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NOVICES, NUNS, AND COLEGIO GIRLS: THE ADRIAN DOMINICAN SISTERS IN THE U.S. AND DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, 1933-61.

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

HISTORY
with an emphasis in FEMINIST STUDIES

by

Elizabeth Dilkes Mullins

March 2014

The dissertation of Elizabeth Dilkes Mullins is approved:

_____
Professor Marilyn J. Westerkamp

_____
Professor Susan Harding

_____
Professor Emily Honig

_____
Professor Alice Yang

_____
Tyrus Miller
Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies

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Abstract

Novices, Nuns and Colegio Girls: The Adrian Dominican Sisters in the U.S. and Dominican Republic, 1933-61.
by
Elizabeth Dilkes Mullins

When three American Catholic Sisters arrived in the Dominican Republic in 1945 they had no idea how to speak Spanish, that the country was under the control of a dictator, or how to begin the process of building a school for girls. Within one year, Colegio Santo Domingo, a school for elite Dominican girls in the capitol, offered a bilingual program of education for the first time on the island. Using oral histories, archived correspondence, unpublished histories, and annals, this project uncovers the unique curriculum of the school and its roots in convent practices. As the nuns became more familiar with their surroundings, the curriculum of the school evolved to teach girls to train their bodies and minds to survive their present and create a new future for their society guided by Catholic values. The curriculum had its roots back in Michigan in the 1930s in the training of new nuns to balance the worldviews required of an American Catholic nun and a teacher in a modern school environment. In the new environment of the Trujillo D.R., the nuns created a similar program of training to enable girls to thrive intellectually and survive physically. This project traces the shared history between novices, nuns, and "Colegio Girls" across national boundaries weaving together American Catholic History, the history of education, the history of women, and the cultural history of the Dominican Republic during the Trujillo era.

Acknowledgements

To my husband, Nick, and daughter, Natasha: I dedicate this work to you with eternal thanks. You each inspired me to begin and finally finish this project.

This body of work would not have been possible without a warm welcome from the Adrian Dominican Sisters: Sr. Donna Markham, Sr. Nadine Foley, Sr. Marilyn Francouer, Sr. Beverly Bobola, and Sr. Margarita Ruiz. Many thanks to all the women I interviewed in the Dominican Republic and the United States and my gracious host, Maruja Alvarez ’61, in Santo Domingo, for her extraordinary hospitality and guidance. Un abrazo y grácias a todas.

My advisor, Marilyn Westerkamp provided the best mentorship a training historian could ask for. Thank you for your time and dedication to your craft as a teacher, mentor, and writer. Thanks to Alice Yang, Emily Honig, Dana Frank and David Brundage, and Catherine Jones for specialized help and inspiring examples. Thanks to Susan Harding whose mentorship changed the project in dynamic ways. Many thanks to the Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism at Notre Dame University for awarding me the Hibernian Research Award to begin my research and the Institute of Humanities Research at UCSC to finish it.

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Introduction: Novices, Nuns, and *Colegio* Girls

Introduction

On September 10, 1945, Sister Mary Philip Ryan wrote the first of thousands of letters to the leader of the Adrian Dominican Sisters in Adrian, Michigan, Mother Mary Gerald Barry. Writing from Miami, on her way to the Dominican Republic, Sister Mary Philip detailed the meetings she had just finished with Mother Gerald's brother, a bishop in Florida, a list of needed purchases she made, and plans for the next day's journey. She closed her letter with the first of many reflections on her path:

> I do not let myself think, Mother, but I know that my heart is ready for anything waiting for us. Please pray that it is full of the charity of Christ. I cannot say any more. With my fondest love for you and the hope that you will be soon coming to see us, believe me,
>
> Affectionately,
> Sr. Mary Philip[1]

Sister Mary Philip was on her way to begin the first international province of the Adrian Dominicans outside American borders in the Dominican Republic. Just a month after the end of World War II, the nuns were poised to expand beyond their home nation. One year after their arrival they opened a bilingual college preparatory school for girls called Colegio Santo Domingo.

During the 20th century, teaching orders of Catholic Sisters educated millions of women worldwide.[2] Emerging from cloistered or semi-cloistered communities of

[1] Mary Philip Ryan, OP, "Correspondence Colegio Santo Domingo," in *Series3A,*

prayer, Catholic Sisters established and staffed institutions of learning for women and girls introducing new social and educational landscapes throughout the Americas. In 1946, the Adrian Dominican Sisters, based in Michigan, extended beyond U.S. borders for the first time to establish and staff Colegio Santo Domingo, an independent, bilingual, primary and secondary school for elite island girls in the Dominican Republic (D.R.). This study investigates how convent practices that existed within multiple worldviews translated into a school that acted as a sanctuary for girls allowing them to develop complex religious identities during the dictatorship of Rafael Trujillo. I demonstrate that the Adrian Dominican Sisters developed their own convent teachings on Catholic womanhood through specific bodily practice and trace its reenactment in the specific context of the postwar D.R. The convent-to-Colegio curriculum prepared girls and nuns to exist safely within the their contemporary political and social moment as well as act once the Trujillato passed. In other words, specific bodily practices and ideologies about the body developed in the convent protected girls and nuns from dangerous political and social circumstances while allowing them to develop as leaders in an imagined future after Trujillo.

At first glance, the Colegio Santo Domingo could fit easily in the history of U.S. cultural and economic imperialism in the Caribbean as a social environment

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[2] Bart Hellinckx, Frank Simon and Marc Depaepe, *The Forgotten Contribution of the Teaching Sisters: A Historiographical Essay on the Educational Work of Catholic Women Religious in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (Leuven University Press, 2010).

where American nuns made Dominican young women obedient to American authority and national interests. Yet the school was not an American "subject-maker" at all. Instead, the school focused upon educating Dominicans to serve and lead their own country independent of American interests. The nuns embedded the teaching of leadership skills and service-mindedness inside the education of young women to be "proper Catholics." The Adrians' version of "true" Catholic piety had cultural overtones of U.S. Catholicism and patriotic practice, but they always pointed their students toward Dominican allegiance.

Understanding the school within the Dominican context spurred new questions for the study: How did the nuns decide to serve Dominican women rather than U.S. imperialist interests (a formidable presence at the time)? What kind of a girl did the school "make"? How did the girls change the nuns? How did both the nuns and their students negotiate dangerous social conventions, politics, race, and class during the Trujillo dictatorship? What role did Catholic piety play in the school curriculum and how did the idea of piety develop in the new school context? The project that emerged from these questions takes a careful look at the encounter between Dominican and American Catholics in the unique setting of the Colegio Santo Domingo.

Historiography

The history of U.S. women religious is a small but growing subfield of the larger field of U.S. Catholic history. The subfield got its start with the demand to

include histories of women in history in general and by communities of women religious who wanted to document their own congregations' histories.[3] The field has grown in recent years to include studies that seek to use women religious as a case study to explore women's studies,[4] cultural anthropology[5], the history of education[6], and political history[7].

My work builds upon the growing body of work on the transnational nature of American history and American Catholic History in particular. I take the largely

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[3] Karen Kennelly, ed. *American Catholic Women* (New York: MacMillan Publishing, 1989); James J. Kenneally, *History of American Catholic Women* (New York: Crossroad, 1990); Dolores Liptak, Ursula Stepsis, ed. *Pioneer Healers: the History of Women Religious in American health care* (New York: Crossroad, 1989). Foley is one example of hundreds of volumes of histories produced for the documentation of a particular community's history.

[4] Carol K. and Martha Smith Coburn, *Spirited Lives: How Nuns Shaped Catholic Culture and American Life, 1836-1920* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Kathleen Sprows Cummings, *New Women of the Old Faith: Gender and American Catholicism in the Progressive Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009); Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Sisters, Monroe, Michigan and Mary Susan Thompson, ed. *Building Sisterhood: A Feminist History of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1997).

[5] Julie Byrne, *O God of Players: The Story of the Immaculata Mighty Macs* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003); Rebecca Lester, *Jesus in Our Wombs: Embodying Modernity in a Mexican Convent* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

[6] Bart Hellinckx, Frank Simon and Marc Depaepe, *The Forgotten Contribution of The Teaching Sisters: A Historigoraphical Essay on the Educational Work of Catholic Women Religious in The 19th and 20th Centuries* (Leuven University Press, 2010); Eileen M. Brewer, *Nuns and the Education of American Catholic Women, 1860-1920.* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1987).

[7] Maureen Fitzgerald, *Habits of Compassion: Irish Catholic Nuns and the Origins of New York's Welfare System, 1830-1920* (Urbana, Ill. : University of Illinois Press, 2006).

triumphant narrative of American Catholic History[8] and Catholic Women Religious[9] and make matters more complicated by considering nuns as intricate actors with multiple allegiances to nation, church and congregation. Following the work of scholars on the margin of American Catholic history, such as Maureen Fitzgerald's study of Irish Nuns in New York and the history of the New York welfare system, I want to see the nuns not as stories or curiosities within themselves but as important historical examples of how women's roles "played out" within America and abroad.[10]

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[8] Jay P. Dolan, *In Search of an American Catholicism: A History of Religion and Culture in Tension* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).; ———, *The American Catholic Experience: A History from Colonial Times to the Present* (New York: Doubleday, 1985)*;* Lauren Derby*, The Dictator's Seduction: Politics and Popular Imagination in the Era of Trujillo* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009)*;* James J. Hennesey, *American Catholics: A History of the Roman Catholic Community in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981); Patrick W. Carey, *Catholics in America: A History* (Westport, Conn: Praeger Publishers, 2004).

[9] Julie Byrne, *O God of Players: The Story of the Immaculata Mighty Macs* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), Elizabeth A. Castelli, *Women, Gender, Religion: A Reader* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), Dolores Liptak, Ursula Stepsis, ed., *Pioneer Healers: The History of Women Religious in American Health Care* (New York: Crossroad, 1989), Dolores Liptak, *European Immigrants and the Catholic Church in Connecticut, 1870-1920* (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1987), Carol K. and Martha Smith Coburn, *Spirited Lives: How Nuns Shaped Catholic Culture and American Life, 1836-1920* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Kathleen Sprows Cummings, *New Women of the Old Faith: Gender and American Catholicism in the Progressive Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009); Eileen M. Brewer, *Nuns and the Education of American Catholic Women, 1860-1920* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1987); Karen Kennelly, ed., *American Catholic Women* (New York: MacMillan Publishing, 1989), James J. Kenneally, *History of American Catholic Women* (New York: Crossroad, 1990).

[10] Maureen Fitzgerald, *Habits of Compassion: Irish Catholic Nuns and the Origins of*

My work also builds upon the work of numerous U.S. historians who seek to resituate American history from the center and look at the U.S. in a broader political, social and cultural context.[11] The study here considers Dominican as well as American experiences equally with bilingual research in both primary and secondary literatures.

The history of education includes a rich set of studies of women's education starting in the 1980's and within women's history.[12] Some studies have even considered the history of Catholic Women's colleges and the impact of teaching sisters on regional or national histories as an intervention on the subfield's emphasis on protestant or public school histories.[13] My dissertation will connect the history of

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New York's Welfare System, 1830-1920 (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 2006).

[11] Amy and Donald E. Pease Kaplan, ed., *Cultures of United States Imperialism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993); Paul Kramer, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States and the Philippines* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); Mary A. Renda, *Taking Haiti: Military Occupation and the Culture of U.S. Imperialism, 1915-1940* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2001); George J. Sanchez, "Race, Nation and Culture in Recent Immigration Studies," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 18, no. 4 (Summer 1999); Thomas Bender, ed., *Rethinking American History in a Global Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); ———, *A Nation among Nations: America's Place in World History* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2006); Carl and James Davis Guarneri, *Teaching American History in a Global Context* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2008).

[12] Barbara Solomon, *In the Company of Educated Women: A History of Women and Higher Education in America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985); Linda Eisenmann, "Reconsidering a Classic: Assessing the History of Women's Higher Education a Dozen Years after Barbara Solomon," *Harvard Educational Review* 67, no. 4 (1997); ———, *Higher Education for Women in Postwar America, 1945-1965* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006).

[13] Brewer, *Nuns and the Education of American Catholic Women, 1860-1920*;

education to American Catholic History, women's/gender history, and transnational American history by focusing on how the Colegio became a place of female intellectual life, social sanctuary, and gender role redefinition as American nuns interacted with postwar Dominican society and its youngest generation of emerging women.

Within gender history, the work of Ann Laura Stoler provides the foundation for my theorizing about how gender roles form and change within the power relations of the colonial context.[14] Stoler's main ideas about the intimate in modern colonialism informs my focus on the influence of the convent in the mission field and nuns as flexibly identified national and gendered subjects.

A Brief History of the Congregation's Founding:

The Adrian Dominican Sisters trace their roots back to the first Dominican convent in Prouille, France established by Dominic Guzman, the founder of the Order of Preachers in 1206. Subsequent enclosures of second order religious women mandated that they live separately from the outside world and under the strict rule of

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Hellinckx, *The Forgotten Contribution of the Teaching Sisters: A Historigoraphical Essay on the Educational Work of Catholic Women Religious in the 19th and 20th Centuries*.

[14] Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); ———, ed., *Haunted by Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006); ———, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), Ann Laura and Frederick Cooper Stoler, *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

St. Augustine. A community at Ratisbon, Bavaria (now Regensburg, Germany) began in 1244. The community received official papal approval by 1245 for the Convent of the Holy Cross.[15] The next seven hundred years women lived in communities sealed off from the public steeped in developing Dominican spirituality and strict Augustinian rule. The convent began to teach and interact with the public, bowing to political pressure of the early 19th century for the end of enclosed convents. [16]

The Regensburg sisters came to the U.S. in response to U.S. based bishops working with German-speaking Catholics. A bishop in New York wrote to Ratisbon seeking teachers and the community responded. Four sisters from Ratisbon ventured to New York in 1853 to found a series of missions, one of which was a convent in Newburgh, New York. The Newburgh mission eventually cut ties with Germany and established their own congregation in 1869. In 1880, Mother Augustine Neuhriel sent Sisters to Michigan to teach German-speaking children in the west and found a hospital for injured railroad workers outside of Detroit in Adrian, Michigan, a farming town. [17] Under the leadership of Sister Camilla Madden, the congregation in Adrian became independent of the Newburgh convent.[18] The Dominican Sisters of the Congregation of the Most Holy Rosary in Adrian, Michigan received canonical

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[15] Mary Philip Ryan, OP, *Amid the Alien Corn* (St. Charles, Ill.: Jones Woods Press, 1967), 22-23.
[16] Ibid., 24.
[17] Ibid. 26-30, 56-58.
[18] http://www.adriandominicans.org/whoweare/foremothers.cfm (viewed on February 18, 2008) Ibid., 140.

status as a separate and papal order in 1923.[19]

From Michigan to the Dominican Republic

Over the 1920's the Congregation expanded to staff schools throughout the midwest and southwest U.S. The nuns who joined were most often students from schools with Adrians as their teachers and reflected the immigrant Catholic Church of the U.S. New nuns were of every European background including Irish, Bohemian, Italian and German-American Catholics. With each new nun, a new network of Adrian supporters arrived with her family. Using these networks, the Adrians would continue to expand.

In 1921 Catherine Barry, an Irish immigrant, with two brothers who were already priests, joined the Congregation. Throughout the 1920s, all three siblings stars' rose in the American Catholic world. Catherine's older brother, Father Patrick Barry was made a bishop in Florida in 1922. Her younger brother, William Barry, was the founding priest of St. Patrick's Church in Miami Beach and received the title of Monsignor for his work. The expansion of the Adrians linked directly to the contacts that their Mother General had in the state of Florida and to the church leadership in the region. From her brothers' contacts, the invitation to begin a school in the Dominican Republic emerged.

The Adrians' Congregation in the mid-twentieth century reflected the recent

[19] Ibid., 321.

crises and pressures on the American Catholic Church, including the Americanist crisis and fears of the corruption of femininity following the new ideology of the "new woman." To side-step these crises or resolve them, the Adrians created a Congregation where every sister was a special individual called by God. Simultaneously, a sister's individuality was erased because, as a nun, she was only important as a member of a larger, homogenized group. The Congregation also had to balance the demands on the community to stay in good standing with the larger church as a well as serve in schools as teachers in a decidedly modern era. In order to protect themselves from corruption from the larger world, the Adrians disciplined their bodies to protect them while they switched between mindsets as teachers and religious. This way of being in the world while standing outside of it marked religious life for Adrian Dominicans. I argue that the sisters took this way of being and translated it to the unique and similar context of the Dominican Republic in the Trujillo era. Disciplining the bodies and minds of elite girls on the island, the sisters promoted a way of life to keep girls safe and secure while training for life in a Dominican Republic without Trujillo.

Adrian Dominican Sisters: New Women and U.S. Catholics

How did the Adrian Dominican Sisters develop the sense of themselves as both modern educators and devout Roman Catholic Women Religious? In the first half of the twentieth century, the Adrian Dominican Sisters drew their membership

from Catholic schools established in the United States, mainly in the Chicago and Detroit areas from ethnic neighborhoods of first and second-generation European immigrants. In the 1930's the congregation transitioned from majority French and German immigrants' daughters to a more diverse mix of European immigrants' children with primarily Irish leadership.

With this new leadership, Irish born Mother Gerald Barry began to teach novices and professed sisters a surprising combination of nineteenth-century feminine mores and church obedience with the goal of becoming autonomous women of the modern world. The result was duplicity in mindset, long before Church reformation thirty years later, that Adrian Dominicans could exist both as women of the world and consecrated "brides of Christ" simultaneously. This mindset and skill set to "code switch" between church obedience as women religious and modern teachers then combined with a new sense of American Catholics as bold and righteous "light bearers." Historian, Jay P. Dolan describes Catholic America in the 1930's as a community that turns outward:

> As Catholics turned outward and became less parochial in their thinking, they sought to integrate their faith with their life in the world. This was a new awakening for many Catholics raised in a subculture that had fenced itself off from the rest of society. Indicative of their confidence and hubris, this new breed of Catholic believed that Catholicism was the only effective remedy for a broken civilization.[20]

[20] Dolan, Jay P. *In Search of an American Catholicism: A History of Religion and Culture in Tension* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 152.

The Adrians took this new sense of themselves as "effective remedies" beyond their immediate area and begin to think about global impact. With increased global thinking and renewed missionary fervor, the Adrians became focused on expanding beyond the borders of the United States first by considering a mission in China, but ultimately deciding that it was too dangerous to undertake a school foundation there.[21] The primary question remains how did the Adrians come to see themselves as international subjects and in what terms? They viewed moving into a communist country as too dangerous but willingly, albeit under-informed, went into a Catholic country under dictatorship. In what ways did their sense of themselves as obedient servants, modern interlocutors, and righteous teachers combine to make the decision to open the school and found its peculiar curriculum?

The Catholic body

Another theme of the project is to explore how girls' bodies were the object of political, social and religious definition by parents and nuns. Throughout the primary documents of the school and oral interviews, girls' bodies are a frequent site of contestation to define a "good" or "proper" Catholic woman or girl. Nuns, from their own convent training and Catholic theology saw girls' bodies as keepers of Catholic identity and purity making Catholic identity and female identity inextricably linked. [22]

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[21] History of the Foreign Missions by SMP.

[22] Karen Trimble Alliume, "Disturbingly Catholic: Thinking the Inordinate Body," in *Bodily Citations: Religion and Judith Butler*, ed. Ellen T. Armour and Susan M. St.

Nuns defined any subject engaging girls' bodies, including biology, athletics, theater and dance, all within religious terms teaching girls that their Catholic identity was made possible by careful management of their bodies and bodily deportment.

Girls' parents had the unenviable job of protecting the bodies of their girls (and therefore their religious identity), something the political and social moment made very difficult. The Trujillo regime, besides inflicting careful economic and political control over the country's elite also included social controls in of female sexuality. At its worst, male members of the Trujillo family, and Trujillo himself, had total sexual power over women in the country. Stories of rape or sexual coercion by teenage boys aligned with the Trujillo family were common tales and fears of families with daughters. Less violent was the truth that if a girl caught the eye of a Trujillo male family member and had contact with the presidential family she was likely to marry him and the girls' parents had no right or chance to refuse social invitations or marriage proposals. The effect of a bringing a Trujillo into the family meant that the girl's family would become part of the inner circle of the President - a dangerous and economically demanding place to be.

As a result, girls' families changed or managed girls' bodies to keep them out of harm's way in their social circles. By changing a girls' body by hiding her, making her appear sick or unfeminine, or even shipping her out of the country for her teenage

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Ville (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006).

years, parents tried to keep their daughters safe. Stories of manipulation of girls bodies was commonplace in the elite circles during the Trujillo era. These stories all communicate how a girls' body was central in both her home culture and U.S. infused school curriculum. The nuns and parents paid tremendous attention to the exercise, public display, and hiding of girls' bodies in order to raise them to be "good" or "proper" young women with the Catholic identity of each girl being paramount to her education and inextricably tied to her bodily health.

Complicity and Resistance to Dictatorship

Among all the Colegio gradutes I interviewed almost every group discussed the education of Rafael Trujillo's daughter, Angelita Trujillo '54. Most groups began to speak of Angelita's treatment at the school as exemplary of the nuns' high standards. As a student, the dictator's daughter was required to clear plates at lunch, ask and receive criticism from the nuns, and use the same manners as everyone else. However, in the middle of every interview, one or two people would object by saying that Angelita was not required to do the same as other students. Over time, the interviews pieced together that Angelita graduated under a program offered only for three years called "Arte y Cultura" (Art and Culture) rather than the commercial, high school or baccalaureate programs previously and subsequently offered. At first glance the nuns treated Angelita like everyone else - she had to go by the same rules and was given the same consequences if she did not comply, including conferences with her

parents. However, officially and with much organization, the nuns did not require the same standard or achievement of Angelita as they did of other girls, and they facilitated special treatment.

The interviewees' views of Angelita's behavior mirrored the complex web of the elite during dictatorship. Angelita was accepted, tolerated and reviled simultaneously by individuals explaining what it was like to go to Colegio Santo Domingo during Trujillo's regime. Stories about Angelita serve to explain how a small community of elite were always in contact and avoiding one another at the same time, with no divisions at first glance or even second. However, the social world made it possible to be friends with political enemies and support dissidents. For example, Angelita's Spanish Literature teacher, Doña Herminia Saltal, was from a blacklisted family known to disapprove of Trujillo's regime. The Adrians hired her anyway, knowing that she came from a family with at least one member killed by Trujillo's secret police. Perhaps because of their standing as outsiders and Americans, the nuns were not punished for such a move, and Angelita was her student just like any other student.

The first chapter situates the Adrian Dominicans, and its leadership in the 1940's in the larger context of U.S. Catholic history. By introducing the two most influential leaders, Sister Mary Philip Ryan and Mother Mary Gerald Barry I argue that the Adrian Dominican Sisters' leadership constructed a unique community of

women living within and outside categories of femininity and Catholic identity. While the community was in good standing with the church, it most likely walked a careful line to step around church controversies involving the Americanist crisis as well as efforts to reject the "new woman."

Chapter two takes this historical base and argues that the Adrian Dominicans trained new nuns via their novitiate program to exist within two ideological frames, to live in the church-sanctioned limits of women religious at the same time that they succeed as educators to a new generation in modern America. To do this, the Adrians trained nuns in a variety of bodily practices to make them immune to the corrupting influences of the outside world even as they lived within it. These practices would form the basis of the similar teachings for girls in the Dominican Republic.

Chapter three explains the foundation of Colegio Santo Domingo and the historical context of the Trujillo dictatorship on the island at the time. Chapter four argues that the school developed an official and hidden curriculum for girls preparing them for life within the Trujillo-dominated Dominican Republic and an imagined life once he was deposed. Within the curriculum was a focus on service and democratic practice all taught as part of becoming a "good" Catholic.

Chapter five explores the role of girls and women's bodies in the Trujillo era and how parents and the school manipulated girls' bodies to keep them safe from harm. Parents resorted to changing girls' bodies to keep them out of harm's way,

sometimes radically. The nuns also weighed in to keep girls safe by creating bodily practices that followed the novitiate model. Former novice mistress, now principal, Sister Mary Philip Ryan created numerous ways to keep girls hidden from view and safe in public by teaching various ways to discipline the body to avoid victimization. These sorts of complex social interactions make the binaries of complicity/resistance, or enemies/allies, useless for analysis and invite a reconsideration of what resistance and compliance with dictatorship means. The nuns did not support or openly reject Trujillo's rule, but existed within the complex ties of the elite as complicit, surviving, dissident, active bystanders, all at the same time.

Primary Sources and Methodology

To understand the school, theorize its curriculum, and understand its historical significance there are several methodological problems that have to be engaged. The first is the differing histories of Congregational history offered by Sister Mary Philip's writing and the oral histories of both teacher and former Colegio students. As in all projects that work with memoirs and autobiography, many of the materials I collected or used for the study glorify the history of their group. Sister Mary Philip was not trained as a historian, but rather a creative writer. Her history reflects her training. She does well in finding or crafting a good story, but the overarching evidence-based narrative of what occurred is not always present. Her histories often glorified congregational leadership, ignored problems or conflicts, and overemphasized the independence of the congregation from male leadership. These

shortcomings aside, what she includes and excludes provides an illuminating perspective on the institutional memory of international work and the ground rules for what made the endeavor in the D.R. a proud chapter in Adrian Dominican history.

Sister Mary Philip's correspondence with Mother Gerald from 1945 until her return to the United States in 1957 offers the most complete archive of the history of the Colegio. It is also the most voluminous. Sister Mary Philip wrote to Mother Gerald nearly every day for eleven years. Often these letters were over five pages long, with notes written in hand on the back and up both side margins. Mother Gerald often wrote back in much more concise prose, often writing one letter for every two of Sister Mary Philip's. It took nine days for letters to reach one another at the start of the school. Sister Mary Philip started writing often to ask for permission, but soon learned that the majority of decisions, whether about expenditures or next steps for the school, had to be made without Mother Gerald's immediate consultation; the letters moved on to be more full of reports on progress, personal anecdotes, thoughts on religious life and reflections on missing the comforts of home and friends.

Mary Philip archived the letters herself during her years as Congregation historian. There are two large archival boxes dedicated solely to their correspondence with over two thousand pages of letters.

The letters arrived at the motherhouse following three methods: hand carried, U.S. Mail or Dominican to U.S. Mail. Early on, Sister Mary Philip learned that all of

her mail interested the eyes of censors and spies for Trujillo. With that knowledge she employed several strategies to writing letters home with useful information. The first was to write in a kind of code. Using shortened names like "Jupiter" for Trujillo, "The little A." for Archbishop Pittini, or more general vague references to people by physical characteristic, like "my white haired friend," Sister Mary Philip kept identities hidden to censors who were not looking very carefully. Anyone with an interest would have figured the code out rather quickly.

Another code used tangled grammatical constructions to confuse non-native English speakers or break up a story into parts confusing the reader. Mary Philip's writing was verbose, but easy to read and grammatically impeccable most of the time. So when a sentence like the following shows up it is obvious that Sister Mary Philip is up to something:

> I hope you get the pint [sic] on finding out from [crossed out sentence re-written in pen above the type] Rev. Ed. It could be a hireling's stunt = good pol. sketch. [end of pen written phrases] I think not, but safety first. Jup pays high for such things.[23]

At the end of her letter she apologized to Mother Gerald by saying "I hate to penance you while I weave a circuitous path." In reading the entire letter the context becomes clear. Sister Mary Philip was asking Mother Gerald for help. She needed help to prepare a magazine article and wanted to prevent a Trujillo-allegiant reporter from

[23] Mary Philip Ryan, OP, "Correspondence Colegio Santo Domingo," in *Series 3A, BOX 3* (Adrian, Michigan: Adrian Dominican Sisters Archives, 1946-54). Sister Mary Philip to Mother Gerald, May 5, 1946, 06443.

drafting the entire thing casting “Jup” as the star. Sister Mary Philip wanted Mother Gerald to speak to the magazine editor directly. Rather than saying this, which would put the community at risk, she said it in pieces, and with a great deal of confusion, to throw off any unintended readers.

In time, she employed other strategies to avoid censors entirely. After the sisters established themselves in the city, word got out that an English language mass was available at the Colegio. American Catholics on the island began to attend, including members of the military, commercial pilots and flight attendants - all of whom came and went between the island and the U.S. mainland often. These visitors to the chapel and the Sisters became Sister Mary Philip’s letter smugglers. Probably using cost as the reason for asking, Sister Mary Philip put letters in the hands of Americans returning to the U.S. with instructions to drop them into U.S. mail boxes in Florida. These letters have little in the way of filtered news or self-censorship. They are the letters with the clearest criticism and reflection on the school and politics on the island.

In addition to the historical documentation of the foundation, I relied on twenty-one group and individual interviews with former students in the Dominican Republic and nine official interviews with former staff. In all, I spoke with 216 people either formally or informally about the school. Like all oral history evidence, it has its limits. Colegio Santo Domingo students loved and still revere their school. It

was difficult to move beyond the hagiographic view of Sister Mary Philip, other teachers, or the school itself. Interviews with members of the classes of 1950 through 1972 yielded almost endless stories of empowerment, discovery, spiritual connection and fun. I had few if any stories of difficulties, conflicts, or trouble except when speaking of the end of the Trujillo administration.

Among Sisters who taught at Colegio Santo Domingo during Sister Mary Philip's tenure as principal, there are few surviving members. Those that offered their memories stepped carefully in speaking of Sister Mary Philip, who was a strict supervisor and principal. Most sisters did not know much about the inner workings of the school and the complicated context of the Trujillo administration in the Dominican Republic. Colegio students were also in the dark about the political climate in the country. When I asked every group what they knew of the political situation, they always answered that no one talked about politics to children and their parents never spoke of it in their presence. It may be that Sister Mary Philip kept her staff uninformed for many of the same reasons that their students were – to keep secret any information that could put the school or the lives of its students and staff in danger if revealed. But the oral histories do yield amazing findings in how people acted, what classes were like, what the curriculum turned out to be within a few years of foundation and what students were expected to do. Staff and students had stories

that filled in holes in the historical record and ultimately created a full picture of what it was like to teach and learn at the Colegio.

Chapter 1:
Adrian Dominican Sisters in Context :
The Adrian Congregation and Pre-War Catholic America

Understanding how the Adrian Dominican Sisters (ADS) chose to expand to the Caribbean and promote elite women as leaders in public and clandestine ways requires an analysis of the nuns' context in the decades leading up to their expansion. The Adrian Dominicans arrived in the Midwest and established themselves within the fabric of American Catholicism as both their region and religion ascended to prominent positions of economic and cultural power in the United States. In response to two major historical events, the crisis of Americanism and the emergence of the ideology of the New Woman, the ADS leadership constructed a unique community of women living within and outside categories of femininity and Catholic identity. This ability to live with paradox formed the basis of the Congregation's power within authority. The Congregational leadership, in particular, Sister Mary Philip Ryan, would use the tools that she learned in her time at the Motherhouse in the 1930s to create a similar institutional philosophy at Colegio Santo Domingo by mid-century.

By the 1930s the ADS congregation was a peculiar integration of controversies within the church and society into Catholic religious life with ambitious

plans for expansion as soon as WWII ended. They were firmly situated within the church's mainstream while desiring to be cutting edge in their own time. This chapter takes the reader through a brief history of the major events of Catholic American history in the late 19th and early 20th centuries situating the congregation into context. to explore how the ADS fit within their historical context as U.S. women and Catholics and the values and intentions the Congregation adopted and developed by the mid-20th century.

Adrian Dominican Sisters in the U.S. Catholic Church

In 1923, after establishing themselves apart from their New York roots, the Adrian Dominican Sisters built their organization fusing the influences and pressures of the mainstream Catholic Church in the U.S., the Vatican, and American popular culture. The resulting incarnation of sisters and the interpretation of the charism of the congregation grew from a sort of "mash-up" of ideologies, limitations and subversions that made the ADS unique. The result was a community built on regulation, ideology, and ambition that the ADS faced in the decade or so before WWII.

Though the larger "world," as the Sisters called it, had tremendous influence on the young women who joined the congregation, and the active and public sisters within it, the magisterium of the Church created the immediate regulation and influence over the Congregation who in turn policed themselves. Bishops chose

which orders to staff and administrate the schools in their dioceses as well as advised families with young women interested entering religious life about local congregations. For the Adrian Dominican Sisters the most important tie was to the Vatican, the source of the Church they were called to serve, but they needed and were needed by local bishops in order to staff and run schools for the U.S. Catholic Church. They also needed local women to become nuns and continue the order. This put them in a dependent relationship with bishops. The community sat at the center of an intersecting trinity of Vatican, diocese, and local parishes and schools - three entities that often did not see eye-to-eye in the early 20th century in the United States.

At the turn of the 20th century, the U.S. Catholic Church and the Vatican were at odds and in debate over how American political ideology and Catholic theology could fuse or could nott. In his seminal work, *In Search of American Catholicism*, Jay Dolan summaries the period from the 1850s to 1920 as a time when U.S. clergy engaged in a battle over the "Americanization" of the church. Beginning in the middle of the 1850's a conversation began in American Catholic communities about how American democracy and Catholicism could work together to assimilate Catholics into mainstream American life and attract converts from the majority Protestant population.[24] Proponents of the Americanization of the Catholic Church like Orestes Brownson and Isaac Hecker, both converts to Catholicism, linked ideas

[24] Jay P. Dolan, *In Search of an American Catholicism: A History of Religion and Culture in Tension* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 66.

of Manifest Destiny or divine providence to promote the idea that the Catholic Church in the United States should mirror the governmental structures of the nation. By the late 19th century, the ideas of the Americanization of the Catholic Church changed with the times. Led by the then-numerous and powerful Irish-Catholic clergy in the U.S., foremost among them John Ireland, the "Americanists" promoted the joining of American republican values with the hierarchical concerns of Roman Catholicism. Responding to major social upheaval due to massive immigration and its detractors, Americanists made an effort to "assimilate" the church as a means to assimilate all the nationalities the parishes of the U.S. offered as well as that American Catholics were engaged and trustworthy proponents of the American experiment. Ireland believed that conversion of Americans to Catholicism was possible if the church was no longer considered a "foreign" presence, but rather an extension of the republican values of the U.S.[25]

Among the strongest detractors to the idea of "Americanization" of the U.S. Church were German-American Catholics, the second largest Catholic ethnic group in the U.S. by the late 19th century.[26] Fearing Americanization as an excuse to eradicate Old World traditions, and especially language, German Catholics organized

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[25] Thomas Bokenkotter, *A Concise History of the Catholic Church*, Revised and Expanded Edition ed. (New York: Image Books/Doubleday, 2004), 373; Jay P. Dolan, *In Search of an American Catholicism: A History of Religion and Culture in Tension.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002)., 115-116. For a full discussion of the Americanization crisis see Bokenkotter, Chapter 30 and Dolan, Chapter 3.
[26] Ibid., 373.

to reject Ireland's and other Irish-Catholic clergy's plans. German Catholics were also discontent with their now second-largest status to the burgeoning numbers of new Irish immigrants and now Irish priests. The fight played out in multiple arenas: in Rome, direct pleas to the Curia, the domestic discussion and fight for a Catholic school system, Catholic presses, and especially at Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. costing the President his job.

In each, Irish and German clergy and laity fought against one another in two groups generally labeled "progressive" and "conservative." The fight reached Europe in the 1890s in the form of speeches and pleas from American clergy for support from clergy in France, Ireland and Germany.[27] In the end, even with a rush of lobbying by John Ireland, the Vatican stepped in to stop the fight by ruling in the favor of the conservative, German-led side. *Testem Benevolentiae*, released in 1896, made clear that the U.S. Catholic Church was not any different than the larger church and should not bend to the cultural mores of national governments.[28]

The Vatican went on in the decades after *Testem* to reject any integration of modern values with church structures or theology. *Pascendi Dominici Gregis*, published in 1907 by Pope Pius X, continued what Pope Leo XIII began in 1903 by specifically rejecting the notion that modern thought was compatible with

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[27] Ibid. 374-75.
[28] Kathleen Sprows Cummings, *New Women of the Old Faith:Gender and American Catholicism in the Progressive Era*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), p. 7.

Catholicism. The papal encyclical further changed American Catholicism by making modernism heretical to discuss or promote. In 1910, the Pope required that all church teachers and officials take an "anti-modernist" oath before working on behalf of the church.[29] Seminaries and publications purged modernist thinking and thinkers, strengthened shows of Vatican loyalty, and supported the anti-modernist stance (known as "neo-Scholastic thinking") as an ideological standpoint that asserted "religion was immune to culture."[30] This desired immunity was clearly impossible, but was the reason for social controls within religious communities for decades afterward.

The history of the Adrian Dominicans shows another example of the intersection between Americanist debates and the pull of the New Woman and the Old Faith. Frankly, the Adrian Sisters lived right in the center of the Americanist debate. Beginning as a German-speaking and German-American serving Congregation, they were largely involved in the creation of a Catholic school system (indeed the entire reason they came to Michigan was to serve German-speaking Catholic children) so the debate must have touched them through their bishops and priests if not their families. But curiously, as time went on, the tide turned toward more Irish postulants by the early 20th century. The first Irish-born Mother General, Mother Mary Gerald, joined the Adrian Dominican Sisters in 1912 and was elected

[29] Dolan, 116.
[30] Ibid. 116

Prioress in 1933. In the decades that followed the Americanist controversy, the Adrians swirled the two groups most at odds in the Americanist crisis.

Perhaps as a result of mixing German and Irish (as well as other immigrant populations), by the early 20th century the Adrian Dominican Sisters left behind no tell-tale signs of being strictly neo-Scholastic, modern or Americanist in the early 20th century. By the1920s and 30s they reflected the values of the parishes from which the Sisters hailed-- immigrant parishes with national loyalties to their adopted country with ethnic pride in their heritage, but a larger identity as Roman Catholics and "soldiers of God." In place of nationalism, the leadership of the Congregation promoted a Roman Catholic identity rather than an ethnic or ideological one. In Mother Gerald's Congregational letters in the 1930's she never mentioned the importance of ethnic identity or countries of origin. Rather she put the emphasis on being "a real Dominican," "bride of Christ" or soldier of God.[31] Going by her public letters there is a clear absence of any hint of the controversy that had almost destroyed the Church just three decades before.

Although the missing ethnic pride in Congregational letters could be chalked up to the "win" against the "Americanists", the history of the Congregation in later decades suggests otherwise. While Mother Gerald promoted a Catholic identity over all others, there is also the clear "Irish-turn" in Adrian leadership. Upon becoming

[31] Mary Philip Ryan, OP, *The Charity of Christ Presses Us: Mother Mary Gerald Barry's Letters to Her Community* (Milwaukee: Bruce Press, 1962), 6.

Mother General, Mother Gerald often chose Irish-American nuns over non-Irish ones for leadership positions.[32] Though this may have been a personal preference it also had ideological implications. The actions of Sister Mary Philip decades later in the Dominican Republic troubles the assumption that Americanization was not a preference of the leadership of Adrian Dominicans. Indeed the American Church becomes the focus of the Irish leadership to "save" the Dominican Republic Church. In other words, there is some evidence that though the official line of the Adrian Dominican Sisters was non-nationalist and uninvolved in the Americanist scandal, the ideology of Americanism had some referent when faced with adversity off shore decades later.

Adrian Dominicans in the 1920s and 30s: The New Woman in the Convent

As the Catholic women's historian Kathleen Sprows Cummings comments in her history of Catholic American women in the Progressive Era, the conflict over Americanism "has been considered one of the most significant episodes in U.S. Catholic history," yet, "it is initially difficult to imagine how these developments might affect Catholic women."[33] In her book, she argues that the emergence of the New Woman and the battle over where Catholics "define their place and purpose in

[32] Interview with former novices recognized this turn by the mid-30's. Interviews with Adrian Dominican Sisters in Santa Cruz, California and Adrian, Michigan 2009.
[33] Kathleen Sprows Cummings, *New women of the old faith: gender and American Catholicism in the Progressive Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 7

American culture intersects during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century."[34] She explores how conversations about the New Woman and Catholic femininity are often proxy arguments for defending "claims to American Citizenship" and the construction of a Catholic female past filled with "Women of the Old Faith" from whom American Catholic women could consider themselves descended. In this created past of strong Catholic women, Catholics argued that women could look to their faith for emancipation rather than a new movement in a new country.[35]

For U.S. Catholic women, the "New Woman" - middle-class, educated, independent and interested in social reform - was at odds with the Catholic version of True Womanhood from the mid-to-late 19th century.[36] Cummings presents the life work of four Progressive-era Catholic women to challenge "the widespread assumption that women who were faithful members of a patriarchal church were largely incapable of genuine work on behalf of women"[37] as well as to show "multiple arenas of intersection between the emergence of the New Woman and

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[34] Ibid.
[35] Cummings, *New women of the old faith: gender and American Catholicism in the Progressive Era*, 8.
[36] Bernard O'Reilly, *The Mirror of True Womanhood: A Book of Instruction for Women in the World*, 14th ed. (New York: Peter F. Collier, 1880).
[37] Kathleen Sprows Cummings. *New Women of the Old Faith: Gender and American Catholicism in the Progressive Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009).

Catholics' struggle to define their place and purpose in American culture."[38] Where the debate ran high for Progressive-era Catholics was how much of the expansion of the "sphere" for women was admissible without endangering their faith. Cummings argues that the women writers and administrators that she studied reveal a complex "rhetoric of differentiation" trying hard to make themselves unlike their fellow Americans and apologists for the Church. However this rhetoric served another purpose: it enabled women writers, activists and thinkers to "affirm their loyalty to the Old Faith, thereby establishing a distance from the New Women that, conveniently, enabled them to emulate her in many respects."[39]

The Adrians, in the same time period and later, fit into Cumming's argument perfectly. The women who joined the Adrian Dominicans at the dawn of the new congregation were another example "New Women of the Old Faith" in a complex convent at the center of Vatican, U.S. church and American culture. To explore who joined the convent, why they joined, and how the Adrian Dominicans developed into an international organization of women, we will focus on two women, Mother Mary Gerald Barry and Sister Mary Philip Ryan, contemporaries, mentors and responsible for the quiet but clear foundation of a modern women's congregation and its first

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[38] Cummings, *New women of the old faith: gender and American Catholicism in the Progressive Era*, 7-8.

[39] Ibid.,13 with a footnote highlighting the work of Leslie Woodcock Tentler and Suellen Hoy on the historiographically ignored work of Catholic Sisters in social reform during the Progressive Era due to a lack of self-promotion on the part of Catholic Sisters.

international mission. Through their stories, the convent in context emerges as a blend of pressures and ideologies.

Mother Mary Gerald Barry began her life as Brigid Catherine Barry in County Clare, Ireland in 1881.[40] Her family had roots in Ireland in "ancient families"[41] with strong ties to Irish nationalist causes, the support of an underground church and hedge schools. Michael Barry, her father, traveled to Australia to apprentice as a doctor before returning to Ireland to marry. His time in Australia politicized him even more toward Irish independence after meeting escaped Irish political prisoners and experiencing British colonialism in the Southern Hemisphere. Michael, and his wife Catherine Dixon, considered emigration to continue his medical training, but stayed in County Clare at the request of their families. The family was neither rich nor poor as farmers and Michael served as an unofficial country doctor to the surrounding community.[42] Their third daughter, Catherine, was the eleventh born to a family of eighteen children, thirteen of whom survived to adulthood.[43] In such a family, Catherine grew up in a rich mix of provincial country living, political debate, nationalist fervor, Catholic piety, classical education and global awareness. All of his

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[40] All biographical information drawn from the historical work of Sister Mary Philip Ryan, both historian and subject in this work, and Sr. Nadine Foley, former Prioress of the Congregation, Nadine Foley, O.P. and Mary Philip Ryan, O.P., *Mother Mary Gerald Barry, O.P.: Ecclesial Woman of Vision and Daring* (Adrian, Michigan: Adrian Dominican Sisters, 2000), 1.
[41] Ibid., 4.
[42] Ibid., 7.
[43] Ibid, 8.

children but one would leave Ireland, but all remained ethnically Irish and nationalists for the rest of their lives.

As the family grew, members began to emigrate across the world, including the oldest sons and daughter to the U.S. At fifteen years of age, Catherine arrived in Chicago to live with her brother and godfather, Gerald, his wife, and another Barry sister, Susan. Gerald was an established architect and helping to put his younger siblings through school. Living with Gerald to further her education, Catherine attended to the care of her nieces and nephews and graduated from the Gaelic School of Language and Literature in Chicago. At eighteen she attended Powers Business College for one year and worked for several years to pay for the seminary education of her brother William (in the tradition of her family).[44]

As a working woman at the turn of the century, she was one of the young working "New Women" of urban centers in the Midwest, probably employed in the new field of female-dominated clerical work.[45] When she was twenty-two she taught Gaelic at her alma mater, the Gaelic School of Language and Literature. Her brothers, Frank and James, taught her civil and commercial law informally, with the plan that she would help them in their law practices after they graduated from Notre Dame.[46] Both brothers invited her to move with their families to establish their law practices in

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[44] Foley and Ryan, *Mother Mary Gerald Barry, O.P.*, 9-10.
[45] Jean V. Matthews, *The Rise oft he New Woman: The Woman's Movement in America 1875-1930* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2003), 44.
[46] Foley and Ryan, *Mother Mary Gerald Barry, O.P.*, 10.

Arizona. At the age of twenty-three she moved to Nogales, Arizona to work as a "secretary" for her brother Frank (her brother James established a practice in Tucson). Though documentation is scarce, it is clear that Catherine was more than a secretary, but rather a legal aide and business manager.[47] She built her brother's law practice into a success and after several years considered following two other brothers and several female cousins into religious life in Florida.

It was in church in Nogales that she met Adrian Dominicans who established a small school while convalescing from tuberculosis. After befriending the Sisters, volunteering to do their bookkeeping, and taking piano lessons from them, Catherine explored the decision to turn to religious life.[48] She wrote to her parents, her brothers, and several of her sisters in making the decision and none objected. [49]

The story surrounding her entrance into the Adrian Dominican congregation follows a trope of stories surrounding Mother Gerald's most important decisions, and indeed many sisters' stories of entering a congregation.[50] The story goes that Catherine intended to join a congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Miami Beach where a cousin lived. She addressed a letter of application to the Sisters of St. Joseph,

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[47] Foley O.P., *Mother Mary Gerald Barry, O.P.*, 10.
[48] Ibid., 13.
[49] Ibid., 14.
[50] In oral histories of nuns, divine providence is the key agent in any major decision whether the decision is for congregational expansion or personal choice. Congregational histories, such as the one produced about Mother Gerald, remain in this tradition.

but on the envelope put the address for Adrian, Michigan, instead of Miami Beach, Florida. The letter was delivered to Adrian at St. Joseph's Academy there and she was accepted into the Sisters of St. Dominic following recommendations from the sisters she had met in Nogales. The Sisters in the congregation take great care in telling the story that Mother Gerald had wanted to join the sisters in Florida (where her brothers lived), but by Divine providence, the letter was addressed incorrectly and she agreed to go to Adrian. She knew no one but the sisters she befriended in Nogales and had no family in the Congregation.

The story illustrates a few things about Catherine Barry and her historical moment. First, Catherine Barry's age tells us quite a lot about her and her options for life and work. Catherine was thirty-one when she entered the community. Since most women joined the convent after high school graduation, this was fifteen years older than some of the postulants. The fact that Catherine did not join earlier signifies that the options and responsibilities that she had in her twenties were enough to stave off religious life or marriage. Through applying her business skills she had put one brother through seminary, helped build another brother's business, but she could not become a lawyer or a priest herself. She had helped everyone else, but could not pursue a similar path. If she was still unmarried and perhaps uninterested in marrying, turning to a religious congregation was a logical step for such an accomplished Catholic woman. Catherine Barry could do more and live more autonomously as a

nun than she could as the unmarried sister of successful brothers. Taking on considerable leadership within a Congregation of women was more than acceptable and perhaps even equal to the commercial success of her brothers.

Second, her story of intended entrance into the Sisters of St. Joseph in Miami Beach, joining her brothers and cousins in religious life, signals two things. One is that she made a break with her family at that moment. Instead of following family, for the first time she struck out on her own (though Gerald was relatively close in Chicago). But she made this independent move by divine action, not by any act of independence. She joined another order of Catholic sisters, with members she befriended, rather than follow her cousins from Ireland.

Catherine Barry's story reveals the deep roots an immigrant daughter has to her family as well as the opportunities afforded to her by striking out on her own. She would work with her brothers in the future; in fact William would be instrumental in creating a missionary field in the Dominican Republic and Gerald would be the architect for multiple schools and convents built in later years. But the fact that she could tell the story of her break without offending her family is important in illustrating what sort of a woman Catherine Barry had to be to become Mother Gerald. Like Cummings finds among the "New Women of the Old Faith," Catherine Barry moved away from her family and struck out on her own for her own advancement, but told the story in a way that affirms her strong faith. Rather than an

independent and plucky "New Woman," Catherine's story highlights an obedient and submissive follower of God's will, two qualities of a good Catholic woman of her time.

Catherine Barry entered the motherhouse at Adrian on February 2, 1912. Her strong skill-set, work experience and advanced age for a postulant and novice made her stand out from the crowd. As a novice, she took the habit and a new religious name, requesting "Gerald" after her brother. Even before profession, Mother Camilla Madden recognized the leadership potential of the new sister and asked Sister Gerald to use her business skills to help run the congregation.[51] In her first few years of professed service, Mother Camilla Madden and after her death, Mother Augustine Walsh, dispatched Sister Gerald to problem schools staffed by Adrian Dominicans to solve large tangles of personnel problems, fiscal mismanagement, and even diocesan discord.[52]

In 1921 she became the novice mistress, the position entrusted with "forming" new sisters.[53] Novice Mistress was one of several administrative positions at the core of congregational leadership. Arguably, it is the most influential as it is the place where the youngest and newest nuns learn how to live as nuns. Choosing Sister Gerald as Novice Mistress marks the beginning of an "Irish Turn" in the

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[51] Foley, *Mother Mary Gerald Barry, O.P.: Ecclesial Woman of Vision and Daring*, 14.
[52] Ibid., 15-16.
[53] Ibid., 15.

Congregation. Before her tenure, the majority of the congregation was of German ancestry, still rooted in the original charism of the congregation to serve the needs of German Catholic immigrants. With Sister Gerald's arrival, a new mode of formation took hold, based boldly on the Irish model of teaching and worship combined with addressing the contemporary moment's obsessions with all female environments. Sister Gerald's novitiate program resembled a military bootcamp more than a church. If subsequent styles of novitiates and reports of Sister Gerald's austere teaching techniques are any indication, the novitiate was not an easy walk for a young nun. The philosophy at the time was to break down a nun not to build her up.[54]

In addition to individual "conversion" to religious life, the novitiate was responsible for the upkeep and administrative duties of the entire motherhouse campus including all cleaning, laundry, cooking and serving. Novice mistresses saw to the education of the nuns as well as to their spiritual maturation and vocational discernment. Though being novice mistress is itself a full time job, Sister Gerald was still an integral part of the leadership of the Congregation often dispatched to attend to congregational business.

It was in her capacity as novice mistress where she met and mentored a working girl from Chicago with a similar pedigree, Peggy Ryan. Margaret Mary Ryan was born on May 9, 1901 to Mary and Philip Ryan, both immigrants from Ireland to

[54] Interview with Sr. Rosemary Ferguson Aug. 25, 2008, Adrian, Michigan.

the U.S. (her father from County Limerick and her Mother from County Clare). The family with seven children moved from Cleveland to New York to Pittsburgh and then settled in Chicago after Philip secured a job as a foreman in a steel mill. He sometimes traveled to oversee mills in Alabama and parts of Eastern Canada and Margaret, at the age of 12, was in charge of writing the family letters to him. [55]

She attended public and then parochial school, enrolling in Aquinas High School in Chicago, run by the Adrian Dominicans. After the death of her father in 1916 and her graduation from high school in 1919, Margaret worked as a receptionist and then entered the Congregation in February 2, 1920 receiving the religious name Sister Mary Philip for her mother and father. She was immediately sent out as a teacher since in those days immediate teachers were needed and training rarely occurred except in informal mentorship on site. In 1922 she returned to Adrian for her required canonical novitiate year with Sister Gerald as novice mistress.

The two women, twenty years between them, made a connection to one another that would continue until Sister Gerald's death in 1961. Surely, Sister Gerald saw Sister Mary Philip as somewhat of a niece, since the young novice had Irish parents and represented the first generation of U.S.-born children with similar roots to Sister Gerald's, even in the same Irish county. Sister Mary Philip must have seen her family in the austere but warm Sister Gerald as both were far from their family and

[55] "Sister Mary Philip Ryan, 1901-2002" personal files, obituary and autobiography, p. 3493, Congregation Archives, Adrian Dominican Sisters, Adrian, MI.

out of the Irish neighborhoods they were accustomed to. Beginning at the end of Sister Mary Philip's novitiate, nearly a thousand pages of letters passed between them revealing their piety, daily activities, dreams, shortcomings, and connection to one another.

Sister Mary Philip, who lived more than a century, meticulously saved and processed all the letters she sent to Sister Gerald sometime after she became the Congregation's historian in her last phase of life. Though there are clearly holes in the records, the letters between them began in 1928 with correspondence about girls who may or may not be entering the congregation. Addressing her former Novice Mistress with familiarity and formality, Sister Mary Philip inquired about her health, told her she was praying for her and gave her updates on girls from her school in Royal Oak who would be joining the Congregation. In the next three years there are multiple letters exchanged (though more often letters from Sister Mary Philip to Sister Gerald than the other way around) with news, ideas, remembrances and names of possible "subjects"[56] for the postulancy.[57]

Toward the end of the 1920s Mother Augustine fell more and more ill, entrusting the daily decisions and much of the administrative running of the congregation to Sister Gerald. After Mother Augustine's death in 1933, the Adrian

[56] Possible additions to the Congregation are now called candidates.
[57] All letters are located at the Adrian Dominican Sisters archives: Sister Mary Philip Ryan, Series 3, Box 3, Folder Title "S. Mary Philip, Novice Mistress 1933-1945.

congregation elected Sister Gerald to the office of Prioress General. She would serve as Mother General until her death in 1961. In April 1933, Sister Gerald wrote to Sister Mary Philip a newsy note that ended with "This is only being sent as a reminder that I am thinking of you...may I soon see you is the sincere prayer of this Yours Affectionately,"[58] There is no letter inviting her to become novice mistress, but that is what the newly appointed Mother Gerald did that summer. By July, Sister Mary Philip wrote from Dearborn, Michigan, "[my] shameless and undisguised loafing period is almost at an end" and thanks Mother Gerald for the chance to receive medical care for abscessed teeth.[59] She promises at the end not to take anything too seriously when she returns to Adrian and ends with "I resolve never to get sick again." Though it is not completely spelled out, it is clear that Sister Mary Philip was sent for a forced rest period and to see a dentist before beginning her time as novice mistress and may have suffered emotionally or psychologically as well as physically. A note from a friend more clearly illustrates the pressure the position as novice mistress carried. Sister Rose Ethel wrote in September, 1933 :

[58] April 7, 1933 Unsigned letter, Series 3, Box 3, Folder Title "S. Mary Philip, Novice Mistress 1933-1945. Photo: DSC08338.
[59] Sister Mary Philip Ryan to Mother Gerald, August 13, 1933, from Dearborn Michigan at the St. Alphonsus Convent. Series 3, Box 3, Folder Title "S. Mary Philip, Novice Mistress 1933-1945. Photos: 8327-28.

"Congratulations, or rather, condolences on your new job!"[60].

Sister Gerald, now called Mother Gerald, chose Sister Mary Philip to follow her in the position that Mother Gerald had held for twelve years. The choice surprised Sister Mary Philip, but it seems in hindsight to be a clear choice to continue the "Irish Turn" and preserve the sort of novitiate that Mother Gerald had created for the congregation. The two women would go on to create a working relationship that would last twenty-eight more years where Mother Gerald, time and again, would choose Sister Mary Philip to expand the vision and action of the congregation.

The biographies of these two leaders of the congregation tell us more specifically about leadership and positioning of the Adrian Dominican Sisters in their larger context. First, the election of Mother Gerald began or furthered the "Irish-turn" in Congregational leaders. Second, though the congregation was not itself embroiled in the modernist or Americanist controversy, its leaders came from fiercely nationalist families with roots in Irish republicanism as well as American immigration and an international past. Mother Gerald, especially, received an education at a school steeped in Irish Ethnic learning where she later worked. Though both figures appeared to be in agreement with the Vatican that the U.S. Church was no different than the Church universally, their Irish ethnic roots may signal other ideas. It would

[60] Letter from Sr. Rose Ethel to Sr. Mary Philip from Cleveland, Nativity Convent, 9420 Dunlap Ave. Sept 8, 1933. Series 3, Box 3, Folder Title "S. Mary Philip, Novice Mistress 1933-1945." Photo 8326.

be wise to consider the possibility that Americanist tendencies or influences may be tempered or somewhat hidden given the intellectual climate of the time period.

Third, they both had worked extensively before joining the Congregation and had experience in the business world and the social world as unmarried, women workers. It is likely that as a result they both held education as an important life path for any woman. Mother Gerald went on to support hundreds of women to finish college, establish preparatory high schools for girls, support graduate work for teachers, and finally begin universities and staff them with Ph.D.-level Sisters. Mary Philip Ryan graduated from college and then attended the University of Detroit in English where she was an award-winning writer and finally earned a Ph.D. in English Literature at the university of Santo Domingo where she became the chair of the English Department.

Mother Gerald and Sister Mary Philip's biographies make them look like embodied harbingers of the New Woman, but they did not reflect her ideologically. Mother Gerald, especially, wrote squarely in the tropes of other Catholic women of her generation claiming her actions as direct obedience to God and as a woman of the Old Faith. Both women carried the ideologies of their Irish nationalistic roots, professional experience, dedication to educating women and Catholic monolithic identity into the organizational structure of the Congregation making their values and visions reflected in the convent. How they imbued the nuns of the convent with this

vision is the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter 2:
"In the world but not of it":
Adrian Dominican Sisters Negotiating Modernity Through Body, 1933-39

The group of nuns who staffed Colegio Santo Domingo in its first phase, from the mid-forties to the late fifties, "formed" their religious vocation in the thirties and forties under the Congregational leadership of Mother Gerald and her team, including Sister Mary Philip as novice mistress. This group of nuns differed markedly from the sisters that came before them. A newer, younger, and more Irish leadership team offered a transformative novitiate education at the tail end of a period of turmoil within the Roman Catholic Church in the United States. The Congregation had to contend with a variety of ideological binaries in order to form new nuns including modernism versus tradition, femininity versus public life, and individual difference versus community union. An analysis of both the leadership of Mother Gerald in the thirties and forties and the program of the novitiate run by Sister Mary Philip from 1933 to 1945 helps us to understand how the Congregation taught new nuns to embrace and live through these binaries, often paradoxically.

During this time period both leaders experimented with and codified a toolbox

of methods to train Sisters to have unique flexible identities as women and Catholics making them simultaneously mainstream Catholic women religious and modern educators. The result was a program of identity formation made possible by the teaching offered in the novitiate as well as the leadership of the Mother General to integrate the world where new nuns came from with the demands of religious and teaching lives. At the heart of this instruction was an emphasis on one's Catholic identity as one's primary strength made stronger through the disciplining of the body to maintain this identity. Mother Gerald's instruction and Sister Mary Philip's practices of the novitiate formed a toolbox that the founding faculty then imported to the Dominican Republic. Sister Mary Philip and her staff re-employed this toolbox of practices in the complex political, social, and theological context of Santo Domingo. By looking at the novitiate of the thirties and forties we can understand the root of what the nuns offered at Colegio Santo Domingo and how the girls learned to navigate and live through the paradoxes of their unique milieu.

In her first letter to the community as Mother General, Mary Gerald Barry instructed Sisters to put God in the center of their lives and pray for others: the Holy Father, the Church, and recently deceased Sisters, among them the recently deceased Mother General Camilla Madden. She asked that Sisters pray in order to resist the waves of temptation threatening the virtues of their chosen vocation. Pray for patience, she instructed.

> Be a joy to your Community now and always. See that you have the right disposition; that you are a real Dominican; that you desire to be holy in word and in work; that you wish to promote the common good; and that you are imbued with the love of God and a great zeal for souls…It is not so much what we do but the spirit in which we do it that marks us as religious.[61]

To be "religious" meant to be a part of a religious order, a person professed to a life in the service of God and the Church- the opposite of "worldly." She concluded her advice to the Sisters "We are in the world but not of it," a frequently used phrase to remind Sisters of the place they occupied as Catholic women religious- inside but not attached to a mainstream "world" of material objects and ideas incongruent with Church doctrine. To be "in the world but not of it" spoke of a requirement for all Sisters[62] set by the Church before Vatican II.[63] They must live in two environments simultaneously- the larger world of schools, hospitals, and retirement communities where they served, and the convent, built on the rules of St. Benedict and the church requirements for female religious communities, where they lived. The measuring stick by which they were judged to have the "right disposition" and be "imbued" existed within the signals given off from their well-trained bodies.

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[61] Ryan, O.P, Mary Philip, *The Charity of Christ Presses Us: Mother Mary Gerald Barry's Letters to Her Community*. Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Bruce Press, 1962, 6.
[62] I will use the terms "religious," "nuns," "women religious," and "Sisters" interchangeably though historically the term "women religious" emerged after Vatican II as the umbrella term to describe both cloistered nuns and semi-cloistered Sisters. Recent usage fuses all terms as synonyms. I tend to use the term "religious" used during the 1930s as a word to describe a person, male or female, in a Catholic religious order. The lack of gender demarcation, before Vatican II, I believe is quite significant.
[63] Pope John XXIII called The Second Vatican Council in 1962 and it met until 1965.

The concept and practice of being "in the world but not of it" plagued Mother Gerald in her first years as administrative head and spiritual guide to the Adrian Dominican Sisters. She began her tenure as Mother General in the mid-1930s when the negotiation of the world became increasingly complicated. Catholics living separately in all Catholic neighborhoods and networks began to dissolve as the emergence of a social gospel and public Catholicism rose to prominence. Jay P. Dolan describes this 1930s transformation:

> As Catholics turned outward and became less parochial in their thinking, they sought to integrate their faith with their life in the world. This was a new awakening for many Catholics raised in a subculture that had fenced itself off from the rest of society. Indicative of their confidence and hubris, this new breed of Catholic believed that Catholicism was the only effective remedy for a broken civilization.[64]

The Adrian Dominicans consisted of a community of women raised in the parochial world of Catholic neighborhoods, schools, and social lives, but nevertheless women with a fire for social change. The "new breed" of confident Catholics who sought to take the Faith everywhere, rather than simply keep it alive while entrenched, populated their Congregation. However, their position as American Catholics reaching out beyond Catholic enclaves left them caught between competing orientations of thought: on one side the desire for religious life and obedience to Church authority; on the other service to others inside and outside the Church and the

[64] Dolan, Jay P. *In Search of an American Catholicism: A History of Religion and Culture in Tension.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 152.

desire to heal the world with their faith. Sisters had to negotiate carefully and manage a great deal of anxiety about their choices. Those in powerful positions of church authority were still entrenched in parochial modes of thinking. In order to avoid problems of appearing too attached to the world their actions and their image was of great importance. The Adrians were also concerned about the actual corrupting characteristics of the world and wanted to stay safe. To maintain themselves took vigilant training of the body and mind.

In this section, I draw upon two primary sources: Mother Gerald's letters and oral history interviews collected from Adrian Dominicans who entered religious life during Mother Gerald's tenure. Soon after Mother Gerald's death in 1961, the order's historian, none other than Sister Mary Phillip Ryan, compiled all the letters Mother Gerald had written to the community and published *The Charity of Christ Presses Us: Mother Mary Gerald Barry's Letters to Her Community.* Designed as a history of the order and a memorial for Sisters in their grief, the letters in *The Charity of Christ Presses Us* appear exactly as they were written. All quotations by Mother Gerald come from this single volume.[65]

The oral histories were gathered in group interviews at two assisted living facilities in Santa Cruz, California and Adrian, Michigan as well as at the Western

[65] To ensure accuracy I cross-referenced original and published words and found that they remained unaltered. Many thanks to Sr. Marilyn Francouer, the Congregation's former archivist, for help with this and many other endeavors like it.

Conference of Adrian Dominicans held in San Jose, October 2007. The Sisters present at the interviews all entered the Adrian Congregation between 1942 and 1957 and knew Mother Gerald personally. They were self-selected as Sisters who offered to provide me some context for understanding Mother Gerald's leadership style and personality in my interpretation of the letters. Though the oral interviewees joined the Congregation in the forties and fifties, the Sisters' opinions and impressions of Mother Gerald remain pertinent. They describe Mother Gerald as a seasoned administrator, the persona she worked to develop in the 1930s. Often their impressions show the continuity of Mother Gerald's salient characteristics as a leader and the role of the letters as a teaching tool for new as well as established nuns in the Congregation. Their reverence for and memory of the letters reflects the importance that the words within held for them and the letters' effectiveness as a teaching tool. Many sisters in their nineties can recite paragraphs of her letters from memory.

In 1934 Marcel Mauss proposed in his groundbreaking lecture "Techniques of the Body" that bodily movements were never natural, but always the product of social training.[66] Using examples from various cultures he asserted: "from society to society men know how to use their bodies" only through the careful instruction and slow learning of "techniques."[67] Using examples from Europe and elsewhere he described

[66] Marcel Mauss, "Techniques of the Body," in *The Body : A Reader*, ed. Monica and Mariam Fraser Greco (New York: Routledge, 2005)., 75-76.
[67] Ibid., 75.

differing techniques used for swimming, digging, marching, walking, resting one's hands, and running to show that depending upon one's society, one's body moved in a "natural" way to do the simplest tasks. Mauss believed that we learn how to move through an "education of composure" performed by a person of social prestige who is then imitated by those of less authority. He proposed that the use of the "pre-prepared movements" made it possible to "domina[te]…the conscious over emotion and unconsciousness" as well as perhaps a means of "entering into 'communication with God.'" Mauss's wish was that with a combined effort of sociologists and psychologists we could continue to better understand this bodily education process--something so ordinary and so central to the organization of societies and the self. His lecture became the basis for a variety of theorists to continue to think creatively about the body, each entering into the discussion in new ways.[68]

Mary Douglas took Mauss's ideas a step further in her widely influential book *Natural Symbols* (1967). In her essay "The Two Bodies" she reviews the work since Mauss and critiques her colleagues as coming up short with a full theory of the body as a socially enacted physical entity. She also critiques Mauss's "denial that there is any such thing as natural behavior" as "confusing."[69] In some defiance of Mauss she asserts that there is a "natural tendency to express situations of a certain kind in an

[68] Ibid., 75-78.
[69] Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols: explorations in cosmology* (London: Routledge, 1973)., 97.

appropriate bodily style" and this tendency is universal in all societies.[70] She claims there is no natural behavior, but a natural tendency to express oneself socially through the body. The second half of her argument is that bodily control "is an expression of social control" and the body is limited by the "controls exerted from the social system." What we imagine our bodies can and can't do is socially constructed. One of the consequences of her argument is that the "same drive that seeks harmoniously to relate the experience of physical and social, must affect ideology." Once one's physical and social experience is linked in the learning of bodily techniques, one's ideology, whether political or theological, is shaped also.[71] For Douglas, bodily techniques led to specific strains of thinking.

Theorists following Douglas splintered into various directions taking up everything from the expression of politics through the body[72] to the role of the grotesque in social organization.[73] Among theorists of sexuality, Judith Butler, among

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[70] Ibid., 97.
[71] Ibid., 98, 99.
[72] Ernst Kantorowitz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997); Lynn Hunt, "Hercules and the Radical Image in the French Revolution," *Representations* Spring, no. 2 (1983); Lynn Hunt, *Eroticism and The Body Politic* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991); George L. Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality: Respectability and Abnormal Sexuality in Modern Europe* (New York, New York: H. Fertig, 1985).
[73] Mikhail Mikhailovich Bahktin, *Rabelais and his world*, trans. Helene Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984); Natalie Zemon-Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1975); Umberto Eco, "The Frames of Comic "Freedom"," in *Carnival!*, ed. Thomas A. Sebeok (Berlin, Germany: Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 1984); Julia Kristeva, *Powers of*

others, wrestled with how "sex" is achieved as it is neither a "simple fact [n]or a static condition of a body." Butler argues in *Bodies that Matter* (1993) that "regulatory norms materialize 'sex' and achieve this materialization through a forcible reiteration of those norms." That this is a process that requires repetition "is a sign that materialization is never quite complete" and the norms can never fully form a body.[74] Butler and others take the body techniques of Mauss beyond behavior and extend to the identity of the body and the signals a body must give to be categorized socially.[75]

Mother Gerald's treatises on deportment follow many of the patterns explained by Mauss, Douglas, and their inspired colleagues. Her reiterative lessons on deportment instructed Sisters on how to successfully live in the world while maintaining their religious identity, both through training the body. First, to "cleanse" women of the temptations of the world, Mother Gerald encouraged disciplining their bodies to be in proper shape and posture to receive God. The creation of a proper body ready to receive Christ's direction made the Catholicity of a Sister strong, and if her Catholicity was strong, she stood a chance against the temptations of the world.

Horror: An Essay on Abjection, trans. Leon S. Roudiez, European Perspectives (NY, NY: Columbia University Press, 1982); Rajyashree Pandey, "The Pre in the Postmodern: The Horror Manga of Hino Hideshi," *Japanese Studies* 21, no. 3 (2001); Warwick Anderson, *Colonial Pathologies: American Tropical Medicine, Race and Hygiene in the Philippines* (Raleigh: Duke University Press, 2006).

[74] Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: on the discursive limits of "sex"* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 2.

[75] Ibid., Londa Schiebinger, "Skeletons in the Closet: The First Illustrations of the Female Skeleton in Eighteenth-Century Anatomy," *Representations* 14(1986).

For the Adrians how you sat, stood, prayed and walked was to either be in God's presence or without Him resulting in vulnerability.

The second was for women to behave religiously and therefore be perceived as religious. Correct perception protected the community from judgment as not religious enough or even heretical. In other words, the Adrians had a strong desire and obligation to keep up their reputation as a Congregation filled with religious and moral purity so that sisters would continue to be invited to staff schools, pastor to their communities, and attract the many needed new postulants to join the order. The threat of sanction was low, but the threat of being passed over for other, more attractive orders of Sisters, was a looming fear. Lastly was advice on how to remain religious in the face of competing doctrines, dogmas, and theories about the world. In a rapidly changing world, Mother Gerald made decisions about what worldly materials were necessary for good teachers, and what would simply be a distraction from religious life. Mother Gerald often addressed all three of these concerns at once in dense warnings, advisements, and pleas for compliance.

At the root of all three were manners. For Mother Gerald, manners were the gateway to thinking. She believed that one's behavior aligned oneself with modes of thinking and the power of imagining. If deportment led to thinking, Mother Gerald intended to teach Sisters to behave in ways that would allow for the development of proper thinking and proper imagining. Like Saba Mahmood found in her ethnography

of women in the urban women's mosque movement in the 1990s, Mother Gerald believed in an embodied, internal morality practiced externally and absorbed internally over time.[76] She detailed in a letter in 1934: "Devotion is required of all Christians but especially of religious: devotion expressed in posture, word and action." To better define the expected posture and devotion, she urged Sisters to do the following:

> At the solemn parts of the Mass we must all be in a posture of adoration. We should desire that Christ find us in a position to be blessed and loved, and therefore we should kneel at the consecration, elevation and blessings…[77]

Mother Gerald believed that without proper posture, proper words, and proper action, a Catholic Sister would not receive Christ's blessing; without that blessing she could not develop herself spiritually. In order to develop, nuns had to discipline their bodies within a fixed set of practices. Therefore, proper posture ensured that a Sister would act in a way befitting a nun, appear religious and remain religious. Without it, her chances of distraction by the world were high. The only way to accomplish the development necessary for a mature spiritual life was through the disciplining of the body to receive spiritual direction. This disciplining required repeated education of each sister and the community as a whole.[78]

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[76] Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*, 1 ed. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005).
[77] Ryan, *The Charity of Christ*, 23. In a letter October 10, 1934.
[78] The role of education as absolutely necessary in the disciplining of the body is discussed at length in Marcel Mauss, "Techniques of the Body," in *The Body : A*

Mother Gerald's approach to manners was not just indicative of a group in flux and needing homogenization of its members. For Mother Gerald manners were a necessary bodily discipline practice linked to the possibility of spiritual salvation and the insurance that Sisters could serve the world without being converted to it. Mother Gerald was engaged in training women how to *use* bodily discipline to reach the right thinking. By choosing the right way to move and shape herself a nun could choose her religious vocation over the temptations of the world daily.

And this returns the analysis back to the question of "the world," modernity, and manners. The education and enforcement of manners was not in itself modern. Rather the way in which Mother Gerald went about instructing Sisters how to engage with the world was a modern technique that also taught how to be modern simultaneously. She understood that Sisters had to engage with the world on a daily basis, and therefore they met with repeated temptations that might change their thinking. Her intentions to teach Sisters to interact in the world but orient toward religious life points to a consciously modern understanding of the conflicting demands within the daily lives of Catholic Sisters. By modern I mean that she taught them to think within multiple frames of understanding the world. Mother Gerald taught them to negotiate modernity within religiously acceptable terms and behavior while still understanding but not "inhabiting" other ways of thinking outside of

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Reader, ed. Monica and Mariam Fraser Greco (New York: Routledge, 2005). Especially pages 75-76.

religious life.

Mother Gerald understood the world in two parts.[79] The first was a long held concept of the world as a physical place filled with material objects that marked it distinctly as human, not God's, creation. These trappings of the world could potentially corrupt a Sister and therefore needed to be restricted, monitored and at times, rejected by the community as a whole. Mother Gerald continued to restrict and prevent the trappings of the world from interfering with Sisters' lives, but she also feared what the world would do to their thinking. The second part of her worldview was ideological not just material.

In effect, Mother Gerald's concept of the world meant what scholars have termed "modernity" - physical material, ideas, and conditions, as well as a process. Using a welcome definition by the anthropologist Charles Hirschkind:

> Modernity is not a functionally integrated totality governed by a singular overarching logic but rather a constellation of practices and technologies contingently connected within discontinuous formations of power.[80]

Mother Gerald's understanding of "the world" included a large number of systems (material objects, religious life, manners, etc.) that its inhabitants recognized, negotiated and didn't fully understand in relationship to one another. Yet her

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[79] The dual understanding of "the world" as a definition that changed over time was an idea discussed with Marilyn J. Westerkamp on February 11, 2008.

[80] Hirschkind, Charles, *The Ethical Soundscape: Cassette Sermons and Islamic Counterpublics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 21. In his footnotes, Hirschkind mentions that his definition reflects the work of Ian Hacking, Bruno Latour and Joseph Rouse on the philosophy of science.

"practices" and "technologies" to order and classify the world in an attempt to contain it was decidedly modern as well. While Mother Gerald's guidance on how to approach the world appears to be advice against allowing oneself to be part of the world, I argue that the practice of limiting contact was itself modern and required Sisters to cultivate a "constellation of practices" to negotiate the existence and influence of the world. Though Mother Gerald believed that she was maintaining a divide between the world and religious life, she taught Sisters to live in the modern world as complex people and understand the "discontinuous formations of power" embedded in public opinions, secular thought, Church hierarchy, and community norms. By existing with disciplined bodies she believed that the Sisters could navigate their way between competing worldviews successfully. Following Douglas and Mauss, the divide between the world and the convent was one of teaching techniques to mark an individual body to belong to a group, as well as an expression of a social message. Those processes made it possible for Sisters to see multiple worldviews as they made their group separate from mainstreams around them.

Nothing revealed proof that Sisters were of the world more than their bodies. Mother Gerald encouraged Sisters to mark their bodies as not of the world by making careful clothing choices, rejecting beauty products and sitting, walking and standing properly.[81] In so doing Mother Gerald encouraged Sisters to behave in a way no

[81] Though nuns each wore the same habit what they wore underneath remained up to

different than Catholic women since the late nineteenth century. Her emphasis and interest in what a "good woman" is and is not reflects the values of the most popular instruction books women in Catholic circles but to different ends.[82] Mother Gerald's warnings about appearance centered on the traditional fear that the trappings of modern life would distract them from their vocation and lead young Sisters astray.

Mother Gerald often warned Sisters that their clothing would reveal them as "worldly" and that public appearance as "worldly" put the community as well as the individual under public scrutiny. Mother Gerald first warned that worldly ways of the body caused trouble for any religious woman. Warning a nun to keep her body restrained was a typical admonition for a nun and had been for hundreds of years. Mother Gerald warned that among other activities, loud speaking,[83] eating without silence,[84] gum chewing,[85] knee crossing,[86] and moving one's body without thinking would lead to evil. The evils, when named, were attracting undue attention or distracting a sister from godly work.

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each Sister's discretion. Most of the advice about clothing, if it is not directly about habits, is probably about underwear or shoes.

[82] The most famous book was written by Father Bernard O'Reilly in 1877 with the interesting title *The Mirror of True Womanhood: a book of instruction for women in the world*. Kennelly, Karen, Ed. *American Catholic Women: A Historical Expoloration* (New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., 1989), 3.

[83] Ryan, *The Charity of Christ*, 26. Letter from Oct. 10, 1934.

[84] Ibid., 40 Letter from June 14, 1935.

[85] Ibid., 34 Letter from May 7, 1935 an "ugly habit" that shows lack of "self-control".

[86] Ibid.

> Do not be swinging your arms either at home or abroad. Keep you hands under the scapular when possible and be reminded that you are girded for strife. The world, the flesh, and the devil are strong forces and you need gird yourself [87]

Although this statement looks similar to admonitions and concerns of medieval religious women, Mother Gerald spoke of a far more modern set of concerns.[88] Mother Gerald's warnings that a nun must be "girded for strife" pointed to a need to deny the influences of the outside world that could be shielded through bodily practice of keeping the body contained. Like Mary Douglas asserts in her theory of "The Two Bodies" Mother Gerald's warnings reflect the demands of a "social body" upon the physical experience of an individual. Mother Gerald is concerned about individual salvation in the quote above but even more about community living. She makes clear that physical disciplines are as important "at home" as "abroad" pointing to a special concern for appearance in public as well as the "public" of community life. She then shifts to warn that the outside influences are strong and therefore must

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[87] Ibid., 22. Letter from June 20, 1934.

[88] See the work of Caroline Bynum, Peter Brown, Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast, Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987); ———, *Metamorphosis and Identity* (New York: Zone Books, 2001); Caroline Walker and Stevan Harrall and Paula Richman Bynum, ed., *Gender and Religon: On the Complexity of Symbols* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986); and others: Bynum, *Holy Feast, Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women*; ———, *Metamorphosis and Identity*; ———, ed., *Gender and Religon: On the Complexity of Symbols*; Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).

be guarded against through bodily practice. Douglas identifies such systems as a "concordance between social and bodily expressions of control."[89]

Mother Gerald never offered specifics when discussing the influences that corrupt. By staying vague, the power of corruption looms larger as it cannot be identified and cannot be controlled. By never naming the problem, the problem is everywhere and strict social controls are not just suggestions, but necessary actions to ensure the survival of the group and the individual.

Mother Gerald promoted the traditional idea that to be a religious meant to actively deny oneself in order to pursue purity and perfection. Mother Gerald often encouraged bodily denial, demanding that Sisters refrain from using products to enhance their bodies: "Deny yourself! Do not build your character on pagan ways-shaking powder over an already too puffed up flesh."[90] Through denial, Mother Gerald promoted a form of asceticism that connected nun's views of the body back to monastic practice since the early Middle Ages. Though these warnings were dramatic, she did not explain why she was telling Sisters to refrain from certain behaviors. Mother Gerald became more ready to explain when she warned Sisters against *appearing* "worldly" through their bodies.

Where Mother Gerald offered an explanation for her advice reveals a larger, perhaps strategic project at work to negotiate and conceptualize the world in complex

[89] Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols* (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1973), 68.
[90] Ibid., 28, Letter from December 17, 1934.

ways.[91] Mother Gerald mixed both the personal responsibility to remain focused and to deny oneself with a concern for outside perceptions of Adrian Sisters. The asceticism she promoted turned out to be more the appearance of asceticism rather than asceticism itself.

> You have been reminded before to be cautious about your appearance at all times. You can be easily seen from the street so be careful to wear your full garb; and even though you cannot be seen, you owe it to yourselves and your companions to be dignified. Wear your habit in its entirety and beauty.[92]

The distinction between self-control and image-control changed the intention of what she attempted to instill in the Sisters. Her warning to wear their entire habit was a reference to the mystery and modesty expected of nuns to never be viewed outside of their form of dress. In heat or discomfort, a nun might choose to sit at her desk and write a letter without her wimple, for example. If a window shade was not pulled down, then the sister would be visible to the outside world without her full clothing. A fully-garbed Sister created an important facet of the community's image inside and outside the convent walls. She explained the importance of appearance as acting "dignified" but implied that something important was riding on the reputation of Dominicans as fully garbed all the time, even when not in public. In another letter she explains her worries and her approach more thoroughly:

> You must realize that fancy clothing of any kind brands you as a worldling.

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[91] Conversation with Alice Yang, Feb. 6, 2008.
[92] Ryan, *The Charity of Christ*, 37. Letter from June 7, 1935.

Thus you must see that you never ask for it nor accept in from anyone.[93]

It seems that a reputation (or branding) as worldly was as dangerous as actually being worldly. If so, then Mother Gerald offered an argument about image maintenance rather than avoiding actual worldliness. Her concerns for this loss of reputation were striking as she asked Sisters to manage the public image of the religious community through dress. Therefore her concerns for image varied in scale. Mother Gerald was concerned for the individual's image as well as the image of the entire Congregation.

Mother Gerald made the clear distinction that one must act "the part" of a traditional nun in order to be one. By acting as a nun one would strengthen the soul to receive God's grace. The consequences of acting out of step were to risk ridicule in the minds of the public and her fellow sisters and thus endanger her soul. This attitude continued to develop over the years of her leadership. In 1952 Mother Gerald remarked, "Sisters, you especially are before the eyes of the public. Every wrinkle and misplaced fold in your character will be noticed."[94] Twenty years later one's dress is one's character and both are on display to all who see her.

Mother Gerald often included lengthy sections in her letters to teach Sisters how to speak so as not to reveal their complex thinking. Language occupied a space that revealed worldliness or holiness. Mother Gerald struggled to encourage Sisters to speak as they behave and behave as they speak, linking language to behavior and

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[93] Ibid., 11. Letter from November 21, 1933.
[94] Ryan, *The Charity of Christ*, 322. In a letter dated April 29, 1952.

behavior to public image. Mother Gerald's emphasis on manners linked women's bodies to their minds by arguing that one's body movements affected the thoughts she had. In this causal relationship how one walked could affect what words a woman chose and how a woman sat affected her ability to receive salvation. The body was the gate and the behavior of the body, the gatekeeper.

Mother Gerald's warnings about language show her insistence that how a Sister acted made her religious rather than worldly regardless of the philosophies with which she was familiar. More than any other aspect of her advice, Mother Gerald explained herself thoroughly to show her reasoning. Some of her advice seems straightforward such as the following admonition for using slang. But a closer look reveals her worries that language itself was a behavior that must be disciplined just as the body must be disciplined in order to stay within religious life and not be of "the world." As elsewhere she concerns herself not only with the individual's mind but also with the public judgment of such behavior:

> Make use of pure English in conversation and writing. American slang is snappy and infectious but let us avoid it. Avoid the use of "guy," "kid" and other such terms that are liable to slip into our vocabulary. It seems the things human are made almost entirely animal because of the names we call them.[95]

Mother Gerald saw language as a direct reflection of a Sister's orientation toward her life and "the world." Just as important, Mother Gerald concerned herself with what others could think after hearing certain words. Slang revealed worldview,

[95] Ryan, *The Charity of Christ*, 235.

and, in the case of rendering humanity into animal form, Mother Gerald rejected that Sisters' should think such thoughts and relay them to others. Mother Gerald wanted to discipline Sisters to understand that words could solidify a worldly view in their own minds and the minds of others. Poor word choice could transform a Sister into a worldling and alienate a lay person (or more likely a child) away from the Faith.

Similarly, she encouraged Sisters to speak in ways that attracted people to the Faith. The Adrians were Dominicans, after all, preachers serving the Church.

> Speak in soft tones to one another, and to others outside the community. Be courteous always. In this way you will draw souls to your Master. He sends you forth to bring the fruit that is to remain.[96]

Again, Mother Gerald's concern is the public reception of the Adrians and how language and its presentation either draws people nearer or pushes them away. Language is the link between the religious and "the world," but the language used by the religious should not reflect too much of "the world." Mother Gerald's advice taught Sisters to walk the line as best they could, always making their religious life central. Their worldly understanding was necessary but also potentially distracting (or dangerous). In the above quotation, language is as much about the body as a gesture. The body of a sister is important in how she speaks as much as what she says. Furthermore, she exists for the purpose to bring people to the faith with her behavior as a way to attract and save others – the fruit that is to remain.

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[96] Ibid., 26. Letter from Oct. 10, 1934.

Even when it came to books, the language most absorbed by Sisters, Mother Gerald begged Sisters to comply with her advice.

> Beware of your making a habit of dangerous reading. Please, please, please watch your reading. Your heart is going to be filled with what you take in, and out of that full heart your lips will speak.[97]

Regardless of the amount of control she had over nuns' lives, Mother Gerald worried. The influences from books had a direct effect on how Sisters spoke and what words they chose. She sums up the connections she drew between education, gender, words, and worldliness in a 1934 letter:

> Education should make you a better Christian; I beg of you to have a Christ-like spirit in your study. Education should not lead you away from the ideals a lady possesses, and therefore I bid you be a lady. The habit you wear signifies that you have been chosen Queen and that this choice will remain unto eternity if you prove yourself faithful. Beware of worldliness, then, in our study, in your actions, in your postures and in your habits in general. Recall the reference made in other letters about manners. Be an honor to the Community in your sincerity, in your modesty, in your humility, and especially in your charity. 'Let your light shine.'[98]

In the advice above she links education to what women think and therefore to what women choose to wear and how they hold themselves. Her language reveals a complex interplay of class and gender and its link to the bodily practice of proper religious life. Mother Gerald begins by making a markedly eighteenth-century plea for education not to corrupt the "ideals of a lady." She does not say that education could make them male or less female, but rather that education could somehow

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[97] Ryan, *The Charity of Christ*, 13. Letter from Nov. 21, 1933.
[98] Ibid., 22. Letter from June 20, 1934.

corrupt class and femaleness simultaneously. Suddenly, in the instance of education, it seems that to be female and of a high class serves Mother Gerald's views of what the order must do both to serve and to remain religious. She goes further in her next sentence, declaring that the habit shows that a nun has "been chosen Queen" perhaps the greatest height for a lady to reach. Suddenly, worldliness affects all the categories explored in this paper at once. Nuns can be transformed away from their proper place in the world and denied their shot at "proving [themselves] faithful" through corruption of their gender, class and religious orientation. If her logic was linear, then what she most feared was that education would open up a Sister to the influences of the world if not approached with the vanguard of proper posture and manners of a Catholic woman religious. What nuns said made visible what they thought and how they thought. Therefore language had to be watched closely by an individual and her superiors just as posture would. Language was as much a discipline as standing straight with one's hands underneath her scapular. If worldly language became the preferred method of communication for an individual Sister, her vocation and the image of the Congregation would suffer.

More so than other advice, Mother Gerald worried and warned Sisters that language would betray their selfhood, thereby endangering their image and their work. Mother Gerald's worries were not unfounded. By the mid-thirties Adrian Sisters followed a strict education program devised by Mother Gerald to complete

college by the end of their novitiate and work toward graduate degrees, as assigned, each summer vacation.[99] Sisters' exposure to new ideas had to be changing what they thought and the way they thought. Sisters attended mainstream and Catholic universities resulting in new language that could expose their developing multivalent lives.

Mother Gerald's understanding of appearing one way while being perceived as another betrays her as the modern woman that she was. She asked Sisters to be "not of this world" by understanding but not embracing the world as their central frame of reference for their lives. By promoting a strategic management of others' views of the Sisters and avoiding a reputation or branding as worldly, she betrayed the fact that she was already modern – negotiating the "disparate systems of power within modernity" while never appearing to be doing so. [100]

Sisters read Mother Gerald's letters throughout the Congregation both in the provinces and at the Motherhouse, but nowhere did they have more cache than in the novitiate. Though Mother Gerald's words can offer tremendous insight into the ideological troubles balancing contact and shelter from the world, Sister Mary Philip's practices in the novitiate acted as a translation of Mother Gerald's advice into

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[99] A letter each May outlined who would study where in what program and for how long. Sisters did not often know what they would study before they were assigned. One sister found out by letter that she would begin study for her PhD three weeks before she began and without any prior warning. Interview on July 1, 2007 at Adrian Motherhouse.

[100] Hirschkind, *The Ethical Soundscape,* 21.

a program of instruction.

The novitiate's entire aim was to spiritually nurture the individual while making all Sisters the same as part of one community. In order to accomplish this, the Novice Mistress had to tend to the spiritual development of individual sisters while working hard to obliterate all that was individual about each Sister's past and way of behaving. The bodily disciplines that Mother Gerald wrote about took on three-dimensional practice in the novitiate. Through bodily discipline a woman could be made into an individual nun and a disciplined subject of the larger community.

During the first years of Mother Gerald's tenure as Mother General, Sister Mary Philip made the Mother General's letters the backbone of her curriculum with new nuns. As the Mother General had been her novice mistress and someone that she clearly respected and loved, she took the leadership of Mother Gerald as seriously as one could. However, her interpretation of the letters was her own and not identical to Mother Gerald's either in word or practice. By interpreting the letters into the program of the novitiate, Sister Mary Philip created a curriculum that also taught women to exist in both a religious and modern context through the instructions that she provided.

In a life history interview with fellow Adrian Dominican Sister Jody Screes, Mary Philip Ryan reflected on her years as the Congregation's novice mistress with a mixture of regret and reflection. She argued that her behavior as the strict instructor

of incoming Sisters had been what was required of her. She had felt the watchful eye of Mother Gerald on her all the time, as not only the head of the Congregation but her own novice mistress. She knew no other model or approach. Sister Mary Philip summed up the experience of novice mistress in a single phrase - "It was a great and dangerous love." [101]

The novitiate and novice mistress has no secular analog with which to compare it. For most Sisters in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, the postulancy and novitiate were two years of women's lives when they received all structured curriculum they would ever have about how to be a good nun. Many sisters were just out of high school or finishing their last year when they decided to enter the Congregation. In other words, the novitiate was the moment of late adolescence for many and formational in all aspects of a young woman's life.

Walking into the motherhouse today, the main entrance resembles the convent as it was in the 1930s when parents and daughters arrived at the foot of the huge mansion stairs at the edge of a circular driveway, and parents handed over their teenage daughter traveling with only a trunk full of belongings. When parents and daughters said goodbye they knew that it would be years before they saw one another again. The girls completed six months of a trial period as postulants and then took one-year vows, received a white habit, and a religious name to complete their training

[101] "Interview with Sister Mary Philip Ryan, O.P. by Jody Screes, O.P." In *Series 3A, Box 5*. Adrian, Michigan: Adrian Dominican Sisters Archives.

in the novitiate. After a year to two years of training, Sisters made first profession and were sent out to teach or receive further education, usually both.

The postulant and novice mistresses were professed sisters with considerable experience teaching in Catholic schools and living in the Congregation. They were given the most important job within the Congregation, to "form" new nuns: weed out those that were not appropriate and teach women the basic skills necessary to be both a competent teacher and a devout sister. The nuns chosen to be novice mistresses were exemplary members of the Congregation and desirable to have within the most powerful leadership team with the Mother General. Also, following the example of Mother Gerald, who had served as novice mistress and fulfilled many other leadership roles simultaneously, Novice Mistresses were vital parts of the Mother General's team. In the 1940s, Mother Gerald expected Sister Mary Philip to run the novitiate as well as write the vast majority of her correspondence, all while attending the University of Detroit, pursuing graduate study in English and Creative Writing.

In five years of oral history collection and research with Adrian Dominican sisters, nothing made nuns more nervous or self-censoring than asking direct questions about their first years in the Congregation as postulants and novices. In the 1930s and 1940s, most found the novitiate a difficult challenge. It was the site where women developed themselves as adults and fully-identified themselves as Catholic women religious. However, this process of development, or "formation" as they

called it, occurred in an environment with intense demands, both emotional and physical, on the young women. Emotions still run high in talking about it, and many women resisted telling me many details about their time other than general comments of how it was the best and worst of times. Some refused to talk to me at all. Others felt safe relaying the good stories and glossing over the more negative aspects. The negative aspects, it turned out, were poignant and somewhat stereotypical, often involving punishment and humiliation, but interviewees offered little detail about how either was administered by Sister Mary Philip. When I shared my predicament in not understanding just how cruel Sister Mary Philip was as novice mistress and that I was forced to rely on my imagination, one nun agreed to tell me all the terrible things that she witnessed in an effort to make sure I got the story straight.

Sister Mary Philip, as novice mistress, inspired a particular kind of fear and respect among the novices she taught. She was described to me by different interviewees as the "leader of a sort of boot camp"[102] "a teacher,"[103] "a mentor, sort-of,"[104] "just plain mean"[105] and "she began where my mother left off."[106] Women were careful to defend her as someone who "was doing what she thought she should

[102] Interview with Evelyn Callow, August 27, 2008, Adrian, Michigan.
[103] Interview with Anonymous Adrian Dominican Sister, August 28, 2008, Adrian, Michigan.
[104] Conversation with anonymous Adrian Dominican Sisters outside the Dominican Life Center, Adrian, Michigan, August 2009.
[105] Interview with anonymous Adrian Dominican Sister, August 26, 2008, Adrian, Michigan.
[106] Interview with Evelyn Callow, August 27, 2008, Adrian, Michigan.

do," but "very stern."[107] As word got around that I was asking about Mary Phil (as she was called by some) more people came forward with a variety of stories to promote her as a sort of saint or detail all of her cruelties. Most everyone added at the end of her story that though Mary Philip could be tough, "you always knew she loved you." I pressed one former nun to tell me how it was that she knew. Evelyn Callow, formerly Sister Marie Madonna, replied, "Well, she was Irish." I asked her what being Irish had to do with knowing that she loved the novices. She smiled "I can't explain that to you if you don't understand."[108]

Mrs. Callow's story as well as the story of other former-novices revealed that it was often novices of Irish background that better understood Sister Mary Philip's behavior and were more apt to forgive her for any outbursts. Many Sisters chalked up her cruelty to defend her position as Novice Mistress in the first place. More than one interviewee said that she thought Sister Mary Philip was given the job as Novice Mistress because she was Irish, not because she was more exemplary than many other Sisters. Many justified her raging outbursts as attempts to gain or keep control and evidence that the role of Novice Mistress did not come naturally to her at all. [109] Although no one I interviewed believed that her outbursts were due to being too young or inexperienced, Sister Mary Philip claimed both in an interview toward the

[107] Interview with Sister Rita Schlitz, August 24, 2008, Adrian, Michigan.
[108] Interview with Evelyn Callow, August 27, 2008, Adrian, Michigan.
[109] Anonymous interviews at the Adrian Motherhouse, Michigan, August, 2009.

end of her life. She also claimed that she feared the judgment of Mother Gerald that led her to believe that she had to be a perfect Novice Mistress by whatever means necessary (and perfect novice mistresses produced perfect novices).[110]

In sum, it is clear that Mary Philip was not kind or harsh entirely. She reflected the novice mistress of the day: tough, unyielding and unsupportive most of the time with glimmers of the exact opposite. When she did yield or act with unsolicited kindness, she made lasting impressions that still bring tears to the storyteller. As I recount both types of stories I hope I do justice to the complexity of Mary Philip's character, the vision that she had for the nuns that she taught, and the pressures of her particular historical moment. Most importantly, the stories of how discipline and activities in the novitiate "formed" nuns reveals the development of a spectrum of practices to nurture the individual while obliterating individual differences to create a community identity.

The Congregational leadership asked postulants who had been living in the convent for six months to take the vows of a novice in groups commonly called "crowds," referring to the group that they entered with. Each crowd participated in a ceremony witnessed by family, if they were nearby, where Sisters accepted a religious name (sometimes requested by the nun herself), the white habit, and the simple vows of obedience, poverty and chastity.

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[110] "Interview with Sister Mary Philip Ryan, O.P. by Jody Screes, O.P." In *Series 3A, Box 5*. Adrian, Michigan: Adrian Dominican Sisters Archives.

At the point of taking a new name the novitiate encouraged young women to think of themselves beyond their gender. For example, nuns were given male religious names at the time of taking first vows when they began their training as religious in an order of preachers. Women named Elizabeth suddenly became Sister Laurence Jerome, never to be called by their family names by friends or family again.[111] Male names for preachers validated the woman's place in the position as preacher and further distanced women from their gender in order to pursue their unmarried lives. Nothing is more reiterative than hearing one's name and the images that it conjures. For sisters named male names, their possibilities for intellectual achievement was broadened and their society stood outside the mainstream by naming women with men's names. Gendered assumptions entered into almost every example of deportment instruction.

The daily routine in the Novitiate balanced individual and group activities meant to encourage Sisters to develop themselves spiritually as well as become a seamless part of the larger Congregational community. Every day novices spent the vast majority of their time in instruction, prayer, and chores around the Motherhouse

[111] This practice was abandoned after reform in the 1970's and most all women with male names now go by their original family names with a few exceptions. I have noticed but have little proof that women with tremendous intellectual potential and subsequent academic accomplishment were almost always given male names. Mother Gerald, for example, was named after her brother. Sister Mary Philip after her mother and father. For the first member of the Congregation to earn a Ph.D. in Philosophy, her religious name was Sister Thomas Aquin.

called "obediences." For nuns in the 1930s, under Mary Philip's watchful eye, novices began their day in silence by waking up and putting on their habits (a ten minute process including multiple layers of pins to keep everything in place) followed by Morning Prayer in the Chapel and chanting the hours. At breakfast, and every meal, a sister read a religious meditation on some aspect of Catholic religious life. Then sisters adjourned to a class or attended to their daily obedience. The novice mistress assigned nuns to every possible job needed to care for the daily working of the motherhouse. Novices did all the laundry, helped out in the kitchen, cleaned the entire campus including waxing floors, cleaning toilets, dusting, window washing, and other household labor, and they helped with the care of elderly nuns in the infirmary. Without the novices, the day-to-day running of the community was impossible.

The big bell in the chapel rang for assembly at lunch. Lines of novices prayed the "Dei Profundis" in unison before eating together in the dining room with a meditation read aloud at a lectern.[112] After lunch all Sisters returned to the chapel for Vespers followed by afternoon instruction. Later in the day all returned to the Chapel again for Matins and the Rosary. A simple supper was followed by an hour of recreation when sisters could talk freely for the only time during the day. At the end of recreation, the sisters returned to silence to study, read, or complete schoolwork.

[112] Though they no longer chant the Dei Profundis, the hall is now called "Dei Profundis Hall."

Profound silence began at 9:30 PM when Sister Mary Philip turned out the lights.

The novice mistress was in charge of all the instruction given to the new nuns. Within the range of activities that Sister Mary Philip designed for novices was a mixture of ways to blend classroom learning and community building while exercising obedience to authority. The activities included time to learn theology and ecclesiology from a priest, confession, and a variety of activities done as a group. Among interviewees many did not remember much of the instruction by priests. One sister remembered only that the priest often used the phrase "carnal desires" and that the frequency with which he used the phrase made it difficult not to laugh. The activities that nuns did remember had to do with the activities offered by Sister Mary Philip and her unyielding and strict instruction.

Almost every one of her novices that I interviewed remembered the "voice choir" as the most memorable part of working with Sister Mary Philip. The Voice Choir chanted a poem in unison (usually "Lepanto" by G.K. Chesterton) and then performed for visiting dignitaries. The voice choir taught absolute obedience to the novice mistress and that what can be made together can never happen alone. Sister Mary Philip demanded young nuns fuse their voices together allowing for no individual differentiation. Pronunciation, pitch, and timing were to be in exact unison with any nun speaking too late, too early, too loudly, or using any accent subject to punishment. Sister Mary Philip would humiliate deviants from the unified voice in

front of others, and if they still could not correct she summoned them to her office for additional admonitions. One sister described a terrifying incident where Sister Mary Philip accused her of being proud and disobedient for "refusing" to speak in unison. The anonymous former novice remembered trying to reason with Sister Mary Philip that she only needed more practice and Sister Mary Philip flew into a rage and accused her of even more pride for refusing to accept her criticism.

The voice choir exemplified Sister Mary Philip's translation of Mother Gerald's treatises on deportment into novitiate activities. The voice choir was a bodily practice to engage in self-discipline to change one's voice, timing, and pronunciation in order to appear as one person, not a group of individuals. The importance of the voice choir was to codify the community as one voice and eliminate the individual differences between sisters.

When Sisters stepped out of line, even the punishments remained community building in nature. Common punishments resembled one another in terms of their physical challenge or public humiliation. Many were punished with a "floor dish"- eating the leftovers on Mother General's plate on the floor with one's back against a column in the dining hall in front of all. Others were punished to pray with their arms outstretched for hours (or what felt like hours) in front of her sisters.[113] Many novices remembered that if you broke something, you had to carry it around with you for the

[113] Informal conversations and interviews with Sister Nadine Foley and other anonymous Sisters, Adrian, Michigan, August, 2008.

rest of the day. It was not uncommon to see a Sister carrying a broken plate or cup with her as she struggled to finish her obediences for the day. All of these punishments put the body at the center, making sisters painfully aware of what their bodies looked like in front of others. The point of the punishment was to make individual difference shameful, thereby strengthening the desire of the individual to be part of the group.

Disobedience was interpreted liberally. The most common punishment was the threat that one would be sent home. The fear of being sent home was almost palpable in the twentieth-century convent as obedience was a central trait of religious life and disobedience evidence of one's inappropriateness for religious life. Nothing made a young novice more nervous than the thought of being sent home. Sometimes the threats were empty and sometimes they were not. The one that most remember was for Sister Mary Philip to order at bedtime for the disobedient novice to "Take your trunk to the barn." Every nun I interviewed said the sentence with the same tone and cadence, remembering the moment that she or another sister had been sent out into the cold alone. The trunk signified that they would be sent home in the morning. The barn lay 100 yards from the novitiate and isolated from any of the buildings on campus. The punished novice would spend the night alone, rather than in the company of her sisters in the novitiate, contemplating what it was they could say to their parents when they were indeed sent home. Again, the punishment was

individuation from the group making the desire to avoid punishment a desire to forego individual identity for a group one.

Sisters did not always break the rules by accident. Mary Ann Hinsdale, IHM uses the term "small subversions' to explain how sisters negotiated the rules of communal living and the relationship between the regulations of religious life and actual life practice.[114] The Adrian novices were full of small subversions. I heard many stories of sisters in the 1940s sneaking out of the novitiate during the night to keep the ostracized sister company in the barn. The stories often ended with descriptions of young women sliding down from the hayloft at midnight and the sweet memory of sleeping in a large pile of quilts and sisters in the hay only to sneak back into the novitiate during the early morning. One sister kept contraband bottles of soda pop in the toilet tanks of remote bathrooms to enjoy in the middle of a hot summer day during her time for completing her obedience.[115] Sisters found joy in their work by laughing together or making jokes even as they kept silence. During meals, one set of novices would "make titles of books" with objects and then the other novices would guess the book. "It took lunch and dinner to guess *Raisin in the Sun"* eighty-year-old Sister Diana told me in 2007.[116] In interviews sisters loved to tell these stories of subversion often laughing so hard they could not continue to tell

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[114] Sisters, ed., *Building Sisterhood: A Feminist History of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary*, 113.
[115] Interview with Sister Diane Pitera, Adrian, Michigan, August 26, 2008.
[116] Personal conversation with Sister Diana, Adrian, Michigan, July 2007.

the story before catching their breath again.

That the sisters would resist the authority of Sister Mary Philip in any way shows that both courage and willfulness was alive and well in the novitiate. Though the novitiate looked as if it were "one voice," especially to outsiders, these "small subversions" were the individual identity developing in the middle of community formation. Through subverting authority, novices learned to strengthen their own sense of themselves and their priorities. They also learned to stand together, as sisters, in defiance to authority, further strengthening of the group. Therefore, rebellion was a distinct part of the formation process.

The novices were not the only members of the community to show "small subversions." Mary Philip herself is commonly remembered for the times that she broke the rules she was in charge of enforcing. One crowd of novices remembers boarding a bus at the motherhouse to go to Innisfail, a summer camp about 30 miles away that required the hard work of novices to get it ready for the summer season. After working hard all day, Sister Mary Philip invited the novices to swim in the lake for recreation. One former novice remembered the delight of splashing around long past the time when they were supposed to have returned to solemn silence and the heat of their habits.[117]

Sister Mary Philip also broke or bent the rules for individuals. Sister Rita

[117] Informal conversation anonymous sister, Santa Cruz, August 2008.

Schlitz, then known as Sister Damian, remembers Sister Mary Philip taking her out of line for evening chapel to escort her to a parlor near the entrance of the convent. Thinking that she was in trouble, Sister Rita was shocked to open the door to find her father and brother stand up to greet her. Sister Mary Philip instructed her to take all the time she needed to have a good visit with her family then the novice mistress took her leave and shut the door behind her. It was 1944 and Sister Rita had not seen her father for over two years and her brother, who was on leave from the Navy during WWII, in three years. [118] As Novice Mistress Sister Mary Philip had her own version of small subversions.

In the novitiate, Sisters learned to be homogenous, unified and strictly observant at the same time that the Congregation passively and actively allowed the expression of their individuality, uniqueness and willfulness. In this dual role of willful piety, Sisters learned that religious life included strict observance and willful rule bending even from their feared novice mistress. Sister Mary Philip's subversion taught the novices and future sisters the ability to balance competing demands of individual interest, friendship and time with the responsibilities of religious life, making them still in the world as well as successfully removed in pious Catholic practice. Sister Mary Philip taught them that Catholic religious life had to be flexible, even paradoxical, to be sustained. Through disciplining the body and mind, nuns

[118] Interview with Rita Schlitz, Adrian, Michigan, August 21, 2008.

lived the paradox of being in the world, but not of it.

Nuns who completed the novitiate with Sister Mary Philip and Mother Gerald in the thirties and forties would move on to become the first Adrian Dominicans to live in the Dominican Republic. Taking their practices of maintaining individual difference while appearing and living in unison to the political and social minefield of the Trujillo era in the Dominican Republic would serve the organization well and enable their survival. It would also form the basis of the curriculum they offered the girls they taught. Colegio girls, like Adrian novices, would be taught to be in world where political oppression and danger surrounded them, while not of it, by cultivating a strong identity as a Catholic woman, through similar bodily practices.

Chapter 3:
"This is a peculiar place, Mother"[119]: The Post WWII Dominican Republic and the Foundation of Colegio Santo Domingo.

Before the foundation of the school, the Archbishop warned the nuns that they would not be able to successfully teach the girls from the island without reaching them at a young age. The word he used for teach was "form"- the word used by Congregational leadership to refer to the Postulancy and Novitiate. Following his advice, the nuns set up a program of study to reach girls in primary school for the specific task of "forming" their character through high school. The "formation" of girls in the Dominican Republic grew from the tools of the convent, but employed in an entirely different and complex political milieu. The Congregation taught nuns "to be in the world, but not of it," while the D.R. at the start of the Cold War offered a new world to live within and reject simultaneously. Sister Mary Philip and her staff had to continue to maintain themselves as a Roman Catholic women's organization, navigate the new political and social environment, and teach their pupils to live within and reject what was around them. In this way, Colegio Santo Domingo resembled a re-designed novitiate, not to form nuns, but to form pious, disciplined, cold war subjects who would reject Trujillo and his administration, just as the Adrians

[119]Mary Philip Ryan, OP, "Correspondence Colegio Santo Domingo," in *Series 3A, BOX 3* (Adrian, Michigan: Adrian Dominican Sisters Archives, 1946-54); Sister Mary Philip to Mother Gerald Barry, November 12, 1945.

would reject "the world" using practices of bodily discipline to spiritually strengthen themselves.

The complex forces that inspired the Congregational leadership to embrace binaries in Michigan became a toolbox of practices to use again in a new and potentially dangerous environment. Though the socio-political forces in the Dominican Republic differed markedly from the Midwest, the Colegio's answer was the same as it had been a decade earlier in Michigan: through bodily discipline a woman could form a Catholic identity to embrace piety and the contemporary world at the same time. The forces at work in Santo Domingo at the time of the nuns' arrival and efforts to build the school are the focus of the chapter.

The Dominican Republic Context 1930-45

The Dominican Republic in the mid-twentieth century was an independent nation, throwing off Haitian rule in 1844 and repelling annexation by the United States in the early 20th century with some success. The period of longest and most stable rule in the twentieth century was that of President Raphael Leonidas Trujillo Molina, who took power in the Dominican Republic in 1930 and ruled until his assassination in 1961.[120] To understand Trujillo's rise to power it is imperative to understand the role of the United States military inside the Dominican Republic (and Haiti) in the early twentieth century.

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[120] Emelio Betances, *The Catholic Church and Power Politics in Latin America: The Dominican Case in Comparative Perspective* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. , 2007), 17.

After successive presidential assassinations and the rise of regional military leaders that vied for control of the country, the Dominican economy destabilized into "five years of unprofitable disorder" from 1911 to 1916.[121] The violence and political disorder destabilized the profitable sugar trade and as a result the United States decided to intervene to re-stabilize the economy from which it profited and depended.[122] The U.S. minister in Santo Domingo called for increased U.S. Naval presence off the coast and Marine guards to protect American interests. Following the removal of two presidents and various crises, Woodrow Wilson demanded that the Dominican Republic give the U.S. full power over its budget, public works, and military.[123] The Dominican president, Juan Isidro Jimenez, refused. In May of 1916, Navy warships entered every port in the country and U.S. marines invaded the Cibao Valley where revolutionary forces drew their greatest strength. The president and his strongest rival both resigned. The Dominican Congress chose another President to rule provisionally, Francisco Henriquez y Carvajal. When he refused Wilson's terms the U.S. cut off all funds to the Dominican government. The Captain of Naval intervention, Harry S. Knapp, announced in lieu of new elections that he would be taking over control of the Dominican Republic. After Knapp's announcement, the

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[121] Eric Paul Roorda, *The Dictator Next Door: The Good Neighbor Policy and the Trujillo Regime in the Dominican Republic, 1930-1945.* American Encouters/Global Interactions (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 15 with a footnote referring to work by Bruce Calder.
[122] Ibid., footnote 15 in Chapter 1 of
[123] Ibid., 15. The same demands were made of Haiti leading to a nineteen year occupation by the U.S. Marines.

president and all his cabinet members resigned from Dominican Congress and U.S. naval officers took their places. [124]

This military occupation "extended and formalized U.S. hegemony there, already made manifest by frequent and naval visits and a 90 percent share of total Dominican imports."[125] During the occupation a new set of military, economic and political leaders emerged. Among them were new leaders within a reorganized Dominican military. Trujillo himself and his regime was a direct product of the U.S. Marine Corps occupation of the Dominican Republic from 1918 until 1924.[126] Rafael Leonidas Trujillo entered the new U.S.-trained *Guardia Nacional* (National Guard) as a rank and file soldier. Descended from Cuban, Dominican and Haitian ancestors, Trujillo grew up in San Cristobal, west of Santo Domingo. As a young man he found employment as a *guardacampestre,* or overseer in the cane fields of a Boca Chica estate. At the start of the marine occupation he applied for training in the new Guardia Nacional where he started as a first lieutenant.[127]

Once the U.S. ended the occupation, Trujillo became General of what was now the Dominican Army with sole control of its power and further development. Trujillo used his connections to the U.S. to solidify his regime and consolidate his power economically, politically and militarily. Using his military connections, Trujillo successfully lifted the U.S. control over the Dominican customs department

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[124] Ibid., 16.
[125] Ibid., 17.
126 Ibid., 21.
127 Ibid. 21.

in 1940, the last vestige of U.S. occupation of the island, with the Hull-Trujillo Treaty of 1940.[128] He used the same connections to profit from the Second World War by amassing an air force via the Lend-Lease Act and courting large loans from U.S. banks to fund infrastructural changes (and personal wealth).[129]

Following the end of the Marine occupation, Trujillo was given the position of commander of the National Police Force quickly renamed the Dominican National Army. Trujillo's position as the General of the Army and a product of American military training positioned him to hold on and expand his power using the military as his base. Using the publication of the magazine, *Revista Militar*, Trujillo advocated for military expansion and national pride through military might. As political historian Eric Roorda puts it "Trujillo's control of the army made him the master of Dominican politics by 1930 and transformed the force from a surrogate for Marine occupation to an agent of Dominican nationalism."[130]

As Trujillo's star rose as a military leader he began to position himself as a "natural" leader and bully his way into a position in the elite circles of Dominican society. He did plenty to cast himself as a longtime member of the upper class even using facial make-up and familial origin half-truths to distance himself from his Haitian roots and prove his place in the upper class, but these efforts were mostly to

128 Ibid., 4.
129 Ibid., 5.
130 Ibid., 22.

convince non-elites of his rightful role.[131] But within the elite a position was anything but assured. Trujillo was of Haitian and European descent making him a target of racial hatred of Haitians and the regimes that ruled the Dominican Republic until Revolution in 1844. Following the Marine occupation, racial hierarchies may have taken hold with increasing hatred of blacks or racial intermixing as it did during the Haitian Marine Occupation during the same era- a reflection of U.S. society at the same time.[132] Trujillo's African ancestry and peasant class origins made him an interloper into the elite class, a weak position that he resented and battled throughout his presidency.

As a result Trujillo acted with as much control over the social lives of the Dominican elite as he did over the politics and economics of the island. At the extreme, Trujillo began a regime-sponsored system of white supremacy that included eugenics and genocide. The regime awarded government jobs, contracts, and leadership positions to only light-skinned citizens and waged a genocidal attack against citizens of the Dominican Republic. with black skin. In 1937 Trujillo authorized the massacre of 20,000 to 30,000 peasant-class Haitians on the mountainous border between Haiti and the Dominican Republic using the justification

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131 This was evident in many of the interviews with Colegio graduates as well as the work of cultural historian Lauren Derby in her book : Lauren Derby, *The Dictator's Seduction: Politics and Popular Imagination in the Era of Trujillo* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009).

132 Mary A. Renda, *Taking Haiti: Military Occupation and the Culture of U.S. Imperialism, 1915-194* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2001); and Lynn Hunt, "Hercules and the Radical Image in the French Revolution," *Representations* Spring, no. 2 (1983).

that black skin would pollute the Dominican Republic.[133] Though his racial views taught racial hatred and excluded a vast number of citizens from political access, his actions seemed more to do with legitimizing himself and consolidating his power than any desire to create a nation based on white supremacy.[134]

As Trujillo rose so did a new era of American diplomacy following the ineffective and expensive "gunboat diplomacy" of presidents of the late 19th and early 20th century. The U.S. dealt with Trujillo following what is now known as the "Good Neighbor" policy, marked by intervention in a country's affairs only if the leader's decisions would affects the economic and political stability of the U.S. The policy has its roots in the beginnings of the U.S. as a republic and the Monroe Doctrine but gained steam in the late 19th century with the rise of the ideology of "Pan-Americanism," a goal of James Blaine, Secretary of State during the 1880's.[135] Though Pan-Americanism had less success in countries finding themselves staring out onto waters filled with U.S. Naval warships, the sentiments of Pan-Americanism--friendship and goodwill visits, military resistance to European takeover, military and

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133 Roorda, *The Dictator Next Door: The Good Neighbor Policy and the Trujillo Regime in the Dominican Republic, 1930-1945*, 15; Betances, *The Catholic Church and Power Politics in Latin America: The Dominican Case in Comparative Perspective*, 35; Derby, *The Dictator's Seduction: Politics and Popular Imagination in the Era of Trujillo*.

134 Derby, *The Dictator's Seduction: Politics and Popular Imagination in the Era of Trujillo*.

135 Roorda, *The Dictator Next Door: The Good Neighbor Policy and the Trujillo Regime in the Dominican Republic, 1930-1945*, 24.

other political liaisons--stayed in place and found root again in the Good Neighbor Policy during the presidencies of somewhat less imperially minded U.S. leaders.[136]

The Good Neighbor Policy, enacted by Herbert Hoover and Franklin D. Roosevelt, had little to do with American behavior as neighborly and more to do with the maintenance of regimes South of the U.S. to keep them allied with U.S. commercial interests and military overtures around the world. As a rule, nations close to the U.S. had to maintain the same enemies and a friendly environment to trade to remain "good neighbors." This status ignored the political system in place within the country including various forms of social control and lack of democracy.

Trujillo manipulated the Church as part of his regime as well. In the early years of his regime, Trujillo organized the church as an arm of his power. In 1931 he appointed an Italian-born priest of the Salesian order with experience as a missionary throughout Latin America, Fr. Ricardo Pittini, to serve as Bishop of Santo Domingo. By 1935, Pittini was archbishop of the country and the two men worked together until Pittini's death in 1961, just months before Trujillo himself was assassinated. Pittini walked a delicate line with Trujillo offering his obedience while trying to modernize the church and have native-born and trained priests. However, foreign clergy remained the bedrock of the Dominican Republic's missions and education system

136 Ibid., 26

throughout Pittini's leadership.[137] Though Pittini strengthened the internal church, he did so by supporting a violent, and by the end, capricious, regime.

Enter the Nuns: The Foundation story

In the middle of this post-WWII dictatorship a group of nuns from the American Midwest, with roots in Ireland, decided to start a school for the elite girls in the capital city of a nation in the Caribbean. The appropriate question is to ask why and how. The answer is somewhat complicated and introduces the complexity of differences between storytelling, history, and the past.

In multiple oral histories and written accounts from the 1970's onward, the story of Mother Gerald's decision to begin a school in the Dominican Republic is told the same way. To put it simply: God directed Mother Gerald to the island. By 1972, when Sister Mary Philip Ryan wrote "Colegio Santo Domingo: Our First Foundation Overseas" as part of a collection of congregational history she described the beginning of a mission in the Dominican Republic. as "the story":

[W]hen Pius XII pointed to the great need in Latin America, the Adrian Congregation had only one question: 'Where should we go?' Mother Gerald and her Council decided to consult the Apostolic Delegate to the United States…Reverend Amleto Giovanni Cicognani. As the story is told, he brought out a globe…and suggested she indicate the Country of choice. Asking the Lord to direct her, Mother Gerald placed

137 Betances, *The Catholic Church and Power Politics in Latin America: The Dominican Case in Comparative Perspective*, 35-36.

her finger on Santo Domingo. Utterly delighted that she had chosen a land named in honor of Saint Dominic, she asked no questions about its location, government, or any of the other details she would want to know….and curiously enough, the Delegate had already received a request for American sisters from His Grace, the Most Reverend Richard Pittini, Archbishop of Santo Domingo.[138]

There are multiple facets of the story that Sister Mary Philip posed that need further unpacking. First, there is no encyclical from Pope Pius XXII until 1951 to aid the support of the faith in Latin America. In, *Evangelii Praecones*, Pope Pius XII remarks: "18. We pray God especially for those missionaries who labor in the interior of Latin America, since We are aware of the dangerous pitfalls to which they are exposed from the open and covert attacks of heretical teaching."[139] Again in 1957 in *Fidei Donum*:

> It should inspire all Catholics with apostolic zeal, as their awareness of having received the faith demands. Let them direct this zeal toward those regions of Europe in which the Christian religion has been cast off, or to the boundless spaces of South America; in both of these continents there are great difficulties to be overcome, as We know well.[140]

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[138] Mary Philip Ryan, O.P., "Colegio Santo Domingo: Our First Foundation Overseas," in *Series 1A, Box 8, Folder 9.* (Adrian, Michigan: Adrian Dominican Congregation Archives, 1972).
[139] Claudia Carlen, "Evangelii Praecones : Encyclical of Pope Pius XII on Promotion of Catholic Missions June 2, 1951 242," in *The Papal Encyclicals* (Wilmington, N.C.: McGrath Publishing Company, 1981).
[140] Claudia Carlen, "Fidei Donum : Encyclical of Pope Pius XII On the Present Condition of the Catholic Missions, Especially in Africa April 21, 1957, 257." in *The Papal Encyclicals* (Wilmington, N.C.: McGrath Publishing Company, 1981).

All encyclicals before 1951 and around the time of the foundation story have nothing to do with missionary work in Latin America. Sister Mary Philip's papal mandates turned out to be from the wrong decade. The story seemed logical and obedient to church needs in the world, but does not match up to historian documents.

Second, her addition of how Mother Gerald did not ask questions about the government foreshadowed the problems and danger that Sister Mary Philip herself would encounter. Sister Mary Philip speaks through her subject by saying that these were "details she would want to know" which, of course, are details Mary Philip would want to know and apparently not the concern of Mother Gerald in that particular meeting or anytime in the planning phase of the mission. Sister Mary Philip both excuses and implicates Mother Gerald in what would become a very dangerous chapter in the history of the Congregation.

The story of the globe, Divine intervention, and the Vatican delegate was told again in a video interview with Sister Mary Philip and Sister Eileen Burke (formerly Sr. Thomas Ann). In the video both interviewees verified the event as true reporting that Mother Gerald was in West Palm Beach, Florida when it happened.[141] The same stories were told to me by former Colegio students on five occasions and were clearly a part of local lore for Colegio students.[142] However, the historical record has little in

[141] Ryan, Mary Philip, O.P. "Trujillo's Time, Script for Video with Eileen Burke," *Series 3A, Box 3, Folder 10,* Adrian Dominican Congregation Archives, Adrian, Michigan.
[142] Interviews with the Class of 1957, 1962, and 64, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, October 2010.

the way of information about the meeting. Mother Gerald did travel to West Palm Beach often to visit Sisters' missions in the same area as her brother Monsignor William Barry, but there is no accounting for the meeting in any historical document. In the footnotes of her history, Sister Mary Philip guessed that the meeting occurred in early 1943 as the first correspondence between officials in the Dominican Republic and Mother Gerald began in December 1943.[143]

Correspondence between Mother Gerald, a local priest, Father Antonio Mendoza, and finally the archbishop Richard Pittini discussed whether to teach Americans in a sugar-producing region called La Romana or teach Dominicans from working-class families in the capital city at a school already established, called Colegio Quisqueya. It was Mother Gerald who asked her brother, Monsignor Barry, to visit the island and report back what might be the best option. Monsignor Barry left for his trip on April 10, 1944.[144] In a letter dated April 22nd, the Monsignor sent a full report of his visit and explained that during the trip, and in conversations with the Archbishop, when Monsignor Barry:

> …pointed out the ability, scholastic attainments, experience, and high standing in the Catholic educational field in the United States, of the Sisters of St. Dominic of Adrian, [the Archbishop Pittini] became enthusiastic for the Capital, and decided to ask the sisters to erect at the proper time a school, both boarding and day, for young women of the Republic.[145]

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[143] Ryan, "Colegio Santo Domingo: Our First Foundation Overseas."
[144] Ibid.
[145] Quoted in Ibid., 4.

The remainder of the his paragraph reveals the first glimpse at the vision for the school:

> He [the Archbishop Pittini] is of the opinion that such a school conducted in English will be a great blessing to the Republic. It will give in the most suitable conditions all the advantages for a superior education to young Dominicans, and at the same time keep them in their own Country and with their own people.[146]

Monsignor Barry instructed his sister to make contact again with the Archbishop and to understand that the undertaking would be an expensive "new venture."[147] His letter detailed what she should do to prepare a staff, and encouraged her to travel to the island herself as soon as possible. Mother Gerald heeded her brother's advice immediately. She found out the Archbishop would be in New York seeking medical attention for progressive blindness and made her way to visit him there. Soon after their meeting she arranged to travel to the Dominican Republic herself to begin preparations for the school. Mother Gerald and her longtime assistant Sr. Benedicta Marie Ledwidge took their "first overseas flight" with Fr. Andrew McEntee, a Dominican priest from Michigan and chaplain of a college preparatory academy for girls run by the Adrian Dominicans in Detroit, on November 20, 1944.[148]

The trip yielded a plan for forging ahead with the building of a school. Mother Gerald selected a piece of property, created a connection with the Spanish Salesian Sisters to house the first Adrians when they arrived, and learned about the educational

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[146] Ibid., 5.
[147] Ibid., 6.
[148] Ibid., 7.

system in the Dominican Republic. Upon returning to the U.S. Mother Gerald continued to correspond with Pittini regarding the school. The Archbishop made clear his expectations of the school in a letter specifically outlining the mission and population it would serve. Pittini said he would teach "the grown up girls of high society" but that to establish the high school they must start first with elementary school in order to allow "sisters to shape them in every way" and so that the sisters could "handle them," something they could not do with girls of high school age raised on the island. He also added "The local experience should suggest in the course of time what additional subjects (domestic, artistic, social, commercial) should complete the program for the full formation of the girls." He ended his letter with the somewhat threatening: "Not to act in this way would bring the probability of failure."[149]

Pittini's letter makes clear that the Archbishop himself set the curriculum and plan for the first years of foundation. The Sisters would arrive, establish a fourth through tenth grade school and add a new grade on either side each year until they established a K-12 institution. The Archbishop discouraged the foundation of a high school only and tried to steer the sisters toward teaching younger children so as to "handle them" more easily. His clear outline of what he would support speaks to the possibility that the Archbishop had a clear vision that he had tailored to the abilities of the Adrians. However his vision supports another story about the foundation of the

[149] Quoted in Ibid., 6-9.

Colegio: that the Colegio was founded specifically to educate the Dominican Republic President's youngest daughter, Angelita.

In her 2010 book, *Trujillo, My Father: In My Memories,* Angelita Trujillo argues that Colegio Santo Domingo was established specifically for her education. She explains that her father invited the American nuns to the island to teach elite girls and bought them a piece of property to establish the school.[150] The story as she told it was told to me by multiple groups of former Colegio students in oral history interviews and produced a lot of spirited discussion about its validity.

Although it is clear from financial records of the Adrian Dominican Congregation that Trujillo did not buy the property where the school was built, he did agree to extend all city utilities to the school site including water, electricity, sewer lines and a road at considerable cost to the country.[151] Also, the letter from William Barry and Archbishop Pittini, re-recorded in the Adrians' history of the school, makes clear that though there were initial plans to serve Americans in La Romana or teach at a school for the poor in the capital, the final decision to start a school for elite girls was not the Adrians' idea, but Archbishop Pittini's. Pittini's idea for the establishment of the school could have come directly from the President, whose

[150] Angelita Trujillo, *Trujillo, Mi Padre: En Mis Memorias* (Miami, Florida: MATD Endeavors, 2010).
[151] Ryan, "Correspondence Colegio Santo Domingo.", Telegram from Mother Gerald to Sister Mary Philip, October 19, 1945.

daughter was preschool-aged at the time of the foundation.[152] Pittini was known to most as a stalwart proponent of Trujillo's Regime and generally at the beck and call of the President.[153] That he answered his President's call for a school, or used the school's founding as a carrot for the President's support, is not out of the question.

After difficulty making progress on the Colegio's building from afar, Monsignor Barry and another of Mother Gerald's brothers, the architect, Gerald Barry, went again to the Dominican Republic to support the process of building the school. Monsignor Barry secured written assurance from President Trujillo that water, electricity, and roads would be allowed and extended to the school construction site at the edge of the city.[154] Gerald made contact with a Dominican architect and resident of Santo Domingo, Humberto Ruiz Castillo, well regarded as a professional and a Catholic, and hired him to oversee the translation of the plans and construction along with his son Fernando. But after the Barry brothers returned to the States progress was slow, and the correspondence dried up almost entirely. At her brother's urging, Mother Gerald remedied the situation by choosing three sisters to be sent to the Dominican Republic to oversee the Colegio's founding.[155]

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[152] Derby, 109 (the whole chapter details the Feria where Angelita was crowned Queen). Angelita was sixteen in 1955, therefore about six at the time of the foundation of the school.
[153] Betances, *The Catholic Church and Power Politics in Latin America: The Dominican Case in Comparative Perspective*., 23.
[154] Ryan, "Colegio Santo Domingo: Our First Foundation Overseas.", 9.
[155] Ibid., 9.

Mother Gerald chose two recently professed sisters: Sister Rudolf Beuttenmuller and Sister Eileen Burke (called Sr. Thomas Ann) as the founding faculty. As for their founding principal and superior, Mother Gerald assigned the task to Sister Mary Philip Ryan. The decision to begin the first international mission with Sister Mary Philip at the helm was a natural. Mother Gerald groomed Mary Philip as a member of her leadership team for over ten years. She also made the clear decision to continue to expand the congregation with Irish leadership in the new mission signifying the primacy of Irish ethnicity in the Adrian Congregation at the time.[156] Mother Gerald influenced Sister Mary Philip from formation through her first major leadership role and knew that Mary Philip could communicate clearly with the Motherhouse and act as a strict head of school and convent. It seems of no mistake that she would send the novice mistress to begin a school where the curriculum was carefully constructed to "form" the girls they served. Mary Philip's leadership could simultaneously obey Mother Gerald's guidelines and recreate the convent in a new environment to keep strict controls on girls and nuns in a new environment for all.

A third way to understand the foundation story is from the point of view of the History of American Catholicism and Twentieth Century American Imperialism. What was it about that moment that made it necessary and attractive to move beyond U.S. borders and teach internationally? Though the Congregation cites the Pope as the

[156] Several interviewees within the Congregation explained Sister Mary Philip's success and leadership in part because of the fact that she was Irish and Irish members were favored by Mother Gerald. Personal interviews with anonymous Sisters at the Adrian Dominican Sisters' Motherhouse, July 2008.

origin of the expansion, the decision to go to the Dominican Republic may have stemmed from the U.S. Catholic domestic fight for control over school ideologies in U.S. public schools.[157] To defend against Protestant influences and nativist sentiments in public school curriculum, the U.S. Catholic Church began litigating for separation of Church and state beginning in the early 19th century. By 1920 the Catholic Church had clearly lost the fight and instead focused their attention and money on the establishment of a full-scale, parish-based parochial school system. While U.S. businesses and military forces continued to push into the Caribbean during the early twentieth century, religious congregations may have seen the threat of American protestants again in the historically Catholic Caribbean. The interest of the Adrians and others supports the idea that the sectarian parish system of the U.S. could now be writ-large extending to U.S. satellites not far off the coast. This new system of education could come alive precisely at the moment that U.S. intervention would turn toward a renewal of economic control of neighboring countries.

Taking into account all of the above, the most complete interpretation of the founding of the school is that it behooved the U.S. Catholic Church hierarchy in the southern U.S. and Caribbean to establish a school for elite girls in the Dominican Republic for multiple and even competing reasons related to the goals of expansion, evangelization and relations to the Trujillo Regime. The Dominican Republic from the early 1930's to the moment of the Colegio's foundation in a rich moment of

[157] Jay P. Dolan, *In Search of an American Catholicism: A History of Religion and Culture in Tension* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 60

commercial courtship by the Trujillo regime. Following the new "Good Neighbor Policy" the United States wanted to maintain good relations with any non-communist ruler in Latin America. The Adrians were well known through their family ties to Monsignor Barry and more than willing to extend their borders to become an international order therefore becoming the future founders of Colegio Santo Domingo.

The Creation of Colegio Santo Domingo:

Whatever its beginnings, both political and mythic, the Dominican Sisters of Adrian arrived after the Second World War to establish a new school for girls and their first international mission. In 1945 Sisters Mary Philip, Thomas Ann and Rudolf arrived in the Dominican Republic by going first from Michigan to Florida and then arriving on the island first in Port-Au-Prince, Haiti and then finally in Ciudad Trujillo, Dominican Republic. They set foot in what would be their home for the next decade in September 1945.

Their arrival in the capital was news within a day. In interviews conducted over fifty years later the story from who would soon be their students was always the same. With astonished faces and bright smiles they would say in English or in Spanish (sometimes both at once with all members of a group interview speaking at the same time in two languages) "They drove cars!" The locals in Santo Domingo had never experienced religious women with such an independent streak: they drove, walked down the street, or talked animatedly with strangers. Almost everyone

remembers seeing them driving.[158] One interviewee was just five years old and remembers watching them drive by while her mother shook her head in amazement and her grandmother crossed herself. That five-year-old girl would become a student at the school just a few years later.[159]

Other first impressions were of how friendly, "normal," and "beautiful" the sisters were. One interviewee repeated over and over: "They were normal people!"[160] The sisters, were both normal and exciting in comparison to the other religious women of Santo Domingo, mostly Spanish nuns who lived in seclusion and did not involve themselves in the local community. Adrians lived as neighbors, went to the market daily, employed a cook and local workers for all their construction and repairs as well as took care of the now aged and blind Archbishop Pittini at his apartment. Everywhere they went, they talked with people, engaged children in games and conversation, and practiced their stilted Spanish with whomever they could. In Sister Mary Philip's earliest letters home are a litany of names of new people she met and what she learned from each of them. Local Dominicans felt their presence and unusual openness almost immediately.

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[158] The nuns were driven by chauffeurs and friends for the first year and then secured a station wagon of their own by 1947, delivered from the U.S. right before opening the doors to the school.

[159] Interview with the Class of 1961, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, October 2010.

[160] Interview with the Class of 1961, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, October 2010.

This openness stood in stark contrast to the "Old World" feel of the Spanish sisters, many of whom taught the elite daughters in elementary school. Many interviewees remembered the Spanish sisters with disgust or were pulled from the schools by their parents who did not approve of the traditional pedagogy including physical violence and what many former students described as the "medieval" theology of hatred of the body and endless talk of sin. The Adrians were positive, bright and "modern," a welcome change for many families. "They were just women with a habit" one interviewee concluded.[161]

It seems that the Adrians arrived at a moment ripe for change among the elite as parents looked beyond the educational offerings for their daughters and demanded something else that prepared girls for life in a new era. When I asked why parents entrusted their children to the American nuns, many former students explained that their parents had been taught by the Spanish nuns and did not want their daughters to be taught in the same way. Others cited the nuns' offer to teach them English as the draw for their families. The parents' acceptance of the nuns, might also be attributed to larger geopolitical changes shaping North America after the end of the Second World War. The U.S., more than Europe, would shape the future of the Caribbean. Parents looked to the promise of bilingualism and a chance to attend college in the U.S. as a potentially more secure future for their families. The future was not in

[161] Interview with the Class of 1960, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, October 2010.

Spain, and the past connection to Spanish authority was not enough to keep parents from giving their children to the new arrivals from the North.

Political Understanding

Upon leaving the Motherhouse, Sister Mary Philip began to write home to "Mother" about every experience she could remember, beginning a voluminous correspondence for the next twelve years. During the first year letters were most plentiful, most often every day. Letters of the first year of the school's foundation touched on the same themes over and over again. The first was Mary Philip's dialogue with Mother Gerald (and herself) to understand the political landscape of the Dominican Republic. One of the most distinguishing characteristics of their first year was the struggle for Mother Gerald and Sister Mary Philip to understand the complex political milieu on the island and how to write about it safely.

Before their arrival the sisters knew almost nothing of the context in which they were to live and work. Mother Gerald had either avoided telling them of the political atmosphere or more likely knew nothing of it herself. Sister Mary Philip began her almost daily correspondence with Mother Gerald from Florida after a long meeting with Monsignor Barry regarding supplies she would need upon arrival and the basic political climate on the island. "Meanwhile we are to be very humble and independent at the same time, we are never to know anything about politics. If we do,

we are apt(e/) to be beheaded!"[162] This is the first advice and first news that she would be entering a country run by an oppressive regime.

Sister Mary Philip tried to live by the advice given to her - to be humble and independent, but this left a lot of questions and conflicts about how to act. In her letters, Sister Mary Philip avoided talking about politics directly, but she expanded her political understandings constantly over the first year that she lived in the Dominican Republic. When she spoke of the President she did so either in passing, without judgment, or a simplistic "code" referring to Trujillo as "Jupiter." This "code" continued for several months until she abandoned it without explanation offering only: "Mother, I'm sure you know who Jupiter is."[163] Regardless, by the end of the first six months, Mother Gerald understood that Sister Mary Philip could not speak ill of the President or offer any resistance to his regime and that he acted as a sort of lord over all others. It was also clear to Sister Mary Philip that she lived in a country where she was watched. In a letter to Mother Gerald in November 1945, she commented ""Our white-haired friend visited us yesterday, too, after Mass. We were warned to write carefully. Jupiter is uneasy and apt to be steaming open even such as this. We are praying."[164] The white-haired friend was most likely a member of the FBI assigned to the Dominican Republic, a source of political advice for the Sisters.

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[162] Ryan, "Correspondence Colegio Santo Domingo.", Sister Mary Philip Ryan to Mother Gerald. Letter from the "Casa Francesca, Catholic Residence for Women" in Miami, Florida. September 10, 1945, DSC06652.
[163] Ibid., Sister Mary Philip to Mother Gerald, Nov. 14, 1945, DSC06585.
[164] Ibid., Letter from Sister Mary Philip to Mother Gerald, November 10, 1945.

After this letter, in order to keep safe, Sister Mary Philip enlisted the help of friends to deliver correspondence in multiple ways. The first was to send letters directly through the Dominican and U.S. mail systems. These letters were the least political although they sometimes contained vague statements of confusion or hiding identity of someone in particular. Using initials and tangled grammar, Sister Mary Philip hoped that her words would avoid censors and signal Mother Gerald not to mention specifics when she replied.

The second kind of letter was delivered to the U.S. mail system by an American heading to the mainland that day. For example, many politically frank letters end with "my friend is here" signaling that she must end the letter or even "this letter will go by army plane." These letters were carried out of the country personally by anonymous American friends and out of view of censors. Many letters were carried by pilots and flight attendants of American-based commercial airlines since several regular visitors took Mass with the nuns if they were on the island on a Sunday and returned to Florida the next day. Their names and level of knowledge of what was in the letters is unknown.

In the frankest letters, Sister Mary Philip also identifies the Church's role in the political situation. Sister Mary Philip recognized the church's role in the government within months of moving. In a rare letter delivered by hand to the United States, Sister Mary Philip took two paragraphs to summarize the state of politics in

the Church just three months before the opening of the school. References to "Little A." stands for Archbishop Pittini:

> "To me it seems that any letter of yours is tampered with now not by permission or order of powers that be but rather by some employee who once found money in an envelope addressed to us and is now using his job for his own interest. Minegoing [sic] to you are more likely to be watched. These dya [sic] there is much in the papers here to the effect that the President demands freedom of speech, press, and post office for all. It is a joke, of course. There is also subtle propaganda about the odium of the American intervention of 1916, a warning to U.S. not to interfere again. There is also an attack on the Amer. owned companies.
>
> As far as we are concerned he has his pints [sic]. We cannot afford to be with him or against him. We will have to be very prudent. Thelittitle [sic] A. is very happy because [sic] the Churhc [sic] and Stae [sic] work harmoniously together. They are on a honeymoon, he says. To me it seems a dangerous marriage, one in which the Church would not dare raise an objection to anything wrong, a poor price to pay for presents of property and other helps. The A. works on diplomacy all the time. He cannot change now. This strategy may be necessary but it seems it will never make good Catholics or a strong Church. He is very much criticized for being political. He is not that. He is an expedientist, all for the Church, and he holds the hand of Jupiter for the honor and glory of God and the good of the Church...No Irishman could do it, Mother...that's the story[165] [sic].

When left to write what she thinks, Sister Mary Philip's analysis of the Archbishop Pittini is positively anti-imperialist. She sees the Church as in league with the government and the piety of Dominicans sacrificed as a result. Already Sister Mary Philip seems gathering her intentions to make pious Catholics as an answer and subversion of the political status quo. She also shows that she knows she is on her own without the ability to fully trust the Church infrastructure. She cannot lean on the

[165] Ibid., Sister Mary Philip to Mother Gerald, June 27, 1946, 6380-81.

church any more than she can lean on the government, but she cannot appear to be too independent either. Her position was similar standing to the convent in Adrian standing between the world it serves and the world it must shun as women of the old faith.

Nationality and Religious Identity

Who she could trust became a focus for Sister Mary Philip as she gathered that she could not trust large institutions. In the first year Sister Mary Philip's letters appeared as a snow-in of names and descriptions of people to Mother Gerald. Though some of these descriptions are no doubt to relay information to Mother Gerald about future contacts for the Adrians and the school, Mary Philip used the correspondence to figure out who she could trust and who she should and could relate to as one like herself. The process of discerning trustworthiness was an object of great confusion. Sister Mary Philip's best tool, one that she relied on over and over was, to judge a person's character as connected to nationality. The process of figuring out who was safe sublimated into stories and descriptions where a person's character aligned directly with their good or bad character. In her discussion of nationalism as revealing of character, Sister Mary Philip engaged in making nationality a cultural rather than a political project.[166]

[166] David Brundage, "Matilta Tone in America: Exile, Gender and Memory in the Making of Irish Republican Nationalism," *New Hibernia Review* 14, no. 1 (2010)., 97.

Some of the first passages in her letters discussing nationality are to identify the people that Sister Mary Philip began to meet in Santo Domingo. The politics of the nation were part of a larger social world in which Sister Mary Philip was a newcomer. Building a school for girls, Mary Philip wanted very much to meet local families and begin to immerse herself in the class and community she would serve. She was also trying to connect her organization to the Dominican Republic via new networks previously unavailable. As she met new people, Mary Philip reported back to Mother Gerald about who she had met and how they might fit with the school, the organization, the Church hierarchy or other networks. These judgments often came in the form of nationality as a means to describe a person's behavior or accomplishments. For example, upon meeting a pair of sisters on the street one day, Sister Mary Philip explains to Mother Gerald that they have "every mark of culture" though she does not explain what this means exactly. She explains further that "both are apparently good Catholics, and though patriotic Dominicans to the bone, they have an American way of thinking and acting."[167] For Sister Mary Philip "an American way of thinking and acting" may have stood in for education and fluency in communication. She tells Mother Gerald that she will see if either of them are engaged and inquire about their interest in joining the Adrians. In this particular example "American" stood in as a category meaning trustworthy or like-minded even though the people in question were clearly local Dominicans.

[167] Ryan, "Correspondence Colegio Santo Domingo.", Letter from Sister Mary Philip to Mother Gerald, Oct. 22, 1945.

Sister Mary Philip continued to make assumptions about character via nationality throughout her first year, always placing American values as superior in work ethic and social interaction. This opinion was reinforced by Mother Gerald's replies that mince no words about the trustworthy "nature" of Americans. She replied to Sister Mary Philip's letter concerning the slow pace of the building of the school with ""your languid Latins are subjecting you to their dilly-dallying" and declared that it will take a long time to "Americanize them into doing things in a hurry and liking it." She concluded the paragraph with "God will bless your efforts."[168] Mother Gerald's point of view is more than clear and may be shared by Sister Mary Philip: natives of Santo Domingo are lazy and that the presence of the Adrian Dominicans will transform and Americanize their work habits.

Nationality as a stand in for character assets or defects was not limited to the Dominican and U.S. nationalities. Some of the more tongue and cheek but no less meaningful assumptions of character take place in the form of assumptions about individuals based on their Irish or English heritage. As the daughter of Irish immigrants, Sister Mary Philip makes Irish heritage clear to her Irish immigrant Mother General. In introducing a new friend to the Adrians, Mr. McArdle, an employee of the Canadian bank in Santo Domingo, Sister Mary Philip makes clear his Irish Catholic background and explains that his wife, an Episcopalian, is "not from the Irish World of her husband" but loves the sisters. Sister Mary Philip ends her

[168] Ibid., Letter from Mother Gerald to Sister Mary Philip to,Dec. 12, 1945, 6546-6547.

paragraph by encouraging Mother Gerald to send a note to Mr. McArdle to encourage him in his faith.[169] Irish stands in for pre-approval and good character just as "American-acting" does, but with an added dimension of moral certitude or ethics in the person in question. Mr. McArdle remains a confidant of Sister Mary Philip in matters of money and politics, even securing his family in the Michigan area as receivers of letters from the sisters to be delivered to the motherhouse indirectly, probably to avoid censors and spies in regular motherhouse correspondence.[170] His Irish background makes him most trustworthy.

As one might expect, the opposite is assumed of those from England. In an effort to see that the building site receive adequate water supply, Sister Mary Philip visited Mr. Rogers, an Englishman hired by the Dominican government to construct an aqueduct for use in the city. Mr. Rogers explained to Sister Mary Philip that the water pipes from the city were inadequate to bring water to the building site and claimed he did not receive plans from the Dominican architect, Mr. Castillo, sent a month prior. He made the comment that Dominican architects could not be trusted with such projects and that he was an architect for hire outside of his work for the government. Sister Mary Philip reported to Mother Gerald that she replied "sweetly" that she did not know that he was an architect and that the problem was not the plans for the school, but the water supply promised by the President. She concluded the

[169] Ibid., Letter from Sister Mary Philip to Mother Gerald, January 19, 1946, 6509-6512.
[170] Ibid., Letter from Sister Mary Philip to Mother Gerald, January 19, 1946, 6509-6512.

section of her letter with "I left there more Irish than ever."[171] Mother Gerald's short letter in reply concluded the discussion of English and Irish encounters with: ""Do not be too Irish about it though, and not at all English."[172] The exchange between the two women reveals the coded assumptions of character aligning with nationality. English are clearly immoral, untrustworthy and unlikable while Irish are morally superior, underdogs, but perhaps easily angered. When Mother Gerald warns Sister Mary Philip not to be too Irish about it, she is asking her to have increased patience. She commanded later in her note: "Keep your head and don't worry." The nationality discussion stands in for more specific judgments about character.

However there is a category that trumps nationality, and that is Catholic identity. In the case of the architect of the school, Humberto Ruiz Castillo, Sister Mary Philip is full of praise for him often remarking how his piety makes him unlike anyone else on the island. In November of her first year, Sister Mary Philip remarks to Mother Gerald:

> ""The more I see of the laxity of the renowned people here in the Faith, and their indifference, and the more I learn about the hidden power playing here, the more I am sure this man is a fearless apostle with his Catholic Action button shining from his coat lapel."[173]

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[171] Ibid., Letter from Sister Mary Philip to Mother Gerald, Jan. 28, 1946, 6501-6503.
[172] Ibid., Letter from Sister Mary Philip to Mother Gerald, Jan. 28, 1946, 6501-6503.
[173] Ibid., Letter from Sister Mary Philip to Mother Gerald, Nov. 9, 1945, 6594. Catholic Action was and continues to be a Catholic organization for laypeople to promote Catholic influence in society. Chapters of Catholic Action exist internationally. Ruiz Castillo was president of Catholic Action in Santo Domingo and a leader in the organization in the Caribbean.

Even after running into terrible problems with the building of the school and blame for the trouble resting on Mr. Castillo,[174] Sister Mary Philip declared that Castillo is a "Catholic among Catholics in the Republic" and begs Mother Gerald to have patience that he will succeed in building the school on time with the help of prayers in Adrian.[175] Clearly, Castillo's piety, not nationality, puts him on par with Americans in terms of trustworthiness.

In her second year on the island Sister Mary Philip wrote home that when she was homesick she walked to the dock to see if she could glimpse the American flag on a ship. But regardless of her patriotism for the U.S. she announced in the same letter. "I feel more Irish than American these days." Her shift from American to Irish shows several ideas at once. First, nationality was a state of mind and heart, something you could do to a person or yourself. Second, American was no longer superior in her mind and Irish was a better category of identity. Through her letters, Mary Philip revealed a complex understanding of nationality and national identity intertwined with religious identity. She is American, Irish, and Catholic. She identifies with whichever identity or set of identities allows her to exist both humbly

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[174] Sister Mary Philip and the other Sisters referred to the architect as Mr. Castillo, though in truth he would be called Mr. Ruiz. This mistake was corrected in later years as the Sisters learned the meaning of last names or *appellidos*. Everyone has at least two last names, the first of which is the family name of one's father and considered more important and passed on to children. Ruiz's two youngest daughters would be taught by the Adrians graduating from Colegio Santo Domingo and later enter the order of their teachers where they remain today.

[175] Ryan, "Correspondence Colegio Santo Domingo.", Letter from Sister Mary Philip to Mother Gerald, Feb. 13, 1946, 6488-89.

and independently trying to exist as an apolitical figure in an intensely political environment, both in the Church and country. Her first year's intense look at nationality to try and understand her surrounding companions beyond other Sisters reveals her changing understanding of nationality as a means to judge one's character and trustworthiness.

The University of Santo Domingo Connection

Another theme of the first year of letters is Mother Gerald's insistence that Sister Mary Philip Ryan become a professor at the local University. Beginning in the first month, on top of pushing for the opening of the Colegio in one year's time, Mother Gerald asks that Sister Mary Philip teach English Literature at the University of the Americas. Sister Mary Philip earned a Masters in Creative Writing and English at the University of Detroit in 1941 while serving as Novice Mistress in Adrian.[176] That Mother Gerald would then want to put her in a position to teach at the local university had several aims. First, she hoped to form a clear connection between the Adrian Dominicans and the local university to help establish the Sisters as intellectuals. Second, this was part of a larger move for Mother Gerald to be establishing Adrian Sisters in colleges throughout the world, hoping to educate sisters and then create a system of exchange to further educate others. For example, in exchange for an Adrian sister teaching at the Catholic University of America during

[176] Carlen, "Evangelii Praecones : Encyclical of Pope Pius XII on Promotion of Catholic Missions June 2, 1951 242".

the summer, six sisters were able to take classes there free of charge.[177] Bit by bit, the Adrian Dominicans became if not the most educated then close to the most educated group of religious sisters in the country. Mother Gerald had her sights on a partnership with the University in Santo Domingo as a training ground for other sisters in the future. With Sister Mary Philip as a member of the faculty, the entire Adrian Dominican Sisters were in.

Finally, to be in higher education at "the first University of the Americas," Mother Gerald would be working toward the re-establishment of the Dominican order in the Dominican Republic. In the sixteenth century, after Dominican priests made public their disapproval of the Spanish treatment of the natives, the Dominican order was summarily expelled from the island. Mother Gerald saw Sister Mary Philip's inclusion into the University faculty as the beginning of a comeback for the Dominicans into their rightful place hundreds of years after expulsion. Sister Mary Philip remarked in a letter in November 1945, that she heard that she would get the appointment in an effort to combat the "protestant influence," part of a larger story of Catholic cultural dominance under threat.[178]

Mother Gerald finally got her wish. Not six months after her arrival and after mentioning the request in almost every letter, Sister Mary Philip wrote to Mother Gerald with a clipping from the local paper showing her picture as the newest faculty

[177] Ryan, "Correspondence Colegio Santo Domingo.", Letter from Mother Gerald to Sister Mary Philip, Dec. 12, 1945.
[178] Ibid., Letter from Sister Mary Philip to Mother Gerald, Nov. 5, 1945, 6597

member at the University of the Americas.[179] She remarks in the letter that her appointment is a Christmas gift to Mother Gerald and asks for Sisters to send books "on the Catholic side" via airmail to prepare for the course she will teach in English literature. In early January, Sister Mary Philip was sworn in as a faculty member, not an instructor ("that will make way for more of us" Sister Mary Philip commented in her letter home), and Mother Gerald answered her letter with the declaration "God is good" and that this position will offer her the chance to "overcome the forces of evil."[180] Sister Mary Philip taught at the University for the remainder of her time on the island.

Sister Mary Philip's reports home also included the constant work to make connections between the Adrian Dominican Sisters and all potential allies on the island to increase expansion, build a base, and recruit new sisters. Every letter is a litany of names to make connections to other Catholic missionaries, Americans in residence, and anyone English-speaking. Sister Mary Philip takes an interest in young women as future sisters as well as families that might have children to attend the school or Irish-born clergy with common relatives. She tries to map her surrounding companions for Mother Gerald and herself to create a "cast of characters" to whom she refers often and builds a community as an island upon an island. The Ruiz family, the Archbishop and other Vatican officials, Redemptorist priests working throughout the island and the McArdle family form the backbone of Sister Mary Philip's support

[179] Ibid. Clippings from *La Nacion*, January 11, 1946, 6529.
[180] Ibid., Letter from Mother Gerald to Sister Mary Philip, January 7, 1946, 6524-25.

network that she mentions on the island. Mother Gerald's replies contain a similar litany of names from the motherhouse including the happenings in the novitiate and the well-being of Sister Mary Philip's former co-workers in the Administration. She also mentions as many names of officials she meets with and waits back to hear how her names and Sister Mary Philip's might connect to one another. At times they do, showing the international fabric of Catholic missionary work and networks the Adrians must tap into to become a part of the local networks on the island.

Another theme in the first year relates to the mission of the Adrians in the Dominican Republic and their primary aim. From the outset, Sister Mary Philip felt pulled toward work with the poor in Santo Domingo. Upon arriving on the island Sister Mary Philip encounters the poor of the island as needing her help more than any other project in front of her. The poor of Haiti shocked her and the glimpses of poverty in the Dominican Republic were just as upsetting. After some initial encouragement, Mother Gerald set down the rule quickly by October, telling Sister Mary Philip and the other sisters that they are to focus on the establishment of the school and leave the work of outreach to the poor to those sent there before them. Detailing each of the ideas proposed by Sister Mary Philip in previous letters, Mother Gerald forbids the sisters from spending too much time giving to the poor. Mother Gerald douses the idea to set up a girls' English class in the evening for working women, orders focus on preparations of the school, and warns Sister Mary Philip: "you cannot impair your health." More specifically, Mother Gerald admonishes and

rewards the sisters by saying: "I notice all the enthusiasm you have for the poor and, of course, it delights me. I know you are going to make good in your studies even though you will have to do everything in Spanish; that is the best way to conquer it-through itself." In the next paragraph she limits the contact they are to have with the Scarboro fathers in the field. "Rarely and if Mr. McArdle can take you, you may visit the missions of the Scarboro Fathers. I know there is a lot to be done. The harvest is ripe and the laborers few, but you cannot do it all and God does not expect you to go on horseback or to resort to any other means in order to reach these people. The priests are doing the best they can and in the meantime God will take care of these souls." In conclusion, Mother Gerald directs them "to prepare yourselves for the school. Do that generously and all the good you can do besides."[181]

The limits do put an end to the sisters spending time serving the poor. In her first letters home she asks that along with supplies for the sisters and school that the Adrians send along clothes for the poor as "packing" and then mentions the clothes in letters subsequent as an aside.[182] For example, in November, she mentions the clothes between other pieces of news: "we await the clothes for the poor."[183] In many stories of first adventures on the island, Sister Mary Philip reports her shock at seeing so many poor people, especially children. After meeting the Scarboro fathers who work

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[181] Ibid., Letter from Mother Gerald to Sister Mary Philip, Sr. Thomas Ann and Sr. Rudolf. Oct. 8, 1945, DSC06618.

182 Ibid., Letter from Sister Mary Philip to Mother Gerald, Nov. 12, 1945, DSC06589

183 Ibid., Letter from Sister Mary Philip to Mother Gerald, Nov. 5, 1945, DSC06597.

in the countryside and with the poorest residents, she was further shocked and told Mother Gerald how the poor were kept from marrying and sending their children to school due to lack of funds demanded by native clergy and church institutions. It was too expensive to baptize children or be married in the church thereby making the orthodox following of the faith out of reach for most poor people.[184]

Sister Mary Philip also discovered that the existence of poverty was not acknowledged by the Trujillo regime.[185] When trying to work with the customs department to admit clothes for the poor she found them reticent to accept it at all. Sister Mary Philip's analysis is that this was a pride issue, but others, such as the former Sister Marie Madonna, characterized it as a political one "Trujillo did not have poor people in his city. It didn't matter what we saw."[186] In this climate it made sense that working with the poor was both part of working within the North American networks and somewhat risky in the view of the Trujillo Regime.

Mother Gerald was somewhat supportive of Sister Mary Philip's efforts to work with the poor, but clearly drew a line. Even after setting them straight in October, Mother Gerald remarked a month later to "Work among His poor...[and the] Spirit of St. Dominic will take hold…the Grace of God will enter the hearts of those

184 Ibid., Letter from Sister Mary Philip to Mother Gerald, Nov. 5, 1945, DSC06597.
185 Roorda, *The Dictator Next Door: The Good Neighbor Policy and the Trujillo Regime in the Dominican Republic, 1930-1945*; Ibid. Oral histories with Classes of 1950 and 52, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, October 2010; Interview with Evelyn Callow, August 27, 2008, Adrian, Michigan.
186 Interview with Evelyn Callow, August 27, 2008, Adrian, Michigan.

with whom you labor."[187] Mother Gerald's views of working with the poor become defined in those first months as something honorable to do in one's spare time, but not at the center of their work. She supported charitable work, but only to a point that did not distract from the foundation of the school.

Nationalism, Catholic Identity, Gender

Struggles and details regarding the building of the school are the bread and butter of correspondence as both Mother Gerald and Sister Mary Philip try to understand what choices they have and make appropriate decisions. The Colegio started from what was once forest and was to be ready for students within a year. All building supplies, money, and furnishings would be arriving from the U.S. The demand of the project was overwhelming. For her part, Sister Mary Philip starts to fray at the edges by the end of 1945 with her letters becoming more and more annotated until they are almost unreadable. Her words that are legible are full of worry and anxiety reporting that the buildings may not be finished in time and that whenever she tries to bring up the cost with Castillo "he changes the subject."[188] She also reports that he constantly left town for days at a time and was unreachable. By January 1946 Mother Gerald admonished Sister Mary Philip for losing her focus and

187 Ryan, "Correspondence Colegio Santo Domingo.", Letter from Mother Gerald to Sister Mary Philip, Dec. 12, 1945, DSC06546-6547.
188 Ibid., Letter from Sister Mary Philip to Mother Gerald, Jan. 2, 1946, 6526-28.

instructed her to write more carefully so that she could read her concerns.[189] In the same letter she notifies Sister Mary Philip that she will send Father McEntee to help oversee the construction of the buildings, as he had done during the establishment of Dominican High School.

After acknowledging that McEntee would be well received and may stay with the Salesians, Sister Mary Philip's letters improve in presentation, but continue in anxiety about whether the school will be finished in time and who to trust, using nationality as a way to express her preferences and justify her decisions. For example she celebrated hiring Mr. Wagner, an American Catholic electrician who agreed to wire the new school on off hours and for a lesser price. In the next sentence she reported that she rejected the contract of another professional bricklayer who was English on the grounds that she refused to "expand the British Empire."[190] Meanwhile, Mother Gerald called Father McEntee to the motherhouse before sending him south to Sister Mary Philip after briefing him "on the difficulties [she] faced" and offering that his arrival would be a "consolation" to her.[191] Sister Mary Philip acknowledged Mother Gerald's letter and then detailed a confrontation with the construction supervisor accusing him of dismissing workers for the day saying that she willed it so. "I have my own voice and my own tongue and I resented very much

[189] Ibid., Letter from Mother Gerald and Sister Mary Philip, January 7, 1946, DSC06524-25.
[190] Ibid., Letter from Sister Mary Philip to Mother Gerald, Jan. 2, 1946, DSC06526-28.
[191] Ibid., Letter from Mother Gerald to Sister Mary Philip, January 18, 1946, DSC06515-6516.

being used as their screen."[192] It seems clear from the correspondence that Sister Mary Philip's authority was ignored and her confidence waned.

Father McEntee's arrival is the perfect case study for how Catholic identity, nationalism and gender all worked together in the minds of the founders of the school. It is also a clear indication of the limits of female power, even Sister Mary Philip's. Once McEntee arrived in the Dominican Republic, life for Mr. Castillo and Sister Mary Philip changed dramatically. For Sister Mary Philip, her power diminished significantly and officially. In a letter dated January 21st, Mother Gerald re-wrote a power of attorney giving Sister Mary Philip all the authority to make financial decisions, and Father McEntee all decisions about the building of the school including decisions about governmental treatment and the import of materials for the building. The letter is quick, but speaks volumes about a shift in responsibility disempowering Mary Philip and taking her away from the activities that had caused her the most anguish.

In the weeks that followed, the language between Mother Gerald and Sister Mary Philip changed to highlight submission to male authority. In a letter on February 3rd, Mother Gerald instructed Sister Mary Philip to "[g]ive all your woes to Mon. Barry and Fr. McEntee and they will take care of them." Later she instructed

[192] Ibid., Letter from Sister Mary Philip to Mother Gerald, January 19, 1946, DSC06509-6512.

her to "Keep visiting the 'battlefield' and keep 'generals' up."[193] Sister Mary Philip must take the role as support while men wage war. She ends her letter with "Keep your head and don't worry." No longer was Mother Gerald instructing Sister Mary Philip in every detail, but rather asking her to step aside and let the men work.

Four days later on February 7th Sister Mary Philip wrote home in detail about how Father McEntee, Monsignor Barry, the Archbishop, Sister Mary Philip and Mr. Castillo were all present for a meeting during which Casitillo was fired by Father McEntee and re-hired again. She compared McEntee's approach with Castillo to that of the novitiate's philosophy that made Castillo "prostrate as one hit by the Atomic Bomb" and then made him draw up resolutions on paper for how he would finish the project and by what time.[194] Finally, at the end of the meeting, the Papal Nuncio, who came in during the final meeting, was heard saying "Aren't these Irish wonderful?" to the Archbishop.

It is obvious that Father McEntee was sent in as a "heavy" to scare Castillo and others into working faster and promising to finish the buildings. But the tone in which Sister Mary Philip expresses Father McEntee's approach and gains swirls nationalism, Catholicism and gender together. Comparing McEntee to an atom bomb blasting an enemy into a signed truce and treaty sounds a tremendous amount like the end of the war in the Pacific just two years earlier. He is free to show his power,

[193] Ibid., Letter from Mother Gerald to Sister Mary Philip, Feb. 3, 1946, DSC06499-6500.
[194] Ibid., Letter from Sister Mary Philip to Mother Gerald, Feb. 7, 1946, DSC06494-6495.

demand submission, and even gain respect for doing so. Sister Mary Philip reports later in the letter that Castillo wanted McEntee to stay two months, not one, and that McEntee agreed saying that they were "buddies now." Male power was necessary and used to force the construction to continue on schedule.

In a letter to Sister Benedicta Marie, Sister Mary Philip credits Monsignor Barry not Father McEntee with dropping the "atom bomb" and putting him back together before returning to Florida but that now Father McEntee is "taking him apart again." In conclusion, she said "[w]e could be here all our lives and never ever understand this Dominican character."[195] Though the details change for another audience, the feeling and intentions of the exchange remain, Sister Mary Philip feels Father McEntee's presence is absolutely necessary to exert authority over Castillo as Americans over another nation. And this work of dominance must be done among men.

As the weeks roll on, Sister Mary Philip continued to detail the "comedy and tragedy" between McEntee and Castillo and Sister Mary Philip begins to defend Castillo as not the only one to blame for the slow schedule. She concludes that McEntee is too angry to understand and "[m]eanwhile his wrath is working just fine" to re-route "Poor Castillo" the "Catholic among Catholics in the republic." To temper the wrath of McEntee and perhaps encourage Mother Gerald to tell him to ease up, Sister Mary Philip plays the only card she can – not nationality, not gender, but

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Catholicity. “It is all too much for him,” but the work is getting done.[196] Mother Gerald replies in an annoyed tone that she does not care about “Castillo’s feelings” and is glad Father McEntee is there.[197]

In the end Father McEntee stayed until April vowing to return in June so that “they finish the school our way and not theirs.” The demand for his return re-enters the letters in June as plumbers, electricians and Castillo all “need” Father McEntee to return to finish the job. As Sister Mary Philip says pointedly about dealing with an English plumber in charge of extending the city sewer to the school (but not the school to the sewer): “You see theneed [sic[of Mr. Kay first to frighten this guy and Fr. McEntee next to fight him.”[198] As the road gets more difficult, Sister Mary Philip calls on the same male authority to help. Father McEntee returned to the island in late June, despite heart trouble, to see the construction finish barely in time for the first academic year.

Father McEntee’s presence as battle general, Irish nationalist and male authority shows the importance of male authority in general and the limits of what Sister Mary Philip could accomplish in the public sphere. She would continue to use men of business and priests (and bishops) as champions of the school to help defend the school from interlopers or those she perceived as cheating them financially or

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[196] Ibid., Letter from Sister Mary Philip to Mother Gerald, Feb. 9, 1946, DSC06490
[197] Ibid., Letter from Mother Gerald to Sister Mary Philip, Feb. 18, 1946, DSC06487
[198] Ibid., Letter from Sister Mary Philip to Mother Gerald, June 5, 1946, DSC06402-04.

politically. The need for Father McEntee shows a moment in which being Catholic and American was not enough, you had to be male to get the job done, a lesson Sister Mary Philip would not forget.

Arriving in the midst of the Trujillo regime to serve the elites that Trujillo socially controlled was an unimaginably complex a socio-political milieu. After getting her bearings and understanding the political structure of the country, the ways to communicate safely, the lack of power of the Church, and the importance of using and leaning on male champions, Sister Mary Philip turned toward the creation of a school that would raise girls to be women who could live in the world they were born in, but transcend it until times improved – a riff on the novitiate's aim to be in the world, but not of it.

Chapter 4:
Colegio Girls – The Colegio's Two Curriculums

> "The Commercial department will have lots of rivalry. There is a great demand here for English speaking secretaries, and Greeg and other Shorthand Systems have set up schools. The parents keep asking us about art and music among other things. They feel that art is one of the neglected things here. All ask us about the science department."[199]

With the buildings in place in record speed, Colegio Santo Domingo opened in September 1946. At opening day Sister Mary Philip had resided on the island for only one year, but her letters show that she had considered all sorts of ideas about the Republic, the island itself, and the various groups of people in the capital. In creating the school curriculum Sister Mary Philip combined her first impressions and convent background to prepare the elite daughters of the island for life in Cold War North America as fervent Catholics. I argue that the school mirrored the convent in its teaching practices, but with a new goal to create, not nuns, but highly disciplined Catholic Cold War subjects using piety as both a protection from the threats of the present and preparation for an imagined future beyond Trujillo's regime. The nuns used their own knowledge of balancing multiple worldviews to teach the girls to function within the repressive societal limits of the Trujillo regime while encouraging them to grow into leaders in their vision of the Dominican Republic of the future:

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[199]Mary Philip Ryan, OP, "Correspondence Colegio Santo Domingo," in *Series 3A, Box 3, Folder 1 "1945-47"* (Adrian, Michigan: Adrian Dominican Sisters Archives, 1946-54). Undated May 1946, 6425.

without Trujillo and guided by Catholic faith. The school therefore had two curriculums, official and unofficial, that taught the girls to be both socially impeccable within their own class and nation and to be socially subversive. Just like in the convent, striking the balance between a vision of the world and the world itself was taught through bodily practice. Sister Mary Philip was an advocate for the end of the Trujillo regime early on and believed she was neither apolitical nor complicit with the regime. It was this position of quiet advocacy and doubt for the staying power of Trujillo that influenced the creation of an unofficial curriculum within the school. Using what she learned from leading the novitiate to teach young women to be of multiple worldviews through bodily practices, she created a curriculum that would offer a similar practice of multiple worldviews for girls in the Dominican Republic. In sum, she took convent practices and created the possibility for political resistance to flourish without detection.

Unlike the history of convent novitiates, the history of political resistance is a rich, multi-disciplinary literature. With roots in the late 60's and the rise of social history and social psychology, the history of resistance to repression burgeoned in the 1980s and 90s as a multi-disciplinary field of stud. James Scott's 1967 book, *Weapons of the Weak*, is for most people the beginning of the field yielding critiques and additions for two decades before he released his second book, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, which remains a foundational and influential text in the

field.[200] Among Scott's critics, sociologists, psychologists and anthropologists questioned his Marxist division of the world in the binary of powerful and oppressed peoples with those resisting belonging to the oppressed group.[201] Multiple scholars across disciplines challenged the view that the only resistance could be the work of a fully oppressed group. Scholars presented cases of resistance from within dominant groups showing that resistance to control or power was sometimes to maintain dominant power over others or resist the power of those over them.[202] These studies challenged the idea that one could exist in just one group rather than multiple groups simultaneously.

The curriculums of Colegio Santo Domingo are another addition to the varied nature of political resistance. Sister Mary Philip and the girls' families were both very powerful and marginalized at the same time. They existed in multiple categories of

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[200] James C Scott, *Weapons of the weak: Everyday forms of peasant resistance* (yale university Press, 2008); James C Scott, *Domination and the arts of resistance: Hidden transcripts* (Yale university press, 1990).

[201] Michael F Brown, "Forum: on resisting resistance," *American anthropologist* 98, no. 4 (1996); Susan Gal, "Language and the "Arts of Resistance"," *Cultural Anthropology* 10, no. 3 (1995); Jocelyn A Hollander and Rachel L Einwohner, "Conceptualizing resistance" (paper presented at the Sociological Forum, 2004); Laura L Miller, "Not just weapons of the weak: Gender harassment as a form of protest for army men," *Social psychology quarterly* (1997); Sherry Ortner, "Resistance and the problem of ethnographic refusal," *Comparative studies in society and history* 37, no. 1 (1995).

[202] Miller, "Not just weapons of the weak: Gender harassment as a form of protest for army men."; Arnold R Hirsch, "Massive resistance in the urban north: Trumbull Park, Chicago, 1953-1966," *The Journal of American History* 82, no. 2 (1995); Sally Engle Merry, "Resistance and the cultural power of law," *Law & Soc'y Rev.* 29(1995); Peter M Kellett, "Acts of power, control, and resistance," *Hate speech* (1995). Orin Starn, "To revolt against the revolution: war and resistance in Peru's Andes," *Cultural Anthropology* 10, no. 4 (1995).

social and political power due to their stations in society and connections to others. Though the curriculums do not show a total dedication to resistance to Trujillo, by virtue of her station as a U.S. woman religious, Sister Mary Philip had considerable leeway to teach girls of the possibility of another life.

"It was a place of freedom," began Isabel Mesa'61 at the start of a four hour-long oral history interview and tour of the school grounds. "The grounds stretched far out, everything was green and you could walk and be safe anywhere. It was the symbol of what they wanted to teach you about your own mind…You could read anything. You could think anything."[203] Isabel Mesa's memory conjured up the result of the two schools offered by Colegio Santo Domingo. The first was the official Colegio that offered a bilingual Spanish/English education by native speakers to girls on a physically beautiful campus. Situated right outside the capital city Santo Domingo, re-named Ciudad Trujillo, the school was at the city and countryside margin, physically between the two. The official curriculum was what one would see at first glance while the unofficial curriculum was encapsulated in the novelty of the grounds as well as the unstated and undercurrents of how the Adrians and other faculty taught the curriculum.

The official curriculum blended at the outskirts of different systems of education. Colegio Santo Domingo offered three programs: High School, *Bachillerato*, and *Comercio.* The High School program mimicked a U.S. high school

[203] Oral history interview with Isabel Mesa '61, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, October 2010.

curriculum, preparing students for college in the United States following the standards of the U.S. high school curriculum. All classes in the high school program were taught in English and matched the high school curriculum in the United States. The *Bachillerato* was an accepted curriculum of study adhering to the standards of the Dominican Republic preparing students for successful completion of the national exit exams as well as college entrance exams. The *Comercio* program, loosely translated, was the vocational track, preparing girls for careers as bilingual secretaries, translators, and typists. From the interview subjects, most young women graduated in two of the programs most choosing the High School program and one other, but not both. Students in *Comercio* usually went straight into the workforce with skills to work as bilingual administrative office managers in business firms based in the U.S and Canada. Students from the *Bachillerato* program usually went to the University in Santo Domingo while a few went to the United States, often to study at Siena Heights College in Michigan or Barry College in Florida, both run by the Adrian Dominicans.

Students could also board in dormitories or enroll as day students. Boarders typically were from towns outside of the city or from different regions of the country altogether. Day students came from across the city on foot, driven by their parents (or family chauffeur) or by city bus (*gua-gua*). Day students also had the option to stay for lunch, the main meal, to eat with the boarders and Sisters, or return to school in the afternoon after eating with their families. Boarders' experiences differed

remarkably from day students. While most day students spent their days at school, time with their families, music lessons and adventures with brothers, sisters, and cousins, were the majority of their lives. Boarders were much more tightly connected to one another and lived a life more under the rules of the convent, including mass every day, night rosaries, and stricter rules with the Sisters as guardians as well as closer relationships to them as surrogate parents.

Many former boarders praised the strictness of the rules and the structure that it offered them. Many made long defenses of the rules of the school, saying that the enforcement of the rules was both fair and direct. Mary Philip was remembered as being the most strict, often ambushing girls breaking rules by yelling, "Savages! Savages!"[204] This epithet was most memorable to the earliest classes of the Colegio. In answer to the question "What would have been different about you had you not gone to Colegio Santo Domingo?" a former student answered in English, "We would have been more savage."[205] By and large, the strict fierceness of Mary Philip was welcomed in hindsight. The Class of 1954 especially had story after story of Mary Philip's discipline. Ana Matilde remembered one incident when Sister Mary Philip corrected her English over and over again during a play rehearsal for a performance of *Snow White*. Under the public corrections Ana Matilde began to cry and later

[204] Interview with class of 1954, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, October 2010.
[205] Interview with the Class of 1953, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, October 2010.

talked of leaving the Colegio because of the mean principal. Sister Helen Clare[206] took her aside and explained that Sister Mary Philip was trying to help her by correcting her. In an effort to reconcile Ana Matilde, Sister Helen Clare instructed her to go to Mary Philip's office and thank her for the corrections that would help her. Ana Matilde did what she was told and went from fearful to appreciative of Sister Mary Philip. By talking with the principal she recognized herself as not humble enough, too sure, and she accepted that she needed to become a more humble person. She accepted that Sister Helen Clare was right.[207]

Stories like Ana Matilde's were common. The graduates saw themselves as indulged girls that needed to receive strong discipline in order to learn properly. Many felt that if they had not received this discipline they would not have realized their potential as learners. Many spoke of how this discipline made them much different mothers than their counterparts by refusing to over-indulge their own children even if they had the resources to do so.

For the girls in the boarding school, their day began at 5 AM with the nuns rising to pray at 5:30 and the girls joining to celebrate Mass at 6:30 every day. At 7 AM staff and boarders ate breakfast and got ready for their school day. Girls who attended daily took public buses, walked or drove with the family chauffeur to school each day. School began with a gathering of the school at the center of the campus

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[206] Sister Helen Clare Doyle.
[207] Interview with the class of 1954, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, October 2010.

where there stood a statue of the Virgin Mary and a flagpole flying the American and Dominican flags. Each morning began with the flags raised and the girls and staff singing both national anthems with their hands over their hearts.

The practice of flag raising, on the surface, looks like the stark work of empire-building, but the many layers of the practice reveal the work of the nuns to carve out space where Trujillo could not and would not intervene. First of all the practice raised hackles among the Dominican Republic Education Ministry who launched an "investigation" of the practice during their first year of operation.[208] That investigation challenged the flag-raising as exactly an empire-building act, but in the end did nothing to change it. Sister Mary Philip continued the practice, as did her successors, until the end of the Trujillo Regime. As soon as Trujillo's assassination went public, Colegio Santo Domingo abandoned the American flag and anthem, electing for the Dominican flag to fly and the singing of the Dominican National Anthem.[209]

The reason for the flag and the pledge seems to be more of a defensive act to survive the Trujillo regime using symbols of Empire to do so. Sister Mary Philip often spoke of needing to defend the campus from takeover by Trujillo going so far as to trying to buy parcels of land around it to buffer the campus to "ward off bad neighbors or other dangers." As if to better contextualize her rather coy comment she

[208] Ryan, "Correspondence Colegio Santo Domingo." Sister Mary Philip to Mother Gerald, November 12, 1947.
[209] Interview with Leonor Elmúdesi, Class of 1977, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, October 11, 2010.

ended the paragraph with: “This is such a riddle here.”[210] The flag was not an act of trying to make Colegio students into American citizens or to make the Dominican Repbulic a part of the U.S. in a larger way, but to make the school American territory. This was Sister Mary Philip’s version of gunboat diplomacy. If you step on these grounds you will be held to American standards, something she believed would judge Trujillo to be unacceptable or unfit to rule due to her naive understanding of American intervention and tolerance of Trujillo in the Dominican Republic. Though it remains unsaid, Sister Mary Philip was trying to mark the campus as apart from Trujillo’s rule and therefore less able to be manipulated or controlled. Once Trujillo was gone, so was the American flag.

The high school organized girls by homerooms and started the day with religion class and then followed an individualized schedule system offering English, Spanish, History, Laboratory Science, Music (both choral and instrumental), Theater (with two performances each year for the public), Visual Arts, Geography, Home Economics, Typing and Athletics (including swimming, track and field, basketball, volleyball, gymnastics, and calisthenics). The sisters offered every subject in English, except for Spanish, though sometimes using a mix of English and Spanish language books for instruction. Students convened for a short service in the chapel once or sometimes more than once a week and were required to attend mass monthly (if they

[210] Ryan, "Correspondence Colegio Santo Domingo."Sister Mary Philip to Mother Gerald, March 12, 1946, 6459-60.

were baptized Catholics).[211] According to one non-Catholic who graduated in the 1960's, non-Catholics were not required to attend or participate in any religious activities.[212]

The school also participated in various events including theater productions and religious festivals like saints' days, though they shunned novenas as backward.[213] For example, the class of 1950 remembered a two-week long festival for St. Mary ending with the crowning of the statue of Mary in an all-school ceremony including prayer, song, and a procession outside. Students also participated in service days to the poor on weekends as part of their religious instruction.[214]

Meals occurred at midday with more than half the school electing to be "semi-interna" and joining the faculty for lunch. Girls sat six to a table with a girl on each end who was responsible for bringing food to the table and clearing at the end of the meal. This was a domestic chore that none of the children had ever completed at home. The practice of clearing the table became even more notable when the President's daughter, Angelita, joined the school and cleared the tables in turn just

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[211] All school activities listed and photographed in the first graduating class yearbook of 1950, private collection of Sister Teresa Ruiz Castillo, Santo Domingo.
[212] Interview with Bliss Sutherland by phone, November 2010. Bliss' only memory of attempted conversion was a nun who had one conversation with her about how one of her grandparents was Catholic and therefore she could be too if she wished. In four years, that was the only mention of conversion.
[213] Interview with Class of 1954, October 2010, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.
[214] Yearbook of 1950, private collection of Sister Margot Ruiz Castillo, Santo Domingo and interviews with the Class of 1950, 51, 54.

like everyone else.[215] In the afternoon the school also offered a snack shop that served ice cream and sold candy to raise additional funds for the school. Among the demands for the first week of operation of the school was Sister Mary Philip's insistence that they have a large ice cream maker she nicknamed the "benefactor," to raise money for the school. In four letters, Sister Mary Philip reminded Mother Gerald of her need for an ice cream maker and how others thought this was a great idea. On the first day, the buildings did not have windows, the Sisters did not have a finished convent, but the school had an ice cream maker.[216]

After the end of the official school day girls returned home via bus or chauffeur to music and other lessons at home with their families. The Sisters also offered after-school music lessons to individual children, language lessons, choir practice, and dance lessons. As a result some children stayed on the campus from early in the morning until late afternoon engaged in various activities offered by the school. In later years these activities expanded to include student clubs (both religious and academic), event organizing committees, yearbook staff, and student council.

In the evening, the "internas" enjoyed recreation, prayed the Rosary with the Sisters at 6 PM, ate dinner at 6:30 and then had study hall after dinner. In the

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[215] Interview with the Class of 1954, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, October 2010.

[216] All of the following letters mention the need for an ice cream maker: Ryan, "Correspondence Colegio Santo Domingo," 6415-17; Handwritten note of Sister Mary Philip to Mother Gerald, May 1946, 6432 -6433; Sister Mary Philip to Mother Gerald, May 15, 1946, 6382-3; Sister Mary Philip to Mother Gerald undated letter and list of needs by area "Kitchen" etc. June 1946.

evenings, the Sisters sang Matins in the chapel or on some evenings put the girls to bed early, donned swim suits, and prayed Matins in the pool. Praying in the water is one of the enduring memories of the spiritual environment given to sisters by the leadership of Sister Mary Philip. Just as former novices remembered swimming in the lake after a day of getting the summer camp, Innisfail, ready for the season, the sisters remembered Matins in the saltwater pool at the Colegio with a similar mixture of relief from the heat and love of "bending the rules."[217] In contrast, none of the former students I interviewed had any idea that the Sisters swam while they were supposed to be in bed. It came as a revelation to more than one. After Matins, the Sisters returned to the convent for recreation, study, and then "Profound Silence" until morning.

In most ways the school's schedule mirrored the schedules of most American Catholic schools and the schedule of the nuns mirrored the convent. According to Sisters who had experienced Sister Mary Philip as novice mistress, her behavior in the Dominican Republic yielded to the demands of the mission field. Both Evelyn Callow (Marie Madonna) and Rita Shlitz (Damian) remember a much less harried and strict Mary Philip on the island, one who would do things like hold Matins while swimming or allow Sisters to go to movies on the weekend. These are all behaviors that are not documented in letters home, but only available from oral histories. Sister Mary Philip kept up the narrative of herself as a strict and omniscient convent provincial in letters home to Mother Gerald, but the truth was that she was far more

[217] Interview with Evelyn Callow, Adrian, Michigan. August 27, 2008.

relaxed and flexible in the Dominican Republic. Sister Rita and many "interna" colegio girls remembered parties with Canadian Scarboro priests who befriended the Adrians and the school. Both Sister Rita and Evelyn Callow remembered the strong friendship between Father Thomas O'Reilly and Sister Mary Philip, which lasted nearly fifty years until the former bishop's death. The idea that Sister Mary Philip would host a party with priests was unthinkable to the former novices. On Friday nights, sometimes the girls, nuns, and priests would watch movies together at the convent with snacks and drinks.[218] The Sisters also sometimes took a siesta in the afternoon, something that was most welcome due to the heat of the island, but unthinkable back in the culture of the Motherhouse.

Finally, Sister Mary Philip incorporated animals into the convent, including two dogs, Pat and Lani, who followed her around everywhere. The dogs played prominently in the memory of former students and faculty as ubiquitous sidekicks and welcome warnings. If you saw a dog, then no doubt Sister Mary Philip was not too far behind, gifting you just enough time to rearrange yourself to appear more pious or productive than you had been. In one example, a group of students hid boxes of candy they were eating in a study hall and bowed their heads thinking they would be punished. They received the encouraging phrase "Good Girls!" and contained their laughter until Sister Mary Philip was out of earshot. She had thought they were

[218] Interview with the Class of 1959, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, October 2010.

praying.[219] Faculty, on the other hand, remembered to sit up straight, if they were not already.[220] The dogs also served as a warning to visitors. Students in the Class of 1954 remembered Pat and Lani acting aggressively toward President Trujillo, who had come to campus, forcing him to jump back into his car until the dogs could be subdued. [221] Though the school was recognizably a Catholic girls' preparatory school, it was far more relaxed than the novitiate ever was. Sister Mary Philip took her position in the provinces to blend cultures and have fewer demands on herself and others.

Mother Gerald chose the majority of faculty members from the Sisters most recently professed. Though the decision was Mother Gerald's, Sister Mary Philip, who was well acquainted with everyone in the community, especially the most recent novices, had considerable sway. At the same time that Sister Mary Philip left for the Dominican Republic, Mother Gerald began to prepare a faculty of young nuns to join her once the school was operational. Sister Kenneth Duweilius and Sr. Mariana, both recently professed nuns were sent to study Spanish at the University of Havana. Sr. Mariana was well known in the congregation as an accomplished puppeteer and early child educator. Sister Kenneth was a writer and English teacher.[222] Both had Sister Mary Philip as their novice mistress. Though the sisters were not told, Mother Gerald

[219] Interview with the Class of 1954, Santo Domingo, October 2010.
[220] Interview with Evelyn Callow, Adrian, Michigan. August 27, 2008.
[221] Interview with the Class of 1954, Santo Domingo, October 2010.
[222] Ryan, "Correspondence Colegio Santo Domingo." Mother Gerald to Sister Mary Philip September 28, 1945 "Sister Mariana just left Adrian with her puppets and her bags and perhaps she'll lose half of them on the way," 6622.

made clear to Sister Mary Philip as far back as November 1945 to write to the "Sisters in Havana as they will most likely be your associates but don't let on to this. Find out what they are learning and what they know."[223] In Adrian, Sister Damian was not sent out to teach with the rest of her "crowd" from the novitiate, but assigned to continue to study art at Siena Heights. "I thought there was something wrong with me!" Sister Damian, now Sister Rita Schlitz, remembered in 2009 "I had no other information than what was written on a card." Mother Gerald shared none of her plans with Sister Damian, but had identified her as a talented up and coming artist and sent her immediately for graduate work in art. Mother Gerald also began a correspondence with the Archbishop of Puerto Rico to begin a foundation there.[224]

The first major conversation about the faculty of the Colegio was in March of 1946, when Sister Mary Philip wrote a long list of needs for the school. She began with the hope that Sister Thomas Ann could stay with them to continue her studies in music at the University and teach younger children until certified to teach at the high school level by the national education ministry. Sister Mary Philip added that it would be best if another Sister were sent for training in music as well as Spanish simultaneously. In the meantime, Sister Thomas Ann could teach singing, including hymns and English songs, to help out at the school. Second, she asked for a special Sister who could be a cook and teach Domestic Science. Third, she needed a teacher for each grade for fifth through eighth as well as a teacher for the commercial

[223] Ibid. Mother Gerald to Sister Mary Philip, November 23, 1945, 6571.
[224] Annals of Puerto Rico, Adrian Dominican Sisters Archives, Adrian, Michigan.

program and first year of the "high school" program, though she does not specify subjects. Fourth, she informed Mother Gerald that she would need to hire a Spanish teacher locally. Finally, she couched her next paragraph by admitting that she should be "punished for making suggestions" but will make them nonetheless since the environment was so difficult.

In naming whom she wanted on faculty, Sister Mary Philip summarized what she believed to be the challenges of teaching in the Dominican Republic revealing her analysis of the political situation. She asked Mother Gerald to reconsider the assignment of one of the sisters by saying that she "has something in her that would not work well here" and would:

> [G]et in with the people-they speak very openly to us of their political views – and with this situation so tense and with spies around, I would fear bad results. We have to watch our step every minute."[225]

With that she asks for "Sr. Thomas Ann, Sr. Kenneth, Sr. Rudolf, Sr. Marianne, Sr. Aquiline, and Sr. Mary Ann of St. A. " all of whom have the "maturity to handle the people" and their near constant "calumny."[226] She does not elaborate on what she means, but from the context it may be that she needed nuns who could listen to political information and not share it. The parents surely complained about the Trujillo regime to them. According to oral histories parents never spoke of politics in front of children. It is interesting that according to Sister Mary Philip parents engaged

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[225] Ryan, "Correspondence Colegio Santo Domingo," Sister Mary Philip to Mother Gerald, March 6, 1946, 6477-6479.
[226] Ibid.

in political talk with the nuns though specifics are lost to the historical record.[227]

Through the summer of 1946, Sister Mary Philip continued to push her preferences for faculty in small references in letters for who might be a good fit or to try to confirm hearsay. For example, in a letter she casually mentioned that she heard Sr. Aquilene was asked to submit passport papers.[228] Mother Gerald offered some, but not much information offering only: "If you keep a secret I think I can send you Sister Damian who can take the art and who is the best in the estimation of Sister Helene."[229] By mid-June Kenneth and Mariana were clear to arrive in the Dominican Republic to join the Colegio as Mother Gerald did not want to them to continue on in Cuba:

> They are well equipped and I am not so keen about Havana. I told them to contact you. Now you make room for them and get their entrance permit as they have requested."[230]

The two new sisters arrived on July 1, 1946[231] followed by the arrival of Sister Henrice and Rose Eileen later in the month.[232] The group of three Sisters was now seven.

The conversations involving faculty continued throughout the summer with

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[227] The oral histories with ex-alumnas offered no insight into the political views of their parents. They were never privy to any political conversations with their parents.
[228] Ryan, "Correspondence Colegio Santo Domingo," Sister Mary Philip to Mother Gerald, undated (most likely late May 1946), 6425.
[229] Ibid. Mother Gerald to Sister Mary Philip, copy June 18, 1946, 6390.
[230] Ibid.
[231] Ryan, "Correspondence Colegio Santo Domingo," Sister Mary Philip to Mother Gerald, July 1, 1946, 6378-9.
[232] Ibid., Sister Mary Philip to Mother Gerald, July 26, 1946, 6361.

Sister Mary Philip offering suggestions and apologizing for doing so. Mother Gerald would write with names of sisters, usually just initials as possible faculty and Sister Mary Philip would write back with her thoughts for and against the candidates. These conversations never had anything to do with teaching or command of material, but rather personalities. Sisters proposed by Mother Gerald would be rejected by Sister Mary Philip as being too "set in her ways" or for "pairing off" and dividing the convent socially.[233] As for a cook, Sister Mary Philip wrote in July "we will be better off without one than to have Sitting Bull or any of that description. I would prefer this to having anyone disgruntled or ugly."[234] For her statements about knowing she had no right to ask for Sisters, Sister Mary Philip had a clear sense of what she did and did not want in her staff. Physical beauty as well as easy-going personality seemed more important to Sister Mary Philip than expertise or teaching ability. The nuns were to be far more than teachers.

Finally, Sister Mary Philip asked for a chaplain fluent in Spanish, but also fluent in English to pastor to the "neglected Anglophone Catholics" on the island. She asked that the chaplain be available to teach philosophy at the University in addition to his responsibilities at the school. [235] By July, there was no word on a chaplain and Sister Mary Philip inquired again.[236] Father Jose María Uranga, S.J., a Jesuit from

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[233] Ibid., Sister Mary Philip to Mother Gerald, July 9, 1946, 6370-71.
[234] Ibid., Sister Mary Philip to Mother Gerald, July 23, 1946.
[235] Ibid., Sister Mary Philip to Mother Gerald, March 6, 1946, 6477-6479.
[236] Ibid., Sister Mary Philip to Mother Gerald July 19, 1946, 6362: "And mother, have we a chaplain? O what a man he will have to be…"

Spain joined the faculty sometime between opening day in October and early 1949 though the origins of his appointment are unknown. According to interviews with the class of 1954, Uranga was of an old style theology recommending that the girls not bother to read the Bible, but simply participate in the sacraments. "He was the opposite of the nuns," one alumna offered.[237]

Also, we lack a full explanation the hire of the first Dominican-born teacher on staff at the Colegio, Señora Herminia Ornes de Duran, the Spanish literature teacher. Unfortunately, the end of the story of how the faculty came to be in the Colegio's founding is absent from the written historical record. For information on Doña Herminia, only oral histories are available to help understand how and why she was chosen.[238]

Doña Herminia, as she was called, attended eight years of schooling in Canada making her fluent in Spanish, French and English. She was hired by Sister Mary Philip in her early twenties to teach Spanish literature and remained a teacher of Spanish at the school for the next thirty-six years.[239] Her place as a teacher came up over and over in interviews with students and former staff as indicative of the kind of

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[237] Interview with Class of 1954, Santo Domingo, October 2010.

[238] In researching the archives, I found that there is a considerable silence with no letters from Sister Mary Philip to Mother Gerald from August 4, 1946 until February 27, 1947. Except for a few brief letters that were misfiled in the wrong year the archives are silent until July 1948. There are a variety of reasons possible for this silence, but no explanation is known. The Annals, probably written much later, offer no help in these matters.

[239] Interview with Herminia Ornes de Duran, October, 2010 with the Class of 1960, Santo Dominigo, Dominican Republic.

resistance and autonomy that Sister Mary Philip and the Colegio had during the Trujillo regime. The classes of 1951, '52, '54 and '60 all used Doña Herminia as an example when trying to explain that the nuns resisted Trujillo openly. Doña Herminia's family was known to be against the Trujillo regime resulting in the death of at least one of her uncles at Trujillo's hand and a blacklisting of the entire family within the Dominican Republic. No one was allowed to do business with them or hire them without serious repercussions. Though in an interview, Doña Herminia, now in her late nineties, did not have the strength to explain the story fully, she did acknowledge that Sister Mary Philip knew full well who she was hiring and from which family. She expressed tremendous gratitude and love of the nuns, crediting them with giving her a life in her country. It would have been a great risk for the Sisters to do such a thing, and that they were allowed to do so is somewhat baffling if her family was blacklisted and the intolerance for resistance was as high as historians of the regime state so clearly.[240] Lacking any mention of her in the correspondence makes the incident even more baffling.

The fact that Sister Mary Philip went ahead and hired a teacher blacklisted in the Dominican Republic reveals proof that she was fully aware of her power.[241] Sister

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[240] Eric Paul Roorda, *The Dictator Next Door: The Good Neighbor Policy and the Trujillo Regime in the Dominican Republic, 1930-1945,* American Encouters/Global Interactions (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998); and Lauren Derby, *The Dictator's Seduction: Politics and Popular Imagination in the Era of Trujillo* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009). Both books offer extensive discussions about the consequences of resistance to the Trujillo regime.

[241] Informal conversation with historian Ana Candela, July 1, 2013, Santa Cruz, CA.

Mary Philip could not take a stance as anti-Trujillo and acknowledged that this would be disastrous, yet she took great pains to set the school apart from its host country. The successful hire and retention of Doña Herminia speaks to this power. Not only did they hire her, but she remained on the faculty for the remainder of her career even teaching the dictator's daughter, Angelita, in the class of 1954. Sister Mary Philip wielded tremendous power as a Catholic woman religious and an American and she used the two together to construct the space of the school.

The unofficial curriculum developed over time as a series of unnamed and unwritten emphases in the school curriculum.

> "With me it will be a big thing if we are going to teach our girls how to teach others to live a little differently. It will be one of the important works for us."[242]

As the Sisters got to know the Dominican Republic and made their place in the society of Ciudad Trujillo, the curriculum took on a rich undercurrent of messages to girls about their potential power, both politically and spiritually. The school taught girls that they belonged in the world, were intellectually able, and a vibrant part of public life. These messages went a long way to challenge the masculine, fear-based control of the elite by the Trujillo regime, but never directly or openly. Like the novitiate, the unofficial curriculum offered Catholic identity and the physical practice of piety as a protection against evil: the evil of the Trujillo regime. Sister Mary Philip

[242] Ryan, "Correspondence Colegio Santo Domingo." Sister Mary Philip to Mother Gerald, undated or date not visible on copy but late May 1946 from context, 6425.

created the school curriculums to teach the girls to balance competing worldviews, the vision of Trujillo as leader in the present and the vision of a country beyond Trujillo in a deep rooted Catholic democracy.

At the school, Catholic identity served as a way to connect girls to an imagined North American past as a Catholic empire that would one day rise again. This Catholic revision of history was common to Catholic schools at the time, situating Catholicism at the center of world and national history.[243] In her first months on the island, Sister Mary Philip and Mother Gerald's letters articulate a clear vision of a future Catholic North America uniting the Caribbean, South and North America. In one of the first letters between them Mother Gerald remarked:

> I miss you at times like this especially, Sister, but I rejoice that you are doing work which I know is very, very important for the church. Would it not be wonderful if one hundred years from now the two Americas were both thoroughly and vitally Catholic?[244]

Grounding her work outside and transcending national boundaries, Mother Gerald's view of the school fit within a larger frame of themselves as Pan-American Catholics. Once Sister Mary Philip understood the political landscape of the contemporary

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[243] Kathleen Sprows Cummings, *New women of the old faith: gender and American Catholicism in the Progressive Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 29. Chapter 1 provides an analysis of a created Catholic history that began to be written and talked about at the turn of the 20th century. In this imagined Catholic world history Europe and the Americas were made possible by the Catholic vision of Queen Isabella of Spain and continued by Saints of North America. In the minds of many Catholics the national lines of North America and Europe were not to be emphasized, but rather Catholic zeal for souls and service to others.

[244] Ryan, "Correspondence Colegio Santo Domingo.", Mother Gerald to Sister Mary Philip, November 8, 1945, 6596.

Trujillo-dominated island she employed the vision of a Pan-American Catholic future as an alternative route for girls at the Colegio by promoting Catholicism as one's primary loyalty and a vision for the future of the Dominican Republic.

As Laura Derby proposes in her assessment of identity politics during the Trujillo regime, "Identity was not a choice but rather a problem since it was close to impossible to cast oneself as an honorable subject resisting Trujillo and his depredations."[245] By training the girls to be pious Catholics first and foremost the nuns knew they could use Catholicity to nourish the girls' independence, intellectual development and a "natural" critique of the Trujillo regime. But if pressed from within to the country to show their loyalty, the nuns could articulate their desire to teach their young students Catholic piety, an acceptable part of one's behavior and a link to the politically complicit national church, thereby deflecting suspicion. Arming the girls with a concept of themselves as Catholics first, the nuns worked around the dictator teaching the girls by example to be both apolitical and resistant at the same time. The nuns did not have to hide their works completely or exist in a two-faced way. The nuns, Sister Mary Philip foremost among them, believed they were teaching girls to be modest, committed Catholics, and the consequence of this identity, a political critique, could hardly be avoided.

The most obvious part of the unofficial curriculum was the physical grounds of the school itself. Designed by the architect Gerald Barry, Mother Gerald's brother

[245] Derby, 31.

and namesake, and translated into plans (and the metric system) by Ruiz Castillo, the school was the first line of physical training for girls to be in the world of the Dominican political moment but not of it. Just as the convent served as a buffer or a sanctuary from the world, Colegio Santo Domingo offered girls another world full of a beautiful grounds with covered walkways stretching between buildings, a chapel with stained glass, a driveway with a statue of Mary in the middle, marble steps to the administration building, full dormitories for boarding students, a kitchen and dining area, a building for classroom teaching, a full athletic field, a salt water swimming pool and a covered outdoor patio or *entremada*.

During the planning stages Sister Mary Philip saw that the school would not only have buildings but extensive landscaping, including trees and flowers. As Isabel Mesa remembered while walking in the now tree-lined main walkway, "You could take a book from the library, find a tree, read, and no one would bother you." Girls were sealed off from Santo Domingo on the grounds. They were safe from all threats to the outside and could focus on their own development, their own ideas. The school grounds were perhaps the only place where a woman's body was safe from harm in the highly dangerous and predatory practices of the Trujillo regime on young women in particular. The first training a girl at the Colegio could enjoy was to be safe.[246]

The biology curriculum followed the basic contours of high school biology at the time including a comprehensive unit on human reproduction. Many former

[246] For a full discussion of the dangers to girls and the safety of the school, see Chapter 5.

students when asked what part of school was most memorable cited the biology program. In biology class during the late 1940's and 50's Sister Thoma taught anatomy using a life sized sculpted doll nicknamed "Ramona." In interviews with the class of 1951-57 all groups mentioned biology class as one of the most memorable. When I pushed what was so memorable, one interviewee remembered that in teaching the reproductive system the sister asked the girls to recite a Hail Mary and then stopped them after the third line: "*Hail Mary*, *full of grace*. The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus." The teacher looked out onto the class and asked them what the word "womb" meant. When they could not answer, she took out the uterus from Ramona and held it in her hands reverently, placing it carefully on the table in front of the class. "This is the womb, girls," one former student remembered her saying, "this is the womb, where Jesus grew inside his precious mother. And you, also have wombs, just like Mary."[247] The reverence and wonder with which she taught was as memorable as her words. The girls learned that their biological capability was part of Catholic faith.

Biology class prepared girls with a rich knowledge of their own bodies, often giving them far more information than their mothers knew about reproduction. The factual information was just one piece of the program. The teachers talked of girls' bodies as something normal, sometimes refuting the popular notions of menstruation as a "curse" or bodies as dirty and dangerous. In biology class girls learned a new

[247] Interview with class of 1958, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, October 2010.

perspective on femininity as productive, healthy and interesting. Often girls would return home and teach their siblings and mothers what they had learned using the same straightforward and direct approach they had experienced in the classroom. A few different former students said they taught their mothers, who had several children already, how pregnancy occurred scientifically and what menstrual periods were exactly. As tenth and eleventh graders serving as teachers of their own mothers, girls saw themselves as receivers of something special and entrusted with important information to share with others. From a young age they knew that the education they received from the nuns was like nothing else offered on the island and they were encouraged to share it with others. They also knew that their bodies were something positive, not a source of sadness or shame. This teaching was in direct opposition to what most girls experienced in the schools run by Spanish nuns and in direct opposition of the popular culture of the time that promoted the idea of women as sexual objects and lesser than men. Girls at the Colegio learned a reverence for their bodies and reproductive power at a time when this perspective was unheard of and even radical.

In letters home Sister Mary Philip often remarked on the impiety of the families on the island, underscoring the importance of educating the girls about their faith. When first promoting the idea of the school, Sister Mary Philip wrote home that the children all came from families "in a position to lead" but that none attended

Church with any regularity.[248] She also made note of the impiety of most people to express her reverence for "Mr. Castillo," the architect of the school whom she always made sure to note was the leader of Catholic Action, and a "Catholic of Catholics in the Republic."[249] From her point of view the majority of the island was only nominally Catholic without taking the sacraments or church attendance seriously. In her early days she faulted the people of the D.R. for their fallen faith.

As time went on and Sister Mary Philip became more exposed to the daily life of Dominicans she became more jaded about the Catholicity of the public, not as a fault of the people, but a result of the governmental control of the church. For example on St. Dominic's day in 1946 she attended a special mass for the day and reported what she heard to Mother Gerald in a tone of defeat:

> No word was spoken of St. Dominic or of the significance of the occasion, that is, the actual significance of the occasion. The honors, the pomp, they all must be turned over directly to Jupiter. The Church is the tool of the G. here, little more on these occasions. They do what they are told and no more.[250]

From her viewpoint, the church was not the center of faith but only an extension of Trujillo's rule. Earlier that Spring she revealed far more ambition to reform the island's church with a somewhat surprising plan and stark judgment:

> The church here, Mother, is very weak. I cannot begin to tell you the state of it. One of the greatest forces would be a school in English for boys [for boys *added in pen]* run by American priests, one that begins with first grade. This is

[248] Ryan, "Correspondence Colegio Santo Domingo." Sister Mary Philip to Mother Gerald Dec. 12, 1945, 6541-6543.
[249] Ibid., Sister Mary Philip to Mother Gerald, Feb. 13, 1946, 6488-89.
[250] Ibid., Undated letter, Sister Mary Philip to Mother Gerald sometime in August 1946.

> far more important than the one for girls. The boys and their parents are anxious to have them learn English, beginning with the 1st grade. This is the time to form their habits for religion. There seems no hope otherwise. I hate to say it, but honestly the Church is political here. The little man has done wonders, but from things that happen, it seems that he has leaned too far on the side of diplomacy. The big shot uses the Church as he needs it.[251]

Sister Mary Philip's analysis and plan for the future of the island revealed her as dedicated not just to her school, but also to the reformation of the political and religious landscape of the Dominican Republic. Sister Mary Philip, in less than a year had changed from uninformed guest to active reformer, however hidden. First, Sister Mary Philip expressed a clear desire to go over the head of the national church, the archbishop to which she was personally and professionally connected. This leap is extremely significant in a nun taught to obey Church authority and defer to the church hierarchy. Her comments reveal a woman far from deferential to her immediate and well-known superiors. Second was her admission that boys' education would be more consequential than girls. Considering her position as the leader of a developing girl's school, the fact that she recognized that a school for boys would make the largest difference signified a shift in her thinking toward reform. It also shows that for all her promotion of women and girls as capable members of society, she believed that men must lead true reform. This gendered limitation is consistent with her historical moment.[252] Third, her thinking also revealed that she considered the American Catholic church as unrelated to the political regime of the island, somehow standing

[251] Ibid. Sister Mary Philip to Mother Gerald, April 29, 1946, 6646.
[252] Conversation with Marilyn Westerkamp, August 18, 2013.

outside of it. In this rare moment her cosmology of Catholicity trumping all categories bowed to the power of nationalism. She preferred American priests over any other as somehow imbued with the proper Catholicism to turn around the country.

Her statements reveal that Sister Mary Philip was far from a silent and non-reflective bystander. She held and shared ideas for deep social change just seven months after arriving in the Dominican Republic by putting her country, her country's Church (not the Vatican), and men at the center of her plan. She distinguished the church of the Dominican Republic from "true" Catholicity and saw American church clergy as the source for stronger Catholic practice.[253] With this new zeal for reform, Sister Mary Philip designed a religious program for the girls that emphasized piety and social reform.

Religion class, according to Isabel Mesa '61, occurred every morning at the start of the day "when you were fresh."[254] Its placement in the day communicated the seriousness with which the Sisters treated religious education. Religion class, once the school opened, would be the parting shot for the day. After flag salute, the girls returned to their homeroom teachers who instructed them from the Baltimore Catechism, translated into Spanish. Though most students did not remember much of what they learned in religion class, their text, the 1941 version, reveals a curriculum

[253] This preference of American clergy and the American Church may reveal a larger influence of Americanism that could very well be a part of her upbringing in Irish-Catholic Chicago.
[254] Interview with Isabel Mesa, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, October 2010.

of offered questions and statements to learn the basics of the Catholic faith in three parts: The Creed, The Commandments and The Sacraments, and Prayer. The book ends with instruction in how to pray the "Our Father." What little students did remember was that they were required by the nuns to read aloud the questions and answers as well as to memorize large sections.[255] This curriculum was consistent among parochial schools throughout the United States.

Religion class was a small part of religious instruction offered at the Colegio. Other official means of receiving religious instruction were chapel, daily mass, evening Rosary and confession. Though students who were not boarders were not required to attend these services, many opted to attend on their own or with their families. Attending church once a month was a school rule, though the nuns offered choir, a popular program entitling girls to attend church weekly. The choir, run by Sister Susanna[256] by the late 1950s, taught Gregorian chant, hymns and more contemporary religious music. Mesa believed that they had the only choir on the island offering Gregorian chant, something the girls took as a great honor.[257] Graduates who participated in choir often traced their faith to their choir days. "It put the faith in every part of you" one graduate tried to explain.[258] The music ingrained the mystery of the Faith into an individual. Many groups of graduates, like the

[255] Interview with Isabel Mesa, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, October 2010.
[256] Sister Susanne Hofweber.
[257] Oral history interview with Isabel Mesa '61, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, October 2010.
[258] Interview with the Class of 1959, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, October 2010.

novices I had interviewed years before, broke into song in remembering their life-changing experiences in the choir.

Beyond the chapel and more sacramental occasions, religious instruction found its way into almost every part of the school. Students remembered explanations for why they should learn Latin to better understand the Mass and the sacraments of the faith.[259] Others remembered debate as a primary means of teaching class material in English class and religion. Learning to put forth and defend an evidence-based argument taught the girls how to think, to articulate their ideas and disagree with one another. More than a few students talked about the emphasis not on memorization, but on understanding. Nuns often spoke of the importance of coming to faith as a decision, not as blind acceptance, and the girls' time at the Colegio was to make the "journey to faith."[260]

Religion also arrived in the form of classroom prayer. Most classes started with a prayer and many ended with one as well. Students were also instructed in the practice to pray before reading, before taking a test, or otherwise engaging one's mind. Students were encouraged to begin each test with the initials J.M.J.D. for Jesus, Mary, Joseph and Dominic as a sort of abbreviated prayer to calm their mind, right their concentration, and commune with the saints before beginning their work. Many of Sister Mary Philip's letters often had a heading of J.M.J.D. at the top, perhaps a

[259] Interview with class of 1958, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, October 2010.
[260] Interview with Class of 1958 and 1954, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, October 2010.

result of having been taught by nuns herself.

For the most part, this approach instilled a deep sense of Catholic identity for many students. Many of the Colegio graduates that I spoke with remain deeply faithful. One graduate said that she was typical in that she was more Catholic than the rest of her family - a fact she attributed to her education at the Colegio. Of the graduates that shared with me their current religious beliefs, two graduates who are no longer Catholic, but consider themselves Christian, attribute their beliefs to the theological grounding provided by the nuns. A graduate from the first graduating class of 1950, now a well-known televangelist and Pentecostal preacher, Sarita Gronau, put it most bluntly that the nuns gave her a theological base of a loving God, knowing Mary as the mother of God, and knowing the Holy Spirit. "This was because of the nuns of Santo Domingo taught [her]... that base" and provided her spiritual formation.[261]

Another part of the unofficial curriculum existed in plain sight: the school held programs that taught girls that they belonged in public. In these programs, girls' bodies were made fully public and accepted on terms both safe and intellectual. When facilitating group interviews with former students one of the most immediately

[261] Interview with Class of 1950, Santo Domingo, October 2010 "La base que recibimos fue muy bueno porque como nos presentaron un Dios amoroso, y veíamos las vidas de ellas consagradas a Dios que todo lo hacian por Dios. Fuimos entusiasmándonos y conociendo, a Maria primero, a Maria conocimos Jesus Christo pero el emphasis que despues cuando yo supe tanto del Espiritu Santo, fue porque las monjas (sic) de Santo Domingo fue las que me enseniaron y ese el las base, es conocer el espiritu y labor social teníamos que hacer y vamos a los barrios pobres."

remembered highlights of time at the school were the *veladas* or school plays, always at Christmas and Easter, sometimes with smaller plays performed during the year. The *Velada* was an all-school activity requiring props, sets, costumes and casting of girls for every scene from playing Mary, Joseph or the crucified Jesus. Girls played all the parts with the boys' parts taken by girls who were tallest.[262] Art students painted and crafted the sets with Sister Damian putting in long hours to make the sets work. The performance occurred in the evenings, with parents and friends invited to watch the performance on the roof of the dormitory building. Everyone connected to the school attended the plays since these events were new to the island and a welcome attraction. The plays were surprisingly public, teaching girls that they had a rightful place in the public eye, on stage, in the spotlight. Theater taught them public speaking and self-confidence unlike any other high school in the area. Many former students credited theater with introducing them to public speaking, something many of them would use in their future careers.

Beginning in the late 1950's Sister Mary Philip began to introduce various extracurricular activities that had roots in the curriculums of U.S. high schools. First was the inclusion of a prom, the first of its kind on the island. The idea of having a dance with boys was considered completely outrageous to the traditional culture of the island, but the nuns presented it as a natural part of growing up. Many graduates remembered the prom as a time when they were privy to the sort of trust that adults

[262] Interview with Class of 1954, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, October 2010.

were given. The nuns talked of the prom as a way to behave properly in the company of boys and conduct themselves with self-respect and self-discipline.[263] The prom continued and slowly the faculty entrusted the event's planning to the girls themselves. Finally, in 1960, a student council began. Girls ran for office, presented their ideas for leadership to the school and then elections took place. After the class officers took their positions, they met after school once a month to plan school fundraisers, events and activities.[264]

The student council was explained as just another part of making a "high school" program, but of course it was far more. The idea of holding democratic elections, hosting campus-wide conversations on leadership, and entrusting school decisions to students was part of a larger project to prepare students for political involvement and social leadership. Student Council looked like another school club, but was part of training girls for the vision of a future democratic Dominican Republic.

The idealism of both the official and unofficial curriculums must yield to the case of Angelita Trujillo. No matter the vision that the nuns, especially Sister Mary Philip, had for planting the seeds of social change rooted in Catholic piety, there is only so far that the nuns could go in the world they lived in. Angelita's education was proof of the nuns' pragmatism in the face of danger and the necessity of compromise to survive. Angelita both received an education at the Colegio like everyone else, and

[263] Class of 1957, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, October 2010.
[264] Class of 1960, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, October 2010.

skated through with less because of her family. An analysis of her education and how former students talked about it helps us understand the limits of the school as well as the functionality of its place within the political society of Santo Domingo. By studying Angelita's education the Colegio emerges as idealistic only to a pragmatic extent.

The first mention of the dictator's youngest daughter is before the school opened its doors. Sister Mary Philip, writing about what grade to start the school argues for starting the school at a lower grade than high school, but writes about a "subtle campaign" to take the young daughter in the school.

> There has been a subtle campaign, too, to urge us to take the lower grades in the school. [line xx'd out] The President's wife has been sending various people to inquire and encourage, saying that they want their little daughter in our school. This has nothing to do with that, but I am all for the fourth grade (she is in first). If you could see the spoiled type we are going to get, no study habits, no discipline, no principles, you would understand, too, the need of getting them young. We do not want the first grade or the second or third at least this year, but if possible I would like the fourth [sic]. As far as the point above is concerned we do not want a thing to do with that…the more distance between us there the better for us here. Another year and all will be changed here. It cannot last. The thing is coming. We will not be a part of it.[265]

Sister Mary Philip's message was clear: the need to form girls early on was of the grandest importance and having to form the dictator's daughter was not going to have to be their problem. As Sister Mary Philip intoned for years, she believed Trujillo would not rule for long.

Mother Gerald replied a few days later:

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[265] Ryan, "Correspondence Colegio Santo Domingo," Sister Mary Philip to Mother Gerald June 5, 1946, 6407.

> If you want to take the 4th grade it is satisfactory to me. I leave these matters entirely to your judgment for you know best. I would not mess with the FIRST GRADE or the 1st damsel.[266]

But, in the end, Sister Mary Philip's vision of a quick finish to the Trujillo regime was unfulfilled. Sister Mary Philip, and the Colegio as a whole, had to contend with the President's family directly.

The case of Angelita Trujillo is a crossroads for how the curriculums of the Colegio worked in the complex social web of the Trujillo-era Dominican Republic. By having Angelita as a student, the nuns had to live as all the other elites in Ciudad Trujillo, with the President's family inside the space they had constructed to keep themselves away from him. As an interloper into elite social webs in Santo Domingo, Trujillo ruled the elite by threat of financial ruin or bodily harm. To survive the elites adapted to sharing the small space of elite life in the city with Trujillo in as friendly and solicitous a way as possible while avoiding him and his associates in calculated ways. Sister Mary Philip and Colegio Santo Domingo had to do the same when Angelita came of age to begin the school. The school began with the fourth and ninth grades but expanded each year to include one primary grade and one secondary grade until the school was complete with a pre-school (co-ed) all the way to the senior year of high school. This meant that by the third year, the school had to agree to let in Angelita as a student where she remained a student until her graduation in 1954.[267]

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[266] Ibid., Mother Gerald to Sister Mary Philip, June 11, 1946, 6409

[267] There are several apocryphal stories of the President bringing his daughter to the school on the first day before her grade was available and being asked to bring her

Among all the Colegio graduates interviewed almost every group discussed the education of Rafael Trujillo's daughter. Most groups began to speak of Angelita's treatment at the school as exemplary of the nuns' high standards. As a student, the dictator's daughter was required to clear plates at lunch, ask and receive criticism from the nuns, and use the same manners as everyone else. Many had stories of the President and his wife attending student/teacher conferences or Angelita behaving as a normal child in the school. However, in the midst of every interview, one or two people would object by saying that Angelita was not required to do the same as other students and was given special treatment because of her status as Trujillo's daughter. Usually a friendly debate would ensue with clear evidence on both sides to support each point of view.

Of course, both were true. Angelita was required to behave as everyone else, but graduated under a program offered only for three years called "Arte y Cultura" (Art and Culture) rather than the commercial, high school, or baccalaureate programs previously and subsequently offered. Along with a group of five to seven friends, she was not required to take math, science or home economics, but rather music, languages, literature and history only.[268] After her graduation, she is rumored to have received a perfect score on the university entrance exams, widely believed to be either

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back the next year. Sister Mary Philip did the unenviable honors of turning the President away.

[268] Class of 1954 Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, October 2010., Interview with Sister Margarita Ruiz, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, October 2010.

false statements or the work of plagiarism.[269] The program "Arte y Cultura" was phased out within a year of her graduation. At first glance the nuns treated Angelita like everyone else - she had to go by the same rules and was given the same consequences if she did not comply. However, officially and with much organization, the nuns did not require the same standard or achievement of Angelita as they did of other girls and facilitated special treatment.

The interviewees' views of Angelita's behavior mirrored the complex web of the elite during dictatorship. Angelita was accepted, tolerated, and rejected simultaneously by individuals explaining what it was like to go to Colegio Santo Domingo during Trujillo's regime. Stories about Angelita serve to explain how a small community of elites was always in contact and avoiding one another at the same time, with no divisions at first glance or even second. Especially for children, excluded from political conversations, the social world made it possible to be friends with political enemies and support dissidents. The most glaring example of this was Angelita's Spanish Literature teacher, Doña Herminia. Angelita took several classes from Doña Herminia probably with no knowledge of the teacher's background or relationship to her father. From Doña Herminia's point of view, Angelita had nothing to do with the violence that took her family members. In an interview, Doña Herminia spoke of Angelita as a child who was simply "very innocent"[270] with no involvement

[269] Conversation with Sister Nadine Foley, August 2009.
[270] Interview with Doña Herminia Ornes de Duran, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, October 2010.

in her father's larger plans and actions. The same assessment could be said now as Angelita's recent memoir emphasizes that to her knowledge her father was only a loving and kind man who was a wonderful father.[271]

In the case of Angelita Trujillo the sorts of complex social interactions necessary to balance her presence in the school make the binaries of complicity/resistance or enemies/allies useless for analysis and invites a reconsideration of what resistance and compliance with dictatorship means. Angelita was a child and children were uninvolved in politics from the perspective of most interviewees. Angelita was friendly, thoughtful, and dangerous if befriended. She was just like everyone else and special. Interviewees, now years after the end of the Trujillo regime, still think of her in the same terms, someone connected and disconnected to her father. As one interviewee told me in private conversation as she was leaving after the official interview "I sat next to her in orchestra. She sat there with her clarinet to her mouth, but there was never a sound from her. Never. But what I want you to remember is that she was a very good person."[272]

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[271] Angelita Trujillo, *Trujillo, Mi Padre: En Mis Memorias* (Miami, Florida: MATD Endeavors, 2010).
[272] Interview with the Class of 1954, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, October 2010.

Chapter 5:
Body Politics

More than any other theme, oral history interviews offered story after story about how the time of Trujillo was dangerous for women. The secondary literature on the history of the Trujillato reflects this. Trujillo created a persona of a larger than life ruler by staging his dominance in public in myriad ways.[273] One of the chief ways that he made and re-made his power was to demand sexual access to women, any woman, regardless of age, marital status, or class. His lovers included girls as young as fifteen, the wives of his closest advisors, and peasant women that he saw while traveling through the countryside. These lovers, and their families, did not have much choice in the matter. Sexual refusal was grounds for treason.[274] To make matters more complicated, the same show of power was allowed of all men in the Trujillo family, especially Trujillo's sons, Rhádames and Ramfis, as well as his closest advisors. As the Trujillo family came of age, so did a dangerous environment for young women.

The procedure of this particular form of power play meant that Cuidad Trujillo was a dangerous place for women, young women especially. Parents had to face this

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[273] Lauren Derby, *The Dictator's Seduction: Politics and Popular Imagination in the Era of Trujillo*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009)., 8-9.
[274] Derby, 10, 185-86.

danger directly in the form of a crisis of visibility. If their daughters were out in public, the President, or anyone close to him, could see them and potentially call them to be one of his conquests. The result was a constant management of visibility, and changing girls' bodies when a crisis hit, to keep them safe. Sister Mary Philip and the staff at the school learned of the President's practice early on in their stay on the island. Joining parents to manage girls' visibility, Sister Mary Philip constructed the school space to keep girls hidden and visible simultaneously. The school offered a place where while hidden the girls could develop themselves individually and when in public they could remain safe in a crowd. Using the same tools used in the novitiate, the girls of the Colegio were nourished as individuals at the same time that they were trained to stand together as one visible unit, homogenized and hidden from danger in plain sight. By doing so, the school fostered Colegio girls to see their bodies as positive assets and defensible with rigorous training of the body and mind within their Catholic faith.

The first interview I conducted for this project was with Sister Rosa Monique Peña, an Adrian Dominican and former Colegio girl, who spoke of her experience growing up during the latter part of the Trujillo regime. At the end of the interview I asked her if there were any stories about Sister Mary Philip that she wanted to share or a question she wished I had asked. She said that she wanted me to understand that the nuns helped many young women who were in trouble with Trujillo's sons get out of the country. As an illustration she told a story from her adolescence of attending a

party with another Colegio girl at the house of someone she did not know well. At the party there were young men connected to one of Trujillo's sons who were there to meet young women. At some point during the party one of the young men invited Rosa's friend to talk in private with Trujillo's son. During that meeting Trujillo's son offered the young woman a signed check without a name or amount for her to fill out "however she wanted" if she agreed to go with him away from the party. The friend asked to go back and speak with Rosa Monique. After hearing what had gone on, Rosa Monique insisted that they leave the party immediately and "demanded one of the chauffeurs to drive us home." Upon returning they told their parents what had happened and heard that they had been lucky. Recent stories of girls trapped in rooms and raped by Trujillo's sons and his friends were not uncommon. Rosa Monique learned later that the nuns of the Colegio helped victimized girls or girls in danger of victimization to leave the country. The experience served as a warning and a sign of the times - girls, especially, were not safe in Trujillo's time.

The story seemed straight out of a fairy tale warning a young girl that if you go through the woods alone a wolf will surely take you. But the story had an undercurrent of Catholicity: the importance of female virginity, the protection of the body, and obedience to authority. It also seemed mysterious that this was a story that Sister Rosa Monique wanted to make sure that I heard. What I learned later was that her story was emblematic to the experience of most elite young women of her generation in the Dominican Republic.

After visiting the Dominican Republic I found that the story of the party with predatory young men was a subset of stories that everyone told, but they were much larger a genre than Little Red Riding Hood spin-offs. Girls' bodies were in danger during the Trujillo regime, but parents worked hard to manipulate girls' bodies to resist becoming a victim with mixed success. Parents manipulated girls' bodies by changing their appearance, forcing girls to feign illness, and relocating girls' bodies altogether by shipping daughters out of the country until safety returned. These stories, so numerous and unusual to someone outside of the society, stood as a clear example of the social control measures of the Trujillo regime and its intersection with Catholic values. Before the nuns arrived, girls' bodies were already sites of power struggles on the part of the elite to resist Trujillo's control and keep their daughters safe. Parents manipulated their daughters' bodies in order to keep entire families out of harm's way and resist the influence of Trujillo in elite society.

The examples of parents' manipulation of girls' bodies are not novel. A Catholic woman's body as a site of family honor and reputation is a well-known part of most western European societies and Latin America in particular. In the stories told to me by Colegio students, girls' bodies were an instrument or canvas to carve messages of resistance to be received directly by Trujillo's family. The female body was a place where the political debate cast out of every day life found a voice through the comings and goings of teenage girls under the control of their parents. In the same way that Trujillo made his power known by torturing the body or killing the family of

an enemy, so followed the resistance to that control by changing the bodies of girls, the object of Trujillo's attention.

There is a tremendous amount of literature on the body as a site for political resistance as part of the larger literature on the history and practice of political resistance itself.[275] Within that literature is a subset of studies of women in particular and how they use their bodies to advocate for themselves both politically and socially.[276] Aihwa Wong's study of Malaysian factory workers and Beneduce, et.al.'s study of Nigerian women both argued that women used illness and bodily possession by supernatural forces to advocate for better conditions in work and marriage. Women have also used their own bodies to try and influence political negotiations in

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[275] Kirstie Ball, "Organization, surveillance and the body: towards a politics of resistance," *Organization* 12, no. 1 (2005);Arnold R Hirsch, "Massive resistance in the urban north: Trumbull Park, Chicago, 1953-1966," *The Journal of American History* 82, no. 2 (1995); Peter M Kellett, "Acts of power, control, and resistance," *Hate speech* (1995); Cathy Maree, "Resistance and remembrance: Theatre during and after dictatorship and apartheid," *South African Theatre Journal* 12, no. 1-2 (1998); A Dirk Moses, *Empire, colony, genocide: conquest, occupation, and subaltern resistance in world history*, vol. 12 (Berghahn Books, 2008); Orin Starn, "To revolt against the revolution: war and resistance in Peru's Andes," *Cultural Anthropology* 10, no. 4 (1995); Ronan Paddison et al., *Entanglements of power: geographies of domination/resistance* (Routledge, 2003); Catherine C LeGrand, "Informal resistance on a Dominican sugar plantation during the Trujillo dictatorship," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 75, no. 4 (1995); Allen Feldman, *Formations of violence: The narrative of the body and political terror in Northern Ireland* (University of Chicago Press, 1991).

[276] Roberto Beneduce and Simona Taliani, "Embodied powers, deconstructed bodies. Spirit possession, sickness, and the search for wealth of Nigerian immigrant women," *Anthropos* (2006); Aihwa Ong, *Spririts of Resistance and Capitalist Discipline: Factory Women in Malaysia*, SUNY Series in the Anthropology of Work (New York: State University of New York Press, 1987).

West Africa against oil companies and for peace accords.[277] The difference here is that girls did not advocate for themselves through using their bodies, but rather their parents advocated for their safety by manipulating their daughters' bodies.

According to Laura Derby, a major part of how President Trujillo wielded his power was through his body and manipulating the bodies of others, through violence with or without public spectacle.[278] In addition to the killing or torturing of enemies, Trujillo also made his appetite for lovers a part of his method of power brokering. Among scholars and interviewees Trujillo's practices as a womanizer are well documented. Trujillo had one official wife at a time, but hundreds of lovers including a few well-known to the public. His typical practice was to see young women in a public setting and demand sexual access through an arranged meeting. At least one member of his administration was in charge of procuring young women for him, usually young women from the country in their teens.[279] The public result was a fear of having your daughters "seen" by the President or any of his scouts. For example one graduate lived in a house just down the street from Trujillo's mother. As a young

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[277] Louise Amoore, *The global resistance reader* (Routledge London, 2005); Augustine Ikelegbe, "Engendering civil society: Oil, women groups and resource conflicts in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 43, no. 2 (2005); Benedetta Faedi, "What Have Women Got to Do with Peace: A Gender Analysis of the Laws of War and Peacemaking," *Geo. J. Gender & L.* 10(2009); Terisa E Turner and MO Oshare, "Women's uprising against the Nigerian oil industry in the 1980s," *Canadian Journal of Development Studies/Revue canadienne d'études du développement* 14, no. 3 (1993).

[278] Lauren Derby, "The Dictator's Two Bodies: Hidden Powers of State in the Dominican Imagination," *Etnofoor* 12, no. 2 (1999), 111.

[279] Derby, *The Dictator's Seduction: Politics and Popular Imagination in the Era of Trujillo*, 112-15.

woman, she and her sisters were not allowed out of doors for fear that Trujillo would see them. "My parents were so afraid," she said. They knew that when they saw the President's black car on the street to not go near any windows.[280]

An elite girl's life during the Trujillo Era was insulated socially, religiously, and geographically. Everyone knew everyone in Ciudad Trujillo, and the elite interacted with one another regardless of their political allegiances. First, since resistance to the President and his family was calculated socially and politically, any slight or exclusion the President interpreted as insolence, resistance to rule, and unacceptable. Second, the city was small back in the forties and fifties. If your family went out to the theater or shopping, you were destined to run into people you knew everywhere.[281] With these two social conditions in place at once elite girls existed in a social space in which everyone was friends with one another, even if they were not. This social dichotomy appears at first as two-faced socialite behavior, but is much more complicated. As a function of a small, insulated, community with a dictator at the helm, feuding and snubbing were impossible and even dangerous. As a result, former Colegio students, even in the present day, would engage in remembering controversial classmates with ties to Trujillo, first positively, then with criticism and even contempt, and finally with praise at what good people these former political families were at heart. Dating and marriage was an extension of this insulated social

[280] Interview with the Class of 1958, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, October 2010.
[281] Interview with the Class of 1959, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, October 2010.

life.

Girls from every class in the forties and fifties remembered dating as strictly forbidden. When a girl had a boyfriend that meant that there was a boy that she waved at when out with her family. "It wasn't a boyfriend, like today." One graduate tried to explain. "We were just sweethearts."[282] The only interaction with boys was through family friends and parties that took place in friends' houses for various occasions including weddings, birthdays, and anniversaries. The nuns introduced the tradition of a winter formal and prom at the school, a welcome and new chance for boys and girls to interact while teachers and parents chaperoned. Many graduates said that the chance to interact with boys made them quite different from their contemporaries at other schools. They could act normal and secure around young men, something most girls could not.[283]

Girls from later classes in the sixties and seventies remembered cruising as a primary means to meet boys. A typical outing meant one car, three to six girls and an entire night of driving back and forth on a major avenue waving at friends and boys that they liked.[284] This was the closest thing to dating that girls would engage in before marriage. For most girls, their husbands were young men that they met at parties, in passing, or introduced by friends. If a young man liked a young woman he

[282] Interview with the Class of 1956, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, October 2010.
[283] Interview with Class of 1963, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, October 2010.
[284] Interview with Maru Alvarez and Myrna Albelo-Bernadino, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 2010.

would often arrange for musicians to serenade the girl at her window and ask her father if he could attend family functions and visit. If the family accepted the boy as a worthy suitor a young man could visit, get to know the family and the girl who interested him. In most elite families, when the girl graduated from high school she was eligible for marriage. This meant that a suitor for a young sixteen-year-old would more likely than not become her husband. [285]

On the other side of the rituals of courtship were the political implications of marriage among the elite. Trujillo and his family were not in the circles of the elite before he came to power. He had no history with the elite except for working for a family as a field hand before rising through the military ranks. Trujillo maintained his power, in part, by convincing the vast majority of the population that he was of elite pedigree. In order to maintain this fiction Trujillo had to control the elites and show his total domination over them. Part of what he demanded of the elites was acceptance as an equal and superior.[286] When someone in his administration or extended family wanted to marry into an elite family that family had to allow the match. Any resistance would be interpreted as refusal to accept the rule of the President and his demand for entry into the elite class. To reject the match would be an affront to Trujillo's honor. Furthermore, once married, the Trujillo family or family connected to the Trujillos required total obedience including sharing all

[285] Interview with the Class of 1960, 63, 65, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, October 2010.
[286] Derby, *The Dictator's Seduction: Politics and Popular Imagination in the Era of Trujillo*, 113.

business partnerships with the new in-laws. Relation by marriage meant one was more likely to have direct contact with the President, become involved in business with him, and most likely draw suspicion, as he was always paranoid that enemies were surrounding him turning friends into foes.[287]

An anonymous member of one of the group interviews related a story to this effect. A girl of sixteen attracted the attention of one of the President's nephews who courted and then proposed to her once she finished high school. Her father, a successful businessman in a profitable manufacturing sector had to agree to the marriage, because to refuse was interpreted as political resistance and would lead to his murder or financial ruin. As soon as the two were married he was forced to bring his new son-in-law and the extended family into the business at a considerable financial loss to his own family. He was also forced to do business with other business ventures owned or controlled by the Trujillos and was further embroiled in the political and economic demands of the dictatorship. As an outsider, I asked the question that seemed simplest and most rational. Why did not the father say no to the marriage? Eyes widened around the room and every head shook in residual fear. No one could say no to Trujillo or his family. In the earlier years of the Trujillo regime, your family would be blacklisted: no one could hire, help or befriend you, forcing you and your family to emigrate, most likely. In the later years, Trujillo would assassinate anyone who showed signs of resistance to his rule.

[287] Multiple interviews yielded the same information from the classes of 1950 until the class of 1963.

The methods of courtship, marriage, and economic extortion are a keen example of the personal and the political. The only way to prevent financial ruin for your family was to prevent your daughter from marrying a boy from the wrong family. But in a country as small as the Dominican Republic, in a city as small as Ciudad Trujillo, in a circle of elites as small as it was, this took considerable manipulation on the part of parents to intervene in the social lives of their daughters. You could not say no, but you could manipulate circumstances. For parents, the manipulation of girls' bodies was the most viable route to control her marriage.

In the chain of events - courtship, marriage, and financial ruin, the father of the family had the most power. The link in the chain was the daughter desired by the right or wrong young man. The resistance to social control therefore took place on girls' bodies, the place of least social power, but most effective to manipulate. If the girls' body was not available for marriage or courtship, courtship or marriage could not take place. If marriage and courtship could not take place, then financial and political ruin could be avoided. And so girls' bodies became the prime battle ground for political resistance in elite families that seemingly had no political stance to take.

The stories that follow are somewhat typical among elite families and signify the degree of deception and manipulation that parents exhibited to protect their daughters and families. They are by no means unusual and must be considered representative of many families' experience during the time of Trujillo. One interviewee's eldest sister at age fifteen or sixteen caught the eye of a young man who

belonged to a family involved with the Trujillos. He immediately began to ask to call on her at home, sent a serenade to wake her at her window, and engaged in all the acceptable public ways to court a young woman. In a panic over the implications of the match for the family, the interviewee remembers her mother telling the older sister that her color was not good and she should go to bed as she was clearly sick. The sister protested that she was not ill and her mother insisted that she was very ill and needed to see a doctor. The doctor came to their home, conducted a full exam, listened to her heart and lungs, and pronounced that the young woman had meningitis and must be quarantined until she was well again. She was prohibited from leaving her room or attending school until pronounced well again. He instructed the family to contact everyone to beware of possible infection among friends and to ban all visitors from the house until the daughter recovered. The daughter/sister feeling fine and not at all ill was baffled, but obeyed her family and the doctor's orders. The doctor came to check on her every day for a full month and each day instructed her to continue to stay out of the public and rest until she fully recovered. When word reached the family that another girl in the community had received a serenade and inquiries from the same boy the girl was pronounced cured and cleared to return back to school. The family never talked about it as a ruse or performance, but existed within the performance until decades later.

Another example was of a five-year-old summoned along dozens of elite young girls to the presidential palace to meet with Angelita Trujillo. Angelita was

planning her portion of an enormous Fair where she was to preside as Queen. Part of the fair was her coronation ceremony including a cadre of little girls to accompany her and carry her robes. In the city, at a bridge game, mothers of a few of the young children received a warning from someone close to the palace that Angelita would select her handmaidens based on the attractiveness of their hands. If the girls were nail biters they would not be chosen. One mother went home and called her daughter to her. Taking nail clippers she told her daughter that she needed to make her nails pretty and proceeded to cut the little girls' nails to the quick leaving some of them raw and bleeding. The little girl went the next day to the palace and obeyed when Angelita asked for all of them to put their hands out for an inspection. As expected she was not picked to participate in the event. Four decades later she asked her mother what the nail cutting had been about and got the full story.

When taken together the stories of the feigned illness and cut nails reveal a few similarities. Both stories reflect the necessity of deception. Asking children to be a confederate in a two-faced scheme was too much of a risk. Just as parents never told their children anything about politics, they never told them what they were really up to even as they said contradictory statements straight to their children's faces about being very ill and needing to take to her bed when she was clearly healthy and needing pretty nails, when clearly she was cutting off her nails and disfiguring her fingers on purpose. There could be no "real" story in both instances. "Real" stories could quickly get out fast and create more trouble. Also, by not having two stories,

the “real” and the “performed,” the parents could never be accused of meaning to avoid the Trujillos and their associates. They never said anything to incriminate themselves.

The second similarity is that each parent found that disrupting beauty and rejecting the expectations of femininity was the way to keep their daughters out of danger. By sullying her image as an ideal female either by presenting her as diseased or disfigured, girls were safe. The desire for the feminine ideal was itself a weapon and a weakness of the regime. By refusing to meet feminine expectations girls were safe from the performance of political control. Finally, the stories showcase that resistance, like complicity and political rule itself, was performative. People pretended to be something that they were not in order to resist.

For some girls, pretending to be sick or avoidance was not enough to keep a daughter and her family safe. In many cases parents sent their daughters’ entire bodies out of the country until their adolescence was over or almost over. For Maruja Alvarez, among many others, this was the case. Maruja was an attractive young girl who often caught the eye of young men in the capital city. The daughter of a successful business owner she was part of a large family of elite Dominicans and attended Colegio Santo Domingo. At the age of fourteen she began to receive invitations to attend parties hosted by a boy her age whose family was “mixed-up” with the Trujillos. The boy was a kind boy, not a predatory member of the Trujillo family at all, but his family affiliations made him dangerous. One night, Maru’s father

took her to a party at a house that was guarded by men with guns. They asked to enter and the guards asked who they were there to meet. Her father gave the name of the boy's family, but the guards said no one of that name lived there and they would not be allowed entrance. Maru described the night as the moment when her father snapped "He just couldn't take it anymore. All this lying and guns and people we didn't know or want to know." Her father ordered Maru back in the car and took her home, angry that his family might be in danger for not attending a party. Over the next few days Maru learned that her father was making arrangements for her to attend a school in Switzerland accompanied by her cousin. Tearfully and with many apologies, her father told her that this was all he could do to keep her and the family safe. Within two weeks, Maru was headed to Switzerland where she would remain for two years, isolated from her family and friends and immersed in a new culture. When she returned, she joined her class at Colegio Santo Domingo, and graduated with them in 1960.[288]

Maru's story stands in some contrast to the others: rather than rejecting beauty, her family rejected Dominican society by removing not her beauty, but her entire presence in the city. By sending her entire body out of the country, the family practiced the clearest rejection of the Trujillo control of the elite. Granted, her situation was the most precarious. Her contact with the boy and his family was far beyond serenades and whispers as she was now being fully courted and by a member

[288] Interview with Maru Alvarez and Myrna Albelo-Bernadino, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 2010.

of a family that posed a great deal of danger to her and her family. Feigning illness or other measures may not have been an option for her family.

The stories stand in some contrast to how other scholars have written about girls resisting parental authority by sneaking out to parties or continuing relationships with boys associated with the Trujillo regime. In Laura Derby's study of politics and popular imagination, she remarks on oral histories of women who had been noticed and protected from Trujillo as both proud of being noticed and afraid of what might have happened if he had succeeded in seducing them.[289] The Colegio oral histories, by contrast, show that the practice of hiding women from predatory or just interested men from the wrong family was a much more extensive practice reaching beyond the President and his many sexual liaisons.

The nuns and the school's curriculum tried to mitigate the dangers of a girl being visible in two ways: keeping girls hidden and scheduled on campus for long hours and by purifying her public presence through bodily training. While parents had the task to keep their daughters safe and sometimes out of sight, the nuns had the task to create an environment where girls were safe, but so safe that they could grow in self-awareness and comfort with their own bodies. Though there is no evidence of a conversation among the staff about how girls should view their bodies, the architecture, curriculum, and teaching methods experienced by the first generation of students reveal a complex environment of safety, exploration, and self-acceptance.

[289] Derby, *The Dictator's Seduction: Politics and Popular Imagination in the Era of Trujillo*., 112.

Sister Mary Philip created a curriculum that complemented the resistance already brewing in elite circles. By teaching girls through bodily practice she advocated a change in their bodies without hiding by nurturing the strongest stuff she knew of, Catholic faith, something only admissible through the body. Most likely unconsciously Sister Mary Philip and other sisters in the faculty saw the site of the female body as the way to teach strength rather than as a defense or sacrifice. Everything in the unofficial curriculum reflected this focus on the body and the strengthening of Catholic identity through bodily practice.

First and foremost, the campus of the school was built at the outskirts of the city at the time, requiring that the city to extend utility lines to include the school. The property was several acres with two main buildings, a chapel, convent, apartments for visiting clergy and an *entremada* for outdoor performances. Long outdoor covered corridors connected the buildings and an *avenida* with a statue of the Virgin Mary and a flagpole stood in the middle of the street. From the entrance gates to the edge of the property the grounds included extensive landscaping including lawn, flowers, and dozens of trees planted at the time of its foundation (and continued by graduating classes as gifts to the school). Isabel Mesa 61' and future principal of the school remarked in an interview at the school that the entire grounds symbolized to her as a child the concept of freedom: freedom of thought, freedom of movement, and freedom to learn. The grounds themselves were a safe place where a girl could find a

book, find a tree and pass an entire afternoon undisturbed.[290] The school grounds made it possible for girls to be outside, but invisible to the street. Via trees, shrubs and a large campus with a large gate at the entrance, girls were safe from prying eyes. While on campus they were quickly ushered into another form of society where a girl was appreciated for her ideas, piety, and willingness to learn, not her sexual appeal to men.

In addition, the school quickly made plans for the building of a pool, to be filled with salt water. Though the oral histories reveal that Sister Mary Philip used the pool often for recreation or even group prayers in the afternoon and evening for the nuns, the school integrated swimming as a part of the curriculum. According to oral histories, the idea of even putting on a bathing suit was somewhat "scandalous" during the 1950's in the D.R. But the nuns promoted the swimming physical education classes as part of a well-rounded curriculum and nothing out of the ordinary at all.

Similarly, the nuns began a practice of offering ballet classes after school, hosted by the school to raise additional funds and encourage extracurricular activities for girls in a safe environment. Wearing leotards, like bathing suits, was similarly scandalous. Isabel Mesa remembers more than a few eyebrows raised when they heard what the nuns were offering.[291] Swimming and dance were also part of a larger

[290] Interview with Isabel Mesa, Class of 1961, Santo Domingo, October 9, 2010.
[291] Interview with Isabel Mesa, Class of 1961, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, October 9, 2010.

program of athletics at the school. For later classes, in the 1960's, the nuns even designated an entire day for the pursuit of athletic endeavors including vaulting on a stationary vaulting horse, relay races, and basketball. Girls from the Dominican Republic remember the thrill of participating in sports, something that was entirely new to them. However one student, an American whose father ran a hotel in the city, Bliss Sutherland, remembered there being minimal athletic opportunities. "The girls were not particularly interested." which was a disappointment to an athletic child with a great desire to engage in all sports-related activities.[292] However small, the athleticism offered by the nuns was far more than what was offered at other schools for girls on the island.

But the Sisters could not keep the girls out of the public eye completely. Trujillo made multiple demands on the school to take part in "civic reviews" and parades that he enacted often to consolidate or show off his control. Every major institution in the country had to report to the civic review and present themselves and their commitment to Trujillo. According to Derby, Trujillo's regime demanded participation in regular "rites of deference and adulation." Parades to show loyalty to Trujillo:

> became part of a political economy of discourse, one which enabled minions to garner symbolic credit with the dictator, while satisfying Trujillo's need to accumulate the symbolic capital he lacked due to his ruffian background.[293]

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[292] Phone interview with Bliss Sutherland, November 2010.
[293] Derby, *The Dictator's Seduction: Politics and Popular Imagination in the Era of Trujillo*., 5.

The "grandiose state procession" therefore became an important moment in which the Colegio Santo Domingo made a public appearance and announced its allegiance to Trujillo. Avoidance was not an option for the Sisters in these cases. An invitation to participate in a "civic review" could not be refused "since failure to comply with the myriad rites of political participation could be met with economic pressure or even death[.]"[294]

Therefore, when an invitation to participate in a "civic review" came, Sister Mary Philip's decision to accept and shape the procession carried considerable weight. Sister Mary Philip would have had all the authority to decide what sort of presentation they would make and could have chosen a variety of formats. She chose a presentation as much like the voice choir of the novitiate as she could, but rather than reciting "Lepanto," the girls embodied the "soldiers of God" in the poem. With inspiration from military parades, Sister Mary Philip formed the girls into squadrons and taught them to march in complete unison with one another under Dominican and American flags. Like the novices' memories of voice choir, many former students remembered the all-school activity to prepare for the reviews exhausting and confidence building at the same time. Sister Mary Philip required the girls to march with their faces staring straight ahead in a serious expression of complete concentration. During long practice sessions the girls marched across the athletic field repeatedly until Sister Mary Philip approved. It took weeks to master and many girls

[294] Ibid., 5-6.

remembered the long hours with weariness. Last Sister Mary Philip instructed them to turn and look at the General in unison, as soldiers did in American processions, expressing solid, serious faces. "We practiced over and over again not to smile, not to show pain, not to move our torsos." Many students remembered Sister Mary Philip saying to think only of their commitment to God and show that commitment in their marching.[295] When they marched in the parade the former students remembered that they stood out for their discipline and unison. "We were the best!" One former student remembered proudly.

Sister Mary Philip's choice to organize the girls to participate in total unison in a military style subverted the normal place for women in public space of Ciudad Trujillo. According to the oral histories of former students, women's bodies during the Trujillo regime were only for sexual imagination when on display. Laura Derby theorizes the use of women's bodies as vessels to communicate Trujillo's power as well as acquire or renew power. In public displays he used his daughters and lovers, not to engender loathing of women, as is argued by some historians of other regimes, but to continue the Trujillo "mythmaking" of sexual exploits and absolute power. For the Trujillo regime "[r]omantic conquest, then, became a means of both subjugating the bourgeoisie and entering their ranks."[296] Sister Mary Philip's behavior rejects both ideas of women's bodies in public by placing the girls of the Colegio into the

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[295]. Interviews with the Classes of 1957, 58, 59.
[296] Derby, *The Dictator's Seduction: Politics and Popular Imagination in the Era of Trujillo*, 115 with a footnote to Sherry Ortner's work in *Sexual Meanings.*

role of Cold War subjects--self-disciplined, religious, and militaristic. The serious expressions, military marching, and guidance to think of their commitment to God were meant to give the impression of a disciplined force that was autonomous. There was nothing about them that was dependent on Trujillo or individually identifiable for his "consumption." By participating in the march, the girls learned that it was possible to be seen publicly by Trujillo without getting into trouble, something all of them feared. Only by sticking together and behaving as one unit guided by a devotional mindset the girls were one force and "soldiers of God."

The process of making the girls safe as one unit itself was potentially subversive, as Sister Mary Philip taught them to be safe not only in numbers, but in mindset. Just as Mother Gerald and Sister Mary Philip had taught the nuns to discipline their bodies to receive God and resist temptation, Sister Mary Philip applied the same principle, with a military flair, to protect the Colegio girls from Trujillo and defend the Colegio itself. One interpretation of the squadrons of girls could be its clear representation of the American military subjugating Colegio girls as an extension of their power. But armies can be conquerors as well as conquered.[297] Just as the voice choir and the novitiate subdued the individual to serve the larger Church, so the girls marched as one, an autonomous fighting force removed from Trujillo's ranks and ruled by another commander.

All of this is not to say that the sisters did not also look at girls' bodies outside

[297] "Conquerors as well as conquered" was the idea of Marilyn J. Westerkamp in conversation on July 7, 2013, Santa Cruz, California.

of their context in a male-dominated society with specific ideas about race. In preparing for the opening of the school Sister Mary Philip and Mother Gerald went back and forth for months regarding what color and style the uniforms would be. Embroiled in the conversation were assumptions on both sides of the water about class, race and femininity. Among other decisions in décor and curriculum was the choice of what the girls would be required to wear to school each day. The choice of uniforms would be both practical as well as a public advertisement for the school that would affect the future of enrollment. Sister Mary Philip's first experience with the racial vision of the Dominican Republic was just a month after her arrival when she remarked in handwritten notes at the end of a letter that "Jupiter maintains that all are white here!"[298] Her incredulous tone speaks to Sister Mary Philip's own concept of race as quite different from that of the President as well as her first introduction to the mandate that all be considered "white" even if they do not appear white to the sensibilities of a Chicago Irish-Catholic. It is a moment of dissonance between Sister Mary Philip's concept of white and the prevailing racial vision of the Dominican Republic as a "white nation." Understanding this racial vision played prominently into the choice for a uniform.

Sister Mary Philip first concerned herself with not making the girls appear any darker. In one of her first openers in what would become a months long conversation

[298] Mary Philip Ryan, OP, "Correspondence Colegio Santo Domingo," in *Series 3A, BOX 3* (Adrian, Michigan: Adrian Dominican Sisters Archives, 1946-54), Sister Mary Philip to Mother Gerald, Nov. 18, 1945, DSC6580.

with Mother Gerald she offered: "You could not use for the dark complexion the blue that we have here, but you could decide on another color that would not soil too easily."[299] Just a few weeks later she re-states her concern more pointedly: " We hate to choose any color but blue, and yet we sometimes fear that it will fade and make these kids look darker than ever-thugh [sic] to tell the truth most of those who will come to us are white or at least light olive complexioned. What do you think about the color, Mother?"[300] For Mary Philip, not the President, not Mother Gerald, the girls not appearing dark-skinned was a foremost concern. Four months later, by March of 1946, the color settled on as far as Mother Gerald was concerned was pink.[301] But in a letter written on the same day Sister Mary Philip rejected pink as the color electing for blue instead.[302] It seemed that Mother Gerald accepted Sister Mary Philip's rejection of blue, while Sister Mary Philip had re-considered her rejection at some point in the interim. Sister Mary Philip then flipped her point of view and argued for a pink uniform using the following argument to Mother Gerald: "American women whose advice we have asked recommend the rose. We have three reasons for using it: Our Lady of the Rosary, the Mystical Rose and St. Rose of Lima. The practical reason of course is for the complexions."[303] Her argument is a great example of Catholic identity used in place of white supremacy. She spews Catholic referents for

[299] Ibid., Mother Gerald to Sister Mary Philip, Nov. 22, 45 Thanksgiving Day. DSC6572.
[300] Ibid., Sister Mary Philip to Mother Gerald, Feb. 13, 1946, DSC6488-89.
[301] Ibid., Mother Gerald to Sister Mary Philip, March 9, 1947, DSC6467-68.
[302] Ibid., Sister Mary Philip to Mother Gerald, March 9, 1947, DSC6465-66.
[303] Ibid., Sister Mary Philip to Mother Gerald, March 19, 1946, DSC6449-6452.

using the color when really race trumps all of her justifications.

Before the blue and pink decision came to an end, a new color surfaced with racial and class status symbolism. Sister Mary Philip and Mother Gerald assumed that they would have a Sunday uniform or formal chapel wear in white. White was the color for the novices as well as the color of the habits of the Adrians and would be well-regarded by both Mother Gerald and Sister Mary Philip, but the idea met with some resistance on racial and class grounds by Dominicans, not Americans:

> Beanie arrived as well as possible uniform patterns. They like the blue and pink patterns but not the white as it looks too much like the uniform (sic) worn by colored nurse maids here. Thus far the Dominican women seeing it are a little taken back. They are accustomed to something like silk, mind you, for the Sunday or formal uniforme (sic).[304]

Now Sister Mary Philip concerned herself with the ideas of Dominican women and rejected the white uniform so as not to conflict with the uniforms of house servants in the homes of their students. The whole exchange reveals the pressures and different camps that Sister Mary Philip felt she had to consult in making a culturally-sensitive decision. She knew the uniform choice was extremely important - a public act of identifying girls and even families. She needed to tend to the racial hierarchies of both nations agreeing to pink for the Americans and not white for the Dominicans, but for different cultural references of color and class. The end of the debate is a practical one with Mother Gerald insisting that whichever color is fine with her, but to please make up her mind so that the Sisters can order the fabric to be shipped from

[304] Ibid., Sister Mary Philip to Mother Gerald, May 3, 1946 DSC6444.

the U.S. Furthermore she complains to Sister Mary Philip "We are constantly crossing one another and blathering about the same things."[305] In the end, Colegio girls wore blue jumpers and white shirts with a blue beanie for Mass.

As the Novice Mistress during the thirties and forties, Sister Mary Philip had a distinct and intimate understanding of how to teach a young woman to be strong in herself as well as unboundaried in a group. Taking the training in the novitiate as a template, Sister Mary Philip taught Colegio Girls a form of Catholic observance and piety that both protected them from evils as well as imbued them with a willful piety. In the face of the dangers of the Trujillo regime, just like in the face of the influence of a corrupting world, Sister Mary Philip taught girls that their bodies were a source of protection if trained properly and hidden from the wrong eyes. In the novitiate, Catholic religious life was taught as a flexible paradox of living in the world, but not existing as part of it. At the Colegio, a similar paradox was at work. The girls learned that there was a way of believing, acting, and seeing that was possible outside the demands and dangers of the Trujillo era. Through the disciplining of the body to receive God's protection, God's love and a Catholic identity that superseded all other allegiances, Sister Mary Philip and the staff at the Colegio taught the girls to survive their present moment while gaining confidence and skills to serve an imagined future without paradoxes.

The nuns arrived in the middle of power struggle over Trujillo's place in the

[305] Ibid., Mother Gerald to Sister Mary Philip, April 1, 1946, DSC6453.

elite and his power over them as an interloper. Trujillo demanded access to the elite circles while the elites rejected him as a true member, but feared repercussion. Within a year of her arrival Sister Mary Philip saw that Trujillo's hold on power was tenuous and could not possibly last. She knew that she had to prepare girls for a life they could not practice now, but would have to understand soon in the aftermath of a dictator. While parents changed girls' bodies by forcing them out of feminine ideals of beauty in a variety of ways, nuns took a different tack. Using the same practices from the novitiate, Sister Mary Philip constructed a school to keep girls out of sight to encourage them to develop themselves as individuals valued for their intellect and healthy bodies. At the same time she taught them skills to protect themselves in public by disciplining their bodies to work in unison, making one unit and erasing the individual so that all girls could be safe. As in the novitiate, Sister Mary Philip trained the girls to exist in two worlds using bodily practice to strengthen faith and faith to protect them from the evils of the world ultimately to inspire a new vision of their surroundings.

Conclusion

In October 2010 I rode in a car driven by a "colegio girl" from the fifties across the city of Santo Domingo. The traffic was thick with cars, buses, illegal and legal taxis, bicycles, and motorcycles. Everywhere were schools, houses, businesses, telephone wires, and private security. Large groups of people walked down the streets past fruit stands and gathered groups under umbrellas to keep out of the heat. Music blasted from inside cafes and from open apartment windows. I supposed that we were in the center of the city.

"There's the school." My host said in Spanish, pointing out the window to a large iron-gated property between large buildings on either side.

"That's the Colegio?" I responded. Having only known the school in letters and photographs that are now nearly seventy years old, I supposed that the school would be almost rural, on the border between the city and the forest or countryside, as it was at its founding.

My host turned a quick left into the main entrance of the school onto the main road through the center of the campus. The chapel, the administration building, the dormitory, the statue of Mary, and the covered walkways all looked recognizable from their pictures. The small trees now towered making a canopy of shade over the main buildings. A few large lawns had been paved over to make way for extensive

basketball courts. The *entremada* was now host to carpentry supplies. The pool still existed in the same place, but was remodeled. A co-educational Catholic college, run by the local diocese, now made its home next door. Humberto Ruiz Castillo's home that he constructed next door to the campus was still visible through the trees, though no one in the family lived there anymore. Houses encircled the campus at every edge except entrance on the street. Colegio Santo Domingo had been absorbed into the burgeoning city where it had started at the margins. By 2010, Colegio Santo Domingo was a large, Catholic high school for girls as well as boys, and owned by the Diocese of Santo Domingo. The legacy of the U.S. nuns seemed far away.

At the interviews I conducted, one of the questions the interviewees always asked was "Why did the nuns leave?" The answer is complicated. Sister Mary Philip left in 1956, re-assigned to start a new girls preparatory school in Detroit. The Adrians already ran one preparatory school in the city, but wanted to start another on a different side of the city. Sister Mary Philip left the island with mixed feelings about returning to the U.S. before seeing the end of Trujillo's rule, but Mother Gerald wanted an experienced founding principal to create what would become Rosary High School. Sister Mary Philip founded, staffed, and built Rosary, spent some time teaching at Siena Heights College in Adrian and finally left again to start a new order of Dominicans in the Philippines, along with the founding of another preparatory school, this time coeducational.

Colegio Santo Domingo continued to offer its curriculum, both official and unofficial, through the 1950's and 60's through the most turbulent years of the Trujillato. They also continued to expand, starting with an elementary school program in the mountains in Las Matas de Farfan focusing on poorer children and families in more rural areas.[306] When Trujillo began to lose his grip on power, the Adrians stayed alive and continued the school despite political upheaval and violence in the country.[307]

The school offered countless scholarships to Colegio girls to study in the United States and continued to attract vocations to join the Congregation. Among the vocations were the youngest two daughters of the architect, Humberto Ruiz Castillo. Teresita and Margot, grew up next door to the school and started in the first year the school opened its doors. By their early twenties they were professed Sisters and remain the in Congregation today.[308]

The decision to sell the Colegio was a practical one. After the large changes in the American Catholic Church following Vatican II, the number of women entering religious orders slowed to a trickle and even stopped in some communities. The Adrians were no different. At its height, the Adrian Dominican Sisters had more than 1500 women in its Congregation, but by the 1970's very few women were entering

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[306] Interview with Sr. Madeline Dervin, May 11, 2010, Santa Cruz, California.
[307] Ibid., and Interview with anonymous Adrian Dominican Sister, May 20, 2010, Santa Cruz, California.
[308] Interview with Sr. Margarita Ruiz, October 10, 2010, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

and many were leaving. There was no way for the Congregation to continue to staff all its schools and missions worldwide. And so the Congregation was forced to make a decision. The decision they made was based on the assumption that with Trujillo gone, those in the Dominican Republic that needed their help the most were the poor. If they could "stand in solidarity with the poor" they could help initiate a true revolution in the island's society. The Sisters sold the school for $1 to the diocese and focused their efforts on the most disadvantaged in Dominican society.[309] The Adrians are still on the island, now dressed in simple clothing rather than habits, founding schools, job training programs, and funding scholarships for young adults to attend college. The quickest answer to the question is that the nuns never left, but their numbers are fewer and they no longer educate the daughters of the elites.[310]

The nuns that the Colegio Girls knew best and recognized did leave. Some left the Congregation altogether. Others went on to teach at other high schools, colleges, or start new careers in new areas of missionary service. The legacy of the nuns does not exist in the school itself, but in the lives of the girls they taught who grew up to enact their educations in a new Dominican Republic. Among the graduates are successful business owners, translators, civil servants, and educators. The most popular private preparatory schools in the city were founded and directed by Colegio

[309] Interview with anonymous Adrian Dominican Sister, May 20, 2010, Santa Cruz, California.
[310] Ibid.

graduates. In their curriculums, with an emphasis on the arts, religious instruction, athletics, and language learning, Colegio Santo Domingo continues.

For those graduates who became mothers and aunts, their time at the Colegio influenced their parenting. They emphasized service to others and living more simply. Many graduates lamented not sending their children to the same school they went to, but knew that the school was no longer the same. Many wanted their children to receive college educations from the sisters at some point in their lives via Barry College or Siena Heights. Many married after finishing their college degrees giving primacy to their educations rather than their marital status.

Mother Gerald died in 1961. Within ten years the Adrians no longer elected a Mother General, but rather a Prioress along with a Leadership Council that served an elected term. The community changed through a long process of open dialogue where many women left to live outside religious life or inside other communities. Those that stayed entered a turbulent era of immense change. When I asked one retired Sister what it was like when the changes began she replied "It was awful! All my friends left!" When I asked her what it is like now she softened "It is absolutely wonderful." I remarked that to go through such a difficult time and heal from it must have taken a tremendous amount of effort. "It was all worth it. We did it right and we're better than ever."[311]

[311] Informal conversation with an anonymous sister, August 2009, Adrian Dominican Sisters' Motherhouse, Adrian, Michigan.

Their former students and colleagues still remember the nuns with tremendous love and loyalty. When I met the ninety-two year old Doña Herminia she held both my hands and told me to tell the Sisters that she loves them and thinks of them daily. "I owe them my life," she said. Former students credited the nuns with the complexity of their inner lives, their deep faith, a challenging and satisfying career. Many wanted to know the fates of their teachers and mourned to hear of losses in the Congregation. I sent a picture of the graveyard at the Motherhouse to show one graduate the gravesite of one of her beloved teachers. At interviews I showed recent pictures of their teachers, now artists, social workers, counselors, and retired educators. Out of the habits former students could recognize their teachers only by their eyes.

When the Vatican released a full-scale investigation of U.S. Sisters, the Adrians were among those investigated. A fellow sister from a neighboring community visited the Congregation motherhouse as an "inquisitor" for the Vatican. The community took great care in trying to decide what kind of a statement or lack of statement they would make about the investigation and welcomed the "inquisitor" with hospitality indicative of Dominican communities worldwide. They are still in the process of responding with some members asking for a break with the Vatican until the leadership "comes around" to the core Catholic values of service to the poor and others. Other Sisters believe that to lose the support of the Vatican would be to lose the community and hope for reconciliation. The community continues to walk the line

between church hierarchy and the Congregation's commitment to preach the gospel of Jesus.

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