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Pussy for Life: Adherence and Deviance from the Dominican Masculine Code in Junot Díaz's *Drown*

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"Are you going to be a pussy all your life?" Rafa asks Yunior in Junot Díaz's *Drown* (1996), setting up the many confrontations faced by the young narrator as he learns what is expected of him as a man. The masculine role models in his life encourage him to distance himself from his emotions and turn on the offensive; rather than be a pussy, Yunior should get pussy. Junot Díaz offers a glimpse into the Dominican experience of poverty and the unfulfilling search for the "American Dream" as an immigrant in the United States. The collection of short stories functions as a bildungsroman of the protagonist Yunior and his maturation into a Dominican male. This paper will use the theoretical framework of masculinities as proposed by R. W. Connell to explore this process of becoming a Dominican male both in the Dominican Republic and in the United States. I will argue that adherence to the masculine code and pressure from the normative gaze of protest masculinity upon urban immigrant males in this book serve to block any alternative and punish any deviation of the code which thereby limits its participants' mobility and forces them into rigid gender roles.

Drown is composed of 10 short stories that can be read together yet can stand-alone. The publication of *Drown*, Díaz's first book, was met with critical acclaim and immediate success for the young author. Díaz is a graduate of Rutgers and of the writing program at Cornell. Critic James Wood describes Díaz's unique writing style as incorporating "a non-literary vernacular compounded of African-American slang, loosened Spanish and standard American short storytelling" (1). Díaz's style is grittier, more urban than his widely successful countrywoman Julia Álvarez, who brought Dominican life to the United States in her books *How the García Girls Lost their Accents* (1992) and *In the Time of the Butterflies* (1994). Díaz's stories revolve around the early

childhood of Yuniór, who, in the earliest story, is nine years old and living in the Dominican Republic and his subsequent adolescence and adulthood in the United States. Spanish is intermixed with English with little or no translation. The Spanish words chosen seem to focus on derogatory words for body parts, such as *pinga*, *tetas* and *chocha*, and insults such as *pato*, *puto*, and *sucia*. The title of the book comes from a key short story in the young narrator's life, that of homoerotic desire and deviation from the masculine code that has been so deeply ingrained in his family structure.

The title, and perhaps the impact of the book, is changed in translation. In the United States, Díaz published the book as *Drown*. The edition in Spanish in 1997, however, does not translate the original title into the Spanish *Ahogar(se)* but rather is labeled *Negocios*. This appellation was taken from the last of the short stories and highlights the protagonist's father and his masculine success with women. According to Lucía M. Suárez, this change "emphasized the kind of masculine success that is valued in the traditional Dominican culture of manhood" (92). Suárez goes on to describe that success as having "two wives, two sons named after him and several mistresses" (92). A further change to the principal focus of the book can be found in the edition published in Spain (1996) and France (2000) as *Los boys*, highlighting the urban street life of Dominican immigrants in the United States. An earlier edition was printed in France (1998) under the title of *Comment sortir une latina, une black, une blonde ou une métisse* after the story "How to Date a Browngirl, Blackgirl, Whitegirl, or Halfie" (Suárez footnote 2, 196). This again changes the focus of the collection. Regardless of the choice of title, Díaz's stories penetrate the masculine code of what it means to be not just a man but also, more specifically, a Dominican man. The stories show the protagonist at different stages in his maturation into Dominican manhood.

Díaz admits a certain level of autobiography in the character of Yuniór. Both the narrator and the protagonist grew up in poverty in the Dominican Republic, and both immigrated to the United States at a young age. Díaz, like Yuniór in his younger years, "was a bad student and . . . poorly behaved" (Céspedes and Torres-Saillant 894). Díaz also admits that he was "not some super-tiguere [hustler]" (895). The author and the protagonist share the experience of having an absent father working in the United States, and in their adult years both deliver pool tables for a living. That is not to say that the collection is completely

autobiographical. Díaz, in his interview with Céspedes and Torres-Saillant, acknowledges the way he plays with the genre of autobiography but quantifies his tinkering with the notion that "narrators are notoriously unreliable" and that "you can't observe anything directly. . . . The very observation of it changes it" (906). Therefore, we must take into account the narrative filter of the book, especially with most of it being through a child's perspective.

This paper will explore the theoretical framework of masculinities in its larger sense. Although the book is dedicated to Díaz's mother, I argue that the focus lies more with male-to-male relationships while treating male-female relationships consequentially. This focus corresponds to Gardiner's theory that "current masculinity studies focus less on men's power over women and more on relationships between men, as they are regulated by regimes of masculinity" (14). The book follows the maturation of the protagonist through his indoctrination into masculinity in three important stages of his life. During Yuniór's childhood, the father, usually the principal receptacle of masculine code is absent, looking for work and economic success in the United States. In his absence, Yuniór's older brother, Rafa, fulfills the role of indoctrinator to the easily influenced Yuniór. In his adolescence, the masculine code of the narrator comes into question by his homosexual encounters with his best friend Beto, which makes the narrator both question the masculine code and ultimately reify his allegiance to it in adulthood, especially in the relationship with his girlfriend Aurora.

When discussing non-white, immigrant masculinity, it is important to differentiate the hegemonic white code, read establishment, from the protest masculinity code of those males excluded from the hegemony. Connell points out that "protest masculinity is a marginalized masculinity, which picks up themes of hegemonic masculinity in the society at large but reworks them in a context of poverty" (114). Díaz focuses on the backdrop of poverty both in the Dominican Republic and in the United States. In the Dominican Republic, Rafa describes the countryside with the exclamation "this is shit" (*Drown* 4). The boys' mother would often send them to family members in the countryside during the summers when she was unable to watch over them because of the economic need to work long hours for little pay in the chocolate factory. The father, working in the United States but not sending money home, exacerbates their poverty. When the father, Papi, finally establishes himself in the United States as a resident (by marrying a

United States citizen), he sends for his Dominican family to join him in his quest for "the American Dream." The dream figures as disappointment for the family and does not dramatically improve their economic situation. In fact, when the family was living in Edison, New Jersey, Yunior's best friend equates their neighborhood with the large dump located in the same town.

As a child, Yunior learns how to be a man from his brother Rafa during their stays together in the Dominican countryside, where Rafa allows Yunior to tag along and teaches him to toughen up at any sign of emotion: "You have to get tougher. . . . Do you think Papi's crying?" (*Drown* 14). Another part of being a man, according to Rafa, is physical violence, often directed toward another boy, Ysreal, and verbal violence, directed toward Yunior. On two separate occasions Rafa finds Ysrael, the boy whose face was eaten off by a pig when he was young, and physically beats him to be able to see his face under his homemade mask. Yunior, who is nine years old, shows compassion toward Ysreal and regret for his brother's actions, and thus positions himself opposite of Dominican masculinity.

Furthermore, Rafa chides Yunior for his complexion and the size of his lips to make Yunior think that he is not Dominican. "It's the Haitian" (*Drown* 5), Rafa says to his friends in regards to Yunior's appearance. He continues, "hey Señor Haitian, Mami found you on the border and only took you in because she felt sorry for *you*" (5 original emphasis). Equating Yunior with being Haitian positions him as "other." Very present in the Dominican imaginary is the differentiation from the Haitian peoples, solidified by the Haitian Massacre in 1937. The Dominican dictator Trujillo exemplified the desire not to be black by his widely known practice of using skin-whitening lotions.

President Trujillo also serves as the powerful example of Dominican manhood when it comes to sexual prowess. Trujillo is the ultimate performance of a Dominican *tiguere*, a womanizer, and he indoctrinated the island by his example. According to Christian Krohn-Hansen's "Masculinity and the Political among Dominicans: The Dominican Tiger," the *tiguere*s have at their base a "shared language" that involves the "seduction of women, freedom from entrapment, and advancement of career or social status" (qtd. in Suárez 97). Rafa, at age twelve, already personifies these characteristics when he tells Yunior of his sexual exploits with women even though Yunior admits that he was "too young to understand most of what he [Rafa] said, but

listened to him anyway, in case these things might be useful in the future" (*Drown* 6). Dissatisfied with the country life, Rafa proclaims that upon his arrival back in Santo Domingo, "I'm going to go crazy, chinga all my girls and chinga everyone else's, I won't stop dancing either" (*Drown* 4). In Santo Domingo, Rafa and his *tiguere* friends in addition to having sexual relations with girls, write "chocha and toto on walls and curbs" (5), derogatory references to female genitalia. To occupy his *tiguere* desires in the countryside, he tells Yunior about his sexual rendezvous with the girls in the countryside: "not that the campo girls gave up ass like the girls back in the Capital but kissing them . . . was pretty much the same. . . . If he was lucky they let him put in their mouths or in their asses. . . . He'd done La Muda that way for almost a month" (5). Rafa even laughs at the stupidity of one girl who was half-Haitian, because she "believed that she wouldn't get pregnant if she drank a Coca-Cola afterwards" (6).

Under his brother's guidance, Yunior attempts to perform the masculine code of the Dominican male on a bus ride, when an older man inappropriately pinches "the tip of [his] pinga through the fabric of [his] shorts" (*Drown* 12). Yunior responds to his advances by feminizing the man by calling him a "pato," a homosexual. The man keeps smiling and Yunior works up his nerve to call him a "low-down pinga-sucking pato" (12) and is immediately reminded of his inferior status as a child when the man squeezes Yunior's bicep to silence him. Yunior responds to the show of aggression by whimpering. Clearly, Yunior is not yet a Dominican man in every sense of the word; he is still vulnerable, and his vulnerability is manifest in tears after Yunior and his brother leave the scene of the transgression. Unaware of the events that had transpired between Yunior and the man on the bus, Rafa responds to Yunior's tears by saying, "you are a pussy, are you always going to be a pussy?" (14). This statement confirms Yunior's unmanliness. Not only is Yunior powerless in front of the man on the bus, but the effect of the man's actions were compounded by Rafa's response, further relegating Yunior into a position of marginalization.

In "Drown," the title chapter of the book, Díaz explores the normative protest masculinity code of compulsory heterosexuality and deviance from that code with the narrator's relationship with his best friend, Beto. The relationship, up until the homosocial crosses into the homosexual, is brimming with violence, theft and contempt for the social power that neither of the boys possesses. The pair "stole, broke

windows . . . pissed on people's steps and then challenged them to come out and stop us" (*Drown* 91). The majority of their interaction takes place in unregulated arenas such as the mall, parking lots and the community center pool after hours. The collective protest of all the kids in the neighborhood to the oppressive pool regulations manifests as mass illegal entry into the pool after hours. The narrative flows from past to present with ease, filling in holes in the past necessary to understand the narrator's present attitude toward his former best friend, turned "pato" (91).

Shoplifting for the pair is one attempt to try to chisel away at the oppressive economic reality of their lives as immigrants in the United States. The pair exhibits the same frenzied and showy behavior that Connell found while interviewing marginalized men in Australia. Beto and Yuniór are "making a claim to power where there are no real resources for power" (110-11). They pride themselves on the cool, smooth exits they orchestrate, often putting themselves into full view of security guards and engaging them in conversation. The activity serves as a space of homosocial interaction that both supports and subverts the protest masculinity of the barrio. When confronted by security, Beto reacts aggressively in concordance with the code of masculinity, especially when confronted by a woman by "slamming the heavy bag into her face" (*Drown* 98). The two flee and are finally caught hiding under a car. When confronted by real authority and institutional power, the narrator breaks with traditional code and cries. The only other incidence of crying in the book is in Yuniór's childhood, when his brother Rafa immediately scolds him for his display of emotion and insults him by calling him a "pussy" (14). Beto, on the other hand, reacts not by undermining the narrator's masculinity, but rather by grabbing his hand and squeezing it in an act of solidarity. Beto is careful not to look at Yuniór and visually acknowledge his weakness, while he is acting out of character for a barrio man. The solidarity Beto offers the narrator is the one of the few positive male-to-male interactions in the book, which marks it as significant in the maturation of Junior into manhood.

The two friends differ in their opinions of education. For Beto, education and the prospects of college are his ticket out of the barrio. Yuniór has a more antagonistic view of the education system and views it with contempt, all the while skipping school to read at the library. Yuniór, like the young men in Connell's study, "encounter[s] school

authority as an alien power and start[s] to define [his] masculinity against it" (Connell 100). This attitude is expressed by the fact that he "hated every single living teacher on the planet" (*Drown* 101). School does not offer any prospects for the narrator. This attitude is cemented by the shuttle metaphor one of his teachers was fond of retelling: "a few of you [students] are going to make it . . . but the majority of you are just going to burn out" (106). The narrator realizes that he is destined to burn out under the educational system and eventually resorts to proving his teacher's statements true by selling drugs in his old neighborhood. With no ambition to leave the neighborhood, school is nothing more than an oppressive reality. That is not to say that he does not value knowledge. Yuniór displays his 'hidden' knowledge to Beto one day at the pool, explaining the meaning of 'expectorating' found on a pool sign prohibiting the action to "the one leaving for college" (94), by spitting on the ground. Beto responds to this non-masculine show of intelligence with a show of physical dominance, pushing the narrator under water to compensate for his lack of intellectual knowledge.

Beto, on the other hand, breaks the normative gaze of protest masculinity by using school as an alternative option to living out his life in the barrio. Beto "hated everything about the neighborhood" (*Drown* 91) and was delirious about the thought of leaving for college. Beto's intense hatred of "the dump, especially the dump" (91) allows for his abjection of the neighborhood that he views as other. This distancing from the neighborhood allows for his expansion beyond his neighborhood through new acquaintances outside of the barrio. Because of his unique position, he is able to break with the code of masculinity not only socially, but also sexually.

Yuniór's present fears of running into Beto as an adult are presented with the backdrop of their close friendship in high school. The narrator alternates between "homeboy" and "pato" in referring to Beto. The chapter begins with the rupture of the friendship that permanently relegated Beto out of the homeboy category and into the pato category. Through the technique of retrospect, the narrator describes the homosexual encounters he shares with Beto, assuring the reader it happened "twice, that's it" (*Drown* 103). The first encounter occurs at Beto's house, vacated by his working parents, after an evening of swimming illegally at the community center. Watching Beto's father's pornography, the two friends' behaviors cross from homosocial into the

realm of homosexual desire and actions. Watching pornography is a repeated pattern in male bonding. Beto and his father would watch pornography in "the middle of the day, not caring a lick about his moms" (104) without speaking until "somebody caught it in the eye or the face" (104) where upon they would laugh at the feminization of the victim. Much like the main character in Piri Thomas' *Down these Mean Streets* (1967), who splits his "heterosexual" mind from his body, allowing the body, his sexual organ, to experience homoerotic desire" (Sánchez 124) Yuniór in "Drown" maintains his focus on the pornography on the television and not on Beto's hand reaching into his shorts. The narrator does respond to the transgression by saying, "what the fuck are you doing?" (*Drown* 104) but does not attempt to stop Beto. The memory of the event later reminds the narrator that Beto's hand was dry and that he was "too scared to watch" (104) the actual sex scene that he was involved in, so he maintained his gaze on the invented scene of the pornographic video.

After the first homosexual encounter, the narrator distances himself from his relationship with Beto and retreats to the basement of his house. Yuniór's fears of "end[ing] up abnormal, a fucking pato" (104) after one homosexual encounter demonstrate that homosexuality is obviously outside the dominant masculinity of the neighborhood. The homosocial bond the narrator feels with Beto overrides his fear of abnormality: "but he was my best friend and back then that mattered to me more than anything" (104). The emphasis here is on the narrator's view of the past. Back then, when the boys were forming their identity, friendship trumped deviant masculine behaviors but, presently, the normative masculine code overrides and limits any deviation from the status quo, and Yuniór refuses to go and see Beto who is home on break from college.

This fossilization of the masculine code excluding homosexual desires/relations is perhaps hastened by the second encounter between Beto and the narrator. As the first, the second begins with homosocial interactions at the swimming pool and proceeds to Beto's empty apartment. Beto offers Yuniór an out if he is not feeling well. In a show of bravado, the narrator plays it cool and accompanies Beto. Again the pair is in front of the television, but this time the homosexual act is intensified from manual stimulation to fellatio with the vivid image of Beto's "hands bracing against [the narrator's] abdomen and thighs" (*Drown* 105). Again Beto offers Yuniór an out, and again he refuses.

The narrator has not yet formed the concrete opinion of homosexuality as a disruption of the masculine code. After the act, Beto lays his head in Yuniór's lap, who was "not asleep or awake, but caught somewhere in between" (105); a clear reference to the liminal state of his not fully formed identity. This liminal peace of maturation and sexual pleasure is interrupted by an intrusion from the outside world. Beto's reaction is to laugh, but Yuniór "nearly cut[s] [his] dick off struggling with [his] shorts" (106). Only with this outside reminder of shame and deviance does the narrator finally get up and leave.

Had the narrator's strict masculine code been more developed, he could have easily responded to Beto's advances with violence. He chooses, however, to distance himself from his former "homeboy" turned "pato" in an attempt to ostracize deviance from his life. The narrator rejects a going away gift from Beto and discards it along with his friendship, thus internalizing the homosexual as "other." After the first sexual encounter, Beto's friendship proved more powerful than adherence to the masculine code, which in turn, led to the second encounter. The fear of recognition or of being caught in Beto's apartment, serves to make concrete the narrator's allegiance to the masculine code of the neighborhood, which necessarily views homosexuals as deviants to perpetuate its own power over those it views as less powerful.

The narrator carries this abjection of homosexuals into his adult life as he consistently talks of violence toward "patos" and advising others not to let their male family members turn into "patos." Part of performing protest masculinity includes vocal denigrations of homosexuals, especially prevalent in the same short story of his homosexual encounters with Beto. After unsuccessfully meeting girls at bars in the nearby city of New Brunswick, Yuniór and his friends Danny and Alex pass the "fag bar" (*Drown* 103) and yell insults. This verbal rejection of homosexuality and deviance from the masculine code serves structurally as the introduction to the narrator's confession of his homosexual experiences with Beto.

Once squarely situated on the side of the masculine code, the narrator must perform the heterosexual role of the barrio. The male heterosexual of the immigrant neighborhood fulfills his role by becoming hyper-masculine and hypersexual where the "three characteristics linked to the notion of hyper-masculinity of interest here are an

emphasis on strength, aggressiveness and sexual potence" (Myrittinen 29) and, by extension, economic success in its various forms.

The first attempts at heterosexual relations come in the story of "How to date a Browngirl, Blackgirl, Whitegirl or Halfie." The short story serves as a how-to manual for other boys of color on preparing the apartment for a potential date. And depending on the race of that date, the narrator describes what type of sexual relations can be expected. The story is directed to other boys living in poverty, with emphasis on removing "the government cheese from the refrigerator," complete with a note to yourself to put the cheese back before morning "or your moms will kick your ass" (*Drown* 143). Part of the preparation of the apartment includes taking down embarrassing photos of your family in the "campo, especially the one with the half-naked kids dragging a goat on a rope leash," removing pictures of yourself with an Afro and cleaning the bathroom wastebasket of "crapped-on toilet paper" (143-4). The most salient factor of the story is not the attempt at physical or emotional intimacy with the girls, but rather the sharing of the accomplishment with the other boys of the neighborhood. Here, Messner's and Sabo's insight is crucial: "Importantly, the sexual act is most erotically salient for the young man in terms of his status vis-à-vis his male peers—not in relation to his actual sexual partner" (67). Males are complicit in this exaggerated heterosexuality not only when the boy is waiting for the girl to show up, calling up their friends to ask "are you still waiting on that bitch?" (144), but also in the bragging about their conquest, "Lo hice loco" (148). While the sex acts are consensual, there is, of course, no discussion on the pleasure, if any, the female partner receives in this exchange.

The narrator's only adult relationship is with Aurora, who is "six months out of juvie" and "skinny like a twelve-year-old" (*Drown* 49). She is introduced in the short story as a drug addict and, more importantly, just after the narrator makes reference to excrement. Aurora is waiting outside for Yuniór to let her in for a drug fix and to have sex, but Yuniór lies in bed "listening to [the] neighbors flush parts of themselves down a pipe" (48) before he opens the door. Already Aurora's character is associated with powerlessness and the abjection of excrement. It is only fitting, then, that the narrator, performing the masculine code, treat her violently and with contempt. Aurora is further relegated to powerlessness by the narrator's animalization of her in relation to her dogs and later with her own association with dogs: "you

know me. Yo ando más que un perro" (49). Yuniór proceeds to grab at her clothes and engages her in rough sex where she reminds him twice to "go easy," and he replies with "I can't help myself" (50). In another encounter with Aurora he punches "her chest black-and-blue" and in yet another the narrator says "I'm amazed at how nasty I feel, how I want to put my fist in her face" (55). Later, when Aurora is gone, Junior punches himself in the nose "just to clear my head" (53). Sex, aggression and violence tend to be compounded in the immigrant masculine code of the neighborhood.

This aggressiveness does have its lapses. The narrator mentions that "every now and then she leaves one [message] that makes me want to treat her better" (*Drown* 48). There are various attempts to forego the chaotic life of drug dealing and intermittent sexual liaisons. These thoughts of giving up the street life and making a traditional home and family are fleeting. The couple breaks into empty apartments to apparently "play house" sometimes for weeks at a time until the superintendent comes and boards up the windows. They bring "sheets, pillows, and candles to make the place feel less cold" (54) but always end up back on the streets. The relationship goes from being on the streets to make-shift apartments, from being intimate and caring where they feel like "normal folks" (65) to one fraught with violence and drugs. This fluctuation from traditional family structure and traditional gender roles to one of violence and intermittent sex is highlighted by the economic realities of the neighborhood. Critic Maxime Baca Zinn describes this condition beautifully when she states that "there is a good deal of theoretical support for the contention that masculine roles and masculine identity may be shaped by a wide range of variables having less to do with culture than with common structural position" (35). Here, it is not the narrator's culture that demands hyper-masculinity, hyper-sexuality and violence, but rather his economic position of Dominican immigrant, forced out of traditional economic institutions and resorting to selling drugs, that determines his masculine role.

The masculine role of the Dominican male in *Drown* is characterized by his adherence to the masculine code that limits behavior. This strict adherence to gender code is what Gloria Anzaldúa refers to when she states, "men more than women, are fettered to gender roles" (106). The idea of a Dominican male in the neighborhood is that of a macho and is reinforced by Aurora's referring to the narrator by the same name. The term macho carries connotations of sexual potency as well as many

other culturally relevant diversions. For Anzaldúa, speaking of Chicano men and, I believe, relevant for Dominican men as well:

The modern meaning of the word "machismo," as well as the concept, is actually an Anglo invention. For men like my father, being "macho" meant being strong enough to protect and support my mother and us, yet being able to show love. Today's macho has doubts about his ability to feed and protect his family. His "machismo" is an adaptation to oppression and poverty and low self-esteem. It is the result of hierarchical male dominance. (105)

In *Drown*, we see the masculinity of the narrator in reaction to the oppression of the hegemonic masculinity to which he, because of his status as immigrant, can never be a participant. In a position of inferiority to the hegemonic, white United States male, the narrator can only exercise imagined power upon those he sees as less powerful. In this case, the oppressed Dominican male immigrant turns and oppresses the Dominican female immigrant, as well as the homosexual, as a method of resistance against the oppression he himself feels from the Establishment.

The protest masculinity is also manifest by the shifting provisional institutions. Yunior rejects the educational institution, which renders him unqualified for most work. The work he does find is that of selling drugs. When police show up, however, any authority Yunior and the other dealers possess fades. This claim to power, outside of established institutions, is what Connell refers to when he states:

There is something frenzied and showy about it. It is not simply adopting the conventional stereotype of masculinity . . . Among these young men too there is a response to powerlessness, a claim to the gendered positions of power, a pressured exaggeration (bashing gays, wild riding) of masculine conventions . . . Very similar patterns appear in the collective practice of working class, especially ethnic minority, street gangs in the United States . . . Through interaction in this milieu, the growing boy puts together a tense, freaky façade, making a claim to power where there are no real resources for power. There is a lot of concern with face, a lot of work put into keeping up front. (110-11)

Yunior does work to maintain his image as that of someone with power. As he is dealing drugs, he drives his Pathfinder automobile, not

a common car in the neighborhood and works the streets, "saying wassup to everybody" (*Drown* 51). He puts up a front of "having the iron will" (63) and of being "immune" (51) to AIDS and not having to use condoms. Here, Yunior displays what Connell describes as the "new-made world [of practices that construct masculinity that] may be hostile to bodies' physical well-being" (65).

Yunior also attempts to chip away at the institutional powers that oppress him. As a billiard table delivery man, he engages in power plays with the clients by making them take up the newspapers the clients have laid down to protect their carpet from the delivery men's shoes, and by stuffing their toilets full of toilet paper as he leaves the house. At his job in the billiard showroom, Yunior pockets the cash from any sales he makes and uses that money to gain favor with women, a realm where he can feel powerful.

In the world of downward social mobility, some power is reclaimed by the hyper-ness of the drugs sold and consumed. The narrator and his dealing partner, Cut, play out their masculinity with "superweed" (*Drown* 47). The success associated with a connection to selling drugs and being able to access drugs makes the male character more desirable to females also involved in the world of drugs: "Fridays are good days to expect her. Fridays we always have something new and she knows it" (47-8). That is not to say that there is not a certain aspect of shame in their profession. Numerous times, the narrator feels the shame of selling drugs: "I keep my head buried in my cap, praying that nobody tries to score" (96) while on the bus with his mother.

The narrator, like many other youths with absentee fathers, grows up "without any expectation of the stable employment around which the familiar models of working-class masculinity are organized. Instead, they face intermittent employment and economic marginality in the long term and often severe deprivation in the short term" (Connell 93-94). This lack of role models for stable employment translates into unstable and unpredictable work. For the narrator, and others like him, "drug dealing does not stand out in their thinking. It is basically another way to make a dollar, as episodic and chancy as employment" (98). Also, for immigrants growing up in immigrant neighborhoods who feel general animosity toward the educational system, their body becomes their greatest asset. According to Connell,

Working men's bodily capacities are their economic asset, are what they put on the labour market. But this asset changes. Industrial labor under the regime of profit uses up the worker's bodies, through fatigue, injury and mechanical wear and tear . . . at that point [the decline of strength] a man's laboring days are over. (55)

This is especially accurate for Yuniór as an adult and also for his father working in the United States while his family was still in the Dominican Republic.

Adherence to the masculine code of being a Dominican male living in poverty and that of an impoverished immigrant in the United States severely limits Yuniór in all aspects of his life. His antagonism toward the educational system, in spite of his love of reading and learning, leaves him unprepared for the traditional job market. With an absent father and the absence of positive roles models, in addition to an unstable labor market, Yuniór falls into shoplifting and dealing drugs as a way to support himself and his mother. Drug dealing brings both financial success and shame to Yuniór. Both his mother and father know of his illegal behaviors yet do nothing to stop him. Yuniór's interpersonal skills also suffer as a result of following the masculine code of the neighborhood. Rejection of homosexuals costs Yuniór his best friend and his only truly intimate relationship. The loss of Beto's friendship and his tenderness renders Yuniór unable to show emotion in his other relationships. Yuniór opts instead to follow his brother's advice to become a man, like Papi; to dry his tears and hide his emotions. In an effort to be a man, Yuniór chooses not to be a pussy. If he wants to be a real Dominican man, he needs to get pussy. His adventures into heterosexual relations both in "How to date a Browngirl, Blackgirl, Whitegirl or Halfie" and within his adult relationship with Aurora lack real intimacy and serve more as bragging rights to his fellow males.

Dominican urban masculinity makes evident the three characteristics that Maxime Baca Zinn proposes for Chicano men. The three are interrelated:

- 1) that a distinctive cultural heritage has created a rigid cult of masculinity, 2) that the masculinity cult generates distinctive familial and socialization patterns, and 3) that these distinctive patterns ill-equip Chicanos (both males and females) to adapt successfully to the demands of modern society. (29)

There is certainly a cult of masculinity both in the Dominican Republic and in the United States for Dominican men that produce familial and socialization patterns. I argue that adherence to this code renders men incapable of maintaining meaningful relationships with the women in their lives and thus serves to the detriment of the whole society. Deviation from the code is unacceptable and is quickly met with disapproval. Therefore, no one has time to question the code that is passed on from one generation to the next in the guise of culture. Anzaldúa addresses this conveyance of supposed cultural roles when she states that "culture forms our beliefs. We perceive the version of reality that it communicates. Dominant paradigms, predefined concepts that exist as unquestionable, unchallengeable, are transmitted to us through the culture" (38). Junot Díaz assumes a similar stance in his portrayal of masculinity in *Drown*. While Beto rejects the masculine code, leaves the neighborhood via higher education and presumably succeeds, the protagonist Yuniór is unable to question the dominant paradigm of protest masculinity, and is in fact, drowning in it.

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Testimonio and Hypertext as Resistance in Chile: The Case of Manuel Guerrero Ceballos and Son

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Those familiar with Santiago de Chile's neighborhoods recognize Los Leones as one of the capital city's most elegant and tranquil streets with its tree-lined sidewalks and many stylish homes and apartment buildings. Los Leones bisects the fashionable "comuna" of Providencia, traditionally a stable zone of the city, somewhat insulated from central Santiago's tumult and din. Yet during the years of the dictatorship, 1973-1989, there was virtually no sanctuary within the country for Augusto Pinochet's opposition, and even upscale districts like Providencia were the site of considerable violence and repression. In March of 1985, in front of the Colegio Latinoamericano de Integración, located on the corner of Los Leones and El Vergel, in the heart of Providencia, Colegio Latinoamericano teacher Manuel Guerrero Ceballos was abducted by DICOMCAR agents (Carabinero Intelligence). His body, among others, surfaced the next day in another part of the city with his throat cut, thus ending the life of a dedicated activist, educator, and articulate opponent to Pinochet and his political and economic agenda. *Desde el túnel; diario de vida de un detenido desaparecido* (1976) is Manuel Guerrero's testimony of his first detention by the infamous and feared Comando Conjunto, an imprisonment he miraculously survived, only to be seized again and killed in the 1985 abduction in Providencia. His book recounts in detail the brutal circumstances of his first internment as well as insights into the political philosophy of Chile's progressive activists in the dark years following the 1973 "golpe de estado." Once released, Manuel Guerrero and his family fled to Sweden where he published his testimony in 1976. His son, Manuel Guerrero Antequera, who as a fourteen-year-old witnessed his father's final abduction, edited and republished his father's narrative in 2008.