To my mom and sisters, my life has meaning because of you. And for you daddy - no hay palabras for what you meant to me. Thank you for loving me and showing me the ways of this life. Thank you for making me think and reflect. Thank you for being lo máximo and reminding me of who I was, who I could be, and who I am. Thank you for raising, but more importantly, supporting me, as a peruana. Thinking of you always. Te adoro.
I'm still not OK with it. How is my fluency supposed to get better if I can't practice with fellow Peruvians?

I am Peruvian. But I don't look it.

I'm grateful I can speak and understand Spanish, so why can't I speak it in el Mercado Indio?

Is it what I look like? What sound like? What I come off as?

I'm waiting for the day I walk in to the tiendita and I get the look from my tía that I can speak on my own.

I think that will be the day that I. ¿Cómo se dice? I will have made it as a peruana.

"It's hard because, and I always mention these women. They're amazing women I admire them, I really do. But it's unfortunate that when you talk about Latinos, you talk about Jennifer Lopez, Shakira, Sofia Vergara, Thalia. You talk about these women that look a certain type of way but you never mention women that look like myself. And there isn't a Latin country where you don't have Afro-Latinos-Colombia, Venezuela, Chile, Honduras. It doesn't matter where you go there's Black people. But why aren't we portrayed in the magazines? Why aren't we in movies? Why aren't we in novelas or soap operas? What's wrong with me? Why can't I represent what a Latina woman should look like?... They make it seem like we don't exist." - Amara La Negra on the lack of Afro-Latinx media representation on The Real talk show
Non-black Latinxs are anti-black. It’s been proven over and over again. Saying things like, “At least we work” or “we don’t pull the race card” is literally ignorant and racist. And of course you can’t pull the race card when YOU’RE A WHITE LATINX. YOU’VE GOT PRIVILEEEEGEEEEEE

I just had a professor say “this is why we don’t study Central America” when talking about Garifuna people since their history is so “complicated” lol. Shouldn’t that be more of a reason to study the complex history of CA? Lol I hate davis

if you’re brown but fair skinned, you have an equal responsibility to tackle colourism in our families. don’t accept compliments on how pale you are. defend people with darker skin. reject any idea that paler skin is better.

There will never be unity in the Latinx community until white and white passing Latinxs recognize and fight against anti-blackness and colorism and anti-indigenous racism within our communities.
"Hold on. Afro-Latina? Elaborate. Are you African or is that just because you have an Afro?" - Young Hollywood

On the TV show Love & Hip Hop: Miami, Puerto Rican music producer Young Hollywood talked with Amara La Negra about a possible collaboration. Before any producing started, Hollywood first wanted to change Amara’s image because he didn’t think “afros can be elegant.” Amara immediately called him out, at one point saying, “I’m proud of my color, of the way my hair curls, and because I’m dark skinned that doesn’t make me any less Latina,” while Hollywood’s ignorance fueled all of his comments, including “you’re just so intense about this whole African thing,” while mockingly raising his fist. This conversation between Young Hollywood and Amara La Negra is a prime example of why there needs to a greater conversation about representation of Afro & Indio-Latinxs in media and society. Hollywood’s comments are all rooted in Eurocentric forms of beauty that have infiltrated the Latino community, which Amara is avidly against.

"I want to be Amara La Negra.

"I didn’t feel like I had to make a choice. I am both. And you should be proud to be both and not be embarrassed or ashamed of it. There’s nothing to be ashamed of." —Loz Alonso

"I’m Cuban but [people] didn’t get it because I was also brown-skinned, and you usually see a fair-skinned Latino. So it was just like, ‘Oh, what are you? Are you black? Are you white? I didn’t feel like I had to make a choice. I am what I am.’ —Christine Hilson

"I couldn’t get an audition as a Latina. People didn’t know what that was, they just said, ‘Well our vision of a Latina looks more Mexican, or Central American, or Spanish.’ And that was an interesting journey I had to take and something that I had to struggle with initially." —Loz Alonso

"I would get really positive reactions at auditions for both African-American and Latinx parts. But, I didn’t look Latino enough because of the curly hair, and the freckles, and the nose and all that stuff." —Audrey Hepburn

"When I became an actress I quickly realized that ‘the world’ liked their Latinas to look Italian, and not like me." —Gili Torres

"I’m a black woman. I am. Culturally, I would say African-American culture is different. I would say I’m more Afro-Caribbean. My heritage, with my culture, who I am....I’m not going to choose. I am both." —Tayana AD

"You’re not one or the other. You’re both. And you should be proud to be both and not be embarrassed or ashamed of it. There’s nothing to be ashamed of." —Loz Alonso
"I think that anybody who watches Univision regularly ... will notice the white, white space that station historically has been," she says. "You're not going to see Indo-Latinos, you're not going to see Afro-Latinos." In fact, she says, the Univision landscape is often whiter than mainstream U.S. television." - Arlene Dávila, professor of anthropology and American studies at NYU.

Novelas are so white because of a lil' something called colorism.

I'm grateful to not only my family, but my fellow peers at Willamette, for keeping me in check, and reminding me about the privileges I hold as a white-passing Latina. I am a proud Peruvian and there are moments where I feel like I am so Peruvian but then there are those other moments where I feel like I'm not Latina enough. Latinxs are part of such a diverse community, that we all look, talk, and celebrate culture differently. Because I'm white, I navigate certain spaces in distinct ways, BUT, IT DOES NOT MEAN I AM NOT LATINA.
Colorism has always been around so WHY NOW??

I embrace my LATINA & my BLACKNESS.

Colorism is so embedded in the Latinx community, a concept easily visible when it comes to those who identify as Afro-Latinx. A significant contributor as to why so many Latinx individuals are colorist is because of popular Latino representation in mainstream media. These popular forms of media highlight what we fail to realize: Latino representation, whether it be in movies, social media, or other entertainment industries, overwhelmingly adheres to Eurocentric standards of beauty and being. The representation of Afro-Latinxs more often than not centers them as the help, or needing the help. Afro-Latinxs are not given the space, nor the types of opportunities to represent Latinidad because of their skin color. Colonialism enhanced and provided the pathway for el blanqueamiento, or whitening, a concept embedded in Latinx culture because of the inherent biases and racist ideologies against Black people. Because of the lack of Afro-Latinx representation, to be Black and Latino isn't a connection many understand, or worse, want to understand.

The Amara La Negra v. Young Hollywood controversy is so important because she has used that moment to start a larger conversation in pop culture on colorism in the Latinx community.

Negro: A docu-series about Latino Identity

This docu-series employs many professors, historians, and Afro-Latinx individuals in the city. Their interviews and experiences embody catharsis.

"People don't realize the blackness of Argentina, the blackness of Peru, the blackness of Bolivia, the blackness of Ecuador, the blackness of Venezuela, the blackness of Panama..." - Giovanni

"People in America, in the U.S., do not know there are about the 150 million Afro-Latinos, but Latinos do not know that either." - Giovanni

"Being Latino is complex...the census and check boxing things doesn't account for those complexities." - Betty

All of these candid testimonios help unpack and remind us that blackness is present in Latin America. The census offers many Afro-Latinos limited options in expressing their identities, causing internal and external issues.
Obatala, the Afro-Mexican dance group: Keeping their roots alive

AFRO-MEXICAN PRIDE

"Seguimos bailando porque intentamos dar a conocer nuestra cultura...y así, consolidar nuestra cultura-consolidar nuestra propia identidad, como pueblo negro." - Anai Herrera

"Que nosotros estamos orgullosos de ser negros y que también los transmitamos." - Anai Herrera

The women that make up Obatala are proud Afro-Mexicans who are dedicated to learning and performing dances with deep rooted connections to their heritage. The Obatala have recognized and made sure the dances they've chosen to learn and perform represent their African heritage.

I think the Obatala, whether or not their intentions are, their determination to learn and perform, include younger generations in their dances indicate their resistance against systems meant to shut them out.

"Latino Vernacular Discourse (LVD), which concerns public discourse in visual, verbal, written, or performative forms produced from within Latinx communities advances epistemological claims about embodied acts of identity and culture." (Holling and Calatell 18).

WHAT IS AN AFRO LATINO?

Monica Veloz, aka MonicaStyle Muse, is a first generation Dominican, and popular lifestyle/beauty vlogger on Youtube. Since her start, she has never strayed away from the topic of colorism within society and the beauty industry. She discusses her struggle with her Afro-Latina identity and how she can be Black AND Latina, that there is absolutely no reason to choose one or the other. Veloz is unapologetic and dedicated to empowering her fellow Afro-Latinos.

Veloz uses her Youtube videos to talk about the anti-blackness in the beauty industry in relation to makeup products but also touches on colorism on the entire spectrum-for Afro-Latinos and white passing Latinos. She demands inclusivity and awareness of what Latinidad embodies.

MONICA VELOZ
BEAUTY VLOGGER

We know colorism exists. Let's shine light into this
Sticking to the Eurocentric standards I see

It is so problematic that society operates and progresses through a white-racial framework, which automatically eliminates space for those that don't conform to Eurocentric beauty labels.

Meet Rocio, Fatima, and Pablo—three Afro-Latinx activists!
Hear Monica Veloz speak on embracing her identity as an Afro-Latina!

Learn more about the space whiteness takes up in telenovelas!
Watch Amara La Negra talk about colorism and why it needs to be discussed.