

PART I



Street Smarts

As I was taught by my queer elders, in order to know where I am going, I need to know where I came from and where, exactly, I am standing. Walking through the streets of La Zona and beyond—to other less formal, unpaved streets, or streets locked in by high-rises, or streets that are really roads and paths to mountains—I am consistently reminded that the D.R. is a Catholic Hispanic state. Whether because of the multiple times that Christians bless me from point A to point B, or because of the ways God is invoked in day-to-day interactions, or because of the presence of multiple churches, crosses, and other markings of Christian presence—for any of these reasons and more, I am reminded time and again that European Christianity was imposed on indigenous lands and has transited and continues to transit through indigenous and black bodies. We cannot deny that Christianity took root through the processes of European settlement, invasion, and conquest. We also cannot deny that indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples have incorporated Christianity into their being, their personhood, their communities, and their ways of life.

Many LGBTQ people are Christian; they are people of faith and, oftentimes, of deep faith. As a non-Christian scholar and author, therefore, there exists an ethical imperative to interrogate my own positionality and its limitations (my biases). That said, I am confounded, personally, by what it could look like to imagine Christianity as a faith that is not implicated in ongoing imperial expansion and the racist, homophobic, misogynistic violences that accompany these political, economic, and social processes. To imagine that, for me, requires imagining and attending to conversations with Christians who seek to unsettle the violence of Christianity's past in the process of shaping decolonized futures as well as with those Christians who advocate for women and LGBTQ peoples' human and civil rights at the intersections of faith. Even then, the question still remains for me: When so many other spiritual and religious traditions exist, why do LGBTQ people continue to practice and have faith in Christianity at all?

J. Lorand Matory reminds me that Christianity has deep (temporal, cultural, and spiritual) roots throughout Africa. Speaking specifically about Oyo-Yoruba

cultures, Matory posits that “interaction among [Christian, Islamic, and *orisa*] religions is a constituting dynamic [of *orisa* worship] . . . which resists being classified as fixed and bounded” (2005, 67). To speak, therefore, of African and Afro-diasporic religious and spiritual traditions is to also speak of foundational Christian and Islamic beliefs as central to those practices. If we are to take this claim at face value and pair it with Matory’s simultaneous proposition that gender in the Oyo-Yoruba cultures signifies completely distinct relationships of power than those produced through colonialism in the Americas, we are able to trace the spaces of tension where those distinct relationships of power (say, in the figure of the *iyawo*) clash and intersect with Christian colonial biblical binaries and presumed heterocomplimentary. If, however, we take Matory’s claim about the centrality of Christianity to Oyo-Yoruba cultures and pair it with Oyèrónkẹ Oyèwùmí’s claim that “western gender categories are presented as inherent nature (of bodies) and operate on a dichotomous, binarily opposed male/female, man/woman duality in which the male is assumed to be superior and therefore the defining category” (1997, 4), then we are required to consider the drastic effects of Christianity’s transit through Yoruba cultures on terms that unsettle any claims to gender as an applicable analytic category. In other words, we must consider “the ways in which ‘gender’ was (re)constituted in and through the practices of colonialism, colonial violence, and the racialized relation to bodies of color” (Méndez 2015, 102) in the shaping of the fundamental questions with which we attempt to approach Yoruba lives and experiences. The tension produced through the distinct viewpoints represented by Oyèwùmí and Matory is productive in expanding the terrain by which we might come to conceptualize our streetwalking experiences in the New World.

The New World was constituted explicitly through Christian *colonial* violence in ways that the Yoruba people—and African peoples more broadly speaking—were not. The dispossession and decimation of indigenous peoples in the Americas through invasion and conquest and the subsequent importation of millions of peoples from Africa and the violent ontological restructuring of personhood produced through the Middle Passage are Christian enterprises that locate Christianity within a different set of historical relationships than those that might emerge through indigenous Yoruba worlds. Whereas my biases generate personal questions about Christianity’s liberatory potential in the context of streetwalking, my training has taught me to attend to the ways in which my interlocutors produce meaning, knowledge, and relationships. In that process, I must also attend to the context in which these productions of meaning, knowledge, and relationship take place. For my interlocutors, many of whom are LGBTQ persons of Christian faith, the pain, hurt, and loss produced by the homophobia, transphobia, and xenophobia of Christian institutions and leaders have produced erotic orientations rooted in alternative epistemologies of personhood. These alternative epistemologies emerge from embodied experiences,

producing powerful discursive and collective strategies with which to confront the violence emerging from these institutions.

Given all this, the work of this book is not to produce a direct dialogue about what unsettling Christianity could look like. Rather, it is to share the stories of LGBTQ activists in the D.R. as a way to generate further thinking about liberation. I begin by first presenting the context in which LGBTQ activists in the D.R. operate. The conversations presented in this section, “Street Smarts,” highlight the ways in which Christian coloniality and Christian fundamentalisms are interwoven with colonial and contemporary nation-state apparatuses in the production of what I call *sexual terror*. Applying Foucault’s archaeological approach to change and transformation (2010, 166–177), this text brings to light some of the presumptions that presuppose Christian salvation as a component of incremental rationalized Enlightenment and the instantiation of the liberal individualized subject and as markers of progress. This interweaving between religious philosophy and political thought and institutionalization has produced conditions that directly diminish and threaten the lives of LGBTQ peoples. These are the epistemic grounds on which racial, gender, and sexual hierarchies; binaries; categories; and identities came into being. They are our collective inheritance and what my interlocutors grapple with—and in turn what we must grapple with—on the path to transforming silence into power.

I have divided this section into two chapters. The first chapter, “Christian Coloniality,” provides a discussion and theorization of Christian coloniality. I locate Christian coloniality within the slow, centuries-long processes of colonialism’s reformulations of meaning. While it is important to consider that Hispaniola was a marginalized colony within the broader Spanish Empire, it is also important to consider that it was a significant rehearsal ground for the implementation of colonization, settlement, *encomienda*, sugar cane plantations, cattle ranches, *cimarronaje*, revolution, nation-state building, authoritarianism, U.S. imperial expansion, and neoliberalism. Today, LGBTQ people suffer under the accumulated weight and palimpsestic force of Christian coloniality as it manifests through the Catholic Hispanic nation-state of the Dominican Republic. This chapter describes the structures of power that shape the backdrop for streetwalking.

The second chapter, “Sexual Terror,” illustrates the myriad ways in which Christian coloniality sustains and produces homophobic and transphobic violence. Definitions of sexual violence are often constrained to violence produced through sexual acts: for example, sexual assault, sexual abuse, rape, and incest. Here I discuss sexual terror as the completely encompassing modes of violence that permeate the social body, striking against those whose desires, feelings, and erotic dispositions do not conform to Christian colonial morality—in particular, Christian colonial ideas of biblical manhood and womanhood. By theorizing sexual terror, I draw attention to the structural ways in which LGBTQ personhood is restricted and produced.



Christian Coloniality

In her essay “My Worlds Will Be There,” published as part of the collection *I Am Your Sister*, Audre Lorde writes,

I see protest as a genuine means of encouraging someone to feel the inconsistencies, the horror, of the lives we are living. Social protest is to say that we do not have to live this way. If we feel deeply, as we encourage ourselves and others to feel deeply, we will, within that feeling, once we recognize we can feel deeply, we can love deeply, we can feel joy, then we will demand that all parts of our lives produce that kind of joy. And when they do not, we will ask, “Why don’t they?” And it is the asking that will lead us inevitably toward change. (Byrd, Betsch Cole, and Guy-Sheftall 2009, 162)

There is a horror to knowing that my life is at risk simply for being who I am. There is a horror to knowing that my lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans*, queer, and intersex friends’ and loved ones’ lives are at risk simply because they are who they are. There is a horror in knowing that there are families, communities, institutions, and nation-states that don’t care whether we live or die, and in some cases, they participate in perpetuating the very violence that leads to our premature and often terrifying deaths. There is a horror, there is a horror, there is a horror.

And so I am moved—as a scholar, an artist, an activist, a healer—to attempt to grasp the root causes of this horror. I feel deeply that my life and the lives of other LGBTQ people have inherent value. I feel this way in a world that does not reflect that sentiment back to me. Therefore daily I must draw from the deep fountains of joy, of love, and of my capacity to question in order to articulate my inherent sense of self-worth and of value for myself and others. I must know this. Actor and director Laurie Carlos once said to me, “You just have to know you are brilliant.” I said back to her (yes, I did), “But how do we know we are brilliant if no one told us so?” She said, “Well you just know. You’ve just got to know.” I responded, “But what if we’ve never been told that?” And she closed the issue by stating simply, directly, “Well I’m telling you now, aren’t I?” What does it mean to

walk in the world *knowing we are brilliant*? And what are the forces that prevent us from knowing this?

Attempting to find the root causes of my horror and to take up Laurie Carlos's call to know our brilliance as who we are in the world are the two clashing emotional sources informing my theorization of Christian coloniality as presented in this chapter. I will first locate Christian coloniality within the slow, centuries-long processes of colonialism's reformulations of meaning, first by focusing on the idea of "gay marriage." This conversation about gay marriage in the twenty-first century leads us to unearth the various formulations of morality in the context of producing the human, which I then follow up by theorizing the Catholic Hispanic nation-state and its historical applications of Christian colonial morality in the management of public spaces and the production of specific kinds of human citizen subjects.

WHAT'S GAY MARRIAGE GOT TO DO WITH IT?

It was June 2013, and I was in the D.R. when the U.S. Supreme Court's decision to strike down the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) was announced. The Supreme Court's decision effectively made it illegal to deny marriage to same-sex couples, opening the way for what is commonly referred to as "gay marriage." I heard about the decision first from my Dominican LGBTQ activist friends and interlocutors. In that moment, they were preparing for that year's Caravana del orgullo. They were paying attention to what was happening in the U.S. because President Obama had just appointed an openly gay ambassador to serve in the D.R. Much of the political content of the Caravana that year was in support of the appointment. In addition, some Dominican LGBTQ activists were considering gearing up for their own campaign for gay marriage. By 2013, there had been several successful court rulings on gay marriage throughout Latin America. In 2010, the Inter-American Human Rights Commission had ruled on a case in Chile and "urged the Chilean state to adopt legislation, policies, and programs to prohibit and eradicate discrimination based on sexual orientation" (Díez 2015, 1). A year before in Argentina, a judge had expanded marriage to include LGBTQ couples. And also in 2009, Mexico City's assembly approved "reforms to the city's civil code allowing for same-sex marriage" (2). These successful cases and the U.S. Supreme Court decision could potentially serve as a model for local activists to propose and fight for legislation even as it became fodder for Dominican Catholic-Evangelical protests. Dominican LGBTQ activists argued that if large democratic governments like Argentina, Mexico, Chile, and the U.S.—which for so long had opposed gay civil rights—were suddenly allowing gay marriage, then anything was possible.

But Dominican LGBTQ activists were not only paying attention to what was happening in the secular courts of Latin America and the imperial courts of the

north. They were also paying attention to the Vatican's response. Just earlier that year, Pope Benedict XVI had stepped down, and Pope Francis had taken his place. LGBTQ activists across Catholic countries everywhere were watching to see how this new pope would respond to the abuse of children by priests; they were also looking to see what Pope Francis would say about homosexuality and gender identity. His track record as archbishop of Buenos Aires, Argentina, demonstrated that he was both religiously and politically adamant about his opposition to gay marriage and ambivalent about the place of homosexuals in God's plan. A letter leaked to the Argentinian press in July 2010 stated, "This [battle for gay marriage] is not just a simple political battle; its *aim is to destroy God's plan* . . . it is not a mere legislative project (this is only its instrument), but rather a strategic *move by the father of all lies, who aims to confuse and trick God's children*. . . . Here we also see *the Devil's envy*, by which all sins entered the world, which aims to destroy God's image: man and woman who have a mandate to grow, to multiply and have dominion over the earth" (TN.com.ar 2010; emphasis in the original). The letter circulated not only within the Argentine press. It spread across networks of feminist and LGBTQ activists throughout Latin America. If this was the archbishop's position in Argentina, what would be his position as a religious and political leader of the international Catholic Church?

On March 13, Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio was selected as the new pope of the Catholic Church under the religious name of Pope Francis. Pope Benedict XVI's (Ratzinger's) resignation in February was surprising to most of the world and came at the tail end of a range of Vatican financial scandals and over a decade of pedophilia scandals (Horowitz and Goldstein 2018). I was with Marivi, a Catholic woman and highly esteemed educator in the D.R., when the news of Benedict's resignation was announced. When I asked her about the state of Catholic life in the D.R. and about rumors that the church was losing followers, she responded, "Yes, it's true. In my lifetime, the majority of my friends have left the Catholic Church. Many of them are in Evangelical churches."

For many Dominican Catholics and former Catholics with whom I spoke, Pope Benedict's resignation represented their own *pena* (sadness, shame) at the state of the church: their own self-understanding as belonging to a church in crisis—a church that has shaped them in fundamental ways but no longer corresponds to their own or others' lived realities, values, or expectations. This *pena* was mediated by arguments that positioned Ratzinger as an intellectual—someone who could have potentially engaged with the world as a modern rational thinker. From this perspective, his downfall resulted from insufficient flexibility before a theological position within an institution that was being challenged by shifting social norms. But this argument sometimes undergirds a desire for a more fundamentalist Catholic presence in the face of the shame and problems within the priests' ranks.¹

The homosexual was a central preoccupation of Pope Francis's leadership as archbishop.² As demonstrated by numerous articles and protests in Argentina, he

was one of the primary *political* opponents to gay marriage. His efforts in 2010 to use the moral authority of the church to pressure the Senate's political decisions on gay marriage were made visible through leaks to the media. Rather than recede into the church, his public attacks against LGBTQ activists became even more visible and open. Despite the pressure placed by the church on the Argentine Senate, they approved legalizing gay marriage in July 2010.

After he was ordained as pope, he led the rites of Holy Thursday—what I learned is a reproduction of the biblical story of Jesus's washing of the apostles' feet. I was with my friend Gerardo, a former priest who was now openly gay and out of the priesthood. We were watching the rites on television. He commented to me his shock at Pope Francis's actions, and we discussed the contradictions symbolized by the pope's actions on this day:

GERARDO: He went to the jails to wash the feet of the young men. I get goose bumps. That is a very powerful statement that he's making. He says that the Church has to go to the margins.

ANA: He talks about margins, but he's a huge homophobe.

GERARDO: Yeah? Well, the church will never accept gays.

ANA: But how can he defend the margins and not those who are marginalized, like gays? As a cardinal in Argentina, he really showed himself, you know?

GERARDO: He's Francis—his flock is among the poor. And besides, he can't do or say what he did or said when he was cardinal. He's a pope now. We have to wait and see what he does with the issue of gays.³

I had offended my friend's sensibilities. He was deeply moved, as a former priest, by the pope's humility as demonstrated by his actions on Holy Thursday. For him, this represented a radical shift from Benedict XVI's theology and overall approach to human suffering. He commented to me that it confirmed his deep faith in the church as an instrument of Christ's love and Paul's teachings. That I would question the pope's integrity on the basis of his stance on homosexuality was offensive and beside the point for him. The church would never accept gays, and this issue did not rest on the leadership of one person. My question and concern were irrelevant. But also, from the perspective of a person of faith—his and others—religion and sexuality are personal. As personal matters, they are supposed to exist outside the realm of public debate. The incursion of the church and state into the personal space of religion and sexuality, therefore, lies at the root of the offense against human dignity and rights. Gerardo's perspective was not unlike the perspective of many of the LGBTQ activists I worked with. This perspective underscores the contradictions and motivations of the Dominican LGBTQ movement, where for many activists, the goal of their work is to get the Catholic Hispanic nation-state out of their personal lives, even as they fight for the rights of liberal citizenship. The means by which they hope to achieve this is by hitting the streets: creating education campaigns for students, educating the

Dominican public through media campaigns and public protests calling for the assurance and application of Dominican laws and universal human rights, and refusing to stay silent in the face of violence.

But much of the crisis of the Catholic Church is the reality of homosexuality. Unlike in Afro-diasporic religions, which make room for the negotiation and inclusion of differently gendered peoples and multidimensional sexualities—thus creating the possibility of expansion and ethical reconciliation⁴—the colonial church built its house on the eradication of sodomy, polygamy, and concubinage as a condition of its modern existence. And today, homosexuals and trans* people emerge as the objects of its battle. As objects, we elucidate a powerful tension between Christian morality and Christian corruption both within religious institutions and in relationship to civil jurisprudence. LGBTQ activists seek to end the positioning of homosexuality as sinful in particular because of how this moral position perpetuates the production of repressive laws and cultural norms.

When DOMA was struck down, Archbishop Allen H. Vigneron (Abbey-Lambertz 2013) of Detroit, Michigan, stated, “The well-being of our society, our nation, and our families is intimately linked to the institution of marriage. These decisions by the United States Supreme Court will make significantly more difficult our work of upholding the truth that marriage is a lifelong covenant between one man and one woman. Such decisions, made by any civic authority, do not serve the common good. Catholics and millions of our fellow citizens will continue to make the case, respectfully yet vigorously, that marriage cannot be redefined, and that attempts to do so hurt us all.” Edward Peters, legal adviser to the Vatican, not only supported Vigneron’s statement but also constructed numerous legal arguments about the destructive relationship between the legalization of gay marriage and evil as proscribed by canonical law. Months earlier, he had publicly articulated an argument in support of restricting communion for those advocating for gay marriage. In his argument, he drew on canonical law to articulate a definition of marriage as *only* between a man and a woman and to articulate why the Catholic Church will recognize neither gay marriage nor anyone cooperating with gay marriage. Peters argues that based on canonical law, those who support gay marriage are subject to moral assessment “in accord with the usual principles applicable to cooperation with evil and . . . applying to cooperation in crime . . . and/or scandal” (Peters 2013).

Archbishop Vigneron and Peters’s positions are representative of the Vatican’s position on homosexuality more broadly. Whereas with Pope Francis, there has been a turn to “love the sinner but not the sin,” much of the discourse emerging from the Vatican turns on the condemnation of gay marriage as both evil and anathema to church doctrine and law. A month after the DOMA decision, Pope Francis stated, “If someone is gay and seeks the Lord with good will, who am I to judge?” (Brydum 2013). Simultaneously, he made it clear that he considers homosexuality and trans* identities “a moral problem. A human problem. And

it must be resolved the best one can—always with the mercy of God, with the truth and always with an open heart” (Grindley 2016). His position as pope mirrors broader Vatican debates, which condemn violence against LGBTQ people, condone acceptance of the person while condemning the “sin of homosexuality,” and actively condemn and punish the support or enactment of gay marriage. The church’s concern with gay marriage is critical to the shaping of marriage debates in families, schools, communities, and national and international publics. The Catholic Church’s global political power positions the institution as a moral authority on civil law and sociopolitical personhood. This political power is an outgrowth of what I call Christian coloniality.

A CHRISTIAN COLONIAL CHRONICLE

After changes in U.S. marriage laws in 2013, I could no longer ignore the centrality of debates about gay marriage in the Catholic Church’s arguments about the nature of homosexuality and trans* identities. What, I wondered, was this focus on marriage (and the family) really signaling? How had marriage (and monogamy) become embedded within social measures of morality and the capacity to embody national belonging? Had marriage always been the measure of moral personhood within the Christian world? What is it about homosexuality and gender nonconformity that seems to confound the philosophical and moral positions of Christian churches? Why do Christian leaders care about who sleeps with whom and about peoples’ gender? Sodomy (the *acto nefasto*), tribadism, concubinage, and polygamy/polyandry are still alive and well and enjoyed by many—despite centuries of religious persecution. How is it that Christian concerns about sexuality and gender “discipline both Native people and non-Native people through sexuality?” (Finley 2011, 34). Is this really about saving our souls?

Streetwalking is an inquiry driven by my horror at the violence produced through Christian coloniality. In this section, I discuss the deep relationship between Christian ideas of morality and the formation of the human, moral personhood and citizenship. I start with the idea that the role of Christianity—in processes of colonization and in the reorganization of knowledge, power, and being—continues to inform our contemporary experiences and understandings of modernity. Renderings of modernity and, by extension, coloniality that fail to account for the centrality of Christian discourses and mechanisms fall short. Centering an analysis of the role of Christianity (its discourses, material practices, and institutions) in processes of colonization and Spanish colonial expansion allows us to examine the continuous and discontinuous processes of the moral regulation of gender and sexuality as central to the project of modernity. It is not sufficient to denote how the crucifix accompanied the sword; the crucifix was attached to the sword, and sometimes it was and continues to be the sword (Goodpasture 2000) that cuts through the lives of LGBTQ persons.

Anibal Quijano (2000) argues that coloniality—that is, the practices, legacies, forms, and modes of knowledge that developed through European colonialism in the Western hemisphere—stems from the control of labor, race, and sex. Maria Lugones (2010) adds to Quijano's argument by suggesting that the concepts of gender and sexuality were produced through coloniality as the primary mode for the distribution of power. Jumping off from these claims, I posit that these processes of coloniality—the formation of gender and sexual categories, as well as the management of labor, race, and sex—emerge from Christian concepts of moral personhood. Within Christian colonial structurings of power and being, gender was developed as a binary structure that mirrored biblical binaries—Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sara, Joseph and Mary, and so on. This binary was (is) best embodied through monogamous heterosexual complementarity. By heterosexual complementarity, I refer to the ways in which men and women became defined as separate, distinct, and essentially different subjects, whereby each “needs the other to supply the missing traits and behavior that when joined signify human wholeness” (Gudorf 2014, 232). Human wholeness is rooted in the idea of the “biblical man” and the “biblical woman.” The biblical man and woman have been inscribed as essential to the moral fiber of humanness (and citizenship), including the attendant heterocomplimentarity that is assumed within them. Biblical manhood continues to be reified as one in which man “constituted a continuous process of creation, for it is in him, in his seed, in his semen, that the potential for new and future beings is harbored” (Garza Carvajal 2010, 17). Similarly, biblical womanhood has required that women be purely passive receptacles within procreative processes.

The construction of gender and sexual difference—imagined as a fixed set of qualities, behaviors, and identities—position heterosexuality and heteropatriarchy as the representations of order and the transcendence of the spirit over flesh, while homosexuality and gender nonconformity are configured as the embodiment of sin and deviance. Furthermore, these differentiations result in a moral context in which homosexuality and gender transgressions become that which must be contained or excised from the Christian corpus, *terra*, and *gens*. Christian coloniality seeks to foster the continual perpetuation of procreative sexuality and the subject capable of reproducing Christian personhood and the colony. This inscription of personhood required the discursive demonization of a vast range of nonbiblical sexual desires and the material punishment of biblically condemned or nonbiblical sexual gender practices.

The church's focus on sexuality and gender differences as sin, illness, and crime served as important sites for the consolidation of the church's political authority within governance structures in the colonies. As Pedro Garza Carvajal outlines, “Over the course of the early modern period in New Spain, colonial officials, jurists, theologians, and other writers associated signifiers like the diabolic, anthropophagy, inebriation, and effeminacy with perceptions of the *pecado*

nefando. By insisting on an inherent link between these multiple cultural constructs, historians, chroniclers, and theologians devised one more ‘just cause’ for the permanence of colonial rule in the Indies” (2010, 132). From the earliest colonial periods through the rise of the modern nation-states in the nineteenth century, Christian policies of conversion and marriage served as measures of the successes of both Christian evangelization and Spanish rule (Schwaller 2011).

In the earliest colonial chronicles, the clearest measures of the success of the Evangelical mission was in the visible re-formation of families. The mission to reform families and intimate relations created a continuously charged context for the formation of colonial/modern notions of gender, sexuality, and significantly, racial hierarchies (Lugones 2007). The management of sexuality was deeply co-constitutive of the racialized hierarchies established through the Christian colonial settlement of the Americas and its attendant processes. These processes include three distinct elements: the management of sexuality and gender, the operationalization of the logics of blood, and the production of the human.

The sexuality and sexual desire of Indigenous and Afro-diasporic peoples was a central Christian preoccupation, as evidenced by confessional practices and capital punishments and other “technolog[ies] of the flesh” (Foucault 1978, 113) aimed at curbing masturbation, concubinage, sodomy, and adultery among many other sexual desires and behaviors of subjugated colonial subjects. Theological legal debate had succeeded in defending the divine nature of human existence and the place of *indios* and *indias* within divine nature.⁵ In the colonial past, Catholic priests sought remediation of vices against natural law—sodomy, polygamy, adultery, and concubinage—through Catholic rites and conversion. Successful conversion to Christianity was explicitly measured in indigenous American and African peoples’ ability to conform to both correct gender expression and monogamous heterosexual complementarity.

The Christian colonial desire to manage sin among *indios* equally justified Christian colonial occupation, expansion, and rule. Laura Catelli writes, “Effectively, marriage between ‘indios’ seemed to represent to the Crown—judging by its insistence on the propagation of that institution—an avenue for conversion, acceptable sexual practices like monogamy, the patriarchal family, and other morally acceptable behaviors” (2011, 228). But the Christian colonists of Hispaniola not only propagated marriage between *indios* and *indias* directly; they also forced the sexual submission of *indias* to Christian colonists—including through rape, sexual slavery, and marriage. The birth of children resulting from these sexual encounters enabled *mestizaje* to emerge as a tool of Christian conquest. Catelli argues that *mestizaje* was a tool of the Christian colonial project used to subjugate indigenous women (and peoples more broadly) to Spanish rule. Through *mestizaje*, it was possible to construct new categories of personhood (e.g., the *mestiza*) but also to change kinship structures through the vehicle of

marriage and reproduction. These changes in kinship structure, which now included Christian Spanish men, opened up the possibility for the appropriation of lands and the further subjugation of indigenous communities.

Whereas Christian colonial practices regulating indigenous peoples, bodies, and lands enabled genocide and increased expansion across American lands and territories, the introduction of African chattel slavery and non-Christianized Africans into the New World economies required the increased control over bodies and their reproductive capacities. This need for increased control fomented the further development and entrenchment of Christian colonial discourses of race and blood mixture rooted in the logics of blood purity (*pureza de sangre*). The development of the elaborate racial schema of *castas* and the accompanying Christian colonial policing of them also demonstrate the overlaps between the Catholic Church's moral concerns and the colonial governments' concerns about population management.⁶ Christian colonial ideologies were deployed to develop and maintain gender binaries and, through those binaries, to measure and constrain blood mixtures. Blood mixture, *mestizaje*, and all the regulations of blood mixture and *mestizaje* point to the regulation of sexuality. Put in plain words, Christian coloniality indexes the role of Christian institutions and discourses in the regulation and management of sex as an attempt to maintain and develop a racial hierarchy that would substantiate the continual expansion of Christian rule over territory and subsequently over the bodies necessary for the ever-increasing accumulation of wealth produced through slave labor.

The Christian colonial regulations of gender and sexuality were central to figurations of the human. Through baptism and conquest, indigenous American and African concepts of gender, gender relations, and ideologies were subsumed and suppressed—through numerous discursive, material, and institutional mechanisms—into the biblical binary of men and women. Biblical gender binaries and their resulting racial hierarchies were part and parcel of the reformulation of Christian doctrines necessary to justify the violent processes of colonization. Through Christian debates over the fate of indigenous peoples and the management of black bodies in these devastated and conquered territories, the universalized figure of the human took on both impulse and form. Human nature, Sylvia Wynter argues, emerged in the context of the New World as a subjective ordering principle that undergirded the organization of distinct human groups into a presumed “naturally ordered distribution of degrees of reason” (1984, 34)—a hierarchy of reason and imagined human potentiality. The same logic that enabled the differentiation of the divine from the secular, of the spirit from the flesh, was now used to differentiate a “Self” from an “Other” and to “domesticate the representations of the Other, whose mode of difference alone enable[d] the mode of Sameness” (34). The creation and sustainment of a natural hierarchy was explicitly possible not only through the construction of new modes of being but also through the knowledges created, validated, and

consummated in service to these new orderings. In this view, the *encomienda*, plantations, and chattel slavery were justified for, to use Wynter's words, "the purpose of rationalizing [*indios* and *negros*] as an inferior mode of being in need of rational human baptism" (35), while conversion and the processes of "converting human beings," following Talal Asad, "expressed a desire to bring outsiders within the fold of a universe in which eventually individual autonomy and secular reason became the source of morality as well as of truth for all human beings" (2015, 399). The presence of desires or expressions outside of biblical manhood and womanhood contributed to the construction of racialized difference that marked some beings as human and others as incapable of humanity. The same humanist logics that undergird the bifurcation of flesh from spirit order bodies and relations in ways that produce streetwalking as a site for the perpetuation of Christian colonial violence.

Streetwalking challenges the idea that "the West, over the last five hundred years, has brought the whole human species into its *hegemonic*, now purely secular . . . model for being *human*" (Wynter and McKittrick 2015, 21). Streetwalking makes manifest the ways in which the Christian colonial logics that developed through the management of being, knowledge, and power in processes of colonization were extended into the formation of modern nation-states. The idea of the secular, in fact, has served to obscure the Christian colonial structuring of power and knowledge in the West (Asad 2003). Christianity's discursive and material powers in Latin America, specifically, were no less diminished by the modernizing processes of secularization. First, Christianity "is the only religion which has organized itself as a church" (Foucault 1982, 783). Second, while modern nation-states were formed as potentially secular structures of governance, the majority of modern nation-states in the Americas retained relationships with the church—as a separate but fundamentally essential institution—or with church ideologies and discourses. The latter is what Foucault conceptualizes as "pastoral power"—that is, the extension of Christian ideology and doctrine through the vehicle of the nation-state.

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, as independent nation-states emerged throughout the Caribbean and Latin America, ecclesiastic institutions lost material function and influence. Pastoral power "spread and multiplied outside the ecclesiastical institution" (Foucault 1982, 783), thereby enabling the development of nation-state institutions aimed at formulating new subjectivities grounded in Christian moral notions of personhood and citizenship. In Latin America, these ecclesiastic foundations were grounded in the institutions, imperatives, discourses, and practices of the Catholic Church. Staking a claim in Foucault's arguments about the subject and power, I argue here that the extension of pastoral power through the mechanisms of modern nation-states reconfigured relationships between institutions and ideologies to extend Christian coloniality into the present.

Christian churches—as institutions with moral and, in many cases, political authority—continue to operate alongside and within the structures of modern nation-states. Together, these relationships and modes of power are expressed in the ongoing regulation of moral personhood, explicitly through the management of gender and sexuality. Christian colonial fixations on gender and sexuality are organized around underlying moral questions about souls and salvation, specifically the reconciliation between flesh and spirit, as prerequisites for upstanding personhood and citizenship. Disciplinary power is carried out toward, against, and through the bodies of those who do not fit or exercise biblical manhood or womanhood, including those of us streetwalking. I think this is why “marriage” and “family” are so important to Christian institutions and leadership—because they represent two sites where Christian coloniality can continue to regulate personhood and maintain legitimacy vis-à-vis the nation-state.

As universal indices of Christian colonial structures of power and being were established—and now continue to be perpetuated—those who challenged (and continue to challenge) those categories of being became both a threat to Christian morality and a target of violence. Streetwalking ruptures biblical gender binaries and racial hierarchies. The contemporary, universal category of LGBTQ exists outside of the framework of universal Christian colonial gender binaries. As a subject category, *LGBTQ* draws attention to the existence of desires, behaviors, and persons who do not conform to biblical gender binaries or expectations of monogamous heterosexual complementarity. For these reasons, sexual and gender difference is often marked as deviant, and LGBTQ political identities are in turn constructed as a threat to both the institutions of “family” and “marriage” and, by extension, the nation-state. In streetwalking, our personhood is always already configured as inviolable because our human being-ness is always already in question. Being configured as already outside the purview of Christian colonial personhood, our suffering is rendered both illegitimate and illegible. Our suffering is configured as a result of our refusal to conform to the imperatives of Christian coloniality. Our suffering is configured as something that is a result of our violations of Christian colonial imperatives and our refusal to embody Christian colonial moral personhood. Therefore, we can also propose that ours is a suffering produced explicitly through the production of the universal human as always already gender-conforming, biblically man or woman, and heterosexual.

Tracing the rise of humanist discourse in the development of secular law (Hobbes and Locke, in particular), Talal Asad discusses how “the essence of the human comes to be circumscribed by [nineteenth-century/Enlightenment] legal discourse: the human being is a sovereign, self-owning agent—essentially suspicious of others—and not merely a subject conscious of his or her own identity.” This definition of the human is how “the right to freedom of belief and expression was crafted” (Asad 2015, 135). The question remains, however, as to why certain humans are deemed worthy of not just human rights but human being.

In this, I invoke Asad's reflection on the inhuman, which, he argues, "presupposes that there are human ways of killing and dying as well as inhuman ones" (135). The bifurcation of human being-ness from human rights is also a primary condition of a presumed secular modernity. In his discussion of secularism, Asad traces how contemporary structures of international law and citizenship divorce human rights from human being. He states, "Nothing essential to a person's human essence is violated if he or she suffers a consequence of military action . . . when that is permitted by international law. . . . The suffering that the individual sustains as a citizen—as the national of a particular state—is distinguished from the suffering he undergoes as a human being" (129). Similarly, the suffering of LGBTQ persons in the context of the New World is a suffering that is justified through Christian moral authority as distinct from secular law. Nation-state and international political processes mirror this bifurcation of the human and maintain the Christian colonial logics that perpetuate the naturalized orders of personhood.

Christian coloniality has directly contributed to our understandings of universalized subjects such as the human (as always already racialized, sexualized, and gendered). This configuration of the human has particular relevance in global discussions about human rights. The concepts and tenets of human rights are rooted in Christian colonial concepts of morality that serve as a parallel, universally applicable measure of development and modernity. The development, enactment, and enforcement of human rights doctrines have become central to contemporary negotiations of citizenship within nation-states and in the international arena. I turn now to a discussion of the relationships among Christianity, the global Catholic Church (the Roman Catholic Church, the Vatican, the Holy See, and the local Catholic *jerarquías*), Christian Evangelical movements, and national and international political institutions.

What Christian institutions and the Catholic Church say matters in the realm of human and civil rights (Fleishman 2000; Radford Ruether 2008; Ryall 2001). Evangelical Christian leadership has entered the realm of national and international politics throughout the world, specifically in the areas of reproductive health and human rights. U.S.-based Evangelical leadership has directly impacted international funding and service structures throughout the Global South (Freston 2008; Hofer 2003). Through its "global transnational character, its elaborate bureaucracy, and its enduring ideology" (Heger Boyle, Golden, and Liao 2017, 396), the global Catholic Church has managed to shape political relations and law for centuries. Today, the Vatican's position on homosexuality, cleric marriage, and reproductive rights affects the laws and policies for contemporary struggles in many countries. But as the Vatican continues its opposition to homosexuality and reproductive rights, radical Catholics, LGBTQ Catholics, and their allies all over the world are challenging the disciplinary effects of Christian coloniality.⁷

Political processes rooted in Christian coloniality become manifest through what are currently some of the most contentious international debates about the rights of women and LGBTQ persons and indigenous peoples and on topics like xenophobia and racism. The United Nations (U.N.) is one international body designated to manage “political and economic cooperation among member countries [through] economic and social development programs improving human rights and reducing global conflicts” (U.N. 2015). The UN has become a critical site for the consolidation of global capital and power among countries of the Global North, even as it serves as an important site for the negotiation of new protections and rights for those dispossessed by the Global North’s globalized, neoliberal economic policies.

While not an official member state of the United Nations, the Holy See, which serves as the central administration of the Roman Catholic Church, does have a privileged position as a permanent observer, a position established by Pope Paul VI in 1964. It is the only religious body in the world to have this status within the UN governance structure, thus “linking universal global principles to Catholic religious tradition . . . and ultimately privileg[ing] one religious ideology” (Heger Boyle, Golden, and Liao 2017, 399) above others. The Roman Catholic Church has also been an active participant in international conferences on human rights, including the 1993 Vienna Conference on Human Rights and the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development. As such, the Roman Catholic Church is one of the most powerful global organizations in the world and serves as an important “counterpart to the contemporary system of nation-states and international governmental organizations” (Heger Boyle, Golden, and Liao 2017, 396). Many debates around whether the Holy See and Vatican City qualify as either state or nation have taken place since the designation as permanent observer (Holy See, n.d.; Center for Research on Population and Security, n.d.). These debates emerge most contentiously in relation to the role of the Holy See in the ratification of international resolutions, agreements, and treaties.

While the Roman Catholic Church benefits from its institutional structures and political reach, other Christian denominations manage power in quite a different fashion. In contradistinction to the Catholic Church, most other Christian denominations function through on-the-ground, decentralized authority. Evangelical Protestantism is one of the fastest-growing religious communities in the Americas. Between the 1950s and the 1990s, “over 50 million Latin Americans converted to Evangelical Protestantism” (Betances 2007, 210). Protestant groups differ significantly from their Catholic counterparts: they are decentralized, ministers are chosen by their communities and ministries are sustained by their membership, and missions are carried out in the poorest sectors of society rather than among the elites. Evangelical Protestantism also allows for a high degree of adaptation and acculturation, permitting it to be absorbed within multiple social and cultural contexts. Many scholars attribute these factors to the fast spread

of Evangelical Protestantism throughout the region and the globe (Kalyvas and van Kersbergen 2010; Meyer 2004; Robbins 2004). The impact of Evangelical Protestantism and its fundamentalist Christian Right strains can be felt around the world—from Taiwan to Uganda to the Caribbean.

Fundamentalist Evangelical groups draw our attention to an important current within Christian colonial logics. On the one hand, they lack the kinds of institutional and political validation of the Catholic Church on a global scale and sometimes even on national scales. On the other hand, they reify the regulatory mechanisms of Christian colonial power in the everyday. For example, in the D.R. in the last ten years, I have noticed that a common response to greeting someone in the street is “Amen.” As I pick up my groceries or leave a vehicle, it is common for someone to tell me, “Que Dios te bendiga” (May God bless you). Walking through the streets, Evangelical men and women are highly visible because of their modes of dress. Evangelical Christian men wear dress pants, dress shirts, and ties; their hair is trimmed with neat edges. Evangelical Christian women wear ankle-length skirts and blouses with sleeves down to their wrists. They do not straighten their hair but rather wear it “natural,” in a single bun tied to the back of the head. These visible distinctions make Christian personhood an element within the streets as part and parcel of the everyday. In contrast, when we are streetwalking, we may show skin, cleavage, or the contours of our curves/edges; we may wear clothes that disrupt biblical binary gender norms; we may wear our hair or brighten our faces in ways that are considered unnatural; we may call attention to ourselves through jewelry, or the flip of a hand, or a strut. Evangelicals, who are socially authorized moral arbiters, are empowered to publicly surveil and comment on streetwalking. In this way, the distinctions in dress become an opening to potential violence. The logics of Christian coloniality and the regulation of biblical gender binaries and sexual norms, as well as disruptions to these norms, are written on the body.

Christian coloniality is the ideological and material framework for the development and perpetuation of the Catholic Hispanic nation-state, as exemplified by states such as the D.R. As Sara Pérez writes, “In the Dominican Republic, the Catholic Church is the axis, the oldest patriarchal promoter; it is the most arrogant, the most efficient, the most solid, the most coherent and the most implacable [institution]. More so than the military, who as organized ‘Armed Forces’ are a parasitic incorporation that is relatively recent in Dominican society and more so than economically privileged groups. . . . Only the Catholic Church has [such a] strange fossil nature[:] it remains the same church that [it] was 500 years ago” (2004, 269).

Streetwalking emerges as a challenge to the presumed moral and political wholeness of the modern nation-state. It is in this context that LGBTQ activists rupture Christian colonial logics *and* the moral and social limits of the Catholic Hispanic state. What does the Catholic Hispanic state look like, then, *en la calle*?

THE CATHOLIC HISPANIC STATE

The history of Dominican heterodoxy remains unwritten; but experience demonstrates that our nationality ends where the [Protestant] “Churches” and “voodoo” begin.

—Luis Martínez Fernández, “The Sword and the Crucifix: Church-State Relations and Nationality in the Nineteenth-Century Dominican Republic”⁸

My use of the term *Catholic Hispanic nation-state* references the explicit, long-term relationship between the Spanish colonial / Dominican nation-state and the Roman Catholic Church. This relationship was complicated by the interplay of colonial and postcolonial power struggles during the long period of hemispheric modern nation-state stabilization taking place during and following the Haitian Revolution, Colombian Independence, and the U.S. Civil War. Why, people ask, do I single out Catholicism, especially given both the development of decolonial and liberation theologies within the Catholic Church and the rapid rise in Evangelical Christianity throughout Latin America, including the D.R.? Whereas in other Caribbean countries, different modes of Protestantism (Anglican, Methodist, and Baptist traditions) took hold, the Christian logics that shaped early modes of Christian colonization on the island of Hispaniola were Catholic, and they were negotiated, incorporated, contested, transformed, and absorbed through modern nation-state processes (Martínez Fernández 1995, 70). Current decolonial scholarship both presumes and subsumes the role of Christian theological debates about the human in favor of a historical materialist analysis of power. Rather than subsume a discussion about the role of Christian institutions, discourses, and debates to the background of a seemingly broader conversation about colonization or coloniality, and rather than relegate this same discussion to the sphere of historical analysis, here I argue that Christian coloniality continues to impact our contemporary understandings of personhood and subjectivity.

During the nineteenth century—at the same time that other emerging Latin American nations such as Mexico were fighting for *estados laicos* (“layperson’s” states)—the D.R. was establishing itself as an independent nation-state aligned with Catholic Hispanic ideologies: a Catholic nation-state rooted in Eurocentric and Hispanophilic ideals of personhood and governance (1844 Constitution, Art. 38; Martínez Fernández 1995). This was achieved both through the discourses of independence and through laws, policies, and mandates—such as those stated in the 1844 national constitution and in the thirty-six constitutions that followed (Sáez 1987).⁹ In this way, the D.R. proved to be quite the opposite from other Latin American countries. Not only was the nation-state, through its various iterations (independence, annexation, war), consistently Catholic, but at times Catholic clergy exercised greater power than the nation-state. For example,

during the period of Spanish annexation (1861–1865), Spanish clergy, empowered by new Spanish legal codes, “prescribed banishment and prison terms for those practicing, promoting, or publishing doctrines contrary to the Roman Catholic Church” (Martínez Fernández 1995, 83). The Catholic Church and Catholicism were critical sites for the articulation of a national Dominican identity and provided a contrasting power to U.S. Protestant imperialism at a time when national leaders were divided between annexation and independence.

Another key historical moment was during the period of authoritarian rule that began with Rafael Leonidas Trujillo and that continued through Joaquín Balaguer’s presidencies (Fortunato 1991). These iterations of the Catholic Hispanic nation-state proved to be significant for the relations between the nation-state and the Catholic Church, relations that were fortified and manipulated in nationalist discourses and processes. Trujillo proposed and then signed a concordat (political agreement) with the Vatican in 1954, concretizing the political relationship between the Dominican government and the religious body of the Roman Catholic Church. The Concordat continues as an official agreement that influences every aspect of Dominican political, social, and cultural institutions. The Catholic *jerarquía* in the contemporary Dominican context has continued in its repressive role of sanctifying elite interests. Alongside them, other religious orders (Jesuits, Dominicans, Salesians, Geronymites, etc.) continue to play an active part in shaping popular social movements. All branches continue to uphold three basic moral values: (1) that homosexuality is a sin, (2) that life is defined from the moment of conception (recently concretized in the Dominican Constitution), and (3) that abortion is morally wrong. Most importantly, when the Catholic Church acts locally, it is also acting as part of a global religious organization that has a documented history of active involvement in defining and ratifying conventions internationally.

Within the Catholic Hispanic nation-state, Evangelical Protestants have also taken hold; even so Evangelical Protestants are still a minority. According to a 2006 population survey, 40 percent of Dominicans identify as practicing Roman Catholic, 29 percent nonpracticing Catholic, and 18 percent Evangelical Protestants—including Baptists, Pentecostals, and Assemblies of God (Ministerio de Economía, Planificación y Desarrollo 2010; Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor 2010). Evangelical Christianity has grown exponentially in the past twenty years, reflecting a larger trend throughout Latin America (Betances 2007). This growth has caused shifts in the social fabric and in the negotiation of political power both in local communities and on the national level.

In the D.R., the first Protestants arrived in 1824 with the freed blacks and runaways from Philadelphia and North Carolina. They were invited by the president of Haiti, Jean-Pierre Boyer, to settle in Samaná. Throughout the earlier half of the twentieth century, various Evangelical ministers from Puerto Rico, Cuba, the Bahamas, and Haiti established Pentecostal and other missions in the

smaller towns and rural areas. During the U.S. occupation, Protestant missionaries arrived as part of the United States' civilizing efforts. Afro-Antillean Black Protestant ministers also accompanied the many Anglo-Antillean laborers who came to work on sugar cane plantations in the first few decades of the twentieth century (Mayes 2014). But it was not until 1979, when the writer and revolutionary President Juan Bosch accorded Evangelical groups political recognition, that Evangelical Protestants in the D.R. began to gain political power. Under Bosch, and all the subsequent administrations, Protestant groups began to receive allocated funds from the Dominican government, though not to the degree afforded to the Catholic Church (Betances 2007).

Another significant shift took place in 1994, when the Dominican government invited Evangelical leaders to witness the signing of the Pact for Democracy. Since then, they have participated alongside the Catholic Church in national political mediations and policy. And in 2004, President Hipólito Mejía Domínguez signed a second social pact that broadened the scope of Evangelical Protestant participation throughout the state. This pact "included broad participation in education, recognition of Evangelical institutions in the administration of public health programs, integration into state-sponsored patronage in health and education programs, provision for the assimilation of Evangelical chaplaincy in the armed forces and national police, acceptance of civil marriage performed by Evangelical pastors, creation of the legal framework for Evangelical media, and allowance of tax exemption status to religious items and vehicles deemed necessary for church use" (Betances 2007, 238). The pact was signed into law in 2010 under the presidency of Leonel Fernández Reyna. In 2011, the Confederación Dominicana de Unidad Evangelica (CODUE) was accorded the power and role to shape educational curricula for primary, secondary, and tertiary education.

The church, as a fourth pillar of the government, has a say in what is approved as law and policy, what is encompassed in "the national," the management of bodies and populations, and the management of what is morally (and by implication, legally) right. While protective laws are often ignored or not enforced, repressive laws are enforced quite heavily against and through those deemed undesirable: homosexuals, trans* people, Haitians, dark-skinned people, women, and the poor. Proof of this resides in the redefinition of life in the Dominican Constitution, the ongoing criminalization of abortion, the cardinal-sanctioned deportation of thousands of Haitian people, the denationalization of Dominicans of Haitian descent, and the tactics of sexual terror used to intimidate LGBTQ people, whose presence is not illegal, but is configured as an affront to *la moralidad pública* (public morality). In this way, the D.R. provides an ideal context for thinking through theories of Christian coloniality because Santo Domingo, the Spanish colony, was always already Catholic. The nation-state of the D.R. has always been articulated as a Roman Catholic nation-state.¹⁰ The political insistence on Catholic Hispanic nationalism generates richly detailed contours

through which to trace the Christian colonial effects and ongoing processes on contemporary subjects.

In the colonial-imperial wound (Mignolo 2007) created through Christian colonial processes, one is witness to the friction between people and peoples' historiographies/histories and battles over the dispossession of land and bodies. *Streetwalking* adds to the already existing rich literature on dispossession by focusing on the ways in which contemporary streetwalking requires us to navigate the material and discursive results of sexual terror, a mode of violence that strikes against those whose erotic orientations do not conform to Christian colonial morality—in particular, Christian colonial ideas of biblical manhood and womanhood. The disciplinary effects of Christian coloniality through the social and political body of the nation replicate the same humanist logics that undergird the bifurcation of flesh from spirit that orders bodies and relations. They produce violence, and they produce streetwalking as a site for the radical articulation of freedom.

Given the moral values accorded by Catholic and Protestant institutions and the degree to which they are incorporated into the Catholic Hispanic nation-state's institutions, LGBTQ people cannot rely on the church—in any of its incarnations—for a just and morally justified alternative to social and political condemnation. Dominican LGBTQ struggles make the Catholic Hispanic nationalist moral and spiritual battle grounds apparent and affectively immediate. In countries like the D.R., where the church also plays a key political role within the state government, LGBTQ activists actively question the church's investment in nation-state governance. LGBTQ activists have identified the church's relationship with the Dominican government as a primary obstacle for the full exercise of human rights. LGBTQ activists challenge Christian coloniality by streetwalking, hanging out, and making noise. In this context, the concept of *moralidad pública* becomes a tool and a weapon for the Christian colonial management of those streetwalking within the streets of the Catholic Hispanic nation-state.

MORALIDAD PÚBLICA

The transition from being subjects of the Spanish Crown to becoming subjects of a liberal modern nation-state was mirrored in the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century public debates about the role of religion versus secularism in the formation of a civilized modernity. These debates were taking place across Europe and the formerly colonized, newly emerged nation-states of Latin America. At stake were the continuing authority of the church as well as the protection of its properties and persons. The debates included questions about the role of religion in relationship to the sovereign and the role of the church in relationship to the nineteenth-century postcolonial state. Chaotic nation-state building processes generated shifts in the role of religious institutions within new national

societies. In most instances, the church was forced to operate under the new nation-state governments, and in this way, “church leaders became acolytes of the State as the religion of the State replaced that of the Church, or more accurately, the very concept of religion as separable from the Church was invented” (Cavanaugh 1995, 408).

On the island of Hispaniola, the Catholic Church that had been operating in alongside (and not always in agreement with) the Spanish Crown under the Real Patronato scrambled to define its place within the body of the postannexation Dominican nation-state. The formation of new national institutions generated a civil public sphere in which the role of religious authority within modern Dominican society was likewise contested. With the establishment of the D.R. as a Catholic apostolic nation-state, the question of morality—and specifically, Catholic morality—would exist as a matter of internal conscience within the new state’s citizenship. In this sense, Dominican citizenship was construed as an inherently Catholic citizenship whereby the enactment of national character would be explicitly construed as an expression of religious faith and moral personhood.

As the state sought to confer its own legitimacy, it drew on Christian colonial notions of morality, and the concept of *moralidad pública* emerged as a state-fomented framework for the management of public space, people, and citizenship. Julio Luis Martínez Martínez defines *moralidad pública* as the ideology in which “the behaviors of any citizen have social repercussions and can be evaluated based on assumed and accepted ethical criteria established by civil society and publics” (2002, 271). In the case of the D.R., these ethical criteria were established through the incorporation of Catholic moral values and Catholic religious leadership within the body of the Dominican nation-state and through the intellectual mechanisms that would be mobilized in the definition of Dominican personhood. Whether we look at President Archbishop Meriño’s influence or the influence of the Catholic Church on Dominicans in the face of U.S. occupation, one factor is clear: the Dominican Catholic Church, once established, maintained a significant role in the management of Dominican national institutions, including in the propagation of discourse and policies regulating moral citizenship.

Simultaneously, the deployment of intellectual agendas and police authorities in the service of the *moralidad pública* contributed to the construction of morally marginalized populations, such as prostitutes, the “loud” urban poor, and the dark-skinned and those associated with them—those who were streetwalking through the early twentieth century. As in Cuba, “an analogy [was] established between the sexualized human body and the sexualized social body; that is, we can see the construction and design of the project of the (sexually determined) nation emerging” (Sierra Madero 2004). This sexually determined nation-state and citizenry was proscribed as biblically male or female, biblically patriarchal, and biblically heteronormative.

The articulation of the domestic space as private space and the street as public space was key to the management of moral citizenship. Teresita Martínez-Vergne writes, “For the government, public (in the sense of not private) space signaled permission to interfere” (2005, 80). Key to the investiture of the patriarch was the formation of the private family space over which the presumed heteropatriarchal father could exercise his rule and impart either secular or religious moral education. Key to the investiture of the Catholic Hispanic nation-state was the formation of a public space over which the heteropatriarchal state, and its actors, could exercise rule of law and order in the enforcement of moral citizenship. In both education and the moralization of public spaces, the process of forming elite citizen subjects was carried out through and against the policing of a racialized populous by Dominican state-builders and nationalists. At the onset of nation-statehood, race, gender, and deviant sexuality were also constructed through ongoing historical disruptions of streetwalking, of those with desires and orientations that fell outside the narrow prescriptions of Catholic Hispanic moral citizenship. Despite all this architecture, streetwalking disrupted the totalizing Christian colonial desires of the Catholic Hispanic nation-state.

Those who were streetwalking through the early twentieth century included the working poor—many of them women who moved through the city streets as vendors, domestic laborers, or sex workers. As they moved through the city’s streets, they created their own public hangouts. These hangouts were under their control, even as they functioned within geographic limits and heavy surveillance. Unique to the hangouts created through streetwalking was the characterization of these spaces as “everybody’s space, the zone of sociability, composed of stores, cafés, pubs, market stands, plazas, and street corners, where people conversed, exchanged money or goods, kissed, argued, played, or worked” (Martínez-Vergne 2005, 80). Streetwalking prevented the totalization of a moral citizenship. In the cities’ public spaces, movement and celebration undermined the control of private acts; notions of *moralidad pública* failed to be sustained. In other words, even with the intellectual and official (church and state) mobilization of discourses of *moralidad pública* and mechanisms of population control, streetwalking enabled dissidence through the intentional occupation of public spaces through acts such as hanging out.

Marriage was another key site for the formation of moral citizenship. It enabled the consolidation of state and intimate Christian colonial heteropatriarchal power. Through the establishment of the Catholic Hispanic nation-state, the institution of marriage shifted from being exclusively religious to becoming a secular practice of civil government that conferred the progressing nation-state with its future: presumably heterosexual male or female children produced in the bosom of a monogamous, nuclear, heterosexual family.¹¹ Marriage was the vehicle by which sexuality (and, by extension, Catholic Hispanic purity) could be contained within the new nation-state, even the occupied nation, for the

purposes of a civilized, Catholic Hispanic, heteropatriarchal, modern nationhood (Reyes-Santos 2015). Simultaneously, the secular practice of marriage enabled the Dominican nation-state to legitimize itself both within the broader context of Enlightenment liberal thought about progress and modernity and also in the context of U.S. occupation. Maintaining a population that was heterosexual and with clearly defined genders flew in the face of U.S. occupation discourse that structured Dominican personhood as perverse and dysfunctional. The end result, however, was that those who could not participate in the structure of the marriage and of the heteropatriarchal Christian family—"sexual workers, single mothers, economically independent women—fell per force outside the pale of Dominicanness. In order to maintain nationality within male elite boundaries, then, worthy men situated bourgeois women under their guardianship and dismissed working-class women as unimportant to nation-building" (Martínez-Vergne 2005, 125).

Teresita Martínez-Vergne, April Mayes, and Elizabeth Manley (among others) all identify and discuss the ways in which the protection and elevation of bourgeois womanhood was central to the construction of the Dominican nation-state and moral citizenship, from the period of the emerging state up into the Balaguer era of the late twentieth century. All three of these scholars also discuss how the surveillance and policing of women in public spaces, especially those who failed to conform to bourgeois womanhood, was key to both safeguarding bourgeois womanhood and the image of the nation-state as legitimate. But these discourses and mechanisms were not just about secular citizenship; they were also about the maintenance and subsequent solidification of the Catholic Hispanic nation-state. Just as the nation wrote itself with the ideals of who should belong—*blancos de la tierra*; heterosexual, bourgeoisie men; and the masses who could aspire to those positions—it also wrote out of itself and its historiography the lives and possibilities of those who were anything but Catholic Hispanic.¹² Streetwalking disrupts hegemonic racial narratives, and those who enact sex work, gender play, *mal vivir*, *mariconeria*, and *locura* were and continue to be a constant threat to the social order. The threat to the Catholic Hispanic nation-state lies in the potential among all those who walk the streets to cross over into aberrant behavior that could compromise the *moralidad pública*. This *moralidad pública* is required by the Catholic Hispanic nation-state to preserve its image as modern, progressive, and moral. Where morality fails, public health takes over.

During the U.S. occupation, the management of prostitutes and people living in zones of prostitution was framed as a preoccupation with the contamination and the spread of disease—specifically venereal diseases—among U.S. troops (Mayes 2014). Dominican participation in hygiene measures also draws from Christian colonial ideas of sexual morality, in which venereal diseases signal an immoral soul (as made explicit in the *Confesionarios* of the nineteenth century). Sex workers, as those who ruptured the strictly policed boundaries between

Dominican society and U.S. soldiers, became the primary subjects of public health management. The management of their persons, their bodies, their labor, their families, and their movement through public spaces was both a technology of the Catholic Hispanic nation-state and a technology of U.S. empire.

Streetwalking, sex workers threatened the boundaries of private/public life. As a result, they were configured in nation-state discourse as threats to health and safety, as well as to *moralidad pública*. In this instance, the management of streetwalking and the discursive control of ideas of moral citizenship and U.S. imperial desires were projected onto the bodies of poor women, black women, and those who did not conform to biblical gender binaries or Christian colonial sexual norms. In the conflicting spaces (streets, brothels, barracks, fields, homes) between U.S. Protestant ideas of hygiene and Dominican ideas of *moralidad pública* was the looming vision of the Catholic Hispanic nation-state. *Moralidad pública* is a primary mechanism for mobilizing state-sanctioned and extrajudicial violence, or sexual terror.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have traced some of the ways in which Christian coloniality preconfigures LGBTQ life and death as excess, as morally justified, as outside of the prescriptions of *moralidad pública*. I have also discussed the ways in which Christian preoccupations with sin and salvation continue to inform contemporary preoccupations with moral personhood. The battles over gay marriage signal a much deeper epistemological struggle over moral personhood and citizenship. To engage Christian coloniality is to be able to identify the mechanisms by which Christian constructions of being, knowledge, and power limit and redefine LGBTQ lives and protest. Our primary site for theoretically engaging the concept of Christian coloniality is the D.R., a Catholic Hispanic nation-state.

But it is insufficient to just consider the imbrication of Christian discourses, ideologies, and institutions with nation-state formations. In the next chapter, I present various examples that deepen the discussion of Christian coloniality by focusing on its attendant sexual terror, or the modes of violence that permeate the social body, striking against those whose desires, feelings, and erotic dispositions do not conform to Christian colonial morality—in particular, Christian colonial ideas of biblical manhood and womanhood. I argue that sexual terror does not just encompass the daily lived experiences of Christian coloniality; it indexes the intentional structural and institutional regulation of gender and sexuality through the vehicle of the Catholic Hispanic nation-state.



Sexual Terror

It was a hot May afternoon. Chantal, a trans* activist, and I sat in the interview room as the sound of traffic ricocheted off the walls. We were wrapping up our conversation. I had just asked her what she thought about the relationship between the Catholic Church hierarchy and the Dominican government. She responded that Cardinal López Rodríguez was at the heart of the church's problems and that his position on homosexuality and migrants made him an awful representative of the church. I then asked her if she had a message for him. Chantal directed her curse into the audio recorder. She leaned down and slowly enunciated,

That damned man—I say it with intention—he should have a heart attack and die. That idiot bastard. That man does not allow us to exercise our power, to have a disco where we can enjoy ourselves, to have a park. He sends the Polittur to remove us from the park as though we are immigrants from another country . . . because he is homophobic. . . . When I see someone who wants a state where all of us free and independent people can't have a place, we who don't harm anyone, that person should retire because he does not deserve to live. People like that cause a lot of damage to peoples' sovereignty. . . . I am not someone to judge, because God does not want anybody to die, but God has to make an example of him so that he can see we are human beings and we shouldn't suffer discrimination, because we feel and we suffer—just like him. . . . We, too, are human beings. (interview, Chantal, May 15, 2013)

Chantal's curse was mirrored by Yeisha, who stated, "There are Christians who really don't like to discriminate. When I pass in front of their church, they'll say, 'Little brother, little sister—we have a door open for you. We offer a lot of love. You can come when you want, as you are, as you feel good.' The church I don't like is the one that has that cardinal, the one who should die" (interview, Yeisha, May 17, 2013).

Trans* activists are deeply aware of the sexual terror that shapes their lives. They are also clear about its roots in Christian coloniality. And they are not alone. At an antinuke (nuclear war) rally on March 16, 1982, at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco, Alice Walker stood before the gathered crowd and read aloud

a curse she had culled from Zora Neale Hurston's notes. The curse begins by invoking "the Man God: O Great One" and lists the wrongs that have occurred. It then calls in the four winds from the four directions, mobilizing them to bring destruction to the curse-prayer's enemies. The curse calls down extinction, disease, paralysis, death, starvation, thirst, destruction, desolation, pestilence, and the loss of the mind, of power, of wealth, of mercy, of language. It is by all means a radical attempt by the curse-prayer to ensure survival. The irony, of course, is that the curse-prayer's survival is ensconced in a prayer meant to destroy everything that has been built through colonialism and slavery. Walker follows up her reading of the curse by attempting to theorize the personhood of this curse-prayer. She identifies them as a woman, a person of color, or aboriginal and as someone who has been trying for a long, long time to "tell the white man of the destruction that would inevitably come" (1995, 41). Walker leads us through her own troubled preoccupations and her own hopes in delivering this speech as a treatise on ecological disaster at the intersections of centuries of racist and heteropatriarchal violence. From the articulation of this curse as a desire for revenge, Walker restitutes its message as a call to protect earth. As she says, "Earth is my home—though for centuries white people have tried to convince me I have not right to exist, except in the dirtiest, darkest corners of the globe." She ends her speech by stating, "But if by some miracle, and all our struggle, the earth is spared, only justice to every living thing (and everything alive) will save humankind. And we are not yet saved. Only justice can stop a curse" (42). As Walker reminds us, our planet is tied together by ecological suffering. And it is also united through the production of categories of personhood whereby some are deemed worthier of life than others.

I understood Chantal's and Yeisha's anger in relation to the anger of other people who had expressed their disgust with the cardinal and his continuing disregard for the lives of poor, black, and gay people. But I also understood it as a curse, a mobilization of unseen forces with the hopes of achieving particular material ends. The curse was directed to the cardinal's person, a person that Yeisha and Chantal hoped to injure in accordance with the social and psychic injury they had received by way of the cardinal's homophobic, racist ideologies. But these curses were mobilized with the full understanding that I would likely publish them. These were curses meant to extend across space and time in ever-reverberating echoes bouncing off the walls of the cathedral and the surrounding colonial walls. They are a mobilization of unseen forces in the face of sexual terror. They, like the curse unearthed in Walker's examination of Hurston's papers, are curses that project an unmitigated desire for justice.

In *Scenes of Subjection*, Saidiya Hartman reminds us that terror is inscribed in present notions of that which is *black*. She writes, "It [the sheer force of the utterance *black*] acts as a reminder of the material effects of power on bodies and as an injunction to remember that the performance of blackness is inseparable

from the brute force that brands, rapes, and tears open the flesh in the racial inscription of the body. In other words, the seeming obstinacy or the 'givenness' of 'blackness' registers the 'fixing' of the body by terror and dominance and the way in which that fixing has been constitutive" (1997, 58) of particular kinds of human and nonhuman subjects. For Hartman, the words *black* and *blackness* contain within them the terror of subjugated bodies and subjugated desires, and the impossibility of freedom in a racialized world.¹ In this world, *black* is always already an object of terror and slavery. In the process of performing, expanding and recuperating blackness, racial meaning and subjectivity are both produced and challenged. Enactments of (white) power and the reiteration of "the conditions of enslavement" come together to attempt to constrict black life while providing the fungible terrain for the production of meaning.² Hartman's description of racial terror captures notions of terror embedded in the U.S. Southern colonial project and the ways in which the productions of blackness have relied on terror as a mode of control for the production of new kinds of subjectivities. I expand on this theorization of racial terror through an elaboration of the concept of sexual terror as it took root in the Spanish colony of Hispaniola. It is important to note that as bodies were broken within spaces of labor, racialization occurred through all the discursive and material apparatuses of Christian coloniality—in particular, through the management of sexuality, sexual relations, and ideas of blood purity and mixture. The monogamous heterosexual family was the greatest measure of Christian colonial success as far back as 1496.³ In the sexual management of enslaved bodies, *indias* and *indios*, *negras* and *negros*—and all the various racialized iterations of these—became containers for the exercises of Christian moral authority over the souls and bodies of the enslaved through explicit and continuously evolving acts of sexual terror.

Sexual terror refers to the modes of violence that permeate the social body, striking against those whose desires, feelings, and erotic dispositions do not conform to Christian colonial morality—in particular, Christian colonial ideas of biblical manhood and womanhood. The seeming arbitrariness of sexual terror "negates human freedom more efficiently than any tyranny ever could" (Arendt [1968] 2007, 430). Sexual terror as an element of Christian coloniality gives rise to the possibility of racial terror, and has sustained itself over the last five hundred years through the bodies of gender and sexually nonconforming people—for example, when sexuality is used as a way to define race and to mark racial transgression. Sexual terror allows us to elaborate on ideas about racial terror by reframing how the control of the soul was mitigated through sexual subjugation and the control of bodies and desires. Sexual terror is rooted in the control of sexuality as central to the construction of race as an organizing framework. Concerns about *pureza/limpieza de sangre* (and in Aragonia, the sodomite) became the vehicles for achieving the Christian goals of reproduction, evangelization, and capitalist accumulation. Through the control of sexuality, discourses

on racial and gendered difference continue to be perpetuated through the continual reinscription of sin/criminality/illness on bodies and desires that are constructed as *different*. As Hortense Spillers reminds us, “Sexuality is the locus of great drama—perhaps the fundamental one—and, as we know, wherever there are actors, there are scripts, scenes, gestures, and reenactments, both enunciated and tacit” (1987, 66). In this drama, streetwalking always leads to the inevitable failure of becoming.

As with racial terror, sexual terror is an all-encompassing experience of violence that permeates Christian coloniality and the structures of knowing and being produced through it. Sexual terror signals the construction of otherness or nonhumanness through sexuality. Sexual terror then marks the shifting interstices and intersections in which personhood is defined, to the exclusion of those who are already configured as nonhuman. Understanding how sexual terror shifts and moves across different kinds of bodies also helps us understand how anyone at any time can suddenly become something other than human, something other than a person.

In turn, streetwalking allows us to navigate both the nonhuman and human realms of being; it is sexual terror that ruptures our personhood. Streetwalking reside not within an individual subject but rather in the relations of power that must be negotiated in response to sexual terror. Streetwalking can emerge through an intentional choice (such as pulling on a leather jacket or sexy lingerie) or by the sudden, unexpected experience of sexual terror—such as being verbally or physically assaulted.⁴

Sexual terror is not something that is limited to the streets or that occurs only as a result of abuses of state authority. For many LGBTQ people, terror can begin in the home, at school, and in the everyday. The fact that the boundaries between public and private domains are often rendered nonexistent is one aspect of Christian colonial power that is made visible through streetwalking. Families and the discourses around families are one such site that brings this aspect to the fore. But so are state, national, and international policies. In the next sections of this chapter, I will discuss how national and international debates and policies contribute to the production of sexual terror. I will first focus on the production of LGBTQ identities and refutations against laws within international fora. I then turn to a discussion of how homophobic and transphobic violence transits through the institutions and discourses of the Catholic Hispanic nation-state and into broader publics, as demonstrated by the actions surrounding the appointment of James “Wally” Brewster to serve as ambassador to the D.R. This chapter ends with an analysis of universalized concepts of LGBTQ identities and the various ways in which LGBTQ activists both appropriate and subvert homogenized concepts of personhood.

GOD AND GAYS

On January 28, 2011, a broad range of Caribbean LGBTQ organizations and affiliated groups, including those in the Dominican Republic, issued a statement to the international online media about Ugandan activist David Kato's murder (Gettleman 2011). The statement signaled the mobilization of the universalized categories of LGBTQ in the service of local struggles. It states, "Were it not for advocacy late last year, thirteen Caribbean countries would have allowed 'sexual orientation' to be removed from an international statement of commitment [UN Resolution A/HRC/14/24] to protect persons from unlawful killing because of who they are. David's death, following threats against his life, is a gripping reminder of the importance of those protections, and a sobering one of how much more work needs to be done to give people the right to freedom over their bodies in places like Africa and the Caribbean" (SASOD-Guyana 2011). At the time, Kato's murder was part of a larger wave of media exposure about homophobia-related violence in the Global South. In 2010 alone, international media reported numerous extrajudicial killings of gay men in Jamaica as well as a series of death threats against and assassinations of gay, lesbian, and transgender activists in Honduras. In the Dominican Republic, just a month before Kato's murder, a Dominican trans* organization posted a report on their web page detailing violence against trans* women. In 2010, there were eleven documented (known) murders of trans* women and gay men in the capital city of Santo Domingo. For many Dominican LGBTQ activists, David Kato's murder was an international reflection of a crisis that many were experiencing locally.

At the time of his murder, Kato was at the forefront of a Ugandan national effort to overturn a parliamentary bill proposing the death sentence for homosexuality. The bill had been put before Uganda's parliament following the March 2009 visit of three U.S. Evangelical ministers "who held rallies and workshops in Uganda discussing how to turn gay people straight, how gay men sodomized teenage boys and how 'the gay movement is an evil institution' intended to 'defeat the marriage-based society'" (Gettleman 2011). These ministers were critiqued in the international media for the role they played in promoting the bill.

In spring 2010—mere months before Kato's murder—the United Nations General Assembly was in a debate that focused on the question of protection for homosexuals and other sexual minorities from extrajudicial, summary, or arbitrary executions. This debate—the first of its kind on the General Assembly floor—was an outgrowth of over eleven years of advocacy by LGBTQ international human rights organizations and groups as well as local and regional efforts throughout the world. Among those opposed to the resolution was the Holy See's permanent observer to the United Nations, Archbishop Celestino Migliore, who stated,

In particular, the categories “sexual orientation” and “gender identity,” used in the text, find no recognition or clear and agreed definition in international law. If they had to be taken into consideration in the proclaiming and implementing of fundamental rights, these would create serious uncertainty in the law as well as undermine the ability of states to enter into and enforce new and existing human rights conventions and standards. Despite the *statement’s* rightful condemnation of and protection from all forms of violence against homosexual persons, the document, when considered in its entirety, goes beyond this goal and instead gives rise to uncertainty in the law and challenges existing human rights norms. (Vatican 2008)

Archbishop Migliore signaled the development of a legal category of gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and trans* persons as the primary reason for opposing UN Resolution A/HRC/14/24. By creating a legal category of “those protected from discrimination” (Pullella 2008), he argued, these resolutions, toolkits, and initiatives would create the ground for legitimizing gay marriage—something the Catholic Church would unequivocally oppose (Catholic League 2009). In addition, Archbishop Migliore expressed concerns that this resolution would create a situation in which states that were opposed to gay marriage would be unduly reprimanded. On May 26, 2010, a majority of countries signed Resolution A/HRC/14/24, which included sexual minorities and homosexuals as a protected category (UNHRC Report 2010; United Nations News Service 2011). Among countries in Africa, the Caribbean, and Latin America, there were a total of thirty-two signatories—far from a majority.⁵

The resolution also preceded the adoption of a document developed by the European Union (EU) Working Party on Human Rights on June 8, 2010: the “Toolkit to Promote and Protect the Enjoyment of All Human Rights by Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBTQ) People.” The toolkit aims to provide employees of the EU working with developing nations (in embassies, in delegations, and as representatives) and “international civil society organizations” with the tools necessary to “promote and protect the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBTQ) people” and “to enhance the EU’s capacity to proactively address cases of human rights violations against LGBTQ people and structural causes behind these violations” (EU Council 2010, 6). I learned about the toolkit from Dominican LGBTQ activists who posted the announcement through various online forums in autumn 2010. Dominican LGBTQ activists, who have historically received financial and logistical support from numerous international foundations and groups (including the EU, U.S.-based foundations, the Centro Cultural de España, and the Centre Cultural Française), were excited to see the document because several of them were adamant that this toolkit would benefit local advocacy efforts for LGBTQ rights in the Dominican Republic (interviews in December 2010 with D.C.M., N.H.M., R.R., and V.S.D.). The toolkit includes

language now standardized and universalized within international human rights work and scholarship on LGBTQ persons. It reads, "Lesbian women and gay men are homosexuals: people whose sexual orientation is towards someone of the same sex. Bisexuals are people whose sexual orientation is towards both sexes. Transgender is the state of one's 'gender identity' (self-identification as male, female, both or neither) not matching one's 'assigned gender' (identification by others as male or female based on physical gender). 'Transgender' does not imply any specific form of sexual orientation. Sexual orientation (attraction towards others that may or may not involve sexual activity) is distinct from sexual activity" (EU Council 2010, 4). Shortly after the publication of the toolkit and following the Amnesty International (2011) report, U.S. and EU representatives began to extensively document human rights abuses against LGBTQ persons in the D.R. Simultaneously, the Cardinal López Rodríguez increased his discursive attacks against streetwalking, focusing on Dominicans of Haitian descent, sex workers, LGBTQ people, and others socializing in gay clubs and public spaces. His attacks included pressuring local neighborhood groups to shut down gay clubs, encouraging police round-ups of LGBTQ people socializing in public spaces, and continuing his public outcries about foreigners who had come to poison the country's youth with their aberrant sexual behavior.

The ongoing persecution of streetwalking in Dominican society makes this a difficult subject to consider, given that Dominican LGBTQ activists are caught between the Global North's imperial interests and the struggle against the sexual terror produced by Christian coloniality. To date, the U.S. and the EU governments, as well as international human rights groups based in the Global North, have documented human rights abuses against LGBTQ subjects in the Dominican Republic. And just as new attention to human rights abuses by the U.S. is complicated by imperial relations, the EU toolkit is not necessarily an immediate cause for celebration. It did not prevent David Kato's murder, nor did it foment accountability from governmental and police institutions in Uganda. In the larger context of Uganda's execution bill, Kato's murder prompted EU pressure on President Museveni. With the threat of losing foreign aid, the Ugandan execution bill was subsequently scrapped.

This use of pressure by the EU is part of a longer history and larger trend of the policing of postcolonial bodies and spaces by former colonial imperial powers. The former colonial empires of Europe established the terms for the persecution of subjects who did not / could not conform to biblical gender binaries and heteronormative imperatives. Today, these former colonial empires, now allied within the rubric of the Global North, continue to exert their power through the continued management of gender and sexuality. The same states that once persecuted sodomy and buggery in the colonies now exert pressure on former colonies to uphold LGBTQ human rights. This is despite their dismal track records that include numerous LGBTQ civil and human rights abuses within their imperial

home spaces. We then have to consider how LGBTQ subjects and questions of LGBTQ human rights have become central to colonial-imperial initiatives aimed at disciplining nations of the Global South. Foreclosed by nationalist discourses that position them as the “other’s other”—as a subject inherent to European/U.S. imperial dominance—those same LGBTQ subjects are not necessarily welcome within the borders of the states of the Global North that so promptly defend them in the international arena (Puar 2007; Reddy 2011; Stoler 1995). LGBTQ activists in the D.R. are fully aware of this dynamic; recall Thalia’s story of the protest against the cardinal in 2004, when LGBTQ activists took to the streets ironically singing to the cardinal, “Send me to Europe, or to New York . . .,” knowing that Europe and New York did not necessarily want them there either.

In the D.R., a 2006 public-opinion survey demonstrated that 56 percent of the population was opposed to granting equal civil rights to LGBTQ people. That same year, the Dominican government legalized prostitution (Artiles Gill and Ortega Espinal 2008). In 2009, Dominican subjects and the Dominican Congress were engaged in a battle over citizenship and the constitutionalization of protections for women *and* LGBTQ Dominicans. Though there is no explicit antisodomy law, an April 2011 human rights report released by the U.S. embassy in the Dominican Republic cited extensive police brutality and social discrimination against LGBTQ people (U.S. Embassy 2010): LGBTQ youth are kicked out of public schools and people are arrested without charges, are fired from their jobs, are denied housing, and experience physical attacks, intimidation, assaults, and threats of violence. The D.R.’s social, political, and economic landscapes are undergoing rapid neoliberal transformations that include (for example) the signing of the Dominican-Central American Free Trade Agreement (D.R.-CAFTA) in 2005, a new constitution in 2010, and the presidential elections of May 2012. As the D.R. becomes further embedded within globalized neoliberal economic structures, it is also further consolidating its Catholic Hispanic territorial and ethno-racial claims. As a result, those who challenge Catholic Hispanic racial, gender, and sexual ideologies become increasingly vulnerable. In 2009, two trans* sex workers were murdered by police, who have yet to be prosecuted (Sosa 2010); at the June 2010 Pride parade, as I will recount in chapter 3 (Confrontación), a police officer assaulted a prominent lesbian activist in a car full of trans* and gender nonconforming people. All the conditions and public experiences of violence resulted in an upsurge of social and political engagement by LGBTQ activists, the development of new social and political groups, the establishment of a LGBTQ legal aid society, and a Metropolitan Community Church (ICM). It also produced the conditions by which the LGBTQ framework made the violences of the Catholic Hispanic nation-state legible and parallel to those violences that had produced Kato’s murder.

FAMILY VALUES

On January 27, 2012—two years after the Dominican government ratified a new constitution (and two years after the first international report on LGBTQ human rights in the D.R.)—Cardinal López Rodríguez and then first lady (and vice president since May 2012) Margarita Fernández stood on a stage for the opening of the new Center for the Integral Formation of Youth and Family. There, they spoke to the serious threats made on families “at this time.” These threats, according to the cardinal, emerged from the “fraudulent politicians and international organizations” (Jiménez 2012) working on behalf of “liberal governments” who support homosexuals and, more explicitly, gay and lesbian marriage. The cardinal stated, “Not only is it general understanding that has turned against the family. Now, all types of perversions have spread everywhere. [Including in] irresponsible legislation” (Jiménez 2012). The cardinal and the first lady made it clear that family and human values come from the home—literally, the “breast” of the home (Jiménez 2012; Hoy Digital 2012; “El Cardenal” 2012). Immediately following the event, the first lady went on camera declaring, “Families are made up of a man and a woman. Men and women, we have the responsibility to raise our children, to shape them. . . . Families have to understand that it is families which are the center of development in all societies” (Jiménez 2012).

In this political crèche, the church and state apparatus was made evident via the figure of the paternal voice of God (the cardinal) speaking before and to the mother/wife figure of the nation (Vice President Fernández). This apparatus holds a logic of divine right over and above secular law and human or civil rights. This has implications not only for contemporary Dominican society but also for the forging of an imagined future state toward which contemporary society must work. Patriarchal authority, derived from divine authority, is inscribed in political doctrine in such a way that “the evolution of the monogamous family is the best guarantee within evolutionary time for political authority to be securely grounded in fatherly authority” (Das 2007a, 96).

In 2009, Dominicans and the Dominican Congress (with support from the Catholic Church hierarchy) were engaged in a very public and brutal battle centered on citizenship and women’s rights. These debates resulted in the 2010 constitution—subsequently referred to as the new constitution—that passed on January 26, 2010. Provoked by the platform on which President Fernández was elected in 2008, the new constitution is unequivocal in its assertion of citizenship as a status reserved only for Dominican (*jus sanguinis*) adults “18 years of age and/or for those who are or have been married, even if younger than 18 years of age” (article 21). Citizenship debates have been entrenched in Dominican public policy debates even farther back than 1942 (Mayes 2008; Zeller 2010), when Trujillo granted suffrage to women. The new constitution takes up these inheritances and inscribes them with Christian colonial logics that center neoliberal

rhetorics of inclusion, equality, progress, and democracy while simultaneously codifying specific kinds of racial, gendered, and sexual belonging within the fabric of the Catholic Hispanic nation-state.

The repression of the Catholic Hispanic nation-state became extremely evident with the constitutional reform process, which continued the denial of constitutional protections for LGBTQ citizens at the same time that it fostered the criminalization of abortion in 2016 (Camara de Diputados 2016). Contradictions embedded within the language of the constitution generate a context for increasingly repressive measures as well as potentially unresolvable constitutional conflicts (Paiewonsky 2009; So 2011). The repressive nature of the conflicts generated by the new constitution most explicitly demonstrates itself in four forms: the inconsistent use of gender-inclusive language throughout the text, the development of amendments that explicitly nullify women's rights, the implicit exclusion of protections that specifically affect LGBTQ subjects and ethnic minorities, and the continual, purposeful replication of a Christian colonial biblical binary gender ideology.

Prior to the new constitution, the D.R. was the only nation-state in Latin America and the Caribbean to lack a statement of equal rights based on gender (Molyneux 2000). That this changed with the new constitution represented potential constitutional advances in key areas relevant to women and gender equality (Ministerio de la mujer 2010), including "the principle of equality, women's right to a life free of violence, the recognition of domestic labor, the recognition of common law marriage, the right to equal pay for equal labor, . . . and the presence of the language of gender throughout the Constitutional text" (CLADEM 2011). But there are many problematic assumptions in these areas of advancement. For example, the recognition of domestic labor refers to the recognition of bourgeoisie—middle- and owning-class—women's roles as *amas de casa* (housewives); it does not consider the thousands of women who work as domestic laborers *for* the *amas de casa*. Similarly, equal pay for equal work does not address gendered divisions of labor. For example, in banks, only women *de buena presencia* ("of good appearance"—a racialized, gendered, and age-specific term) are hired, and they are hired to occupy specific positions. Women, in general, are not promoted as bank managers and are not hired for many professional positions; dark-skinned women generally do not occupy positions in public. While effeminate men *de buena presencia* may have public positions, they, too, will not generally be promoted to positions of authority, and *macha* women and trans* folks won't even get a foot in the door. In this case, the problem is less so access to equal pay than it is access to equal labor positions or even opportunities to work.

The reality of trans* Dominican subjects' lives highlights yet other shortcomings of the new constitution. For one, the gendering of Spanish language replicates ideas of biblical manhood and womanhood as mutually exclusive and

opposite degrees of being that specifically exclude gender nonbinary and trans* possibilities. Spanish language extends gender all the way to inanimate objects, but conflicts about the gendering of animate beings have generated new gender language forms that are not yet in use in the Academia Real de la Lengua Española or the new constitution. Most importantly, and most complicatedly, the elaboration of gender specificity within the new constitution signals a success for the feminist movement while obfuscating the realities of trans* Dominicans' lives. The feminist movement's urging to include gender binary language as a way to specify women's place within civil, economic, political, and social worlds also deeply undermines the existence and realities of third-gender or multigendered persons. Lastly, centering LGBTQ subjects in this discussion highlights how fights for marriage equality continue to replicate the ideology of biblical manhood and womanhood as cisnormative standards for civil freedom.

The union of divine and secular authority within the new constitution is most clearly articulated in article 37, which states that "the right to life is inviolable from conception to death" (Asamblea Nacional de la República Dominicana 2010). Only one of a handful of constitutions in the world to define life from the moment of conception, the new constitution created the parameters for the criminalization of abortion in all circumstances. Juridically distinct from the protection of "unborn children," defining life from the moment of conception draws from two key preceding documents. The first is the 1983 Holy See's Charter of the Rights of the Family, in which article 4 states, "Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception" (Holy See 1983). The second is the American Convention on Human Rights, article 4.1, which states, "Every person has the right to have his life respected. This right shall be protected by law and, in general, from the moment of conception. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life" (IACHR 1969). Recent legal analyses of constitutional shifts throughout Latin America demonstrate that a narrow interpretation of defending life from the moment of conception is mutable (Bergallo and Ramón Michel 2016). However, in the D.R., the codification of defining life "from the moment of conception" was mobilized for increasingly repressive measures.

The new constitution, however much it served as a landmark for a more open democracy, has not resulted in greater gender equality or the furtherance of rights among the most vulnerable in Dominican society (Tejada Yangüela 2012). Rather, it has fomented potentially unresolvable constitutional and legal conflicts between the national constitutional mandate "to protect the right to life from the moment of conception" (Asamblea Nacional de la República Dominicana 2010, Art. 37) and the international mandate to protect women's rights, including reproductive freedom as outlined by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW; U.N. 1979).⁶ The redefinition of life from the moment of conception created the constitutional basis on which,

in 2016, the Dominican legislature criminalized abortion under all circumstances (Pérez Reyes 2016). Seemingly, the Dominican legislature's decision is perhaps a reflection of the fundamentalist forces at play within the nation-state more so than a reflection of the fundamentalist potential of the idea of life from the moment of conception.

Veena Das has argued that the regulation of birth and reproduction is a site through which "the idea of God as author of nature and time is displaced and the political body is seen as subject to death and decay" (2007a, 94). But in the Catholic Hispanic nation-state, a Christian colonial concept of nature and time reformulates the political body as the grounds through which the Catholic Hispanic nation-state intervenes to ensure the survival of both state and God. This is carried out through the lives of its subjects. The processes of the Catholic Hispanic nation-state reflect a deep and willing integration of Christian moral values into the secular structure of constitutional and civil law.⁷ Within this context, women who seek abortion are guilty of not only immorality (Why were they pregnant in the first place, and by whom?) and murder (life is from conception) but potentially also treason (an attack on the life of the fetus is an attack against the nation) and abomination (an attack on the life of the fetus is an attack against the Christian God). The sovereign must not only (re)produce himself, but he must do so in perpetuity. The state, holding rights over death and life, thereby relies on the idea of both "nature" and God in the project of its own reproduction (Agamben 2005; Foucault 1978). In this framework, the death of women in childbirth or because of childbearing is only one other duty that assures that women, like men, are "ready to die for the continuity of the political [sovereign] body" (Das 2007a, 100) and Christian redemption.

This logic is also extended to LGBTQ persons. As beings lacking moral personhood vis-à-vis the Catholic Hispanic state, LGBTQ persons' deaths are reconceptualized as a necessary sacrifice in the larger project of the nation-state's perpetuation. These same forces that seek the nation-state's *and* Christianity's perpetuation also espouse liberal discourses of equality. Article 39 of the new constitution is yet another example of the new constitution's embedded contradictions; it guarantees the right to equality, with several important exclusions. It states that "persons are born free and equal before the law, they receive the same protection and treatment from the institutions, authorities and other persons and enjoy the same rights, freedoms and opportunities, without any discrimination for reasons of gender, color, age, disability, nationality, family ties, language, religion, political or philosophical opinion, and social or personal condition" (Asamblea Nacional de la República Dominicana 2010). Gender, the first of the protected classes, in a strict interpretation only refers to biblical manhood and womanhood, as clarified in clause 4, which states that "woman and man are equal before the law." The implicit exclusion of third- or multigender categories creates a context of inequality. LGBTQ activists in the Dominican Republic have mobilized for the

inclusion of sexual orientation and gender identity as two additional protected classes. In many cases, they have proposed the idea of “social or personal condition” as an entrée into the expansion and articulation of protections within this article.

Though there are no ratified international laws in relation to sexual orientation and gender identity, the Yogyakarta Principles, developed in 2006, make a set of recommendations for the development of international standards. International bodies have shown continual reticence toward the idea of ratifying any sort of human rights document or protections on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity (O’Flaherty and Fisher 2008). However, a few states have commended the principles and have adapted language from the principles in national discourse. This, of course, does not imply an equal application of laws or true political, economic or social change. Equally problematic are the moves by countries from the Global North to use another nation-state’s standing on the rights of sexual minorities to enact racist national and immigration policies (Puar 2007). Given that the new constitution “gives constitutional status to international human rights laws that have been signed and ratified by the Dominican Republic” (So 2011, 730), international conventions do have a role to play in challenging irresolvable constitutional dilemmas. They present strategically universal opportunities for the negotiation of locally repressive policies.

As in other Caribbean nations, in the D.R., “sexual agency and erotic autonomy . . . pose a challenge to the ideology of an original nuclear heterosexual family that perpetuates the fiction that the family is the cornerstone of society” (Alexander 2005, 22). The new constitution is a document that establishes racist, xenophobic, heteropatriarchal, and religiously fundamentalist ideologies. A constitution that focuses on a narrative of progress vis-à-vis gender without questioning the fundamental “conviction that women must be governed by men [as a belief that has become] interwoven social and political forces . . . at the heart of structures of power and subordination” (Pateman and Mills 2007, 135) or that gender itself is not a mutable category undermines its own authority even as it seeks to legitimate democratic principles of equality. It fails to encompass the wide range of gendered and sexual experiences of those at home and abroad. It also effectively reflects tensions central to the negotiations among Christian institutions’ moral authority, the nation-state’s responsibility to its citizens, and the lived realities presented by all of us streetwalking through the nation’s *calles*.

MR. BREWSTER GOES TO GAZCUE

In June 2013, U.S. president Barack Obama nominated James “Wally” Brewster, an openly gay man, as U.S. ambassador to the Dominican Republic. Cardinal López Rodríguez and other Catholic Church representatives immediately voiced their disapproval of the nomination, claiming that the values and laws of the U.S.

and the D.R. were inherently different, and on that basis, Dominican national values had to be respected. While not directly opposing to the nomination, the cardinal sought to diminish it by critiquing the U.S. government. He stated, “We can never predict what the U.S. will do.” The bishop of Santo Domingo, Pablo Cedano, took a stronger position, stating that Brewster’s reality “is far from our cultural reality” and that Brewster would “suffer [if he came here] and [would] have to leave” (*RB News* 2013). He went on to critique President Obama’s decision as a “lack of tact and respect by the United States” (*Listindiario.com* 2013).

The Evangelical church coalition convened large public demonstrations in front of the U.S. embassy in Santo Domingo and called on their members to boycott the nominations (Leclerc 2013). Pastor Sauford Medrano “call[ed] on President Danilo Medina to adhere to the Christian values that sustain the Dominican nation” and stated that Medina “[should] act with free and independent will within his role as the dignified representative of the sovereign Dominican state, to protect the values of the nation.” In conclusion, he said, “We [Evangelical Dominicans] do not accept this nomination” (*El Día* 2013). The Christian demonstrators demanded that the Dominican president intervene in the nomination, stating that the ambassador’s presence would be “an insult to good Dominican customs [and] would be a great inconvenience to society” (*El Día* 2013). Articles in Christian newsletters made claims that this kind of appalling act would never occur in “countries like Afghanistan or Yemen—or other nations with Muslim customs and beliefs—by virtue that [homosexuality] clashes with the legal, moral, and religious tenets” (*Cristianodigital.net* 2013) of Islam. By extension, the argument went, in a Christian-Catholic society such as the D.R., this logic should also apply.

The Brewster nomination was no small matter. It came in the aftermath of major changes in the Dominican Constitution, a process in which representatives of the church had active roles. The Christian ministers’ demands to the Dominican government were also an attempt by Christian (non-Catholic) leaders to mirror the church’s exercise of social and political authority over Dominican society. The reactions of religious leaders staved off Brewster’s approval until November 2013, though through a complex interplay of U.S. political and economic power, they did not stop it. In the meantime, while Christian activists mobilized anti-LGBTQ campaigns, LGBTQ activists mobilized commercial boycotts, public conferences, and the *Caravana del orgullo* and drew on international attention. But the issue continued even after Brewster’s appointment. In 2015, when Brewster elicited attention to widespread corruption in the Dominican government and to the issue of denationalization of Dominicans of Haitian descent, the cardinal stated, “This man [Brewster] needs to be inside his embassy, and as the wife of a man, like all wives who take care of their homes, he should also just stick to his housework” (Lavers 2015; J. Thomas 2015). These heteropatriarchal ideas about masculinity and, indeed, heteropatriarchy itself—the idea

that a gay man is not a real man and that a woman as a wife only has her place in the home—demonstrate biblical manhood and womanhood as two operative constructs within Christian coloniality. Christian coloniality itself, in turn, has contributed to the binary and racialized construction of contemporary gender ideologies that contribute to heteropatriarchy.

Through Christian coloniality, biblical manhood—in addition to being conceptualized in relationship to God—positions a man as protector of and provider for his wife and children. Masculinity itself is constituted through these vectors of relationship: subordination to the Christian God and Jesus and dominance (protective and provisionary) over women and children. Similarly, biblical womanhood positions women as having an equal duty to God, Jesus, and service. Implicit within biblical woman's service is her constitution as wife to biblical man. This gender ideology has contributed to the gender binary directly (Hird 2000). The biblical gender binary is also made apparent when representatives from the institutions of the church—in this case, the cardinal, a representative of the Dominican Catholic and the international Catholic Church—call into question a person's gender and gender roles because of their sexuality, perceived weaknesses, and/or failure to embody biblical manhood.

Cardinal López Rodríguez's critique fostered an international response that eventually led to his replacement in June 2016. But the cardinal's downfall was not due exclusively or even possibly to his homophobia. In September 2013, the Dominican Supreme Court upheld a resolution that effectively denationalized two hundred thousand Dominicans, the majority of whom were of Haitian descent (Cote-Muñoz and Rosario 2015; Gonçalves Margerin, Varma, and Sarmiento 2014; Hannam 2014; C. Pérez 2015). The ruling was declared a gross abuse of human rights by the international media, human rights activists, and other Caribbean nation states. Peruvian novelist and Nobel Prize winner Mario Vargas Llosa made an open declaration at the Mexican International Book Fair. He called on Pope Francis to modernize the Catholic Church. Within his critiques, he specifically named the Dominican cardinal, stating, "I have been actively critiquing [López Rodríguez] because, incredibly, he is supporting racist laws that deprive close to 200,000 Dominicans of their Dominican nationality—solely because they are children or descendants of Haitians. This seems totally incompatible with what it means to represent the Catholic Church" (7dias.com.do 2013). Following on the heels of this statement, the Dominican ambassador to the Vatican, Victor Manuel Grimaldi Céspedes, refuted Vargas Llosa's statements in an unauthorized letter to the pope. In his letter, he defended the cardinal and made an open critique of Brewster for having received a group of LGBTQ activists at the embassy. Claiming that the cardinal was being unjustly attacked, he explicitly articulated that "in the Dominican Republic, the State's Constitution establishes marriage as between man and woman, and the U.S. ambassador (who is 'married' with a man) has met with members of the Gay

and Transsexual collective, which is attacking the Catholic Church and makes assertions that the Dominican state is not *laico* (a lay state)” (Listindiario.com 2014). By making this statement, Grimaldi indirectly named Brewster and the LGBTQ community as the instigators of a defamation campaign. He also side-stepped the immoral nature of xenophobic state policies. Immediately following his unauthorized letter, the Dominican government deauthorized Grimaldi from speaking on official terms. Grimaldi responded with a second open letter in which he defended himself by stating, “We have fundamental values that have forged us as a *pueblo*, nation and state, and these have to be respected by large and small states. With the 2010 Constitution, the Dominican state is *laico* . . . but it respects the Dominican cultural traditions that have deep roots in Christianity. And though it seems paradoxical, we are not a confessional state, we are *laico*. But, as Ambassador, I swore to defend the Constitution. And as a Christian, I will defend the values of Christian culture, independently of my personal faith” (Rosario Adames 2014).

Grimaldi’s conflation of the U.S. ambassador’s reception of LGBTQ activists at the U.S. embassy (El Caribe 2014) with his defense of the cardinal’s well-documented racism against Dominicans of Haitian descent is emblematic of how Christian coloniality is imbricated with ultranationalism within the Dominican sociopolitical landscape. Making recourse to a very limited and fundamentalist interpretation of Catholic morality, Grimaldi minimizes the actual moral, social, and political authority of the cardinal—and the implications of his discourses—and instead attempts to locate the onus of Dominican social problems in the body and presence of the gay U.S. ambassador and LGBTQ Dominicans more broadly. Grimaldi’s assertions highlight how ultranationalist calls for sovereignty derive from Christian colonial discourses that continue to replicate gendered, racialized hierarchies of power.

Like in Uganda and elsewhere, the U.S. call for the recognition of LGBTQ rights has been critiqued as a disciplinary imperial exercise. By refuting the significant role that the church plays in Dominican politics, Grimaldi attempts to invalidate the context in which Dominican human and civil rights struggles are embedded and, in its stead, articulate Dominican sovereignty as a Catholic Hispanic struggle for Christian morality—in particular biblical manhood and womanhood.

By naming marriage between a man and a woman as the site of Christian morality, Grimaldi—as in Margarita Fernández’s evocation of family—draws on a colonially constructed ideology of biblical manhood and womanhood. This ideology is challenged by LGBTQ activists. But it is not just biblical manhood and womanhood or even Dominican sovereignty that are at stake. That a Dominican ambassador brought an issue about a U.S. ambassador to the pope also conveys an understanding of canonical law and a religious political system as resting above state jurisdiction. With this series of events, we are witness to

how the universal church, the Vatican, and most explicitly, the Holy See and Pope Francis are in the throes of a global negotiation over the existence of their ecclesiastical polity.

These strategies—the diminishment of political authority by critiquing a moral failure to embody biblical manhood or womanhood, the assertion of Christian sovereignty as ultranationalist sovereignty, and the manipulation of Christian morality for the delegitimization of human and civil rights struggles—are but some examples of the ways in which Christian coloniality produces sexual terror. Christian coloniality is manifest in the long history of Christian conversion; national laws defining gendered, racialized identities; national laws regulating marriage as a monogamous union between biblical men and biblical women; and our ideas about what gender and sexuality even are. But Dominican LGBTQ activists weren't having it.

A week after the Christian demonstrations, Dominican LGBTQ activists participating in that year's Caravana del orgullo incorporated both critiques of the Catholic Church's position and symbols and signs of support for "Wally," the name local activists employ in reference to Brewster. Drag queens employed Carnival-like methods: donning the garbs of Catholic authority, they paraded as the cardinal and as priests, absolving parade goers of sins and presiding over the moral temperature of the Caravana. They held Gay Pride flags, and without breaking character, they spoke to the media to proclaim Christian love for all God's children. Other Caravana participants made and posted signs in support of "Wally." Leaders of the LGBTQ activist community held a press conference and spoke to the Dominican public about Brewster coming to the country "as a diplomat and not as a gay activist" (Colectivos LGBT 2013). Some activists attempted to demonstrate how Brewster mirrored Dominican concepts of masculine heteronormative respectability and aimed to frame his position within the logics of Dominican cultural values and human rights. Arguing that the D.R. has diplomatic relations with many countries that support the human rights of LGBTQ persons, the LGBTQ community stated that they rejected the ways in which the religious sectors threatened, ridiculed, and incited hate in the Dominican population. They also questioned the same religious sector's silence "in cases of corruption, and the rape of children and adolescents, as well as the abuses of power perpetrated by religious leaders who are sustained by the Concordato and other policies" (Colectivos LGBT 2013).

In a published public statement, LGBTQ activists articulated that "democracies cannot give themselves the luxury of tolerating the constant interjections of religious functionaries in political matters as though they are *ayatolas*, demanding that the state assume and impose the religious precepts of their churches" (Colectivos LGBT 2013).⁸ Lastly, leaders of the LGBTQ movement argued, "One of the primary obstacles to the development of democratic institutions in the country is the lack of an effective separation of Church and State" (Colectivos

LGBT 2013), which they cited as violations of articles 45 and 39 of the 2010 constitution. Dominican LGBTQ activists called attention to what is at stake: Christianity's moral authority within the democratic governance structures of the Catholic Hispanic nation-state.

BEING STREET SMART

In streetwalking, the gender-nonconforming bodies of trans* people are hyper-visible against the deserted nighttime landscapes. Streetwalking—by sex workers, activists, entertainers, and LGBTQ activists—reminds us that “the earth is also skin and that [in streetwalking we] can legitimately take possession of a street, or an entire city, albeit on different terms than we may be familiar with” (McKittrick 2006, ix). The potential of death lingers in the night air, behind every car door. The policing of trans* bodies is another chapter in the legacy of Christian coloniality that marks streets as spaces of hypersurveillance. The trans* activist Christian Dumont (who uses multiple gender pronouns) tells us,

Being trans*, walking through the street at night to take a *carro público* [share cabs] or a taxi, they load you into their cars for nothing—to round you up. When that happens to me, I know that if you have your *cédula* [national identity card], they can't arrest you because they could easily say they were taking you in for being undocumented. Instead, I fight and I tell the police they have to let me go. But if I am with a *compañero*, to intimidate him, they say to him, “You come with us, not you [meaning me].” I get in the middle and say, “No. You aren't taking either of us in. There are other people here. You have to take everyone on this street if you are taking us in.” (interview, Dumont, April 2013)

During the Trujillo dictatorship, there existed extreme and visible modes of surveillance and discipline—including public torture, haphazard disappearances, and the ever-present black *cepilllos* (Volkswagen buggies) that patrolled the city streets on the lookout for dissidents. The *cepilllos* held both material and symbolic value, embedding the power of the Trujillato in the time-space of the streets. They came to signify political terror through their increasing presence and the repeated association of their presence with the increasing disappearance of loved ones. They were, in effect and in action, an extrajudicial, semiprivate space that moved throughout the veins of the city. People were swallowed up by the *cepilllos*, usually alive, and they could disappear altogether or reemerge dead. The silhouettes of those inside were only visible as shadows, masking the very real torture being enacted through both speech and physical acts. Today, the use of cars to carry off those who are streetwalking—including sex workers, trans* people, undocumented people, and Dominicans of Haitian descent—in the

middle of the night is a direct replication of a Trujillo-era state tactic, and one that is used regularly to instill sexual terror.

For Dumont, there was nothing exceptional about getting picked up by police. In fact, it was so commonplace that Dumont knew how to defend their self. As a person with a *cédula*,⁹ Dumont also had the tools necessary to defend their rights as a citizen, despite the fact that the context of defense is already a violent, unjust circumstance. Their ability to use deflection tactics also emerges from an understanding that if they draw attention to the police officers' actions in a voice loud enough to draw attention to the scene, the likelihood of something happening (abduction or harm) is greatly reduced. A loud, witness-drawing *confrontación* draws attention to the matter at hand. By calling others who are streetwalking to attention, the police are outnumbered, surrounded. Dumont makes it clear that there is a collectivity when they state, "There are other people here. You have to take everyone on this street if you are taking us in." Though it might not work every time, the possibility that Dumont will disappear is lessened because of the act of collective witnessing. Choosing to speak rather than remaining silent enables Dumont to mobilize that collectivity in a way that weakens, and even stops, the police's abuse of power. Dumont's experiences are but one example of the ways in which sexual terror permeates Dominican society.

Being street smart is about knowing what is going on around you. In this section, I have aimed to bring our collective attention to what's going on in the streets. Specifically, I have discussed the case of the D.R. as a Catholic Hispanic nation-state. As a Catholic Hispanic nation-state, the D.R. provides a rich context for thinking through the long and palimpsestic weight of Christian coloniality. We can look to fifteenth- and sixteenth-century debates about the nature of the human and understand that these debates had real material implications for the lives and deaths of Indigenous and African peoples for over three hundred years. We can look to the impact of U.S. occupation and homegrown authoritarian rule in relationship to Christian colonial ideals in order to understand the ways in which sexual terror permeates all aspects of contemporary society. The Catholic Hispanic state brings these dynamics and stories into sharp relief, but they are stories that teach us to think about similar processes taking place across the Americas, the Global South, and the world.

Christianity is far from homogenous or singular. The history of Christianity is deeply structured by local, regional, and global struggles over the discursive meanings of the divine and the divine's relationship to the human. This is of particular importance in the realm of human rights as they affect LGBTQ people.

Within the Spanish colonial processes of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Christian theologians grappled with the discursive justification for genocide, enslavement, and dispossession. For example, in the trials of Valladolid in 1550–1551, Bartolome de las Casas and Juan Gines de Sepúlveda debated notions of the human and whether these notions could be universal and thus applicable

to the indigenous peoples of the Americas. In the end, both theologians came to distinctly different conclusions. While Sepúlveda advocated that natural law (drawn from Aristotle) could be universally applied, he suggested that within the premises of natural law, a natural hierarchy existed in which indigenous peoples—and other non-Christian “barbarians”—were squarely at the bottom. Las Casas, on the other hand, drew on concepts of natural law to conclude that all persons—especially those who were not heretics (such as Muslims and Jews)—were capable of embodying Christian virtue and Christianity (Adorno 2007). From Las Casas’s point of view, Christianity and its successful embodiment could become the measures of universal personhood. In this way, Christianity was taken up by colonial governors such as Nicolás de Ovando to establish universal Christian measures of human being. The goal of Christian colonial policies was to assist indigenous peoples in that process of entering into “humanness.” Those who failed to meet the standards could be (and were) enslaved, killed, and discursively reconfigured as belonging to a primitive past. In other words, by failing to meet the requirements of personhood as determined by a Christian framework, indigenous people inadvertently and unknowingly abdicated their rights to their lands, their belongings, and their persons. It was never a just war.

Our contemporary concepts of human rights emerge from these same Christian colonial preoccupations with the nature of human being among America’s indigenous and Africa’s sub-Saharan peoples. The possibility that all beings could be human but might not be was deeply interconnected with Christian theological preoccupations with salvation intertwined with Spanish colonial preoccupations with just war and expansion. Las Casas, in particular, is named as the Christo-patriarchal source of human rights law. Drawing on Spanish juridical texts, canonical law, and the Bible, Las Casas argued that natural law made potential Christian subjects of all persons. He did not argue against Spanish conquest but rather against the violence of the conquest, positing that Christian love and its universal messages were more just motivations for expansion across indigenous territories—territories that he argued needed to be protected against savage tyranny. Las Casas effectively constructed universalist arguments of common nature while at the same time making recourse to the necessity to respect the sovereignty of indigenous kingdoms.

Today, human rights and civil rights as applied to liberal notions of citizenship within modern nation-states seemingly represent the broadest and most inclusive modes of personhood and belonging. But is this really the case?

Dominican LGBTQ activists purposely use lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans* political identities even when tacit subjectivity (Decena 2011) is an option, even when other affective sexual dispositions exist. In this way, LGBTQ personhood serves as a strategic universalism that connects Dominican LGBTQ activists with others facing similar struggles transnationally. The mobilization of LGBTQ personhood as a strategic universalism allows for the possibility of claiming

a universal moral personhood that is both human and gay/lesbian/bisexual/trans*—epistemic categories that are mutually exclusive within the parameters of Christian coloniality. In contrast to strategic essentialism, which collapses distinct enunciations of personhood into essentialist categories for rights struggles, strategic universalism enables us to conceptualize the mobilization of identities like LGBTQ, feminist, and *Afro-descendiente* to “make redemptive personal and ethical sense of the human depth of [our] experience of sexuality [and spirituality] . . . [thereby] reclaiming our sexuality and our moral powers of love and transcendence on terms of equal justice” (Richards 1999, 96).

Universalism is an empty signifier “whose very emptiness and lack creates a pluralized, difference-based competition on the part of various particularisms in a democratic social-symbolic field to assume the position of the universal organization” (Lott 2000, 670). Dominican LGBTQ activists transcend the particularities and specificities of their ontological locations to enact and mobilize internationalized, universalized concepts of identities and rights with the full knowledge that these identities do not begin to reflect or encompass the complete range of local, ontological understandings of humanness or personhood. In contrast to Paul Gilroy’s use of strategic universalism as a cosmopolitan “planetary humanism” (2000, 327) that transcends but does not transit through the national, in which the particularities of black or LGBTQ struggles are subsumed or erased as viable political concepts (Robotham 2005, 564), the way that Dominican LGBTQ activists enact strategic universalism is through the operationalization of universalized categories like LGBTQ personhood in the struggle against Christian colonial sexual terror. The use of identity categories such as LGBTQ serves to index the *resistencia* mobilized through streetwalking. By taking recourse to international and, in some cases, cosmopolitan LGBTQ identities, Dominican LGBTQ activists draw attention to the shortcomings and breaches of Catholic Hispanic nationalist ideologies while also revealing nationalist anxieties about modernity, progress, and global citizenship. By engaging in these universalisms, Dominican LGBTQ activists are able to access the spaces, resources, and tools necessary for realizing a local struggle against sexual terror, including those persons who may identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or trans*. This political orientation is also informed by the principles of *guatiao* and *ubuntu*, concepts distinct from the liberal renderings of personhood that demarcate LGBTQ categorizations.

Attending to erotic orientations undermines totalizing liberal (and neoliberal) narratives of subjectivity. For those who exercise an LGBTQ politics in the realm of social struggle, the issue is not the viability of a public queer life or the radical realization of a Christian spiritual-religious life. The recourse to the language of human and civil rights, however, allows them to navigate both without sacrificing either. For Dominican LGBTQ activists, the promises of liberal human rights activism lie in the realization of LGBTQ *resistencia* to universalized

concepts of the human that exclude their very existence—that is, the highest purpose of human and civil rights is the possibility of freedom from church-state oppression as people who fail to conform to biblical notions of personhood. Even as LGBTQ activists fight for civil and human rights, what lies at the heart of the struggle eschews liberal notions of the individual and provides an alternate road map for what it means to be both liberated and a citizen. LGBTQ activists have drawn from the cultural concepts of *guatiao* and *ubuntu*. Building on Allen's (2011) discussion of friendship as a space for freedom that elides liberal notions of citizenship, *guatiao* and *ubuntu*—as fundamental aspects of LGBTQ activist struggles for liberation—recenter notions of friendship and love as strategies and possibilities inherent to *resistencia*. They reveal how erotic orientations are grounded in shared experiences and in a subjectivity that is always already in relation to others.

As Deivis Ventura, an outspoken and well-known gay activist, explained to me, *guatiao* is an Aboriginal word that means “I am you, you are me” (Whitehead 2011). Deivis also equated it with the Xhosa term *ubuntu* in the same conversation. He clarified that both *ubuntu* and *guatiao* mirror the same basic principle: a sense of self as a sense of community. Sitting in a small office at an HIV advocacy organization, I asked Deivis what he understands LGBTQ activism to be about:

ME: Why fight for the rights of LGBTQ people?

DEIVIS: We are not fighting for exceptional rights or special benefits. We are fighting for the rights that are ours to begin with—human rights, rights that we have as Dominican citizens.

ME: I've also noticed that many Dominican LGBTQ activists are involved in other struggles—like the 4 percent education struggle and the *lucha* for the rights of Dominicans of Haitian descent.

DEIVIS: That's right. It is related to the concept *guatiao*, or *ubuntu*. *Guatiao* comes from the Taino and *ubuntu* from Africa. Both concepts mean “I am you, you are me. We are.”

ME: Why is this concept so important to Dominican LGBTQ activists? I have heard others use it too.

DEIVIS: First of all, people say we deny our *negritud*. That is not true. Then they say we all want to be *indios*. That is also not true. But to say we are not *indio* and then to deny the way we live our *negritud* is very violent. So in instances when we have met with other Caribbean LGBTQ activists, it has become important for us to clarify our values, our understandings of our identities and histories, and the values that shape our approach to our activism. *Guatiao*, *ubuntu*, allow us to do just that.

ME: So would you say that these concepts are part of what it means to be Dominican?

DEIVIS: I wouldn't say that people have this as part of their general consciousness, no. But in the LGBTQ community, we know that when we fight for ourselves, we fight for everyone.

As I wrapped up our interview, I asked Devis where he first heard the term *ubuntu*. He laughed and scolded me: "From Mandela! You don't know Mandela?!" I laughed but admitted that though I knew of Nelson Mandela, I did not know the history of the word *ubuntu* outside of its presence in the African American holiday Kwanzaa, which had been acknowledged and celebrated in my high school. *Ubuntu* is a term from the Nguni language of the Xhosa/Zulu people. Mandela discussed the term in a 2006 interview and described it as "an innate duty to support one's fellow man" (Oppenheim 2012, 370). As presented by Claire E. Oppenheim in her cross-cultural comparison of the concept, "ubuntu is a spiritual ideal, a way of life that is conceptually represented in a wide range of sub-Saharan African societies" (2012, 370) and carries within its definition a "moral directive to create community," "to become more fully, genuinely human, in unity with one's fellow man" (371). It is also a conceptual framework for how to carry out the development of this ideal: ubuntu "requires that [ones' harmonious integration into one's community of fellow man] be largely comprised of direct, face-to-face, positive interaction with one's community members" (371).

As a value and a practice, the concept of *ubuntu* provides Dominican LGBTQ activists with the necessary framework for grounding their work in the overall spiritual development of Dominican personhood. Similarly, within the precepts of LGBTQ activism, *guatiao*, aside from being a social practice, is also a *political* practice for the establishment of relationships between different communities, reframing the terms on which solidarities are constructed. In historical literature, *guatiao* has been articulated as similar to the Spanish process of *compadrazgo* (godparenting), in which, "through the sacrament of baptism, parents and godparents are united in an indissoluble union" (Arrom 1973, 16). This metaphor is only problematic in that it is based on unequal relationships between two individuals and mobilizes Christian colonial logics that presume these hierarchies. *Guatiao* has also been defined as the practice of establishing mutual alliances through intentional relationships and the exchange of names (Guitar 2013) and as the actual name that indigenous people used to describe themselves in the Caribbean (Whitehead 2011). From these definitions, as well as usage practices among the Kalinago today, we can surmise that *guatiao* could be construed as an indigenous Caribbean naming practice that confers alliances, inscribes communal histories onto interpersonal relationships, and redefines communities. As a concept, it is marked by endemic understandings of interdependence, often extending beyond the individual to the family and the nation and beyond the nation to international relationships (personal conversation, José Barreira, October 2012).

In this sense, *guatiao* and *ubuntu* were articulated to me as part of the underlying cultural logic that informs the Dominican radical politics of belonging among LGBTQ activists in the D.R. *Guatiao* is a concept that has generated a “sense of recognition”—a self-identification that helps things fall into place. As Deivis elaborated to me in our interview, “If you can understand that the struggle for human rights is one aspect of what *guatiao* is, then you can understand why we LGBTQ activists don’t struggle simply for our rights—we *fight for everybody’s rights*” (Deivis’s emphasis). Time and time again, with a diverse range of LGBTQ activists, I heard the same sentiment. Chris, a trans* activist, stated, “What makes us *quir* is that we fight for everybody.” Or Monica, another trans* activist, said, “I’m not interested in being free simply to be free. If I am free, it is because we all are.” Or Mirla, a lesbian activist, told me early on in my research, “A lesbian politics has to do with the fact that all of us are able to have the same rights—without being part of an institution.”

Although these sentiments could be read as expressions of liberal notions of equality, the underlying contextual meaning, and the place of articulation, speaks volumes. When Chris made their statement, we were at a protest organized by a group of people fighting for *justicia fiscal* (economic justice). Chris was not responding to any sort of question; I had not asked Chris why they were there or made any comment about why I was there. Chris was articulating a political position in a group context in which several people were standing around and talking about government corruption. Chris was, most specifically, articulating a *quir* presence—a presence informed by ideas and understandings of community interdependence. It was also a specific location, within *quir*-ness itself, of a politics that extends beyond HIV advocacy or simply belonging. Monica and I, though in the context of a one-on-one interview, were discussing what it means for her to be trans*. Monica’s sense of freedom was most importantly about being free in relationship with and to others’ freedom. *Guatiao* and *ubuntu*, as Deivis explicitly articulated, offer political possibilities that enable LGBTQ activists to establish alliances with other marginalized groups and with Dominican society as a whole. In this sense, *guatiao* and *ubuntu* signal an erotic orientation toward streetwalking. They enable LGBTQ activists to express their strategic goals in their struggle for civil and human rights as encompassing the exercise of one’s power to make decisions for one’s personal and collective life without harm to others while also demanding the transformation of the Catholic Hispanic nation-state.

The *guatiao* and *ubuntu* frameworks operate alongside an explicit mobilization of a strategic universalism that consists of framing local struggles in the language of international movements. This purposefully brings attention to the juridical dimensions of the discrimination Dominican LGBTQ activists face. And despite the potential for instilling the exclusionary logics of neoliberalism, the local use of a universal, political notion of LGBTQ does not obscure or diminish other self-articulations of LGBTQ relationality. As yet another lesbian

activist, Jennifer, stated, “I consider myself a lesbian because it is the classification that society has given a woman who loves another woman.” When Mirla stated, in the context of a one-on-one interview, that “a lesbian politics has to do with the fact that all of us are able to have the same rights—without being part of an institution,” she was very consciously aware of her own political location and was being clear to me that she is an autonomous, radical lesbian. The entire interview, in fact, was about her personal trajectory in the Dominican lesbian feminist movement and the many instances in which she had been excluded from different circles of activists *because* of her insistence on not belonging to a feminist institution invested in the Catholic Hispanic nation-state. For her, lesbian politics is about the transformation of our idea about what rights are or could be—beyond the institutions or structures that confer them. It is also about rights that extend beyond the personal experiences of lesbians and includes others adversely affected by the policies and actions of a Catholic Hispanic nation-state.

When Dominican LGBTQ activists confront the church (rather than the Dominican government) in protests demanding the recognition of gay marriage, their demand takes on an equally significant moral imperative: the protection of the lives and souls of LGBTQ persons. In the D.R., the grounds for political possibilities shift beyond the mere structures of secular democratic principles, extending into a struggle over the epistemic and ontological realization of human life.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have traced the ways in which the logics of Christian coloniality produce the conditions of sexual terror. Sexual terror is not just an intimate kind of violence; it also includes the structures and institutions that uphold the ideologies central to the perpetuation of violence. I focus on the multiple layers of structural and institutional Christian coloniality—from how LGBTQ persons are configured through power struggles between the Global North and South to how the state configures personhood as rooted in the heteropatriarchal family. By discussing the social response by Christian leaders in the D.R. to Ambassador Brewster’s appointment, I also bring to light the very material, concrete ways in which Christian fundamentalism shapes public conversations about who belongs and who does not. I bring us back to a conversation about universalisms and ask us to consider how universalisms like human rights provide tools for LGBTQ activists to articulate political strategies. But LGBTQ activists in the D.R. are also well aware and make manifest other articulations of personhood.

By drawing out an analysis of Christian coloniality and its attendant sexual terror, I conclude my discussion of the context in which LGBTQ activists live their lives and formulate protests. In the next section of this book, “Streetwalking,” we will turn to a discussion of the multiple and overlapping strategies utilized by LGBTQ activists in the realization of their vision for a more just world.

