In colonial Mexico, the miscegenation of indigenous, African, and European populations resulted in a plethora of diverse genetic mixings that challenged racial and ethnic purity and disrupted social stability. The visual arts played a critical role in illustrating to contemporary viewers how to understand race scientifically and culturally. In turn, they also fostered racial stereotypes that proliferated into the nineteenth century. These stereotypes can be seen most readily in secular paintings, such as the casta and costumbrista genres, where depictions of everyday people and their daily lives were the primary subject matter. This chapter will explore the resonances between eighteenth-century casta and nineteenth-century costumbrista imagery. In the same way that a string on a musical instrument will begin to vibrate, or ‘resonate,’ when a string tuned to the same frequency upon another instrument is played, there exist important indirect resonances beyond the direct interactions between these two genres. Both the direct interactions and indirect resonances capture the visibility and invisibility of race and miscegenation. I will examine the racialized social spaces, that is, spatial representations of racial and social relationships, in eighteenth-century casta and nineteenth-century costumbrista painting. We can find, from casta to costumbrista paintings, a continuity of aesthetic and stylistic conventions as well as underlying preoccupations with socio-racial and socio-familial relationships, a subject that has largely gone unexamined thus far in scholarship of Mexican visual culture.2

1 A mixture of races. The term was coined in 1864 and comes from the Latin words miscere (to mix) and genus (race). See David G. Croly, Miscegenation: The Theory of the Blending of the Races (New York: H. Dexter, Hamilton & Co., 1864), ii.

2 Previous versions of this research have been presented at the 2013 College Art Association panel, “Representing “Race” in Iberia and the Ibero-American World,” (2/14/13) and Bryn Mawr College’s Visual Culture Colloquium (3/19/14). I would like to thank my audiences for their attendance and their thoughtful comments and questions that have contributed to the development of this research. Additional acknowledgement is due to Marie Gaspar-Hulvat, who has given critical edits and suggestions to improve this project. Lastly, I would like to
Terminology and Typecasting

To begin, I want to say a word about terminology. The word *casta* will be used in two ways. First, as a noun of Iberian origin, *casta* signifies ‘lineage’ or ‘breed.’ In colonial Spanish America, *casta* referred to the various mixed races that had appeared in the post-Conquest period. For example, *castas* include *mestizo* (a person of Spanish and Indian parentage), *mulatto* (a person of Spanish and Black parentage), *castizo* (a person of Spanish and *mestizo* parentage), and *morisco* (a person of Spanish and *mulatto* parentage) to name a few of the most common. More unusual names, such as *lobo, barcino, or capamulato*, were used to label mixes between Indians and Africans, though they did not consistently mark the same racial mixes. Second, as an adjective, as in *casta* painting, the term refers to the unique genre of painting that represented families of various racial mixes (*castas*).

In the mid eighteenth-century in Mexico, *casta* painting, which portrayed racially mixed families in a hierarchical manner on a series of canvases, became popular, evident in the multiple series produced of this genre during this period. Typically represented were a father and mother of different races (Spanish, Indian, or Black, or some combination thereof) and one to two of their mixed-race offspring. Twelve to sixteen panels often comprised a *casta* series with the most pure, that is, the ‘whitest’ races, occupying the top category that initiated the series. Attention was placed on the physical appearance, clothing, attributes, and settings of the families to locate them on the social hierarchical ladder. For example, the individuals in the beginning of a series are typically well-dressed, many wearing fashionable European styles. As one moves further down the series, clothing becomes more simple, loose-fitting, and even tattered, with the last panel, often of unconverted Indians, depicted

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3 To cite one example, in Miguel Cabrera’s 1763 *casta* series, the 9th panel produces a *China Cambujo* from Black and Indian parents, while in Andrés de Islas’ 1774 *casta* series, the 8th panel produces a Wolf (*Lobo*) from Black and Indian parents. There are numerous inconsistencies in the nomenclature that at once demonstrate the inadequacies of such a system as well as the pervasive desire to classify and control miscegenation and its perceived social and racial instability. For more on *casta* terminology, see Manuel Alvar, *Léxico del Mestizaje en Hispanoamérica* (Madrid: Ediciones Cultura Hispánica, 1987).