NOTES

Preface

12. Some of these migrations are forced, some are voluntary, and some writers take on the challenge of circular migrations between the homeland and Spain.


**Introduction**


9. While I use the term “diaspora” throughout this book, I am aware that some of these writers and artists are indeed living in exile. Rather than repeatedly using both terms, I have chosen to use “diaspora” in order to underscore the ways that the status of migration changes for individuals and across generations. Marvin Lewis writes: “In the diasporic and transnational realities of artists, some migrations are ‘voluntary’ while others are ‘forced’ due to the political, social, and economic situations in Equatorial Guinea. Their transnational experiences are often determined by national forces such as dictatorship and repression over which they have no control. Creative writers interpret their realities within the contexts of exile, post-colonialism, place and displacement, as well as other causes for trans-border activities.” Lewis, *Equatorial Guinean Literature*, 7.


15. Samantha Pinto, *Difficult Diasporas: The Transnational Feminist Aesthetic of the Black Atlantic* (New York: NYU Press, 2013). For Pinto, difficult diasporas are “the aesthetic and critical terrains that imagine the feminist potential for occupying diaspora’s very form itself, the transgressive and often unexpected
loops of circulation that cannot easily be traced to fixed points of origin and return” (3–4).


17. Silvia Torres-Saillant, *Caribbean Poetics: Toward an Aesthetic of West Indian Literature*, 2nd ed. (Leeds, Eng.: Peepal Tree, 2013); Silvio Torres-Saillant and Ramona Hernández, *The Dominican Americans (The New Americans)* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1998). Peripheral is an important concept that emerges in the Latino studies context with Torres-Saillant and Hernández’s work, which aptly notes that Dominicans represent the periphery of the margins; that is, if Latinos are marginal, then the vastly understudied Dominicans and Dominican-Yorks are on the periphery of that margin.


21. For more on “la gran familia” and its limits, see Moreno, *Family Matters*.


25. Laó-Montes, “Afro-Latinidades,” 120. Laó-Montes also contends that “in so far as Afro-Latinidades are marginalized from hegemonic narratives of African-ness, Blackness, Latinidad, and Hispanicity, and therefore from their corresponding world-regional (Black Atlantic, Latin America, African-America, Afro-Caribbean) and national ideologies of identity (racial, ethnic), Afro-Latina/o, as a subalternized diasporic form of difference, should be transformed into a critical category to deconstruct and redefine all of the above cartographies of self, culture, and power” (119).

26. See the work of Joanna Boampong and Dorothy Odartey-Wellington for some of these works, in the special issue on “Global Hispanophone” of the *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies* 20, no. 1–2 (May 2019).


39. Frantz Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks (New York: Grove, 1952), 89.
45. One recent example is the organizing work of Colectivo Ilé around the 2020 census in Puerto Rico and their consciousness raising work to encourage folks to self-identify as “Afroboricua” or “Afrodescendiente.”
49. Sipi Mayo, Inmigración y género, 22.


54. Lewis, *Equatorial Guinean Literature*, 8. While these perspectives vary within Equatorial Guinea, it is important to note how colonial impositions aided in fracturing peoples across difference. We see here a fundamental violence and indifference in the ways that colonial empires carved out colonies in African territories with no knowledge or interest in existing kinship ties, community territories or needs, clan links and practices, or Indigenous spatiality.

55. Donato Ndongo-Bidyogo, interview with the author, Madrid, Spain, July 2016.


61. Lorde, “Age, Race, Class, and Sex,” 118.


64. When I am talking about relations beyond the human, I am referring to our ethical interdependence with nonhuman animals, ecology, and the environment—cosmologies that include the presence of ancestors, and other forms of relations that are beyond the scope of colonial logics. For more on the colonial difference, see Walter D. Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2012).

66. Maldonado-Torres, “The Decolonial Turn,” 120.


68. Maldonado-Torres, “The Decolonial Turn,” 112.


70. Flores, From Bomba to Hip-Hop, 42.


76. For more on the United States as an extension of the Caribbean, see Yolanda Martínez-San Miguel, Coloniality of Diasporas: Rethinking Intra-Colonial Migrations in a Pan-Caribbean Context (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).


79. Rebecca Solnit and Joshua Jelly-Schapiro, Nonstop Metropolis: A New York City Atlas (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016), 84.

80. McKittrick, Demonic Grounds, xiii.


92. Maldonado-Torres, “Reconciliation as a Contested Future.”


99. Wynter, “Unsettling the Coloniality.”

Chapter 1


1. Interview with the dramaturge, January 2014, Malabo, Bioko, Equatorial Guinea.


8. These works subvert silencing power structures in myriad ways. In some cases, they do so by creating satires that reveal the absurdities of corruption. An excellent example is Ramón Esono Ebalé’s *La pesadilla de Obi*, a graphic novel that satirizes the dictatorship under the premise that Obiang’s greatest nightmare is to be an everyday Guinean. Ebono was imprisoned for this comic from 2017 to 2018. Ramón Esono Ebalé, *La pesadilla de Obi* (Washington, D.C.: EG Justice, 2015).


10. Nadia Celis Salgado, *La rebelión de las niñas: El Caribe y la ‘conciencia corporal’* (Madrid: Iberoamericana, 2015). She says, “Mi conceptualización de la ‘conciencia corporal’ se adhiere al esfuerzo . . . por crear un corpus de conceptos propios para refuter la arraigada cultural machista y legitimar los sabers feminism en la region” (29; “My conceptualization of the ‘corporeal consciousness’ adheres to the effort . . . to create a corpus of own concepts to refute the deeply rooted macho culture and legitimize the feminist knowledge in the region”). Jessica Marie Johnson, *Wicked Flesh: Black Women, Intimacy, and Freedom in the Atlantic World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020). Johnson writes: “Using black femme in the context of women of African descent’s practices of freedom in the eighteenth century surfaces foundational strains of this resistive femininity and intimacy between women. In a setting where assault and rape, brandings and burnings, and broken limbs and dismemberment awaited black women who refused to submit to their owners or defied the men around them, daring to form intimate bonds with women a strategy for survivial. In the eighteenth-century context, black femme freedom articulates the audacity of a freedom that dared to reach past masculinity and empire for satisfaction. It infuses black women’s choosing of each other with carnal and erotic stickiness” (174–75).


13. I must credit Katsi Rodríguez Veláquez for the discussion of how the term “flesh” in Anglo academic writing does not translate or travel in the same way in Spanish. Flesh, in fact, becomes its closest synonym, “carne,” or meat, and the slippages leave space for loss and enunciation.
15. Celis Salgado, Rebelión de las niñas, 25.
16. Johnson, Wicked Flesh, pg. 172–73. Johnson also writes: “Invoking black femme instead of (black) women or womanhood remembers the slipperiness of the category of woman in a multilingual world of slaves” (173).
18. The Fang are Equatorial Guinea’s most numerous (and politically powerful) ethnic group.
19. Religiosity, in the form of Catholicism and African and Afro-syncretic belief systems, is included among these power structures, although it is not the center of my analysis in this chapter. For more on religiosity and syncretism in By Night the Mountain Burns and Song of the Water Saints, see Ineke Phaf-Rheinberger, “Migration versus Stagnation in Equatorial Guinea: The Sea as the Promise of Modernity,” Research in African Literatures 48, no. 3 (fall 2017): 55–71; and Rebeca Hey-Colón, “Transformative Currents: An Exploration of the Sea and Identity in the Works of Angie Cruz and Nelly Rosario,” in Negotiating Latinidades, Understanding Identities within Space, ed. Kathryn Quinn-Sánchez (Newcastle upon Tyne, Eng.: Cambridge Scholars, 2015), 9.
20. This contention with the dark is also central in Ávila Laurel’s novel Awala cu sanguí, in which the darkness propels fear, and folklore acts as a salve against the dark.
22. The Treaty of El Pardo also recognized the Portuguese territories in Brazil and its more western occupations in South America (established by the 1494 Treaty of Tordesillas). This treaty thus launched the beginnings of the Spanish Guinea territories in the nineteenth century.
23. For a history of sacristans and Annobonese resistance to colonial imposition, see Arlindo Manuel Caldeira, “Organizing Freedom: De Facto Independence on the Island of Ano Bom (Annobón) during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries,” Afro-Hispanic Review 28, no. 2 (2009): 293–310. Also, significant to considering Annobón are the distinct practices that show fundamental differences in what are supposed (or at least imagined) to be “homogenous” Equatoguinean islands under the banner or myth of “Bantu unity.” This is similar to narratives of mestizaje, multijae, or la gran familia, which sought to obfuscate the heteropatriarchal and racial projects in the Americas, particularly in the Hispanophone world.


33. I am building here on a now almost defunct Puerto Rican mourning ritual in which funeral guests greet families with the phrase “Te acompaño en tus sentimientos” (I accompany you in your feelings [of mourning or grief]). This sentiment is also found in the novel. The English translation reads, “No one would accompany them in their grief” (150), and the original reads, “Y no habría nadie que las acompañara” (130).


35. There is a connection here to folklorized Puerto Rican practices around women and witchcraft. In the song “Doña Chana,” made popular by Cortijo y Su Combo and Ismael Rivera (recorded in 1959), we hear about the bruja doña Chana who has dogs released on her.
49. Francis, *Fictions of Feminine Citizenship*, 56.
52. Francis, *Fictions of Feminine Citizenship*, 56.
60. Zamora, “(Trance)forming,” 7.
61. Eliana Castro, “From the Entrails of the Monster” (unpublished paper
submitted to Yomaira Figueroa, Chicano/Latino Studies 811, Michigan State
University, East Lansing, Mich., October 4, 2018), 2.
62. Key here is that the photo was whitened in order to ensure that the hus-
bond’s darker skin appeared lighter or whiter. Mercedes comes to believe that this
man, a stranger, was in fact her father Silvio, whom she has never met.
63. Megan Adams, “‘A Border Is a Veil Not Many People Can Wear’: Testi-
monial Fiction and Transnational Healing in Edwidge Danticat’s *The Farming of
Bones* and Nelly Rosario’s *Song of the Water Saints*” (master’s thesis, University
of South Florida, 2010).
64. Ayuso, “‘How Lucky for You,’” 48.
67. Omise’ke Natasha Tinsley, “Black Atlantic, Queer Atlantic: Queer Imag-
innings of the Middle Passage,” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 14,
69. Xhercis Méndez, “Decolonial Feminist Methodologies” (paper presented
at the annual meeting of the Caribbean Philosophical Association, Dakar, Sen-
egal, June 2018).
70. Obono argues that la dote, or “dowry,” has slowly transformed into a
capitalist rather than a communal structure. This means that marriages or part-
nerships are not only ordered by the logics of first or second wives, or eldest to
youngest children, but also by status as concubine (rather than wife) and the
amount of la dote that was paid. In recent years, demands for larger and more
lavish dotes have also been a point of contention within the Fang and Ndowe
ethnic groups. III Seminario Internacional sobre Guinea Ecuatorial, Universidad
Nacional de Educación a Distancia, Madrid, Spain, July 6, 2016.
71. Luis Melgar Valero is also the author of the novel *Los blancos estais locos*
(2017), which discusses the LGBTQ experience in Equatorial Guinea from the
perspective of a Spanish diplomat stationed there.
72. Parker Brookie, “In Review: *La Bastarda* by Trifonia Melibea Obono,”
*Asymptote* (blog), May 21, 2018, https://www.asymptotejournal.com/blog/2018
/05/21/in-review-la-bastarda-by-trifonia-melibea-obono/.
75. Roberts, *Freedom as Marronage*, 5. Hubert Edzodzomo Ondo also sees the
trope of “cimarronaje” within *La bastarda*. Hubert Edzodzomo Ondo, “Recono-
cimiento, negación, y exclusión de las identidades en *Le Pacte d’Afia* (2009) y *La
Bastarda* (2016),” in XVI Congreso Nacional Educación Comparada Tenerife
(La Laguna, Spain: Universidad de La Laguna, 2018), 304.
77. Edzodzomo Ondo, “Reconocimiento,” 303.
Chapter 2


1. lê thi diem thúy, The Gangster We Are All Looking For (New York: Knopf, 2003), 90.


8. For a primary example of “culture of poverty” theory as it relates to Puerto Rican families, see Oscar Lewis, *La Vida: A Puerto Rican Family in the Culture of Poverty—San Juan and New York* (New York: Random House, 1966).


17. Kelly Oliver, *Witnessing Beyond Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 80. Oliver is not without critics, however. Michael Monahan’s “Recognition beyond Struggle: On a Libera tory Account of Hegelian Recognition” argues that there is another path through which to understand Hegelian concepts of recognition, one that is not the eternally agonistic “master-slave dialectic”—that is, the concept of pure recognition. Nevertheless, Monahan’s elucidation of pure recognition, as he notes, does not invalidate the myriad critiques of Hegelian agonistic recognition. Michael J. Monahan, “Recognition beyond Struggle: On a Libera tory Account of Hegelian Recognition,” *Social Theory and Practice* 32, no. 3 (July 2006): 389–414.


20. Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, 2nd ed. (London: Zed Books, 2012), 144–45. Here Smith also notes that *testimonio* is a familiar project in Latin America, one that “has become one of a number of literary methods for making sense of histories, of voices and representation, and of the political narrative of oppression” (145).


22. Donna McCormack reads fictional narratives at the intersections of queer and postcolonial studies through a framework of witnessing in *Queer Postcolonial Narratives and the Ethics of Witnessing*. Although McCormack does not engage the concept of faithful witnessing, she does use witnessing, recognition, and the importance of seeing these as critical concepts in fictional narratives. Donna McCormack, *Queer Postcolonial Narratives and the Ethics of Witnessing* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014).
33. One example that Cruz offers is of a queer black man who is ignored in the predominantly middle-class gay community of gentrifiers. In a moment of crisis and attempted suicide, this young man chooses composure when confronted with police involvement. Cruz reads this moment as an act of resistance, highlighting the young man’s “stoicism” as a survival strategy in the face of looming police violence. She argues that “recognition of the resistance in these tight spaces belies a history of often hostile negotiations and struggle waged by LGBTQ youth everyday.” Cindy Cruz, “LGBTQ Street Youth Talk Back: A Meditation on Resistance and Witnessing,” *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 24, no. 5 (2011): 553.
34. Cruz, “LGBTQ Street Youth,” 550, emphasis added.
38. The concept of the decolonial attitude is part of a philosophical intervention related to Husserl’s conception of the phenomenological attitude, Heidegger and Sartre’s work on authenticity, and Habermas’s philosophical meditation on the post-conventional attitude. The term “decolonial attitude,” coined by Maldonado-Torres, refers to a subjective disposition toward knowledge. For more on the decolonial attitude, see Maldonado-Torres, “Reconciliation as a Contested Future,” 225–45; and Maldonado-Torres, *Against War*.
43. Ngũgĩ, *Decolonising the Mind*, 3.
45. This can also be read in relation to José Esteban Muñoz’s theories of “dis-identification” wherein “for some, disidentification is a survival strategy that works within and outside the dominant public sphere simultaneously.” José Esteban Muñoz, *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 5.


47. Ngugi, *Decolonising the Mind*, 2.


54. Achille Mbembe argues that “commandment” is part of the imaginary of the power state sovereignty. Commandment features three sorts of violence: founding violence, legitimation of violence, and finally “war,” which refers not only to our contemporary articulations of war, but also to the violence that maintains, spreads, and ensures permanence. Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*.


63. Díaz writes: “Poor Oscar. Without even realizing it he’d fallen into one of those Let’s Be Friends Vortexes, the bane of nerdboys everywhere. These relationships were love’s version of a stay in the stocks, in you go, plenty of misery guaranteed and what you got out of it besides bitterness and heartbreak nobody knows. Perhaps some knowledge of self and women” (Díaz, Oscar Wao, 41).


65. We see Ana and Maritza’s (Oscar’s love interests) tragic romantic relationships in New Jersey, as well as Lola’s verbally abusive relationship with her first boyfriend.


Chapter 3

1. Achy Obejas, Days of Awe (New York: Ballantine, 2001), 309. “Destierro” is sometimes used to denote the condition or sentence of “exile” in Spanish (the more common term is “exilio”). However, “destierro” is considered one of the untranslatable terms for exile because it is a condition that denotes action: “1. m. Acción y efecto de desterrar o desterrarse. 2. m. Pena que consiste en expulsar a alguien de un lugar o de un territorio determinado, para que temporal o perpetuamente resida fuera de él. 3. m. Tiempo durante el cual se cumple un destierro (pena). 4. m. Pueblo o lugar en que vive el desterrado. 5. m. Lugar alejado, remoto o de difícil acceso.” Real Academia Española, Diccionario de la lengua española: Edición del tricentenario, 23rd ed., s.v. “destierro,” https://dle.rae.es/?id=DTh9AQi. Throughout this chapter, however, I expand and depart from this definition of “destierro” in order to show its significance to decolonization projects (political and cultural) and to Afro- and Indigenous-descended peoples in the modern world outside of penal or bourgeois connotations.


4. When talking about destierro in this chapter and beyond, I wish to wrestle the term away from its associations with elitism and bourgeois political exiles. In doing so, I want to make space to think about dispossession that centers those who are most directly affected by domination and colonialism.

5. To be clear, I am not thinking of African-descended peoples and Indigenous peoples as mutually exclusive groups, for African peoples are indeed Indigenous. Colonialism, slavery, and forms of resistance to these oppressions brought forth Afro-Indigenous-descended peoples. Bearing witness to Black Indigeneity in the Americas is critical if we are to think about destierro, justice, and reparations. Within the context of this chapter, I am thinking about Indigenous peoples on Abya Yala and Turtle Island as well as Indigenous Africans and Afro-Indigenous peoples.


7. In fact, the first iteration of this chapter was rooted in postcolonial discourse. In revising this research over the last five years, I have come to this concept of destierro, a mere footnote in previous drafts, and decided to “put teeth on it,” so to speak, and offer decolonial thought a way to address how physical and
metaphysical diasporic lived experiences are constitutive of the sociopolitical economy that is so richly theorized in literary works.


10. When I use the term “dislocation” within this context, I am building on the work of Brinda Mehta, whose scholarship on the Atlantic (*kala pani*) crossing of Indian women created waves of diasporic dislocations. She argues, “The *kala pani* discourse stresses that, rather than there being a single ‘Indian’ experience, there has been a series of displacements or dislocations which can be identified historically and culturally—and which can be used to develop a critical methodology for reading the fiction of Indo-Caribbean women.” Brinda J. Mehta, *Diasporic (Dis)locations: Indo-Caribbean Women Writers Negotiate the Kala Pani* (Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2004), 10.


14. Said says, “Nationalisms are about groups, but in a very acute sense exile is a solitude experienced outside the group: the deprivations felt at not being with others in the communal habitation.” Said’s concern is the exiled subject’s lack of access to communal sharing and a sense of belonging to a larger group: the nation. Said, *Reflections on Exile*, 140.


20. I follow Seyhan’s point in *Writing Outside the Nation*: “Descriptions such as exilic, ethnic, migrant, or diasporic cannot do justice to the nuances of writing between histories, geographies, and cultural practices. Although as critics we do not have the language commensurate with our task, we have the responsibility to reflect, problematize, and preface the terms we employ. In this study, I do not use the terms exilic, diasporic, or ethnic writing in a strictly technical sense, but as signifiers of texts conceived in and operative between two or more languages and cultural heritages” (9).


27. Alexander, _Pedagogies of Crossing_, 274.


31. Alexander, _Pedagogies of Crossing_, 274.


34. Although an ecocritical reading of this novel, and perhaps many of Ávila Laurel’s works, would be illuminating, it is beyond the scope of this project.


36. Valdés, _Oshun’s Daughters_, 63. See also María Cristina Rodríguez, _What Women Lose: Exile and the Construction of Imaginary Homelands in Novels by Caribbean Writers_ (New York: Peter Lang, 2005).

38. My use of identity reclamation is influenced by the Nuyorican Poets Movement of the 1970s and 1980s, in which diasporic Puerto Rican youth learned to reconstitute their identities as part of anti-imperial and antiracist radical politics. Furthermore, within the context of women of color feminist politics, my use of reclaiming identity is deeply indebted to the work of Michelle Cliff and in particular her essay “Claiming an Identity They Taught Me to Despise.” See Michelle Cliff, *The Land of Look Behind: Prose and Poetry* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Firebrand, 1985).


42. Valdés argues that Pérez “underscores the importance of sensuality in the development of one’s identity” (*Oshun’s Daughters*, 76).


50. Valdés, Oshun’s Daughters, 63.
52. Benita Sampedro Vizcaya, “Routes to Ruin,” Lengua y Literatura 7, no. 2 (November 2012), https://lljournal.commons.gc.cuny.edu/2012–2-sampedro-texto/. “The event goes like this . . . On a late afternoon in the month of April, some time during the 1940s—they recall—a fire of unprecedented magnitude burned to the ground the grandiose buildings of the Claretian Mission, church, and house on the island of Corisco. It was a day of absolute horror in the island, flames falling from the sky; the fire could not be contained, although all the children at the boarding school were safely rescued. They recall, too, the man held responsible for the fire: his name was Father Andrés Bravo.”
53. Sampedro Vizcaya, “Routes to Ruin.”
54. The Ndowe are an ethnic minority group predominantly living on the littoral coast of Equatorial Guinea, the island of Corisco, and in other African nations as well.
55. Sampedro Vizcaya, “Routes to Ruin.”
57. See Ugarte, Africans in Europe.
58. Sampedro Vizcaya, “Routes to Ruin.”
60. Sampedro Vizcaya, “Routes to Ruin.”
61. In a personal correspondence with Juan Tomás Ávila Laurel, he explained that motodu, an Ndowe word for jefe or chief, is one that reflects a position of power that is not coated (“revestido”) in dignity. Later in this chapter we will see the word ekambi used to signal another kind of jefe. According to Ávila Laurel, ekambi is a powerful position of jefe that is coated in high dignity. When speaking about motodu Don Francisco and motodu Obiang, Ávila Laurel is referring to Francisco Macías Nguema and his nephew Teodoro Obiang Mbasogo, who took dictatorial power in Equatorial Guinea after independence—in 1968 and 1979, respectively. Teodoro Obiang Mbasogo remains the current dictator of Equatorial Guinea.
63. Sampedro Vizcaya, “Routes to Ruin.”
64. Ávila Laurel provided this information in our personal correspondence. Furthermore, according to Benita Sampedro Vizcaya, the airport’s status is tenuous at best: “As we look to the future, a brand new airport that traverses the island of Corisco has just been inaugurated on 12 October 2011, its landing
strips running from north to south, from coast to coast, with the linear precision of a ruler. But it would be ingenuous to believe that the current generation of Corisco citizens will benefit from it” (Sampedro Vizcaya, “Routes to Ruin”).

65. Francisco Zamora Loboch, Desde el vivil y otras crónicas (Madrid: Sial Casa de África, 2008), 27.


67. This insight is based on personal correspondence between Ávila Laurel and the author, June 2014.

68. Primero is carrying on a sexual affair with the tourist Anika. This son, who is quiet and very close to his mother, confides in Malela that Anika has one breast, that she is difficult to satisfy sexually, and that she desires anal sex. Malela counters that this sexual practice is unheard of on their island, and worries that she will become the grandmother of a feces-covered baby: “Yo Malela, sería la primera mujer del pueblo que iría a la playa a lavar al niño porque nació con caca en todo el cuerpo” (54).

69. Coloniality of land and of power means that people are continually stripped of the right to their own land, the land on which they may have been born. They must buy it outright within a system that is meant to disenfranchise them at every turn. This multiplies the meaning of Alexander’s question, “What does it mean to be an exile on the land on which you are born?” These Equatoguinean experiences align with Puerto Rican and First Nations and Indigenous concerns and political mobilization around land. Jodi Byrd reminds us that settler colonialism is a “grasping network of relational and precarious dispossessions that enable dispossession to continue in perpetuity. Indigenous studies might be able to contend with how the vexed histories of slavery and colonization continue to inflect our understandings of the past and present and help us imagine decolonial futures for all those who find themselves now here in our lands” (Byrd, “Variations under Domestication,” 138–39).

70. Some of these themes are also found in Trifonia Melibea Obono’s work (which was discussed in chapter 1). In her first novel, La herencia de bindendee, Obono tracks the ontological realities of being a Fang woman in Equatorial Guinea. The novel’s title translates roughly as “the inheritance of the prostitute,” and as in her second novel, La bastard, she examines the conflation of traditional knowledge practices with heteropatriarchy to show how contemporary Fang kinship and social structures have made it nearly impossible for women in Equatorial Guinea to participate in public life without the support of a brother or husband. Furthermore, this has made it difficult for women to leave abusive marital arrangements—within monogamous or polygamous relationships—without facing backlash and other forms of destierro. The inheritance of the bindedee reflects a recent phenomenon. Obono has noted that the more formal education a woman gets, the more structured job and higher salary her prospective partner must have. If she fails to partner in this way, her marital arrangement may not be accepted by her family. If she persists with an unacceptable arrangement, and in lieu of an acceptable dote or bride price, both she and her partner will have to financially support her extended family—a responsibility that normally falls
solely on the male partner within the kinship structure. However, because this is not desirable, women feel compelled to partner with the “highest bidder”—therein lies the “herencia de bindendee.” To go to the highest bidder, one must potentially be close to power, and thus be aligned with the very forms of coloniality that one attempts to subvert in everyday life. In this way, Fang women, although part of the ruling ethnic group within Equatorial Guinea, face the effects of the coloniality of gender and destierro.

71. For more on the concept of corporeal consciousness, see chapter 1, “Intimacies,” and Nadia Celis Salgado, La rebelión de las niñas: El Caribe y la “conciencia corporal” (Madrid: Iberoamericana, 2015).

Chapter 4


2. The CARICOM lawsuit also implicates other European slave-owning nations, including Spain, Portugal, Norway, Sweden, and Denmark.

4. Quijano, “Coloniality of Power and Eurocentrism in Latin America.”
6. Though Fanon is speaking of anticolonial realities of the mid-twentieth century, his relevance further manifests after the failed political decolonization projects of the 1950s and 1960s. Advancing Fanonian thought in the context of theories of decoloniality crystallizes its significance outside of his temporal moment.


11. Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed*, 187. Walter D. Mignolo argues that the colonial difference is the colonial classification of the world in the modern/colonial imaginary. This system of classification “converted differences,” for example race, “into values.” To transform or traverse these differences/values requires a fundamental shift in human relations. One way to transform these human relations is through decolonial love, which requires a decolonial attitude or a subjective disposition that turns away from dominant hierarchies and is instead aligned with those who are most oppressed and silenced. Walter D. Mignolo, “The Geopolitics of Knowledge and the Colonial Difference,” *South Atlantic Quarterly* 101, no. 1 (Winter 2002): 71.


15. Maldonado-Torres, *Against War*, 244.


27. Consider a few historical examples of reparations: the United States’ reparations to Japanese Americans interned during World War II; the Canadian apology for the Chinese Head Tax; multiple apologies to Aboriginal and Indigenous populations (including Australia, Canada, and the United States); the German Holocaust reparations; and the recent lawsuit brought forth by CARICOM.
31. As Ylce Irizarry notes, the protagonist is also Puerto Rican and Ecuadorian, and he “prioritizes his puertorriqueñidad even though he is also Ecuadorian.” Ylce Irizarry, “Because Place Still Matters: Mapping Puertorriquenidad in *Bodega Dreams*,” *Centro Journal* 27, no. 1 (Spring 2015): 156.
35. This statistic was accurate in 2004 when *Barrio Dreams* was published. Furthermore, Dávila notes that while there were no official statistics detailing the number of Puerto Ricans displaced by “urban renewal” the numbers were, “likely to be great, as indicated by the estimates from 1959–1961, when Puerto Ricans accounted for up to 76 percent of the people displaced from various urban renewal sites in the city” (31).


44. Irizarry, “Because Place Still Matters,” 165.

45. See chapter 3 for more on these terms.

46. I use the term “community” tentatively, since Bodega’s conception of community is tied both to the locality of Spanish Harlem and to the Puerto Rican diaspora. These two imagined communities—to borrow from Benedict Anderson—are points of pride for Bodega, and yet he remains unknown to them; the residents of Spanish Harlem do not know who “Bodega” actually is. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 2016).


49. For more on the American Indian Movement and organizing within Native social and political movements, see Kim Anderson, “Affirmations of an Indigenous Feminist,” in *Indigenous Women and Feminism: Politics, Activism,*
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Culture, ed. Cheryl Suzack et al. (Vancouver, Canada: UBC Press, 2010), 81–91. For scholarship on the Chicano@ Movement’s struggles with gender, feminism, and leadership, see Maylei Blackwell, ¡Chicana Power! Contested Histories of Feminism in the Chicano Movement (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2016).

50. Whalen, “Bridging Homeland and Barrio Politics,” 120.
51. Whalen, “Bridging Homeland and Barrio Politics,” 120.
52. Irizarry, “Because Place Still Matters,” 162.
53. Vera/Veronica is perhaps the more elusive character, as she shapeshifts from an affectionate to a faithless lover. She has attained wealth through marriage, and holds onto the trappings of whiteness (for example, she changes her name from Vera to Veronica to escape her Puerto Rican/Nuyorican roots). She eventually colludes with Nazario to murder Bodega, and attempts to abscond with his properties and fortune.
54. I presented an early version of this chapter at the 2011 American Studies Association Conference in Baltimore, Maryland. In the audience was Juan Flores, one of the foremost scholars of Puerto Rican studies. During the Q&A and later in our post-panel discussion, Flores urged me to theorize the “Afro” in Afro-Latinx (at that point Afro-Latin@), and to be clear about which authors I characterize as Afro-Latino, versus having created Afro-Latino characters. Flores shared that in his own conversations with Quiñonez, the author allegedly denied having Afro-Latinx characters; in other words, he denied the novel as an Afro-Latinx cultural production. I agree with Ylce Irizarry, however, that Quiñonez uses racializing features for the characters in his novel.
59. Sandoval, Methodology of the Oppressed, 187.
60. “Mira, Junito, go buy un mapo, un conten de leche, and tell el bodeguero yo le pago next Friday. And I don’t want to see you in el rufo.” Ernesto Quiñonez, Bodega Dreams (New York: Vintage, 2000), 212.
62. Maldonado-Torres, Against War, 244.

64. Machado Sáez’s reading of masculine queerness in Oscar Wao indicts the narrator, Yunior, as the orchestrator of Oscar’s inability to belong to Dominican masculinity or the diasporic conception of maleness. It is Oscar’s “sentimentality, virginity, and tears” that enable the reader to conceive him as queer, but it is also Yunior’s hypermasculinity and his hyperawareness of its tenuous claims that compel him to narrate Oscar in such hopeless ways. Machado Sáez, “ Dictating Desire, Dictating Diaspora,” 534–35.


68. Though Oscar Wao does not indicate Yunior’s sexual abuse, in Díaz's first novel, Drown (1996), we read that seven-year-old Yunior is the victim of a sexual assault on a bus. This may or may not be the violence that Diaz attests to in his interview with Moya, but nevertheless, I believe the narrative arc of Yunior's own history of sexual abuse. Junot Díaz, Drown (New York: Riverhead, 1996).


71. Harford Vargas makes a similar claim in “Dictating a Zafa.”


73. Marvin Lewis writes that “Annobón and Malabo, as island populations, have been at the center of Equatorial Guinean island literary discourse for some time, but this is the first contemporary extended tribute to Corisco. While this assertion can be disputed, it bears to mention that the author of Matinga, sangre en la selva is not of Benga or Ndowé origin. This means that while this story emerges from within Benga cosmology, many Benga or Ndowé peoples may see this story as an ingenuine use of the myths and origin stories. The narrator speaks of its indigenous past, origins of its populations, cultural traditions, as well as the impact of colonialism. Although most of Matinga, Blood in the Jungle is devoted to the Río Muni mainland context of coastal ‘playero’ culture, the reader receives a good idea of the importance of Corisco to the national ethos.” Lewis, Equatorial Guinean Literature, 128.

74. Lewis, Equatorial Guinean Literature, 111.

75. Lewis, Equatorial Guinean Literature, 138.

76. The novel’s temporal and spatial location is at the very heart of the renewed interest of the Spanish in their sub-Saharan African colony. Spain lost its colonies in the Americas after its 1898 defeat in the Spanish-American War, which required a reassessment of its remaining colonies in northern and sub-Saharan Africa. The renewed focus on Equatorial Guinea meant that political decolonization for that
nation would not come until 1968; this was followed by Spain’s transition from fascism to democracy in 1975. See Ugarte, *Africans in Europe*.


84. Lewis, *Equatorial Guinean Literature*, 133.


86. See also the interpretation of this novel within the Mami-Wata myths which Marvin Lewis does in chapter 4 of *Equatorial Guinean Literature in Its National and Transnational Contexts*.


89. Moya, “The Search for Decolonial Love.”

**Chapter 5**


4. See Nelson Maldonado-Torres’s analysis of the non-ethics of modernity as creating a state of perpetual war in *Against War: Views from the Underside of Modernity*.

5. With this formulation, I also hail the politics and possibilities of the #BlackLivesMatter movement.


8. Roundtable discussion, III Seminario Internacional sobre Guinea Ecuatorial, Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia, Madrid, Spain, July 6, 2016;
Interview with the author, July 7, 2016. Ávila Laurel later asked for fiction, criticism, and scholarly readings about Afrofuturism.


11. Using digital platforms and blogging in Trinidad and Tobago as a case study, Tonya Haynes finds that “online Caribbean feminisms are extremely diverse, heterogeneous, and polyvocal. Networks may be simultaneously regional, national, and global, or transnational and diasporic.” Through digital media practices, Caribbean feminists “knit together online communities that are often linked to on-the-ground organizing and action.” Tonya Haynes, “Mapping Caribbean Cyberfeminisms,” sx archipelagos no. 1 (May 2016).


17. Miguel A. De La Torre, Santería: The Beliefs and Rituals of a Growing Religion in America (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2004), 84. He explains, “As male twins they are Taewo and Kainde, Ibo and Iwe, or Alawa Akuario and Eddeu. As female twins, they are Olori and Oroina, or Ayaba and Alba. As male and female twins, they are Araba and Ainá, or Adden and Alabba” (84).

18. González-Wippler, Santería, 142; De La Torre, Santería, 84.


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32. The translation of these lyrics is my own, sourced from Tito Rodríguez’s 1968 cover of the song from his album El Doctor de la Salsa. This was the version of the song that I grew up listening to and that I began listening to again when writing this section on Ibeyi. Rodríguez’s version of “Llora Timbero” uses the present-tense verb “viene” whereas earlier versions, for example, the circa 1934 recording of “Malanga murió” by the Orquesta Cheo Belen Puig, use the past tense “vino.” There are other versions of this song with freestyle verses, a single singer, and/or with choral unison throughout.

33. Gallo, Al compás de Cuba.


38. Michelle Cliff, If I Could Write This in Fire (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 87.


41. Ibeyi, “Ghost.”


44. Beliso-De Jesús, Electric Santería, 82.

45. Alexander, Pedagogies of Crossing, 288.

46. Alexander, Pedagogies of Crossing, 296.

47. “If Africa functions largely as an epistemic gap,” says Alexander, “then its cosmological systems cannot be made to figure legitimately in (post)modernity’s
consciousness . . . And yet some of its most formative categories—migration, gender, and sexuality, experience, home, history, and memory—can be made intelligible within these very systems” (Pedagogies of Crossing, 297).

48. The second novel in the Shadowhouse Fall trilogy was published in 2017: Daniel José Older, Shadowhouse Fall (The Shadowshaper Cypher Series #2) (New York: Scholastic, 2017).


51. Xhercis Méndez, “Transcending Dimorphism: Afro-Cuban Ritual Praxis and the Rematerialization of the Body,” Journal for Cultural and Religious Theory 13, no. 1 (Winter 2014): 115. She further explains, “For instance, Orishas as ashé are capable of inhabiting everything from stones to the variated ‘bodies’ of their initiates. The capacity to manifest in various material forms, then, suggests that the Orishas are not only fluid, but also capable of shape-shifting” (108).

52. Alexander, Pedagogies of Crossing, 296.


54. Méndez, “Transcending Dimorphism,” 115. Méndez argues that “this openness to invisible forces calls practitioners to conceive of their ‘bodies’ as protean, as a shape-shifter of sorts. . . . This often entails both metaphysical and physical transformations in those being inhabited” (116).

55. Older does away with the logics of seniority, heteropatriarchy, and white supremacy in order to create a world in which Sierra, a novice, is to inherit the role of the most powerful shadowshaper. Her race, gender, age, and sex do not inhibit her from taking up these responsibilities, and her community of expert and apprentice shadowshapers supports her efforts.


59. Sandoval, Methodology of the Oppressed, 182.

61. In *Pedagogies of Crossing*, Alexander frames the difficulties of practicing the Mojuba in spaces that are teeming with overlapping and contested histories as “living an ancient memory in a city overcrowded with errant spirits, teeming with yearnings not easily satisfied in towering buildings or in slabs of concrete” (287).


64. Cliff, *If I Could Write This in Fire*, 87.


67. The 2012 short story appeared as a teaser for his now-abandoned sci-fi novel.


69. The protagonist learns that Alex’s friend (and the protagonist’s unrequited love interest) Mysty had been raped by her father until the age of twelve. The dimension of sexual exploitation in “Monstro” becomes part of understanding the coloniality of gender—“In the D.R. incest was like the other national pastime.”


71. Alex joins the ranks of what Díaz calls the “Sovereign kids,” generally independent and wealthy offspring of the Dominican elite who go to the Dominican Republic to enjoy luxurious summers and then return to U.S. universities to earn their elite degrees.


74. Mysty is a transnational Dominican who grew up in Montreal and is back in the Dominican Republic against her will. Her Francophile ways are documented by her impeccable French, her French novels, and her ultimate goal of working for the United Nations in France. For these elites, the cultural capital of wealth and family connections coupled with the cultural nationalism that Alex exhibits (a pride of country) are allegiances too small to combat the inferiority complex of being Dominican. What sets this story in motion is that the protagonist decides to stay in the Dominican Republic to win her over.

75. This is also the way that *Drown*, Díaz’s first book of short stories, begins. The protagonist’s older brother, Rafa, is making fun of Yunior, telling him that he was picked up at the Haitian/Dominican border. Junot Díaz, *Drown* (New York: Riverhead, 1996).

76. The biblical verse cited on the photo caption concludes, “Therefore the LORD will give you flesh, and ye shall eat.”

77. Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, 42.


80. Fernández Retamar, “Calibán,” 7. Fernández Retamar’s “Calibán” offers a literary historiography of Caliban and The Tempest across the Caribbean, Latin America, and Europe. Similarly, in The Pleasures of Exile, George Lamming posits that “Caliban is Man and other than Man. Caliban is his [Próspero’s] convert, colonized by language, and excluded by language” (15). Furthermore, Prospero requires Caliban for his own survival. Caliban is a laboring body, and he is the figure through which Prospero gets to define himself as Man and as monarch. Lamming contends that “Prospero dare not dynamite Caliban. . . . To murder Caliban would be an act of pure suicide” (99). In “Monstro,” the “dynamiting” of the Other is an act with both immediate and unknowable consequences that creates the conditions for apocalypse. As colonialism dehumanizes the colonizer, so too does Caliban haunt Prospero—“in a way that is almost too deep and too intimate to communicate” (Lamming, Pleasures of Exile, 99).


84. Ávila Laurel has said that Panga Rilene is just a story that came to him while traveling in Southeast Asia. When asked about the possibility of the work being Afrofuturistic, he replied that he had never heard of the genre, but was interested to know more about what it was and what it meant.

85. An ecocritical reading of Equatoguinean literature and of Juan Tomás Ávila Laurel’s work in particular is beyond the scope of this project, but would be a worthwhile endeavor.

86. Díaz, “Apocalypse.”


88. Confusion abounds when a dozen white men, and later a dozen Black men, arrive in uniforms. They are thought to be the disappeared brothers of the children in NE. They demand an audience with the women in the beam structure. In response to this perceived threat, Panga’s mother bares her breast and the men, struck with fear, flee. Panga believes they are suffering from trypophobia, a fear of holes, which foretells her mother’s own illness. The story ends with Panga’s mother leaving NE, and Panga finds out that her mother is not from NE at all but
rather from that gluttonous place where the rich and powerful dominate others. Her mother left “that place” to come to NE, and in the end, returns to that other place.

89. There are many passages in the novel wherein Panga questions if she is in an anatomically female or male body, and there is an entire subplot in which she dresses like a man and visits bordellos in Singapore, Manila, and other Asian Pacific and Southeast Asian locales. There is a sense that global geographies and cores/peripheries have shifted as well, but this is beyond the scope of this chapter, even as it mirrors some of the geopolitical shifts in Díaz’s “Monstro.”

91. Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks, 206.
92. Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks, 206.
93. See chapter 4 of this book for more on decolonial love as a practice and as a form of repARATION.
94. Sandoval, Methodology of the Oppressed, 4 and chapter 6; Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks.
96. Díaz, Oscar Wao, 51.

Coda

10. Ilombe, Ceiba II.
15. Ilombe, *Ceiba II*, 252.
22. Salon Literario’s Festival de la Palabra is created by the Afro-Puerto Rican writer and professor Mayra Santos Febres.
23. The fact that Remei Sipi Mayo and another writer, Edjanga Jones Ndjoli, were participants in the Festival de la Palabra that year felt like my book project in practice: relations across Afro-Atlantic Hispanophone islands.