

“Modernity, Nationhood and
Independence in the
Nineteenth-Century Caribbean

Diego Ubiera, PhD

Larger Questions of the Project

- Haiti/DR as cradle of freedom and alternative to the hostile, colonial environment in the Caribbean at mid-century.
- Complicate conflict narratives of Haitian-Dominican relations.
- Narrate the experiences and political thinking of subjects outside of formal politics.
- Bonó's essays as a reflection of popular sentiment. A "transcultural", elite adaptation of popular thought.
- For most lettered urban elites who hoped to forge a modern nation-state, the great majority of the island's residents represented a problem.
- Bonó as an anti-colonial essayist who offered an alternative to this paternalistic, annexationist/imperialist project of modernity.

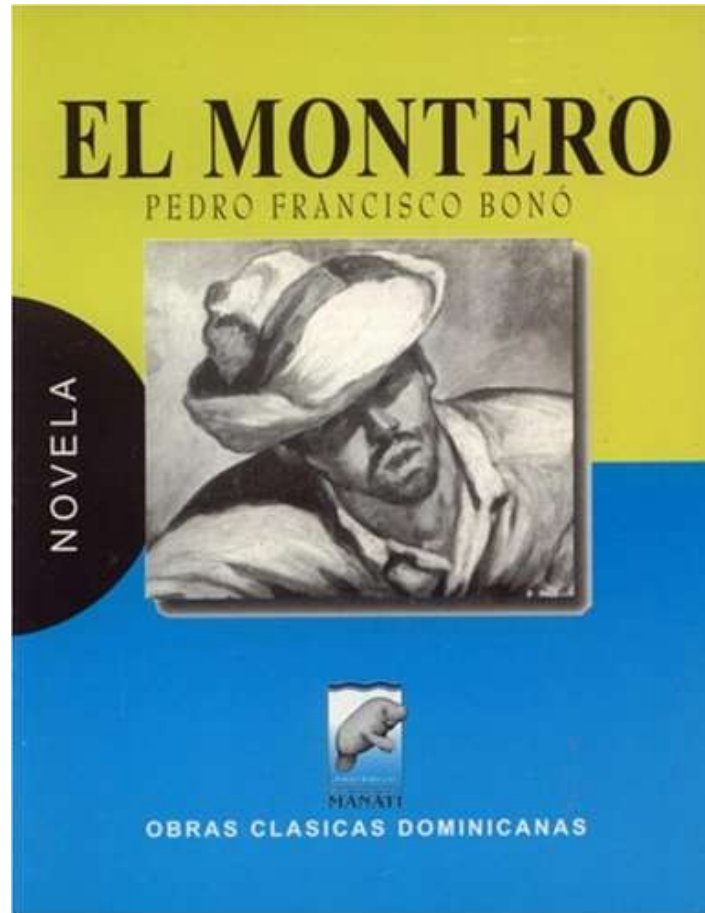
Pedro Francisco Bono – 1828-1906



El Montero – 1850s – Latin American “Costumbrismo”



“The water carrier” (1850s).
Peruvian artist, Francisco Fierro



Marc Ferrez, 1882 photograph of Bahian
Woman

Colonial Santo Domingo and “Reconstituted Peasants” – 1500s-1790s



Caribbean Basin



Democratic Tobacco vs. Oligarchic Sugar

- “He [Tobacco] has been, is and will be the true father of the nation, for those that observe him in his economic effects, civil and political. He is the basis of our infant democracy for the equilibrium in which it maintains the fortunes of all individuals, and from there comes to be the most serious barrier of possible oligarchies; he was and is the most firm support of our autonomy and he is, finally, who maintains the economy of the republic for the interchanges that he realizes and the industries that he promotes and needs ... tobacco today for the *Cibao* directly and the republic indirectly, is the crop that should be favored given its beneficial contact with all criollo industries.... It activates the division of labor by a permanent demand of various services offered by the working classes”. (Pedro Francisco Bono)

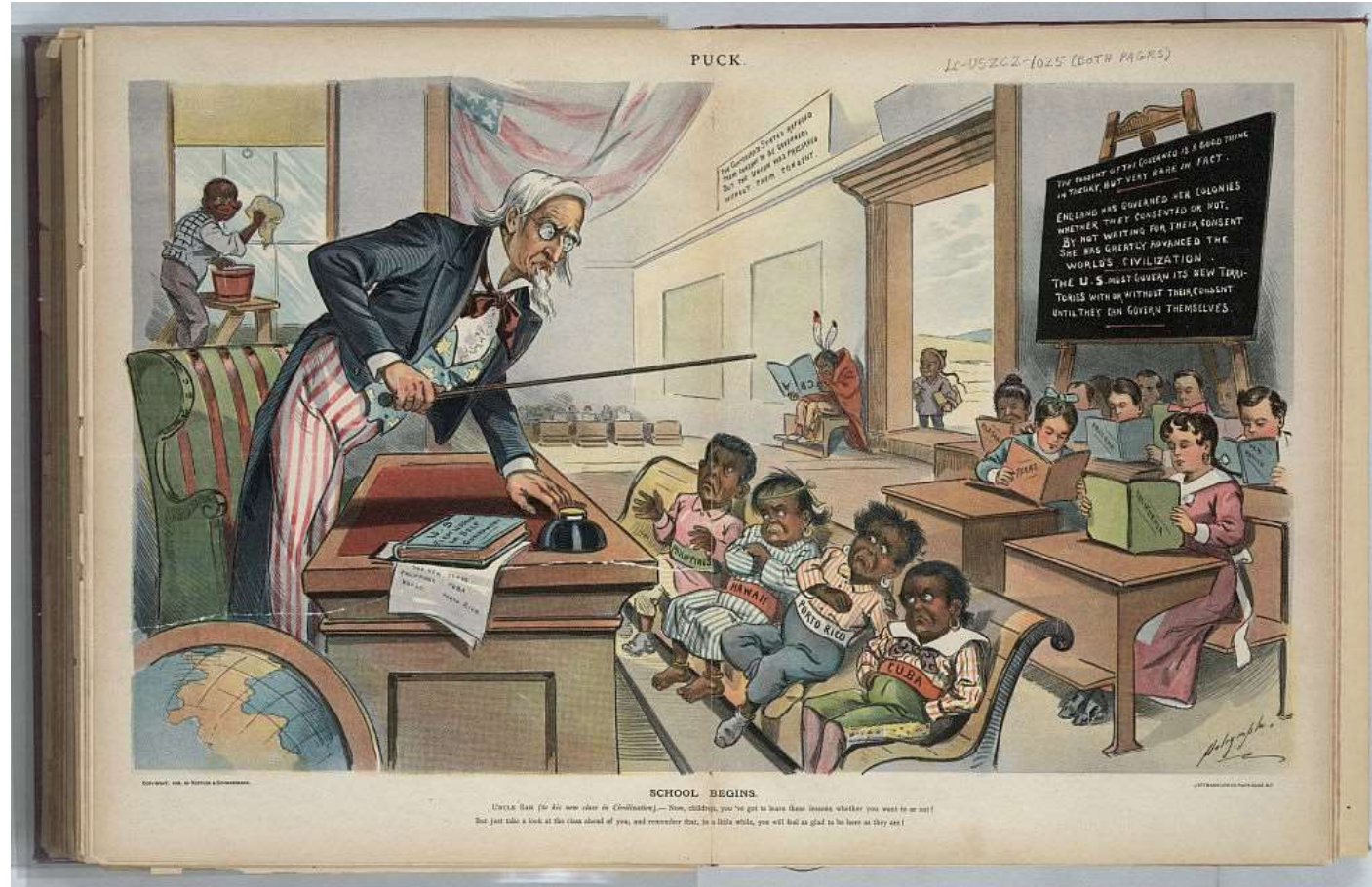
Bono's letter to new General/President Luperon (1880s)

- “That foreign capitalists come here and establish four to six sugar mills on top of fertile lands that were given almost freely or very cheaply on the shores of the sea or on navigable rivers – bravo – that they introduce the machinery, housing, and transportation without paying a cent – bravo, bravo – that the masters see themselves surrounded by a population that before were owners of the land and are now their serfs, that this same population who not only have been converted into serfs, also have to defend the farms with guns that they have to purchase at their own expense – and let the bravos continue. Well, general, defend the peasant worker - who are the real nation. Since I live in a very isolated area of the country I have savage opinions, but general, the more I see the government protect the sugar industry, the poorer I see the blacks of *Sabana Grande* and *Monte Adentro*, and if this continues, all of the small farmers that have been citizens until today will become peons and serfs, and Santo Domingo will become a mini Cuba, Puerto Rico or Louisiana. But the issue goes far beyond current demands and it is inappropriate for a letter of congratulation.”

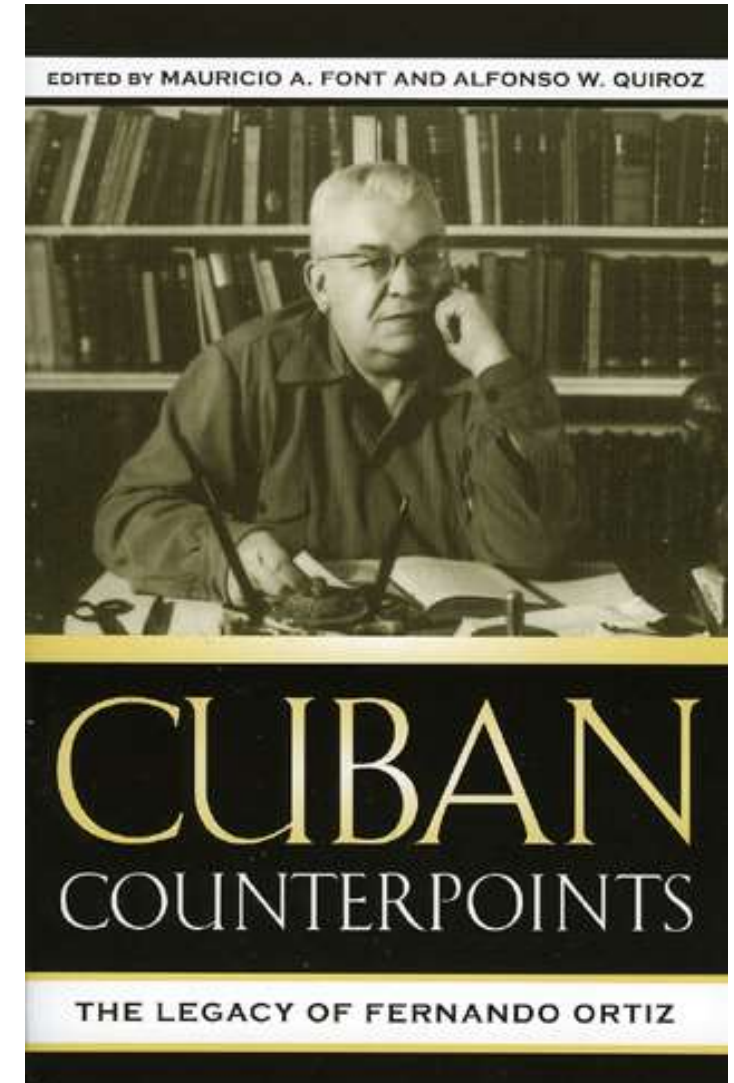
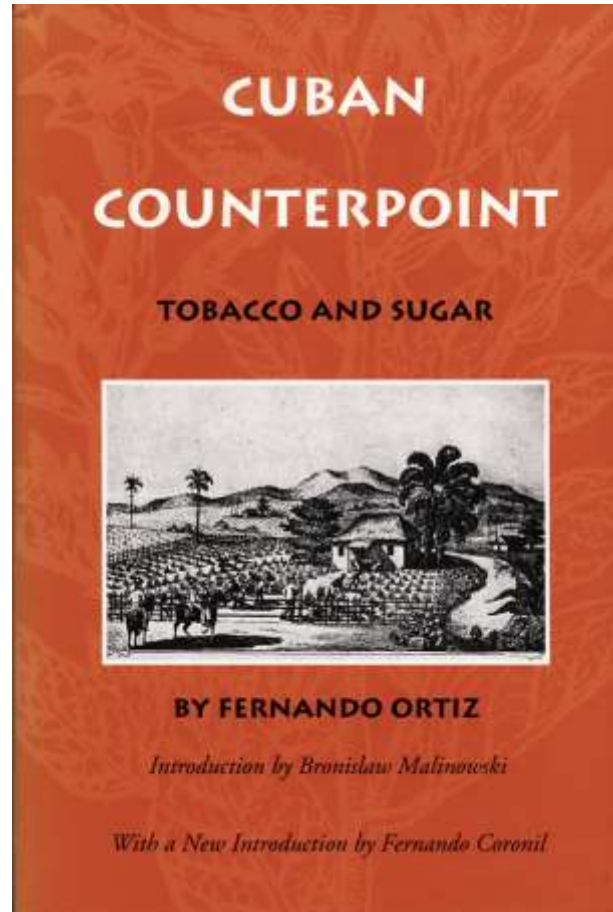
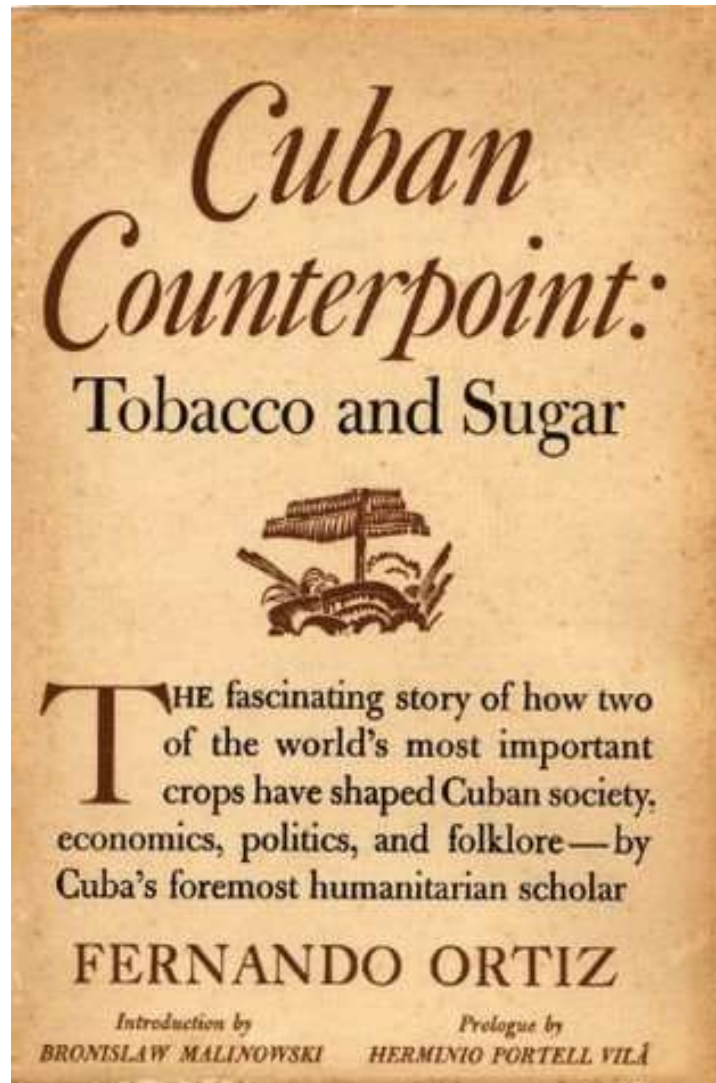
Haiti/DR Independence and state-formation, 1791-1865

- 1500s-1790s – Colonial Period
- 1791-1822 – Revolutionary period
- 1822-1844 – Haitian Unification Period
- 1844-1863 – First Republic
- 1863-1865 – War of Restoration
- 1880s-1916 – Sugar Modernity, Economic Liberalism, Positivism and “Order and Progress.”

Order, Progress, Imperialism



Fernando Ortiz, “transculturation”, and *Cuban Counterpoint* (1940)



Fernando Ortiz and “Transculturation”

- “*Transculturación* (transculturation) is a term coined by the Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz in his canonical essay *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar* (1940). This term was a revision of the term *acculturation* introduced to US and British anthropology and social sciences by the Jewish Polish ethnographer Bronislaw J. Malinowski in the 1920s and 1930s. The term appeared first in the work of US anthropologist J. W. Powell (1834–1902). Both theories were based in migration and migratory studies, and an analysis of the cultures of immigrant populations into the United States and Cuba. While acculturation¹ described the assimilation processes into US society, where European, African, and other immigrant populations learned English and assimilated into American society, *transculturation* addressed the complex processes of exchange—linguistic, economic, racial, gendered, and cultural—involved in these exchanges. For Ortiz, cultural assimilation was not a one-way process that involved one less powerful culture assimilating into a more powerful one, giving bicultural peoples a sense of “loss” as Malinowski’s proposed for US acculturation, but a two- or more way exchange of cultural influences, layering upon each other in complex processes of power, loss, and production”.