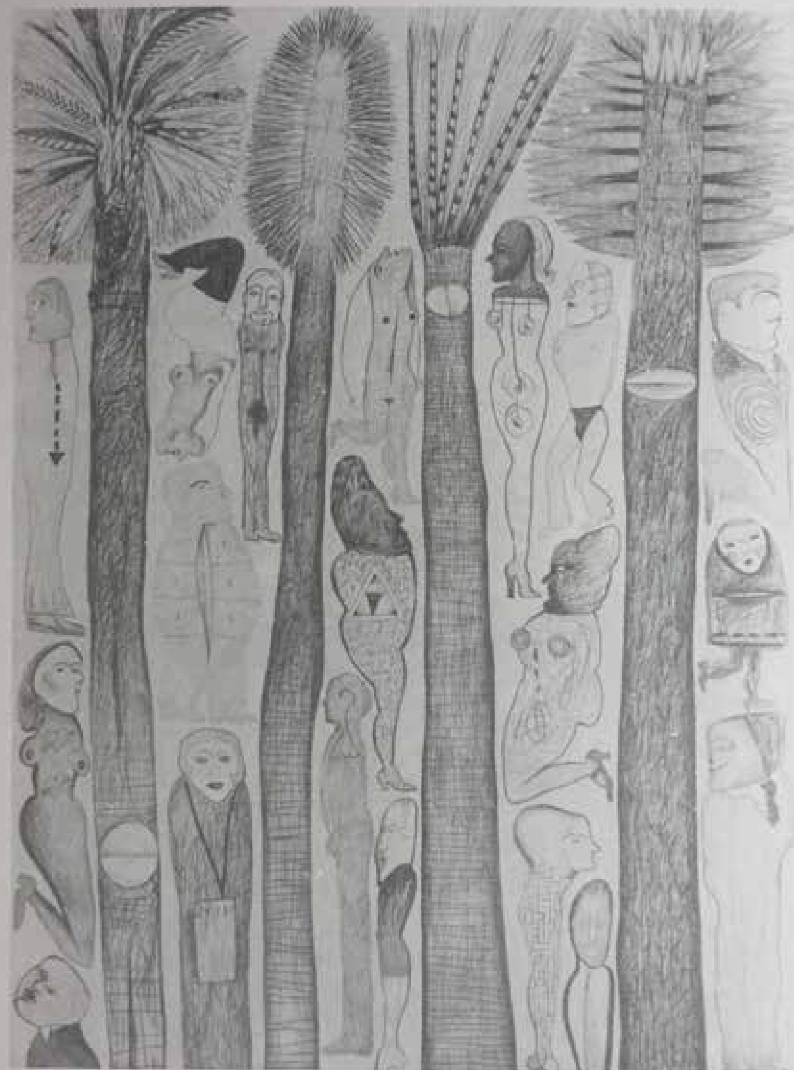

Figure 1. Jorge Pineda, *Del otro lado del paraíso*, 1992. Pencil drawing, 1.20 x 1.50 m. Second page of *Jorge Pineda Dibujos: Internamiento*, catalogue (Santo Domingo: Casa de Teatro, 1992). Courtesy of the author

are mostly male and wear suits, alluding to the gendered power differentials in this sexual landscape. Moreover, the figures, though placed in close proximity, generally do not touch or interact with each other, creating a strong sense of individualist isolation despite the crowded surroundings and society that they are embedded in. Hence, this sexual landscape speaks of a sexuality that is not relational, conjugal, or primarily procreative. In this sense, this sexual imaginary diverges (one may say, perhaps, "queerly") from the normative (Western) heterosexual imaginary structured around couples, family, and having offspring.

An exception to this tendency is the drawing *Casa de citas* (*House of Trysts*), which features three male-female couples in a house that, as the title makes clear, is a brothel (fig. 2). The couples are again shaded in different grays and whites, alluding to their different racial phenotypes. The male figures grip the women and are turned with their faces looking directly at the viewer, suggesting their being in a position of greater power. Moreover, the house is surrounded by numbers, and one of the men's bodies is marked with numbers as well, evoking the calculating and economic transactions taking place. Importantly, this heterosexual scene is "headed," under the brothel's roof, by an upturned and beheaded hog with a bull's-eye. This animalistic, phallic, and decapitated symbol frames and centers (through the bull's-eye) the entire scene. The flipped and headless hog evokes a subject that fails in multiple ways to conform to the Enlightenment ideal of the self-determined and conscious (male) subject; and while there are no direct evocations of homoeroticisim here, one may think of this as a scene of thwarted "queer" postcolonial masculinity vis-à-vis this normative Western conception of the subject. Pineda's Caribbean subjects and couplings are critically divergent from Western norms of sexuality and the familial, conjugal, and relational structures these rely on. In this way, these sexual subjects are antinormative in relation to this Western imaginary; however, at the same time these gendered and sexual structures are presented as the predominant, that is normative, reality of the Caribbean society portrayed. Hence, Pineda's works in *Internamiento* speaks of the multiple ways sexuality in the postcolonial Caribbean is wound up with questions of normativity and how these complicate all-too-neat determinations of what is normative and antinormative at any given moment.

In this exhibit and in other works from the 1990s, Pineda offers portrayals of Dominican postcolonial reality and of how different normative structures promiscuously intermingle. For example, Pineda's 1994 woodcut *Casta casa* (*Chaste/Caste House*) speaks to the manifold interrelations of different normative systems and how they structure Dominican society (fig. 3). Unlike the series of works discussed above, in this work familial relations are put at the very forefront. *Casta casa* is a black-and-white representation of a house with three levels, and, again, the top part of the house

Figure 2. Jorge Pineda, *Casa de citas*, 1992. Pencil drawing, 1.20 x1.50 m. In *Jorge Pineda Dibujos.* Courtesy of the artist

features a strongly gendered and sexualized animal subject: here, two skinny dogs with their tails tucked in. Their disheveled appearance and different colorings—each is part black, part white, and a mix of these two colors in some parts—suggest the ubiquitous Dominican *viralata* (bastard dog). Notably, the genitals of one of the dogs are covered with a small black rectangle, speaking again to a simultaneous hypersexualization and sexual prudishness. The "heading" of these Caribbean houses by these animal subjects evokes the dehumanizing colonial processes through which these societies came into being and highlight their gendered and sexual implications, their effects on masculinity, their conceptions of family lineage (or the lack thereof), and their overall sexualization.

The Caribbean human subjects that populate this postcolonial "house" are also colored in white, black, and various shades in between, as well as covered with graphic symbols (arrows, circles, rectangles), letters, and numbers that point to an almost mechanical process underwriting their couplings and the offspring they have produced. The relations between men and women are characterized either by distance or through aggressive gestures, such as, for example, of men with their tongues stuck out at a woman in sexually suggestive ways. These sexualized and gendered dynamics are also literally underwritten with racial terms: a banner below each "family" describes with colloquial Dominican expressions their particular racial combination ("Trigueño claro+negro=indio puro" or "Indio Lavado y Mulato Da Blanco"). Yet not all banners refer to racial terms; several evoke color mixings that allude to other identity aspects, particularly those related to class and economic status ("verde" [green] equaling money and "azul" [blue] indicating aristocracy). Pineda's *Casta casa* is thus a complex portrayal of how racial ideologies and class positions intersect with and suffuse gender and sexual relations in the Dominican Republic. Moreover, the piece, through the apparently rational (racial) equations with their illogical/impossible results, offers a complex indictment of the disavowals and desires that underwrite Dominican racial categories and sexual couplings. Symbolically this is represented also by how between the two *viralatas* there is a bleeding heart with an arrow and small goblet that appears to be gathering the dribbling blood. This iconic image and still life speak to the overall theme of this Dominican house: the bloodletting and lacerating aspects of these couplings as well as their inebriating effects. *Casta casa*, as do the works of *Internamiento*, speaks of a rampant sexualization of postcolonial Dominican society, a sexualization that does not coincide with modern Western norms of the bourgeois family, conjugality, and procreation; moreover, this sexuality is neither tied to these subjects' psychological interiority nor to forms of personal agency or active "choice." They are "interred" in these structures, structures that are not reducible to either modern Western nor so-called traditional Dominican logics of power but are what Chakrabarty terms "noncommensurable logics of power, both modern," coexisting cotemporaneously in colonial/postcolonial spaces.[21]

Figure 3. Jorge Pineda, *Casta casa*, 1994. Woodcut print, 3.66 x 1.83 m. Courtesy of the artist

These earlier works, and perhaps Pineda's earlier oeuvre more generally, offer complex and compelling portrayals of "what is," of the intermingling of normative systems in postcolonial Dominican society. I want to argue that Pineda's more recent work, widely shown internationally, especially his installations, offers a different critical angle and engagement

with the question of normative logics. Namely, his newer works tackle certain universalized (and idealized) modern Western concepts, specifically that of childhood, and reveal their "dark" sides; these idealizations with origins in the European Enlightenment were always already deeply embedded in troublesome histories of colonialism and racialization.[22] These works, hence, in Chakrabarty's famous term, are "provincializing Europe" by showing "the modern as inevitably contested."[23] Pineda offers in many of his installations powerfully unsettling contestations of the modern category of the child and the notions of innocence and purity associated with it. Ashis Nandy, another important Indian postcolonial theorist, has discussed the key role of childhood in Western thought and its link to colonial projects. Following other scholars, he notes how the "modern concept of childhood" was a "product of seventeenth-century Europe."[24] This "new concept of childhood bore a direct relation to the doctrine of progress now regnant in the West," and then "colonialism dutifully picked up these ideas of growth and development."[25]

Pineda's figural installations of lifelike children and youth provoke a strong sense of terror and deep unease by creating scenes that tell us something terrible must have taken place. One of his most famous installations, *El sueño de Winnie de Pooh* (*Winnie de Pooh's Dream*; 2001) is notably featured on the cover of Jarne's *Arte contemporáneo dominicano*.[26] This work features a fake grass lawn with flowers, under which one can make out the silhouette of a little girl's body; her legs and feet, with white tights and black shoes, are sticking out from beneath the edge of the lawn (fig. 4). The quaint and homily garden scene, which appears carefully tended too, contrasts and ultimately masks a literally underlying crime: the little girl's burial beneath it. This powerfully evokes a terrible "underside"—the human cost—underlying the manicured lawn and the Western conceptions of tamed nature, of bourgeois society and family life, and of civilization it alludes to. A similar critique is made in another installation, *Los santos inocentes* (*The Innocent Saints*; 2004), which features a small child who, standing against a wall, has been wallpapered over; only her lower legs and feet, again in white tights and black shoes, are showing.

Figure 4. Jorge Pineda, *El sueño de Winnie de Pooh*, 2001. Plastic lawn with flowers; partially covered child figure. Courtesy of the artist

While these two works direct a critique at deeply compromising Western sociocultural positions toward femininity in general and girlhood specifically, other works feature young boys. Many of Pineda's installations feature lifelike figures of children who are turned to a wall, a gesture that starkly suggests that that they are being punished for something. The wall itself is covered with large, messy black carbon scribbles that each child seems to have made; however, the truly terrifying aspect of each installation is that the source of these black scribbles appears to be a burned body part of the child. The installation *Me voy* (*I am Leaving*; 2005) features a small boy standing in a corner with two black and burned arm stumps from which a whole series of black scribbles on the wall appear to emerge (fig. 5). The installation *El cuco* (*The Boogey Man*; 2005), even more terrifyingly features only the lower half of a child's

Figure 5. Jorge Pineda, *Me voy, Sur*, 2006. Life-sized child figure; wall drawing. Courtesy of the artist

body, turned against the wall; the top is burned, the place from which, again, many black scribbles are emerging to cover the wall. Lastly, the installation *El bosque* (*The Woods*; 2004) features a little girl in a skirt and a hooded sweater with her face to the wall; this time it appears that her face has been burned, since this is where the black scribbles seem to originate from. All these pieces suggest that these children have been cruelly punished for coloring on the wall; yet, at the same time their crippling injuries are the very sources of their childlike expressions of creativity. They are, in their shame, turned toward the wall and away from the world. These installations thus evoke a complex indictment of Western conceptions of the child—the other of the self-possessed Western subject—that inextricably welds the notion of the child to grave forms of wounding. Though Pineda's critical take on the figure of the child may not readily appear associated with any particular location, his work at least obliquely gestures toward the logics of colonialism and its teleology of progress, imagined in racialized, gendered, and ageist terms, of bringing the infantilized, effeminate, and dark "other" toward civilization.

In other figural installations, Pineda's critique is more specifically directed at racial politics and their effects. Indeed, Pineda won first prize in installation in the important national E. León Jiménes art competition in 2006 for a work titled *Afro* (fig. 6). This installation features a standing lifelike figure, facing a wall; the figure is, however, headless, with a large solid carbon circle on the wall in place of the head. The "afro" becomes here a gaping black hole that replaces the human head, the body part most strongly associated with human intelligence. This marker of blackness is both tied to the person's shaming (being turned against the wall) and "beheads" or derationalizes him. Pineda's installations thus powerfully unsettle the scaffolding of the modern (male) Western subject, namely, its foundational exclusions: of femininity, of childhood, of racialized others, and of death, as Pineda most recent works with skeletons suggest. His pieces show that the unsettling of this modern Western normative subject—an arguably queer project—is intimately tied up with the unsettling of the assumptions that governed colonialism and that have invariably become part of the post-colonial world. It is in this sense that Pineda challenges us to think the postcolonial and the queer

together as a project that can never forego the question of the antinormative, as Halberstam rightly insists, but for which one must also grapple with the cotemporality of multiple structures of normativity and antinormativity in the postcolonial world and the difficult challenges these raise for projects of social and sexual justice.

Figure 6. Jorge Pineda, *Afro Charlie*, 2009. Life-sized adolescent figure; wall drawing. Courtesy of the artist

Endnotes

1 Lawrence La Fountain-Stokes, *Queer Ricans: Cultures and Sexualities in the Diaspora* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), ix.

2 Rosamund S. King, *Island Bodies: Transgressive Sexualities in the Caribbean Imagination* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2014), 213n1.

3 Omise'eke Natasha Tinsley, *Thiefing Sugar: Eroticism between Women in Caribbean Literature* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 28. The transnationalization of queer studies has been driven by "postcolonial queer theorists like Manalansan, Sinott, and Gopinath," who "have recently and crucially pushed for new queer cartographies" (25).

4 Robyn Wiegman and Elizabeth A. Wilson, "Introduction: Antinormativity's Queer Conventions," in "Queer Theory without Antinormativity," special issue, *differences* 26, no. 1 (2015): 4, 1.

5 Jack Halberstam, "Straight Eye for the Queer Theorist—A Review of 'Queer Theory without Antinormativity,'" 12 September 2015, bullybloggers.wordpress.com/2015/09/12/straight-eye-for-the-queer-theorist-a-review-of-queer-theory-without-antinormativity-by-jack-halberstam, final para.

6 Jonathan Hartlyn, *The Struggle for Democratic Politics in the Dominican Republic* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 101, 32, 101.

7 Rosario Espinal, "The Defeat of the Dominican Revolutionary Party in the 1986 Elections: Causes and Implications," *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 9, no.1 (1990): 104, 109.

8 Rosario Espinal, "Economic Restructuring, Social Protest, and Democratization in the Dominican Republic," *Latin American Perspectives* 22, no. 3 (1995): 76. These protests culminated most dramatically in "the food riots that ensued in April 1984 when angry crowds broke into stores, burned tyres and confronted security forces. Clashes between the national guard and rioting crowds left more than 100 casualties and hundreds in jails" (Espinal, "The Defeat," 110).

9 Espinal, "Economic Restructuring," 77.

10 Harlyn, *Struggle for Democratic Politics*, 137.

11 Ibid., 138, 143.

12 In the late 1970s Balaguer's hold on power was waning as the "unemployment rate remained high," "the distribution of wealth was highly skewed," and "human and civil rights were severely curtailed." Espinal, "The Defeat," 103.

13 Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 46, 148, 129, 239.

14 "Into complacent and dissident"; Jeannette Miller, "1980–1990," in Jeannette Miller and María Ugarte, eds., *1844–2000 Arte Dominicano: Pintura, Dibujo, Gráfica y Mural* (Santo Domingo: CODETEL, 2001), 258. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are mine.

15 Ibid.. This exhibit and the generation of artists associated with it centered on demanding access to important symbolic and representation spaces that they saw as occupied by an older generation of established Dominican artists who excluded them. Ultimately they would prove to be extraordinarily successful in their undertaking, since several members of this collective are now some of the most prominent Dominican artists and "forman parte hoy del mejor arte dominicano" ("are now part of the best Dominican art") (ibid.).

16 "A period that tries to break with what came before on all levels and by all standards"; ibid., 266.

17 "An exemplary rupture with the folklorist and facile exoticist tendencies that monopolize the art business on La Hispaniola"; Ricardo Ramón Jarne, *Arte contemporáneo dominicano* (Madrid: Casa de América, 2002), 20.

18 "Different schemes, forms and styles"; "the new ideas and commitments . . . that fundamentally have been developed since the 1980s"; Marianne de Tolentino, "El arte actual en la República dominicana," in Antonio Zaya and María Lluïsa Borràs, eds., *Caribe insular: Exclusión, fragmentación y paraíso* (Badajoz and Madrid: Museo Extremeño e Iberoamericano de Arte Contemporáneo and Casa de América, 1998), 285.

19 Historically, painting—"hegemónica en tradición y cantidad" ("hegemonic in tradition and quantity")—has been considered the most important artistic media, perhaps not only in the visual arts but in the arts in general in the Dominican Republic (ibid., 287). As de Tolentino notes, "La pintura ha identificado el arte nacional desde sus inicios" ("Painting has characterized the national arts since the beginning") (291). In contrast, three-dimensional works, and sculpture specifically, is described by de Tolentino as "estancada y conservadora" ("stalled and conservative") in the Dominican Republic (288). In fact, the artists who would turn to installations generally did not emerge from the National Fine Arts School that had played a decisive role for the formation of previous generations of artists. As Jeannette Miller describes, "Los artistas de los últimos 20 años cuentan con una fuerte formación gráfica, la mayoría ha incursionado en dibujo, grabado y diseño y muchos per tenecen al mundo de la publicidad y de la arquitectura"

("The artists of the last twenty years have a strong training in graphic design, the majority has ventured into drawing, printing, and design and many belong to the world of advertising and architecture") (*1844–2000: Arte dominicano*, 290). Indeed, incisive for the future developments of the Dominican arts was the opening of the Altos de Chvón School of Art and Design in 1983, associated with the Parsons School in New York.

20 "Works of consciousness"; de Tolentino, "El arte actual," 288. "A strong visual aggression"; "entering the third millennium . . . the critical consciousness remains"; Miller, *1844–2000: Arte dominicano*, 258, 290.

21 Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, 14.

22 "Concepts such as citizenship, the state, civil society, public sphere, human rights, equality before the law, the individual, distinctions between public and private, the idea of the subject, democracy, popular sovereignty, social justice scientific rationality, and so on," describes Chakrabarty, "all bear the burden of European thought and history" (ibid., 4).

23 Ibid., 46.

24 Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 14.

25 Ibid., 15.

26 Jarné, *Arte contemporáneo dominicano*.