Prophetic Visions of the Past

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Introduction

1. Laurent Dubois’s *Avengers of the New World* remains one of the most accessible recent accounts of the events in Haiti. For the revolution’s impact on the Caribbean and beyond, see Dubois, *A Colony*; Geggus, *Haitian Revolutionary*; Geggus, ed., *The Impact*; Brown, *Toussaint’s Clause*; and Matthewson, *A Proslavery*.

2. It is important to add to the summary of the revolution that throughout the eighteenth century Saint Domingue had become, in spite of its size, one of the richest colonies in the world—thus the French interest in preserving the colony at all costs. The enormous production of the colony was predicated on the huge number of slaves that were brought to it, and the extreme physical cruelty with which they were treated. For examples of the cruel treatment of the Saint Domingue slaves, I refer the reader to the first chapter of James’s *Black Jacobins*.

3. For the Trotsky transcripts see James, *At the Rendezvous of Victory*; and James, *C. L. R. James on the “Negro Question.”*

4. The years 1958–1962 marked the creation of the weak West Indies Federation among British colonies in the Caribbean. The federation was short-lived, but it preceded the independence of several of its members, including Jamaica and James’s native Trinidad in 1962. James, however, often changed his emphasis but not his priorities: in the map of the “postcolonial” Caribbean of the early 1960s that he traces in his “Appendix,” he signals out socialist Cuba as the island that has moved the closest to his ideals.

5. For different perspectives on the disputes about “natural servitude” of Native Americans (best exemplified by the debate between Bartolomé de Las Casas and Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda in Valladolid [1550–1551]), see Padgen, *The Fall of Natural Man*; Rabasa, *Inventing America*; Losada, *Fray Bartolomé*; and Mignolo, *The Idea*.

6. Walter Mignolo echoes Césaire when he succinctly states in *The Idea of Latin America*: “Colonization of being is nothing else than producing the idea that certain people do not belong to history—that they are non-beings. Thus, lurking beneath the European story of discovery are the histories, experiences, and silenced conceptual narratives of those who were disqualified as human beings, as historical actors, and as capable of thinking and understanding” (4).
7. Mignolo’s notion of the “modern/colonial world system” is itself an expansion and revision of the concept of the “modern world system,” developed by Immanuel Wallerstein in order to describe the development and expansion of the modern capitalist globalized world. To Wallerstein’s ideas Mignolo adds the crucial element of coloniality/colonialism. See Mignolo, Local Histories.

8. Césaire’s use of the terms “being” and “nothingness” should not be identified with Sartre’s use of them. For Sartre, “nothingness” represents a constitutive aspect of consciousness, its incompleteness, which constantly attempts to fulfill itself and achieve full “being” (without ever achieving it, for consciousness is by definition a lack of full being, an awareness of otherness or non being). Césaire politicizes and historicizes Sartre’s terms, reconfiguring that abstract phenomenology of non being as the colonial condition of those who have been expropriated from their being and condemned to seek in vain a fullness (a privilege of the colonizer) that always seems close at hand yet remains perpetually out of reach. For lucid elucidations of the relations of Black and Africana thought and the existentialist tradition, see Gordon, Fanon; and Gordon, Existential.


10. It is important to point out that this process may occur in spite of the “best intentions” of European intellectuals to assist in colonial emancipation. The classic example of that situation is Jean Paul Sartre’s take on Aimé Césaire’s “nègritude,” which he praises and supports just as he explains it, dialectically, as a negative or antithesis moment whose first moment is white European culture. Although necessary, that negative moment must be transcended and incorporated to a higher synthesis. See “Black Orpheus” in What is Literature? Equally well known is Frantz Fanon’s response to Sartre’s “assistance”: “At the very moment when I was trying to grasp my own being, Sartre, who remained The Other, gave me a name and thus shattered my last illusion. While I was saying to him: ‘My nègritude is neither a tower nor a cathedral, it thrusts into the red flesh of the sun, it thrusts into the burning flesh of the sky, it hollows through the dense dismay of its own pillar of patience . . . ’ [lines from Césaire’s poetry], while I was shouting that, in the paroxysm of my being and my fury, he was reminding me that my blackness was only a minor term. In all truth, in all truth I tell you, my shoulders slipped out of the framework of the world, my feet could not feel the touch of the ground. Without a Negro past, without a Negro future, it was impossible for me to live my Negrohood. Not yet white, no longer wholly black, I was damned” (Black Skin, 137–38). As Fanon’s words dramatically convey, even in Sartre’s “defense” the black man remains trapped in the colonial “double bind.”

11. For an analysis of the anxiety that the lack of such a stable, unified self produces on the colonizer, Homi Bhabha’s insights on mimicry and colonial discourse remain quite useful. Albert Memmi’s classic reflections in Portrait also eloquently address the issue of the colonizer’s anxiety.


13. In a short 1936 preface to his 1934 play Toussaint Louverture (later rewritten with the title The Black Jacobins), C. L. R. James stated: “The French Revolution was the starting point of a cruel struggle between whites and mulattoes. The mulattoes could own land and slaves, but were denied political rights and social equality. It was only after seeing their masters torture and murder each other for two years that the slaves began their own revolution” (Toussaint, 45). While that may not have been his intention, James’s words give the impression that there was little resistance on the slaves’ part before the French Revolution. As we will see in chapter 3, the
structure of Aimé Césaire’s *Toussaint Louverture* can give the same impression. Significantly, by 1938 James opens his historical essay *The Black Jacobins* giving due credit to maroon slaves and figures like Mackandal, and highlighting: “one does not need education or encouragement to cherish a dream of freedom” (18). His 1967 rewrite of his play also begins by emphasizing the centrality of the masses of slaves.

14. The issue here is one of emphasis rather than of taking an either/or position. It is clearly undeniable that the events and ideals of the French Revolution had an enormous impact on the Haitian Revolution, and on figures like Toussaint Louverture. The very title of C. L. R. James’s classic *The Black Jacobins* points to that connection. The question is whether enough has been said and researched about how the slaves themselves might have conceptualized their struggle for liberation before, and in addition to, the ideas of the French Enlightenment. For a pioneer work attempting to look at the Haitian Revolution “from below,” see Fick, *The Making of Haiti.*

15. In “Rebélés with a Cause” Phillippe Girard makes an important contribution to the documentation of the role of women in the Haitian Revolution. Dubois also makes significant points in *Haiti;* see also Dubois and Garrigus, *Slave Revolution.* Garraway’s *The Libertine Colony* greatly enhances our understanding of sexual dynamics in the slave cultures of the French Caribbean, which constituted an immediate context for the role of women during the revolution. On the same topic, see also Garrigus, *Before Haiti.*

16. See also Suárez Navaz y Hernández Castillo, eds.; and Lugones “Toward a Decolonial.” See also Elina Vuola’s critical reading of Dussel’s approaches to sexuality, “Thinking Otherwise: Dussel, Liberation Theology and Feminism,” in Martin Alkoff and Mendieta, eds., and Dussel’s response in the epilogue of the same volume. For a different and highly creative and nuanced combination of decolonial and feminist/gender concerns, see Sandoval’s influential *Methodology of the Oppressed.* For a thorough overview of the ideas of Dussel, Quijano, Mignolo, and Maldonado-Torres, followed by some critiques of their positions and formulations, see Restrepo y Rojas, *Inflexión decolonial.*

17. Several essays in Munro and Walcott-Hackshaw *Reinterpreting* address the impact of the revolution on Haitian writers and intellectuals.

18. Even my limited corpus in this book—literary works from the twentieth-century Caribbean—focuses on works by several authors who have had a significant impact and lasting influence on the culture of the region, leaving out other lesser known works on the subject. Works that do not form part of my study include the long poem *Las metamorfosis de Makandal* (1998), by the Dominican Manuel Rueda, and *La tragedia del rey Christophe* (1963) (found in *Teatro*), by the Colombian playwright Enrique Buenaventura. I have not included either the Puerto Rican Edgardo Rodríguez Juliá’s early novels, which I consider to be closely related to the Haitian Revolution; for those, see Figueroa, “In Search.”

19. As I indicate in the chapter on Césaire, the examination of how claims to “universalism/universality” have historically played a fundamental role in the articulation of the global web of the coloniality of power is different from abstract philosophical speculations on the possibility and desirability of actually discovering/articulating such universal values. In any case, and at the very least, the critique of how the claim to universality has actually been used historically should make us healthily suspicious of the motives, sources and goals of any such attempt, and cautiously skeptical about any claim of having actually *achieved* such universality.

20. Whether the duties of a committed writer, dutifully engaged with history, politics and society, are gladly accepted by all these writers is a different question altogether. For an exami-
nation of how those political commitments can actually provoke inner turmoil and resistance on the part of some Caribbean writers, see Figueroa, *Not at Home*.

21. In his study on Toussaint and Césaire, *Free and French in the Caribbean: Toussaint Louverture, Aimé Césaire, and Narratives of Loyal Opposition*, Walsh also highlights the continued pertinence of White’s ideas in the study of Caribbean historiography.

### Chapter 1

1. All quotations from Carpentier’s novel come from Harriet de Onís’s translation, followed by page number in parentheses.

2. For a very lucid and thorough examination of Carpentier’s “real maravilloso,” and how it is similar yet also different from the better known term “magical realism,” see González Echevarría 107–29.

3. Gerard Aching provides a compelling account of how Carpentier and James, in spite of their different approaches, use execution scenes (Mackandal’s in Carpentier, a young slave’s in James) to vividly convey not only the resilience and persistence of the revolting slaves, but also the colonizers’ perplexity when faced by their victims’ challenge to the legitimacy of colonial domination.

4. Probably the best-known approach to the novel’s structure is that of González Echevarría, which remains fascinating in spite of its excessive reliance on numerical calculations. For other approaches see Volek; and Richard Young.

5. Carpentier’s own comments regarding the inclusion of Pauline in the novel refer simply to his surprise at encountering Pauline’s palace during his visit to the old Cap-Francais (now Cap-Haitian). He regards the palace as a sign the coexistence of the past and the present, a “synchronism” that for him again points to the Spanish American “marvelous real” (*Tientos*, 107). For more details regarding his sources and use of the Pauline episode, see Speratti-Piñero.

6. C. L. R. James also includes an ironic aside on Pauline in his account of Leclerc’s expedition, emphasizing, like Carpentier, the cynical sense of self-entitlement of European colonizers: “At the last moment Bonaparte changed the command, putting his brother-in-law, Leclerc, at the head, a sign of the importance he attached to the venture. Pauline, Leclerc’s wife, and their son went with the expedition. She carried musicians, artists, and all the paraphernalia of a court. Slavery would be re-established, civilization restarted, and a good time would be had by all” (*Black Jacobins*, 275).

7. Emir Rodríguez Monegal and Giovanni Pontiero are among the critics who have pointed out, without attempting to explain, Toussaint’s absence from the novel. Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert (“The Haitian Revolution”) also points out Toussaint’s absence, but her useful analysis focuses on the novel’s dismissive treatment of Dessalines, which amounts to a symbolic, if not literal, absence of the actual achiever of Haitian independence.

8. One may even argue that Toussaint Louverture is not mentioned at all. In chapter 7 of the first part of the novel, Carpentier refers in passing to a character called “Toussaint, el ebanista” [“Toussaint, the cabinet maker”], who is carver religious figures for Lenormand de Mezy’s wife. This could certainly be a reference to Louverture, as in the first two parts Carpentier does mention in passing other revolutionary heroes like Christophe, referring to their occupations before the revolution. However, the allusion remains mysterious, for the historical Toussaint was a coachman for the Breda family. The name Toussaint is not mentioned again in the novel.
9. For a detailed analysis of Carpentier’s declared and undeclared sources for his novel, see Speratti-Piñero, *Pasos ballados en El reino de este mundo*.

10. The topic of Carpentier’s influences brings up the interesting question of whether Carpentier was acquainted with James’s book. So far I have not encountered any explicit indication that Carpentier had read *The Black Jacobins* before writing his novel, and there are no obvious loans from James’s book (as there are from other works) in *El reino de este mundo*. However, one can speculate that it is very likely that Carpentier knew it, and that James’s study may be one of those “many” works that dealt with the figure of Toussaint, and that supposedly persuaded Carpentier to stir his novel in a different direction.

11. James had in fact addressed the events of *The Black Jacobins* in a play produced in 1936 with the title *Toussaint L’Ouverture*. James revised the play in 1967, and retitled it *The Black Jacobins*. The original version was published in 2013; the 1967 version may be found in Hill; and in *C. L. R. James Reader*.

12. Kara Rabbitt emphasizes how James explicitly recurs to the structures of classical tragedy in his “emplotment” of the events in the revolution, and how Toussaint’s “tragic flaw” is clearly articulated on the basis of important literary tragic heroes (“C. L. R. James’s Figuring”). For an examination of the political implications of this “tragic” emplotment, see Scott, *Conscripts*. As Scott aptly observes, the first six paragraphs of chapter 13, in which James spells out his views on the poetics of tragedy and the genre’s pertinence to Toussaint’s dilemma toward the end of his life, were added to text in 1963’s second edition. To Rabbitt’s and Scott’s observations one might add the possible influence on James of Césaire’s portrayal of Toussaint in his *Toussaint Louverture*. There Césaire clearly presents his hypothesis that Toussaint voluntarily removes himself from the political scene in order to preserve the unity among the Saint Domingue masses, an act that responds to Toussaint’s “tragic sense of life” (*Toussaint Louverture*, 310; my translation). As James clearly indicates in his bibliography (*Black Jacobins*, 389), in 1963 he was well acquainted with Césaire’s book (which in turn was greatly influenced by the first edition of James’s book).

13. James’s thesis on the connections between slavery and the development of European capitalism was later developed, with special emphasis on England, in Eric Williams’s *Capitalism and Slavery*. The thesis remains controversial; for a more recent assessment and critique see Cateau and Carrington, eds., *Capitalism and Slavery*.

14. For a lucid assessment of the Haitian Revolution as the attempt to enact radical (Spinozian) enlightened ideals of universal emancipation, see Nesbitt, *Universal Emancipation*.

15. Multiple aspects of James’s diagnosis of the Russian Revolution and the historical meaning of Stalinism can be found throughout his works. For some of his most consistent analyses, see his *World Revolution* and *State Capitalism*.

16. For comics, and movies, see James, *American Civilization*; for cricket see James, *Beyond a Boundary*.

17. For an analysis of James’s relations with religion and African traditional beliefs in the context of the Caribbean’s “historicism” and “poeticism” philosophical traditions, see Henry, *Caliban’s Reason*, particularly chapter 2.

18. James’s literary penchant is displayed in an episode when rebellious maroon slaves, which should have been sympathetic to Toussaint’s efforts, in fact fight against him, resenting among other things Toussaint’s strict prohibition of Vodou (*Black Jacobins*, 309). The maroons warn the French about a forthcoming attack by Dessalines; the French commander is humorously described by James as “uncertain as to what this demoniacal black general would do next” (ibid.).
19. For the importance of Spengler in Carpentier’s outlook, and the late career Marxist recasting of his early works see González Echevarría, Alejo Carpentier.

20. Paul B. Miller has already made the point of the James/Toussaint similarity by aptly pointing out that, in his constant celebration of the uniqueness of Toussaint as a heroic leader, James also (like Toussaint) moves away from the masses that presumably legitimize Toussaint’s leadership (“Enlightened Hesitations”, 1075). Naturally, for James what makes Toussaint such a remarkable leader is precisely his deeper grasp of French “enlightened” ideas.

21. Fick makes a compelling case in her book for a view of the Haitian Revolution from “below,” that is, from the perspective of the uneducated slave masses, among whom the enlightened ideals of the French Revolution were of secondary importance (The Making of Haiti). Nesbitt has criticized some significant omissions on Fick’s part, in his own case for the fundamental importance of those ideals in the development of the revolution (Universal, 62).

22. There is no doubt that Toussaint opposed and forbid Vodou, and that his role in that religion has not been significant. One possible source of doubt, however, is his assumed surname, “L’Ouverture” (which Toussaint in his later years wrote “Louverture”). “Louverture,” in French, means “the opening,” and it refers, presumably, to Toussaint as he who opens the way to freedom for all the slaves, or Toussaint as he who bravely opens the way among enemy soldiers for his men. However, there is a possibility that Toussaint was aware of his surname’s connections to Legba, the powerful Loa who is always invoked first in Vodou rituals, as he opens the way to the other Loas. Madison Smartt Bell uses this connection in his novel on Toussaint, Master of the Crossroads (“Master of the crossroads” being a title of the Loa Legba).

23. Evidently scientific knowledge can offer compelling practical evidence for the validity of its claims. Sousa Santos is simply arguing that there are other knowledges that may complement scientific knowledge, not take its place. He also points out that the view of scientific knowledge as a monolithic line of seamless development is itself false: Thomas Kuhn already laid out the problematic character of that simplistic view of scientific progress. Also, at any given moment there may be several conflicting positions or paradigms within the scientific community, and the dominance of one position sometimes responds to political, not strictly “scientific,” interests (for an interesting examination of this reality in the case of Physics, see Smolin, Trouble with Physics). Finally, there is the well-known reality that science itself cannot offer reliable ground for the ethical application of its discoveries. If we move from “hard” science to other “knowledges,” from politics to ethics to ecology, etc., the fact that they are not strictly governed by the scientific method has not stopped the West from dismissing other views as primitive or barbaric. Even on the issue of religion the West has traditionally assumed that its Judeo–Christian tradition somehow purveys self-evident truths that are superior to the religious views of conquered peoples.

Sousa Santos has explored these issues in many of his writings. In addition to Another Knowledge, Another Production and Democratizing Democracy, which are easily available in English, I have found Conocer desde el Sur a particularly useful summary of his concerns. See also Grosfoguel’s excellent overview, “La descolonización del conocimiento.”

24. “Nature” and “the natural world” are, of course, very slippery concepts. For an excellent overview of their difficulties, see Buell, Future of Environmental Criticism.

25. See Farmer, Haiti After; Diamond, Collapse; and Shawn Miller, An Environmental History.

26. George B. Handley has made a compelling argument for how in spite of the “twentieth century neo-colonial and masculine conquest . . . of ‘virgin’ nature” rhetoric (126) in Los pasos
perdidos, Carpentier’s baroque aesthetic approach (which includes his ideas on “lo real maravilloso”) in fact undermines may of his own anthropocentric assumptions.

27. James’s approach to colonialism and Marxism reveals what Sylvia Wynter calls his “pluri-conceptual framework,” in which “multiple modes of domination arising from such factors as gender, color, race, class, and education are non-dogmatically integrated” (“Beyond the Categories” 63).

Chapter 2

1. For González’s intellectual trajectory, see Irizarry, José Luis González. For the controversies around El país de cuatro pisos, see Gerald Guiness’s introduction to his translation, The Four-Storeyed Country.

2. For an extensive overview of Puerto Rican literature from its origins, see Rivera de Alvarez, Literatura puertorriqueña.

3. In his text González presents Albizu as the ideological representative of a nineteenth-century, dominant, land-owning class that saw its privileges threatened by the new powerful U.S. economic interests. For González, “the ever-growing weakness of the creole ruling class rendered it incapable of countering American imperialism with a plan of its own for the historical development of Puerto Rico and in fact finally led it to abandon the liberalism that characterized it in the last century, for the conservatism that has so far characterized it in this. The idealization—or rather, the misrepresentation—of the historical past has always been one of the typical traits of the ideology of this ruling class. Pedro Albizu Campos was without a doubt the most coherent and consistent spokesman for that conservative ideology (Puerto Rico, 7). For further analysis of the rhetoric of Albizuist nationalism and its nostalgia for the past, see Sotomayor, Hilo de Aracne, 179.

4. For a lucid examination of Pedreira’s ideological assumptions, see Flores, Insularismo, or its English version, “The Insular Vision,” included in Flores, Divided Borders.

5. For a thorough analysis of Pedreira’s historical context, see Flores, Insularismo, or its English version, “The Insular Vision,” included in Flores, Divided Borders. For lucid observations on the persistent marginalization of blackness (both black authors and black subjects) in Puerto Rican literature and culture, see Santos Febres, Sobre piel y papel.

6. Throughout this chapter, quotes in English from Palés Matos’s poetry will be my translations, followed by the poem title in the case of long quotes, and by the page number of the original Spanish in parentheses. My source is La poesía de Luis Palés Matos, Mercedes López-Baralt’s magisterial critical edition of Palés Matos’s collected poems. There are two useful translations of Palés’s poems: Julio Marzán’s 2000 Selected Poems/Poesía selecta, which includes many poems from Tuntún and other selections from Palés’s poetry; and Jean Steeves-Franco’s 2010 translation of the complete Tuntún.

7. For an overview of diverse critical responses to Palés Matos, see Marzán, The Numinous Site; and López Baralt, El barco. See also Rivera Casellas (“Cuerpo y raza”) who places Palés Matos in a wider context of representations of blackness in Puerto Rican literature. For the important connections between Palés Matos and Pedreira, see Ríos Avila, La raza cómica; and Rodríguez Vecchini, “Palés y Pedreira.” For a lucid examination of Palés Matos’s ambivalent relation to Puerto Rican black culture in the context of negrismo, see Roy-Féquierè, Women.

8. The critic Jean Claude Bajeux, one of the first to place Palés Matos in a Pan-Caribbean
context, enthusiastically reads Palés Matos’s emphasis on musicality, sonorities and rhythm as politically liberating.

9. For a more thorough examination of Palés Matos’s ironic aloofness, or distance, from the poetic universe he constructs, see Figueroa, *Not at Home*.

10. For a lucid assessment of how Palés Matos and Guillén can, and cannot, be compared, see González Pérez, “Ballad of Two Poets.”

11. For Palés Matos’s links to modernismo, see López Baralt, *El barco*. In “La biblioteca negra,” Rodríguez Vecchini developed a compelling reading of *Tuntún* as a “rewriting” in Afro-Caribbean key of Rubén Darío’s modernista classic *Cantos de vida y esperanza*.

12. Tomás Blanco perceptively suggests that one reason that many of Palés Matos’s generational peers reacted negatively to his “black poems” and their international success may have been “the fear that abroad they might consider us a black people—that is to say, a clearly unjustified shyness in the face of certain illogical racial prejudices” (*Sobre Palés Matos*, 34; my translation).

13. On the significance of Llorens Torres, see Díaz Quiñones, *El almuerzo*.

14. In the next paragraph, Palés Matos offers interesting concrete examples of his arguments: “The Haitian deformed the foreign language into *patois*. He translated Catholic symbolism into equivalents within the Vodou cult. This basic cult from the native land, brought by the grandparents and kept in spite of official prohibitions, was practiced in a thousand altars that light up their candles in the jungle. In that manner, the Haitian soul, using the expressive resources of an exotic culture, through subtle but very certain pathways, achieves its essential objectives and is fulfilled with a clearly delineated fullness” (*Obras*, 240; my translation).

15. Ruben Ríos writes: “*Tuntún* is, above all, a hysterical assembly that pulverizes the docile utopia of identity, laying bare its fictitious construction, its performative gesture, its ‘made up and concocted’ core” (*La raza*, 158; my translation).

16. An interesting example of Palés Matos’s ambivalence, one that regards the syncretism that he otherwise celebrates in so many instances, involves the definition of the word *Ecué* that he includes in the glossary (“vocabulario”) that he added to the second edition to his book. The definition that he provides is: “god of black Cuban sorcerers. It corresponds (?) to the Christ of white people” (*Tuntún*, 220). The question mark—in Spanish the parenthesis is “(¿?)”—is Palés Matos’s. It clearly indicates disbelief, confusion, irony or mockery, as if the identification of Ecué with Christ were going a step too far for the poet. Thus Palés Matos incorporates Afro-Caribbean syncretism in his poetry, yet subtly but clearly marks his distance from it.

17. Palés Matos’s ambivalent relation to his poetic material is further revealed in the often-problematic literary and ethnographic sources for the articulation of his “African” images; see Rodríguez Vecchini, “La biblioteca negra”; and López Baralt, “La biblioteca negra” (López Baralt’s text was inspired by Rodríguez Vecchini’s). Although both Rodríguez Vecchini and López Baralt acknowledge the Eurocentric and often blatantly racist character of Palés Matos’s sources, they emphasize his “ironic” appropriation of them (López Baralt, for example, simply states that “Lagarto verde” “rejects the colonized mind-frame, which attempts to imitate the invader to the point of ridicule” [16; my translation]). Such a limited (which does not mean totally mistaken) reading ignores Palés Matos’s own Eurocentric representation of the Count of Lemonade’s “authentic” character, itself a product of the logic of coloniality. My own reading does not deny Palés Matos’s ironic and satirical performance, but rather suggests that there is an agonistic anxiety in Palés Matos’s recurrent distance from the black world his poems “represent.”
18. While the biographical detail that Palés Matos himself was a white poet is an important part of the problem I am discussing, I do not think it is enough to explain it. On the one hand, Palés Matos's race does not stop him from writing those parts of *Tuntún* where he quite effectively takes up the defense and celebration of an Afro-Caribbean identity before Euro-American interests. On the other hand, Palés Matos clearly saw himself as part of an Antillean culture and society (see note 19)—and the *Tuntún* quite clearly presents Africa as an integral part of that culture. While as a white poet Palés Matos is in a position of social privilege, as an Antillean poet he knows himself (anxiously) to be part, not outside, of that spectrum of Afro-Caribbean culture.

19. In an interview Palés Matos stated: “I have never talked about a black, a white, or a mulatto poetry. I have only talked about an Antillean poetry that may express our reality as a people, in the cultural sense of that word . . .” (*Obras*, 237; my translation).

20. As one example, we may look at the "glossary" that Palés Matos included in the second edition of *Tuntún*. In it he includes a word like *dingo*, which he defines as “a wolf-dog from Australia. It is used in the poem “Candombe” in a totemic sense” (*Tuntún*, 219; my translation). Why, one may ask, would the poet use an Australian animal as a totem in an African poem? The answer is quite simple: the word has a nice “African-sounding” sonority to it, regardless of its lack of “authenticity.” It is hard not to read several of the entries in Palés Matos’s glossary as further attempts of the poet to distance himself from his Afro-Caribbean material.

21. In a 1932 interview Palés Matos stated: “I have always been ‘independentista’ [in favor of Puerto Rico’s independence], but understand me well, a tragic, dramatic ‘independentista,’ one of those who naively believe in independence at any moment, in any circumstances, and at any price. I cannot imagine a more practical solution to the great spiritual problem with which our people are engaged” (*Obras*, 302; my translation).

22. For more recent assessments on the socioeconomic conditions of Caribbean societies, see Knight and Martínez-Vergne, *Contemporary Caribbean Cultures*; Ramos, *Desencuentro*; and Palmer, *Caribbean Economy*.

23. For an analysis of the anxiety that the lack of such a stable, unified self produces on the colonizer, see Bhabha, *Location*.

Chapter 3

1. For an overview of the tensions and possible contradictions in Césaire’s political career, see Armet, "Aimé Césaire."

2. Although Césaire had retired from active politics (he was mayor of Fort-de-France until 2001), he remained engaged with current events until his death in 2008. For example, he supported Ségolène Royal in her 2007 campaign for France’s presidency.

3. In *Friends and Enemies* (chapter 3), Chris Bongie provides an insightful analysis of a late manifestation of France's linguistic universalism in his discussion of Régis Debray's *Haïti et la France* (2004) (the book version of an official government report written by Debray on the relations between Haiti and France). Even in his support of Haiti, Debray cannot stop himself from referring to it as a Francophone country. He acknowledges the importance of the Creole language (spoken by the great majority of Haitians) but goes on to state that “Creole cannot provide access to the realm of international relations, to the data of universal knowledge, nor to the culture of the legally constituted state” (qtd. in Bongie, *Friends*, 163). French universalism (or
more precisely, the Frenchness of universalism) remains alive and well in the twenty-first
century; it still regards itself not as a sum of particularisms but as a realm beyond them, to which
such particularisms (like the Creole language) do not have access.

4. For a concise overview of the contemporary currency of “Western Universalism,” see
Wallerstein, *European Universalism*. For the colonial logic of the universal claims of Western
Modernity, see Mignolo, *Dark Side of Western Modernity*.

5. For a concise overview of this period of Césaire’s political life, see Toumson and Henry-
Valmore, *Aimé Césaire: Le nègre inconsolé*.

6. In addition to *La tragédie du roi Christophe*, Césaire’s two other plays from the sixties,
*Une saison au Congo* (1966) and *Une tempête* (1969), also respond directly (albeit allegorically, in
the case of *Une tempête*) to the political events and the decolonial impulse of that period. *Une
saison* deals with the tragic fate of Patrice Lumumba.

7. “On voit grandement errer à son sujet. Certains de ses admirateurs français disent, sat-
isfaits: ‘C’est un produit de notre culture.’ D’autres, les réactionnaires: ‘méfiez-vous de lui, il a
été formé par Prague et par Moscou.’ La vérité me paraît tout autre. Il n’est que de regarder son
style: abandon à soi et contrôle de soi, véhémence et sagesse, particularisme et humanisme, il a
créé en politique le style Africain mais c’est l’Afrique, son passé millénaire qui lui ont enseigné
tout cela” (Césaire, “Preface,” 6).

8. In a paradox characteristic of Césaire’s political career, Touré was Guinea’s first presi-
dent after the French colony voted in 1958 for immediate independence from the metropolis
(whereas Césaire had opted earlier for the “overseas department” status for Martinique). *Ferre-
ments* includes a poem titled “Salut à la Guinée” (“Hail to Guinea”) that celebrates Guinea’s love
of freedom.

9. Garraway also highlights the possible connections between Césaire’s approach and
Laclau’s formulations (“What is Mine,” 77). See also Figueroa’s *Not at Home* and “Between
Louverture.”

10. For nineteenth-century homages to Toussaint see, for example, William Wordsworth’s
well-known poem “To Toussaint Louverture,” from 1803, as well as J. R. Beard’s *The Life of
Toussaint L’Ouverture* (1853) and Wendell Phillips’s lecture “Toussaint L’Ouverture” (1861).

11. Although it is extremely unlikely that Césaire had any knowledge of *The Black Jacob-
ins* (1938) before publishing his *Cahier* in 1939, James’s influence is noticeable throughout Cé-
saire’s *Toussaint Louverture*, particularly with regards to the argument that the colonies played
a seminal role in the production and accumulation of capital in Europe, which paradoxically
led to events like the French Revolution, in which the French bourgeoisie challenged the Old
Regime, without realizing that their arguments and guiding principles would be appropriated
by Haiti’s “black Jacobins” in their struggle for their own liberation. We can also detect James’s
influence in Césaire’s comments on how Louverture lost touch with the masses at the criti-
cal stage of his struggle, a mistake that contributed to his downfall. I have not been able to
locate any explicit references to James in Césaire’s works that would give us his assessment of
the great Trinidadian’s thought or works; he does quote James a couple of times in *Toussaint
Louverture* (234; 251). James briefly reviews Césaire’s *Toussaint Louverture* in the bibliography of
the second edition of *The Black Jacobins*; he is appreciative but finds that “it lacks the fire and
constant illumination which distinguish most of the other work of Césaire” (388).

12. For a close literary analysis of the role of Haiti in the poem throughout its different
versions, see Pestre de Almeida, *Aimé Césaire: Un saison en Haiti*. 
13. For an overview of some of the political and cultural repercussions of the Haitian Revolution in the Caribbean, see Popkin, Facing Racial Revolution; Geggus, ed., Impact; and Fischer, Modernity Disavowed.

14. The original French reads: “il est place pour tous au rendez-vous de la conquête” (Cahier, 29). One translation of the phrase renders it as “the rendezvous of victory,” which is the form Said was fond of, and which gives its title to one anthology of C. L. R. James’s writings (At the Rendezvous of Victory). While that translation captures some aspects of Césaire’s celebratory declaration of inclusiveness, it lacks the ambiguity of the original “conquest,” which remains provocative in a colonial context.

15. The Nigerian writer Wole Soyinka famously riposted that a black man does not need to proclaim his negritude any more than a tiger has to proclaim its “tigritude” (see Burden, 141). Césaire himself criticizes the essentializing of negritude in an interview with the Haitian poet René Depestre, insisting that his conception of negritude isn’t biological but cultural and historical (Depestre, Bonjour, 144). It has frequently been noted that Léopold Senghor’s view of negritude does tend to rely on more essentialist notions, and it is mainly (but not exclusively) to him that critics have often responded (see Loomba, Colonialism/Postcolonialism; and Young, Postcolonialism). In Voicing Memory, Nesbitt provides useful details on the relation and actual points of contact between Césaire and Senghor, at least in the initial stages of their careers. See also Kesteloot, Black Writers; and Arnold, Modernism.

16. For a more thorough examination of the tensions that I discuss in the Cahier, see my discussion of the poem in Figueroa, Not at Home.

17. Originally written in 1963, the play was revised for a new edition in 1970. The English translation is from 1969, and overall it does a good job of capturing the original edition’s main thrust, although it does not do justice to the intensity of Césaire’s poetry. I will quote from the 1969 English translation unless otherwise indicated; occasionally I will direct the reader to the original French when a passage from the definitive French edition does not appear in the translation, or I may offer my own translation.

18. In the original French, see pages 20, 40, 84, and 145–46, among others in which Christophe emphasizes the specificity of his black identity. As just one example, in an argument with Pétion in the first scene Christophe highlights the historical tension between blacks and free people of color when he states, “I’m not mulatto, I don’t sift my words” (12).

19. At certain points in the play Christophe invokes not only Africa but also African and Vodou gods. By contrast, as with other heroes of the revolution, the historical Christophe’s relation to Vodou remains somewhat ambiguous; what is clear in the historical record is that, like Toussaint before him, Christophe persecuted the practice of Vodou and insisted on Roman Catholicism as the official religion of his kingdom. See Dayan, Haiti.

20. In his Aimé Césaire Raphael Confiant criticizes Césaire for his seeming obsession with masculine heroics. An interesting response to Césaire’s traditional rhetoric can be found in Daniel Maximin’s novel, L’isolé soleil. Et les chiens se taisaient was originally published in Les Armes miraculeuses (1946); see Césaire Œuvres. It can be found in English in Lyric and Dramatic Poetry. For the understudied role of women in the negritude movement, see Sharpley-Whiting, Negritude Women.

21. In this chapter, I am respecting Césaire’s use of the term “mulatto,” which names one of the main sections of his book. In the other chapters, I also preserve the word when it is used by the writers (for example, in Palés Matos’s poetry). However, historians have gradually moved
Notes to Chapter 3

away from a simplistic use of that term, in favor of a more nuanced view of Saint Domingue's social structure, in which, rather than speaking of blacks and mulattoes, it is more accurate to speak about enslaved people and free people of color (many who were mulatto, but some of whom were former black slaves who might even have acquired slaves themselves). One may also distinguish between the wealthier white sugar plantation owners, "les grand blancs," and lower class whites, "les petits blancs." For a description of these complex categories, see Garrigus, Before Haiti; and Stewart R. King, Blue Coat.

22. For overviews of the justifications of slavery both in France and beyond, and Enlightenment's philosophers' ability, or lack thereof, to effectively address the injustices of the slave system, see Sala-Molins, Le code noir and Dark Side; Miller, The French Atlantic Triangle; Nesbitt, Universal Emacipation; Ghachem, The Old Regime; and Davis, Inhuman Bondage. See also Blackburn's important trilogy of books, The Making: The Overthrow; and The American Crucible. For an overview of the presence and impact of the Enlightenment in modern Caribbean literature, see Miller, Elusive Origins. For the broader issue of the way in which racism and slavery have also found philosophical justifications, see Buck-Morss, Hegel; and Patteron, Slavery.

23. Buck-Morss's text remains fundamental for any reflection on the relation between Hegel and the Haitian Revolution. In Voicing Memory, Nesbitt offers an important alternative approach, which highlights Césaire's productive use of Hegel.

24. For the affective and existential dimension of coloniality, and Fanon's groundbreaking role in its analysis, see Gordon, Fanon; Gordon, Existentia; and Oliver, Colonization.

25. The notion of a French commonwealth, which corresponds to Césaire's long dream of more local autonomy for the Overseas Departments without severing the links with France, seems oxymoronic in the context of France's highly centralized political system (in spite of the creation in 1958 of a French Community). Césaire certainly writes his essay in a moment when his discontent with Martinique's departmental status has reached a high point. For a general overview of Césaire's tensions with France's central government, see Toumson and Henry-Valmore, Aimé Césaire. Walsh (Free and French) offers an extended and insightful examination of the issues and problems that Toussaint and Césaire share, which Césaire indeed understands as shared problems arising from France's colonial framework even in departmentalization. Hurley ("Is He, Am I, a Hero") offers a compelling reading of Césaire's essay on Toussaint as a self-referential text, in which the poet uses the figure of the Haitian general in order to explore his own political dilemmas.

26. For a reading that focuses on the commonalities of both works (their attempt to challenge a Western hegemonic reading of history), see Madureira, Cannibal Modernities.

27. In Voicing Memory (chapter 4), Nesbitt offers a compelling reading of how Césaire incorporates Hegelian elements in the Tragedy. I certainly agree with Nesbitt that Césaire, like other French and Francophone intellectuals of his generation, felt considerable enthusiasm for Hegel. My emphasis here is that that enthusiasm, as his enthusiasm for other aspects of the European Enlightenment, coexisted with considerable anxiety. As Nesbitt acknowledges, Césaire not only "cannibalized" Hegel but also went out of his way to insist on his commitment to a purely Afrocentric approach—"though Césaire's many Franco-European influences are readily apparent, his politically engaged speeches and interviews often downplayed those influences in favor of the African and African-American cultures celebrated by negritude" (Voicing, 122). It is in that self-doubting gesture (which I agree is quite insufficient to "hide" Césaire's European formation and erudition) that I locate Césaire's double bind as a colonial subject; it is visible
throughout most of his poetry and plays. As far as the effectiveness of drawing on Hegel at all to begin with, it goes without saying that the Left and the Right have successfully appropriated the German philosopher. Inasmuch as Hegel’s dialectical approach imposes a predetermined goal (in terms of contents, rather than in exclusively heuristic terms) to history, it can be argued that excessive reliance on Hegel by a decolonial thinker like Césaire is problematic indeed. It was that dialectical teleology, when applied by Sartre, that Fanon found so dismaying in Black Skin (137–38), even if of course one can also read Hegel into Fanon (after all, as Foucault suggested, one can be Hegelian even in one’s attempts to escape Hegel [Nesbitt, Voicing, 119]). If the dialectic begins with Europe as its initial “positive” moment, it is likely to remain Eurocentric, no matter how much “otherness” it incorporates. Something like what Mignolo calls a “pluritopic hermeneutics,” taking as its point of departure the interaction of multiple literal and metaphorical locations, would be necessary (Darker Side of Renaissance; Local Histories). As Buck-Morss convincingly argues, it is precisely the concreteness of the Haitian Revolution that gets erased or silenced in Hegel’s appropriation of it in his development of the abstract Master-Slave dialectic. Incidentally, that is also why É. Glissant’s insistence on unpredictability, as an essential aspect of his vision of liberation, is so important (Introduction, 19; Philosophie, 67). In the Tragedy Christophe states in Glissantian fashion: “The human material needs recasting. How are we going to do it? I don’t know. We’ll start on a small scale. In our little workshop” (37). However, one can argue that Christophe’s Afrocentrism in the play ignores precisely that “I don’t know;” it remains immersed in a colonial logic that imposes a Eurocentric narrative, even if that logic disguises itself as the emancipating thrust of a Hegelian dialectic.

28. Edouard Glissant, in works like Poétique de la relation and Traité du Tout-Monde among others, had a tendency to present tensions similar to those in Césaire’s works—now transformed into notions such as “opacité,” “poétique de la relation,” “chaos-monde,” “tout-monde,” and others—as somehow more easily reconciled in the contemporary multicultural, postmodern world. As the critic Celia Britton commented of Glissant in 1999: “he increasingly writes as though the values of Relation, chaos, and diversity have in fact already prevailed” (Edouard Glissant, 9).

29. In many regards Césaire is, like the other authors examined in this book, a “colonial subject,” in that he was born and educated in a colonial society to which he must adapt even as his relation to it is mainly one of opposition and critique. One of Fanon’s great contributions to decolonial thinking, in writings like “The Lived Experience of the Black Man” [“The Fact of Blackness”] chapter in Black Skin, is his explicit and eloquent expression of the tensions and anguish of the colonial subjectivity—in other words, his dramatic presentation of how the colonized subject is not always pure rebellion, but rather a node of contradicting desires, many of them produced and fed to him by the colonial system itself. An acknowledgment of that existential dimension of coloniality is vital in its critique. We can often observe those tensions and contradicting desires in Césaire’s writings, albeit frequently in spite of the seeming intentions of the poet.

30. For a very general overview of Haiti’s symbolic role in Martinique’s intellectual imaginary, see Salien, “Haïti vue de la Martinique.”

31. The novels in question are La renuncia del héroe Balatasar (1974) and La noche oscura del niño Avilés (1984). For a more detailed assessment of those novels’ connections to the Haitian Revolution, see Figueroa, “In Search.”

32. Walsh (Free and French in the Caribbean) offers a very useful overview of Césaire’s visit to Haiti and the significance of Haiti in his oeuvre.
Chapter 4

1. For the operas based on Dessalines, see Largey, *Vodou Nation*. For a useful overview of Dessalines’s image throughout the nineteenth century and its use by African American writers, see Twa, “Jean-Jacques Dessalines.”

2. It is relatively hard to find reliable information on Dessalines, given his polarizing reputation. Important sources are Thomas Madiou’s *Histoire d’Haïti* (1817) and Beaubrun Ardouin’s *Etudes sur l’histoire d’Haïti* (1853)—both offer a wealth of details on the revolution and were written not long after the events, but they have been accused of bias in favor of the mulattoes or Haitian elites. The most thorough overview of Dessalines’s figure, and probably the most sympathetic presentation, is probably Dupont’s *Jean-Jacques Dessalines*.

3. Throughout the chapter, all quotes from all three plays will come from that volume, *The Haitian Trilogy*, and will be followed by page number in parenthesis.

4. For an overview of the racial hierarchy in the Saint Domingue colony, see Dubois *Avengers*. As we have seen, in *Toussaint Louverture*, Césaire also vividly portrays a racist social structure that lends its shape to the very structure of his book. As indicated in the notes of chapter 3, contemporary historians prefer the categories of enslaved people and free people of color to the somewhat reductive terms “blacks” and “mulattoes,” although the latter have a long history in Haitian history and historiography.

5. In her important *Beyond the Slave Narrative: Politics, Sex and Narrative in the Haitian Revolution*, Deborah Jenson examines official documents, proclamations, and other little-studied texts produced by Dessalines. The result is a tremendously complex figure with many links to later developments in anticolonial thought. Jenson highlights Dessalines’ emphasis on black agency and the need for self-liberation by any means possible (in which she finds some connections to Malcolm X’s rhetoric); the Pan-American discourse of freedom and cooperative sovereignty that dominates his attempts to establish commercial relations with the United States; and, in the same vein, Dessalines’ attempt to export the revolution’s emancipating impulse to neighboring colonies like Trinidad and Venezuela.

6. For a useful overview of the role of history in Walcott’s works, which always connected to the dimensions of place and myth, see Part I of Burnett’s *Derek Walcott*.

7. “I knew, from childhood, that I wanted to become a poet, and like any colonial child I was taught English literature as my natural inheritance. Forget the snow and the daffodils. They were real, more real than the heat and the oleander, perhaps, because they lived on the page, in imagination, and therefore in memory” (*What the Twilight*, 62)

8. Earlier in the play Christophe declares more explicitly: “You fools; I do not tie the shoe-laces of history; I am the history of which you speak” (28).

9. In the autobiographical poem *Another Life* (1973), Walcott writes of himself and of his painter friend “Gregorias” (Dunstan St. Omer) as young artists:

   . . . drunkenly, or secretly, we swore,
   Disciples of that astigmatic saint,
   That we would never leave the island
   Until we had put down, in paint, in words,
   As palmists learn the network of a hand,
   All of its sunken, leaf-choked ravines,
   Every neglected, self-pitying inlet
Muttering in brackish dialect, the ropes of mangroves
From which old soldier crabs slipped
Surrendering to slush,
Each ochre track seeking some hilltop and
Losing itself in an unfinished phrase . . .
(Walcott, *Collected*, 194)

10. A similar critique of a Caribbean rhetoric of *male* heroism informs Guadeloupean novelist Daniel Maximin’s *L’isolé soleil* [*Lone Sun*] (1981), where the mass suicide of Louis Delgrés’s men against Napoleon’s forces in 1802 is contrasted to the less celebrated persistence of *women* who survive in order to patiently, and without the pyrotechnics, attempt to build a better future. For an interesting take on the role of the rhetoric of heroism in the very different case of Puerto Rico, see Sotomayor, “La imaginación nacionalista” (*Hilo de Aracne*). Of great interest also is José Martí’s ambiguous relation to that rhetoric of heroism, given his iconic status in the Caribbean; see “El reposo de los héroes” in Ramos.

11. We may establish a connection between Toussaint’s attitude toward France’s “civilized” ideals and Césaire’s words, examined in chapter 3, about France not colonizing “in the name” of the Declaration of the Rights of Man, only to begrudgingly acknowledge immediately that maybe those principles did play a role in France’s self-appointed “civilizing” role (*Nègre je suis*, 69–70). Thus we see the ubiquity of the colonized subject’s double bind with regards to the modern/colonial world system.

12. For a concise overview of the ways the image of Toussaint has been construed by friends and enemies, see the afterword of Madison Smartt Bell’s *Toussaint Louverture*. For a view of the revolution that tries to go beyond the almost exclusive emphasis on heroic leaders like Toussaint, see Fick, *The Making of Haiti*; and Fouchard, *The Haitian Maroons*.

13. Both Thieme (*Derek Walcott, 147*) and King (*Derek Walcott and West Indian, 326*) suggest that Yette, divided between her love for the earth and her desire for the city, is a more complex character than Pompey, the simple pleasant totally committed to the land. I agree with that assessment, and Yette’s complexity may make her a better representative of the complex pulls (ranging from subsistence farming to insertion into international markets) that have dominated Haiti’s history. The play, however, oversimplifies that complexity by racializing it—Yette claims “The white part of me is the town / the black part of me is the country” (36). The reduction of those tensions to racial stereotypes detracts from their presentation in the play.

14. In Walcott’s most “epic” work, *Omeros*, one of the main protagonists, the Fisherman Achille, also receives an “education” that gently pushes him away from grand heroic and tragic models of emancipation. Attempting to escape his limited and limiting surroundings, Achille travels in a dream back to the Africa of his ancestors. There, part of his lesson will be the acceptance of his history and legacy: not the passive acceptance that justifies or is indifferent to the injustices of the past, but the ability to fully embrace and inhabit his creolized reality with its many resources and possibilities, in order to better address the injustices of the present. After that initiatory dream, Achille’s accepted field of action will be his local, seemingly unglamorous everyday surroundings.

15. To the discussion of the problems that Yette faces within the plot of the play, we might add at another level an analysis of the role Walcott gives her in the play, particularly her association with the Haitian earth itself. Although Yette resists working the soil at first, Pompey gradually educates her about the importance of working the land—a land that she herself sym-
bolically embodies, since we are told that “her skin the same shade as the ground” (334). The feminization of the land (and the fatherland), and moreover the explicit presentation of women as representatives of the land and nature, often respond to problematic gendered categories that ultimately restrict the possibilities of women (more often than not, women of color) as actual human beings. We see a similar problem in the character of Helen in Walcott’s Omeros; for that case, see Figueroa, Not at Home.

16. For the history of Black Power, see Joseph, Waiting; Joseph, ed., The Black Power Movement; and Ogbar, Black Power. For Walcott’s personal ambivalence about the Black Power movement and its effects in the Caribbean (particularly Trinidad, where there were violent demonstrations in 1973 after Stokely Carmichael was banned from the island), see King, Derek Walcott.

17. All of these issues find complex expression in Walcott’s most famous play, Dream on Monkey Mountain (1970). The play has been regarded as Walcott’s response to the surge of Black Power movements, but even in that case it remains an ambivalent and complicated response. In the play, Makak decapitates the “white goddess” in his attempt to recover his black pride, but it was the white goddess who sent him on his quest to begin with. At the end of the play, Makak’s peace with his situation and his identity could be regarded as a renunciation of the violent actions that dominate the previous sections of the play, or as an achievement that that violence, for better or worse, actually made possible.

18. For an overview of the role of racial discourses in the formation of Latin American, see Hyatt and Nettleford, eds., Race; and Mignolo, The Idea. For an accessible broader overview of the historical development and deployment of racial categories, see Rattansi.

19. Walcott writes in “What the Twilight Says”: “One kind of writer, generally the entertainer, says, “I will write in the language of the people however gross or incomprehensible” another says: “Nobody else go understand this, you hear, so le’ me write English”; while the third is dedicated to purifying the language of the tribe, and it is he who is jumped on by both sides for pretentiousness or playing white. He is the mulatto of style. The traitor. The assimilator” (What the Twilight, 8–9). Walcott is, naturally, the third kind of writer, and his justified resentment against those who jumped on him from both sides is only matched by his rhetorical unfairness, which condescendingly reduces all attempts to write in “the language of the people” as the work of mere “entertainers.” Evidently, the accusation does not even do justice to his own use of vernacular Creole in his poetry. On the other hand, Anton in The Haitian Earth captures Walcott’s tensions as a poet with the imperative for political commitment in the age of Black Power when he complains “Perhaps I should not be a writer but a soldier” (306).

20. Toussaint did have a close relation to his master, Bayon de Libertat, manager of the Bréda plantation. He was already a free black by the time the revolution started in 1791. As for Toussaint’s feelings for his former master, the records suggest that they were indeed affectionate; in one of his writings, reflecting on how Bayon granted him his freedom, Toussaint refers to his former master as “one of those men who think more of their duties to fulfill toward oppressed humanity than the product of work of an unfortunate being” (Smartt Bell, Toussaint, 70). Thus, Walcott’s fictional encounter between Toussaint and Calixte Bréda may be excessive in its pathos, but not totally inaccurate in its portrayal of Toussaint’s initial position between two worlds. For an excellent overview of Toussaint’s situation before he joined the revolution, see Smartt Bell, Toussaint.

21. In “Monotonies of History” Chris Bongie attempts to link the figure of the mulatto Vastey in The Haitian Trilogy to Walcott’s own conflicts as a mulatto intellectual. The essay
makes many important points about Vastey, although it tends to oversimplify the plays’ criticisms of Dessalines and Christophe as mainly examples of the “Mulatto Legend” reading of Haitian history, which serves the self-legitimating purposes of the mulatto elite. At the same time, Anton’s important presence is relegated to a footnote.

22. For Walcott’s religious preoccupations, see D’Aguiar, “In God We Troust.”

23. Aside from the need to make the distinction between love and forgiveness, Deacon Dale’s conception of love is significantly different from Derrida’s in his belief that “the man who whips you cuts his own flesh,” that is to say, in his mystical assertion that in spite of their violence against each other, humans are spiritually one. The logical conclusion is that in hurting the other I hurt myself (and vice versa). Derrida is more Levinasian in his approach: forgiveness, as he understands it, would be compromised by the belief that in loving the other I love myself. The radical alterity of the other must be preserved.

24. For a useful overview of the moral dilemmas posed by Truth Commissions, see Hayner, Unspeakable Truths.

25. For the U.S. occupation of Haiti, see Renda, Taking Haiti; and Schmidt, United States. For an insightful assessment of the 2010 earthquake’s connections to Haiti’s political and economic situation, see Farmer, Haiti After.

26. C. L. R. James praises a similar description of the events in France on the part of Saint Domingue slaves: “And meanwhile, what of the slaves? They had heard of the revolution and had construed it in their own image: the white slaves in France had risen, and killed their masters, and were now enjoying the fruits of the earth. It was greatly inaccurate in fact, but they had caught the spirit of the thing” (Black Jacobins, 81).

Chapter 5

1. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from the play are from the 2005 edition of the 1978 version translated by J. Michael Dash and Glissant himself. There is an older translation of this version of the play, made by Juris Silenieks in 1981. The longer 1961 version of the play was performed on the French radio in 1971. The shorter 1978 version was streamlined for stage performances, and has indeed been performed several times. Overall the “version scénique” retains the substance of the original longer play, mainly shortening long speeches and dialogues, and eliminating a subplot concerning General Charles Belair. It is not my objective here to compare these two versions, except to indicate that in the longer version Toussaint comes across as slightly more assertive (he has more lines). Although I will focus on the latter version throughout this chapter, when necessary I will quote passages from the 1961 version that did not make it to the 1978 version; in those cases, the translations are mine.

To further complicate matters, the Dash/Glissant translation eliminates some very significant lines and scenes from 1978 version of the play. When quoting lines from the 1978 version that do not appear in the Dash/Glissant translation I will use Silenieks’s translation, and I will use the translator’s name in the parenthetical reference.

2. James himself wrote a play on the revolution, titled Toussaint Louverture, in 1936 (Paul Robeson played the title character in the staging of that version). In 1967 James rewrote the play, retitling it The Black Jacobins. In James’s play, the contrast between Moyse and Toussaint plays a central role. The 1967 version is included in Hill; the original version was published in 2013.
3. Césaire presents his hypothesis on Toussaint’s self-sacrifice in chapter 15 of the third section of his Toussaint Louverture, titled precisely “Le sacrifice” (“The Sacrifice”).

4. It could be argued that Césaire does acknowledge the dilemma that Glissant confronts if one contrasts his Toussaint Louverture, with its admiration for Toussaint’s careful planning for a postcolonial future, to his Tragedie du roi Christophe, with its begrudged admiration for Christophe’s megalomaniac, but grandiosely tragic, attempt to enoble the black race through his own self-aggrandizement. Christophe remains, nonetheless, a problematic figure, since it is not possible for the author to totally overcome the horrors of the historical Christophe. Additionally, Christophe did share Toussaint’s economic concerns about the international market. The contrast between Ariel and Caliban in Une tempête may be closer to the tensions in Glissant’s play.

5. Certain critics refer to the movement as the “Front Antillo-Guyanais pour l’Indépendance” (for example, Jones, “We Were Going,” 249), a name that Glissant himself has used in an interview (Couffon, Visite à Edouard Glissant, 50). The ambiguity is significant, as it suggests Glissant’s ambivalent position with regards to nationalist politics from early in his career. The Front itself was ambiguous in its proposal of a status for the French Antilles, although it took a clear stand for Antillean self-determination, against assimilationist departmentalization as it had been established after World War II, and in favor of establishing stronger links with the rest of the Caribbean region. For a lucid examination of the main text produced by the Front, Les Antilles et la Guyane à l’heure de la décolonization, see Nesbitt, Caribbean Critique.

6. As David Macey indicates, in the appropriation of Fanon by postcolonial studies, Fanon’s work has not always been adequately placed in its Caribbean context. See also Mardorossian, “From Fanon to Glissant.”

7. Macaïa (presented in the list of characters as a “rebel leader”) is based on the historical Congo leader Macaya, who led a band of slaves that always operated on the margins of Toussaint’s army. In fact he was briefly taken prisoner by Toussaint in 1795, and actively resisted Toussaint’s attempts to impose the plantation system on the former slaves. Interestingly, at least in the early years of the revolution, the historical Macaya insisted on his fidelity to his African (Congolese) royalist political views, declaring himself a “subject of the king of Congo.” Macaya also appears briefly as a character in Victor Hugo’s Bug Jargal (1826). In his play, Glissant omits all of those details and portrays the character as the anarchistic, libertarian opponent to Toussaint. For the historical Macaya, see Thornton, “I am the Subject”; and the appropriate sections in Fick, The Making of Haiti.

8. At the same time, it is important not to identify Macaïa’s “anarchistic” forest time with some mythical, circular or “premodern” conception of time. Macaïa’s forest is the maroon territory in the mountains, his time is not the supposedly progressive march “forward” of modernity/coloniality, but the oppositional time of the colonial difference, which aspires to what one might call, following Dussel, a transmodern vision. Slaves were always already part of modernity, as its underside. Thus, Macaïa’s argument is not abstract, about different conceptions of time, but political, about coloniality disguised as “progress,” which is the time unit of “modernity.”

9. For overviews of roads taken and not taken in Haiti’s history, see Dubois, The After shocks; Fatton, Haiti’s Predatory Republic; and Farmer, The Uses.

10. For Quijano, “One of the fundamental axes of this model of power is the social classification of the world’s population around the idea of race, a mental construction that expresses the basic experience of colonial domination and pervades the more important dimensions of global power, including its specific rationality: Eurocentrism. The racial axis has a colonial origin and
character, but it has proven to be more durable and stable than the colonialism in whose matrix it was established” (“Coloniality of Power,” 533).

11. In the 1961 longer version of the play, Toussaint states: “Danton, Robespierre, Santhonax, Saint-Just, they are all gone! The Revolution is lost in France; we will defend it here” (112; my translation). This acknowledgment of the French Revolution’s most radical actors, and the need to bring that movement to its logical radical consequences, certainly make Toussaint exemplary of the “black Jacobins” that James refers to, even if it does not necessarily reveal a full acknowledgment of the transmodern dimension of the Haitian Revolution. In this case, as in others, Toussaint comes across as a more complex figure in Glissant’s older version of his play.

12. For some reason the soldier’s significant remark and Toussaint’s dismissive response (“those who die are eating the earth”) are not included in Dash’s and Glissant’s translation, but they do appear in Silenieks’s version.


14. Evidently the figurative use of the concept of slavery in European revolutionary rhetoric was not unusual, with the Marseillaise itself objecting a return to “l’antique esclavage.” Among some thinkers the paradoxical rise of the United States as a slave-holding bastion of liberty did not go unnoticed either. See Buck-Morss, Hegel; Davis, The Problem; and Blackburn, The American.

15. As Michel-Rolph Trouillot poignantly points out, “The Haitian Revolution . . . entered history with the peculiar characteristic of being unthinkable even as it happened” (Silencing the Past, 73). Of course, that “unthinkability,” which is the unthinkability of black slave agency and full humanity in the minds of even “enlightened” Europeans, is itself a sign of the coloniality of power. Buck-Morss’s book on Hegel and Haiti offers a compelling overview of the impact of the Haitian Revolution on European thinkers beyond the German philosopher.

16. In describing the revolting slaves as “transmodern” with regards to the ideals of European Enlightenment I do not mean to say that all of them consciously shared one abstract, alternative universalist project. Evidently, the revolting slaves came with all kinds of individual and group perspectives and designs, united by the immediate desire to emancipate themselves from slavery. The point here is that in this they were not different from any other human collectivity coming together in revolutionary action (not all the people who rally around a cause do so for the same reason). Buck-Morss aptly illuminates this point in “Universal History,” the second essay of Hegel, Haiti, and Universal History.

17. Quite surprisingly, the Dash/Glissant translation of the play eliminates the powerful, though humiliating for Toussaint, scene of the removal of his uniform and insignias. To complicate matters further, and limiting ourselves to the original French, in the 1961 version of the play Toussaint retains a lucidity that is eliminated from the 1978 version; he shows this when he states: “We are free today because we are the strongest. The consul retains slavery in Martinique and Bourbon. Thus, we will become slaves when he becomes the strongest” (112; my translation). The significant changes from the 1961 to the 1978 French versions, and then from the 1978 French version to the Dash/Glissant translation suggest a keen indecisiveness, on Glissant’s part, as to how he wants to depict Toussaint as a historical figure but also, equally important, as a Caribbean symbol.

Walsh offers an extremely valuable examination of the implications of the historical Toussaint’s ambivalent relation to France and Napoleon, as expressed in Toussaint’s “texts,” which range from letters, to his 1801 Constitution, to the “mémoire” he wrote in prison (Free and French in the Caribbean).
18. In a lyrical passage of 2007’s *Une nouvelle région du monde*, Glissant links the prison in the Jura mountains to other symbolic spaces of black imprisonment, such as Gorée (in today’s Senegal), from where many slaves were shipped to the New World; Dubuc Castle in Martinique, which received some of those slaves; and Robben Island, where Nelson Mandela was imprisoned. With regards to Toussaint, Glissant writes: “The Joux Fort close to Pontarlier where Toussaint Louverture was thrown and where he died of hunger and cold; I always imagine it like a boat that sails across the Jura mountains as its bow beats the swelling waves of the black forests” (*Une nouvelle*, 151; my translation). All of those prisons are “places of both imprisonment and liberation” (ibid.; my translation). An important dimension that *Une nouvelle* brings into the picture, as it links Toussaint to other geographies and time periods, is what Glissant calls, throughout *Mémoires des esclavages* (2007), the need for “transversal histories” of slaveries, slave trades, and liberation struggles, through which the transnational character of slavery and racism, and the resistances against them, can be explored.

19. Glissant’s relation to Creole was always ambiguous, to say the least. Although *Monsieur Toussaint’s* prologue refers to the Creole segments as expressing “the pure pleasure of writing at last a language *as one hears it*” (14; Glissant’s emphasis), he has severe pages in *Le discours antillais* on Creole as linguistic expression of colonial alienation. In his own work Glissant uses a form of creolized French, and he was critical of the “Creolité” movement as potentially essentialist, whereas he preferred the term “creolization,” which pointed to a more fluid, never final aesthetic (Glissant, *L’imaginaire*, 30–31). One might conclude from his comments that Glissant is mainly trying to avoid a certain kind of exoticism that he seems to associate with writing in Creole. His theoretical distinction between *langue* and *langage* in *Le discours* may be in part a way to justify his choice: even while writing in French (*langue*), his outlook, style and attitude (*his langage*) are Caribbean. For a good overview of Glissant’s linguistic strategies, see Britton, *Edouard Glissant*.

20. Regardless of how one ultimately judges Glissant’s late works, it is hard to disagree with Bongie when he states that “an increasing number of academic readers of Glissant, have, in line with Hallward, understandably registered a certain unease, and even distress, when it comes to his later writings” (*Friends*, 339). Although Britton has consistently argued for the persistent political currency of Glissant’s ideas, one can detect echoes of that “unease” when she points out in 1999—that is, before the publication of Hallward’s book—that in his 1990s works Glissant “increasingly writes as if the values of Relation, chaos, and diversity have in fact already prevailed” (*Edouard Glissant*, 9). At the very least, then, one could accuse Glissant of unskillfully failing to translate the connection between his ideas and reality into effective writing. Many of the core arguments for or against Glissant revolve around deciding whether in his late works he simply moved toward different, more abstract concerns (which might make him irrelevant or not, depending on whether one finds those concerns useful in the articulation of one’s *concrete* battles), or whether he is actually (and problematically and perhaps self-servingly) arguing that engagement in concrete battles of any kind has become a trivial pursuit in our globalized world, and that any battle that does not address primordially global concerns is in fact complicit with the forces of neoliberal globalization. While I lean toward the first alternative, proponents of both positions have found supporting quotations from Glissant’s many writings.

21. Glissant equals the “new region of the world” (one his last images for global interrelatedness) to the tout-monde: “It is never true that we are naive in this region, it is not a refuge of dreams or a phantom of hope. Just as well, in it we do not stumble anymore. It is not a chosen land. It does not belong to anyone. *As you already know, without knowing anything yet, we ac-
claim it and call it Whole-World [Tout-Monde]” (*Une nouvelle*, 76; my translation; Glissant’s italics).

22. In his two insightful chapters on Glissant in *Caribbean Critique*, Nesbitt sides with Hallward and Bongie on the criticism of the seemingly apolitical character of late Glissant’s theoretical writings. However, Nesbitt also points out that in spite of its more critical focus on the need for a nationalist anticolonial project, *Le discours antillais* already displayed what Nesbitt terms “utopian . . . aesthetic musings thrown out to give a vague veneer of political investment devoid of any sense of what might be involved in constructing the ‘collectivity’ he [Glissant] invokes” (242). Additionally, as Nesbitt clearly elucidates, both *Le discours antillais* and Glissant’s first novel *Le Lexarède* are marked by a clear pessimism and skepticism about the possibility of an anticolonial project of the kind Fanon, for example, had articulated. Even during that period celebrated by some critics as his most “political” Glissant remained stuck in “l’impuissance à sortir de l’impassé” (*Discours*, 13; quoted in the context of the present discussion in Nesbitt, *Caribbean*, 241). As I have tried to demonstrate in this chapter, *Monsieur Toussaint* is also an eloquent example of Glissant’s impasse.

23. Boaventura de Sousa Santos’s concern with “other (non-Occidentalist) knowledges” (which also imply other imaginaries) offers good examples of areas in which some of Glissant’s ideas against the “totalitarian drive of the single root” might be applicable. See, among several of his texts, *Another Knowledge Is Possible*.

24. The question still remains of how the “insights” of Glissant’s deconstruction of the logic of coloniality translate into concrete political action. This question is further complicated by the fact that Glissant acknowledges that historical imperialism, in its colonial joining of distant regions of the globe, played an important, albeit paradoxical role in the development of the “totalité-monde” (another term for the “tout-monde”) that he praises (see, for example, *Introduction*, 88). Bongie makes this point most cogently in his critique of Glissant’s notion of “mondialité” (akin to “tout-monde”), which the Martinican author attempts to distinguish from “mondialisation” (linked to neoliberal globalization) in *La cohée* (Bongie, *Friends*, 334–38). Reading somewhat against the grain of Glissant’s rather excessive optimism, I would suggest that the question of practical usefulness remains unanswered because those poetic musings (productive and provocative as they might be) are not solutions, but rather extensions of the impasse (between Toussaint and Macàia) already present in *Monsieur Toussaint*—attempts to make that impasse productive by making it a necessary point of departure rather than a dead-end conclusion. One might argue it is an impasse that any serious post/colonial writer must address, without oversimplifying it, even at the risk of remaining indefinitely perplexed by its conflicting pulls. That perplexity need not entail inaction, and it does not seem to have paralyzed Glissant’s engagement with concrete causes (regardless of one’s assessment of his political activities).

25. A phrase that Monsieur Libertat the colonist repeats against Toussaint several times in the play is “you cannot change what exists” (*Monsieur Toussaint*, 33; 34; 35; 40; my translation). The use of the word “exists” naturalizes as an ontological given the colonial social order of slavery. Not surprisingly, Toussaint states when talking about liberty and equality, “I work to make them exist” (*Monsieur Toussaint*, 33; my translation). The Dash/Glissant version translates most of those instances (except the first one) as “you will not change the way thing are,” a phrasing that softens the ontological essentialism of the original.

26. Glissant’s concept of “unpredictability,” in conjunction with “tout-monde” and its derivatives, could enter into an interesting dialogue with Hardt’s and Negri’s “multitude.”
27. I am contrasting Monsieur Toussaint to Glissant’s theoretical works in terms of the impasse with regard to possibilities of action in a post(neo)colonial context. The same questions and preoccupations appear in his novels, beginning with La Lézarde (1959) in which the Lézarde river of Martinique, moving from the mountains (associated with maroon slaves) to the coast (associated with captive slaves), already symbolically links many of the positions that I have discussed. While discussing the novels would be too lengthy for the purposes of this book, I would still maintain that, although the novels are certainly more complex in their presentation of Glissant’s concerns, his one play still presents the impasse that I am concerned with more concisely and dramatically than any of them. The novels themselves became increasingly abstract and theoretical throughout Glissant’s career, to the point that the theoretical volume Traité du Tout-Monde has a section supposedly written by Mathieu Béluse, a character from Tout-Monde who is one of many recurring characters in Glissant’s fiction ever since his first novel. For the treatment of the maroon slave in Glissant’s novels, see Rochmann, L’esclave.

Chapter 6

1. All quotes from the novel in this chapter come from Jonathan Tittler’s excellent translation. However, there are very few instances when I have felt Tittler’s translation misses an important nuance of the original; in those cases I have modified the translation, and I have clearly indicated it.

2. In 1986 Zapata Olivella published El fusilamiento del diablo and in 1993 Hemingway, el cazador de la muerte, both of them more formally experimental than his early realistic novels, although without reaching the extreme complexity or sustained lyricism of Changó. The most thorough study of Zapata Olivella’s works as a whole can be found in Tillis.

3. William Luis, editor of the prestigious Afro-Hispanic Review, opens a number of the journal dedicated to Zapata Olivella with this statement: “Manuel Zapata Olivella is one of the greatest writers of Afro-Latin American descent and has earned a permanent place among the best writers in Latin America. His Changó, el gran putas (1983) contains all the characteristics of the finest novels of the Boom and post-Boom periods, which gave Spanish American literature instant world recognition, and Zapata Olivella’s novel should be required reading for any serious specialist of literature. Unfortunately, this is not the case. We still live in an era in which many scholars of Latin American literature cannot look beyond the writer’s African heritage” (5).

4. Some of Zapata Olivella’s texts on Afro-Colombian folklore have been compiled in Manuel Zapata Olivella, por los senderos de sus ancestros. See also El hombre colombiano. Zapata Olivella also traveled with his sister, the dancer Delia Zapata Olivella, in tours that were meant to display Afro-Colombian music in the country and internationally. See his autobiography, ¡Levántate mulato! For an overview of Zapata Olivella’s research as an anthropologist and how it ties in with his work as a novelist, see the biography by José Luis Díaz Granados, published in the website dedicated to Zapata Olivella, manuelzapataolivella.org.

5. For a useful and concise overview of Afro-Colombian history, see the first two chapters of Prescott’s Without Hatreds or Fears. For a broader perspective on Afro-Latin America see Andrews.

6. In The Colombian Novel Raymond Williams expertly situates Zapata Olivella in the context of Colombian fiction. Marvin A. Lewis’s important Treading the Ebony Path situates the novelist in the more specific context of Afro-Colombian literature.
7. For an overview of some of the most important explorations of the Middle Passage in the Hispanic world, see DeCosta-Willis, “Meditations on History.” See also Jackson, “The Black Novel.”

8. For a detailed exposition of the novel’s structure, see Aguiar. For an appreciation of the degree to which Zapata Olivella truly intended his novel to be a black *epic* (an approach that invites a comparison to Derek Walcott’s *Omeros*), see Cuervo Hewitt, “Luís de Camoens.”

9. In several of his essays Zapata Olivella refers to works by Jahn and by Tempels, which seem to have influenced his understanding of “Muntu.” Those works are certainly not unproblematic, particularly Tempels’s. See Coetzee and Roux, eds., *African Philosophy Reader*, chapter 2.

10. For an examination of how language is used in the novel to develop an Afrocentric perspective, see Zoggyie, “*Lengua e identidad*.”

11. I use the notion of “Afrocentrism,” with regards to Zapata Olivella, in a very general way to describe his attempt to provide an African (or Afro-descendant) perspective on events (such as slavery, colonialism, and the very value of African culture) in which the dominant perspective has been Eurocentric. Zapata Olivella’s assumption is that, in spite of important differences between black groups and individuals, there were shared experiences that can often politically unify the aspirations of Afro-descendants. The term “Afrocentrism” is not supposed to indicate an essential or biological unity of all Africans, or the ethnocentric idea that Africans should ignore values and concepts that are not “authentically” African. See Ossa, “*Changó el gran putas* Afrocentric Discourse.” For a critique of ethnocentric Afrocentrism (which, paradoxically, often relies on colonial European concepts of what is “African”), see Mudimbe, *Invention of Africa*; and Appiah, *In My Father’s House*. It must be mentioned that Zapata Olivella’s concept of Africa often draws upon questionable sources like Tempels and Jahn, but his views are always mediated by his direct experience of the survival of African customs in his native Colombia.

12. The living are aware of not only their ancestors but also themselves as ancestors of future generations. For the importance of the link to ancestors, in addition to the works of Tempels and Jahn on which Zapata Olivella relied directly, see Henry, *Caliban’s Reason*; Coetzee and Roux, eds., *African Philosophy Reader*; and Hountondji, *African Philosophy*.

13. Although gender is not explicitly thematized as an important locus of oppression/resistance in Zapata Olivella’s work, there are strong female characters in his fiction (particularly the black matriarch “La Cotena” in *Chambacú* and Agne Brown in *Changó*) that open the door to a productive exploration of that category.

14. Lucía Ortiz aptly describes the collective struggles of Afro-Colombians that *Chambacú* portrays; see her “*Chambacú*.”

15. For broader historical perspectives on slavery, see Meltzer, *Slavery*; and Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*. For an overview of the modern/colonial African slave trade, see Davis, *Inhuman*; and Blackburn, *The American*.


17. Zapata Olivella summarizes many of his observations on the importance of the category of “race” in the Latin American context in his autobiography, ¡Levántate mulato! For a thorough overview, see Dhouti Martínez, “Rewriting the Other.” See also Janis, “Negritude.”

18. For a cogent critique of multiculturalism as commonly celebrated in the United States, see San Juan Jr., *Racism*. 

*Notes to Chapter 6*
19. For black literature and humanism in Latin America, see Jackson, *Black Literature*.
20. On the topic of race and Marxist revolution, see also James's fascinating conversations with Trotsky, collected in *At the Rendezvous*.
21. For several examples, see Bolívar, *Liberator*.
22. For recent attempts to look at Bolívar without falling into the hero worship paradigm, see Lynch, *Simón Bolívar*; and Langley, *Simón Bolívar: Venezuelan Rebel*.
23. Santiago Castro-Gómez has examined Karl Marx's writings on Bolívar, in which the German philosopher directly addresses Bolívar's treatment of Padilla, an important episode in Zapata Olivella's novel. For Marx, the fact that Bolívar executed Padilla but did not exert violence against his main political opponent, the creole Santander, was indicative of Latin America's absence of modernity. In such a pre-modern, colonial society, "bloodlines and ethnic privilege still constituted the fundamental criteria for honor and distinction" (Castro-Gómez, "(Post)coloniality," 263). Marx subscribed to the notion that "colonialism was nothing more than the past of modernity" (ibid.). As Castro-Gómez clarifies, colonialism/coloniality are in fact an intrinsic part of the project of modernity, and ethnic/racial hierarchies are inherent to the articulation of Eurocentric modern/colonial hegemony. "Coloniality is not the past of modernity; it is simply its other face" (ibid., 283)
24. For the regional and hemispheric impact of the Haitian Revolution, see Geggus, *Impact*; and Gaspar and Geggus, eds., *Turbulent Time*; and also Genovese, *From Rebellion*.
25. In his interview in Harris, Zapata Olivella briefly addresses the diversity of the treatments of the religious theme in his fiction.
26. Ifa is a traditional divination system in Yoruba religion; its answers to diverse questions and situations encompass a rich array of Yoruba oral tradition—poetry, proverbs and stories—that also embodies aspects of the Yoruba worldview. Orunla is the orisha who rules the oracle. See Bascom's books. For Ifa as practiced in Cuban Santeria, see Murphy, *Santeria*.
27. In his interview with Krakusin, Zapata Olivella indicates that although Changó is a very important figure, he is not necessarily the best one to emblematize the African diaspora as a whole. He considers that Yemaya, goddess of the sea and mother of the other orishas, would be the most appropriate figure. He goes on to state that Changó is sometimes privileged out of chauvinism ("machismo"), and that even women often give priority to the warrior god with his life-giving phallus. Then he states that he made sure that Yemaya was acknowledged in the novel, which includes a long poem to her (Krakusin, "Conversación," 20). It is hard to figure out what to make of Zapata Olivella's words, for they in fact constitute a possible criticism against his novel: if Yemaya was the better symbol, why construct the novel around Changó?
28. Close to Zapata Olivella would be Miguel Ángel Asturias in texts like *Mulata de tal* (1963). Again, in highlighting the singularity of Changó, I am not referring to writing about myth, or from a dual perspective that alternates between mythical and rational worldviews, but
rather to the sustained attempt to create a mythical framework and focalization for the events portrayed in the novel, even the historical ones.

32. One possible way of understanding Changó’s role in the novel would be to link him to the slave trade in Africa before (or independently of) the Europeans, and also to role of some African tribes and groups as middlemen in the European slave trade. There are allusions in the novel to Muslim slave trade in sub-Saharan Africa. Thus, Changó’s curse might point to the agency and involvement of Africans in their own history, for both good and evil as in any human group, as opposed to the dominant view of Africans as mere objects of European designs. If that is the intent of the novel, it is certainly not developed in any significant way. For slavery in Africa see Lovejoy, Transformations; and Miers and Kopitoff, eds., Slavery in Africa. The topic of the place of slavery among Africans in the context of the Atlantic slave trade remains controversial, and it is certainly problematic to contrast it to the modern/colonial, globalized trade organized by European empires. See Manning, Slavery; Thornton, Africa and Africans; and Davis, Inhuman Bondage.

33. Ian Smart calls Changó “liberation literature,” in an explicit analogy to liberation theology (15). In his suggestive reading, Changó becomes a “trickster” figure who works for the liberation of his ekobios. For a critique of Smart’s use of the category “trickster,” see Ossa, “There is Nothing.”

34. For a recent attempt to address theodical concerns from the Liberation Theology perspective, see Sobrino, Where Is God?

35. See Pinn’s Varieties and African American Humanist Principles.

36. For an overview of “the problem of evil” from antiquity, see Larrimore, Problem of Evil. See also Rowe, God and the Problem.

37. Timothy J. Cox also notices the problem that I am describing, and he reads Changó’s actions, from the perspective of the Middle Passage, as a warning that any attempt to recover a pure, original Africa “will lead to a heritage of internal, “national” strifes, not to a pure or idyllic order between the natural and the supernatural worlds” (92). Ultimately, Changó’s actions are explained by his excessive vitality, which makes him an all-too-human source of both creativity and war, for ultimately “it is humankind’s own life-force Nature that multiplies its sorrows” (ibid.). It is that vitality, with both positive and negative consequences, that the African diaspora has remained faithful to, and which Zapata Olivella celebrates in Cox’s reading. Cox concludes by stating that if his reading is not a satisfactory answer to the question of why the evils of the Middle Passage occurred (thus bringing up explicitly the question of theodicy), then “the modern mind had better look beyond the spirit and instead search for a reason, because all the spirit reveals is its mystery” (ibid., 93). Thus, the novel’s mythical frame paradoxically invites us to look beyond it to history for answers. While I fundamentally agree with many of Cox’s points, my reading in the next section puts the emphasis on why religion and myth, or “the spirit,” consistently keep coming up in works like Changó in spite of repeated attempts to leave them behind.

38. The phrase “all bloodlines” (in Spanish, “todas las sangres”) also alludes to the novel Todas las sangres, by the Peruvian José María Arguedas. Not unlike Zapata Olivella for Afro-descendants, Arguedas was a great defender of Indigenous rights and culture in his novels, which also try to combine historical and mythical perspectives. It should be noticed that Arguedas was interested in Liberation Theology, and that one of the movement’s main figures, Gustavo Gutierrez, acknowledges the priest character in Arguedas’s Todas las sangres as a “precursor of liberation theology” (Tamayo, La teología, 95).
39. For further links between Zapata Olivella's vision and Dussel's philosophy, see González de Allen, “Enrique Dussel.”

40. For an overview of Liberation Theology, see Tamayo, La teología. See also the classic expositions by Gutierrez (Theology of Liberation) and Ellacurria and Sobrino (Mysterium Libera tionis). For Liberation Theology in the African American context, see Cone, Black Theology.

Conclusion

1. In a well-known passage of Specters of Marx, Derrida states about the ideal of democratic participation: “Even beyond the regulating idea in its classic form, the idea, if that is still what it is, of democracy to come, its “idea” as event of a pledged injunction that orders one to summon the very thing that will never present itself in the form of full presence, is the opening of this gap between an infinite promise (always untenable at least for the reason that it calls for the infinite respect of the singularity and infinite alterity of the other as much as for the respect of countable, calculable, subjectal equality between anonymous singularities) and the determined, necessary, but also necessarily inadequate forms of what has to be measured against this promise” (Specters, 81). The revolution in Haiti occupies a similar “gap” between the “infinite promise” of universal emancipation that it invokes, and the “necessarily inadequate forms” that those aspirations have taken in Haitian history. As I suggest later in the afterword, in Haiti’s case that “gap” is complicated by the persistence of a colonial frame—both internal, in the form of local elites, and external, in the form of global colonial interests—that opposes Haiti and what it represents.

2. Pat Robertson’s words, which naturally provoked much controversy, can be found on many news Web sites on the Internet; for a succinct version see http://www.cnn.com/2010/US/01/13/haiti.pat.robertson/.


4. Sylvia Wynter eloquently criticizes “the ongoing imperative of securing the well-being of our present ethnoclass (i.e., Western bourgeois) conception of the human, Man, which over-represents itself as it were the human itself” (“Unsettling,” 260). That “overrepresentation” of one concept of the human to the point of overtaking the human itself is characteristic of that surplus of being that characters the coloniality of being/power.