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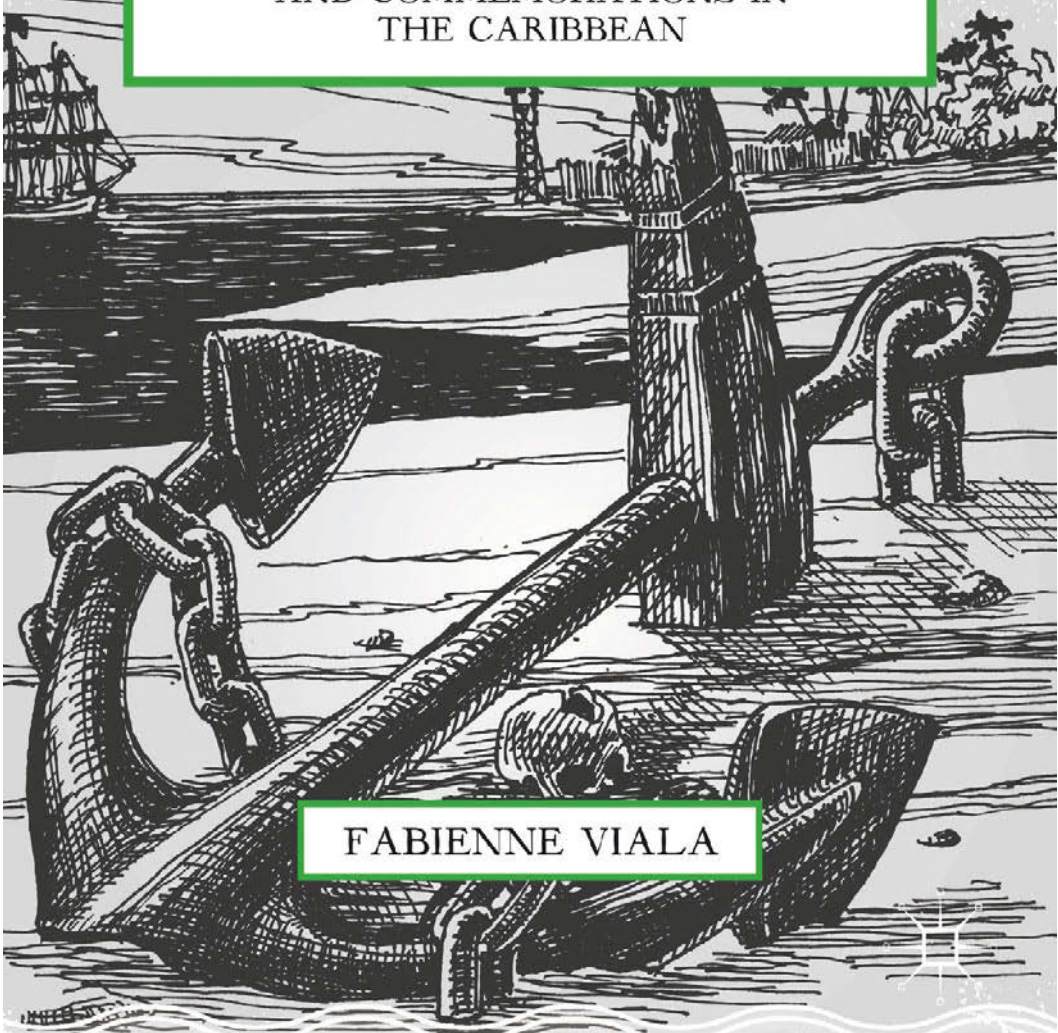
THE POST-COLUMBUS SYNDROME

IDENTITIES, CULTURAL NATIONALISM, AND COMMEMORATIONS IN THE CARIBBEAN



FABIENNE VIALA

The Post-Columbus Syndrome

NEW CARIBBEAN STUDIES

Edited by Kofi Campbell and Shalini Puri

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The Post-Columbus Syndrome

Identities, Cultural Nationalism, and Commemorations in the Caribbean

Fabienne Viala

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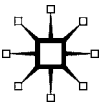

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For Yemayá

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This book is my tribute to Yemayá. *Ache*.

Introduction—The Post-Columbus Syndrome: A Comparative Approach to Caribbean Memory in the *Longue Durée*

The 500th Anniversary of Columbus's Arrival in the Caribbean

In 1992, following Spain's initiative and input, Europe celebrated ostentatiously the 500th anniversary of the discovery of the New World by Christopher Columbus. This caused turmoil among the peoples of Latin America, for whom it effectively meant commemorating a genocide. On October 12, celebrated as the *día de la raza* (day of the race) in all the Spanish-speaking countries of the Americas since 1913,[1] statues of Columbus were toppled or covered with red paint to recall that what Europe called "discovery" had been in fact the violent conquest and colonial enslavement of the native peoples of the Americas by the Spaniards.

Particularly in Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, and Paraguay, Central and South American countries where large portions of the population have indigenous origins, the beginning of the 1990s gave birth to protest marches and collective uprisings against the 500th anniversary, which was regarded as reprehensible. After 1992, the peoples of Latin America have continued to refuse to commemorate Columbus, and recently there have been reactions of rage against what he represents. In Venezuela, in 2002, President Hugo Chavez declared October 12 "day of the indigenous resistance," which the Venezuelans commemorated in 2004 by toppling the statue of Columbus in Caracas. On October 12, 2007, the Bolivian president Evo Morales made a symbolic visit to the Chapare region to show support to the *cocaleros* peasants of Cochabamba[2] and to make obvious his refusal to celebrate Columbus Day. The antiquincentennial protest that was born in 1992 became a platform to defend indigeneity on a continental scale and to denounce the racial and economic inequalities from which Latin Americans with mixed-race and indigenous origins still suffer (Hale 1994). The year 1992 became a

symbol for the descendants of those incorrectly called Indians by Columbus to claim the right to exist as equal subjects in the nations of Latin America (Summerhill and Williams 2001).[3]

The islands of the Caribbean, where Columbus actually landed, demonstrated a more complex response. The Antillean archipelagos did not react regionally against the European celebrations. Neither did they align with the Latin American anti-Columbus movements, despite their long effort to transform their postplantation societies into Creole nations and to construct a sense of collective identity among pluricultural and mixed-race peoples (Bolland 1992). Commissions to debate the meaning of Columbus's arrival in the region were launched nationally on some islands, with different consequences in the commemorative public sphere in the Hispanic, English, and French Caribbean. Jamaica condemned Columbus as a pirate, an enslaver, and a capitalist "Babylonian," echoing its negative portrait of Columbus in Rastafarian popular culture; the Dominican Republic commemorated him as a Hispanic godfather and sacred hero, but Haiti threw his statue into the ocean when Jean-Claude Duvalier fled in 1986. In Cuba and Puerto Rico, the Taíno heritage was at the forefront of the commemorative debate, but not in the same manner in both countries: while Columbus was the hero of an epic scenario of discovery and atonement in Cuba, he hardly entered the commemorative imagination in Puerto Rico as a persona. In Guadeloupe and Martinique, the bicentenary of the French Revolution in 1989 was the visible part of a morass of colonial taboos about origin, self-discovery, and cultural regionalism that maintained a dialogue in absentia with Columbus-related scenarios.

The 1992 debate around the meaning of the term "discovery" in Latin America has been widely and closely studied, giving rise to an ocean of publications (Block 1994, p.101). However, very little has been written about what happened at the time on the Caribbean islands (Higman 1999) and even less about how the Caribbean region as a whole reacted to the 1992 anniversary. In this book, I examine the different ways in which the islands of the Caribbean remembered Columbus. In so doing, I aim to make a new contribution to comparative Caribbean Studies by exploring the complex dissonances of the different commemorative perspectives by which the Spanish-, English-, and French-speaking islands engaged with their colonial heritages. Some commemorative perspectives were lenient and others were frankly aggressive in the way in which they represented Columbus and his influence on the region. But in all cases, they approached the remembrance of their colonial past according to their national myths: memory and heritage were shaped according to the specific goals of cultural nationalism.

I believe that comparatism and transnationalism are key to improve cultural memory in the Caribbean, memory that is too often weakened by

exclusionary nationalism, as the state-molded commemorations of Columbus in the region will show. It is essential to examine specific single-island strategies of memorialization in order to go beyond limiting and nationalist scenarios. *The Post-Columbus Syndrome* is the format I designed for this purpose. In this book my aim is to look at remembrance and cultural heritages from a comparative perspective with a view to facilitate inter-Caribbean federation and solidarity among the islands and to allow memory, freed from linguistic and national barriers, to assist justice and be used for a better representation of Caribbean interests in the world.

I focus in particular on Jamaica, Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Guadeloupe, and Martinique for two reasons. First, because I consider these islands to be the most representative when it comes to examining collective memory and national commemorations from a Caribbean perspective on the 1492–1992 anniversary; second, because on those particular islands, the discrepancy between the discourses about national memory, officialized by the states, and what the people wanted to recognize as their national heritage is particularly rich for understanding the echoes of and the differences between Spanish, English, and French Caribbean cultural nationalisms. I examine how the same historical heritage, epitomized by the figure of Columbus, was recycled by multiple national discourses and how historical memory was narrated, retold, and performed on the public cultural stages according to different national templates of memory.

Those dissonances reflect what I define as the "post-Columbus memory syndrome." I analyze the diversity of linguistic areas in the Caribbean and suggest that we reconsider 1992 as a turning point in pan-Caribbean strategies for shaping and expressing collective memory. I argue that the collective Caribbean imaginations of today are based on dysfunctional national memories; the islands of the Caribbean (variously nations, states, and *départements*) share a constant desire to remember in *a certain kind of way* (Benítez-Rojo 1992) based on the repeated recycling of heritage with a view to engaging and coping with the present. I suggest that this syndrome, as it is now, actually started in the 1990s.

Columbus was in fact as much remembered as dismembered in the 1990s national and collective imaginations in the Caribbean; the commemorative cultural productions of the time were concerned with the representation of *some* origins, the recognition of a *certain* heritage, and the meaning of an *authentic* and *national* belonging, which they addressed vis-à-vis the historical continuum of 500 years. For them, the image of Columbus symbolized this temporal *longue durée* and emphasized the heritage of violence in the region and, therefore, the celebration of national cultures of resistance. The use of the term *longue durée* here refers to Fernand Braudel's work (Braudel

1958), for I argue that the Braudelian spirit is helpful in understanding archipelagic Caribbean cultural self-representations in the twenty-first century. In so doing, I situate my work in continuity with that of other Caribbean scholars, such as Stuart Schwartz and Franklin Knight, who reflected on the need to enlarge the theoretical scopes of the Caribbean scholarship. Schwartz considered Braudel's *longue durée* as an interesting model for analyzing the Caribbean as a region (which would include not only the islands but also the circum-Caribbean basin and the Caribbean coasts of Central America) and as a perspective that would unify the different disciplinary and linguistic insularisms by which Caribbean Studies are often restricted (Schwartz 1983, p.57). For Knight, Braudel's *longue durée* was interesting in that it would allow, if applied to Caribbean Studies, to break away from the traditional European historiography with which Caribbean history is still periodized (something that Knight laments as being a sign of intellectual dependence). Instead, the *longue durée* will help to think Caribbean history in analytical terms rather than in terms of historical periods and to trace the pattern of the social formations in the Caribbean, considering that similar phases of social changes did happen in the region but not simultaneously. Knight defined it as a systadial history (Knight 1983, pp.58–59). Besides, I consider that the concept of *longue durée* is key for comparatively examining strategies of memorialization in the Spanish, English, and French Caribbean contexts, because Braudel's work certainly influenced the memory systems theorized and produced in the Caribbean by Edward Kamau Brathwaite, Edouard Glissant, and Antonio Benítez-Rojo (to whom I dedicate the first part of the book). The *longue durée* was a theory with which the three authors were familiar[4] and which they used as an implicit template to theorize their own systems of memory. Brathwaite, Glissant, and Benítez-Rojo considered Caribbean cultural memory to be in direct relation with the natural setting and landscape in which the Caribbean plantation system developed (tropical climate, volcanic land, hurricanes, mangroves). Braudel was the first to articulate the use of physical geography and history to study human activity at a large scale and beyond traditional and fragmented historical periods; he also introduced for the first time in the social sciences the view that the history of human societies resulted from slow rhythms, invisible to the human eye; in Brathwaite's, Glissant's, and Benítez-Rojo's views, physical geography, transculturation, and Creolization were also the result of such rhythms. Lastly, locating the Caribbean Post-Columbus syndrome within the *longue durée* allows me to examine memory in relation to the idea of historical continuity (500 years of repeated cycles of exploitation), which was at the heart of the Caribbean reactions to the anniversary. It also allows me to consider that Caribbean memorialization in the 1990s was a manifestation of

the transitional ending of a historical period, rather than the sign of a curse that the region is historically doomed to remain subaltern and peripheral: the fact that the 2010 earthquake in Haiti was analyzed in terms of curse in the international press reflects this tendency (Dubois 2012, p.3). Like Laurent Dubois, I disagree with such a perspective and my reference to the *longue durée* is therefore in dialogue with the interest that world-system analysts found in Braudel, as stated by Immanuel Wallerstein:

> For world-systems analysts, the *longue durée* was the duration of a particular historical period. Generalisations about the functioning of such a system thus avoided the trap seeming to assert timeless, eternal truths. If such systems were not eternal, then it followed that they had beginnings, lives during which they developed, and terminal transitions.
>
> (Wallerstein 2004, p.18)

However, I will not follow Braudel's eurocentric method *à la lettre*, for his focus was on the Mediterranean basin, as the cradle of European civilization, with the aim of contesting the hegemony of traditional historiography in French academia; rather, I consider the Post-Columbus *longue durée* in a specifically Caribbean, geo-historical, and memorial context. Traumas of the past, stemming from embedded racial, economic, and political exploitation, resonated with upheavals, failures, and anxieties in the present. The recognition or denial of, fascination with, and lack of interest in Columbus in Caribbean cultural memories in the 1990s derived from the symbolic potential of this character to engage with issues of national remembrance.

Cultural Nationalism and Caribbean *Anamnesis*

In Caribbean postplantation societies, nation building had to respond to the challenge to unite Creole societies. Consequently, cultural nationalisms have been the force field shaping collective identity into scenarios of remembrance with the view to constructing a sense of belonging and togetherness. I agree with Shalini Puri that "nationalism is better understood not as an ideology like fascism or liberalism, but rather as a framework for political activity, and a structure of feeling" (Puri 2004, p.10). While Puri's work questioned the relationship between cultural hybridity and social equality in the Caribbean, I believe that it is essential to connect cultural memory, in the hybrid and multilinguistic societies of the Caribbean, with the collective aspiration for social justice. In the 1990s, since the collapse of the USSR and the consequent end of the Cold War meant the end of the "Three Worlds" paradigm, economic globalization and the birth of supranational economic structures,

such as the European Community or the economic tutelage of the International Monetary Fund, were considered to be promoting new forms of exploitation in the Caribbean. In that context, the need to remember the foundations of national feelings of belonging and collective identity became symptomatic of utterances that were meant to make the present bearable, as a structure of feeling in Puri's words, and as a method for performing catharsis, *un arte de bregar* (the art of coping) as Arcadio Díaz Quiñones put it (Díaz Quiñones 2000). The Caribbean region felt threatened by new forms of exploitation, to which they responded by narrating their past and commemorating their hybrid identity in scenarios meant to protect a sense of national belonging. The colonial past was read from the present, and commemorations gave voice to precolonial and non-European origins, including Indian and African—in other words, in a past where a sense of solidarity could be found. Columbus, as a hero of both Spanish and colonial history, became a reservoir of metaphors with which to confront postemancipation national myths and pre-Columbian collective imaginations. The collective recycling of memory thus became the voice of a desire to resist, and to act out in everyday life, the traumatic consequences of renewed forms of exploitation.

In this study, Columbus becomes the magnifying glass through which I examine what I define as a process of *anamnesis*. This concept has different meanings, from which I draw the new concept of *anamnesis caribensis* as follows. In Plato's dialogues (*Meno* and *Phaedo*), *anamnesis* is a method of knowledge that allows the subject (a young boy) to remember what he already knows (geometry), but without knowing that he knows it, thanks to Socrates's selected questions. In Eliade's comparative anthropology, in works such as *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, *anamnesis* is the collective and ritual recitation of the original myth at the moment of imminent disaster: telling the story of the original myth gives sense to the present and allows the community to cope together with danger (a war, a death, a birth, a flood). In medicine, *anamnesis* is the detailed report of the symptoms of the patient to understand both the antecedents of the relevant pathology and how to treat it. This implies selection and therefore desire. By analogy, therefore, self-knowledge and cathartic performance characterize those Caribbean cultural narrations that responded to the desire to remember together as a protective strategy of resistance and therefore both dealt with national identity and engaged with commemorations in the *longue durée* at the time of the fifth centennial.

Out of this, I suggest a notion that I therefore call *anamnesis caribensis*. I define it as a self-cognitive method produced by cultural nationalisms in the 1990s, a Special Period in Times of Peace. The scholarship usually uses the term "Special Period" to refer exclusively to Cuba after the collapse of the Soviet Block and the end of the country's privileged relationship with

the USSR. I apply it here to the particular world context of the 1990s when the three worlds *Weltanschauung* ended; this opened up new routes for economic imperialism. The fifth centenary of Columbus's "discovery" happened in this context and became a platform to look back to a history of exploitation in the Caribbean. Cultural memory, even outside the official political line on each island, invented mechanisms to negotiate violence with repeating and long-term consequences. It was based on the recognition and selection of latent remembering of episodes of the past (memory antecedents) that had the symbolic potential to reiterate and reinforce the island's collective national myth. Mnemonic triggers—in this case 500 years of European and imperialist exploitation of the New World—facilitated new forms of desire for remembering and forgetting. The elements identified as sustaining the national myths were thus performed in scenarios meaningful for the present—as if in a postoblivion narration—which implied the right to recycle, as much as to erase, fragments of memorabilia while achieving self-representation and catharsis.

Consequently, the 1990s Post-Columbus syndrome was pan-Caribbean but composed of multiple national commemorations. Cultural nationalism is therefore the key that can open the door to each specific commemorative imagination, which varies according to the local, colonial, and linguistic heritage of each island. Yet understanding this commonality requires considering complex factors. First of all, the cultural deciders at the highest level of the state and the cultural actors (artists, intellectuals, writers) were sometimes, though not always, working together to produce a collective platform for remembrance in each society. Second, most of the scenarios that integrated Columbus into the foundational myths of the island intended to reinforce feelings of national pride, belonging and togetherness *at home*; but in some cases they also dialogued with a transnational Caribbean audience and with other carefully selected Latin American countries. I take those factors into consideration, and see how they interacted with the meanings of each commemoration. Finally, I only select the commemorative pieces where the mnemonic imagination was committed to national self-reflection from within the strongest traditions of the islands: short fiction and historiographical "texts" in Cuba and the Dominican Republic, performative arts in Puerto Rico, Dub Poetry in Jamaica, theater and essays in Martinique and Guadeloupe, and novels in Haiti. Caribbean culture is simultaneously interdisciplinary and translinguistic. Therefore, I will approach it in the plural, through variables and echoes.

My definition of *anamnesis caribensis* dialogues with the notion of volcanic memory defined by Shalini Puri in her latest work. In *The Grenada Revolution in the Caribbean Present: Operation Urgent Memory*, Puri analyzes

how the 1983 revolution in Grenada, though repressed from the collective memory on the island, nevertheless continues to haunt the national imagination (Puri 2012).[5] She shows that the repressed memory of the revolution is inscribed in the landscape through three forms of memory: submerged, residual, and eruptive. In submerged memory, the landscape is the place of material residues of the revolution. For example, Cuban planes are left abandoned and the vegetation has been growing on their carcasses, turning them into ghost-residues of memory. At the same time, for residual memory, the landscape of Grenada is dotted with what Puri calls a state-choreographed memory, like the memorials to the American soldiers who died during the invasion, while there is not a single one to the Grenadians and to the Cubans who died in the conflict. Lastly, popular memory (graffitis, visual arts, calypso music) emerges in the landscape as an eruptive memory that rescues forgotten figures of the revolution such as Maurice Bishop. For Puri, this volcanic memory (submerged, residual, and eruptive) displays Grenada's inability to resolve and struggle to transcend the scene of a trauma.

In a similar way, I believe that Columbus has been haunting the national imaginations of the Caribbean archipelagos for which he became a memory trigger in the 1990s. When Europe decided to commemorate the 500th anniversary of Columbus's explorations, it created a shock in Caribbean memory that led to the eruption of the submerged trauma of colonization, and of its aftershock, the souvenir of slavery. This polytraumatic past was revived by the threat of renewed forms of economic and political enslavement in the context of the growing control of international and supra-national powers over the region (like the EEC and the IMF) after the end of the Cold War. The Post-Columbus memory syndrome reflects the way in which this *return of the repressed* happened in the cultural landscape of the Spanish, English, and French Caribbean. Following Plato's argument that self-cognition is a mnemonic act of remembrance, the *anamnesis* in the 1990s consisted in awakening once-known-but-forgotten traumas thanks to oriented commemorative triggers. My definition also resonates with Puri's idea that Caribbean collective memory is complex, ambivalent, and eruptive. While official commemorations choreographed the memory of Columbus at a big scale in the Hispanic Caribbean, popular memory erupted alternatively in Puerto Rico and Cuba (Chapter 5), locally in Jamaica and in Martinique (chapters 6 and 7), and impulsively in Haiti (Chapter 8). The *Anamnesis Caribensis* is the framework that allows me to distinguish those eruptive acts of remembrance one from another, to analyze their internal mechanisms in the specific national and linguistic context in which they were produced, and to situate them anew in a wider regional and inter-Caribbean perspective. I hope that

such a comparative approach to polytraumatic heritages will help the region to transcend the scene of the trauma.

Transculturation, Commemorations, and the Recycling of Heritage

In this book I suggest a new approach to transculturation as a model for reading not only cultural mutations but also Caribbean memory. Transculturation was first defined in the Caribbean context by Fernando Ortiz (in his 1940 book *Contrapunteo Cubano del Tabaco y del Azúcar*) to describe the process of creative cultural transformations in Cuba. Ortiz, to whom I dedicate Chapter 1, considered cultural syncretism in Cuba to be the creative and skilful adaptation of local and transported slaves to violence in the context of the colonial exploitation of the New World by the European empires. The protagonists of transculturation were the Spanish, Carib-Arawak, and black cultures of Caribbean colonial societies.[6] For Ortiz, transculturation began with Columbus's arrival in the Antilles and was unfinished and still in process at the time he wrote the *Contrapunteo Cubano del Tabaco y del Azúcar*. It consisted of three major phases (deculturation, acculturation, and neoculturation) specific to plantation and postplantation Caribbean societies. As a process of selective cultural appropriations and transfers, Ortiz's transculturation incorporated cultural mutations in the *longue durée*, and revealed how Taíno-African-Caribbean cultures borrowed from one another and transformed Spanish cultural traits.

I use the concept of transculturation as a template for reconsidering the meaning and scope of memory studies within contemporary Caribbean Studies. Transculturation evolved from positivism to postmodernism; it constituted a rich, foundational, primary scenario in the pan-Caribbean theories of Brathwaite, Glissant, and Benítez-Rojo, whom I consider to be the three main scholars who articulated cultural identity and cultural memory in the Caribbean context. Throughout their careers, their theoretical works and their works of fiction intended to create new strategies for expressing collectively the heritage of the Caribbean, articulating cultural hybridity and historical violence. At the core of their work was the belief that historical reparation was the key to constructing a unified and archipelagic Caribbean collective imagination in order to resist neocolonialist forms of exploitation. The influence of Ortiz on their works, and particularly the way in which they transferred the theory of transculturation to the field of cultural memory, has never been examined from an academic point of view. By using transculturation as the primary theoretical material for the understanding of the Caribbean region in the *longue durée* and in Post-Columbus times in Part I,

and by examining it through the lenses of cultural anthropology and historical memory in Part II, I propose a geo-historical comparative reading of archipelagic culture. I suggest that this approach contributes to renewing Caribbean Studies as a multilinguistic and interdisciplinary field of study, approaching the region as a whole rather than as fragments and postcolonial remains of older "Commonwealth Studies."

It also allows me to consider each specific cultural block—the Hispanic, English, and French Caribbeans—outside the myopia and ideological taboos that diminish the islands' worldwide impact, keeping them clustered in artificial neocolonial academic categories. In French academia, there is no such thing as Caribbean Studies but, rather, the literature of "our overseas territories" (*Littérature d'outremer*), mostly referring to Martinique, according to the publishing market. In the United Kingdom, Caribbean Studies are mostly Anglophone and postcolonial, and those of us who teach in that field still have to convince our students that Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico are as Caribbean as Jamaica and Trinidad. Finally, as far as Latin American Studies in Europe is concerned, the Hispanic Caribbean islands are considered exceptions and peripheral Spanish-speaking territories. This book therefore creates bridges so as to engage those islands, that barely manage to dialogue, in cultural discourses. By approaching Caribbean cultural nationalisms as a whole set of cultural corpuses, where colonial memory encounters postcolonial heritages, I propose new perspectives for teaching and research in Comparative Caribbean Studies. Columbus, and his Caribbean representations, are the lens and compass with which I draw the contours and understand the internal mechanics of memory in the archipelagic cultures of the Caribbean.

In this sense, my comparative methodology echoes Michael Rothberg's definition of multidirectional memory when he considers the relationship between the memories of the Jewish holocaust and of the African slavery. Rothberg's aim was to examine productively and not competitively both histories of victimization (Rothberg 2009). Likewise, instead of looking at the Arawak and the black heritages as competing, as it is often the case in state national commemorations in the Caribbean, I adopt a multidirectional approach to the traumatic heritages of the Caribbean following the characteristics of transculturation. I consider that this multidirectional approach (interdisciplinary, multilinguistic, and transnational) has the potential to create new forms and solidarity in the Caribbean and new versions of justice at the regional and transnational level.

In the first part of the book, I examine the major pan-Caribbean and postcolonial systems of cultural memory that attempted to make sense of the Caribbean of the 1990s in the *longue durée*, that is, Edward Kamau

Brathwaite's Creolization (Barbados), Edouard Glissant's *Antillanité* (Martinique), and Antonio Benítez-Rojo's Chaotic meta-archipelago (Cuba). Christopher Columbus was present in their critical studies to approach cultural memory as well as in their works of fiction. I read their work comparatively in the light of the importance and role that they separately gave to Columbus. I contend that the three of them in fact expanded the positivist theory of transculturation proposed by the Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz in the 1940s, adapting it to the specific memorial heritage of the islands, which they were approaching with postmodern visions dating from the 1970s to 1990s. Their systems proposed powerful metaphorical connections between the different cultures of the archipelago with a view to negotiating remembrance in the direction of catharsis and to articulating both the need to remember and the desire to forget.

Chapter 1 focuses on the invention of the cultural counterpoint by Fernando Ortiz as a method to study the mechanism of cultural memory within the evolution of Caribbean identities. Ortiz's counterpoints articulated national memory and colonial history in order to analyze racial and cultural heritages in the New World and their specific evolution in Cuba. His analysis of transculturation in the context of the Caribbean, before and after Columbus, eventually provided the region with an interdisciplinary approach to geo-history, a Caribbean version of what Fernand Braudel's *longue durée* was for European Historicism. In this chapter, therefore, I retrace and analyze the evolution of the character of Columbus from *Cuban Counterpoint of Tobacco and Sugar* in 1940 to *Hurricane, Mythology and Symbols* in 1947, as a way of examining the relationship between Cuban heritage, citizenship, and national memory in Ortiz's work. In particular, I explore how economy, race, and culture became the agents of a Caribbean, primitive, and Columbus-oriented scenario to construct a Cuban collective and national reservoir of commemorative strategies.

Chapter 2 reads Brathwaite's theory of Creolization as a system of geo-historical memory for commemorating in the long term the Caribbean heritage. I approach Brathwaite's *oeuvre* as a whole system and theoretical counterpoint that evolved from *Contradictory Omen* (1974) to *Missile and Capsule* (1981). In such a metaphorical spatio-temporal system, the cultures of the Antillean Arawaks and the transplanted black slaves share common features, as in Ortiz's study of the transculturation of tobacco. I argue that Brathwaite's theory of Creolization was a free adaptation of transculturation in the specific context of Anglophone postcolonial nation-building based on a strategy of collective remembrance. Brathwaite expanded and corrected the historical approaches of *Contradictory Omen* and *Missile and Capsule* in his poetry, with an unusual poetic counterpoint that related Columbus with

Caliban, one being the forgetful father of the other. The very particular, and unprecedented, way in which he integrated Columbus in the Caribbean heritage of violence is the most interesting marker of the evolution of Creolization from a national to a transnational imaginative unifier. In Brathwaite's last works, Columbus became a figure to express pan-Caribbean traumatic origins as much as intercultural and multiracial transnational solidarity. Columbus, for Brathwaite, became a symbol of remembrance and forgiveness, a rather unusual figure in the English Caribbean Nationalist discourses.

Chapter 3 analyzes Edouard Glissant's interest in transculturation from his early fiction and poetry to his later theory in the specific context of Martinique after the 1946 law of *Départementalisation*, which turned the colonies into administrative divisions of France, called *Départements*, at the level below the national. I argue that Glissant's poetic system was effectively a report on the memory neurosis of the French Antilleans, of which the most damaging consequences lay in the neocolonial, frustrated, inferiority complexes of the *domiens*, the citizens of the *Départements d'Outremer*. I read Glissant's work as a system of *anamnesis* where fiction, poetry, and theory were meant to trigger the questions that would bring back memory and foster a sense of Caribbean belonging in the overseas *départements*. The first part of the chapter follows Glissant's interest in transculturation, from his work in the review *Acoma* (1971–1973) in Martinique to his participation to the *Cahiers de l'Unesco* in Paris (1982–1988). I examine *Poétique de la Relation* in 1990 as a key text where Glissant engaged with the 1492/1992 anniversary without sharing the views of UNESCO on the celebration of the "Encounter of the Two Worlds." Glissant had different views on the history of the New World and had already, in earlier texts, addressed the importance of Columbus in Antillean memory. This I demonstrate in the second part of the chapter, where I study the role and importance of Columbus and the discovery in Glissant's epic poem *Les Indes* (1965). I argue that Glissant's approach to Columbus was motivated by a wish to arouse a desire for memory in Martinique's collective imagination. This chapter follows the rhythm of *anamnesis*, going backwards in time in Glissant's oeuvre, from his most famous 1990s essays to his earlier work in *Les Indes*, forgotten by contemporary Caribbean Studies, in order to examine the primary Columbus-oriented, epic, and poetic scenarios for commemorating the Antilles.

Chapter 4 focuses on the place and representation of Columbus in Benítez-Rojo's *oeuvre* and in what he himself defined as a Caribbean trilogy: the 1979 novel *The Sea of Lentils*, his last publication in Cuba before he left the island; the 1992 essay *The Repeating Island*; and a collection of short stories, reedited in English in 1998, *A View from the Mangrove*. Benítez-Rojo

theorized his postmodern reading of Caribbean cultures within a wide range of productive metaphors in the 1990s but he had already applied this perspective to his own historical fiction much earlier. In them, the image of Caribbean culture as a "feedback machine" is a very powerful tool with which to analyze the mechanisms that led to recycle and transform historical violence into cultural, linguistic, and creative productions. I argue that strategies of creative writing, in both theory and fiction, allowed the author to express his desire to write Caribbean history in the *longue durée*: he addressed the importance of commemorating foundational episodes of the archipelago's past, from the perspective of his own problematic relationship to memory as a Cuban writer in exile. After leaving the island in 1980, his work and name were minimized in Cuban national culture. Columbus epitomizes the weight of his own existence as a writer *in absentia*. Indeed, Columbus in Benítez-Rojo's *Sea of Lentils* was a character, motif, and episode of the history of the Caribbean. He was eventually rewritten into a theoretical paradigm in *The Repeating Island* to characterize Caribbean cultures by their doubly binding desire to remember violence and to interrupt this desire, in the manner of creative catharsis. Ortiz's transculturation remains the main model of his reading of Caribbean culture as a machine to process memory though the back-and-forth displacement of violent forces. It led him to propose alternative commemorations, different from the national and socialist Cuban pantheon of heroes, and to remember the Caribbean through narrative strategies of polymemory, mixing times, spaces, and cultures. Chaos theory, predictable random motion, and psychoanalysis were among the multiple tools that allowed him to understand the region as a whole and to commemorate its existence through rupture, dissonances, fragments, and resistance.

In the second part of this book, I analyze the Post-Columbus memory syndrome as a syndrome *in variatio*. The nationalist desire for remembrance and belonging varied according to the local interpretations of the history of Columbus. As a result, the Caribbean imaginings of the discovery that I examine in this second part are based on postmodern narrations that negotiate two different visions of historical memory: historical memory as cyclical and repetitive on one hand, and as a flow interrupted by moments of amnesia on the other.

Chapter 5 shows that the Hispanic Caribbean was characterized by a desire for total memory, like the fantastical disease of Borges's *Funes El Memorioso*,[7] where the absent others, the Taínos, were to be remembered at any cost, just as much as a mesmerized Columbus arriving in the New World. This produced an extremely rigid representation of heritage. The first part of the chapter will examine a case of *anamnesis in vivo*, representative of the totalizing memory syndrome in the Hispanic Caribbean; I explore the expedition organized

by the Cuban geographer Antonio Núñez Jimenez in 1987/1988, while he was president of the *Comisión Cubana por el Encuentro de las Dos Culturas* (Cuban Commission for the Encounter of Two Cultures), to commemorate the 500th anniversary. Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic participated to some extent in this canoe expedition, celebrating Arawak culture as much as Columbus's journeys, but with different ideological premises according to the political agendas of the islands at that time. I will contrast the reports that were published after the expedition on each of these three islands. In the second part of the chapter, I will focus on Cuban, Dominican, and Puerto Rican cultural commemorative production at the time and read comparatively a selection of historical novels, history books, and public events that romanticized, idealized, and transformed Columbus-based episodes so that they might fit into the corresponding national myths and reinforce national solidarity and pride.

In Chapter 6, I examine the role and function of Columbus in the Anglophone Caribbean imagination, as well as the political, ideological, and cultural potential (the symbolic value) that he represents for Jamaicans when they address collectively their past, commemorate their heritage, and remember their origin. In the 1990s, *anamnesis* and commemorative performance happened on the musical stage in Jamaica, where music has been the strongest medium of nationhood and collective belonging. Therefore, this chapter will shed light on those Caribbean transcultural and popular performances that addressed and exploited the symbolic potential of Columbus onstage, from reggae to dub poetry. To understand the specific place Columbus held within the islands' cultural anamnesis in the 1990s, I will first focus on the anti-Columbus tradition of Jamaican reggae and then examine Columbus's mutation from a stock-character in the 1970/1980s reggae music to a symbol for debating national identity in dub poetry in the 1990s. The second part of the chapter analyzes the work of the dub poet Mutabaruka, and the commemorative dimension of his 1994 record *Melanin Man*. This album offered a platform to the Jamaican people for performing a critical anamnesis of their national heritage, with two poems dedicated to Columbus.

Chapter 7 looks at representations of Columbus in Martinique and Guadeloupe. In the French Antilles, also known as the *Départements d'Outre Mer* (DOM), the fifth centenary of Columbus's arrival passed unobserved. At the same time that Columbus was totally absent from mainstream cultural politics, he appeared, in Martinique, to be the central target of intense memorial debates that were kept peripheral by the central powers on the island. Accused of crimes against humanity and of genocide against the Arawak people, Columbus was theatrically prosecuted in a trial staged from the 9th to the 11th December, 1993, in the municipal theater of Fort de France.

Organized by the *Cercle Franz Fanon* and by the nationalist and anticolonialist lawyer Marcel Manville, the Columbus trial went almost unnoticed in the local mainstream press and was given attention only by leftists and pro-independence associations and newspapers. This, for me, reflects the very specific nature of the memory syndrome in the French Caribbean. In the 1990s, a certain awakening from a long-term institutionalized amnesia was happening in civil society, and at the time of the fifth centennial of the Discovery of the New World, Columbus played the role of a catalyst of memory, but without any coherent, collective, and united plan of action. In the first instance, this chapter examines how Columbus became a symbolic device to trigger the first phase of a scenario of anamnesis in the French Caribbean. The symbolic exploitation of Columbus reflected a collective desire to remember and to demand justice and historical repair. I will then focus on the Columbus trial in 1993 and examine first how the debates and their judicial performances impacted on the collective memory, and second, how they resonated with other Columbus-related theatrical events that happened on the island at the local cultural level. In the second part of this chapter, I will question the extent to which the awakening of anamnesis in the civil society of Martinique coincided with the major literary productions not only from Martinique but also from Guadeloupe. The Antillean writers at the time imagined historical scenarios to assist the awakening of collective remembrance on their islands, in stories in which Columbus was in fact absent, but that nevertheless embraced the themes of colonization and slavery. This is for me another sign of the paradoxical nature of the anamnesis of memory in the French Caribbean, awakened but soft, as if memory was recovered like a melody played muted. I will mostly look at Maryse Condé's play *An Tan Revolysion* and Patrick Chamoiseau, Raphaél Confiant, and Jean Bernabé's *Eloge de la créolité* to determine the nature of the memory debate in the 1990s French DOM.

Chapter 8 examines the role of memory and the importance of commemoration in the Haitian national imaginary. The year 1992 was a moment of extreme upheaval in Haiti, after General Raoul Cédras, with the support of the CIA and of the Bush administration, made a coup against President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, forcing him to go into exile. In such a climate of political unrest, military occupation, and massive migration, it is understandable that the country did not engage with any public commemorations of the fifth centenary of the Discovery of the New World. Therefore, Columbus is not as present in this chapter as in the rest of the book. Nevertheless, I contend that Haiti's national memory, split between two class-oriented scenarios of black heritage, provides us with yet another case of *anamnesis caribensis*, where memory is as much choreographed as eruptive; while heritage is

recycled to facilitate a protective strategy of resistance, competing memories in the society limit the scope of the catharsis and of the transcending of the trauma. Haiti invented its own "Post-Columbus memory syndrome" before 1992 and therefore it figures as a meaningful case of memorialization at the end of this book. In 1986, Haitians toppled the statue of Columbus in Port au Prince and threw it into the sea when Jean Claude Duvalier Baby Doc fled the country with the help of the American air force. The collective anger poured on Columbus's statue in 1986 in Port au Prince was an act of scapegoating rooted in the slave heritage and in the Haitian imagination. Columbus was sentenced to historical oblivion, because he represented the continuous oppression of the people of Haiti over the previous 500 years. It reveals the collective instinct of the people to unite forces thanks to meaningful symbols of their past. Obviously, in a Caribbean country like Haiti, black national pride is powerful and the keystone of a feeling of solidarity among the people that "emerged from a historic commitment to self-sufficiency and self-reliance" (Dubois 2012, p.12). Still, toppling Columbus's statue was an impulsive, unpredictable, and popular performance, with which the ruling elite did not want to deal at all.

This, for me, reveals the complex nature of memory and memorialization in Haiti: while the celebration of black freedom is the keystone of the national identity, the Haitian collective imagination is nevertheless split between two opposed and competing historical scenarios when it comes to commemorating black heritage, held by two social groups, separated by class and language: on one hand, the educated elite has commemorated since the nineteenth century their story of black Jacobinism, where Haitianity is told in French, as the result of the canonization of enlightened black heroes like Toussaint L'Ouverture and Dessalines. On the other hand, the people of Haiti act out their heritage in Creole with vodoun, within traditional forms of popular culture and social networks forged in slavery, within which the maroons are commemorated as foundational father figures. Both the elitist and the popular perspectives perpetuate the memory of 1804, but in competing heritages, thus dividing the *anamnesis* in Haiti into antagonistic approaches that prevent any healing, reconciliation, or collective catharsis to happen. What is commemorated is a traumatic past, continuously told or performed, to maintain the power of the few (either the heads of state or the heads of the vodoun societies) over the many others.

In the first part of this chapter, I will examine the idea that in Haitian society, the Post-Columbus memory syndrome takes the shape of a conflictive *anamnesis*. On one hand, the elite commemorate the national myth by repeatedly celebrating the black Jacobins, while they tend to erase the oral, Creole, and popular cultural memory from the collective imagination. At the

same time, the people commemorate their maroon heritage with vodoun, in which zombism appears to be a commemorative strategy based on the manipulation of memory and amnesia as a way to discipline and punish, like toppling Columbus's statue and sentencing the scapegoat to historical oblivion. Memory is as much the keystone of power over the masses, and the instrument of justice for the masses; it is a matter of class in Haiti. In the second part of my analysis, I will question the position of some Haitian writers regarding historical memory and national identity. Since the 1980s, the position of the Haitian intellectual has changed and Haitian writers found themselves at the crossroads of several memory paths. Particularly since the 1990s, fiction became a tool to diagnose and question the dysfunctions of national memory in the country. I will consider the representation of zombies and zombie-making in the novels of Lyonel Trouillot and Gary Victor, as a way to act out the spell under which the nation seems to be condemned to perform an idealized story of pride in order not to confront the feeling of shame.

PART I

Post-Columbus Systems of Memory: Recycling Heritage in the Caribbean

CHAPTER 1

Transculturation as Commemoration: Fernando Ortiz, the Cuban *longue durée*, and the Role of Columbus

In the *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar* (1940), Fernando Ortiz retraced in 25 chapters the story of the birth and growth of the tobacco and sugarcane cultures in Cuba. To tell the history of the Caribbean basin before Columbus and until 1940, Ortiz created a new theoretical device, the counterpoint, to describe how cultural translations operated in the Caribbean among Taíno, African, and European cultures. Tobacco and Sugar, with diametrically opposed connotations,[1] are the two protagonists of Ortiz's reading of the Caribbean in the *longue durée*. This reading is both geo-semiotic and historical-economic. What I mean by this is that the terms "tobacco" and "sugar," because they mean more than their literal meaning for Ortiz, have become memory triggers in his book: they are trade products that represent Caribbean identity since its origin; therefore, telling their "stories" (as if tobacco and sugar were the characters of a plot) allows him to go back in time and describe, analyze, and understand the history of the region and its particular geographical identity.

Because of its broad historical scope, its densely descriptive and analytical nature, which relates the mutations of race and culture in Cuba to the evolution of the colonial and postcolonial economy on the island in the very long term, Ortiz's contrapuntal method invited the reader to understand race and culture in Cuba through *anamnesis*: that is to say, to look at the Caribbean as a cultural zone characterized by selective and creative cultural memory, of which tobacco and sugar were the antecedents. Ortiz created a device that allowed for multiple and interdisciplinary memory-loaded narrations (connected to history, economy, geography, cultural anthropology, comparative mythology, and national identity), looking back in time to remember the

past; for him, understanding Caribbean culture meant explaining how the past still existed in the present, and under which form. Thanks to the symmetry of his contrapuntal method, he turned the history of racial tensions in the Caribbean into a history of positive translations, turning the multiracial Caribbean imaginaries into one common process of alternative transformations. The latter resulted, for Ortiz, in the unique national identity of the Cuban postcolonial Republic. In this sense, I believe that Ortiz's analysis of Caribbean culture should be defined as commemorative, in the sense that in such a system, memory sustains national identity and the pride of belonging to a common Cuban heritage.

In *Contrapunteo*, *anamnesis* starts with the title of the book and the meaning of each two symbolic character. *Tabaco* in Spanish comes from the Taíno word for smoking pipes. Smoking tobacco was an important ritual of the natives, who believed it allowed the opening of the threshold between the supernatural world and everyday reality. It was a translational device that played a pivotal role in their social cohesion, passing on the fundamental beliefs of the community and translating them into a metaphysical and collective creed. In *Contrapunteo*, Ortiz explains how, centuries after the disappearance of the Taínos on the island, tobacco culture became a craft in Cuba, representative of a Cuban *savoir-faire* and knowledge, protected by laws of conformity and non-falsification, thanks to specific labeling. Tobacco is portrayed heroically as a local Antillean treasure and a token of cultural and national pride in Ortiz's book, with chapter titles such as "De como el Tabaco habano salió a conquistar el mundo" (How the Tobaco from Havana conquered the World) or "Del tabaco habano, que es el mejor del mundo" (On the Tobaco from Havana, which is the best in the World).

The second term of the title is addressed in the second part of the counterpoint, from chapters 12 to 19, which describes how sugar, the other fetish of the Cuban economy,[2] was introduced by the Spaniards for the purpose of mercantilism in the preindustrial plantation system. Ortiz tells how sugar production became a premodern capitalist industry from the early *trapiches* (sugar mills) to the later *ingenios* (sugar refineries), which required an organized, numerous, and systematic use of *mano de obra* for the hungry plantation, fed by the massive importation of black slaves from Africa. The brown gold was obtained through sugarcane processing. The sugar industry was also the result of another kind of translation: this is how Spain translated the exoticism of the New World into a profitable economy and justified expansionism after discovery.

My argument in this chapter will consist of two points. First, I suggest that transculturation—a word coined by Ortiz in Chapter 2 at the beginning of his book—was the keystone of a method of cultural *anamnesis*

for understanding the Caribbean as a regional culture in the *longue durée*. I believe that transculturation, as the theoretical device defined by Ortiz, allows one not only to remember the Caribbean, but also to constantly commemorate its identity as an originary myth, retold in different contexts in the present.[3]

Ortiz described transculturation as a three-stage process of creative cultural adaptations in Cuba, in which the actors were the Spaniards and the Europeans who crossed the Atlantic on one hand, and the local Taíno-Arawak Indians and the black people brought from Africa on the other. Ortiz's theory put forward a positive and compensatory cultural mechanism that transformed the violence of the arrival of the Europeans in the region into a process of cultural creation, epitomized by Cuban identity. Transculturation is the result of the cultural behavioral translations between Taínos and Africans. Ortiz examines how the slaves in Cuba adopted particular cultural elements from the native peoples of the Caribbean in order to resist and adapt to the Spanish and Catholic yoke. The main point is that European cultural traits were eventually modified by the incorporation of syncretic Taíno-African elements to give birth to a new, specific, and richer *cubanidad* on the island.

The three-stage process of transculturation—deculturation, acculturation, and neoculturation—corresponds to alternative external and internal fluxes. On one hand, transculturation is a necessary centrifugal movement of de-possession, in order to erase, disguise and *forget* a cultural element—precisely when its practice is repressed by the hegemonic power, as it was the case with African metaphysical and religious beliefs in the context of Catholic colonial society; on the other hand, it exists in a series of centripetal movements of appropriation, to incorporate, in compensation, a foreign cultural element, in other words, to *remember* something coming from another cultural, racial, linguistic and social group.

Transculturation shares the characteristics of *anamnesis*: it is based on the ability to select what can be remembered or erased, and to replace and adapt elements of latent collective memory to the needs of the everyday life. Ortiz's system combines multiple meanings of *anamnesis*. First, it draws on the religious/spiritual/mythical definition of anamnesis, when telling the origin repairs the damage of colonization and slavery (what Eliade calls *apodictical* and *cathartic* in *the Myth of the Eternal Return*). Second, it resonates with the medical meaning of *anamnesis*, in the sense that tobacco and sugar are the antecedents of Cuba's racial history. In Ortiz's early and criminologist approach, race was the disease that needed to be cured; eventually, race became for Ortiz part of Cuban syncretism and cultural richness. In that sense, the antecedents are to be understood as the origins of the national identity. Lastly, Ortiz's cultural memory shares the characteristics

of the Platonic definition of *anamnesis*: remembering something we know while being unaware of this knowledge. Ortiz's reader is invited to remember what he knows about the Caribbean (sugar and tobacco being obvious products associated with the region) while being at the same time unaware (and therefore enlightened by the reading of his book) that the words "sugar" and "tobacco" have got a deeper meaning, in relation to the cultural origins of the region; therefore, the method of the counterpoint is Ortiz's tool to revive the memory of the reader, as Socrates's questions trigger the young boy's knowledge of geometry in *Meno*.

In addition, Ortiz considers transculturation as a type of cultural memory, specific to the Caribbean, which operates by mimetism and transfer: one culture takes of the other what seems most familiar among many alien cultural practices. This is how the Caribbean tobacco-smoking ritual came to be recognized, understood and adopted by the black slaves to commune with the supernatural world—it was a practice close to the rituals performed in Africa before the Middle Passage, but whose exact procedure had been lost during the voyage. What was apparently lost and forgotten because of the trauma of the slave trade in fact remained at a latent stage in collective memory; transculturation allowed it to be remembered with a different, mixed, and enriched Taíno-African performative style.

In Ortiz's definition, transculturation is unpredictable, continuous and undoable; it is a process of cultural transformation in the very long term and across generations, where all cultural parts are transformed, including the economically dominant culture. Transculturation is equivalent to a memory procedure in Ortiz's view: cultural elements are never completely lost or forgotten; rather, they are recreated, re-*membered*, thanks to the cultural interactions of the different racial groups in Cuba. At the time he forged his theory, he thought that full transculturation had yet to be fully achieved but promised assimilation as a *horizon d'attente* for a future, modern Cuba. In other words, transculturation was for Ortiz the mechanism not only to describe cultural memory in Cuba but also to praise its progress as a nation able to remember collectively and to build a feeling of common cultural belonging. The Caribbean aptitude to recycle and rearrange cultural traits coming from different racial, linguistic, and religious backgrounds was for Ortiz the cultural talent of Cuba, able to self-repair and self-improve.

The second pillar of my argument is that Columbus was a key figure in Ortiz's system of *anamnesis* and that he played a major role in transculturation. For Ortiz, Columbus was the agent of the Caribbean–European interferences. Yet this is problematic for us as contemporary researchers in Caribbean Studies. Critical studies since the 1960s have returned to the fact that Columbus did not discover the Antilles but thought that he had found

the Indies he was looking for (O'Gorman 1958, Dussel 1992); that he interpreted erroneously the signs of the foreign culture he encountered in order to take possession of it (Todorov 1982, Carew 2006); and that he did not feel it necessary to understand the natives (Hulme 1986, Greenblatt 1991). His influence of the New World he discovered resulted from the delusional projection of his exploratory dream, born out of his fascination for Marco Polo, and the confirmation that the territories discovered were fit for Spanish crown's profit.

But in Ortiz's version, Columbus is the one who exported tobacco to the Old World and brought the sugar plants with him to the New World on his second voyage. As much as tobacco and sugar were two colonial fetishes, symbolic of Spain's "marvelous possession," Columbus was the hero who transported them: tobacco and sugar were part of the transatlantic relation, smuggled by Columbus, at the threshold between the Old and the New World, the very threshold deemed central to Campbell's monomyth in his study of the constitutive elements, episodes, and archetypes of heroic initiations (Campbell 1949).

Columbus Eshu? Columbus Elegua? Ortiz endows the European mariner with the talent of translation that characterizes the Caribbean *dioses de los caminos* (gods of destination and destiny) called Elegua in Cuba and Eshu in Haiti, portraying him as an agent between the natural and the supernatural, between reality and myth, between mercantilism and capitalism. Ortiz's Columbus is a hybrid, symbolic character that holds in one hand tobacco and in the other sugar. With *Contrapunteo*, Ortiz's purpose was not to write a history of colonialism in the Hispanic Caribbean, but to show how the three major cultures—from the perspective of Cuban citizenship—transformed themselves through contact with each other by means of transfer, syncretism and creative appropriation. Indeed, with the neologism of transculturation, Ortiz brought to light the fact that Cuba's transcultured post-1898 society was not simply the result of the addition and adaptation of different cultural layers resulting from the violent colonial encounter. Such a scenario would be to read the Caribbean in terms of multiculturalism.[4] Instead, in Cuba, Ortiz saw a process of creative, interactive, and perpetually intermingled translations, born out of the complex context of a chaotic transplantation, where Columbus was a key figure. He appeared as an embryonic epic character in *Contrapunteo* in 1940 and reached the stature of a Cuban Odysseus in *Huracán* in 1947. In the main body of this chapter, I will retrace and analyze the evolution of this character and propose new perspectives for reading the relationship between Cuban heritage, citizenship, and national heroism in Ortiz's work. In particular, I will explore how economy, race, and culture became the agents of a primitive Caribbean- and Columbus-oriented

process of constructing a Cuban national reservoir of memory. This will allow us, in chapters 2, 3, and 4, to understand the Ortizian dimension of Brathwaite's, Glissant's, and Benítez Rojo's memory systems; their unusual interest in Columbus; and their specific postmodern approaches to Caribbean imaginations in the *longue durée*.

Transculturation for Praising and Remembering *Cubanidad*

In his numerous anthropological essays, Ortiz studied most recurrently the representation of black culture in Cuba, particularly Yoruba religion and music, and more specifically, the sociocultural relations and crossbreeding between blacks and whites on the island. His life-long attempt to analyze the particularity of Cuban cultural identity through race was rooted in his desire to contribute to the progress of Cuban society. Though his primarily positivist mind-set became less aggressive and more subtle with time, Ortiz never ceased to posit his understanding of Cuba in terms of improvement and modernity, and to narrate the nation as young, not yet fully realized, but endowed with the cultural depth of a grand civilization whose ancient origins were tied up in a complex racial and cultural encoding.

The model he elaborated in the first half of the twentieth century focused on the twists and turns of the syncretic elements that define Cuban culture, dissecting their origins, showing how they intersected, and analyzing how they recreated themselves in a way that changed negative and traumatic elements into positive and self-affirmative ones, elements of which, he felt, the Cuban should be proud. As an analogy, one might say that Ortiz's transculturation theory proposed a reading of the Caribbean as a region with its own DNA, where identity was as much as inherited—Indo-Antillean, white, or black—as duplicated, thanks to the complex reassociation of the information encoded in each cultural sequence, after a mistake led to a mutation of the original identity sequence. The mistake was epitomized by the violent rupture caused by colonization and slavery, corresponding to what Ortiz calls deculturation and acculturation. This occurred with Columbus's arrival. In Ortiz's mind-set, the positive emerged from the negative. Indeed, what prevented the imposition of a homogenized Hispanic culture in Cuba was the trauma that arose from the start of each identity sequence: the enslavement of the Taínos and the uprooting of the Africans. The primary cultural information from each was displaced, erased, and uprooted from its original cultural and geographic context, and therefore had to renew and diffuse itself into multiple syncretisms. In the particular case of Cuba, which was most dear to Ortiz, the polytraumatic historical origins (the resettlement of the *criollos*, the genocide of the Indians, the slavery of the Africans) were turned in the

long term into a cultural gift, thanks to the capacity of adaptation of the Cuban people, and their ability to syncretize cultures and to reach the stage of civilization.

When he chose the word transculturation in 1940, Ortiz was correcting the ethnocentric English term of acculturation, which he himself used in his earlier works to describe the atavisms of black culture, which he believed were responsible for the blockages of Cuba's progress toward modernity. What the new word brings is the possibility to highlight the negative and turn it into the basis of the positive. Indeed in Ortiz's *Cuban Counterpoint*, no creative and appropriative transculturation would be possible without, first, a phase of deculturation and, second, of acculturation. The negative prefixes in the system are essential to stress the primary and original loss upon which cultural regeneration can operate:

> La transculturación expresa mejor las diferentes fases transitivas de una cultura a otra porque este no consiste solamente en adquirir una distinta cultura (lo que significa el termino anglosajón de "acculturation") sino que el proceso implica también necesariamente la perdida o desarraigo de una cultura propia, lo que pudiera decirse des-culturación y además significa la consiguiente creación de nuevos fenómenos culturales que pudieran denominarse de neo-culturación
> (Ortiz 1963, p.101)

In 1944, Ortiz corrected and augmented his previous analysis of Afro-Cuban cultural practices in *Los Negros Brujos* (1906) and *Hampa Afro-cubana: Los Negros Esclavos* (1916). He expanded the transculturation model to remap the history of "the relations between blacks and whites in Cuba" for the purpose of an article published in the *Phylon Journal of Atlanta* (Ortiz 1944). This article shows how Ortiz modified and rendered more complex his first positivist analysis of black Cuban communities. For the purposes of clarity, and for the readers not familiar with the text, I will begin by describing Ortiz's analysis.

The first stage called deculturation moves from hostility to compromise. The first cultural "encounter" between white dominant and black slave cultures is violent ("the white man attacks the black man and enslaves him by force, the black rebels against his oppressor if possible, the people are told that the Negro is sub-human and bestial, at last the black man is conquered but he is not resigned to his fate") (Ortiz 1944, p.22). Then comes the "good master/good negro" paradigmatic relationship, where violence is defused into a new bond between black and white: "the white man begins to relent because of his brown off-spring and the black man who has lost his family, his homeland, and consciousness of his historic past, goes on readjusting himself to the new land, and begins to feel love for his new fatherland" (p.22).

Eventually, acculturation is a process of negotiation between violence and frustration that changes from adjustment to self-assertion. To adjust to the dominant white model he values as a norm, the black man of the second and third generation hates himself for being black: "This is a phase of constant frustration for the black man. The white dominant man tolerates him and cooperates with him when it is advantageous to him, he looks upon the dominated race with kinder eyes provided they keep their place" (p.23). Eventually self-assertion improves the situation and the black ceases to be ashamed of the traditions and surviving values of his ancestral culture. This is when the words "negro" and "mulatto" stop being taboos, and it is what Ortiz identifies as the contemporary phase of postcolonial Cuban society—he wrote the text in 1944. He writes, "In Cuba we are at last on the road to mutual understanding in spite of prejudices which have not been eradicated and are even aggravated today by foreign political ideologies whose principal exponent is Hitler with all his brutal race theories" (p.23).

The last stage is called transculturation. More than anything, it is a goal to reach, at the end of a quest for progress, the improvement of Cuban man. We can see how much Ortiz's enlightened and positivist intellectualism is the heart of his theory of Cuban sequential identity. Indeed, he hopes that the ultimate phase of transculturation will lead to integration: "This is tomorrow's phase, the last phase, when cultures fuse and conflict ceases, giving way to a *tertium quid*, a third entity and culture, and to a new society culturally integrated, where mere racial factors have lost their dissociating power" (p.24).

Without doubt, transculturation was about commemorating the racial interactions in Cuba and telling the story of their mutations and improvement: for Ortiz, Cuban society progresses according to a model of cultural evolution where race slowly but surely stops being a barrier to progress. It was already the argument of his 1906 *Los Negros Brujos*.[5] But the fundamental change in the 1940s' articulation, in the *Contrapunteo*, consisted in proposing a flexible and self-compensatory pattern to what was initially a racist, evolutionist model. The counterpoint model recalls the characteristics of Afro-Caribbean music, where one drum gives the rhythmical canvas and steady beat while a second one improvises and challenges the first one with its secondary tempo, thus creating a disharmonic musical and multilayered line (Quintero Rivera 2005). In fact, in 1944, Ortiz's main focus was no longer on harmony, as had been the case when he was a criminologist and considered the black *mala vida* as something to be corrected and cured (Díaz Quiñones 2006).[6] Transculturation opens the *Contrapunteo* with Ortiz's acceptance of disharmony as the original foundation of the Cuban postcolonial identity, envisaged now as in constant evolution and progress. Ortiz's system is often

understood as a wholly positive, creative, and associative cultural process, evident in comforting stereotypes like the *ajiaco cubano* (Cuban stew) to define Cuban identity as a multicultural mosaic. I would counter that it is essential to remember that transculturation deals first and foremost with loss and lack: the invention of a new way of being is the result of a need to survive by adaptation. Cuban cultural vitality was considered by Ortiz to be an organic body capable of changing rhythm and incorporating foreign elements, translating them to transform them, and eventually replacing the lost element, erased or dead, with a stronger and syncretic one. The erasure of original elements—the very ones condemned as atavistic and negative in *Los Negros Brujos*—became positively connoted in the *Contrapunteo*, as able to transform the dominant culture as well. Ortiz seemed to put vitality, primitive invention, movement, and flexibility on the side of non-white and non-Spanish cultures in Cuba, as a result of which the cultural improvements occurred thanks to the adaptability of the enslaved cultures.[7]

In the same vein, the image used by Ortiz to describe syncretism is not of addition leading to fusion, but of twirling cultural elements that become stronger and almost incapable of being differentiated once they are intertwined. Just as disharmony was the impulse that enabled transcultural mutations, the notion of cultural impurity as a positive value in Cuban culture became important for Ortiz to defend the vitality of the Cuban post-plantation society, accounting both for its capacity to syncretize elements borrowed from Spanish culture, and to cut the umbilical cord with the mother land. It is important to bear in mind that Ortiz's transculturation is a type of *anamnesis* that commemorates Caribbean origins as the combination of impure, mixed, intertwined, and compensatory cultural traits.

The strongest commemorative elements of Ortiz's *oeuvre* are to be found in his interest for syncretisms in Cuba. Syncretisms for Ortiz are racial, linguistic, and religious. As regards race, he questioned and analyzed the existence of *panhispanismo* and the essence of Spanish culture with the essay *La Reconquista de América, Reflexiones sobre el panhispanismo* (1910). His argument was that, since it did not make sense for the black Cubans to regard Africa as their motherland, it did not make sense either for white Cubans to consider Spain as their cultural homeland: both the black and the white Cuban men were Cubans, said Ortiz. He stressed that there was no such thing as a Spanish race; rather one could talk about a Spanish civilization, made up of a mixture of Iberian and impure cultures. The European discoverers and the Spanish colonizers were indeed already bringing a cultural mixture, if we bear in mind that the men and women sent to the New World were of all kinds: adventurers, delinquents, and renegades. Again the analogy serves to praise social progress and cultural health and to give a positive connotation to the

idea of racial impurity. In terms of linguistic syncretism, Ortiz explored the idiomatic richness and inexhaustible creativity of Cuban language in *Catauro de Cubanismos* (1923). He registered, in an encyclopedic style, how the Spanish spoken in Cuba borrowed grammatical patterns, words, and sounds from indigenous and African languages, and was also nurtured by an impure Spanish language, itself influenced by Arabic words, and was far from the Spanish of the *Real Academia de la Lengua Española*. Ortiz used this linguistic impurity as another point on which to praise Cuba as a model of transcultural Caribbean civilization. Finally, religious practices were for Ortiz privileged cultural objects that represent the complexity of Cuban culture. One famous example is his analysis of the cult and devotion of the *Virgen de la Caridad del Cobre*, the patron Saint of Cuba. The cult was initially the result of a syncretism between the catholic colonizers and the Indians they wished to evangelize.[8] She eventually became a meaningful figure in Yoruba culture, the most influential culture amongst slaves, and was used to embody multiple versions of the goddess Oshun and to allow the slaves to practice their religion inside the repressive and normative cultural pattern imposed by white Catholic masters. Ortiz therefore shows that the cultural meaning of the *Virgen del Cobre* arises out of not only the syncretism of Spanish, Indian, and African beliefs, but also the syncretic combination of already syncretic beliefs.

In all cases, Ortiz analyzes syncretisms as metaphorical associations born out of a need for remembering shared by all the cultural agents (and not only coming from a primitive subject forced to fit into the so-called civilized dominant model). The associations of metaphors happen according to the degree of familiarity shared by the cultural elements, that is to say according to how much they can feel similar with the other, and not because of the strength, power, or violence imposed by a dominant assimilationist culture. Therefore, the way in which a symbolic object or a cultural practice, first considered external, becomes a new inner symbol for the culture that appropriates it, can be quite unexpected, as in the case of tobacco.[9]

With *Contrapunteo* and particularly with the idea of transculturation, Ortiz took a stand on some of the major issues of historical cultural analysis of his time. Impurity, in racial, linguistic, and religious terms, became a positive trait of cultural vitalism:

> el tabaco llega al mundo cristiano con las revoluciones del Renacimiento y de la Reforma, cuando caída la Edad Media empieza la modernidad con su racionalismo. Diríase que la razón, flaca, y entorpecida por la teología, para fortalecerse y libertarse necesitaba del auxilio de estimulantes benevolentes que no la embriagaran con entusiasmos.
>
> (Ortiz 1963, p.268)

Ortiz also rejected the linear logic of acculturation and preferred the model of transculturation as an intertwining, in order to envisage progress and modernity in a culturally mixed but, for all that fulfilled, sense of Cubanness. There was certainly a strong utopian dimension to Ortiz's desire for a renewed Cuba. Using European schemes of knowledge, he proposed a non-eurocentric reading of Cuban culture, and he placed Cuban identity at the center of Caribbean heritage. His patriotism led him to assume that Cuba's cultural mutations, born out of the connections and disconnections of three different and already impure cultures, made Cuban transculturation more creative than any other. It is with *Huracán*, seven years later, that Ortiz will complete his model. And this is when Columbus, already backstage during the *Contrapunteo*, takes to the stage.

Transculturation as a National Myth: Hurricane and the Cuban "Geomythology"

A tropical cyclone is visually characterized by a low-pressure depression, around which the winds swirl and produce rainstorms and oceanic chaos. Analogically, the transculturation framed by Ortiz in the 1940s was based on a primary loss (a central depression) around which cultural adaptations and transformations swirl until they produce a new cultural balance, of a compensatory and mixed nature, for the whole structure. *Huracán—su mitología y sus símbolos* (1947) is characterized by recurrent metaphors of circularity and spiral movement—the fury of the hurricane, the waves of the ocean, the chaos of displacement. Primitive Taíno mythology is the main subject of *Huracán*, and Ortiz extends the description of the Indo-Antillean culture that he began in his historical analysis of the tobacco economy in *Contrapunteo*. The book presents Cuba as a civilization with an ancient heritage and reinforces the exceptionality of the island's past, by representing foundational episodes and heroes that Ortiz believed worthy of belonging to the national imaginary. The brutal and impulsive force of the Caribbean tropical climate sets the background for the heroic, inventive, and thoughtful reactions of the people of the Caribbean Sea, from whom Cuban man descends. While Columbus was only a symbolic and historical marker in *Contrapunteo*, we will see later in this chapter that he becomes in *Huracán* a heroic figure at sea, and a mythological pivot in the construction of an epic of Antillean civilization.

Huracán is the keystone in Ortiz's construction of a Cuban geo-mythology and of the Cuban Republic as the national epicenter of the Antillean civilization. At first sight, it is a deductive anthropological study based on the symbolism of the helicoid ideogram drawn and worshipped by the Arawaks on the island before Columbus's arrival (Figure 1.1).

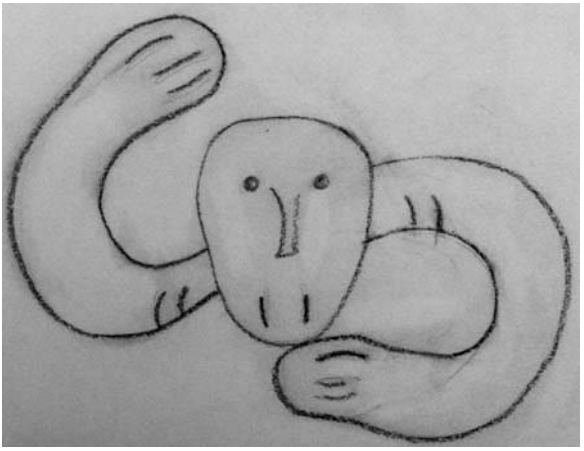

Figure 1.1 Taíno Representation of God Huracán

The ideogram represents a circular central pit around which arms are displayed in an external and inverted symmetry drawing a sigmoid representation that stands for the giratory movement of the cyclone. Ortiz based his hypothesis about Indo-Antillean mythology on the study of equivalent cyclonic and circular symbols in other cultures (such as the Ethiopian ritual in the book of Enoch, the African Bedouins, and the Nahuatl cosmogony). This led him to assume that the Indo-Cuban ideogram represented the god Hurricane. His anthropological method combined the traditional tools of comparative mythology typical of European scholarship at the time with a deductive and hypothetical method to imagine what symbols would have meant for the Taínos, given the lack of information, the absence of written texts and the loss of physical traces. Ortiz uses a virtual grammatical mode to assume and presume how the Indo-Cubans must have thought, putting them on the same level as Greek civilization (Ortiz 1947, p.91). He fills in the void of the historical erasure with a mythological and epic narration, based on an extended knowledge of comparative philology. For example, he uses Ruskin's essay, *The Queen of the Air*, and recalls the two figures of Athena: on one hand, the goddess of air, breath and life, *pneuma*, and inspiration, the muse of intelligence; on other, Minerva, the goddess of wind directions and of the four cardinal points. Athena was represented wearing a spear and a shield on which a Gorgon head was drawn, representing the fury of the tempest, recalling the swirls of wind and the fear that anyone who dared look into her eyes would be turned into stone. Ortiz concludes that something similar must

have occurred in the mythology and symbolism of the Indians of the Antilles (Ortiz 1947, p.92).

Together with the transculturation model described previously, the image of the intertwining thread in *Huracán* echoes the description of syncretism as a set of complex elements that fuse together in a copulative and compensatory association. Indeed in *Huracán*'s mythology, the theoretical considerations of transculturation are denoted by the natural, climatic, and geographic elements of the Caribbean islands, where tempestuous and unpredictable motions prevail. The first protagonist of the Caribbean landscape is the wind that swirls into a cyclonic depression. The second is the sea, another element associated with the idea of motion. Again the foundational heroes of this pre-Columbian landscape, and the first to produce syncretic thinking, were the Taínos. The ability to think the spiral is indeed materialist in Ortiz's analysis of primitive philosophy: it is because the Taínos witnessed many different spiral lines in their natural environment—circular winds, waves, or the curves of a shell—that they came to think of the spiral as a metaphysical symbol, creating chains of metaphors, the ones at the heart of the process of transculturation. Ortiz reimagines the moment when Antillean men and women invented knots, first twisting a thread and then tying twisted threads together to make them stronger and almost unbreakable. This is for Ortiz how the helical process was invented, and how a practice became a symbol.

For Ortiz, the Caribbean sea is the foundational cradle of Cuban culture, not only because the Indian, the Spanish, and the black settlements on the island began at sea, in canoes, in caravels, and in slave ships; not only because the history of the Caribbean is a history of trade, transactions, and trips back and forth between the Caribbean and Europe; but also because from the beginning of time, transculturation happened among the people of the Caribbean within their own cultural environment and ecology. Ortiz's vision is indeed a vision in the *longue durée*: life on the island was born from and with the sea. In those matters, Ortiz took position against Lamar Schweyer's *homo cubensis* theory, defending a non-Cuban, original Carib Indian, coming from Venezuela. Alberto Lamar Schweyer based his theory of a pure original Palaeolithic Cuban man upon a skeleton found in a cave in Oriente, in Coscuyuela (Harrington 1921). This proto-Cuban specimen stood for the autochthonous *homocubensis* and served as the basis for the *siboneismo* movement, a theory that rejected the idea that Cuban culture was a mixed culture born from the exodus and the displacement, in favor of a pre-Columbian utopia, based on the belief of an original and pure Cuban identity. Ortiz was thoroughly opposed to this and defended the idea of a transcultural Cuban identity (Rojas 2004). Benítez Rojo, Brathwaite, and

Glissant will certainly remember the importance of the Caribbean geography when rethinking transculturation for their own projects.

In *Contrapunteo*, Ortiz talked about an Antillean Mediterranean sea (*un Mar Mediterráneo de las Antillas*), being the area dominated by the Carib-Arawak culture. In *Huracán*, he went further and created an extended geo-mythology in order to study Cuba as the center of a grand Caribbean civilization. The same year, in 1947, Fernand Braudel published *La Méditerranée et le Monde Méditerranéen à l'Époque de Phillippe II*. Braudel's emphasis on a geographical area (the Mediterranean basin), rather than on the historical figure of Phillip II, was deliberate. He highlighted three different periods, long-term history (*la longue durée*) where changes are almost invisible; social history, where societal transformations are noticeable: and short-term history, where changes constitute upheavals in everyday life. Braudel's historical analysis of the *longue durée* did not fit with the traditional French positivist mind-set of the Sorbonne at the time. Supervised by Lucien Fèbvre, father of the Annales School and of the New History School, who separated from the *Ecole des Hautes Etudes de Sciences Sociales* to create his own university department based on a new methodology, Braudel created the concept of the *longue durée* to invalidate the positivist *histoire évenementielle*, seen as a sterile and chronological collection of events (what he ironically called a History of Historians, by and for Historians). The long-term history of the Mediterranean basin remapped the history of Europe by adopting a very long term focus on the birth, growth, and cultural transformations affecting the people living on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea.

The analogy with Ortiz is enlightening: Braudel offered a eurocentric reading of transculturation where the Mediterranean basin was the epicenter and foundational cradle of Mediterranean civilization. Braudel's perspective was deliberately anti-positivist. Ortiz in the 1940 was following a different post-positivist line, in order to define Cuba as a society where citizenship, race, and civilization where balanced thanks to transculturation processes operating in the long term. The Braudelian distinction between the history of the *longue durée*, the agitated nature of social history, and historical upheavals, enabled him to get rid of the rigidity of chronology. Likewise in *Huracán*, Ortiz blurred historical boundaries: the absence of explicit dates to contextualize the various periods the book covers, and the thematic rather than chronological table of contents, enabled him to embrace Cuba's history in a very general and synthetic way, in order to focus on the socio-anthropological result of those mechanisms in the long term. As he said in *Contrapunteo*, he considers Cuba to be a synthetic historical laboratory where all the shocks, changes, and mutations that happened across centuries of history in Europe happened "in a day": "Toda la escala cultural que Europa experimentó en

más de cuatro milenios, en Cuba se pasó en menos de cuatro siglos" (The many layers of cultural evolution that happened in Europe in 4,000 years happened in Cuba in four centuries) (Ortiz 1960, p.100). This allowed Ortiz to articulate a Cuban national myth.

Columbus, a Caribbean Ulysses

Christopher Columbus is a recurrent character in Ortiz's *obra*. He is present mostly in works whose goal was to underscore Cuba's national imagination and to commemorate national pride and a Cuban feeling of belonging, or *cubanidad*.[10] This was the case in 1940, when the new Constitution under the *de facto* presidency of Batista,[11] offered progressive laws in matters of public education, land reform, minimum wage, and social welfare. In 1940 and in 1942, Ortiz delivered two speeches in praise of the Cuban Republic as a fully formed civilization and successful and progressive society. These tributes to the nation interestingly both dew on the celebration of Columbus's arrival in the Antilles and his heroic and memorable transatlantic journey. I will briefly analyze the two speeches, quite unknown outside Cuban Studies, in order to then examine how those Columbian scenarios were expanded in Ortiz's epic story of the Caribbean in *Huracán*.

On October 9, 1940, in the Rotary Club of Havana, Ortiz gave a talk entitled "*1868 y 1492. Evocación cubana de dos históricas mañanas de Octubre*" (1868 and 1492. Cuban Evocation of two historical mornings in October). Using the technique of counterpoint, once again, he drew a parallel between the discovery of the New World by Columbus on October 12, 1492, and the first declaration of Cuban independence by Carlos Manuel de Céspedes on October 12, 1868. Ortiz's purpose was to celebrate the new Constitution of 1940 as representing a full coming-into-being of the nation, thus proving Cuba's political and social growth from youth to maturity. In Ortiz's words, the constitution meant that Cuba was ready to end a "juvenile era" to enter "universal drama" (Guanche 1998, p.43).

Of the two October anniversaries—Columbus's arrival in the New World and Céspedes's declaration of Cuban independence in the town of Yara—the first one is not exactly Cuban since Columbus landed in Cuba on October 29 and not on October 12. Nevertheless, Ortiz chooses October 12 as the main symbolic date along with the episode of Yara, linking the two as symbols of Cuban national pride and belonging. October 12 is called the *día de la raza* (day of the race) in the independent nations of Latin America. Ortiz refused to use such a name on the grounds of the arguments he had put forward in his essay *La Reconquista de América*: for him, race was an invention to separate and to exclude, and no such thing as a Spanish race existed: "Pero ese

concepto es falso: la raza española es una mentira" (The concept of "Spanish race" is fake and it is a lie), (Guanche 1998, p.82).

Columbus is therefore celebrated not as the Spanish discoverer and hero of the *día de la raza*, but as a Caribbean foundational hero, who enriched the New World with the multicultural treasures of Europe, such as iron, the wheel, the gunpowder, the astrolabe, the printing, and money. And more than a list of objects, the arrival of Columbus resulted for Ortiz in the combination of "the adventurous nature of the Castilians, the mercantilism of the Mediterraneans and the universal epopeya of the Christians" (Guanche 1998, p.87).

Clearly in the Rotary Club speech, Ortiz's intention was to celebrate Cuba as an autonomous, independent, and mature republic, able to work for the social progress of the people. The arrival of Columbus is to be commemorated as the birth of a unique Caribbean civilization, which grew as an independent and mature national body in Cuba after the declaration of Independence in Yara in 1868, and reached maturity in 1940 with the new constitution. For Ortiz, Yara was a symbolically significant moment when the New World taught the Old World a lesson in democracy, liberalism, and republicanism, leading to Cuba's self-discovery as a *patria*: "En Yara es el descubrimiento de una patria. Cuba se descubre a si misma" (Guanche 1998, p.87). By commemorating Yara as a second *descubrimiento*, Ortiz celebrates the birth of Cuba as a *criolla* nation of the New World: the country not only was free from the bosom of the old European empires, but became a part of the Americas, which for Ortiz were on the side of progress while Europe's history was characterized by brutality, torture, religious wars, and imperialisms (Guanche 1998, p.89). Ortiz incorporated Columbus in the cyclical story of Cuba's cultural growth, from pre-Columbian innocence, through colonial childhood and republican adolescence, to civilized adulthood. In the middle of the Second World War, he used Columbus as a way to celebrate Cuba's history as a paradigm of universal humanism.

The second commemorative speech in tribute to Columbus opened the first Cuban congress of History on October 8, 1942, in the Palacio Municipal of Havana. There again, the discoverer is remembered as an agent in the progress of civilization. As stressed in the title "Por Colón se descubrieron dos mundos" (Thanks to Columbus two worlds discovered each other), Ortiz points out the mutual encounter and the inter-relational discovery between the Indo-Antilleans and the Spanish. For Ortiz, this is what initiated the process of transculturation studied two years before in *Contrapunteo*: "No fue en realidad un Nuevo Mundo lo encontrado sino que varios mundos nuevos. Dos mundos que se ignoraban se descubrieron el uno al otro, y para ambos, que de dos meros semimundos pasaron a ser un mundo solo y verdadero" (In fact, it was not one but several new worlds that were discovered.

Two worlds that ignored each other discovered each other; and those two half-worlds became one) (Guanche 1998, p.91).

Ortiz turns the racial encounter into a mutual exchange of knowledge. Using parallelisms and accumulative rhetorical figures, some of which are poetic, even epic, Ortiz puts forward what each culture brought to the other, both contributing to the progress of mankind and to the birth of a third cultural thread, namely, Caribbean civilization, out of the exchange of goods like corn, chocolate, and spices grown in the Americas and milk, wheat, and meat brought by Europe. The encounter between the two worlds, in Ortiz's view, leads to the highly productive mixing of Western culture with the American revolutionary spirit and faith in utopias (Guanche 1998, pp.98–99). Cuban national pride, and the celebration of its postcolonial achievement as a free nation, is rooted in the utopian faith that nurtured the sons of America and gave them the strength to triumph over racial tyranny and economic dependency, according to Ortiz. The transcultural mutation of Cuban society began with Columbus, and as an agent of transculturation and of civilization, Ortiz considers that he belongs to the postcolonial Cuban heroic pantheon and October 12 should be a day of celebration every year on the island (Guanche 1998, p.96).

The 1940s and 1950s were years when Ortiz praised Cuban nationalism on the island and, at the same time, examined Cuba as a model of civilization in more abstract and universal terms. *Contrapunteo* in 1940 and *Huracán* in 1947 are mirror images of each other, reflecting the pendulum-like position of Ortiz, a Cuban intellectual-citizen on one hand and an anthropologist of his time, influenced by European methodologies, on the other. Columbus is the pivot in this pendulum movement. In *Huracán* Ortiz transformed Columbus into a mythological hero of the Caribbean Sea, as Aeneas and Ulysses were in the Mediterranean basin. He considers that Columbus's discovery was as important as the discovery of the printing (Ortiz 1947, p.97). In *Huracán*, the narration of Columbus' journeys, arrivals in the New World, and returns are part of an epic story and quest for regeneration. Ortiz's personal version of the legend is that Columbus, a European historical figure, became a Caribbean hero: he achieved his destiny when he landed on the Caribbean islands. Ulysses is well known for the cunning with which he resisted the curse of the god of the ocean, Poseidon. By analogy, brought by the unpredictable winds of the god Hurricane, Columbus arrived at the Caribbean. Ulysses was cursed and condemned to navigate endlessly inside an enclosed sea, prevented by many adventurous episodes from returning to Itaca, until he finally found a way home. In Ortiz's representation, the curse is transformed into an act of good fortune. Columbus was lucky enough to be knocked off course by a hurricane, the winds helping to bring him to the Caribbean (Ortiz 1947, p.66). This deviation at sea, remembered as a mistake

in history books, becomes an omen of good fortune, or an act of Fortuna, that brought him to the region so that he could contribute to the growth of a new Caribbean civilization, arising out of Taíno culture. Likewise, if we follow Ortiz's story, Columbus's return home is not to be understood as his return to Europe, in chains and defeated, but as the recurrent voyages he made to the Caribbean. Ortiz suggests that the Caribbean was to Columbus what Itaca was for Ulysses.

In a book dedicated to the Hurricane divinity of the Taínos, Columbus seems to be touched by the leniency of the god and the mildness of the climate. The famous navigating mistake that is responsible for his arrival in a presumed India, and the contingency of his "discovery," are therefore toned down in favor of a new narration where the Hero accomplishes his destiny. This is when the cunning knowledge of the admiral comes to the foreground. Indeed, Columbus is often referred to as knowledgeable about the phenomenon of Hurricanes thanks to what he learned from the Indians. Ortiz describes him as a wise and knowledgeable sailor, unlike his adversary Francisco de Bobadilla and as able to adapt to the new environments he discovered, as if he had a natural talent for transculturation (Ortiz 1947, p.69). Against the black legend of Columbus as the bad sailor and poor translator, Ortiz provides elements for a new golden legend where Columbus is "the good mariner" ("*el experto marino*," p.81) in order to transform the story of the origin of the Cuban civilization into a success story. Ortiz's transformation of Columbus into a hero is mediated by the fascination for Taíno culture and mythology, about which Columbus learns everything he can. Narrating Columbus's journeys as the foundational odyssey of a civilization, regenerated by transculturation, fulfils Ortiz's desire to praise the postcolony as a republic of progress and a universal model, and to celebrate nationalism and republicanism at the same time.

At the climax of his epic narration, Ortiz manages to turn Columbus into a syncretic father figure, as a sacred object of transculturation, with an analysis of the syncretism between the divinity Hurricane and the Catholic Saint Francis of Assisi. Because the hurricane season coincided with the day of Saint Francis, on October 4, but also because the Franciscan Order was very much represented among the missionaries sent to the Antilles, and lastly, bearing in mind the fact that Saint Francis wears a thread around his waist, the rage of the cyclones in the Caribbean was interpreted in popular belief as the Saint's anger, and called the *cordonazo de San Francisco* (the whipping of Saint Francis) by Spanish settlers. The legend eventually incorporated the figure of Columbus as endowed with the attributes of both the God Hurricane and Saint Francis. Finally, Ortiz shows that the black Congos of Cuba also appropriated the legend to represent the Spirit Tata Pancho Kimbungila ("Tata"

meaning father, "Pancho" being the Spanish short name for Francisco, and "Kimbungila" meaning swirl). The god Ifa/Orumbila in the Cuban Yoruba pantheon, coming from a bantu religious practice still alive in santería, is the *orisha* (god) (of destiny and the cosmos). He communicates his knowledge to the *babalaos* (the priests of the cult of *santería*) that read the *sortilegios* (spells) in the form of a cross and in the four directions of the winds, on the table of Cosmos. When the *babalao* believes he is in danger of war, illness, or magic power, he ties around his waist a little chain made of eight stones that are omens to be read when they fall down on the floor. This chain, called an *okpele*, recalls the thread of Saint Francis. Ortiz unstitches all the layers of the syncretism so that Columbus could be pantheonized as a Caribbean Christian saint, a Taíno divinity, and a father figure in Congo African language. As a result, Ortiz transforms Columbus into a hero and a product of transculturation.

It is common in Latin American cultural and intellectual history to divide Fernando Ortiz's works between an early phase, strongly influenced by positivism and characterized by a racist approach to culture, and a second phase when he valorized the African heritage in Cuba and fully integrated it within the national identity as one of its major cultural components. Looking at his works through the prism of national heroism allows us to understand the more subtle and innovative ways in which Ortiz articulated Cuban heritage, citizenship, and national identity in the continuity of his career. Columbus is the character that links the three dimensions together. In Ortiz's view, Columbus was not only the historical agent that facilitated the transculturation between Europe and the Caribbean (between the old and the new); he also deserved to be considered as a Caribbean hero in the epic sense of the word, because he was the major catalyst of the encounter between the Taíno and the African cultures (between the local and the foreign) that renewed and enriched Cuba. The idea of cultural and economic progress, in fact tied together in Ortiz's positivist perspective, is also at the heart of the birth and growth of national pride, sustaining the view that since Columbus's arrival, Cuba has been achieving the destiny of exception to which the island was predestined in the Caribbean region. As the core story to tell the essence of Cuban identity, transculturation was in the first place for Ortiz the main plot to tell the story of Cuba as an exceptionally rich culture—a story in which racial miscegenation is a positive and creative response to historical traumas. In the second place, transculturation became for Ortiz the epic story of Cubans' exceptional ability to become a strong nation, with Taíno-African traits that transformed European culture into a Caribbean miscegenated identity.

CHAPTER 2

Edward Kamau Brathwaite's Transnational *Anamnesis*: Creolizing Columbus in the English Caribbean Collective Memory

In 1974, with *Contradictory Omens*, the Barbadian Edward Kamau Brathwaite coined the term Creolization—from the Spanish word *criollo*[1]—to analyze the intercultural transformations of post-plantation Jamaican society. In this study published a decade after the independences of the former British West Indies, Creolization was for Jamaica what Ortiz's transculturation had been for Cuba: a process of compensatory cultural affirmation in the *longue durée*, negotiating the need for remembrance and forgetting among the people of the Caribbean. In 1983, Brathwaite expanded the analysis of Creolization to the Caribbean archipelago as a whole in a short essay called *Two Paradigms: Missile and Capsule*. While *Contradictory Omen* looked at transculturation in Jamaica only, *Missile and Capsule* proposed a larger historical counterpoint to read the archipelago from its very first geographical birth as multiple and fragmented islands, and to examine "the culture of the Caribbean in space and time" (Brathwaite 1983, p.12). In resonance with Ortiz's *Contrapunteo Cubano del Tabaco y el Azúcar*, *Missile and Capsule* stressed the beauty and efficiency of Taíno culture, a canoe-relational culture that facilitated the communication between small islands, thus dealing with geographical fragmentation:

> When there were Caribs, you could communicate from island-island by canoe. You stand on the Morne, St Lucia, and you look out across the water wind to Martinique. On a clear day you can see the green marked valleys of that landfall only hail away. A Carib, if he wished could reach there by canoe before

> night came: he and his family and his friends [. . .] And so there was this intimate connection: daily contact cousins. (p.16)

While tobacco and sugar were the symbolical fetishes used by Ortiz in his counterpoint, Brathwaite's antithetical paradigm situated the history of the Caribbean in the *longue durée* and also approached the geography and history of the archipelago through a set of systematic oppositions. In Brathwaite's metaphorical spatiotemporal system, the cultures of the Antillean Arawaks and of the eventually transplanted black slaves share common features, as in Ortiz's study of the transculturation of tobacco. For the Barbadian writer, the Arawak and African cultural skills derived from the notion of circularity: perpetuation, survival, inward relation, and restoration of equilibrium. In contrast, we find in *Missile and Capsule* that Brathwaite describes the missile culture, brought by Columbus and whose goal was to annihilate and conquer, in terms of recalling the evil connotations of sugar in Ortiz's view.

I contend that Brathwaite's theory of Creolization was a free adaptation of transculturation in the specific context of Anglophone postcolonial nation building to facilitate a strategy of collective remembrance that I call *anamnesis*. Hence, Creolization evolved in Brathwaites *oeuvre*, following as much the sociopolitical transformations of the archipelago after the islands became nations as the writer's own critical views about postcolonial studies and their limited power to tackle issues of cultural heritage and postnational collective memory. *Contradictory Omen* and *Missile and Capsule* are the markers of Brathwaite's theory of Creolization: they are very well known in Postcolonial Studies but not fully accommodated in non-Anglophone Caribbean theory. However, while these essays are read in postcolonial scholarship as mirrors of Braithwaite's political and post-Marxist approach to the region, I read them as two specific moments in Brathwaite's memory system. They represent Brathwaite's proposal to incorporate memory and remembrance in the collective imaginations of the problematic, postcolonial Anglophone archipelago. Both texts contributed to the author's reading of Caribbean Cultures as geopoetic mutations in the *longue durée*, and proposed different discursive, performative, and mnemonic strategies of remembrance that reworked some elements of Ortiz's anthropology of Cuban memory and culture. I will in due course examine how Brathwaite expanded and corrected those views in his poetry, which proposed new scenarios of commemoration in the postcolonial Antilles, for among them, we find the unprecedented and unusual poetic counterpoint that turned Columbus and Caliban into father and son.

Edward Brathwaite and the Bajan Counterpoint of Creolization and Memory

As I mentioned earlier, Brathwaite did not approach transculturation, in the 1970s, in the same intellectual and political context as Fernando Ortiz did in the 1940s. The latter was looking at the entire process, whose ultimate goal was cultural assimilation. Brathwaite was only interested in the last stage of transculturation, called neoculturation by the Cuban anthropologist, the phase when the Caribbean people constructed their identity by negotiating multiple racial heritages and by articulating the memory of traumas and violence with feelings of pride and belonging. Brathwaite's post-Ortiz, postmodern, and postcolonial theory of Creolization was articulated in the context of Anglo-Caribbean independences[2] and therefore, the issue was not national homogeneity in the sense of assimilation but that in the sense of unity and collective togetherness:[3] Caribbean West Indians needed to unite as a single people despite being citizens of a series of little islands on the *mapa mundi*. English colonization tended to consider its colonies as an organized amalgam. To facilitate their ruling, the islands were grouped into different geographic, economic, and political entities, such as the Leeward Islands, the Windward Islands, and eventually the West Indies Federation. The various independences broke this artificial cohesion and Brathwaite's approach tended to build a collective archipelagic memory as necessary to construct economic and intellectual independence.

Born in Barbados and educated in England, Brathwaite's thoughts about his people matured in Africa, where he witnessed the political shift to independence in Ghana in 1957;[4] eventually, it was in the United States, and particularly in the field of African studies at Yale University and New York University, that he established a career as an Caribbean academic, as a poet *engagé*, and as the bard of black Caribbean postcolonial subjectivities. The *detour* via Africa allowed him to reconsider his Caribbeanness and his position in the American academia *to speak for and about*[5] black Caribbean cultures. It is no surprise then that, Barbadian born, he chose another island, Jamaica, as a laboratory to promote the Creole-national Caribbean identity through a united archipelagic imagination.

In *Contradictory Omens* (1974), Brathwaite was concerned to recollect a foundational narrative—a *muthos*[6]—to arouse feelings of unity in the Anglo-Caribbean archipelago. The history of cultural mutations in Jamaica and of the evolution of the black Caribbean post-plantation society, analyzed in the long term, are the key points of the text. Brathwaite examined how the Creole Jamaican society was divided into different "containers" of imagination

according to the standards, models, and norms adopted by the society, grouped into binary pairs: metropole/colony, european/creole, black/white, educated/non-educated. For example, the metropole/colony division modified what Brathwaite called "the class stencil" that the Europeans brought; it created a Creole upper class of plantation owners, erasing the middle class. The poorest white rooted their identity in the feeling of being white and European, that is upon racism and metropolitan values, whereas educated black, mulattos, and white politicians concerned with class justice could share the pride of being Creole, since they had no other country than the colony in which they were born, and regarded the island as a substitute for Europe (Brathwaite 1974). Therefore, the history of slavery and colonialism in Jamaica was responsible for the splitting of Jamaican citizenship into scattered and multilayered collective imaginations and feelings of belonging.

Given that Anglo-Protestant colonial acculturation coexisted with strong afro-spiritual beliefs, from myalism to garveyism, and from Rastafarism to black power, Brathwaite found it absurd to build the independent West Indian nations as replicas of the European nation-state models. In the modern European nation the main goal is the protection of common interests and common good against particular interests and privileges; ethnic group differences thus become secondary (Hobsbawn 1992, p.20). But instead, ethnicity and racial origins were for Brathwaite the keystones of Creolized social groups in Jamaica, and the point of origin of all other categories, such as class, language, territorial belonging, and cultural values. Building the nation after independence implied leaning on the majority to construct a coherent, broad, and solidary national group. And this majority, in Jamaica, was black. Afro-Caribbean people, descended from African slaves, peasants, and illiterate laborers, represented the social and cultural force upon which Brathwaite relied to construct the postcolonial Jamaican nation. The reasons for this were, first, that black Caribbean people had belonged to the island for a long time, since they had replaced the Amerindians (like Ortiz, Brathwaite considers that the transculturation process in the Caribbean began with the cultural encounter and crossbreeding between Caribbean Indians and black slaves brought from Africa). Second, the people's long history of cultural resistance and adaptation resulted in a Caribbean–European–Afro-Christian syncretic culture. In other words, black Jamaicans were according to Brathwaite the best agents of Creolization in the *longue durée*: "The black folk culture of the Caribbean possesses a culture as living and adaptable as any, capable of the greatest potential for transformation." (Brathwaite 1974, p.43).

Creolization for Brathwaite was proof of the complex and rich heritage born out of violence in the Caribbean region. Jamaica was a laboratory in which to examine how the performance of collective memory could

be the cement of national solidarity and collective identity in the Anglophone archipelago. It implied remembering what had been forgotten during and after the Middle Passage, but also negotiating parts of British history inculcated at school that were worth re-membering/re-forming in new, foundational scenarios appropriate to the new island-nations. Indeed, Brathwaite substituted the colonial historical discourse with a postcolonial poetics that incorporated into the commemoration of national Caribbeanness the loss and Creolized reinvention of African origins. Trauma and uprooting, instead of being negative and mainly forgotten remainders of a chaotic past, became cultural agents that made possible a creative process of adaptation, echoing Ortiz's idea of neoculturation.

Brathwaite did not consider independence as the achievement of collective memory but as the beginning of a process of *anamnesis* that would allow not only Jamaicans, but all Anglophone Caribbean citizens, to remember together. Following Ortiz in the 1940s, Brathwaite considered that "the interculturation process was still in his early teens" in the 1970s. As a proof that this process has been very slow in the Anglophone Caribbean, we can think the symbolic anniversary of Emancipation Day, marking the end of slavery, only became a national celebration in Barbados in 1997. It shows the difficulty to incorporate the history of slavery into the collective and official imagination of the Independent Anglo-Caribbean societies. Brathwaite considered that the West Indies after the independence were still mentally dependent, or as he himself put it, "afrosaxonised" (Brathwaite 1999, p.181). Brathwaite's view was echoing Aimé Césaire's at the same time: "The colonies fighting for Independence, that is the epic. When they become independent, that is when the tragedy begins" (Césaire 2006). After *Contradictory Omens*, Brathwaite continued his project and reiterated, systematized, and multiplied his views about postcolonial strategies of remembrance and togetherness in the Caribbean. He kept a close eye on the continuous dysfunctions of memory in the postcolony, which he addressed by creating a series of interdisciplinary paradigms. In 1974, in *Caribbean Man in Space and Time*, he coined the notion of *tidalectics* to deconstruct the Hegelian eurocentered dialectic, monolithic, and self-centered colonial historiography (Brathwaite 1974b). In the 1980s, the distinction between "missile" and "capsule" endowed the Caribbean with an encapsulated potential for adaptation and resurrection, as opposed to the missile on the side of globalization and destruction (Brathwaite 1983, p.10). Brathwaite also worked in the field of literary memory and cultural commemorations for which he enlarged the spectrum of Caribbean heritage outside of the limitations of the Anglosaxon academic literary canon, welcoming orality and "nation language," as the true language of Jamaica, used not only in everyday life but also in poetry and literary works on the

islands. In historiography, he promoted Caribbean heroes—like Nanny of the Maroons, Cudjoe, or Sam Sharpe (Brathwaite, 1977)—and remapped the national and cultural history of Jamaica, Barbados, and the entire English Caribbean archipelago (Brathwaite, 1982). From the 1970s to the present, his interests have covered different epistemes—history, language and semiotics, poetry and philosophy—and have been addressed to different publics, such as highbrow/traditional poetry for educated readers, oral poetry for a less-educated audience, and essays in postcolonial studies for academics and students.

The concept of Creolization underwent a series of transformations when transferred to the territory of art, poetry, and creative imagination. As a poet, Brathwaite explored the verbal potential of the unpredictable/undecidable nature of Creolization. Poetry grasped this unpredictability in rhythm and time through anachronism, in unexpected juxtaposition of words, typographical misspellings to create specific pronunciation effects, and through metaphors, echoing the tidal movement of the Middle Passages, reconstructed in the plural. History was already a narrative mode that allowed for a retrospective movement back to origins. Poetry achieved this recollection at a metaphorical and discontinuous level, adopting the idea of contingency and creating a blurred and aleatory chronotope, akin to relocation of the black slave people in the Caribbean, brought by force and for the purpose of mercantilism. With poetry, going back to African origins did not mean returning *in presentia* to Africa—as was the case during Brathwaite's first phase in Ghana. The poetic expression of Creolization allowed the Middle Passage to speak *in absentia*, through multiple narrative scenarios—exiles, migrations, uprooting, island drifting. The poetic *longue durée* allowed the poet to bend the boundaries of time, space, and the imagination where the Arawak and the African cultures could mingle and resonate with each other. This foundational narrative, postmodern and segmented, reflected transculturation as the original feature of the Caribbean and played the role of a *récit d'origine* to gather, claim, and express in unison the Anglo-Caribbean collective identity. Brathwaite dialogues in this case with the Platonic concept of *anamnesis* and more precisely with its modern and European version, coined by the historian of religions Mircea Eliade, to describe the participative and collective need of a community to tell the primary scenario of the origin in order to make their past real (what Eliade calls apodictic force) and to give a meaning to the pain suffered in the present as a part of the historical cycle to which the community belongs and participates (Eliade 1971). While history had always been the discourse of visibility for Brathwaite, poetry allowed the invisible—the unconscious collective imagination—to find a suitable voice to perform recollection and remembrance. Creolization, by becoming a poetic

mode, empowered the words to commemorate *in absentia* and became a vector of trauma in language and in emotions, beyond time and space. While stories of pain had been unveiled by Brathwaite with cultural history, they became the main essence of his poetry, as if the territory of word and sound was a virtual pangaea for the independent black Caribbean people to be and feel together.

The complexity of Brathwaite's constantly rearticulated system of memory expressed in different modes—history, poetry, philosophy—and his vast literary and critical production has lead critics/scholars to, at best, classify his poetry as enigmatic and reserved for the privilege of a happy few in Caribbean Studies.[7] I do not share this view. My aim in this chapter is to bring to the table both Brathwaite's mnemonic poetry and his theory of cultural memory, to examine how he adapted the concept of transculturation to the Anglophone Caribbean as a strategy to voice and to perform collective commemorations.

This is when the character of Columbus, undeniably present in Brathwaite's theoretical and poetical work, becomes very interesting. At a time when this historical character was largely debunked as an antihero in the postcolonial West Indies, the Barbadian scholar chose to Creolize Columbus. The latter was for him a useful theoretical tool (a paradigm) and an even more useful poetical character (a voice) in the construction of Antillean collective memory; Columbus was a guinea pig in Brathwaite's experimental Caribbean memory system that I have called *anamnesis*. The fact that he used Columbus as a postcolonial trope to approach the emancipated West Indies is easily understandable (it is a topos of postcolonial approaches to criticize the so-called "heroes" of the conquest). More surprising is how Brathwaite reinvented the character of Columbus in poetry in line with the evolution of his views on the meaning of Caribbeanness in the late twentieth century. Brathwaite's most interesting creation consisted in giving shape and voice to Columbus as Caliban's father, displacing at the same time the Shakespearian and English postcolonial canonical scenario, and introducing a precolonial story of origin rooted in the Caribbean region before it split into different national histories and linguistic imaginations (French, Hispanic, English, Dutch). I consider that the Caliban/Columbus paradigm helped to pull "the visibility trigger" (Brathwaite 1992): It constructed a family history—a memory system—that articulated a desire for foundations and for performance among national subjectivities, in the still economically and mentally dependent nation-islands of the Caribbean, with a pan-Caribbean approach to the region. Brathwaite's postmodern posture relocated the Afro-Anglo-Caribbean Creolized culture in an archipelagic and transnational web of relations where the "I" of the poet could be free from generic, formal, and all-encompassing

theoretical norms, as Postcolonial Studies came to be in the author's view. This tidal and hybrid aesthetics of subjectivity and performance had been Brathwaite's means to reconcile the Caribbean collective imagination with its multiple national identities. The very particular and unprecedented way the poet integrated Columbus into the Caribbean heritage of violence is the most interesting marker of the evolution of Creolization from a national (in the 1970s) to a transnational (since the 1980s) imaginative unifier.

Columbus and Caliban: The Postmodern Caribbean Family

At the time when Barbados became independent, Brathwaite wrote *The Arrivants: A New World Trilogy* (1967–1969) as a postmodern poetics of transculturation. The Middle Passage became in this collection of poems the central element of Afro-Caribbean identity. It was the common narrative with which the scattered tribes of blacks who had suffered for centuries could be united, across the different generations of precolonial, colonial, and postcolonial times and spaces, through an anachronistic commemoration of exiles (in the first book *Rights of Passage*), through a poetic tribute to African origins (in the second volume *Masks*) and through the recollection of the genocides of both the Caribbean indigenous people and the black slaves (in the last opus, *Islands*).

Intertwining the Indian and the black traumas enabled the poetic voice, as a representative of a subaltern postcolonial subject, to fill the void of his origins, to speak for himself, and to recover a proper and genuine language in the present that would not come from Europe. Caliban had to learn the idiom of his silent and invisible mother Sycorax, trapped in a tree according to the Shakespearian scenario, and rid himself of the dactylic, pentameter language of Prospero. The formal and linguistic liberation of the poet—with unexpected visual, temporal, and rhythmic transformations—is achieved through the application of a creative, compensatory, and subjective transculturation, thanks to the voice of the poet and the use of the first-person pronoun. Beyond metric and structural norms, often qualified as concrete poetry, the Caribbean epic of *The Arrivants* makes the words in the poems, thanks to creative typographic effects, like pictographs to be looked at, and sounds to be heard and felt. All the same, Brathwaite's poetry is not bereft of logic and order, and is based on an extremely solid structure: the narration of the exiles, of the creed, pains, and hopes of the characters of the Middle Passage, becomes the common thread of the stories told in the poems, through echoes and parallels between different sections of the collection. But at the same time, the tales of the past and the stories of traumatic displacements are interrupted by a voice speaking in the first person, which returns the reader's

attention to the present with strong drum-like rhythms and onomatopoeic effects. Poetry is the voice of the self, talking from the past to the present and allowing memory to resonate in time and space, beyond the chronology of European historiographical discourses.

Arising out of his knowledge of Shakespeare's play, Caliban had been a recurrent character in Brathwaite's work. More specifically, the heroization of Caliban had been part of a postmodern Caribbean epic to galvanize national identity.[8] He emerged as a trope in Brathwaite's postcolonial theory but then evolved in a much more interesting and complex manner in his poetry, and particularly in the New World trilogy. Let us now trace this evolution.

In the lectures he gave for the Institute of Commonwealth Studies in Mysore University (1982), Brathwaite systematized the Caliban paradigm within a set of postcolonial transpositions and relocations: Caliban, in Brathwaite's system, stands for the alternative—the "other" or the " native"—and bears the power of the metaphysical revolt of the spirit in the place of physical revolt. Indeed we are reminded that Caliban's alliances in *The Tempest* did not work, that they were "laughable" and "ridiculous" according to Brathwaite, because he chose to ally with the wrong people. Anagram of the word Canibal, Caliban is the epitome of nature as opposed to civilization and he represents "Europe's primitive inaccurately nostalgic sense of nature, he is the natural person of the play." In Brathwaite's paradigm, Prospero stands for the plantation owner and Miranda for his motherless daughter, trapped in an incestuous relationship with the white maroons, also called "Redlegs" in Barbados. The latter were white Irish slaves who refused to mix with the freed black slaves and fell into a miserable life, struck by poverty and diseases caused by endogamic sexual reproduction. Coming from José Enrique Rodó's *Ariel* published in 1900 (Rodó 1988), who was an anti-Caliban in this canonical essay of Latin American *modernismo*, Ariel becomes an overseer spying for Prospero in Brathwaite's plantation paradigm: "he is Prospero's spying eyes, both his police and television aerials." The last but central character of Brathwaite's reading of Shakespeare is Sycorax, who belongs to a magical sub-reality that goes against Prospero's rules. This female figure is very close to Grendel's mother in the English epic *Beowulf*. But Brathwaite, as with Shakespeare's play, displaces and distorts this tradition in order to produce a proper Afro-Caribbean postcolonial primary scenario (Brathwaite 1999).

In Brathwaite's poetry, Caliban is less manichean and his story, nonlinear and scattered in different poetry books, shows some unexpected elements. In *The Arrivants: A New World Trilogy*, Columbus appears in opus 1, *Rights of Passage* (1967) and Caliban in opus 3, *Islands* (1969), both as problematic heroes of Caribbean history. A close reading of their representation

and evolution reveals that Caliban was part of a fantasized father–son counterpoint with Columbus. If Creolization was a socio-historical theory, poetry for Brathwaite was the means to express it and a possible tool to improve the destiny of the black Caribbean people through imagination, dream, and fantasy, thus inventing the nation as a family.

The Birth of Caliban in Limbo

Columbus miscalculated his navigational route and arrived in the Antilles thinking it was the Grand Khan's Indian Empire. He eventually corrected this mistake by taking advantage of the territories he had discovered by chance, exploiting their resources. He adapted to the situation and made the most of his error at sea by establishing colonial exploitation and the slave system. Mistake, unpredictability, and opportunity are the original elements of the legend of the discovery that Brathwaite exploited in his poetry, as part of what he called *Limbo*. Caliban's name appears for the first time in the third volume of the Trilogy *The Arrivants* (Brathwaite 1973), called *Islands*, and in the second section of *Islands*, entitled "Limbo." Indeed, *The Arrivants* tells us that at the beginning of the European history of the Caribbean was Limbo—negation, oblivion, and erasure being the keystones of colonialism. As a result, it is from Limbo that Caliban needs to tell the Caribbean history of the region, to speak for his people, and to unite all the people of the other brother islands. This new *muthos*, told by Caliban, is empowered to turn the primitive mistake of Columbus into a new fantasy of collective origin and heritage. As much as Columbus dreamt the Indies, Caliban must now learn how to dream—and therefore remember, commemorate, and construct—the independent Caribbean archipelago.

Significantly, the poetic birth of Caliban in the eponymous poem *Caliban* in the section "Limbo" happens after Section 1 "New World" and before Section 3 "Rebellion." This is significant, even more so when we become aware that Caliban's birth was announced by a series of clues and signs before his explicit appearance as a character named Caliban. Reading those internal connections will help us to unveil the true dimension of Caliban in the trilogy and his relationship to Columbus.

All the poems of the section "New World," which is the first section of *Islands*,[9] proposed a history of violence, commemorating heroic rebellions ("Tacky, L'ouverture and all the hungry dumb-bellied chieftains," p.165), and the pain of slavery ("I, slaver, slaying, my bright whip ripping a new soil of scars/buying/a new world of negroes, soiling the stars," p.172). *Islands* begins with the episode of Discovery, with the presence of Columbus, and with the bitter portrayal of the colonial genocide of the Arawak culture by the Europeans:

> The sea is a divider. It is not a life-giver,
> Time's river. The islands are the humped
> backs of mountains, green turtles
> that cannot find their way. Volcanoes
> are voiceless. They have shut their red eyes
> to the weather. The sun that was once a doom of gold to the
> Arawaks
> is now a flat boom in the sky.
>
> (p.164)

In "New World," there is a singular feminine presence. This female character, with no name, recalls Sycorax in the sense that she seems to be the bearer of memory, and to have the power to reunite the scattered members of the tribe. Her presence prepares the reader/listener to appreciate the birth of Caliban in the following section:

> She's dark and her voice sings
> of the dark river. Her eyes
> hold the soft fire that only the warm
> night knows. Her skin is musky and soft.
> She travels far back, explores
> ruins, touches on old immemorial legends,
> everyone but herself has forgotten. She
> becomes warrior and queen and keeper of the tribe.
>
> (p.171)

The structural coherence of the section "New World" lies in the drum-like rhythm that unites the poems, with verses shortened into repetitive and monosyllabic sounds, like in *Legba*: "and black black black/the black birds clack/in the shak shak tree" (p.175). Significantly, Legba is the Guardian of the crossroads, called Papa Legba in Haiti and Elegua in Cuba; he facilitates the communication between the supernatural world and the human world, and therefore he is the master of human destiny: he stands for the choices men must make in their lifetime. *Legba* therefore announces Caliban's return home to embrace his island's destiny. And indeed, the last poem of "New World" is entitled *Homecoming*: by reversing the notion of arrival into return, this poem announces the return of the prodigal son, Caliban, to his island. In the next poem *Limbo*, we finally meet Caliban, fully endowed with a name, a heritage and the power to speak for the historical suffering of his people, in the name of the entire scattered Afro-Caribbean kinship:

> Ninety five percent of my people poor
> Ninety five percent of my People Black
> Ninety five percent of my people dead.
>
> (p.191)

This opening mentions the theme of poverty that will be explored deeper in a later version of *Caliban* (Brathwaite 1976). It creates an explicit link between the colonial past—genocide and slavery—and the situation of postcolonial underdevelopment at the time the poem was written. Brathwaite is using Caliban as a figure of rebellion in the English Caribbean imagination (Paget 2000), as Césaire did in his 1969 play, *A Tempest*. In the poem, Caliban names different revolutions that took place in the Caribbean history:

> It was December second nineteen fifty six.
> It was the first of August eighteen thirty eight.
> It was the twelfth October fourteen ninety two.
> (p.192)

Those three revolutions were failures, echoing to the failed rebellion of Caliban in Shakespeare's play; but at the same time, they are also powerful symbols of the epic of freedom for the people of the Caribbean, in an anachronistic and enlarged vision. The first one refers to the first Cuban Revolution attempt, and names Granma after the boat that crashed in the East of the Island. Eventually, this episode was appropriated by the Cuban revolution as part of the national myth. The second is the day of the abolition of slavery in Jamaica, which did not change the fact that black Jamaican people continued to be discriminated by the color of their skin on the island. The last date refers to the discovery of the New World by Columbus, which proved Copernicus to be right, and challenged ancient European cosmographic beliefs. But his cosmographic revolution did not create an attitude of humility among European colonizers. On the contrary, they asserted a will to master, order, and function as the norm of civilization for the rest of the world. Brathwaite creates in this verse a historical manipulation through inverted chronological order; Caliban's perspective on history blurs the different meaning of the term revolution and puts at the same level an ideological conflict among Cubans in the twentieth century, a white English order versus a black Afro-Caribbean culture in the nineteenth century, and a Spanish/Arawak encounter at the end of the fifteenth century.

Caliban has a panoramic and synthetic ability to tell the history of the Caribbean. His power of speech does not lie in his call for physical revolt but in his ability to give visibility to Limbo, to speak for and from the infancy of time, prior to guilt and damnation, crossing the boundaries of traditional chronology and discourses. His language is not a sterile imitation of the master's language in order to curse him—as some postcolonial Shakespearian readings could claim—but a bacchanal drum calling the kinship to assemble in a metaphysical spirit of revolt, an idiom more than a language, beyond

words and using rhythm, using silence and music, which are the attributes of poetry. The poem *Caliban* becomes a hymn to Limbo, written in the manner of a calypso song, in a very visual accumulation of single-word verses that makes the poem sound like the leitmotiv of a steel band:

> And
> Ban
> Ban
> Caliban
> like to play
> pan
> at the Car-
> nival;
> pran-
> cing to the lim-
> bo silence
> down
> down
> down
> to the is-
> land town.
> (p.192)

Columbus, a Father Figure

Columbus appeared as a significant character before Caliban's birth, in the very first volume of the Trilogy, *Rights of Passage*. He stands among a series of travelers and exiled characters in the poem *The Emigrants*, in the third section of *Rights of Passage*, called "Islands and Exiles." As usual in Brathwaite's poetry, the moment of appearance of the central character is significant. This first reference to Columbus appears just after the poem *Calypso*, which echoes the Kaiso Limbo dance that Caliban performs in the third volume *Islands* that we mentioned before, thus announcing a metaphorical relationship between the two characters in the poetical chronotope of *A New World Trilogy*. More significant is the fact that this first allusion to Columbus comes before the poem *South*, narrated by an anonymous character who wants to return to the island and shares many traits with Caliban as he appears later in the poem *Caliban* in *Islands*:

> But today I recapture the islands'
> bright beaches: blue mist from the ocean
> rolling into the fishermen's houses.
> By this shores I was born: sound of the sea

> came in at my window, life heaved and breathed in me then
> with the strength of that turbulent soil.
> Since then I have travelled: moved far from the beaches
> sojourned in stoniest cities, walking the lands of the north.
> (p.57)

The theme of the homecoming is the common thread that links Columbus in *The Emigrants* and this first person and anonymous voice in *South*. While a narrative voice in *The Emigrants* wondered what the voyage could really mean for Columbus, presenting it as a return (*What did this journey mean, this new world mean: Discovery? Or a return to terrors he had sailed from, known before?* p.53), *South* is the explicit statement, from the part of a first person character, of a desire to return to the native–sea–land. Interestingly, the use of a second plural pronoun can identify both the navigators and the indigenous: "We who are born of the ocean" (p.57), suggesting a connection between them.

By assuming that Columbus's arrival in the New World was in fact a return to a place he had been to before, the legend of the discovery is replaced by a series of transatlantic displacements, where a forgetful but desiring Columbus had been the father that once upon a time planted his seed in Sycorax's womb. Whereas in the poem *The Emigrants*, the famous mariner is described as gazing into the blue of the ocean, with the leitmotiv "Columbus from his afterdeck watched stars, watched heights, saw bearded fig trees," in *South*, the poetic voice is characterized by the same interrogative modality with which Columbus's attitude was questioned in *The Emigrants*. This interrogative modality creates the possibility of an emotional relationship between Columbus and the anonymous character retuning after a long exile to his native Caribbean island in *South*. The latter is eager to know what Columbus thought and felt: "But did his vision fashion, as he watched the shore, the slaughter that his soldiers furthered here? [. . .] Soon he would touch our land, his charted mind's desire" (p.53).

At the same time, as an enigma given to interpretation, the nature of Columbus's feelings is left unknown, but this leaves the idea that he indeed had some feelings, beyond the caricature of Columbus as an evil man.

In *Rights of Passage*, Brathwaite uses a first-person narrative voice to watch and comment on Columbus' arrival, and speak for his insular people. This could be the voice of an indigenous Taíno. But given the importance of the return to the island as a metaphorical thread in all the trilogy, this voice also echoes the postcolonial Caribbean subject who claims the right to recall his origins, the very same voice that will take the melodic shape of Caliban's voice in the third section, in a poem called *Caliban*. The reader has indeed been prepared to see Caliban born and named in the third book, after he

was present *in absentia* and anonymously since the very beginning of the trilogy, but only insofar as he was contained within the voice of the poetic voice asking questions and wondering what was the meaning of Columbus's presence.

The book *Islands* that we mentioned earlier as the place of birth of Caliban, in 1969, is a repetition with variation of the first volume, *Rights of Passage* in 1967; it follows on from the poeticization of the African Middle Passage in the second volume, *Masks*, in 1968, which was dedicated to the recovery of African origins. This means that both Columbus and Caliban, when they reappear as characters in the third book of the trilogy, are literally coming back from Africa (in *Masks*) and returning to the Islands they discovered in book one (*Rights of Passage*), thus giving this final book its title (*Islands*). We saw that the first-person narrator of the initial volume, anonymous but possibly identifiable as a Cacique, became Caliban, clearly named, and symbolically baptized in the eponymous poem *Caliban* in the third book. It seems that the anonymous self only became himself after he incorporated his remote African past, experienced in the poetic journey of *Masks*. Brathwaite's originality lies in the fact that Columbus reappears in the third book *Islands* as "Slack bwana Columbus" riding "out of the jungle's den" (p.162). The unspoken guilt and responsibility for the slaughter that the first-person witness could foresee from the shore in the first book is now embodied by the paradigmatic posture of the enslaver, "bwana," meaning master in African swahili, as if Columbus had participated in the colonization of Africa. This historical invention is possible because of voids in the history of Columbus, and creates the possibility of constantly rewriting the past and so the one's origin in poetry.

This makes *The Arrivants: A New World Trilogy* not only an epic rearticulation of neglected and denied origins, but a true journey of transculturation, where loss triggers poetic creativity and fosters the metaphorical building of a collective Caribbean imagination. Indeed, there is a familiarity and a similarity of feelings between the speech of Caliban, the abandoned son, in *Islands* and the emotions of the Admiral, his oblivious father, scrutinized by the anonymous poetic narrative voice, through the use of interrogatives, in *Rights of Passage*. Caliban would not have been able to rebel without the energy to question and to refuse to take the order of the world for granted, as Columbus did in the fifteenth century. The poetic disposal leads us to believe that this energy was inherited from Columbus and from his departure, as if the abandonment of the son by the father triggered the desire to define one's Caribbean identity in postcolonial times. The negative leads to the positive, as in Ortiz's model. The spirit of rebellion converts the theme of discovery into return, in a carnivalizing process familiar to postcolonial discourses; it

also deconstructs the scenario of the Middle Passage into many triangular journeys, which is a technique particularly evident in postmodern narrations.

It is not because Columbus discovered, but rather because he forgot the Antilles, that Caliban wishes to recapture his insularity. The return of Columbus, through fiction and anachronism, is also a reference to the situation in 1966, when Barbados became independent, and to Brathwaite's political concern when he wrote *A New World Trilogy*: post-colonialism allowed the return of the first world as a neocolonizing discourse of power, held by the first world, despite the legal and theoretical political independence of the islands. The prefix "post" for Brathwaite could dangerously lead to the erasure of the past, pretending that the present was beyond the evils of colonialism. Hence, the trilogy poeticizes the necessity to reconsider history without being mesmerized by the apparent beauty of the island's independences. "Bwana Columbus" is a master figure against his will who connects Jamaica's independence to other African Nations and to a third-world community suffering from the problems of underdevelopment, creating a true archipelagic brotherhood among the suffering peoples of precolonial, colonial, and postcolonial times. Instead of going back to the black legend and portraying Columbus as an enslaver or as ironically in chains (Kincaid 1997), Brathwaite uses him to displace the question of master and slave to the field of postcolonial studies. Caliban, as Columbus's bastard son, will not let oblivion and amnesia participate in a false canonization of postcolonial history. There is still much to tell about the past and much guilt to expose before any better future could happen in the Caribbean nations. Metaphors, anachronisms, and fantasmatic family relationships are the means by which Brathwaite exposes these issues, and his means of building a Caribbean collective imagination in postcolonial times in *A New World Trilogy*.

While Columbus is an amnesiac father, Caliban is a fatherless creature, the son that Prospero would never have engendered,[10] left with no heritage but his underdevelopment and dependency upon the globalized world of whites. In *Metaphors of underdevelopment* (1985), Brathwaite is explicit about his intention to foster a subversive literature of underdevelopment, and to empower the self to evolve "from a mammon of Unprospero to its creative opposite: Nam, Sycorax, Mabrak" (Brathwaite 1985, p.460). This verse reveals that the character of Caliban in the 1980s came to symbolize political, memorial, and cultural awareness for Brathwaite. Politically, Caliban takes side for the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM being the group under which the Non-Aligned countries united after the end of the Cold War); from the perspective of genealogy, Caliban is associated with his mother Sycorax, a figure who exemplifies the importance of remembering his heritage and claiming it back; lastly, Caliban is culturally close to his African origins and to Rastafari

resistance, with the reference to Mabrak—which is the name of an African river but also of that of a subversive reggae band (named after his drummer Leroy Trevor Mabrak). Nam, Sycorax, and Mabrak are the umbrella terms with which Brathwaite portrays a mature Caliban. Interestingly, the expression "MAMMON OF UNPROSPERO," capitalized in the poem, is also symbolic: "Mammon" refers to the biblical worship of greed and avarice, associated with globalization, international capitalism called "babylon" in Rasta vocabulary; at the same time, the oral similarity with the Spanish word *mamón*, meaning a newborn still drinking the milk of his mother's breast, also recalls a baby whose origins have been erased from his very birth, painting Caliban as a nonbaptized child. This recalls the "Limbo like me" from which Caliban bangs his pan in the poem that bears his name in *Islands*, in reference to the Christian's notion of limbo as the place where infants go if they die before being christened, avoiding the damnation of the original sin. In *Metaphors of Underdevelopment*, Caliban is offered the possibility to overcome the trauma of his birth in limbo and to achieve a full liberation 15 years after the Anglophone Caribbean archipelago became independent. He must remember his mother fully, by her name Sycorax, while she was only called "The Cracked Mother" in the opening poem of the "Limbo section" of *Islands* (p.180); in this poem (which title was *The Cracked Mother*) Caliban presented himself as a fatherless child dreaming of being his father Columbus: "My mother said I'd be alone and when I cried (she said) I'd be Columbus of my ships and sail the garden round the tears that fell into my hand" (p.180). In *Metaphors of Underdevelopment*, this very child portrayed in *Islands* as he was daydreaming of his careless father Columbus, is represented by the expression "mammon of unprospero": Prospero's unborn, in other words, a character called Caliban whose father is not Prospero but Columbus. In 1985, Caliban must become a man and overcome the trauma of colonization by accepting the violence of his heritage and claim the freedom and the autonomy he deserves.

In *A New World Trilogy*, Brathwaite used poetic license to enrich and displace the postcolonial paradigm of *The Tempest* developed in his more traditionally styled postcolonial lectures delivered at Mysore University, in which he imagined that Columbus could be Caliban's guilty and unknowing father, replacing master Prospero and returning from Limbo. He therefore erased the curse associated with Shakespeare's scenario. In the postcolonial islands of the Caribbean, independence was not a victory but the beginning of a struggle for visibility and for autonomous identity, in a still dependent archipelago, whose existence was subject/subordinate to supranational, globalized, and first-world hegemonies. The concerns of these island-nations might explain why Caliban had been such a fruitful paradigm in 1968–1969 with Aimé

Césaire's *A tempest* and Roberto Fernandez Retamar's essay *Caliban*. But the poetic interconnection Brathwaite establishes between Caliban, non-son of Prospero (mammon of unprospero), and bwana Columbus creates a change of perspective in the way the Caribbean postcolonial subject will go on to consider himself in the first decade after independence, that is, as belonging to a third-world, black, and Creolized brotherhood.

Columbus in Brathwaite's Poetry since 1992: Transnational Transculturation

The late 1990s were for Brathwaite an opportunity to establish the balance sheet of postcolonial studies and to measure the achievement of postcolonialism after two decades of independence. Interestingly, the character of Columbus and the scenario of the discovery reappear in his poetry from the commemorative year, 1992, with significant mutations, reflecting the crisis of the collective Afro-Caribbean imagination that was at the heart of his work since the late 1960s.

On the occasion of the anniversary in 1992, Brathwaite published the book of poetry, *Middle Passages*. The second poem of the collection is an edited version, under the new title *Colombe*, of one section of the 1967 poem *The Emigrants*, which had opened the trilogy in *The Arrivants I: Rights of passage*. The strategic location of the poem, in a volume intended as a reflection on the fifth centennial, shows that Braithwaite considered the Genoese mariner to be rich and interesting symbolic material at a time when the condition of the West Indies and the future of the Caribbean needed to be reconsidered.[11] The same year, he also wrote a longer version of this poem, in Spanish and for a special issue of the Cuban Review *Casa de Las Américas*, dedicated to the celebration of the 1992 anniversary. Its title is *Yo Cristóbal Colón* (I, Christopher Columbus). The poem is the synthesis of Brathwaite's postmodern and postcolonial views of transculturation in the Anglo-Caribbean world, but adapted for a Cuban audience and intended to make Columbus a historical character worthy of forgiveness. This was indeed the official line followed in Cuba in 1992, for reasons that have to do with the political agenda of the island at the time (see Chapter 5). Brathwaite participated in this poetic redemption of Columbus. His refusal to vilify Columbus as a caricatured antihero and his decision to redeem its historical image highlights Brathwaite's strong belief in transculturation—the latter being a mechanism for the positive incorporation of violence, traumas, and negative episodes of history, into the Afro-Caribbean imagination, allowing the creation of a new and specific cultural identity. It is also important that Brathwaite, whose academic career has focused mostly on Jamaican and

Anglophone Caribbean cultures, chose in 1992 to participate in the commemoration of the discovery in another language on a neighboring island,[12] where a positive use of Columbus was welcome, as opposed to the scapegoating trend that was adopted in Jamaica (see Chapter 6). The collective Caribbean imagination that Brathwaite chose to foster in the late 1990s had moved beyond nationalist rhetoric and the construction of a national identity, which had been at stake 20 years earlier. At the turn of the twenty-first century, he invited the English Caribbean people to unite with other Caribbean islands and other third-world countries and to move beyond nationalistic enclosure. He is therefore praising a postnational transculturation and taking issue, from Cuba, with anti-Columbus discourses in Jamaica, which he regarded as too nationalistic and limiting.

In *Yo Cristóbal Colón*, Columbus refuses to accept the guilt of the slaughter he was commissioned to commit by the Spanish Kingdom. Humble, he counts and mourns the dead slaves, and he asks to make peace with the rebels of the world, Caribbean and American, from the past and from the present. As announced by the title, Columbus speaks this time in the first person. He appears, as usual in Brathwaite's poetry, on the afterdeck ("*Estoy de pie sobre este promontorio andaluz* / I am standing on this Andalusian deck," Brathwaite 1993, p.67). The date in the subtitle, October 13, 1992, allows the voice of Columbus to rise from the tomb, one day after the commemorations of the fifth centennial anniversary of his discovery. In other words, this is Columbus's ghost speaking. This coincides with a major revival of the cultural representations of Columbus as a ghost and scapegoat in Jamaica, that is, as the man responsible for the evils of the past and of the present, more specifically in Jamaican reggae and dub poetry since the 1980s. This Jamaican animosity toward Columbus reached a paroxysm of discontent in the 1990s, as we will see in Chapter 6. On the contrary, Brathwaite chose to defend Columbus, from the postcolonial perspective of an Afro-Caribbean poet, living and teaching in the United States, who was invited to participate in a Caribbean commemoration of the Spanish Discovery in Cuba.

In *Yo Cristóbal Colón*, the stanzas consist of a juxtaposition of ideas as images, with random inclusions of capital letters, recalling the "Sycorax Video Style" that Brathwaite will later systematize in *Barabajan Poems, 1492:1992* and *Dream Stories* (1994). Indeed the poem is written in prose and divided into 13 paragraphs of irregular length, from one line to 19 lines, with almost no punctuation, except for comas added by the Spanish translator for the purpose of clarity. This visual poetic style carves history as material for fragmentation, emotional manipulation, and anachronism. Past, present, and future mix back and forth in the poem, breaking the rules of syntax and of chronology; formal incoherence (thanks to the absence of punctuation) and

accumulative declamation (with the use of comas) belong to Columbus's self-acknowledging discourse, in the manner of a confession where he recognizes the deaths he caused in the past, from the assassination of the Taína princess Anacaona to inhuman trading of the African lucumí slaves:

> Colón, Cpangu, Guyachiere, Los Almos, La Florida arrastrando sus cadenas en esos Everglades, Chichmacha Chakmuul la cacica Anacaona que asesiné, las velas de las carabelas como cuencas de ojos y el viento ciego en mi visión, los mástiles doblándose como cañaverales en el péndulo y el huracán macheteándolos en huesos, en lágrimas, en la sangre de lucumí.
>
> (Brathwaite 1993, p.67)

The Sycorax format belongs initially to Caliban, and appeared for the first time in the letter he wrote to his mother, in the poem *Letter SycoraX*, in *XSelf*, and eventually in *Middles Passages*. Interestingly, this style is now transferred to Columbus's confession, allowing the fantasmatic father–son relationship to follow the line of transculturation, since Columbus seems to borrow from his son Caliban the poetic mother tongue of the Caribbean diaspora, as a later returning *arrivant* on the Caribbean archipelago, in 1992. This actually matched with the Cuban collective revolutionary imagination (Fernández Retamar 1974). Hence, if we remember that Brathwaite based his poetic style on the valorization of nation language (Brathwaite 1984), it is interesting that this 1992 Columbus speaks Spanish, in the first person and in Sycorax style, to ask for forgiveness.

Columbus would like his fellow victims to be fair to him: "*No me culpen por Haití y Toussaint y la muerte de Las Casas, de todos esos Amerindios* /Don't make me guilty for the death of Toussaint, Las Casas and all the Amerindians" (p.67). In fact, he considers in his defense that it was the old European world that made him do what he did: "*En el rojo 23er. día del cruce me convertí en lo que Europa hizo de mí: acero, pincho pon-pon, lanza, punta de flecha a propulsión* / On the red 23rd day of the voyage, I became what Europe made me: steel, pon-pon arrow, missilic weapon" (p.68).

Columbus seems to have in mind the many trials that have unfairly humiliated him. He suffers from the ignorance and from the lack of interest of his fellow historical companions, in the valley of the dead, where neither Sequoya, nor Tacky & Nanny & Zapata and not even Geronimo, want to talk to him (p.67). Columbus feels he has been punished enough and that he deserves to go back to peace and to be incorporated again in the history of the Caribbean. As a consequence, Columbus's efforts in the poem converge in a desire to earn forgiveness. For example, by using different kinds of anachronistic analogies, he establishes metaphorical connections between

his experience as a discoverer and the exiles of the Caribbean diasporas, comparing the journeys of his caravels in 1492 with the 1992 Haitian rafts:

> Y estos pueblos, que me miran fijo desde las cabezas olmecas de basalto negro, despalabrados de Senegal náufragos entre los arrecifes y rocas de la vera Cruz; estos ojos blancos en el océano de canoas que pasamos en el centroAtlántico como refugiados haitianos rumbo a las muertas playas del oro de Midas de Miami; estas travesías, primero mías, ahora bosques tuyas. (p.69)

Columbus's anachronistic knowledge makes him both an actor from history and a critical exegete of the past. This transfer of speech abilities was previously attributed to Caliban in Brathwaite's earlier poetry. With the Sycorax style, Columbus recognizes and gives visibility to the Caribbean cultures and laments their neglect in contemporary postcolonial national fictions about 1992: "*así que ahora en el Caribe tenemos un pueblo sin raíces aparentes, sin su semilla pamadre, dis/traccíon, como digo destruccíon: pueblo sin valores aparentes* / Now in the Caribbean, we have a rootless people, without mother seed, dis/traction, or better said destruction: people without any visible values" (p.68).

Interestingly, this Columbus speaking in the first person from his afterdeck thinks about García Lorca's arrival in New York, implicitly alluding to a familiarity with the Spanish writer who wrote *Poeta en Nueva York* in 1929 (p.69). Indeed, a section of Lorca's *Poeta in Nueva York* is about the suffering of the black people in Harlem. Besides, the year 1929 when Lorca went to New York has partially reordered numerals of the year 1992. Also, at the end of the poem, he mentions Marcus Garvey, Victor Schœlcher, George Lamming, Mighty Sparrow, and Robert Nesta Marley (p.69). Columbus seems to be calling for a community of poets, in a Caribbean kinship whose boundaries will not be frontiers but texts. There is an obvious gap between Garvey, the creator of the Negro World, and Schœlcher, the white metropolitan French man who abolished slavery in Martinique and Guadeloupe. There is a significant difference between Lamming and his early perspective of exile in the 1950s in London, the political protest music of the Trinidadian calypso singer Mighty Sparrow, and the national cultural unity achieved in Jamaica by Bob Marley before his death in 1981. But all those poets, writers, and musicians share a common sense of belonging: they are part of a Creolized transnational and migrant community that experienced the "pleasures of exile," a community that Columbus is requesting the privilege to join.

Columbus remembers in the poem that the Indians—described as "the little copper men" in the poem—called him a name that he cannot even pronounce, a sound like "Hawwwwwf" (p.69). De-baptized, Columbus is asking

for the right to be reborn in history and to join the Caribbean imagination as a simple man: "*solo soy un marinero, okay un almirante, pero navegante sin embargo* / I am just a mariner, ok an admiral but still, just a sailor" (p.69). Columbus wants to enter the family of the *voyazé* in Haitian Creole, the Caribbean people of the sea. In a final gesture of peacemaking, he holds in his hand a symbolic object that might assist with his inclusion in the circle of the kin: the crab shell he took from the shore on the day of his arrival. Whereas in the two other versions of the poem (in *The Emigrants*, *Rights of Passage*, 1967, and in *Colombe*, *Middle Passages*, 1992), the crabs scattered when he set foot on the sand; at the end of *Yo Cristóbal Colón*, Columbus holds the shell in his hand, as he gazes in the water in the hope of peace and inclusion:

> en mi mano, la pequeña concha del cangrejo soldado encapuchado que recogí en la playa de Rio Bueno—mirando conmigo por encima de este pasaje. /In my hand, the little black soldier crab that I took on the beach of Rio Bueno, looking with me far away in the deep of this landscape. (p.69)

Columbus is clearly working toward a reconciliation that could be granted over time and over space, in an eternal and transnational Caribbean time and space.

At a propitious moment to measure what was achieved after two decades of independence, Brathwaite neutralized the negative features of the character of Columbus, turned him into Caliban's father, establishing a third world/first world dichotomy, and letting him speak in the first person, in Spanish, from Cuba and in the style of Sycorax Video. This is an important transformation that betrays a new direction in Brathwaite's reflection on postcolonial studies in the 1990s. The point is no longer to construct solidarity among the independent West Indies, on the grounds of national identity, but to expand the feeling of solidarity to an enlarged Caribbean Imagination, in times of globalization; this is when a common postnational language is required, for which Sycorax Style, and not Jamaican English, is the primary inspiration. Caliban's mother has been an important and recurrent figure in Brathwaite's conceptualization of postcolonial English Caribbean cultural politics: she had been from the 1970s to the 1990s nation's language, tide, womb, mother island, and capsule. She also became Brathwaite's postmodern muse in the early twentieth century (Savory 1994). She is the inspiration that inhabits the poet's computer, and as such, she can unite the Caribbean people beyond national boundaries, in a poetic utero, before and beyond language, in a primary amniotic fluid of words that goes back in time, before clustered and chronological history, across time and space (Jenkins 2007, Savory 2008).

In parallel, Columbus in 1992 was like a ghost figure who, in Brathwaite's poetic chronotope, returned to bring about reconciliation and a postnational federation. The 1990s were characterized by social, political, and economic upheavals and blockages in Jamaica. The major cultural protest in reggae and in dub poetry chose symbolically to punish Columbus and proposed theatrical devices of scapegoating, trial scenarios, and claims for justice. Brathwaite, on the contrary, chose not to look back in anger, but to transform his previous national and postcolonial system into world literary and political consciousness. In fact, postcolonial studies have picked up many of Brathwaite's ideas, but he has himself been very critical toward the field. Brathwaite is a scholar in Caribbean Studies rather than a postcolonialist; nevertheless, some of his theoretical works, like the Caliban paradigm, were directly engaging with important debates in postcolonial studies at the time. The use of Columbus in Brathwaite's work reveals that he distanced himself throughout his career from mainstream postcolonial theories to adopt a transnational approach of Caribbean heritage and memory. If Columbus was a witness and a reminder of the trauma necessary to construct the postcolonial nation in the 1970s, his evolution from a paradigmatic external character to a first-person poetic voice in the 1990s leads to the incorporation of the English Caribbean islands into a postnational third-world community, beyond insularity and linguistic differences. We have followed the diverse, strategic ways in which Brathwaite operated transculturation by addressing and reinventing the role and impact of Columbus in Caribbean society. It is a view that diverges from his early black nationalism. The evolution of Columbus in Brathwaite's commemorations of Caribbean culture in time and space proposed new paths to build a transnational Caribbean *anamnesis*. We will see in the following chapters that this was not well received on the islands, demonstrating the discrepancy between cultural memory at home and cultural memory from the perspective of the diaspora.

CHAPTER 3

The Snake, the Shore, and Columbus: Edouard Glissant's *Anamnesis* of the French *Département d'Outre-Mer*

The Snake of Consciousness: On Memory and Transculturation in Glissant's Œuvre

Obsessed by the slippery nature of language, and its unpredictable and inexhaustible potential to transform reality, Edouard Glissant's life-long writing career coincided with a will to connect the sense of identity and belonging of the people of Martinique with their lost and forgotten collective imagination. But the author's quest for effective remembrance did not imply nostalgia. Though Glissant engaged with decolonization and devoted some of his most political texts to examining and contesting the structures of French colonialism (Nesbitt 2013), he refused to participate in the major anticolonial discourses—pan-Africanism, particularly *Négritude*, Fanonism, and Marxism—that accompanied the emancipation of the Caribbean from the weight of the past and history. His fiction, his poetry, and his theory attempted from different angles to acknowledge the definitive collapse of the pan-African dream and to find new strategies in the struggle for identity, in the misplaced utopia of decolonization in which free nations were in fact politically and economically subaltern.[1] More specifically, Glissant's poetic system constitutes a report on the memory neurosis of French Antilleans. Its most damaging consequences in the *départements d'outre-mer* lay in the fact that the Antilleans continued to represent themselves as neocolonial, frustrated, and inferior subjects. Glissant's *anamnesis* through fiction, poetry, and theory was meant to trigger the questions that would bring back memory and foster a sense of Caribbean belonging in the overseas *départements*.

Glissant was 12 years old when Césaire became his philosophy teacher at the Lycée Schoelcher. Even though the differences between the father

of *Négritude* and the master of *Antillanité* should not be over-exaggerated (Condé 1993), it is within a French metropolitan milieu, among the literary Parisian avant-garde of the mid-1950s, with Philippe Sollers, Roland Barthes, and the writers of the *Nouveau Roman*, that Glissant fed his literary hunger and started to explore the narrative possibilities of language and form, leading him to win the prestigious metropolitan Prix Renaudot in 1958 with the novel *La Lézarde* (*The Ripening*).[2] He was influenced by poets like Victor Segalen, Saint-John Perse, and Paul Claudel, who were on the margins of the French literary canon and were about encounter, exile, and otherness. In Paris, Glissant read avidly William Faulkner, Alejo Carpentier, and Pablo Neruda who explored, questioned or praised national identity through territorial and regional cultural traits, and used the power of language to address issues of class and race in the Americas. After five years of forced residence in Paris, Glissant's experiential learning was sharpened by his return to Martinique.[3] From then on, he constantly addressed in his writing the subaltern neurosis of dependence and amnesia of the *Antillais* and their unformulated need for self-discovery in the *départements d'outre-mer* (generally called by their acronym, DOM). Numbness, amnesia, and latent desire are the elements of Glissant's pathology of the DOM memory syndrome, represented by the image of the immobile woman listening to the silent sucking of the snake in *Soleil de la Conscience* (Glissant, 1987): "And when the snake suckles an immobile woman, it speaks to her silently, that is in its language of sucking: Do not feel sorry for yourself, I bring you the glory of my order, the perfect circle" (Dash 1995, p.45).

From 1965 to 1980, Glissant lived on Martinique where he witnessed the damages of acculturation in daily life.[4] He created the journal *Acoma*, to diagnose the alienating political, economic, and psychological structure of the *départements d'outre-mer* since they were established in 1946. Within a centralized and pyramidal administrative organization inherited from the Napoleonic republican order, the Antillean subjects of the former colonies were citizens, but still racially categorized and culturally and economically dependent: French but from overseas, French but not white. Their attachment to the mother country was regularly reiterated by the paternalist rhetoric of the French fatherland—often disguised in a sophistic use of the motto *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité*—and the infantilism and passive consumerism created on the islands as a consequence. This nesting structure was closely linked to the perpetuation of economic dependency, the *département* being a non-autonomous structure by definition and *a fortiori* when located overseas. It led to an implicit and unquestioned articulation of the Antilleans as subaltern citizens that fits easily with the racial prejudices inherited from the colonial past and that trapped the island in the belief that it was unable to deal by itself with

the particular needs of a Caribbean tropical climate, landscape, culture, and self-providing economy. *Départementalisation* creates a geographical illusion and a psychic delusion that the overseas islands are part of the metropolitan territory.

The gap between fantasy and reality is the most damaging consequence of the silencing of memory established by the French model of assimilation. Martinique imagined itself to have a neurotic and suffocating metonymic relationship with the metropolitan nation. Metonymy is a rhetorical figure that names a part of the whole as representative of the whole; it is thus a metaphor for inclusion and belonging. Martinique, as a territorial and administrative unit of France, is France. The *département* repeats the nation, more precisely French Republican values, and exists only as a reflection (a projection and reduction) of the French macrocosm. This metonymic existence is based on the mono-model of the French Republic and of French culture—no matter how inappropriate the models of *France métropolitaine* inherited from the Enlightenment and from the French Revolution could be in an island like Martinique.[5] In terms of memory, it implies that the Antillean collective imagination can only be French by forgetting any other component of its identity; the fact that everything different, in terms of race, but also cultural habits and metaphysical beliefs, cannot be remembered but only exoticized in folklore. The Indian, the African, and the plantation heritage are meant to be reservoirs of clichés for tourism and metropolitan holiday satisfaction that, as sterile cultural vignettes, do not threaten the French Republican myth. This mechanism alienates and consumes the Antillean subject from within. Glissant was aware that he cannot treat the symptoms if he does not address the origin of the syndrome, located in collective memory and absent or delusional strategies of commemoration on the island. He aimed to replace denial and oblivion with self-awareness, so that the flesh, numbed by amnesia, could accept, however painful, the bite of the snake, initiating memory and consciousness.

His work repeatedly displaced the obsolete totems of the Antillean imagined community and resisted the fetishist nostalgia for nonrelevant father figures, whether Aimé Césaire or Victor Schoelcher, because they were part of the sterile commemorative program designed by the metropole.[6] His work embraced a large variety of forms and discourses: from poetry to fiction, from theory to essay, from philosophy to cultural studies. This swaying from one episteme to the other created echoes and reiterations between early and later works that shaped Glissant's approach to memory in the Caribbean as a system of metaphors and as a literary chronotope. For example, entire sections of Glissant's 1985 poetry collection *Pays Rêvé, Pays Réel* are dedicated to characters from his previous novels *La Lézarde* / *The Ripening* (1958) and *La Case*

du Commandeur / The Overseer's Cabin (1981), such as Laoka, Thael, Mathieu, and Mycéa. As Michael Dash suggested, Glissant's oeuvre cannot be read as a linear and logical progression toward a final purpose but "as a series of probings which move back and forth in time, between landscapes and personae" (Dash 1995, p.20). In this chapter, we will reread Glissant's poetry in tandem with his later fiction and theory, and consider his approach to memory at three key moments: 1965, with the poems of *Les Indes*; the 1980s with the novel *La Case du Commandeur* and the publication of *Antillean Discourse*;[7] and the 1990s, with *Poétique de la Relation*. I argue that Glissant's system of memory was a postmodern transfer of Ortiz's transculturation to the field of cultural memory in the DOM. It reached a theoretical climax in the 1990s with the publication of *Poétique de la Relation*, at a time when the commemoration of the bicentenary of the French Revolution was still in the minds of Caribbean intellectuals concerned with problems of collective memory, remembrance, and self-representation on their islands, as we will see in detail in Chapter 7.

Poétique de la Relation was, of all Glissant's essays, the one that engaged most analytically with the commemoration of the conquest and colonization of the New World at the time when the international celebration of "the Encounter of the Two Worlds" was being debated and prepared at UNESCO in Paris. Glissant did not participate in the project, he himself had left UNESCO in 1988 after having been the director of its famous review, the *Courrier*, for six years.[8] Written in 1990, *Poétique* epitomizes Glissant's interest in an approach to Caribbean cultural memory in the *longue durée* that predated the 1992 anniversary and did not fit the UNESCO vision. The essay, too often remembered only for its first chapter on the rhizome metaphor, demonstrates that the Caribbean is a geographical, historical, and linguistic archipelago where cultural mutations happen in the long term, and are constant, ambivalent, and unpredictable. The themes, topics, and metaphors used by Glissant to develop his view of the Caribbean *longue durée* are taken from episodes of the discovery: he debates the question of the Arawaks as the primary inhabitants, the plantation as a system of violence, the importance of deregionalizing Caribbean literatures and of valuing them as part of a tradition and in different languages. *Poétique de la relation* engages in a dialogue with Benítez Rojo's *Repeating Islands* in the terrain of chaos theory (see next chapter); for both authors, this is a way of approaching Caribbeanness as a set of postmodern discursive strategies. Glissant also dialogues very obviously with Brathwaite (see previous chapter), whom he quotes in the epigraph of *Poétique de la relation* ("the unity is submarine," taken from Brathwaite's last lines in *Contradictory Omens*) and from whom he borrows the word Creolization. While echoing as much Benítez Rojo's

postmodern approach to the Caribbean and Brathwaite's work on Creolization, Glissant created his own and specific system for constructing identity through remembrance, in which *Poétique de la relation* was a key work.

The idea at the forefront of *Poétique de la relation* is certainly Creolization, drawing on Brathwaite's arguments, but analyzed in terms of Ortiz's ideas of unlimited miscegenation, unpredictability, diffraction, and refraction:

> La créolisation est non seulement une rencontre, un choc, un métissage, mais une dimension inédite qui permet a chacun d'être là et ailleurs, enraciné et ouvert, perdu dans la montagne et libre sous la mer, en accord et en errance. Si nous posons le métissage comme en général une rencontre et une synthèse entre deux différences, la créolisation nous apparaît comme le métissage sans limites, dont les éléments sont démultipliés, les résultants imprévisibles.
>
> (Glissant 1990, p.46)

In an earlier article for the *Courrier de l'Unesco*, in 1981, Glissant had declared that his fascination with Caribbean civilization came from its ability for transculturation, as a capacity to comprehend and incorporate otherness, and thus for *marronage*, a reference to black maroons (Glissant, 1981b).[9] Glissant amplified the meaning of *marronage* defined as the will to go out of the limits (out of the plantation and of any enclosed system). As such, he was clearly relating *marronage* to the legacy of the Caribbean open sea, paradigmatically opposed to the Mediterranean enclosed sea. These ideas are expanded in *Poétique de la Relation*, replacing the debate of the "Encounter of the Two Worlds" in the arena of postcolonial studies, through an inversion of Braudel's approach to the Mediterranean Sea.

Creolization allowed Glissant to define the Caribbean region as an archipelago of cultures to be commemorated, not because it was discovered by Columbus, but because it constantly produced unpredictable cultural encounters—called relations by Glissant. Hence the heterogeneity of the region (linguistic, political, racial), a heterogeneity that is often disparaged as a sign of indetermination (close to a no man's land for V. S. Naipaul or defined as a "European cockpit" by Eric Williams), is in fact for Glissant made of constituent and relevant contradictions. Without naming Ortiz, Glissant returned to the core principles of the Cuban anthropologist: civilization and transculturation, the first being the result of the second, in a progressive process of adaptation in the long term, through generations and between cultural elements that were initially alien to each other. Nondetermination is replaced by the creative notion of unpredictable incorporations and unexpected cultural relations.

This overemphasis on transculturation at the beginning of the 1980s had a lot to do with the French overseas *département* apparatus, where acculturation

(that is, the imposition of Frenchness) was sadly the result of deculturation (the plantation system) and not, as in Ortiz's proposal, a step beyond emancipation and progress. Neoculturation, as a compensatory, creative moment to negotiate violence, exists in Martinique at an unformulated stage and in everyday language only, according to Glissant, but not as an articulated and explicit element in collective awareness (Glissant 1989). Glissant's point was to tell the subaltern citizens of Martinique that they were subjects of a metonymic community, that they had the right to begin a conscious transculturation process, and that they needed to become visible for themselves through a voluntary effort of representation and politicization. Glissant does not follow Ortiz's positivist line of transculturation but transfers the model to the postmodern condition of the *domien*,[10] and to what Brathwaite called "geopsychic fragmentation" (Brathwaite 1983, p.13). For Glissant, the key to unlock embedded blockages was *anamnesis*, summed up in the metaphor of the "prophetic vision of the past" (Glissant 1961). His 1981 article in *Courrier* and the publication in the same year of the novel *La Case du Commandeur* planted the seeds of Glissant's *Poétique de la relation* as an attempt to animate the zombified French Antillean consciousness by accessing self-cognition and memory.[11] Transculturation—called Creolization, poetics of the relation, interpenetration of cultures, interference of languages by Glissant—is the key to opening up and breaking free the alienating and neurotic amnesia of the *domien* (Cailler 1988, p.59).

Glissant calls diglossia the fragmented speech resulting from amnesia; it is a symptom that is caused by belonging to antagonistic cultural and linguistic systems, one being master over the other. The novel *La Case du Commandeur* (*The Overseer's Cabin*) exemplifies this syndrome. It begins with Marie Célat's escape from the lunatic asylum of Fort de France, ironically considered the most secure of the asylums in the Caribbean. This is an act of *marronage* that triggers remembrance and pushes the diegesis back in the past. Her being mad is in fact an act of resistance against the hegemonic *logos* that negated both her and her people. The history of the Longoué family is narrated, from the plantation era to the abolition of slavery, from the perspective of a character, whose name is significantly displaced into a truncated phonetic version, Mycéa. For Glissant it is indeed in language—sometimes unconsciously formulated (*malgré nous*) as in the case of the character's abbreviated name—from which arises resistance to the core narrative. The other and its incorporation into diversity and plurality is what Glissant calls *opacité*: it is a perspective and a way of thinking that empowers the individual to keep a healthy distance from the absolute truths inculcated by the French core narrative. *Opacité* facilitates the emergence of relativism: "La pensée de l'opacité me distrait des vérités absolues, dont je croirais être le dépositaire. Loin de

me rencogner dans l'inutile et l'inactif, elle relativise en moi les possibles de toute action, en me faisant sensible aux limites de toutes méthodes" (Glissant 1990, p.206).

The Overseers Cabin, published in 1981, was an exploration of Glissant's interest in transculturation as a strategy of remembrance. The *anamnesis*—the self-cognitive method for remembering what we know latently or in Glissant's words "the prophetic vision of the past"—is at the heart of the two epigraphs that open the book. Mycea's father Pythagorus's proverbial statement about knowledge ("Il y a toujours dans le monde quelque chose que tu connais et quelquechose que tu ne connais pas/ There is always what you know and what you don't know in the world") is followed by her grandfather's image of the buried history of words ("Parce que la parole a son histoire qu'il faut fouiller comme un plan d'igname loin au fond de la terre/Because the history of speech needs to be unearthed like an undertaken yam root"). Both epigraphs leave the reader with the expectation of a quest for knowledge and an effort to dig out memory from subterranean obscurity. The yam root, a Caribbean plant *par excellence*, is in Glissant's view what grows on the land, it stands for an *Antillanité* deeply buried by a denial of memory and by a delusional desire to be first and foremost French. Glissant theorized this syndrome very explicitly in the 1980s, but it is also true that he had already addressed, in earlier poetic writings, the question of memory and collective imagination in the Antilles. This is when Columbus first emerged as a major tool for commemoration, in 1965 with *Les Indes*.

Columbus and the Commemoration of the History of Indies

With *Les Indes*, Glissant wrote the history of the New World and of the Middle Passage. This was an act of poetic *marronage*, not quite like Mycea's escapism, but rather by verbal conquest. Indeed both narratives were completely absent from the French historical and literary canon in the 1950s and Columbus was certainly very little represented within French historical patrimony. A fashionable figure in philosophical allegories during the French enlightenment (Pageaux 2003), Christopher Columbus inspired very few French metropolitan writers in the twentieth century.[12] In the French colonies and eventually *départements*, the narrative of assimilation completely erased the fiction of the discovery of the New World from collective memory, and also that of the Middle Passage. The reality in the DOM is that the official, French narrative of origins belongs to the *Siècle des Lumières* and to the epic of reason, of which the year zero was Schœlcher's abolition of slavery (see Chapter 7). The common consensual belief among intellectuals and educators in France, still prevalent today, considers that nothing

worth remembering happened before the French Revolution in the Antilles; slavery and its consequences—the establishment of a multilayered, exclusive, and racialized socio-colonial order—does not need to be evoked since all those traumas have already been resolved by the French Enlightenment, as Schoelcher's humanitarian act proved, at least according to the French colonial powers. Glissant refused to accept this version and his analysis invalidates any unthinking neocolonial satisfaction that the *Départementalisation* law of 1946 was the legal institutionalization of free, equal, and brotherly French *départements*; for Glissant, it represented instead the paroxysm and institutionalization of "fear, self-denial and alienation" (Glissant 1989, p.268).

To corroborate this view, it is worth bearing in mind that on Martinique, there is only one memorial to slavery, created in 1998 by the artist Laurent Valère, located at Anse Cafard in the place where a slave ship crashed on the cliffs. It was also only very recently, in 2001, that the Taubira law acknowledged slavery to be a crime against humanity. On Guadeloupe, where Columbus landed during his second voyage, the local French governor built a memorial in Capesterre-Belle-Eau in 1916 and it received the blessings of the Pope. The memorial was neither a commemoration of the origin of the island nor of the birth of the New World. It was even less a reminder of the importation of slaves in the French West Indies, The memorial was renovated in the 1950s, at a moment when the Antilleans were fully assimilated to France after the *Départementalisation*. Pierre Nora's analysis of *lieux de mémoire* as the product of amnesia in French society is very appropriate to describe the neurotic relationship to the past that imprisons the DOM collective and official imagination. For Nora, sites of memory exist to compensate the absence of real environments of memory in France, in other words, if French people could live within memory, they would not need to have specific sites and moments for commemorations (Nora 1993). The slavery museum of Martinique is a good example of the institutionalization of amnesia: it allows people to forget that slavery existed by commemorating its abolition rather than invoking its remembrance. It does not anchor collective Antillean memory to any epic of struggle and resistance, nor does it remember slavery as a trauma, but rather it effects its erasure (or at least the illusion of its erasure) at the hands of the French Republic.

Therefore, Glissant's choice was subversive, which can explain why *Les Indes* is the less studied text of Glissant in French Academia. In this book, he poeticized the discovery, the conquest and slavery, while the national commemorative fiction renewed its colonial ideology (but pretended to be postcolonial) by creating a republican and administrative structure inherited from the revolution, namely the *département*. In 1965, *Les Indes* (The Indies)

are Glissant's answer, like a snake bite, to awaken consciousness and draw the venom of national amnesia and political numbness thanks to the rhythm of poetry and the power of language. It is an epic poem divided into six sections, which chronologically retraces the history of the DOM's present neurosis, following the path of untold fears and traumas in colonial times. "The Call," "The Voyage," "The Conquest," "The Trade," "The Heroes,' " and "The Relation" are different episodes that reveal how deeply the Indies were no more than a fantasy born of the deepest human dreams of possession, which then turned into conquest, slaughter, and nightmare, replacing the beauty of the land with a violent reality: "*L'Inde est imaginaire, mais sa révélation ne l'est pas*" / The Indies, as a territory, are a fantasy, but their revelation is in no way real, says the poet (Glissant 1994, p.151).[13] Glissant reconstructs the historical discovery of the Antilles in a combination of prose and verse in order to offer a new reservoir of symbols for the construction of a sense of remembrance in the DOM.

There is no return to Africa for Glissant, as in Brathwaite's second volume of the *New World Trilogy, Masks*. *The Indies* are, rather, a return to the origin of the dream as a foundational distortion of reality and its violent expression as imported ideals: "*l'imagination crée à l'homme des Indes toujours suscitées, que l'homme dispute au monde* / Imagination created the Indies that mankind always dreamt of, this dream is what man will fight the World for" (Glissant 1994, p.108). The dream begins in Genoa, where the first section, "The Call," takes place. The omniscient poetic voice introduces this first episode in the oral style of a *trouvère*, the nomadic medieval poet who sings the epic and raises the curtain of history:

> Voici le port en fête, l'aventure qui se noue; le rêve s'épuise dans son projet, l'homme a peur de son désir au moment de le satisfaire / Here is the cheerful port, the beginning of the adventure; the dream is exhausted by its project, the man is afraid of his desire when he is on the point of satisfying it. (p.108)

Glissant chose the traditional form of the epic in order to praise national belonging. Columbus plays a central and symbolic part in the book, but unlike Roland, Orlando, Araucana, or Gilgamesh in their corresponding contexts, Columbus is mostly present *in absentia* as a forgotten figure to be re-membered thanks to the power of poetry. He is not embodied by what he accomplishes but by what he feels. Only named once, at the beginning of the second section, "The Voyage," he is identified as the character on the shore whose feelings of desire are expressed by the poetic voice. Columbus embodies the tension between dream and reality, between *pays rêvé* and *pays reel*, that characterizes the history of the Caribbean. Indeed, the Janus-faced

identity of the region, torn between idealization and domination, came with Columbus, who promised the world to his mariners before even setting foot on a Caribbean beach: "Three days, Columbus finally told them, and I'll give you the world" (p.119). Columbus is the one who introduced the possibility of dreaming the Indies and so forced into reality a mistaken fantasy.

He is, as a consequence, the epitome of the relation of interdependence between the dreamers who set foot on the sand and the naked reality of the island, which was forcibly conquered as a result of desire. The shore is the paradigmatic in-between encounter of sea with land, in a false dialogue where the third-person pronoun *he*, representing the Admiral without naming him, receives the response from the beach and from another anonymous voice on the island:

> Et quelqu'un dit: Nous sommes plage de l'écume, ô fils
> Il dit . . . Nous sur la plage, il nous est fait licence de nous assembler à la proue de la voix, de crier [. . .]
> Il dit; et la plage ne sait à ce debut de quelle écume se fera
> Sacre ou ravage? Nul ne sait, pieds nus sur le sable nu
> De quelles Indes voici l'approche et la louange? (Glissant 1994, p.112)
> And somebody said: We are beach and foam, O Sons
> He said . . . We, on the beach, we have been given the right to gather at the bow of the voice, and shout [. . .]
> He said; and the beach at this point does not know of which foam
> Coronation or slaughter? Nobody knows, bare foot of the bare sand
> Which Indies is this the encounter and the praise? (my translation).

The undetermined pronoun *we* on the beach faces the *we* representing those arriving as the European dreamers claiming their intention to satisfy their desire of conquest: "*Indes! ce fut ainsi, par votre nom cloué sur la folie, que commença la mer* / Indies! this is how, with your name nailed up on madness, the sea began" (p.113). The energy of the discovery, with the dream becoming reality, gives birth to a euphoric encounter between sand and sea:

> Et chaque voix gardant sa rime pour la *Terre*! des vigies,
> et chaque mer
> Baignant sa mer à l'autre face! Et tout confus, et tout
> vivace!
> Et le marin dit qu'il croit même, enfants, qu'il est deux
> Indes, deux levures d'or saignant!
> Mais les Indes sont vérité. (Glissant 1994, p.118)
> And each voice keeping its rime for the *Land*! watches,
> and each sea

> Bathing its face in the other face! And all confused, and all
> Alive!
> And the mariner says that he even believes, children, that there are two
> Indies, two bleeding and golden leavenings!
> But the Indies are truth. (my translation).

But euphoria only happens on the side of the discoverers. It is the expression of their lust and greed. The encounter cannot give birth to any shared dialogue since the anonymous and indigenous voice on the beach is silenced and left outside the dialogic enunciation. Yet, the poetic voice foresees the future, which is also the past, in a true strategy of *anamnesis*, linking together the sacrificed poet Terpandra[14] and the maroon Toussaint, both belonging to the common knowledge of the sea, ready to be awoken by the poet's voice. Columbus's landing on the shore is therefore an ambivalent rupture of the time–space continuum; he stands for the debasement of the dream that will turn to slaughter, and at the same time, the sea brings with him remembrance; a universal and cyclical acknowledgment of pains and history is thus rewritten on the shore, in the quest for gold and riches (p.127). The modality and rhythmic pattern of Columbus's speech on the shore evolves significantly in the following episodes. In "The Conquest," the encounter, previously divided into euphoric and nondialogic alternative voices, turns into a "*Tragique chant d'amour avec la terre nouvelle/* A tragic canto of love with the new land" (p.129). The entire episode is built upon the metaphor of the rape of the Indies, called in the singular and feminine French word "Inde." The latter embodies a beautiful woman forced by the unstoppable desire of the male conqueror, a character that is an amalgam of Cortés, Pizarro, Balboa, and Valverde. Columbus opened the route for the conquerors and rapists of the islands who followed, those whose desire to possess erased the indigenous people and inseminated slavery in the Caribbean basin.[15] The cantos are introduced by a laconic "he said" followed by the long monologues, in direct speech, of the aggressor who takes possession of the body of the Indies in an idiom both erotic and violent, forcing it to remain faithful to the dream he had, erasing Columbus's mistake and the reality of the island:

> Et si les Indes ne sont pas de ce côté où tu te couches, que m'importe! Inde je te dirai, Inde de l'Ouest: afin que je regagne mon rêve/And if the Indies are not on this side where you lie down to sleep, I don't care! Indies I will call you, West Indies: so that I could win my dream back. (p.136)

In the section that follows, "The Trade," verse is abandoned for a prose that is harsher and therefore expresses a painful poetic remembrance, to tell the truth of a suffering Indies, after the Indies of the dream. It ends with

the evocation of both the sun of awareness (echoing the title of Glissant's earlier book of poetry *Soleil de la conscience*) and the sea of history, which join together on a poetic shore, made of feelings and meters, giving sense to a future idiom that would embrace the history of the slaves who died in the Middle Passage and suffered on the plantations (p.147).

The poetic voice closes this page of history, after having brought back the past from oblivion, so that the shore could be the tidal interpenetration of the historical pains of the Caribbean island, and the beach the repository of memory.

The section "The Heroes" proposes another scenario to remember the heroes of the slave rebellions erased by colonial historiography, by creating a new Caribbean epic. The absence of a history of *marronage* is at the heart of the collective amnesia syndrome, as Glissant will demonstrate later in *Caribbean Discourse*, showing how France erased the black slave rebellions from history. This silenced any possibility for the people of the French Caribbean to have their own slave heroes (Glissant 1989, p.135). Significantly, Delgrès, Toussaint, and Dessalines are recognized as heroes of the Indies. *Neg' mawons* (black maroons) entitled to fulfil a dream of emancipation, they also paid the price of their desire to change reality and sacrificed themselves for their ideals. The poetic voice names them and sheds light on the epic history of the Indies, buried like the yam Papa Longué invited the reader to unearth in the epigraph of *La Case du Commandeur* (Glissant 1981, p.149).

The heroes enter the territory of myth, which entitles them to belong to collective history and to a right of remembrance. They quit the limbo of folklore where they had been kept. Glissant clearly spoke his mind regarding the inclusion of premodern cultural Caribbean elements into the building of *Antillanité*, since the French colonial heritage perverted the relationship between myth and tale.[16] For Glissant, the Antillean tales of Martinique, often put forward as bearing the oral dimension and cultural specificity associated with African roots, are nothing but a non-history and a barrier that blocks self-consciousness, the expression of an original void that does not open up and does not call for filiation but is looking back and not heading toward the future. It is a suppressed discourse (*un discous rentré*) and even though it has the appearance of a collective one, using the pronoun "we" as the main narrative focus, it should be regarded as the marker of the impossibility of remembering and of the erasure of the foundational non-French *muthos* of the Caribbean. For Glissant the united and self-conscious Antillean narrative, expressed by the pronoun "we," still has to be conquered through myth (Glissant 1989, p.152).

The obscurity that qualifies the *epos*[17]—which he names the obscure epic in *Les Indes*—is a sign of amnesia. Therefore, the poem will produce

light—meaning, remembrance, and recognition. In the first part of "The Heroes," the poetic voice creates a feminine mother figure, whose sons, Toussaint and Dessalines, are invited to enter the territory of historical remembrance:

> Ouvrez les portes et sonnez pour les héros sombres. La mer les accueille parmi ses fils, le soleil se lève sur le souffle de leur âme / Do open the gates and sound the horn for the obscure heroes. The sea welcomes them among its sons, the sun rises on the breath of their souls.
>
> (Glissant 1994, p.155)

Glissant's epic of commemoration allows the shore to exist as an anti-*lieu de memoire*: the Indies are not fixed into a museum-like space that facilitates the forgetting of past traumas. The shore is a threshold that constantly relates the sand with the sea, the waves with the beach, as epitomized by the last section of the text entitled "The relation"—meaning in French both story and encounter. It ends with a poetic close up of the shore at the moment when the discoverers are departing, leaving the possibility for the dream to be renewed, calling for the next desire to be newly reborn and with questions rather than fixed answers: "*Mais peut-être l'homme n'a-t-il que même désir et même ardeur, n'importe soit-il? Et d'où qu'il vienne même souffrance connaissable?* / But maybe man always has the same desire and lust, whatever it might be? And wherever he comes from, the same recognisable pain" (p.159).

Columbus leaves his debased dream as a legacy to the Indies, a fantasy to be reimagined in the future. The character neither fits into the stereotypical historical representation of the perpetrator of the Arawak genocide, nor is he the scapegoat for the damage of Caribbean history. Rather he is turned metonymically into the French Antillean, frustrated and constantly desiring memory, but incapable, at the time Glissant is writing *Les Indes*, of remembering this desire.

Glissant's epic of the Indies and subversive use of Columbus is based on a political dilemma: How can we create a national *epos* when *we* are not a nation but a region assimilated into France, and when our historical *muthos* has been reduced at best to folklore? The wish for a shared narrative—the ability to express a narrative "we" (Ormerod 1981)—is a challenge on an island where diglossia and self-denial feed this metonymy and maintain the fiction of the assimilated French avatar. In the French DOM, the issue is not land legitimacy and territorial belonging.[18] The dysfunctional self-representation is located in memory and its impossible performance. Neither commemoration of origins nor nationalist rebellion is possible in a neo-colony that is a regional unit of France: Antilleans are already French, what other nationality could they claim? Assimilation zombified the collective imagination of

the DOM, letting them be only French—but from overseas, but black, but ex-slaves . . . Amnesia induces frustration and frustration is compensated by amnesia. A dilemma it is, indeed.

Négritude was a necessary clamor that awoke consciousness and broke the fake totem, but only replaced it with an inappropriate African idol. For Glissant, there is no need for a mythic recovery of origins, but for a narrative that connects pains, traumas, and blockages, linking past and present, recollecting an original *muthos* that will enable a present epos. Interconnecting times and cultural values is the key to a poetics of intercultural relations (the meaning of *Poétique de la Relation*) that does not pretend to cover up the symptoms but hopes to build the future. The poetic voice, like the hissing of the snake of consciousness, aims to give verbal tools to Martiniquan legal citizens and mental subjects, so that they can go beyond passive dependency, so that the "I" can become a "we."

Transculturation, Performance, and Post-Columbus Memory in Martinique

Since the settlement established by the French pirate and trader D'Esnambuc at the end of the sixteenth century, Martinique only had one master; it always belonged to France, as a colonial possession and eventually a republican *département*. In contrast, if we return to Fernando Ortiz and his national reading of Cuban culture, we find a very different context. Cuba built its national and patriotic narratives, before and after the revolution, through the use of anticolonial/anti-Spanish and anti-imperialist/anti-US discourses, since the island passed from the hands of Spain to those of the United States. In the French West Indies, the "one to one" relationship generated a very successful practice of assimilation that muted the process of transculturation. For Glissant, transculturation is the key to remembrance and political consciousness, and transculturation is awoken by performance. Glissant's *anamnesis* constructed a system of political consciousness understood as remembrance, as well as a strategy to imagine remembrance as a linguistic performance: following Glissant's view, we can say that the *domiens* forgot that they are political citizens and they need to consciously and collectively act out their culture, of which Frenchness is only a colonial trace. In other words, the zombie citizen of the DOM, once he has been given the taste of memory, must learn how to react to it.

Glissant's essay *Theatre, consciousness of the people*, first written for the review *Acoma*, and eventually published in *Antillean Discourse*, shows how the French colonial deculturation process erased the possibility of any collective national epic and impoverished the collective self-representation of

the people, which was maintained as folklore by the subaltern elite. The absence of a performative self-conscious theater in Martinique is for him the symptom of a complex and intertwined deculturating and acculturating French colonial style that consisted of persuading the Antillean subjects that they were "others" in order to prevent them from representing themselves. Contrary to Brathwaite's and Benítez Rojo's postmodern readings of Ortiz, Glissant did not consider Columbus to be an agent of transculturation, but rather a performer of the desire for transculturation, since in the particular context of Martinique transculturation needed first to be acknowledged and consciously admitted as an essential part of Antillean society. According to Glissant, when he wrote *Les Indes*, transculturation was what needed to be remembered and revived by commemoration. Therefore, the postmodern condition of the *domien* lay in the need for a mnemonic and cognitive effort to connect collective imagination and self-representation, in other words to achieve *anamnesis*.

Glissant approached *anamnesis* as a performance. *Antillanité* is the discourse of memory while reconnected to self-awareness and self-representation, performed thanks to and through *anamnesis*. In the discursive performance of memory, and from our reading of *Les Indes*, I suggest that Columbus plays the role of a linguistic shifter. In linguistics, the shifter (which Benveniste also called *embrayeur* or *déictique*) is a temporal, spatial, or personal marker that articulates the utterance with the enunciation.[19] In Glissant's work, Columbus is a shifter in the discourse of memory because he allows one to understand the *who*, *where*, and *when* of deculturation and therefore to reflect on the present situation of acculturation of the DOM. He stands for a pivotal and symbolic moment, a place and encounter between *Rêvé* and *Réel* that makes possible the enunciation of the reality of the DOM.

To understand how Columbus works as a shifter in Glissant's memory system, we must go back to the image of the rhizome with which he theorized Caribbean identity in *Caribbean Discourse*. The rhizome metaphor is the most popular part of Glissant's theory in France because it allows one to read the *Caribbean Discourse* as a decontextualized theory of subjectivity and language, together with Deleuze and Guattari (and therefore to avoid talking about Caribbeanness as a process, and to keep it as an abstract theoretical scenario). But we should remember that Glissant had in fact in mind the image of the mangrove as a piece of Caribbean landscape and as a metaphor of Caribbean latent identity. If we consider the vegetal and literal meaning of the rhizome, its submarine and horizontal roots are salt sponges that contribute to the balance of the mangrove biomass but that remain latent and centrifugal under water. It is a fragile but autonomous system, which the *départements* are not. It is a fact that the main reason for wanting *Départementalisation* on the

islands was the hope that Martinique and Guadeloupe would be stronger economically by staying in the bosom of France, and out of the fear of underdevelopment. Still popular, the political idea that France needs to protect "*son outremer*" (the possessive pronoun is almost proverbial in French political discourse) is based on the belief that the islands would not survive without the subventions of the metropolis. The price to be paid was to renounce self-determination. The rhizome is precisely the metaphor of a self-autonomous, fragile but balanced eco-system, the contrary of what the *Départements d'Outre-Mer* have become.

For Glissant, since Caribbean memory is a submarine and floating unformulated discourse (like a rhizome), Columbus is the character that contextualizes the time, the location, and the actors of history (like a shifter), so that the past can be grasped and enunciated, and so that remembrance can become a foundational platform from which to construct the future. Columbus is part of Glissant's reading of the New World as belonging to the rhizome ecosystem. This paradigm (the rhizome) is one of the most famous of Glissant's theoretical devices. Inverting the image of the genealogical tree, coming from a common ground that grows in multiple generational branches, Glissant shows that the Caribbean Sea, unlike the enclosed Mediterranean Sea, is an open and traumatic space that developed in the way of a mangrove, drifting, and with submarine branches.[20] The figure of the discoverer allows the circulation of memory to act as a filter of the salt; and this should (or, Glissant hoped it would) allow the zombie *antillais* to become a man with memory once he has been fed with salt (the salt is indeed believed to be what brings back memory to the man who had been zombified).

In Glissant's system of *anamnesis*, Columbus facilitates the performance of memory, even more so given that the epic poem is very theatrical: *Les Indes* belongs at first sight to the genre of poetry but also has a very deep connection to theater in terms of poetics. This is not surprising, since Glissant's system of memory connects transculturation and performance: theater is performed on stage and in culture the latent transculturation is expressed in everyday life, in language and social habits.

In *Theater, the people's consciousness*, which we mentioned earlier, Glissant defined a series of paradigms that could assist the birth and evolution of Martiniquian self-consciousness into collective and political representation. Starting from the *a priori* principle that there is no nation without its theater, Glissant eventually uncovered in the essay the link between nationhood and tragedy as a mode of self-representation, collective imagination and political action. In his model, theater is defined as a way to represent oneself, based on a historical awareness that is eventually transformed into collective consciousness, through the symbolic rituals of tragedy (for example, with the sacrifice of

the hero as a unifying scapegoat for the community). For Glissant, since theatrical expression incorporates common folklore (*le fond folklorique commun*), the staged performance goes beyond folklore and transforms it into culture (when Socrates drinks the poison or when Oedipus pokes his eyes out on stage). Going beyond folklore is the condition for the people to defend their political identity ("*un peuple qui se politise se défolklorise*," wrote Glissant). The mechanism proceeds as follows: performance allows one to act out folklore and go beyond it; this transforms tragedy (premodernity) into drama (modernity), and gives birth to an articulated collective consciousness that has come to terms with its past. Clearly, Glissant approaches theater systematically as a conveyor of national political consciousness. His view is that performance is a dialectical coming-of-age of memory, following the progressive and compensatory definition at the heart of transculturation and modernity, as Ortiz defined it and as we saw in the first chapter.

Glissant's argument then advances by proving how the Hegelian model cannot apply to the people of Martinique because of the colonial yoke that blocked the self-representation of the Antilleans. He reminds us that the Greek model of tragedy consists of the smooth and harmonious transformation of creeds (*croyances*) into collective consciousness (*conscience*). In Martinique, where there is no consciousness of the past other than the French one and therefore no possible "going beyond" a common heritage, there is an incompatible gap (called *hiatus* by Glissant) between creed and consciousness that has been deepened by the colonial apparatus. First by the mental uprooting of the slave; then, eventually in post-plantation times, by the rhetorical persuasion of the French in order to make the Antillean believe that he is other than what he could think he is. In this delusional apparatus, Frenchness is a given and national belonging is taken for granted. The creeds cannot be transformed into culturally productive consciousnesses since they are lived as painful (exile, nostalgia) and they do not produce any positive cultural discourse. If we read this passage bearing in mind the processes of *anamnesis* on one hand and of transculturation on the other, it is clear that Glissant's periodization of theater (premodern/modern) and his definition of politically conscious imagination (creeds transformed into culture) are both infused by late positivism, closer to Ortiz than one might have thought: culture is seen as the result of progress *after* and *beyond* primitive forms of belief. In this theory, memory is seen as enlightenment, and political consciousness as a sign of development. Glissant is othering the Antilleans as incapable of autonomous self-cognition.

The last major point of Glissant's essay explains how the acculturating apparatus was facilitated by the creation of the Antillean elite, which was at the same time in the position of both slave and master. The elite stands

for the metropolitan hegemonic order and values, although it does not hold all the benefits of this representation. As a result, creeds, in the elite's hands, become caricatures, superficial, and weak. Glissant shows that in Martinique folklore is encouraged as a stereotyped, harmless, and empty container of a finished past that, disconnected from the current beliefs, feelings, and needs of the Antilleans, does not threaten the hegemonic French order. Glissant offers the example of carnival, which is weakened as a popular local practice, but favored as a tourist attraction, overwhelmingly praised by the Antillean *pouvoirs publics* and the media as proof of a healthy positive local culture. The parody belongs to the rhetoric of persuasion characteristic of French acculturation. Instead of erasing Martiniquaian cultural specificity, the latter is impoverished by being turned into something taken for granted ("*quelque chose qui va de soi*"). Folklore is indeed neutralized, not by being forbidden but by being praised, becoming an alienated, empty, and depoliticized remainder.[21] The same phenomenon happens with Indo-Antillean culture: the inclusion of the Carib-Indian past into Martiniquian folklore provides for a pseudo-history and the illusion of a cultural background ("*l'illusion d'un arrière pays culturel*"). At the same time it is harmless since it cannot nurture any collective representation because of the lack of knowledge and total absence of desire to know about and remember the Arawak, Taínos, and Carib origins on the island. As in the examples of carnival and Indian origins, Glissant demonstrates that folklore is a signifier emptied of any historical significance. Therefore, popular culture is uprooted from its historical past and this neutralization—necessary for the status quo of the neocolonial status—contributes to the dissolution of the collective imagination into lifeless, fossilized, and fragmented material. In the last part of Glissant's essay, we can see how memory is manipulated by a subaltern elite suffering from inferiority complexes. The premises of Glissant's approach to the memory syndrome in the DOM are that, first, memory is the basis of political consciousness; second, performance is the coming of age of memory; third, the Antilleans, as *domiens*, do not want to remember; fourth, as a result they cannot perform their identity self-consciously; and fifth, the elite is the guardian of this collective amnesia.

In the last part of the essay Glissant proposes a solution to this cultural and political dilemma: a new model of modern and tragic theater that will avoid the Hegelian dialectic. He imagines a tragic performativity that will establish a productive dialogue, a genuine self-representation, and participate in the collective cultural revolution Martinique needs.[22] A complete and synthetic change needs to be performed. Poetically, this means renouncing sacrificial tragedy (Socrates's suicide and Oedipus's blinding himself) and moving directly to political tragedy. Glissant's play *Monsieur Toussaint* in

1959, presented as "a prophetic vision of the past" in the preface, realized this poetics of memory through performance. But *Les Indes* a few years later, as an epic poem, was also designed to be a performative epic in order to enable the collective cultural revolution Glissant wanted to spark.

Now returning to *Les Indes*, the epic poem is built as a tragedy of voices with stage directions and direct speech, and the six theatrical paintings (*tableaux*) of "The Call," "The Voyage," "The Conquest," "The Trade," "The Heroes," and "The Relation" are announced and framed in the diegesis thanks to the omniscient poetic voice in the prologue of each episode. The *cantos* of "The Trade" and "The Heroes" focus on characters without giving any central role to one hero over the other, but rather providing for a division of heroic trends into several voices—as figures in performance. The first episode, "The Call," reminds us of the *parodos* of the Greek epic form, when the chorus enters the stage, while the last one, "The Relation," recalls the *exodos* and the exit of the chorus, with the departure of the discoverers. *The Indies* is a text that combines the epic with the tragic to create a Caribbean epos and reach a new form of theater of consciousness. The postmodern approach to language in the text includes disharmony as a creative energy, following Ortiz's view on transculturation, and rejects any counterproductive nostalgia (Glissant 1989, p.708). *The Indies* provides the French Antillean reimagined community with a premodern mythical signified inside a modern dramatic signifier, the theater of consciousness, which aims to replace the French Republican model with another collective *muthos*, elaborated from an anticolonial perspective, but with postmodern poetic tools. The alliance of premodern, modern, and postmodern strategies is what characterizes Glissant's Post-Columbus *anamnesis*.

Conclusion: Antilleanity and the Desire for Memory

Glissant transferred to the neocolonial French context of Martinique the postcolonial definition of transculturation invented by Ortiz in the 1940s for analyzing Cuban society. He created a political mirror—like Césaire did in colonial times—for a postmodern representation of Antillean subjects that could imagine an Antillean kinship. We can understand, then, why in *Caribbean Discourse* Glissant considered Martinique and Guadeloupe part of the same problem and, therefore, why he illustrated the delirium of Antillean identity through case studies done similarly in both islands (Glissant 1989). His point was not to stress the dissimilarities between the two islands but to reinforce the view that they shared a common Antillean neurosis and a latent Antillean identity. But it is nevertheless striking that Glissant did not mention, explore, or even question the subaltern relationship between Martinique

and Guadeloupe and the triangular system of hegemony of the *métropole*: in France, Martinique is the main representative of the Antilles; Guadeloupe is not only underrepresented in the Assembly but also considered backward and less educated than its "sister" in the French collective imagination. There is a gradation between Martiniquaians and Guadeloupians in the French collective imagination, between the Ariels and the Calibans. According to the principles of Frenchness, neither are the natural children of Prospero but the first is closer to the civilizationist ideals of the Master. This silence in Glissant's oeuvre is, for me, the sign that his system of memory was first and foremost the result of desiring a relationship with his own island. *The Indies* was the laboratory for exploring with words, rhythm, and metaphors his desire for a Post-Columbus Martinique. With *Les Indes*, Glissant built a poetic "Mare Nostrum" to gather the "we" Martiniquais in a spatial and temporal *longue durée* where transculturation, political self-consciousness, and pride would be connected and become the foundations of a collective imagination. Unfortunately, the island was not ready for any such Post-Columbus discussion.

CHAPTER 4

Anamnesis, Chaos, and Columbus: Antonio Benítez Rojo and the Caribbean *Feedback-Machine*

A Cuban *Anamnesis: The Repeating Island*

Together with Edward Kamau Brathwaite's views on Creolization, and Edouard Glissant's concept of *Antillanité*, Antonio Benítez Rojo's vision of a chaotic meta-archipelago is the third major postcolonial analysis to adopt the perspective of the *longue durée* through which to approach the Caribbean region and its complex identities. This theory was fully developed in *La isla que se repite*, published in Spanish in 1989, and in English as *The Repeating Island* in 1992. I will start by disentangling the different theoretical frames within which this text has been read in Latin American and Caribbean literary and cultural studies, namely postmodernism, chaos theory, and a set of striking terms including supersyncretism, polyrythm, and free-play of performance. Benítez Rojo derived these concepts from one notion, the Plantation, capitalized in the text and viewed as the primary scenario of violence in the Caribbean. One metaphor, in particular, the "feed-back machine to conjure violence," becomes emblematic of Caribbean cultures.

These powerful images have screened off the fact that *The Repeating Island* was part of Benítez-Rojo's wish to participate in the debate on memory and commemoration in Caribbean Studies, at a time of change, when the East/West world dichotomy was in agony, and event to mark the fifth centennial of the Discovery of the New World were in preparation. Benítez Rojo's essay starts with an explicit warning against the dangers that the 1990s might bring for Caribbean Studies: the threat of analysis and scrutiny through neocolonial eyes, as if Columbus were going to return 500 years after his first arrival in the region: "Postindustrial society navigates the Caribbean with judgments and intentions that are those of Columbus; that is, it lands

scientists, investors, and technologists (the new (dis)coverers) who come to apply the dogmas and methods that had served them well where they came from, and who can't see that these refer only to realities back home" (Benítez-Rojo 1989, p.2).[1]

Benítez-Rojo wrote only this one theoretical text, in 1989, as a reading of the Caribbean that would not be blinded by neo-imperial scholarship with the multiple anniversaries to come: the year 1992, marking Columbus's first voyage in the Antilles, and 1998, the 200th anniversary of the Spanish-American war. He synthesized various interpretative trends of his time to construct a new theory that would, first, contain the memory of the Caribbean region, offering a historical reading in the *longue durée* drawing on Braudel's interdisciplinary approach of time and space (Benítez-Rojo 1989, p.149); and second, examine how remembrance and commemoration were, and had always been, positive and creative traits of Caribbeanness, exceptional in its way to be a culture of catharsis. In Benítez-Rojo's view, the Caribbean had demonstrated for 500 years its ability to be culturally self-sufficient and to process the traumas of violence. In other words, the archipelago in the late twentieth century did not need any new Columbuses to teach them how their past should be remembered. At the same time, as a writer in exile in the United States and disenchanted with Castrism, Benítez Rojo's metaphor of the chaotic meta-archipelago was a format through which he could allow his Cubanness to exist outside Cuba, within a geographical and historical Caribbeanness that was wider than the *grand récit* of the Cuban revolution. Standing at the crossroads of personal memory and collective remembrance, *The Repeating Island* is Benítez-Rojo's proposal of Caribbean *Anamnesis*.

Postmodern Transculturation

The notion that syncretism facilitates catharsis, which prevails in *The Repeating Island* and is called a "conjuring of violence" in the text, comes from the positivist theory of transculturation proposed by Fernando Ortiz in the 1940s. Benítez-Rojo expanded this theory at a crucial time for the Caribbean, as his Barbadian and Martinican fellow Caribbean scholars did in *Contradictory Omens* and in *Poétique de la Relation* (see chapters 2 and 3 of this book). But unlike Brathwaite and Glissant, who remained quite shy about the influence of Ortiz, the writer and theoretician Benítez-Rojo recognized in explicit terms the importance of his compatriots, to the point that in Chapter 4 of *The Repeating Island*, occupying a central position in a book of eight chapters, he gives a reading of Ortiz's *Cuban Counterpoint of Tobacco and Sugar* as a postmodern text *avant la lettre*.

Indeed, as announced by the subtitle of the essay, *The Repeating Island: The Caribbean and the Postmodern Perspective*, postmodernity was one of the lens through which Benítez-Rojo proposed to examine the mechanisms of cultural production and syncretical creativity in the Caribbean. From this perspective, Benítez-Rojo reread Ortiz and examined the postmodern features of his *Cuban Counterpoint of Tobacco and Sugar*. He based his demonstration mainly on the analysis of the structure and style used by Ortiz, whose text is divided into two unbalanced parts: a short one (entitled "Counterpoint of Tobacco and Sugar") and a much longer one (called "Transculturation of Tobacco in Havana and the beginnings of Sugar and Slavery in America"); the second part then begins with a self-reflective chapter, entitled "about the counterpoint and its complementary chapters." Why was this not at the beginning, right after the introduction, asks Benítez-Rojo? His answer is that Ortiz held the view that the author of a text was not the creator of a reality, the meaning of which was to be found in his sole intention, but a technician of words, operating with discourses that preexisted his own writing and that could be modified by the interpretations of his readers. Benítez-Rojo seems to turn Ortiz into a precursor of Barthes's ideas in his famous 1968 piece, *The Death of the Author*,[2] since Ortiz's decision to comment on his text within the text itself, and not in a signed preface, gives a sense that "there is no reason to establish a relation of semiological hierarchy between two texts, since there is really no text that can encompass the reality that it wants to express" (Benítez-Rojo 1989, p.153).

Besides the fact that Ortiz reflected on the self-reflective nature of Ortiz's text—a text questioning its meaning through its structure and therefore questioning authorship—it is in this intriguing chapter on "the Counterpoint and its complementary chapters" that he acknowledged the limitations of his views and interpretations. Benítez-Rojo interprets this as a sign that, instead of proposing one single truth, Ortiz's text opened up questions for others to take over and correct his views, with no attempt to exhaust the theme (Benítez-Rojo 1989, p.154). Another major transgression of the rules of modernity and positivism, according to Benítez-Rojo, lies in the discrepancy between Ortiz's two parts, and the fact that 400 pages (Part II) were devoted to complementary chapters, as annotations to Part I. Benítez-Rojo's interpretation is that the logic of the *Cuban Counterpoint* did not follow the encyclopedic form cherished by the positivist socio-scientific works of his time (such as Manuel Moreno Fraginals and his successors in the field of sugar plantation historiography, Ramiro Guerra y Sánchez, Raúl Cepero Bonilla, and Juan Pérez de la Riva). Instead, this was a chaotic structure, proposing an expandable text, with many branches, annotations, and connotations, whose disorganized form was meant to trigger further interpretations on the

part of the reader. From this, it becomes obvious that Ortiz's heterogeneous text, qualified as a "bastard text" (Benítez-Rojo 1989, p.158) mixing social sciences, literature, and fiction, was a model of interdisciplinarity for Benítez-Rojo when he was himself making a reputation in the field of Latin American and Caribbean Cultural Studies in North American academia, since *The Repeating Island* was the text with which Benítez-Rojo got his tenure (Stavans 2002, p.26). The *Cuban Counterpoint* became for him a method to analyze the Caribbean differently from European theoreticians of modernity (in the eyes of whom Ortiz belongs only to positivism) and of postmodernity (a trend with which neither Ortiz nor the Caribbean has ever been related before the publication of *The Repeating Island*). The book thus became a way to analyze the region without falling into the judgmental and "strictly Western" perspectives of scholars who were acting like Columbus's heirs at the time of the 500th anniversary of his arrival in the Antilles (Benítez-Rojo 1989, p.158).

Benítez-Rojo used postmodern perspectives to rescue Ortiz from the modernist shelf where Cultural Studies had forgotten him. He had in mind that any commemorative discourse about the Caribbean in the 1990s would, at least, have to take into account transculturation as a mode for reading the cultural memory of the region. Benítez-Rojo paid attention to the structure and style of Ortiz's text, where he saw deconstructionist and postmodern traits; likewise, he carefully chose to place the chapter in homage to the *Cuban Counterpoint* at the epicenter of his book, following a postmodern meta-literary style: this chapter (on Ortiz) provides the reader with implicit guidance for reading *The Repeating Island*. Clearly, the relationship between the essay and Ortiz's *Cuban Counterpoint* is that of an analogy: in the same way that transculturation was the keystone of Ortiz's text, defined by Benítez-Rojo as a "chaotic and materially unrepresentable archive" (Benítez-Rojo 1989, p.157), Benítez-Rojo used a postmodern reading of transculturation to examine the central notion of his own text, coined as "the feed-back machine" of Caribbeanness, which he proposed as a metaphor to relate cultural memory, rituals of remembrance, and catharsis in the Caribbean.

The Feedback Machine: Cultural Rituals of Memory in the Caribbean

The image of the feedback machine is Benítez-Rojo's most powerful suggestion, resulting from his postmodern take on transculturation. It is a direct extrapolation of Ortiz's theory, emptied of its positivist content and reformatted as a postmodern textual device. Let us examine how this shift happened.

In the introduction to *The Repeating Island*, the author provides us with a chronological survey of the history of violence that has characterized the

Caribbean since Columbus. He uses the extended metaphor of machines, ranging from the *máquina-flota* (fleet machine) to the *máquina-plantación* (plantation machine), and their multiple variations in chronological order, the Columbus's, Cortés's, and Menéndez de Avilés's machines.[3] With striking images of rape, insemination, and painful delivery with forceps, we are told how the Caribbean Sea gave birth to the Atlantic Ocean, standing for the navel of capitalism. Recalling Ortiz's personification of Tobacco and Sugar in the *Cuban Counterpoint*, *mar Caribe* (Caribbean Sea) and *Atlántico* (Atlantic) are the personified protagonists of the foundational myth telling the origins of the Caribbean, but also of the world system as it began with Columbus's arrival in the Antilles. The following extract tells the story of the traumatic birth of the Caribbean:

> El Atlántico es hoy es Atlántico porque Europa en su laboratorio mercantilista, concibió el proyecto de inseminar la matriz caribeña con la sangre de África [. . .]; toda Europa tirando los ganchos para ayudar al parto del Atlántico: Colón, Cabral, Cortés, Soto, Hawkins, Drake, Hein, Surcouf . . . Después del flujo de sangre y de agua salada, enseguida coser los colgados y aplicar la tintura aséptica de la historia, la gasa y el esparadrapo de las ideologías positivistas; entonces las espera febril por la cicatriz; supuración, siempre la supuración / Let's be realistic: the Atlantic is the Atlantic because Europe, in its mercantilistic laboratory, conceived the project of inseminating the Caribbean womb with the blood of Africa [. . .]; all Europe pulling on the forceps to help at the birth of the Atlantic: Columbus, Cabral, Cortés, Soto, Hawkins, Drake, Hein, Rodney, Surcouf . . . After the blood and salt water spurts, quickly sew up torn flesh and apply the antiseptic tintures, the gauza and surgical plaster; then the febrile wait through the forming of a scar: suppuration, always suppurating.
>
> (Benítez-Rojo 1989, p.7)

Besides the Ortizian, epic, mythological, and metaphorical style of this passage, and the criticism of the discourses of modernity that it contains—both signs of Benítez-Rojo's position as a postmodern follower of Ortiz—I want to draw attention to the image of a suppurating wound, related to the idea of an unresolved trauma, which is very useful to understand the mechanics of Benítez-Rojo's *anamnesis*. This image announces the metaphor of the Caribbean as a feedback machine conjuring violence, which is densely developed in the second part of the introduction to the essay: the feedback machine is a very specific machine, that does not deny but process the wound, a machine quite different from the European machines put together for colonial exploitation that the author enumerated in his historical survey of the Caribbean Atlantic. The *Máquina Caribe* is a machine that processes the pain and turns it into something culturally meaningful, a machine that recycles

the violence (also called apocalypse by the author) thanks to ancestral and heterogeneous beliefs, religious practices, and syncretical rituals produced by traditional Caribbean cultures.

The author invites us to understand the fleet-machine and the plantation-machine as a succession of machines, put together one after the other, in the vein of Deleuze and Guattari's theory; that is to say, it is a machine made out of successive machines, each one interrupting the flow of the previous one. Benítez-Rojo borrowed the term "machine" to Deleuze and Guattari, who had exposed their views on the subject as a machine of desire in the age of capitalism in their 1972 text, *Anti-Oedipus*. More specifically, what Benítez-Rojo extrapolates and transfers from the French philosophers to the field of Caribbean Studies is the notion that interruption is part of the mechanics of the machine of desire, also a machine of power over subjectivity, described in corporal terms. What Deleuze and Guattari called *hyle* (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983), the Greek word for flow, Benítez-Rojo rephrased it with the stuttering neologism *la máquina la máquina la máquina*. With this, he meant that in terms of production, Columbus, Cortés, and Menéndez de Avilés's machines were first machines of flow and then of interruption. On the other hand, the *Máquina Caribe* is a feedback machine that creates both flow and interruption of that flow, with a creative back-and-forth movement. Its rhythm is irregular and unpredictable, as it was invented by *los Pueblos del Mar* (the Peoples of the Sea) through the mimesis of natural and environmental rhythms (hurricanes, sea waves, mangroves). "The People of the Sea" is again an all-encompassing term that allows the writer to talk about the Caribbean as a united region, of which the centers are multiple and within which limits are expandable. The feedback rhythm of this machine is analyzed through a series of comparison with Taíno-Afro-Caribbean religious and musical syncretisms, exactly as the transculturation of tobacco was analyzed by Ortiz.

The feedback machine recycles the traumas of the past with a set of ritual practices, called the free-play of performance, coming from traditional, heterogeneous, racial, and cultural memories from Africa, India, and China, to name the major ethnic groups that came to the Caribbean and modified colonial and European cultures. It is the postmodern grandchild of Ortiz's notion of transculturation, intended as a means to examine the positive process of cultural creativity born out of the traumas of colonization and slavery in the Caribbean. Benítez-Rojo is actually quite clear about the optimistic tone he wants to convey, attacking the pessimistic perspective on cultural consumerism of someone like Adorno, and celebrating cultural syncretism as an ongoing process of adaptation and creativity in the Caribbean (Benítez-Rojo 1989, p.26).[4] *The Repeating Island* wanted to reverse the negative vision of the Caribbean into a positive one, as Ortiz's theory of transculturation did

in his time. We could define the essay as a theoretical feedback machine, processing the negative and disparaging stereotypes frequently associated with the Caribbean in the rest of the world, such as fragmentation, instability, isolation, cultural complexity, scattered historiography, contingency, and nonpermanence (Benítez-Rojo 1989, p.2). All those notions were the focus of postmodern theories, and it is no surprise that Benítez-Rojo chose to merge them with transculturation in 1989.

The analogy between the text and the feedback machine at the heart of the text is evident in the very literary style of the essay. It is a creative performance and, in and of itself, a text that commemorates, with back-and-forth movements from theory to literary analysis, the writer's national heritage (four of eight chapters focus on the Cuban writers, namely Guillén, Ortiz, and Carpentier) as well as Benítez Rojo's Caribbean identity. It is a very personal essay where the author allows himself to remember his cultural identity positively and to recover his Cubanness in the United States, at a time when exiled Cubans were seen as *gusanos* (that is, "worms") and *persona non grata* in Cuba. The remembrance and celebration of Benítez Rojo's Caribbean identity are at the heart of his writing: "my Caribbean nature [. . .] inclines me irremediably toward the heterogeneous and the polyrythmic" (Benítez-Rojo 1998, p.10).

The author believes that the rhythmical feedback patterns of Caribbean cultural and literary works are inherited from Taíno and African heritage, and from plantation cultures; they characterize the entire Caribbean region and are not related to the colonial languages, Spanish, English, French, Dutch, or Creole. Rhythm is for Benítez-Rojo essential to Caribbean writers, and was inherited directly from the history of slavery and the African cultural origins of the slaves (Benítez-Rojo 2002, p.13). I will not rehearse criticisms of this essentialist view here, since there are many already existing (De la Campa 1997, p.100). Rather, my point is to clarify that regarding the rhythm of Benítez Rojo's style in *The Repeating Island*, the very characteristics that qualify it as a deconstructionist and postmodern essay (such as its heterogeneity, fragmentation, metaphorical resonances, and rhythmical shifts) are the result of the author's very personal reading of postmodern narratives in the literary sense of the term, those narratives that he identified in his own rereading of Ortiz's *Cuban Counterpoint*. The postmodernist dimension of *The Repeating Island*, which makes the text akin to a feedback machine for its reader, has in fact much more to do with the autobiographical dimensions of the essay. Benítez-Rojo wanted to participate in the commemoration of Caribbean cultures by expressing his own feelings on Caribbeanness; the latter happened to share common features with what he considered representative of postmodern literary and textual features in the late 1980s, and he merged his own desire to remember the Caribbeanness he carried within himself, as an exiled Cuban

citizen in the United States, and his intellectual desire to theorize Caribbeanness in a new and positive global approach to the region from the standpoint of American academia.

Postmodern theories were a pretext for the author of *The Repeating Island* to propose an all-encompassing and geo-historical reading of the Caribbean, expanded to include Florida and the South American coasts, and to examine it as a transnational, transatlantic, and drifting archipelago, therefore beyond island-based geographical definitions, and particularly beyond the limiting definition of Cubanness espoused by the revolution.[5] His point was not to contribute to postmodern theories, but to contribute to Caribbean Studies. Clearly, reading the Caribbean as postmodern did not mean for Benítez-Rojo applying Lyotard to cultural productions of the region, but quite the other way round; what the author had in mind was that if Lyotard had been Caribbean or had known the Caribbean, he would have written *The Postmodern Condition* long before he actually did.[6] One obvious proof is that Benítez-Rojo applied his favorite environmental vocabulary (drifts, turbulences, archipelagos, rhythms, and sounds), a recurrent lexicon for describing the Caribbean and its cultural heterogeneity, to postmodernity and precisely to describe the multiple, fragmented, and relative meaning of truth in postmodern views (Benítez-Rojo 1989, p.151).

Benítez-Rojo's postmodern reading of the Caribbean relocated the Caribbean at the center of the theories of cultural memory of the time, allowing for a fruitful commemoration of the region in the 1990s, and nudging European theoreticians of postmodernity who totally ignored the region (Benítez-Rojo 1989, p.151).

In 1989, *The Repeating Island* was like Socrates's question to the young boy in *Meno*: first, an attempt to help first-world scholarship remember the Caribbean as a forgotten territory, in need for a fresh and Caribbean-oriented recovery. As such, Benítez-Rojo orchestrated the souvenir of a primary scenario of violence (the machines) that would allow for a better understanding of the world system as it was in the last decade of the twentieth century. Second, the *anamnesis* was clearly addressed to Cuba, since collective memory on the island tend to focus exclusively on the epic of the revolution; any and every predating struggle, such as the wars and rebellions for national independence, was used to commemorate the national myth and retold as a precursor episode announcing the necessary and predictable victory of 1959. At a time of crucial change in the world system in 1989, Benítez-Rojo was pointing to the limitations of Cuba's collective and official memory, oblivious of acknowledging when it came to acknowledging its non-Cuban Caribbean past. The latter was a story that started with the People of the Sea, before Columbus, and has since continuously impacted on and transformed Caribbeanness as

an attitude of resistance and adaptation, flow and interruption, remembrance and oblivion. *The Repeating Island* was intended to recover and remember the elements of this foundational and primary myth, still visible in Cuban body language, music, food, languages, and religious practices, but erased from the history books and from the historical discourse of the island.

Chaos and Predictable Random Motion

In *The Repeating Island*, the author merged theories of postmodernity with scientific theories of chaos. The latter allowed him to highlight new ways of approaching Caribbean memory and Caribbeanness as ritualized and performative scenarios of remembrance. What caught Benítez Rojo's interest in chaos theory was that this new scientific theory at the time was meant "to observe dynamic states or regularities that repeat themselves globally" (Benítez-Rojo 1989, p.3). In other words, it dealt with repetitions in the broadest sense of the term. Chaos theory, applicable to many disciplines from the sciences to the humanities, represented for Benítez-Rojo a set of new devices to approach the relationship between randomness and necessity, and between the particular and the universal, at the philosophical level. He examined chaos theory in the very large sense, as another all-encompassing perspective to theorize irregular but recurrent rhythms, complementarily to postmodern theory, and in resonance with the image of the feedback machine:

> Chaos looks towards everything that repeats, reproduces, grows, decays, unfolds, flows, spins, vibrates, seethes; it is as interested in the evolution of the solar system as in the stock market's crashes, as involved in cardiac arrhythmia as in the novel or the myth. Thus Chaos provides a space in which the pure sciences connect with the social sciences, and both of them connect with art and the cultural tradition.
>
> (Benítez-Rojo 1989, p.4)

A repetition bares the memory of a past scenario. More interestingly, the repetitions analyzed by chaotic, predictable, random motion are paradoxical, captured in the oxymoron "predictable random." The way those repetitions happen cannot be predicted. Chaos theory examines a system of repeated motions, in time and space, of which the variations cannot be exactly foreseen, or defined in advance; knowing that a motion will surely happen does not change the fact that we cannot know exactly when and where it will occur. With predictable random motion, also called chaotic motion, short-term patterns of repetitions are predictable, but the knowledge of the future in the longer term is extremely limited, if not impossible: "Random chaotic motion

is predicted by the same laws of dynamics that were developed to explain regular motion. Chaotic systems are so sensitive to perturbations that predicting a real world trajectory over an extended time is practically impossible, even if the equation of motion is known exactly" (Kautz 2011, p.13).

This was of interest for Benítez-Rojo. After Castrism had disappointed him,[7] chaos theory, like postmodern literary approaches, allowed him to rethink Caribbean history as a series of multiple truths, against the monolithic myth of the Cuban revolution. *The Repeating Island* proposed a non-prophetical historical reading of Caribbeanness, in which the repetitions of the primary scenario of violence, the plantation machines, common to the whole region, were unpredictable and chaotic repetitions of a primary scene. This was in direct conflict with historical materialism.

As in Alejo Carpentier's rewritings of the Trojan War, the First and Second World Wars, and the French, Haitian, Russian, Mexican, and Cuban Revolutions, in literary works like *El reino de este mundo*, *Guerra del tiempo*, *El Siglo de las Luces* and *La consagración de la primavera*,[8] the revolutions in Marxist history are historical repetitions, following *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*: "Proletarian revolutions, such as those of the nineteenth century, criticise themselves constantly; constantly interrupt themselves in their own course; come back to what seems to have been accomplished, in order to start over anew" (Marx 2001, p.14).

This quotation resonates with Benítez-Rojo's description of the successive machines in the Caribbean. In a dichotomy similar to the one with which he differentiated first the machines of flow and then of interruption (*la maquina la maquina la maquina*) from the feedback machine (*la maquina Caribe*), chaos theory, applied to Caribbean history, presented heterogeneity as a positive process moving toward cultural catharsis and based on unpredictable modes of reproduction, where the flow, and the interruption of the flow, coexisted. This view allowed Benítez-Rojo to stand against any attempt to foresee and decide the future and against the temptation to format new generations of Caribbean men and women, as the utopian discourse of the *Hombre Nuevo* did in Cuba. In *The Repeating Island*, history is chaotic and, as such, it is not told with a linear and dialectic progression toward a goal, whether we have in mind the imperialist imposition of an idea of civilization by colonial empires, or socialist classless society; history is based on flows and interrupted flows of memory—remembrance and oblivion together—working to generate catharsis.

Chaos theory therefore represented a philosophical attitude and an intellectual posture, in which knowledge of the past facilitated disorganized and metaphorical readings of connections, echoes, and silences in Caribbean historiography, instead of being reorganized to fit in the requirements of a

monolithic ideological truth and without teaching any lesson other than that of facilitating historical remembrance. Exactly as postmodern theories provided the author with strategies of narration, chaos theory was a method for highlighting meaningfully the unpredictable, paradoxical, and incoherent episodes of violence that recurrently carved the monument of Caribbean history. As such, chaos theory proposed a new way to commemorate Caribbean history through a perspective that was largely interdisciplinary and viewed across the *longue durée*, including multiple and heterogeneous topics such as nature and the environment, culture and literature, music and mathematics, and the geo-historical connections between archipelagos that do not share the same colonial language:

> The Caribbean is [. . .] a culture of the meta-archipelago: a chaos that returns, a detour without a purpose, a continual flow of paradoxes; it is a feed-back machine with asymmetrical workings, like the sea, the wind, the clouds, the uncanny novel, the food chain, the music of Malaya, Gödel's theorem and fractal mathematics.
>
> (Benítez-Rojo 1989, p 14)

Chaos theory facilitated the recovery of a forgotten and primary scenario of violence, since each random repetition was retold in a different, unpredictable, new manner. The capitalization and personification of "Chaos" in the introduction to the essay echoes once again Ortiz, this time his study of the divinity *Huracán*/Hurricane (see Chapter 1). The power of chaos for Benítez-Rojo was primarily that it helped to break into pieces the linear, damaging projects invented by modernity, such as the exploitative regimes that had started with Columbus (De la Campa 1997, p.99).

Benítez-Rojo considered modernity to be the point from which different kinds of violence were imposed on the Caribbean either for profit, in the name of a eurocentered conception of progress, or for establishing national canons on the island, as praised in Cuba by Ortiz, Guillén, and Carpentier in their literary works. In contrast, Benítez-Rojo's chaotic approach reduced those modern episodes to moments within a much longer *durée*, small fractions of a 500-year-long period that started with Columbus's arrival. The study of chaotic random motion allowed him to justify theoretically the fragmentation of the *grand récits* of modernity into *microrécits*, and at the same time to propose a pan-Caribbean reading of the region, as in *The Sea of Lentils*, published just before he left Cuba, the volume that I discuss in the next part of this chapter.

For all those reasons, I believe that chaos theory facilitated Benítez-Rojo's construction of an *anamnesis* of Caribbean heritage. Repetitions, interruptions,

and unpredictability are part of the cognitive mechanism of anamnesis, whether Platonic, religious, or medical, as I examined in the introduction of this book. In the essay, the Plantation is proposed as the primary scenario to be recovered, a foundational element already known but undesirable because painful and shameful, always present but unconsciously so, in the many cultural performances in the Caribbean (in literature, music, and social life, since it has a specific rhythmical pattern). Capitalized in the text, the Plantation refers as much to the sugar plantations and to the system of slavery first introduced by Columbus in the Caribbean, as to the mechanisms of cultural heterogeneity and polyrhythmical behaviors employed in Caribbean modes of narration—be they oral, physical, or written—to resist violence. Chapter 1, fully dedicated to analyzing the passing *de la plantación a la Plantación* (from the object-plantation to the concept-plantation) shows that the multiple cultural productions in the Caribbean were born out of the Creolization and Africanization of Cuban society in response to the successive mechanisms of violence.

Since the memory of the plantation exists in latent form all across the Caribbean, Caribbeanness, in Benítez-Rojo's view, becomes a form of perpetual commemoration of the past, by which he means, a continuous and at the same time interrupted, repetition of the plantation. Chaotic random motion thus offered a discourse, a perspective, and a storyboard upon which those repetitions are represented, that are constantly in motion and worth remembering.

Columbus in *The Sea of Lentils*: The Subliminal Memory of Violence

Benítez-Rojo's historical fiction tends to present Caribbean history as a storyboard of visual vignettes (the text is very visually descriptive) that do not always follow the chronological order of traditional historiography.[9] In *The Sea of Lentils* (1979) and *A View from the Mangrove* (1998),[10] episodes of the past are carefully chosen as worthy of remembrance for they were moments when the desire to conquer and to possess justified massacre, enslavement, rape, and all forms of exploitation and dehumanization in the Caribbean archipelagos. The main plots are fragmented into short sequences, and displayed following a chaotic order, apparently at random, which engages the reader in reassembling and connecting them to each other, as parts of the machines of violence that characterize the region.

This *bricolage* uses a series of visual narrative techniques meant to trigger the reader's desire for remembrance, facilitated by the emotional impact of the storytelling: we find some close-ups on well- and lesser-known historical figures, such as Philip II of Spain, Cristobal de Ponte, Isabel Tudor, or John

Hawkins. These alternate with long descriptive episodes, in the manner of travelling shots, that tell the arrival in the Antilles in 1492, the enslavement of the Taínos, the Haitian Revolution, or the Spanish-American war in Cuba,[11] from the subjective perspective of an anonymous and fictional character, such as a soldier who travelled to the New World with Columbus, or a Cuban *mambi* in the 1898 Spanish-American war. The internal focalization, often with a shift to the present tense while the rest of the text is written in the past, and mostly in the archaic form of the Spanish past tense in *The Sea of Lentils*, expresses the emotions of the protagonists powerfully, in a style akin to the dolly shot in cinema. These visual effects leave the reader shocked and stimulated by the memory of a scenario of violence, not initially visible, but recognizable as part of a preconscious and emotional knowledge of history. This is what I will call subliminal memory.

In the novel *El mar de las lentejas* (The Sea of Lentils), Columbus is presented as a *déjà vu* of violence, present, even when absent, as the subliminal image recalling an already known scenario. The novel tells four stories, set at different historical periods from the end of the fifteenth century to the dawn of the seventeenth century, adopting a fragmentary style that forces the reader to switch from one period to another across the 28 chapters of the book. Columbus, called *el Almirante* in the novel, is a secondary character in only one of the stories, but he is a shadowy figure in all the others, as if the many elements that marked his arrival and conquest of the New World had been repeated in time.

The four plots are as follows. One, the last days of an agonizing Philip II in *El Escorial* and his chaotic memories of the conquest and evangelization of the New World since the abdication of his father Charles V. Two, the life of a soldier named Antón Babtista in Hispaniola among the Taínos, after he came with Columbus on his second trip, until his death and the decadence of the Navidad settlement. Three, the massacre of the French protestant colony in Saint Augustine, because of the Catholic fanaticism of Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, *el Adelantado* who conquered Florida for the Spanish Crown. And four, the birth and growth of the triangular slave trade, described through the transactions of the Ponte Family, Genovese merchants based on the Canary Islands, and the English privateer John Hawkins, in the second half of the sixteenth century.

The Sea of Lentils is an earlier, fictionalized version of *The Repeating Island*, telling the story of the birth of the Atlantic from the rape of the Caribbean Sea by Europe. The novel portrays the European machines that successively exploited the Caribbean, from their glorious days to their decay, one machine replacing the previous one, following the pattern of flow and interruption analyzed by the author with the very striking phrase *la maquina la maquina*

la maquina in the 1989 essay. Those machines of Spanish and English colonial violence share common features—conquest and exploitation, profit and greed, desire and power—and common topics—the enslavement of the local population, the catholic evangelization, the search for gold, the establishment of the sugar plantation, and the African slave trade. Each machine is embodied by a historical character, a Spanish adventurer or an English privateer, who are, in one way or the other, duplicates of *el Almirante*.

Indeed, Columbus is part of the mechanics of violence that is also the heritage of the Caribbean. He is a key character of the *récit de fondation* of the Atlantic, first and foremost, because he invented and assembled the first machine of violence in the Caribbean, which Benítez-Rojo described as a medieval vacuum cleaner sucking up the resources of the islands:

> The machine that Christopher Columbus hammered into shape in Hispaniola was a kind of *bricolage*, something like a medieval vacuum cleaner. The flow of Nature in the island was interrupted by the suction of an iron mouth, taken thence through a transatlantic tube to be deposited and redistributed in Spain.
>
> (Benítez-Rojo 1989, p.6)

Columbus represents a primary historical scenario of desire, power, and violence that eventually repeated itself for 500 years in the Caribbean. He is a relevant fragment of the chaotic random motion of Caribbean history, and the already-known-but-forgotten element to be recovered thanks to fictional *anamnesis*, sustained by the visual style mentioned above. In *The Sea of Lentils*, Columbus is present, little-involved but constantly relevant, a secondary character who is given little speech but is in fact an essential part of the book, and so of Caribbean history. He appears in one of the story lines—the story of Antón Babtista—set during the 1493 expedition. The latter was crucial to the foundation of the Atlantic: of the four voyages to the Antilles, the second one was when Columbus imported sugarcane from the Canary islands to the Caribbean; on his return from this journey, he brought some seeds of tobacco to Spain, as noted by Fernando Ortiz (Ortiz 1963, p.49). Benítez-Rojo chose to fictionalize Columbus at this foundational moment of transatlantic history, at the crossroads of tobacco and sugar, proving once again that transculturation was crucial for a true understanding of cultural memory in the region.

The story of the 1493 voyage is seen and told through the eyes, actions, and feelings of an anonymous soldier, while Christopher Columbus remains for the most part in the background. But when he does appear in the diegesis, whether in short dialogues, portraits, through direct speech, or in

body language, he is characterized by attitudes, words, feelings, and actions that are echoed and repeated in the other plots by means of thematic connections. The elements of the Columbus Machine—transatlantic crossing, gold seeking, settlement, and enslavement—and the emotions that accompanied them—arrogance, ambition, delusion, and fanaticism—find themselves metaphorically repeated at a later period by the other soldiers, discoverers, pirates, and colonizers in the novel. Benítez-Rojo creates the illusion of Columbus like a watermark on paper, scarcely visible yet the repetitive backdrop for later episodes of violence, for which he provided a primary template even though he was then dead.

In the case of the Ponte/Hawkins story, their trading agreement is an expanded version of Columbus's mercantilist machine. The two men, Pedro Ponte and John Hawkins, born decades after Columbus's death, are sons of men who were Columbus's contemporaries. Ponte's father, Don Cristobal, shares the same first name, social background, and nationality (Genovese and discretely signaled as a Jew)[12]; above all, he made profit in Tenerife out of the first sugar plantations and African slaves, the early sugar mills intensively studied by Ortiz in his *Cuban Counterpoint*, and the focal point of the Plantation machine in *The Repeating Island*.

The story of the Ponte family in Tenerife, at a moment when the archipelago started to be known as the sugar islands, repeats the story of the sugar plantation, an important element of Columbus's exploitation of the New World to the extent that one of the themes of the anti-commemorative discourses in Latin America and the Caribbean in 1992 was that Columbus was guilty of establishing slavery in the New World. In parallel, history remembers John Hawkins for his participation in the triangular transatlantic commerce of men and merchandize, and as the one who imported tobacco to England. The repetition of a primary Columbus-related scenario becomes obvious. The story of the commercial contract and relationship between Pedro Ponte, the Canarian *criollo*, and Hawkins, the English commander, is the story of the transatlantic exchange of sugar and tobacco, involving not only the Spanish but also the English Empire. The two men embody and expand the image of Columbus with sugar in one hand and tobacco in the other, in Ortiz's scenario of transculturation, whose influence was crucial for Benítez-Rojo, as we saw in the first part of this chapter. John Hawkins appears in the novel as a sort of English Columbus of the sixteenth century, who had to persuade the members of the Guinea Club that his project was worth the risk, just as Columbus had to beg from court to court until the Spanish crown agreed to finance his dream a century before. Besides, the visual representation of Pedro Ponte and John Hawkins in postures recalling Columbus facilitates the reader's historical anamnesis: we are invited to

remember Columbus, behind the other men who followed his path, as if he was underneath in the story from which he is absent. Both men are described at different moments of the novel through visual close-ups as they are gazing at the ocean, either from the tower of a castle or the afterdeck of a ship. Ponte appears from the open window of his room, in Tenerife, one hand on the map of the Caribbean drawn by the French cosmographer Guillaume Le Testu, entitled *La Mer de L'entille*, an old French name for the Antillean Sea, whose literal translation in Spanish is *El Mar de las lentejas*, referenced in the title of the novel. Ponte is described as totally immobile, as a statue or a frozen image:

> Sin parpadear, con la frente enarcada con un parcimonio asombro, don Pedro atravesaba con su dedo, de derecha a izquierda, la lenta porción que separaba las costas de Guinea de aquello que el cosmógrafo llamaba en su carta *La Mer de Lentille* / Unblinking his brow arched tightly in amazement, Don Pedro slid his finger right to left across the quiet stretch of ocean that separated Guinea coasts from what the cosmographer on his chart was calling *La Mer de Lentille*.
>
> (Benítez-Rojo 1979, p.193, and 1990, p.187)

This vignette is not only a *mise en abyme* of the whole novel, but of Columbus himself. Indeed, in Havana, the statues of Columbus erected in the nineteenth century, now in Cardenas and in the city museum of Havana, represent him holding the globe in one hand and pointing at it with the other (Gutiérrez Viñuales 2004).[13] Benítez-Rojo certainly had them in mind while portraying the European discoverers of the Caribbean Sea. Interestingly, Columbus appeared in a similar posture earlier in the novel, pointing at a map of the Caribbean:

> La Isabela ha de ser para aquestas tierras lo que fue Roma para Europa—continuo el Almirante, poniendo su dedo en el centro del pergamino / Isabela will become to these dominions all that Rome has been to Europe—the Admiral continued, placing his finger in the center of the parchment.
>
> (Benítez-Rojo 1979, p.89, and 1990, p.85)

As a brief moment in the novel, no more than half a sentence in Chapter XVI, the memory of Columbus is awakened by the longer description of Ponte in Chapter XVIII.

In the same vein, the description of Hawkins is particularly meaningful; gazing at the coast while approaching Tenerife, he is an echo of Columbus in the sense that he resonates with Brathwaite's verse portraying "Columbus from his afterdeck" in *The Arrivants* (see Chapter 2), which Benítez-Rojo

reviewed for the Cuban journal *Casa de las Americas* four years before the publication of *The Sea of Lentils*:[14]

> John Hawkins, el hijo segundo de William Hawkins, esta ahí, reclinado a la borda del *Peter*, contemplando en el horizonte la roca del Teide; esta ahí preguntándose si, ya concluida la guerra con Francia, será posible reanudar en firme el comercio con Tenerife [. . .] porque hay que tener en cuenta que en Inglaterra reina Isabel, una Isabel que cada día parece mas herética / And now here is John Hawkins, William Hawkins's second son, leaning out over the Peter's rail to contemplate the Teide's grey-brown rock on the horizon, here he is, asking himself if, the war with France having ended, there might be a definitive resumption of the trade with Tenerife [. . .] for let's not forget that in England now Elisabeth, who every day seems more heretical.
>
> (Benítez-Rojo 1979, p.113, and 1990, p.108)

Besides the intertextuality between Benítez-Rojo's Hawkins and Brathwaite's Columbus, another and more obvious echo is the conflation by Hawkins of Queen Elizabeth of England with Isabel la Católica, who had favored Columbus and with whom he allegedly had a romantic affair. Benítez-Rojo is playing with elements of the myth and with what his reader's general knowledge about Columbus. Thanks to these visual chaotic resonances, Ponte and Hawkins become Columbus's heirs in the novel, not by traditional lineage, but through the repetitions of the random and unpredictable motion of Caribbean history, where one element of the old machine is recycled into a new part of the next machine, reproducing violence in a new form. In the two other plots—King Philip's conquest of the New World until the defeat of the Spanish Armada by England, and Pedro Ménendez de Avilés's conquest of Florida after the massacre of the French protestant colony of Saint Augustine—Columbus-related scenarios of violence are also repeated.

Delusion is a characteristic element of Columbus's actions in the New World. The rare moments when the character speaks in the novel, either in direct or in free indirect speech, portray him as possessed of the belief of the rightness of his mission, convinced (falsely) that he had found the land of the Gran Khan of India and that he will bring rich and exotic new resources to the Spanish Kingdom. The yellow complexion of his skin, the long shape of his face, and the light in his eyes, seen from Antón's perspective, give a sense of the delusion that inhabits Columbus, whose words, "calm and persuasive, went on fabricating dreams that took flight like big auspicious birds" (Benítez-Rojo 1990, p.122). When Antón comes back desperate to *el Almirante* because he has not found any gold, the latter comforts him and repeats again the same story, trying to

persuade everyone including himself that there is indeed plenty of gold: "Minas riquísimas, abundantísimas; minas como desean los Reyes, como deseo yo, como desean los hombres que han venido conmigo / The richest, most abundant mines; mines to suit a king's desire, my desire, and the desires of the men who came here with me" (Benítez-Rojo 1979, p.89, and 1990, p.84).

Columbus's delusional convictions take the shape of Catholic expansionism in the story Philip II of Spain, self-congratulating himself before his confessor that violence served to evangelize the savages on the New World (Benítez-Rojo 1979, p.41, and 1990, p.35). In the times of Columbus, the most damageable consequence of delusion was the violence toward the local indigenous population. Often in the novel, the Indians of Hispaniola don't have any other choice to resist violence than to sabotage Columbus's machine by committing suicide. The Taínos are nothing but trophies for the Spanish Majesties, enslaved, humiliated, and killed anytime necessary. Exactly the same attitude characterized Menéndez's arrival in Florida, but this time, the delusion becomes religious fanaticism: "Los herejes han de morir todos, que ése y no otro es su destino / I must kill all the heretics that you have with you" (Benítez-Rojo 1979, p.173, and 1990, p.167). While the Indians waved at the caravels from the shore, the Spanish conquerors landed ready to submit them, with the cross held high, and singing the *Te Deum* (Benítez-Rojo 1979, p.50, and 1990, p.44). Eventually, the slaughter of the Protestant colony established by Jean Ribault in Saint Augustine will be as violent as the treatment inflicted by Columbus to the Indians. The description of the merciless violence toward peaceful peasants, women, and children, as defenseless as the Indians were, repeats the machine of Columbus but this time in the context of the Counter-Reform and of European religious wars transported to the Caribbean:

> Salían a medio vestir, en camisa, y algunos sostenían flojamente la espada, sin mas valor en el semblante que las mujeres, quienes corrían chillando por la plaza y por las galerías, de un rincón a otro, con los brazos alzados o llenos de niños, casi todas descalzas y desgreñadas. Los hombres murieron como puercos, muchos bajo sus catres y mesas, en cueros, otros despatarrados en el barro de las cuadras, entre chacotas y relinchos. / They came half-dressed, in their shirtsleeves, and some of them brandished their swords weakly, without showing any more martial aspect tan their women, who ran shrieking through the plaza and the galleries, from one corner to another; their arms upraised or filled with children, almost all disheveled and barefoot. The men died like pigs, many still naked underneath their tables and cots, others spread-eagled in the stable's mud amid taunts and whinnies.
>
> (Benítez-Rojo 1979, p.69, and 1990, p.64)

Repetition-with-variation is a common trait of the Latin American new historical novel, a genre with which *The Sea of Lentils* can be said to share many features, if we follow Seymour Menton's six criteria (Menton 1992): the depiction of a historical period for a philosophical purpose; the distortion of history through omissions, anachronisms, and overlaps; the use of real historical characters; metafiction and the author's comments on his own creation; intertextuality, in reference or in parody of another text; and the palimpsest, since for Menton the New Historical Novel is often a rewriting of another text.

Space considerations do not permit me here to detail the extent to which *The Sea of Lentils* fits this model, although it clearly does in many ways. Since the Latin American new historical novel has exploited to a great extent the topic of the Discovery and, more precisely, the character of Columbus, to contest the 1992 commemorations in Latin America,[15] we should perhaps ask why Benítez-Rojo chose such a fictional treatment of Columbus in 1979, and also examine the commemorative density of the novel, above and beyond any commemorative command.

As critic John Updike noted, *The Sea of Lentils*, of which the 1990 English translation was selected by the *New York Times* as one of the notable books of the quincentenary, showed *avant la lettre* the absurdity of celebrating Columbus's arrival in the Antilles (Updike 2002, p.32). Predating the huge number of publications triggered by the quincentennial celebrations (Block 1994), Benítez-Rojo's novel was a reflection on memory and commemoration in the Caribbean that proved wrong the hypocritical and consensual celebrations of the "Encounter of the two worlds" before they were even launched in Spain in 1981. As such, the novel is based on the stimulation of historical awareness. Its *in medias res* and non-chronological unfolding demands the reader's patience and participation in order to forge crisscrossing interpretations and connections while reading the text. This back-and-forth effort of reading, recalling the motion of a feedback machine of memory, is part of a process of cognitive anamnesis, which invites us to go through the historical screen of oblivion that encapsulates the past in a set of facts and a body of evidence. The latter, sustained by partial and official historiographies, creates the comfortable illusion that the past is linear and, therefore, that violence does not belong to the present; on the contrary, *The Sea of Lentils* fictionalizes the past as fragments and echoes, which need to be related to each other in order to be recovered and fully understood, a symptom of the continuous random motion of violence that is a permanent threat in and for the Caribbean. In Benítez-Rojo's view, historical remembrance means historical awareness, and the commemoration of the past enables us to have clearer views on the present issues in the region.

The need and importance of celebrating Caribbean heritage, in the margin of European hagiographic and political orchestrations (as the official 1992 celebrations were all over the world), has been part of Benítez-Rojo's work for a long time and his entire writing career was oriented toward the construction of a system of cultural memory from the specific perspective of a Cuban writer in exile after 1980. *The Sea of Lentils* was published in 1979, when he was director of the newly founded Centre for Caribbean Studies at the prestigious *Casa de las Américas*, coinciding with the year of the 20th Anniversary of the Triumph of the revolution. The novel addressed in many ways the meaning and importance of commemorating Caribbean history in Cuba, but without following the *oficialista* line of his contemporary compatriot Alejo Carpentier. Considered the inventor of the Latin American New Historical Novel by Seymour Menton, Carpentier published in the exact same year a Columbus novel, *El arpa y la sombra* (The Harp and the Shadow). The two writers had very different approaches on Caribbean memory, but these were embodied in contrasting fictionalization of Columbus.

Carpentier's last novel is the only one of his works exclusively to focus on a single historical character. *The Harp and the Shadow* rehabilitated Columbus in universal history through a process of demystification, climaxing in the third part of the novel: during his trial, a powerless Columbus witnesses, as a ghost, the debates between those who want to sanctify him and those who accuse him of mischief and diabolic actions. Interestingly, Carpentier's imagination foresaw the real trials that were going to happen two decades later in the Caribbean at the time of the quincentennial, as happened too in Martinique and in Dominica where Columbus was trialed in 1994 (see Chapter 7). Besides this anachronistic coincidence, Carpentier was very conscious of the interest that his novel would represent from a quincentennial commemorative perspective[16]: on April 4, 1978, he travelled to Spain to receive the Miguel de Cervantes literary prize in Alcala de Henares. A month before, on March 7, 1978, the Centro Iberoamericano de Cooperación (CIC) had been launched in Madrid, as a result of the wish of the Ministry of External Affairs, since 1977, to develop cooperation between Spain and Latin American countries (González Calleja 2002). While he was writing *The Harp and the Shadow*, Carpentier was fully aware that Spain had started to work toward new economic and cultural connections with Latin America, and among them, the project of celebrating the Discovery of the New World that was going to facilitate a series of publications of all kinds.

It was certainly not mere coincidence that Benítez-Rojo made completely opposite stylistic choices in *The Sea of Lentils*, which can be read as an ironic palimpsest of *The Harp and the Shadow*. Carpentier wrote a triptych, of which the second part, called "the hand," is a long confession by Columbus as he

nears death and awaits his confessor. This part is certainly the longer and the more important of the novel, preceded by "the harp," recounting Pope Pius IX's maneuvers to canonize Columbus, and followed by "the shadow," portraying that grotesque trial of Columbus that I mentioned earlier. In "the hand," Columbus's voice adopts three major tonalities: guilt, when he remembers his lies concerning gold; exaltation toward the beauty of the Caribbean region; and nostalgia for a moment when his adventure was beginning and all the dreams seemed achievable. Carpentier mixes poetry and prose in order to give a more complex and human voice to Columbus than the caricatured versions of the character in much historiography, demonized by some and canonized by others. In *The Sea of Lentils*, the narrative technique of the confession of the agonizing man, allowing for the resurgence of souvenirs at random,[17] is transferred to Philip II. There is no doubt that Columbus was the focal point of interest for Carpentier. On the contrary, Benítez-Rojo's used multiple detours in his novel to bypass Columbus. A crucial character to understand the mechanics of violence in the Caribbean, Columbus is a narrative trope rather than a protagonist, and a historical character among others. For Benítez-Rojo, Columbus, Ponte, Hawkins, and Menéndez de Avilés, as European figures, will never access the pedestal of the heroes of Caribbean history; their stories are memorable and worth remembering only for what they tell about the Caribbean region. The men, in and of themselves, do not count.

When he left Cuba in 1980, Benítez-Rojo became a pariah of the literary and cultural agenda on the island, while Carpentier won the highest accolade due to a major writer.[18] Benítez-Rojo's subliminal Columbus and Carpentier's monumentalized one resonate with the dichotomy between genesis and genealogy established by Michel Foucault. Benítez-Rojo constructed his novel as a genealogy of Caribbean violence within which Columbus had a crucial place and played the role of originator. The stories of the European machines that exploited the People of the Sea and transformed the Caribbean Sea into the Atlantic, correspond to "the conditions of apparitions of a singularity" described by Foucault as part of the genealogical perspective.[19] Benítez-Rojo's narrative strategy was oriented toward the restitution of the effects of violence rather than of the product of colonialism in and of itself. On the contrary, Carpentier focused on Columbus's epic story in the New World as a point of origin—a genesis—from whence, dialectically and following the course of history, was born historical resistance, such as the local and national struggle, and more precisely, the Cuban Revolution.

In Benítez-Rojo's view, Columbus was the mnemonic trigger of a process of awareness, inviting the reader to look at the region across a broad span of 500 years, while Carpentier's novel proposed a counter-hagiographic

novel, which helped to humanize the Columbus myth in European literature and to justify the Cuban myth from a national and postcolonial perspective. The former proposed a system for remembering through reading, which I call *anamnesis*; the latter commemorated the Discovery of the New World as the point of origin of the postcolonial destiny of Cuba. For Benítez-Rojo, Carpentier was one of those scholars, criticized in the introduction of *The Repeating Island*, who approached the Caribbean through Columbus's eyes. The fact that he died in Paris in the year when Benítez-Rojo took the opportunity of an invitation by the Sorbonne to leave Cuba for good is a coincidence. But the nonlinear treatment of Columbus in *The Sea of Lentils* was certainly the result of a conscious commitment to cultural memory, and a contestation of any dialectic, prophetical, and partial readings of the history of the region.

PART II

Anamnesis *Caribensis: Columbus in 1992*

CHAPTER 5

Columbus The Memorious: Commemorations of the 500th Anniversary of the Discovery of the New World in Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic

This chapter examines the representations of Columbus's journeys and colonization of the Caribbean region in Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic, during the commemorations of the 500th anniversary of his arrival in1992. Its title, which alludes to Borges's well-known text *Funes The Memorious*, references the hyper-commemorative nature of the Hispanic Caribbean societies, which intensified during the quincentenary commemoration. The event became a magnifying glass for the three countries to affirm their national identities and their existence as Caribbean political exceptions. Collective memory became the favorite platform for the states to react to the new forms of neocolonial hegemonies emerging after the end of the Cold War. While the commemorations assumed a different character according to the sociopolitical agendas of each island at the time, they shared a grand scale, particularly in light of the upcoming 1898 celebrations: if 1992 was the 500th anniversary of Columbus's arrival in the region, 1998 marked the first centenary of the United States' wresting control of the Caribbean basin from Spain after the Spanish-American War in 1898. The coincidence of events transformed the scenarios for celebrating national memory and remembering the role of Columbus in public spaces and in the national literatures, in the specific context of crisis that each island was going through at the time.

In fact, both anniversaries stood as symbolic markers of the historical subaltern condition of the Hispanic Caribbean—islands at the frontier of

empires, as defined by the Dominican historian Juan Bosch (Bosch 1970). The past, and to a certain extent the present, of the three Hispanic plantation-islands of the Caribbean, are marked by a dependence on two masters, Spain and the United States. The three islands share a common colonial and post-colonial history, from whence they took completely different political paths, based on a different national mythology. On the surface, Puerto Rico is now, arguably, a state-colony of the United States; Cuba since 1959 is a socialist republic that became a bastion of resistance to capitalism and American imperial expansion in the Caribbean; and the eastern half of Hispaniola is a third-world republic that was still, in 1992, marked by 30 years of a right-wing military and racist dictatorship. A double-bind complex of dependence characterizes the Hispanic Caribbean's collective imagination—European and American, and colonial and neocolonial (Hennessy 2000). Different needs and desires to remember the past were at stake in 1992 according to the political, economic, and cultural relationship of the islands with both their previous and present masters. This led the states to develop close links with other Spanish-speaking Latin American countries in the case of Cuba and Venezuela, for example. The other important factor that shaped the commemorations was the role of Spain and, particularly, the importance given to the Hispanic origins as a counterpoint to Americanization within the national myth.

In July 1984, in Santo Domingo, the Dominican Republic hosted the meeting of the different commissions for the quincentenary of the discovery of the New World, during the Second Ibero-American Conference, which alongside Spain included all the Latin American countries and the three Hispanic Caribbean islands.[1] The director of the Mexican Commission, Miguel Leon Portilla, renamed it "Commission for the Encounter of the Two Worlds," turning the commemorative spirit into a debate, and erasing the ambiguous and euro-centered perspective implied by the initial name of the Commission for "the commemoration of the discovery of the New World." The Santo Domingo meeting was eventually ratified by the other 163 countries of UNESCO, and since then, all national commissions in Latin America and in Europe have adopted the name "Encounter of the two Worlds" instead of "discovery of the New World."

In the Hispanic Caribbean islands, the names of the national commissions for the 1492/1992 anniversary mirrored the ideological position adopted by each state. In Puerto Rico the *Comisión Puertorriqueña para la Celebración del Quinto Centenario del Descubrimiento de América y Puerto Rico*, articulated the national celebration in light of a Janus-faced origin, American and Spanish; the ensuing national debate centered on the issue of Puerto Rico's official language. It was a way to question the extent of colonial acculturation and

therefore, language became a political battle that fed the already existing conflict among those in favor of statehood, those wanting autonomy, and those in favor of independence of the island. In Cuba, the commission followed the line opened by Mexico as the *Comisión Nacional Cubana Conmemorativa del Medio Milenio del Descubrimiento Mutuo de las Culturas del Viejo y del Nuevo Mundo*. The emphasis on the term "culture," loaded with strong ideological significations in Cuba since the revolution and Che Guevara's definition of the *hombre nuevo*, worked hand in hand with the didactic instrumentalization of memory by the cultural institutions on the island, historically encouraged by the ministry of culture since the late 1970s, through literary and cultural prizes intended to reinforce the revolutionary ideals (Kapcia 2000). This time the cultural competitions were oriented toward the celebration of an extended Latin American heritage. In the Dominican Republic, the *Comisión Dominicana para la Celebración del Quinto Centenario del Descubrimiento y Evangelizacion de América* considered Columbus's arrival as the historical origin of the nation and as a marker of its belonging to Roman Catholic civilization. The event was to be celebrated as a trait of *Hispanidad*, very much in resonance with what was happening at the time in Spain, which considered the Dominican Republic to be the Hispanophone American country with the greatest potential for economic exchange at the time when the European market was looking for expansion in the region.

The advent of the anniversaries of 1992 and 1998 saturated the Puerto Rican, Cuban, and Dominican commemorative public spaces with historical memory. The anniversary of Columbus's arrival in the New World raised the question of the Caribbean origins of the islands and of the representation of race within national identity, urging the states to narrate a primary scenario of exception that could reinforce the national myth, recalling what Eliade defined as the original tale (*récit d'origine*) at the heart of all myths (Eliade 1971). Additionally, the upcoming anniversary of the end of the Spanish-American War triggered the issues of nationalism, patriotism, and cultural identity, and prolonged the commemorative debates after 1992. The states took advantage of the commemorations to explore the symbolic potential of heritage, to orientate their national politics at a time of deep socioeconomic crisis, and to manipulate the feeling of belonging of the Cuban, Dominican, or Puerto Rican citizens into selective and incomplete scenarios of origins.

Cultural actors on the islands responded by proposing quite different versions of what they considered Caribbean collective memory meant or should mean. They used their art (literature, theater, sculpture) as a rite of resistance, sometimes complementing the official discourse, sometimes contesting it, but always performing their approach to collective memory as a means to trigger their people's reflection, critical thinking, and political solidarity. Different

cases of anamnesis, with different story-lines, therefore appeared at the same time on the three islands, revealing the radical dissimilarity between Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic regarding the use of historical heritage. But since commemorations were the products of cultural nationalisms, the 1992 anniversary also revealed the internal fractures within each society when it came to remember together and commemorate the meaning of national identity and cultural heritage. But beyond the different surface-level commemorative perspectives emerging from the dissimilar cultural politics of the states, we can still find a complex network of connections between representations of Columbus in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic, which I will explore in the rest of this chapter.

The first part of the chapter examines a case of *anamnesis in vivo* that characterizes the totalizing memory syndrome in the Hispanic Caribbean, a pathology that the Spanish-speaking archipelagos shared with *Funes el Memorioso*. This case study is a canoe expedition along the Amazon river and to the Caribbean islands, organized by the Cuban geographer Antonio Núñez Jiménez in 1987/1988, while he was president of the aforementioned *Commission Cubana por el encuentro de las dos culturas*. Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic participated to some extent in this scientific voyage, whose goal was to celebrate the Arawak culture as much as Columbus's journeys. But the three Hispanic-speaking Caribbean islands had different ideological reasons to take part in such a project. I will contrast the motivations behind their participation by examining the local and memorial context of each island at the time.

In the second part of the chapter, I compare the Puerto Rican, Cuban, and Dominican commemorative productions that appeared in the public space and at a cultural level at the time. I have selected historical novels, history books, and public events that romanticize, idealize, and transform Columbus-based episodes so that they could fit into the corresponding national myths and reinforce the feelings of national solidarity and pride among the population. The corpus I have selected can be defined as narration of heritage—literary, historical, performative, or plastic—that was meant to popularize history and long-gone events to a wider audience. In the case of Puerto Rico, I analyze the play written by Roberto Ramos Perea, *Mistiblú* (1993) and the artist Jaime Suárez's controversial sculpture, *El Tótem telúrico* (1992). In Cuba, I look at texts by Francisco Pérez Guzmán, *La Aventura Cubana de Cristóbal Colón* (1992) and Julio Ramón Pita, *El Ojo del Rey* (1996). In the Dominican Republic, I consider Hugo Tolentino Dipp's *Mitos del Quinto Centenario* (1992) and Avelino Stanley's novel, *Hasta el Fin del mundo me iré* (2006). These works debate the meaning of commemorating Columbus in 1992 within the scope of popular culture. They participate

in the anamnesis that was encouraged by the official cultural institutions, but offer alternative narrations of the meaning of origin, race, and national identity.

Too Much Memory: Reinventing the National Antecedents

Defining the Syndrome

Collective memory is first and foremost a narrative. At the heart of it lies an illusionary scenario, often manipulated by national institutions to create a certain reading of the past, through the selection of what will or will not be remembered in the light of the present context. *Anamnesis* in clinical terms is the narration of the antecedents of a disease. In this light, I suggest that the historical memory syndrome related to the commemorations of the 1492–1992 anniversary in the Hispanic Caribbean consisted of narrating the antecedents of a traumatic past in a way that could erase time boundaries, and recycle the traumas in scenarios that would serve the political interest of the states in the present, instead of encouraging the collective work of mourning the past. I will from now on refer to this extended quincentennial commemorative corpus as Columbus 92 (collective celebrations, monuments, shows, and texts). Quantity did not necessarily mean quality, and the multiplication of official commemorative products should not hide that, rather than a popular and collective motivation, it was the conscious decision of each state to use as much as possible the opportunity of the anniversary to resonate with the specific political agenda of the island at the time. They converged in the fact that they diverted the elements of the national myth to construct the illusion of cultural homogeneity in the nation.

Events in Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic recall the "*machine du souvenir*" (machine of remembrance), defined by Christine Chivallon, to examine the sudden and intensified commemorations of slavery in France after the 2001 Taubira Law. This law, named after the Guyanese deputy Christiane Taubira, declared slavery to be a crime against humanity. This triggered many commemorative movements in France and gave visibility for the first time to the slave descendant French citizens, asking for reparations for the pain of slavery, in the *Départements d'Outremer* and in the metropolis. For Chivallon, this triggered a mechanism of remembrance, which she describes as a repeating-machine that creates an overflow of memory that dissolves the possibility of a mutual understanding and reconciliation. Chivallon believes that the legalization of the memory of slavery prevents any debate on the topic kept under the complete control of the republic (Chivallon 2013, p.39).

Two of the arguments put forward by Chivallon resonate with the Hispanic Caribbean Columbus 92: first, a grand-scale, institutionalized commemoration does not necessarily come with a real concern for what is commemorated—the history of slavery in France, and in the particular case that is the focus of this chapter, remembering Columbus in the Hispanic Caribbean. Second, collective remembrance is not necessarily what it should be: that is, healing, fair, and efficient to help a community to deal with their present by making peace with their past.

I believe that collective memory should be oriented toward justice and in this sense, I consider with Chivallon that too much memory is likely to limit and annihilate the relationship between commemoration and collective repair. As Paul Ricoeur argues in his essay *Vulnérabilité de la Mémoire* (1998), the excess of commemoration creates a meaningless repetition effect, stuttering the past in order, in fact, not to remember it. Ricoeur's analysis of the problem of excessive memory (*abus de mémoire*) resonates with the Hispanic Caribbean Columbus 92 commemorations. While looking at the infatuation for celebrations in France, the philosopher first points at those who have the political power and use memory in order to serve their vision of national identity; he describes those rulers as zealous of glory and calls this attitude "a concerted manipulation of memory," where the excess of memory becomes equivalent to oblivion.[2] In all cases, the manipulation of memory consists in selecting some episodes of the past and fixing them into a narration. In the second part of his argument, Ricoeur transfers Freud's analysis of traumatic memory, mourning, and melancholy,[3] from the individual to the collective level. He follows Freud's idea that mourning is a natural attitude after the loss of someone, or something, very deeply loved. Ricoeur then looks at the "lost object" that collective memory, the states, and the people commemorate. Since collective memory deals with loss, it directly touches national self-esteem, hence producing resistance. For Freud, it is the individual's inhibition that creates resistance to remember the trauma; instead of repeating the traumatic episode of his past in the form of a souvenir, the individual acts it out, in what Freud calls compulsive repetition. Ricoeur transfers the notion of compulsive repetition to the collective and public space. Commemorations are meant to remember violent historical episodes of the national past, which imply traumas and pains, calling to be cured. For Ricoeur, excessive memory is a syndrome in France, of which the multiplication of commemorations is the main symptom in the late 1990s. He sees it as an equivalent to the Freudian compulsive repetition: it is a resistance to the work of remembrance and therefore, a way to repeat the trauma without knowing it, by acting it out instead of telling it as a souvenir (Ricoeur 1998, p.25). For Ricoeur, too much memory is equivalent to non-memory: a resistance to the

hard work of remembrance, normally meant to heal and make peace with the past.

When based on traumas and violent heritages, as is the history of the Caribbean, collective memory should benefit from being analyzed with the tools of psychology. My view is that historical memory in the Hispanic Caribbean is going through some sort of compulsive pathology. Following Ricoeur's perspective, I see the hyper-commemorative form of the 500th anniversary of Columbus's arrival in the region as the symptom of a syndrome, based on excessive memory and compulsive repetition, meant to divert the mourning process and to maintain the traumas, with a view to nurture the national myth in times of crisis. The Puerto Rican historian Jalil Sued Badillo, who felt concerned about the manipulation of the colonial past in the official commemorations of the quincentennial, made a complementary point on those matters, by examining the pathological nature of Caribbean collective memory. For him, the difficulty to engage healthily with heritage in the Caribbean lies in the continuity between past and present, engendering the impossibility to mourn since the struggles of the past are still repeating themselves in the present: Sued Badillo reminds us that the Caribbean was not only the first American space to experience the transatlantic European expansion, with Columbus's voyage, but also the last colonial space in America. He claims that

> in much of the Caribbean, the past still constitutes much of its present, whether there is consciousness of it or not. The region can be likened to an *anima en pena*, or lost soul, seeking reparation before achieving release. The effects of this quincentennial situation, both in its economic and intellectual aspects, are therefore themes of recent history.
>
> (Sued Badillo 1992, p.599)

I believe with Sued Badillo that this *anima en pena* syndrome is at the heart of the Hispanic Caribbean anamnesis, marked by the anachronical manipulation of the past to tell traumas of the present; the latter took a specific form in Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic according to the commemorative rhetoric that each national cultural body used at the time. The canoe expedition of Núñez Jiménez, which I mentioned earlier and I will now examine in detail, is for me the most representative event when those pathological national and collective memories meet: the justification of a national situation of crisis in the present encouraged to act out the past instead of working it out and mourn it, leading to performing the traumas in delusional scenarios, and to producing anachronistic foundational myths. In the Hispanic Caribbean, commemorations signified a refusal to

mourn the past and embodied in the present the dilemmas about national memory.

Anamnesis in Vivo: The Canoe Expedition of Antonio Núñez Jiménez

In January 1986, during the First Symposium of Rupestrian Art in Havana, the Cuban explorer, geographer, and archaeologist Antonio Núñez Jiménez presented the project of an expedition in Canoe along the Amazon River and to the Caribbean; it was eventually approved in April during the fourth Ibero-American Conference that took place in Costa Rica as part of the events to commemorate the Discovery of the New World, with support and funding from Latin America and Spain. Núñez Jiménez was at the time vice-minister of culture in Cuba.

A team of 32 scientists joined the expedition; they were coming from eight Latin American countries: Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Brazil, Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, and Colombia.[4] Besides exploring the fauna, flora, and the living conditions of the indigenous populations along the Amazon and Orinoco rivers, the purpose was, as stated in Núñez's diary, to "revivir el descubrimiento del Caribe y sus islas por las tribus prehistóricas de las cuencas del Amazonas y del Caribe / Live again the discovery of the Caribbean continental region and of the Caribbean islands like the prehistoric tribes coming from the Amazonian and Caribbean regions." This idea of "revivir/live again" sounds like an act of remembrance in action, which I would call an *anamnesis in vivo*. The point was to demonstrate, by a physical and practical expedition 500 years after Columbus's arrival, that the Amerindians were the first settlers of the Caribbean islands and that the Caribbean culture and civilization were already there when Columbus arrived. At first sight, this narration is in tune with the anti-Columbus and anti-commemoration events that took place in Latin America. But if we look closer, things are in fact much more ambivalent, and proposed an idealized version of the encounter between the Amerindians and Europe, glorifying at the same time both cultures.

The expedition consisted in two journeys, each of which acted out both myths of origins, that of the native populations on one side, and that of the European discovery on the other side (we must remember that Spain was the first sponsor of the project). The first trip departed on March 1987from Cuba to Quito, Ecuador, with two canoes. They were carved by Quechua Indians of the Napo region and named after two Latin American heroes, "Hatuey" and "Bolívar," who both successfully united their people against the Spanish Empire in the sixteenth and nineteenth century.[5] The team received the help of military trucks to go through the densest parts of the

jungle, while they canoed the rest of the time on the Amazon river. They crossed the Peruvian frontier, reached Manaus, went up north to the Orinoco river, entered Venezuela, Boca Grande de Dragon, and from the Venezuelan coast canoed to Trinidad in August, to arrive in eastern Cuba (Baracoa and Guantanamo) in November 1987. The second trip departed in February 1988 from Montecristi, República Dominicana, canoed to Haití, Cuba, The Bahamas, and finally Isla de San Salvador, in June 1988. This journey ended where Columbus arrived when he first reached the Antilles, reliving his voyage in reverse: the whole itinerary was therefore a performance of the past and a double-bind, in homage to the first and native discoverers of the Caribbean Islands, and then to Columbus, as the man who allowed Europe to land in the Antilles and who facilitated the Encounter between the two worlds.

Actually, the report of the expedition, first published in 1989 in Ecuador,[6] reveals a much more Columbus-oriented perspective than we could have thought at first sight. First of all, it is Núñez Jiménez's diary, using the tone of the discoverer in resonance with Columbus's *diario de abordo*, except that it is not from a Spanish caravel in 1492 but from a Quechua canoe in 1987, that the captain of the trip is exploring the Americas and the Caribbean. An important figure of the Cuban Revolution, Núñez Jiménez fought with Guevara, held key cultural positions in the state, and was a renowned geographer and archaeologist.[7] The image on the cover of the book, which served to advertise the project, shows him standing on the canoe "Simon Bolívar," bearded, with a military suit, and holding an oar vertically. At this point, it is worth having in mind that the expedition coincided with the recent announcement of a closer collaboration between Cuba and Venezuela, against American imperialism, through the ALBA[8] (Bolivarian Alliance of the People of the Americas) the commercial alliance of nonaligned countries named after the Venezuelan father of Latin American independence, who also gave his name to the canoe on which Núñez Jiménez posed on the photograph. The revolutionary image of the chief captain of the expedition, as a guerillero-discoverer, with a camera hanging over his neck, was to remind that the struggle against imperialism and North American hegemony was to be continued at the cultural level through the union of a third-world Latin America.

The narrative line of his diary proposes a recovery of the past, going backwards to grasp the pre-Columbus Caribbean origins that federate Latin American countries. In this *anamnesis in vivo*, the indigenous heritage was represented by the canoe carved by "real" Quechua Indians, as an anachronistic token of the past, in order to praise the roots of a common Latin American identity, following the nonaligned spirit of the ALBA. The Simon Bolívar canoe symbolized liberation, federation, and the myth of a united

Latin American culture. While in the eighteenth century, the European colonial expansion sent British, French, German, and Dutch travelers to explore the world and back up their commercial interests, Núñez Jiménez's canoe trip backed up the commercial project of the ALBA. No matter how postcolonial the canoe expedition may seem, it was based on a colonial gaze of the indigenous communities of the Americas and on a nostalgic recovery of the heritage of the Caribbean—Cuba being the guardian and leader of this nostalgic anamnesis leading to the commemorations of the common Amerindian origins of the Spanish-speaking America.

Núñez's diary, with the title *En Canoa del Amazonas al Caribe* (On a canoe from the Amazon River to the Caribbean), strikes for its primitivism and its epic tone. The report strongly recalls Alejo Carpentier's 1953 novel, *Los Pasos Perdidos*, canonical of the genre of the new Latin American historical novel, also shaped as the diary of the main protagonist. In Carpentier's text, the hero is a caricatured Western man who forgot his Latin American origins, and who lost the sense of truth and ethics in a corrupted North American city, that the reader can identify as being New York. During an Amazonian expedition down the Orinoco, in quest of a primitive music instrument, he rediscovers his Spanish mother tongue and the miscegenated features of the American culture that he still possesses at a latent stage within himself, but that he had forgotten, as if those traits had been numbed by the superficial modern life of the so-called civilized world. While lost in the Amazonian jungle, with a botanist, a priest, and an adventurer called *Adelantado*, the character experiences a phenomenon of magical *anamnesis*: at the moment his hands touch a battle axe that belonged to a conquistador, the historical object loaded with magical retroactive powers, opens a temporal vortex that let him become a sixteenth-century Spanish soldier who came to conquer the New World. The narrator, whose name was since the beginning of the novel unknown to the reader, becomes temporarily endowed with the identity of Juan de San Pedro, a trumpet-soldier who came with Columbus's caravels (Carpentier 1999, p.161).

I will not examine in more details the already extensively studied novel of Carpentier. I just want to highlight the similarity between this 1953 novel, written by an extremely canonical and revolutionary Cuban writer, whose text worked as a pattern to read the myth of the Discovery in Cuba, and the *anamnesis* performed by Núñez Jiménez in his diary more than 40 years later. The situation of the expedition recalls the one in the novel: the crew counted among others, a Colombian biologist, a Brazilian zoologist, and Núñez Jiménez himself, a Cuban archaeologist. Núñez shares many features with the character of the *Adelantado*, an avatar of Columbus in Carpentier's fiction, such as the knowledge of nature, a sense of adventure, and a quest for

utopia to recover the forgotten origins of the world. Like the battle axe in the novel, the canoe carved by Quechua Indians, was the symbolic object that allowed the expedition to rewind the time and go back in the past, performing the anamnesis necessary to recover the Amerindian heritage at the heart of the Latin American and Caribbean civilization.

The narrative strategy in both texts is very similar: the diary recollects the adventures and encounters with the fauna, flora, and Indian inhabitants along the Amazon and Orinoco rivers. The use of the first-person pronoun combines the subjective vision of the narrator, his anthropological discovery, and his personal childhood memories, in echo with the rediscovery of the childhood of mankind experienced in the forest. Indeed, Núñez Jiménez acknowledges in the prologue that his interest to participate in the anniversary celebrations originated in his long-time fascination for the subject since he was a child (Núñez Jiménez 2009, p.28).

Particularly significant regarding the American epic style of the diary, is the celebration of women and their role in the expedition. In Núñez's Jiménez prologue, women are emulated in a manner that resonates in explicit terms with the fascination of Carpentier's protagonist for Rosario, archetype of the American miscegenation between cultures and the threshold for his new understanding of nature. In Núñez Jiménez's words, women are idealized heroines, proving that Latin American solidarity also exists at the level of gender (Núñez Jiménez 2009, p.14).

Alejo Carpentier wrote *Los Pasos Perdidos*, in the context of the post–Second World War era, the decline of European hegemony in the world and the beginning of decolonization. His purpose was to give visibility to the Latin American identity and to raise Latin American literature at the level of universal culture, Cuba being its leading representative. Similarly, in 1989, at the end of the Cold War era when the world hegemonies were reconsidered, the report of the expedition *En Canoa del Amazonas al Caribe* reflected the Cuban ideological and cultural desire to represent the Latin American heritage. This explains the combination of primitivism, exoticism, epic, and revolutionary ideology underneath the canoe project, in resonance with Carpentier's fiction and particularly with the episodes when the musicologist travels through time backwards.

The Cuban interest for recovering the Latin American roots of the nation was joined to some extent by the Dominican Republic and by Puerto Rico, while looking toward the construction of a Hispanic American mythology and civilization. With diverging national motivations, the three islands shared the project to rediscover the Caribbean as a geographic space of exception, and as the cradle of their civilization. The primary scenario proposed by Núñez Jiménez's project, varied according to the national agenda of each

island. In Puerto Rico, the anniversary created as many collective celebrations as contestations. Columbus and, the culture of the Taínos, became tools to celebrate the Hispanic origins of the American colony. In the Dominican Republic, celebrations were monumentalized as a reflection of the desire of President Balaguer, in a political style that was continuing the *Trujillato* (the long dictatorship of Rafael Leonidas Trujillo). Both Columbus and the Taínos were used as characters to construct a racial and national myth. In Cuba, Columbus was redeemed of the sin of colonization, following Ortiz's views (see Chapter 1), and the Taínos were celebrated to a smaller extent than for the other two islands. Both served as symbolical objects, emptied of their anthropological and biographical content, and filled in with new storylines that resonated with the wish to repeat the revolutionary myth at a time of crisis for Cuba after the end of a privileged relationship with the Eastern block, and when the country was looking to extend the meaning of Cuban identity to a wider third-world Latin American community.

The Quintocentenario in Puerto Rico: Anamnesis or Delusion?

Puerto Rico celebrated pompously the 500th Anniversary of Columbus's arrival in the Americas. This was the wish of the new governor Hernández Colón, elected in 1985, to take advantage of this symbolic date to valorize the Hispanic heritage of the island and to launch a huge show of politics. Hernández Colón's cultural nationalism reinforced and praised *Hispanidad* as a trait of cultural homogeneity and as the label of cultural exception of the American Free Associated State. More Puertorican-ness became equivalent to a renewed hispanophilia, the culmination of which was the creation of the *Comisión Puertorriqueña para la Celebración del Quinto Centenario del Descubrimiento de América y Puerto Rico* on May 7, 1985. The words of the Governor on that day presented the commemorative enterprise as a "recovery for the Puerto Rican people of the testimony of our past" (CPCQDAPR 1992, p.3). The official Puerto Rican perspective was clearly that of an *anamnesis*. But the latter emphasized the cultural legacy of Spain by denying the violence of the colonization in explicit and conscious words: "No tenemos que mirar hacia atrás para desenterrar cadáveres o para justificar errores; la historia es una línea de continuidad progresiva de presente y futuro, es preferible hacer acopio de lo mejor que poseamos y robustecer el proceso de la historia" / We must not look back in the past to unearth corpses or to justify mistakes; history is a continuous line of progress from the present to the future, it is preferable to make the most of what we have and strengthen the process of History (CPCQDAPR 1992, p.4).

As a result, official visits and cultural collaborations between Spain and Puerto Rico were highly publicized, such as that of the King Juan Carlos and his wife in 1987, and the opening of a Puerto Rican pavilion at the "expo92" in Seville. Architectural projects were launched: the transformation of the old San Juan, the renovation of the old military Spanish casern "Cuartel de Ballajá," and the construction of the "Plaza del Quintocentenario." The major commemorative event was the "Grán Regata Colón 92"—a boat race departing from Cadiz and arriving in the Bahia of San Juan in June 1992, as a symbol of the first territory of the "New World" where Columbus landed (despite the fact that he actually discovered Puerto Rico in his second voyage in 1493 and the first territory he touched was Isla San Salvador, in the Bahamas). The replicas of the three caravels were the jewels of the festivities, as they were in Spanish celebrations, standing as symbols of the Almirante's sailing talents and as the strong bonds between Spain and Puerto Rico. Furthermore, Columbus's journeys to the New World became a flag not only of the Spanishness within Puertoricanness—with the adoption of Spanish as the official language of the island—but as the heritage from which a homogeneous cultural miscegenation was born since. In his introductory speech to the festivities, Gobernador Hernández Colón considered that "Columbus's gesture was the origin and the opportunity to reflect on our identity and to affirm it." By establishing Spanish as the official language on the island, he continued, the law was protecting Portorican identity, which originated in the rich encounter between Taínos, Africans, and Spaniards. This is from this position, he concluded, that "we define ourselves to our co-citizens of the United States and to the rest of the World" (CPCQDAPR 1992, p.4).

No doubt that the official commemorations were very consensual: the 500th Anniversary of Columbus arrival in the new World praised the pride to be a Spanish-speaking American colony, and the myth of the Free Associated State as a successfully homogenized identity, thanks to the double-marked colonial heritage, American and Spanish. In such an *anamnesis*, the Puerto Rican identity stood for a cultural Caribbean exception, enriched by two strata of colonization. The allegiance to the United States was reinforced and totally unquestioned, but praising strong Hispanic bonds counterbalanced and amended at the same time the idea and guilt about the American acculturation, thanks to the overemphasis on the vivacity of the Spanish heritage.

This scenario was visually allegorized by the Logo of the Commission for the Celebration of the fifth centennial, on which were represented the three sail cloths of Columbus's caravels with the red cross of the Catholic Kings. It was stamped on the many leaflets, textbooks, videos, and exhibitions

launched to celebrate the (allegedly) harmonious heritage of Puerto Rican identity. It is hard to miss the delusional nature of such a story of origin: while the commemorations were meant to encourage a total erasure of the violence of the past, they praised the continuity between 1492 and 1992 as if the island of Borinquen had remained the same since Columbus first hispanisized it and until his return in the Bahia de San Juan in 1992.

One part of the Puertorican Columbus 92 products consisted in vulgarizing the Taíno heritage, in a quite folkloric style, erasing the violence of the encounter. A good example is the series of historical comics published by the Commission, *Historia Gráfica de Puerto Rico*. In the first fanzine, we can see Columbus being congratulated by the Kings of Spain after returning from his first voyage. His caravels then leave for the second trip, and after discovering Marie-Galante, they arrive at the island of Borinquen: the native people encountered on the shore ask the Spaniards for protection against the cannibal Caribs. Drawings then present the habitat and way of life of the Indians identified as Taínos, with the Taíno word for each object, and its definition in Spanish. The fact that this kind of graphic narration was simplifying history for a young and nonspecialist public does not justify the delusion and manipulation of the historical past that had a view to promote the illusion of a Taíno-Spanish marvelous encounter. The second leaflet dealt in the same romanticized style with slavery and the African slave trade. But, it is important to have in mind that when it came to praise miscegenation in Puerto Rico in 1992, Taíno origins were overemphasized while blackness was mostly, if not totally, invisible. In fact, "The taíno constitutes the most easily evoked symbol of a legendary past that is mystified and permeated with nationalist overtones" (Davila 1997, p.71). This had to do with the racial politics of Puerto Rico (Santos Febres 2009), and the black component was not integrated in the commemorative space since it did not fit with Hernández Colón's views of a homogeneous culture. Another topic exploited by the commemorations was to defend the geographic and environmental patrimony of Puerto Rico, with a view to highlight its exceptional tropical climate and to create collective awareness for its preservation. A good example is a book like *Puerto Rico, Isla del Coquí*, by Laura Ramos Peña. The coquí is a little frog that lives in the Yunque, the National Caribbean Forest of Puerto Rico and the only tropical woods of the island. It is the pride of the Puerto Ricans, as a vestige of Caribbeanness, after the island was massively cleared out, industrialized, and modernized after becoming a Free Associated State in 1952 under Luis Muñoz Marin. The coquí, who starts to croak when night falls, is a symbol of Puerto Rico. The book describes its habitat, reproduction, and beauty in the manner of a national allegory: essential to the ecosystem, the animal becomes an emblem of the Puerto Rican identity that needs to be

protected. It is celebrated as a mythological character that inspired legends and poems, and qualified with adjectives like "proud" and "responsible." The author proposes five attitudes to participate in the protection of this species, in the manner of an ecological guide, and the book finally ends with a poem entitled the *canto lastimero del coquí* (lamentation of the coquí), where the animal talks in the first person to lament the disappearance of his brothers. The vocabulary clearly humanizes the animal and elevates it at the level of the Puerto Rican citizen, an exceptional but endangered species. It recalls the words of Hernández Colón praising the Puerto Ricans as Spanish-speaking and American citizens, whose exceptional *hispanidad* was to be protected and valorized thanks to the opportunity given by the commemoration. The book was edited in a bilingual format, Spanish and English, and stamped with the three Caravels logo of the Commission. It is a good example of the hyperbolic dimension that the 1992 commemorations took in Puerto Rico.

The official position was hugely mediatized, and successful to some extent, if we think that many Puerto Ricans went out in the street and enjoyed the celebrations. But Hernández Colón's vision was certainly not unanimous on the island. Many considered it a submissive acceptation of the double-subaltern condition of Puerto Rico. The question of collective heritage became extremely polemical, reflecting the ongoing tensions between the three political trends that split the Puertorican society on the islands: the annexionists (*estadistas*) who want to become fully a state of the United States, with all the citizenship rights that go with it (like voting for the US president); they are represented by the PNP (Partido Nacional de Puertorico); the autonomists, in favor of the actual status quo, represented by the PPD (Partido Popular Democrático), in power at the time of Hernández Colón mandate; and those claiming for a total independence with the PIP (Partido Independista de Puerto Rico). The context was extremely tense on those matters at the time: 1989–1991 was a time when the political status of the colony was discussed in the American Congress. The commemorative platforms in the 1990s therefore became a political arena where two anniversaries, 1992 and 1998, became opportunities to defend statehood and American belonging, or to use Columbus as a counterweight to praise Hispanic origins as a mark of regional exception, but still within an accepted Americanness. Cultural nationalism forced the trait of homogeneity in order to construct a narration that could maintain this dilemmatic dual belonging, Spanish and American.

The particularity of the Puerto Rican debate is that it really happened among intellectuals, academics, journalists, and artists on the island, who were themselves split between two antagonistic positions. Some supported the cultural nationalism of the PPD and of the Governor, like Rafael Castro

Pereda, a professor and journalist who wrote 24 articles in the main Puerto Rican newspaper, *El Nuevo Día*, from July 1983 to June 1992, to praise, support, and comment on the evolution of the commemorative projects. He considered Columbus's arrival in the Antilles as the most important event in universal history together with the birth of Christ (Castro Pereda 1992). But a strong opposition appeared among other scholars and cultural actors who felt ashamed to see money "wasted." For them, a real *anamnesis* was needed in Puerto Rico, the focus of which should be the Taíno heritage, and the history of slavery, which needed to be told with serious scientific and anthropological approaches rather than with the folkloric tone of Columbus 92.

Remembering the violence of the indigenous genocide was the main line of those who criticized the official discourse.[9] They also wanted to open a debate about the real social problems at the time, such as the racial tensions and the economic inequalities on the island. In *Una reflexión puertorriqueña sobre el significado de la celebración del V centenario: 500 anos de Encuentro o Resistencia*, the authors—Jalil Sued Badillo and Juan Manuel Delgado[10]—both respected professors and historians on the island, criticized the delusion the colonial celebrations with these words: "la celebración del Quinto Centenario del descubrimiento es un acto irracional, descabellado, imbuido en cierto grado de sadismo / Celebrating the 500th anniversary of the Discovery is irrational, absurd and sadistic" (Sued Badillo and Delgado 1991, p.20). Sued Badillo lamented the refusal to remember the past on the island and the hypocritical and acculturated nature of the official commemorations (Sued Badillo and Delgado 1992, p.7).

Part of the Delgado and Badillo's book consisted in replacing Columbus's journey in the context of global history and to demystify the idealization with which the commemorative celebrations were manipulating the event: the arrival of Columbus was one historical event among many others that resulted from the process of history; there was nothing providential about it. For the Sued Badillo, what was being celebrated in 1992 was capitalism, since Columbus's discovery was motivated by mercantilism. In this vein, he shared Benitez Rojo's view in *The Repeating Islands* that Columbus was the father of proto-capitalism in the Antilles (see Chapter 4). For him, this was something that could and should certainly be studied, understood and debated, but certainly not celebrated.

In this conflictive commemorative panorama, the Puerto Rican edition of Núñez Jiménez's expedition was located at the heart of the commemorative delusional maze. The author, Awilda Palau de Lopez, was the director of the ICP (Institute for Puertorican Culture) at the time, the main governmental agency in charge of shaping and disseminating an official view of what constitutes Puerto Rican culture.[11] Palau de Lopez had been for years

a strong defender of the adoption of Spanish as the official language. She published in 1992 her commitment to this theme, in the book *La Batalla por la Reafirmación del Idioma Español*, with the support of the Commission for the Celebration of the Discovery of Puerto Rico and the Americas. In Puerto Rico, her approach to the 500th anniversary was in fact totally in tune with the official cultural politics of Hernández Colón. But at the same time, outside of Puerto Rico, the author shared close bonds with Cuba and was thrilled to participate in Núñez Jiménez's project, whom she knew personally.[12] A full version of Núñez Jiménez's diary did not make sense for the Puerto Rican publishing market since the canoes did not manage to get to the island. Instead, the author decided to explain the circumstances of the limited participation of Puerto Rico in the expedition. She entitled her book *Bolívar y Hatuey en Puerto Rico: la Participación puertorriqueña en la expedición en canoa del Amazonas al Caribe*. Palau de Lopez's wish would have been to include the Cuban project in the major festivities of the Puerto Rican Columbus 92. But the expedition faced major problems to enter the American territory. The canoes were not welcome, mostly because they planned to land on the island of Vieques, which was at the time an American military zone. In this sense, from the outside, the tone of the book could sound like a protest, showing solidarity for Cuba against the American politics of the embargo. Nevertheless, there was nothing anti-American in Palau de Lopez's position within the Puerto Rican commemoration of the Discovery of the Americas since she was following the consensual and official line of Hernández Colón; her interest in Núñez Jiménez's trip was an opportunity to praise the common pre-Columbian and Hispanic heritage shared by the Spanish-speaking countries of the Americas, echoing Hernández Colón's cultural nationalism. Palau de Lopez was not contesting the fact that Puerto Rico belonged to the United States; she was participating in the celebration of Puerto Rico as a Spanish-speaking territory of the United States. What could sound revolutionary and anticapitalist was in fact the product of a reactionary attitude in favor of a political status quo.

Awilda Palau's book is divided in three parts that resonate with the epic tone of Núñez Jiménez's diary using the first-person pronoun. In Part I, entitled "Yo, el cacique Hatuey" and Part II "Yo, Simon Bolívar," the expedition is told from the point of view of the canoes, talking about the heroes after which they were named. The author celebrates the glorious resistance, federative talent, and successful liberation to which both the rebel and the liberator led their people. The last part is the author's own vision, "Yo, puertoriqueña de finales de Siglo XXI," where the author wishes for more cultural collaborations between Puerto Rico and Cuba and with all

the Spanish-speaking Americas. She therefore praises the Hispanic linguistic heritage as an instrument for cultural resistance, but without denying the American belonging of Puerto Rico.

This example shows that we should be very careful when talking about collective memory in Puerto Rico. Cultural nationalism was massively shaping it at the time into two delusional scenarios: one pretended that the Puerto Ricans could be both American and Spanish; the other, that being more Spanish made the Puerto Ricans special-American citizens.

Cuba and the Discovery of the New World in the Special Period in Times of Peace

Commemoration in Cuba is a complex mechanism that has played a strategic role to sustain the revolutionary discourse in the society: commemorative events are not performed temporarily, at one and only specific time and place. Commemoration is a permanent collective exercise, present in everyday life, constantly fed by multiple local events, book presentations, festivals, and celebrations of all kinds, loaded with symbolic significance for the nation. They keep alive the revolution, through a rhetorical reiteration, recurrently celebrating its epic episodes and heroes (Kapcia 2005). The commemorative discourse shapes the cultural calendar on the island, not only year after year, but month after month; it stokes the fire of national memory and justifies the continuation of the revolution, as an everlasting process, and not only as a historical event that happened once.

The public space and time on the island are therefore saturated with commemorative platforms, a political function that has to maintain the social project of the revolution. There is always an event to commemorate, such as the date of birth or of death of the national heroes, from José Martí to Frank País among many. As a result, any day, any month, and any year is loaded with a commemorative and symbolic potential, and a latent significance that the cultural deciders can activate if they wish so. In this context, we may wonder what would be the situation of an anniversary that is not connected to the national myth, but to the Spanish colonial past, as was the *quincentenario*? If we think that the year 1992 was also the year of the 25th anniversary of the death of Ernesto Guevara, what could be the importance of Columbus, either as a hero to celebrate or as an antihero to demystify, within the national collective mythology? Against all odds, Cuba was interested in commemorating this event as much as it could serve the interest of the revolutionary myth. The discourses that engaged with historical memory on the island therefore made Columbus fit in the already strongly commemorative revolution-related cultural web.

The context played an important role. The quincentennial of Columbus's arrival in the New World happened when the ideology that was holding the nation was threatened since the collapse of the Berlin wall. The year 1989 marked the beginning of the end of the system as it used to be, and in order to keep it alive, the roots had to be found in a newly imagined community, containing national identity without constraining it. Additionally, the year 1992, contesting by anticipation the anniversary date of 1998—a celebration day for the greatest enemy of the Socialist Republic of Cuba—became by anticipation a symbolic niche to consolidate the anti-US rhetoric that constructed the nation since 1959. At a time of national crisis after the loss of the USSR as a major ally, the country was looking for partnership with other Latin American and/or socialist countries. Political and economic isolation created a need and a wish to make new alliances that could supply for the loss, lack, and terrible economic crisis, which stroke the country,[13] without betraying the principles of the social project created by the revolution. Those alliances were found namely in the Latin American nonaligned countries, and as a consequence, new symbolically loaded images were activated in the official culture, borrowed from the Latin American indigenous discourses against the quincentenary celebrations, and adapted to Cuba in order to reshape temporarily the cultural official calendar on the island, during a time of exception, called "the Special Period in times of Peace." The official discourse engaged with the anniversary by orientating the collective national imaginary toward a Latin American and Caribbean Cultural Region to which Cuba could belong as a cultural and ideological model. In this way, the debate questioning what was indeed to be commemorated allowed us to praise the myth of origin of the nation, renewed and reinforced within a wider Latin American community. This is in such a context that the canoe expedition of Núñez Jiménez happened, together with other events encouraged by the Cuban Commission for the Commemoration of the Encounters of the two Cultures, such as literary prizes like the *Premio Extraodinario de Literaturas Indigenas* of Casa de las Américas in 1992, awarded to the Paraguayan author Suzy Delgado for her bilingual Spanish/Guarani collection of poetry *Junto al fuego/Tataypype*;[14] or the popular festival of the *Feria del Libro*, the fifth festival that was specifically dedicated to *El encuentro de las dos culturas*.

The Taíno Indians and their culture were at the forefront, as a tool to reinforce Latin American solidarity on the basis of a common primary heritage, but that would not threaten the Cuban national myth. Indeed, there is no visible native Indian culture on the island, where the Taíno cultural elements have been integrated in the national culture thanks to the process of transculturation studied by Ortiz (see Chapter 1). There is no Taíno-descendant activism in Cuba that would claim the rights and recognition for their

hyphenated citizenship in the nation, as it was the case in the Latin American countries that were strongly involved in the debate against the celebration of Columbus's arrival.

While the story of the common roots between Latin America and Cuba was told thanks to before-Columbus and Carib-Indian historical scenarios, the connection in the present was facilitated by the Spanish language and by the interactions between Latin American and Cuban intellectuals, writers and academics, roundtables and collective publications, and on the basis of shared cultural traits of Hispanic nature, a common colonial past between two racially miscegenated societies. The bonds were emphasized by the fact that the concerned Latin American countries shared the same political and ideological socialist principles as those of Cuba.

But the difference between the Cuban Columbus 92 discourse and the pro-indigenous/anticelebration approaches in continental Latin America lies in the representation of the persona of Columbus. As we saw with the canoe expedition of Núñez Jiménez, the *anamnesis* negotiated at the same time the myth of the Carib-Indians, the myth of Christopher Columbus, and the myth of the socialist Cuban revolution, thanks to the personality and name of Núñez Jiménez himself. This gave to Cuba the role of the initiator, and therefore reinforced the idea of its exceptional destiny, as the leader of a Latin American federation. This is from this angle that Cuban cultural institutions chose to be involved in the quincentennial debate. In 1991, the prestigious *Fundación Casa de las Américas* hosted a conference under the name "Nuestra América ante el quinto centenario / Our America and the Quincentennial." The papers were eventually published in a special issue of Casa de las Américas review in 1992. "Nuestra América ante el quinto centenario" was the result of a collaborative project with Colombia, and resulted in the publication of two volumes in Bogotá in 1990. The books gave voice to Latin American philosophers, economists, anthropologists, and artists gathered against the 1992 celebration orchestrated by Spain. Among them were, for example, the Argentinian Enrique Dussel, the Uruguayan Eduardo Galeano, the Paraguayans Ruben Bareiro and Augusto Roa Bastos, the Brasilian Darcy Ribeiro, and the Mexican Leopoldo Zea. Those intellectuals adopted a critical position against the imperialism and the neocolonialism that lay underneath Europe's interests in commemorating Columbus. They encouraged solidarity among Latin American countries against the Ibero-American rapprochement encouraged by Spain and the Economic European Community. They questioned the meaning of the commemoration—asking what, in fact, was to be commemorated?—and followed Edmundo O'Gorman idea that the *descubrimiento* (discovery) was nothing but an *encubrimiento* (cover-up), a masquerade (O'Gorman 1958). Both the Colombian and the Cuban

conferences corresponded to a politicized rereading of the commemoration and of a conscious instrumentalization of historical and collective memory with a view to reinforce the feeling of national identity and their respective national myth.

This is when the specific Cuban approach of the 1992 anniversary can best be sensed. In the 1990 Colombian publications,[15] we can find two Cuban communications, one by Roberto Fernández Retamar,[16] the other by Fidel Castro. Both focused on the character of Columbus, whereas the other papers did mention his name only as a temporal marker, without any interest for his persona. We saw in Chapter 1 that, with Ortiz, Columbus became part of the Cuban cultural heritage, and indeed, Fernández Retamar and Castro seemed to follow this tradition. For Retamar, commemorating the 500th anniversary of Columbus's arrival became a way to celebrate Cuban internationalism and the Cuban intervention in the Angolan war of independence, which participation had just ended, in 1991.[17] Fernández Retamar's perspective was that, by helping their African brothers, Cuba corrected the shame of slavery brought by Columbus to the New World:

> si siglos atrás muchos de nuestros antepasados fueron traídos de África como esclavos en horrendos barcos negreros, en estos años descendientes de aquellos hombres cruzarían el Atlántico en sentido inverso, para ayudar a consolidar la libertad y la independencia de países africanos / If centuries ago, many of our ancestors were brought from Africa as slaves in hideous slave ships, in the last years, the Cuban descendants of those very slaves have crossed the Atlantic in the reverse way, to help African country to consolidate freedom and independence.
>
> (Benedetti 1992, p.95)

Columbus was therefore amended for his deeds on the basis that he was a man of his time and that he belonged to a feudal world system of which he was the product and not the initiator. For Fidel Castro, Columbus was an adventurer and a visionary man. Castro held the clear view that the colonization that started with Columbus's arrival could not be celebrated, and he mentioned his own feeling of solidarity with his fellow Amerindians. That said, he confirmed that he had given his full support to the creation of a Cuban Commission for the Celebration of the Encounter of the Two Worlds (Benedetti 1992, p.216).

It seems that there was a specific Cuban reading of Columbus's journeys to the New World that, by unexpected routes, played a role in the national myth; hence, this encouraged to redeem Columbus, following Carpentier's *Harp and the Shadow* (see Chapter 4) but not to glorify him either. Looking at the Casa de la Américas' conference, we find the great lines of the Bogota group, but it did not come with the addition of a specifically Columbus-related

panel, despite the fact that Fernández Retarmar and Castro's contribution to the Bogota edition were Columbus-oriented.

The critical and anti-neocolonialist perspective was the main theme of the Cuban conference, as in the Columbian's publication, warning against the fact that the common Spanish language should not be an alibi to mask the neocolonialist intentions of Spain. The Mexican Leopoldo Zea proposed to go beyond the 500 years: in the context of a New World situation as was the end of the Cold War, the solidarity between Latin American countries will prove that the end of the USSR and of the communist block was not the end of history. This was clearly in resonance with the Cuban perspective at the time of a major crisis. Zea's view indeed made space for the Cuban New Man to be redefined as part of a bigger Latin American community, in an enlarged third-world archipelago, sharing a common heritage and collaborating as an autonomous nonaligned economic community. Going beyond the notion of "end of history" implied constructing the future on the basis of a common origin: hence the wish to rediscover the historical roots and to provide the nations with the narration of a shared Carib-Indian heritage to ground a transnational collective memory. Casa de las Américas debates participated in planting the seeds of a third-world archipelagic reimagined community.

Casa de las Américas, as a cultural institution, gave space to writers, poets, and novelists to enter the debate of the quincentennial. International writers were invited, such the Barbadian Edward Kamau Brathwaite, whose poetry has extensively dealt with Columbus (and who wrote the poem *Yo Cristóbal Colón* for this event, as we saw in Chapter 2); and the Nigerian Wole Soyinka, who wrote the forewords for the literary panel. But the line followed was that of the African roots, as in Fernández Retamar's rereading of the Cuban-Angolan journey as an inverted Columbus journey. Nancy Morejón's contribution, "Afro América, la invisible" (the Invisible Afro America), adopted a theoretical position indebted to Soyinka, and remapped the literary history of Cuba through the lens of the African and black component. She engaged in the debate of the 500th anniversary in the form of an analogy, proposing the concept of "our Afro America" as Miguel León Portilla, the president of the Mexican commission for the Encounter of the two Worlds, did with the concept of "Our Indigenous America." In the first part of her communication, Morejón's view resonates with the critical position of the Latin American intellectuals aforementioned: the genocide of the Indians, the falseness of the word Discovery, the plantation economy and slavery, and its resulting in transculturation, quoting Ortiz. But Columbus is never mentioned, neither as the discoverer of Cuba, nor as the one responsible for slavery and plantation. Rather, the key point of Morejón's paper consists in expanding the community called *Afroamérica* to the

diaspora: "Afroamérica como Amerindia esta diseminada por todo el continente / Afroamerica, like Amerindia, is disseminated all over the continent" (Casa de las Américas 1992, p.61); this was a way to allow the Cuban outside of Cuba, those who had long been considered traitors to the Nation, to reintegrate the national collective community, echoing the national politics at the time. In both cases, says Morejón, the colonial genocide left the culture disseminated in the form of a transculturated and transnational Indigenous and Afro America. This way, the contemporary nation belongs to a wider black third-world archipelago rooted in common black roots. Africa is not the mythical womb to recover, but a cultural component present at all levels of the Caribbean culture. The *anamnesis* of Africanity implies a journey of rediscovery of which the founding father for Morejón was the poet Nicolas Guillén. He was the poetic national discoverer of Afrocubanity, the one who articulated patriotism, nationalism, and africanism. Guillén becomes the one who joined two continents, the American New World (Latin America and the Caribbean) and Africa. This view echoes in a different style Fernández Retamar's transfer of Columbus's journey into the Cuban/African epic of the Angolan war.

The Cuban Columbus was an empty figure—an inoffensive puppet as in Carlos Fuentes's novel *El Naranjo*[18]—providing the rhetoric of resistance, insurrection, and solidarity that was already there in the Cuban National Revolutionary myth but that could be recycled in the new context of the "Special Period in Times of Peace."

Columbus in the Dominican Republic: Monumentalizing New Antecedents

With the oxymoron "new antecedents," I want to point at another kind of delusional Hispanic-Caribbean *anamnesis*. In the Dominican Republic, glorifying the souvenir of Columbus and of the Discovery was meant to project the image of a new, grand, and healthy country to the rest of the World, while masking and muffling unresolved memory traumas inside of the nation. The celebrations of the 500th anniversary of the Discovery were neither thought nor done for the Dominican people. They were orchestrated to suit the imagination of one man, President Joaquín Balaguer, echoing Ricoeur's views on rulers who are "zealous for glory." Balaguer's end of reign coincided with the anniversary, which became an opportunity to pay a tribute to himself, through an approach of Dominicanness indebted and perpetrating the 30 years of racist cultural politics of Trujillo.[19] It was also a time when the country was hoping to attract international investors and tourists on the island, and was seeking economic collaboration with the European Community,

thanks to privileged linguistic and historical bonds with Spain (Ferguson 1992). Both scenarios coincided in an extremely limited story of the past, and lead to the hyperbolic monumentalization embodied by the Columbus Lighthouse. The project of building a mausoleum to Columbus, on the one and only Caribbean island where he established a settlement, started and was abandoned under Trujillo. It finally came true under Balaguer's last years of power: the work started in 1986. The inauguration was planned on the anniversary day of the Discovery, October 12, 1992. It was meant to be the climax of festivities, to attract many tourists,[20] and to give a positive image of the country, erasing the dark shadow of Trujillo's dictatorship (Ferguson 1992). The visits of the Pope and of international heads of state were also announced. But things did not work out as initially planned: the story of Columbus 92 in the Dominican Republic is that of the total failure of the Dominican cultural nationalism.

To have a better sense of the delusional meaning of the construction, it's worth recalling that the Lighthouse is a huge building ($210 \times 59\ m^2$) and that its cost has been estimated to 70 million US dollars. At the inauguration, which finally happened on October 6, 1992, the Lighthouse projected in the sky of Santo Domingo the laser image of a red cross, which was the cross of the Spanish Catholic Kingdom and of Columbus's sail cloths. In a poor country where electricity is a rare good, the building of a purposeless lighthouse was indignant for the Dominican people. More than a mausoleum to Columbus, the cement monument was the symbol of Balaguer's political career. At that time there were a lot of Dominican jokes over the fact that the president, 86 years old at the time and blind, was not even able to see the laser red-cross projected by the lighthouse. During the inaugural ceremony, the (alleged) mortal remains of Columbus were transferred from the cathedral to the lighthouse. Pope John Paul II, on the island at the time, was not present on the occasion. He celebrated a mass in front of the Lighthouse a few days later, on the 11th, but he chose not to participate in any kind of event glorifying Columbus, given the extreme resentment of many Latin American countries toward such celebrations. In continental Latin America, Christopher Columbus was indeed mainly considered responsible for the genocide of native Arawaks, Taínos, and Caribs.

As a result, the Dominican commemorations did not give birth to any collective jubilation or public debate among the Dominicans, unlike what happened in Puerto Rico. The population was not much interested in participating in the festivities; the Dominicans seemed tired of Balaguer's recycling of Trujillo's national and racial politics. Nevertheless, the strong discontent and the criticism of the Lighthouse encouraged some historians to wish for a more complete *anamnesis* of the past. They enhanced the Hispanic heritage

as a window to recover the Taíno and indigenous history of their island, like in Puerto Rico. They did not condemn Columbus but toned down his deeds by remembering the Taíno culture, in a similar folkloric tone as the Puerto Rican official celebrations. Black culture and the history of African slavery were very little represented, and when they were represented, it was to remind that the native Indians suffered in the *encomienda* as much as the black slaves did in the plantation. The reason for silencing the remembrance of the black cultural component of Dominicanness was not based on the myth of an idealized miscegenation like in the Free Associated State of Puerto Rico, but on an ongoing history of violence between the Dominican Republic and Haiti. If Hispanic origins were praised in Borinquen as a counterweight to American acculturation, they were put forward in Hispaniola as a protective shield against the *peligro negro* represented by Haiti.

A good example of alternative commemoration is Hugo Tolentino Dipp's *Los Mitos del Quintocentenario* (1992).[21] Built like a prosecution against Balaguer's grandiose manipulation of the commemorations, the book demystified the tales of the official Dominican Columbus 92 but proposed another extremely nationalist, and hence selective, version of the meaning of national collective remembrance. The prologue, strongly patriotic, declares the author's pride of being Dominican, and praises true national identity, still unrecognized internationally because of the cultural dichotomy between the Spanish colonial origin on one hand, and the American influence during the US occupation of the island, on the other.[22] The book is dedicated to Gregorio Luperón,[23] founding father of the Dominican nation, and the Epigraph quotes Las Casas—"the mouth who lies kills the soul"—announcing that the author's posture will be on the side of truth and of justice.

Five myths of the quincentenary—one for each hundred years—are deconstructed in the text. First, the commemoration of the "Encounter between two cultures" is criticized for it celebrates foreign non-Dominican heroes like Columbus and the kings of Spain. Second, the commemoration of Columbus himself is absurd for Tolentino Dipp, who quotes extracts of the mariner's diary to prove that he did not make any attempt to understand and interact with the Indians, but instead, made some of them slaves and sent them by force to Spain. The author does not pursue any deeper condemnation and even refuses in explicit terms to turn the book into the prosecution of Columbus. In fact, the latter is not made responsible for the genocide of the natives or for slavery at large. Instead, the author wants to make a point that Columbus should not be part of the national commemorations because he was not Dominican. The question about how good or bad a man he was is simply out of topic for Tolentino Dipp; his war horse is Dominicanness and Patriotism, which, for him, should be the only

reasons to launch expensive and public commemorations. In short, Tolentino Dipp is not contesting memorial monumentalization *per se*, but saying that the object of the celebrations was not well oriented, and that they should have been constructed for the Dominicans and to reinforce their feeling of national belonging. Tolentino Dipp's views are therefore quite close to Cuba's approach to national commemorations, in the format at least: based on the belief that public space is a platform for constant celebration and reinforcement of national patriotism. Such a view is not surprising if we keep in mind the fact that the author has been a long-time member of the Dominican Revolutionary Party.

The third myth contested is the myth that Spain brought civilization to the Dominican Republic. Here the counter-argument is based on the description of the *encomienda* system, the enslavement of the Indians and eventually the blacks brought from Africa. For the author, this happened after 1492 and the person responsible for this was not Columbus but Nicolas de Ovando. There again, the Dominican Republic, like Cuba, absolved Columbus. Concerning African slavery, Tolentino Dipp tries to keep his argument as little passionate as possible: black slaves were very expensive, in comparison to Indians that the Spaniards had for free. They were therefore better treated than the Indians and this is why the latter died massively, not because they were less resistant. If such an argument does not deny the suffering of black slaves, it is nevertheless an obvious twisted tale to reinforce the heroization of Indians and silence the story of African slavery. The myth of Christian evangelization, fourth on the list of the delusions attached to the celebration of the quincentenary, is criticized strongly for the same reason, since it led to violence against the Indians.

At last, the myth of the Spanish Identity of the Dominicans is considered critically. Tolentino Dipp recalls that the Dominican Republic is the only Hispanic Caribbean country that wanted to again become a Spanish colony is 1861. The author laments it and wishes for celebrations of more Dominicanness. In the official commemorations, Spanishness has been put forward to clean the Dominican identity of any African lineage, following Trujillo's racist politics.[24] On the contrary, Tolentino Dipp points at the fact that the black slaves contributed to the Dominican Culture and that the history of slavery should be more represented in the collective remembrance (but it does not mean that that is what he himself does in his book). Interestingly, the blacks that the author includes in the national patrimony belong to the past and to the times of slavery. If he praises a more inclusive collective national memory, Taíno and African, Tolentino Dipp remains extremely vague and quite at the surface of things when criticizing cultural alienation: "a la cultura de la dependencia hay que oponer la cultura de la necesidad dominicana, hacer

de nuestro ethos nacional la imagen de lo que verdaderamente somos como resultado de todas nuestras experiencias históricas." (Tolentino Dipp 1992, p.163).

How did the Dominican participation in Núñez de Jiménez's trip fit in such limited *anamnesis* of the past? The Dominican edition of the report, published in 1994, with the support of the colonial city of Santo Domingo as part of the special *quincentenario* editions, reflected as much the perspective of Balaguer's scenario focused on the glorification of Columbus, and the alternative heroizing of the Taínos, as proposed by Tolentino Dipp. The prologue, written by the Cuban José Juan Arrom, professor of Latin American Studies at Yale University at the time, presents Núñez Jiménez's expedition as the fifth journey that Columbus would have dreamt to realize. Arrom develops the analogy between Columbus's journey, his three caravels, and his crew of mariners on one side, and Núñez Jiménez and the canoes Hatuey and Bolívar on the other. He celebrates the presence of women on board as a sign of collaboration and fraternity. The book, entitled *En canoa por el mar de las Antillas* (Canoeing the Antillean Sea), reported the second and Caribbean journey only, departing from the Venezuelan coast and arriving in San Salvador. Based on a selection and extracts of Núñez Jiménez's diary, it is striking to see that the editing created a certain othering of the black Caribbean component, minimized, exoticized, or Africanized as something that did not belong to *hispanidad* and to the Hispanic/Dominican Caribbean, hence described as foreign. This is obvious in the parts related to the arrival of the canoes in Jamaica, while describing the Rastafari community, and in Haiti, described as a land of poverty, misery, and drums with statements as stereotypical as: "it is Africa here." The French Caribbean is also exoticized as a foreign post-plantation society, praised for their rum, without any deeper attempt to see Caribbean cultural connections between the islands. Basically, the non-Hispanic Caribbean is described as an unknown territory. The book's conclusion asks the question, "What is the Caribbean?" and answers by praising the creation of a Caribbean federation that would unite the islands despite of their distance.

It is clear that the main *anamnesis* in the Dominican Republic was based on a strong nationalism that did not invite to a Latin American or Caribbean belonging, even if attempts of that kind existed on the periphery of the commemorations, as reflected by the limited Dominican participation in the Cuban expedition. The latter reflected a very shy proposal to open Dominicanness to a regional third-world Spanish-speaking federation. If we think that the form of the scientific expedition was a common instrument of surveillance and control of a region by the European empires in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Pratt 1992), it is puzzling to see that the

Dominican *anamnesis* in 1992 seemed to revive such a colonial gaze while looking at anything Caribbean outside of the national identity. It reveals the closure and isolation of the collective imagination, and the strong frontiers into which the post-Trujillo era was still enclosing national memory, limiting any attempt to enlarge the discussion on heritage.

The Cultural Reactions to Columbus 92: Memory Strikes Back

On the three islands, cultural actors stepped in the debate of collective memory, and proposed their own stories of how Caribbean should be commemorated. They prioritized the need to open a collective debate about heritage, national identity, and the role and meaning of Caribbean roots in the Puertorican-, Cuban-, and Dominican-ness at the dawn of the twentieth century. I have selected the works of writers and artists positioned as much inside and outside of the official mythologies, for they reflected on the effort to remember collectively and publicly, in more ambivalent and flexible approaches than the official commemorative discourses on their respective island. Yet, they used the opportunity of the mainstream official memory (state-funded events, competitions, and publications) to create a niche for debating national identity within the institutional culture. This is an important point in order to understand the subtle mechanism with which the cultural actors in the Hispanic Caribbean islands free themselves from nationalistic scenarios of memory. In my view, it is inaccurate to examine the mechanics of national culture in the Hispanic-Caribbean only in terms of dissidence on one hand and propaganda on the other. Though both positions certainly do exist, the more interesting and popular cultural products are proposed by writers, artists, and intellectuals whose priority is to deal with the concerns of the people who live on the island. Those cultural actors have a foot in the institutional state culture, from where they can open up critical perspectives. Their works give space to criticize the system in which they are nevertheless participating as citizens. Some literary genres and artistic disciplines seemed more flexible to integrate the regional Caribbean heritage in the story of the origin of the nation-island, depending on each island cultural politics. Two major cultural reactions to the official commemorations can be identified in the productions at the time.

The first one consisted in totally silencing Columbus in order to allow for a real debate on memory. In Puerto Rico, removing Columbus from the cultural scene allowed one to propose a more complex version of heritage than the official stories that mostly glorified the character in literary texts.[25] It is therefore in the field of popular art and performance that the more interesting contributions for debating Columbus 92 happened. The sculptor and

architect Jaime Suárez proposed a non-folkloric and anthropological recovery of the indigenous heritage to engage with the Puerto Rican people in their capital city in a meaningful fashion. His *Tótem Telúrico* won the architecture competition launched by the Puerto Rican Commission for the Celebration of the Fifth Centennial, in September 1991, after it was selected by a mostly Latin American jury.[26] The monument is a cement column, 12 meters tall and 1.2 meters in diameter, covered with fragments of ceramics, found during the excavation of the old San Juan during the renovation of the military casern of Ballajá (one of Hernández Colón's biggest commemorative projects as we mentioned earlier). The very top of the sculpture represents the map of a pre-Columbian city, before the Spanish colonial arrival. Placed in the middle of the Fifth Centennial square (*plaza del quintocentenario*), the sculpture has become a very popular spot in San Juan, which everybody knows and considers part of their national patrimony, and 30 years after its erection, it is still a meeting point for younger and older Puerto Ricans in their everyday life.

Jaime Suárez's artistic career is characterized by a quest for recovering the origins and primary roots of the Américas; as a consequence, earth—by extension clay, ceramics, and any telluric material—has been for him a major element of inspiration. Since the 1970s, he has been experimenting with the modelling, painting, and sculpture of clay, as a way to narrate the primary origin of individual and collective identity.[27] He started to work on the concept of trace, diverting the traditional use of clay for making objects; instead, he used rough clay as an engraving board and created the *barrografías*, meaning "writings on clay" in Spanish, a new type of clay engravings. In the 1990s, he experimented with liquid clay on paper, creating maps and cartographic drawings after the wet clay had been left drying up on paper, either on the floor or hanging from the ceiling. For Suárez, this was a way to reflect on the deeper meaning of the Puerto Rican identity.

With time, Suárez moved from a quest and reflection on origin, as a philosophical concept, to public art. He turned his artistic motivation to the community, to unite the feeling of belonging and identity of the Puerto Ricans, in resonance with the political dilemmas of his fellow citizens. His *Tótem telúrico* participated in the artist's interest for collective memory and its representation in the public space. As said by art critic Margarita Fernández Zavala, "the *Tótem telúrico* revealed the multiple cultural layers that constitute our history as a people. It exposed stratas of incomplete historical moments, of forgotten and erased parts of our collective identity" (Fernández Zavala 2006). Suárez wanted to materialize collective remembrance in a symbolic object that could tell their story to the Puerto Rican citizens of 1992, inviting them to feel closer to their indigenous roots, and to belong to a wider

Latin American kinship. He compared his work to a historical narration, very close to what I have constantly defined as anamnesis in this chapter: "This Column-totem in ceramics is erected as a monument to commemorate the earth of America, our womb, of which the fragments are the guardians of the mysteries of our identity and of who we are. Like a Trajan column telling us our story" (García Gutiérrez 2009).

The totem was controversial on the island, epitomizing the tensions between official commemorative views on one hand, and the popular need and wish of the Puerto Rican people to appropriate for themselves their national heritage, on the other. Despite the fact that *Tótem telúrico* was the winner of the official and national competition of art, the Governor was not very fond of Suárez's sculpture. He clearly would have preferred other candidates to win, namely those who proposed works made out of more noble materials than ceramics—despised as related to *artesanía* rather than art—and less conceptual sculptures, such as the ones proposed by the Spanish artists who represented the Encounter of the two worlds in more figurative manners. Later on in 2000, after the 1992 and 1998 commemorations were over, the president of the Chamber of representatives (*Camara de Representantes*) at the time, Edison Misla Aldarondo, tried to get rid of the monument and to replace it by a statue of the national hero Eugenio María De Hostos.[28] It shows in which little respect the state cultural nationalism considered non-figurative historical sculptures in general, and Suárez's in particular, whose name was not even pronounced on the day of the inauguration. But the Puerto Ricans reacted firmly against removing their totem and it has since stayed in the middle of the square. Suárez understood the desire of his fellow citizens to have their identity praised beyond the didactic and limited political lessons offered by the Free Associated State. This implied avoiding any figurative representations of Christopher Columbus, which would have been considered a masochistic reminder of the status of Puerto Rico as a nation-state of twice colonized subaltern citizens.[29]

Performance is the other platform where a critical view to the official commemorations was creatively developed in Puerto Rico. Playwright Roberto Ramos Perea adopted a very ironic and critical position with the play *Mistiblú*, performed in the *Teatro Ateneo Puertorriqueño* of San Juan de Puerto Rico in 1991. Avoiding not only Columbus but also the Taínos, Ramos Perea exploited the symbolic time-length of 500 years at the heart of the upcoming celebrations to criticize the official discourses on historical memory, which he considered trapped in a sterile, endless, and absurd political dilemma. Instead, he proposed a tragic and grotesque story, infused with the themes of memory, discovery, and colonization, to expose and question the pathological collective memory of the Puerto Rican citizens. The play begins with Casanova's

first arrival in the New World, chasing the famous alchemist Count of Saint Germain. The play states that the Count invented a magic potion for eternal life, called Mistiblú: each drop of this potion gives 100 year of extra life.

The two historical characters are at the heart of the ironic-allegorical device of the play.[30] On one hand, we have an ageing Casanova losing his sexual vigor and wanting to have at any cost some potion to perpetuate endlessly his life of debauchery. On the other hand, Saint Germain escaped Europe to hide on the small Caribbean island of Puerto Rico after taking five drops of Mistiblú: he cannot stand the pain of being condemned to live 500 years, of which he has already lived 214 when the play starts. When he appears on stage in Scene II, Saint Germain is holding a skull, like Hamlet, desperate to find the antidote that could allow him to die: the sorcerer is desperate to end the curse of his own discovery. Ramos Perea is clearly exploiting the ironic potential of the two commemorations that were going to contaminate his country: 1992, as the symbol of 500 years of European origins; and 1998, marking 200 years of American dependence.

In the rest of the play, Casanova is going to be tricked by Saint Germain and used as a guinea pig to try the first version of an antidote, given to him as if it was Mistiblú. The ingestion of this counter-potion first diminishes Casanova's sex appeal, annihilates his sexual vigor, and eventually kills him. Delighted to see that he found the right recipe for death, Saint Germain takes a whole bottle of what he believes is the antidote; but, in the euphoria, he gets distracted and drinks a whole bottle of Mistiblú, therefore condemning himself to eternity.

Mistiblú is a critical reflection on the pathological relationship that the Puertoricans have with their historical and national memory. It is therefore a political parabola of the perpetual economic and mental colonization of the island, which is responsible for the delusions of national identity, as Ramos Perea put it in April 1992, precisely when the expectations of the Governor of Puerto Rico regarding the upcoming celebrations were at their peak:

> Do I really need to explain that my country, unable to determine its own destiny, annihilates day after day its real pain, with worn-out euphemisms like 'Christian People/Christian morality,' 'Hispanic roots,' 'united family,' 'bread, land and liberty,' 'democracy,' '500 years of history,' among many other 'narratives' as Lyotard would put it, that have lost their meaning and which imposition made my people an enemy to himself.
>
> (Ramos Perea 1993, p.178)

The plot of the play is based on two delusional versions of the memory syndrome in Puerto Rico, summarized by the Count when saying that "the puertoricans celebrate everything, even there humiliations," (Ramos Perea

1993, p.182). Casanova refuses to admit that his glorious times are over. His sexuality in decline is a metaphor of Europe's colonial past: "The entire Europe was mourning the death of the famous phallus. The desinflated lover needed now eternal life, perpetual erection" (Ramos Perea 1993, p.179).

The quest for eternity and monumentalization—so well embodied by the hyper-commemorative spirit of the fifth centennial in Puerto Rico—is criticized for being a delusional attitude of compensation and nostalgia, perpetuating the illusion of the possibility of the past when power and conquest were irresistible. Spain's interest for exploiting the opportunity of the anniversary and create economic bonds in the Spanish-speaking Americas reveals an attitude similar to Casanova's. For Ramos Perea, both Spain and Puerto Rico seemed to need their drops of Mistiblú, a name that, besides recalling the blue color of Viagra, hints at both the idea of mysticism and nostalgia.

The New World, and more specifically Puerto Rico, is portrayed as the laboratory of this memory manipulation and the setting of a fool's game between the two European reactionary attitudes, embodied by the two main characters. While Casanova wants to perpetuate the past at any cost, the Count of Saint Germain refuses to accept the slow process of life, in resonance with the slow process of mourning described by Freud and analyzed by Ricoeur as the hard work of remembrance, that we examined in the previous paragraph: "Despues de tomar el Mistiblú, no hay vuelta atrás. No hay antídoto. Solo esperar a que pasen los siglos y entonces, solo entonces/After taking some Mistiblú, there is no coming back. Just need to wait until the centuries go by, and only then." (Ramos Perea 1993, p.182). Saint Germain wants an antidote to erase the effects of the potion, to pretend that things did not happen, to end up with life and therefore, to stop remembering.

The perpetuation of memory, triggered by a perpetual desire of expansion on one side and the oblivion on the other, close to the disease defined by the historian Sued Badillo, are equivalent and sterile attitudes for Ramos Perea. His fellow citizens are hiding their historical pains, disguising them in delusional celebrations that are collective lies, like the one with which Casanova is being tricked and killed. Ramos Perea proposed to acknowledge and accept the humiliations implied by the colonization in order to resist to neocolonial forms of dominations, against the lukewarm and consensual cultural nationalism.

The third character of the play is the pop star Madonna. She plays a secondary role on stage and is part of the ironic device of Ramos Perea. At the time he wrote the play, Madonna was an international singer, famous for her blasphemous attitudes in her concerts in which she would mix sexual pauses with symbols of Catholicism. In the play, Madonna is described as a blond material girl, in reference to one of her famous songs, melancholic and

frustrated because of the lack of sexual appetite of her master Saint Germain, and with mixed feelings of attraction and disgust for Casanova. Accessorized as a symbolic device in the play as was the potion Mistiblú, the popular blond icon, standing in between two historical and European characters of the sixteenth century, brought the public closer to the story and recontextualized it in their present thanks to anachronism and caricature.[31]

Both Suárez's sculpture and Ramos Perea's play were successful among the Puerto Ricans and can be defined as part of the popular historical culture on the island. It reveals that beyond the "too much memory" syndrome orchestrated by the cultural nationalism, there was a desire in the society to engage with a more productive mourning of the past and to deal with the repercussions of the meaning of identity in contemporary Puerto Rico.

The second attitude was to give voice and humanize the persona of Columbus. In Cuba, we saw that the official position was to redeem Columbus, but without talking much about him, in order to stay in tune with the anti-Columbus tone of continental Latin America. As a result, Cuban writers who wanted to push further the national debate purposely exploited and developed the figure of Columbus in their work, as a foreign adventurer who travelled to the New World, within allegorical scenarios that projected the social issues, fears, and hopes that the Cuban people were going through at the time on the island: when the end of the USSR was starting to have very tough economic consequences for Cuba in 1992, those issues mostly concerned the paucity of food and primary goods, and the dilemma of saving the socialist ideals while opening to tourism and foreign money.

With the book *La Aventura Cubana de Cristóbal Colon*,[32] historian Francisco Pérez Guzmán told the story of Columbus's encounter with the beauty of the island of Cuba during his first two voyages. In nine chapters, Columbus diary and letters are interpreted by the writer, in the manner of a guided reading of Columbus's words, with very loose scholarly references, but with quotations in inverted comas mixed with Pérez Guzmán's own words all along the book, to simplify the reading effort. The text is clearly a vulgarization of the history of the Discovery for the Cuban reader of 1992. The author points at what Columbus could not say at the time, but should and would have said, had he had the knowledge of a Cuban historian like Pérez Guzmán. The latter glosses the diary in order to bring it closer to his Cuban contemporary reader. Thanks to anachronism, he complements Columbus's thoughts and words, taken freely from his diary and letters, with detailed descriptions of the landscape, the geography, the climate, the plants, the fruits, and the habits of the Taíno Indians. As a result, *the Cuban Adventure of Christopher Columbus* becomes the travel book of Columbus after being corrected and improved by

a Cuban historian: Columbus was *honesto pero equivocado*, honest, but wrong (Pérez Guzmán 1992, p.174).

It is Columbus as a foreigner on the island that is represented in an almost fictional fashion: the character, as a botanist, an ornithologist, a naturalist, and an ethnographer, is under the spell of the beauty of the island—plants, birds, and landscape—and is described as being mesmerized by its ecological balance. This is very far from the image of the colonizer willing to exploit at any cost the resources of the New World for the Kings of Spain. Through this peaceful scenario of encounter between two worlds, the book commemorates and celebrates the resources of the Island of Cuba at the time of Columbus's arrival, with an emphasis on the nutritional quality of the fruits of the island, to the point that Cuba becomes the provider of the vitamins that improved longevity in Europe: "Sin duda, a partir de aquel día en Gibara, el horizonte nutricional de Europa se enriquecido y contribuyo a incrementar la expectativa de vida/ Without a doubt, since the day in Gibara, the nutritional future of Europe improved and the life time length increased in Europe" (Pérez Guzmán, p.48).

The historian then becomes a nutritional adviser, listing in details the quantities of calories, proteins, carbohydrates, fibers, grease, and vitamins provided by the tropical fruits on the island:

> Revisemos para 100 gramos de la porción del fruto, como se comportan los indicadores nutricionales. En calorías, el aguacate, mamey, níspero, caimito y el anón se ubican en la categoría de buenas. No así el mamoncillo, la guanábana, el marañon, la guayaba y la piña. En este renglón, el aguacate y el níspero parecen como los máximos exponentes con 110 y 133 calorías respectivamente. En proteínas, vuelven a incluirse en la relación de buenos el aguacate, níspero, caimito y el anón, este ultimo con la cifra mas elevada de 2,8g.
>
> (Pérez Guzmán, p.48)

This kind of discourse would be surprising in a text telling the story of Columbus's arrival in Cuba, unless we remember that the major preoccupation of the Cubans at the time was to find food and to compensate for what they did not have any more since the USSR was not any longer exporting the primary goods to the island. The book praises strategies to rediscover what is available on the island, going back to the land, with a view to use its natural resources. Slowly drifting from historical dietary reconstitution (dealing with what Columbus and his mariners ate in Cuba and how they were able to fight the scorbut and many diseases thanks to the tropical fruits) to a description in the present tense of the amount of vitamins and nutritional needs for a man, a woman, and a child, the historical vulgarization of the story of Columbus becomes a nutritional leaflet guiding the Cubans on the best strategies to cope

with the lack of food on the island, bringing the awareness from the scope of historical knowledge to the field of public health:

> En la actualidad, se acepta que un lactante necesita 30mg diarios de vitamina C; el adulto, 70mg y la embarazada, 100mg. Con 50g de guayaba o marañon y 200g níspero, guanábana y piña, se satisfacen las necesidades de las personas. [. . .] Para evitar el beri-beri, el hombre requiere alrededor de 1,5mg de vitamina B1 y los niños menores de un año necesitan 0,4mg. Si tenemos en cuenta frutas como la guayaba con 0,5mg, la guanábana 0,7mg, el aguacate 0,7mg, el mamoncillo 0,05g y la piña 0,08g podemos apreciar su contribución en suministrar B1.
>
> (Pérez Guzmán, p.50)

This was a way to make the story of Columbus's arrival in 1492 meaningful for the Cuban readers of 1992, to comfort and train them to identify the resources they could grow and find by themselves on the island. While the fruits have nutritional value, the plants have medicinal virtues:

> En realidad Colón no podía imaginar que cuando admiraba la flora cubana por su intenso verde, frondosidad, altura y flores de multiplicidad de colores y formas, también registraba un don extraordinario: medicinal. La palma real, tan admirada por el, es un diurético efectivo. La raíz se emplea para expulsar piedras de la orina. La grasa extraída de la semilla del corojo se usa para las enfermedades inflamatorias de las articulaciones.
>
> (Pérez Guzmán, p.87)

The list continues through three pages. Each time, the author highlights the natural patrimony of the island forgiving Columbus for not being aware of it. Finally, Pérez Guzmán also lists the subterranean resources of the Cuban land, giving hope that goods other than sugar, the first resource exported to the ex-USSR, would be exploitable:

> Colón no sabía, ni podía saber, que aquellas tierras del norte elogiadas por su belleza y otras mas al sur que visitaría en el segundo viaje guardaban en el subsuelo manifestaciones de hierro / magnetita, hematita en proporciones altas, abundantes manganeso y cobre / calcopirita, materita, bauxita, cromita, pulimetálicos y mineralización sulfurosa / birita, entre otros.
>
> (Pérez Guzmán, p.125)

The author carefully selects the episodes of Columbus's story according to two main scenarios. First, Columbus is depicted as a foreigner who could not understand how exceptional Cuba was—like the United States, and the capitalist world at large, has been incapable of understanding socialism. Cuba's

national destiny is to be that of an exceptional island, and Cubans should neither be afraid of their future not frightened about the opening of the frontiers to foreigners. Rather, they should continue to be proud of their island and to keep it as pure as possible by protecting it from the influence of the West. Second, Cuban citizens are reminded that their island does not need help from the outside, and that they should not be anxious about the restrictions following the end of the privileged relationship with the USSR. This is a way to reassure the population but also to give some justification to the terrible lack of primary goods that was striking the island on those early years of the Special Period.

El Ojo del Rey, written by Julio Ramón Pita in 1996, is a historical epistolary novel, this time exploiting the fictional potential of the myth of Columbus at sea. The author uses an archaist style, with old Spanish words and grammar, to increase the historical dimension of the text and rewrite some well-known moments of the story of Columbus's crossing the Atlantic. Divided into two parts, the novel is told from the perspective of a spy for the King of Spain, nicknamed *el ojo del rey*, "the King's eye." The first part consists of a series of letters exchanged between the spy and King Fernando: they describe the preparation of the first voyage, from December 1491 in the port city of Huelva, to the departure on September 4, 1492, from La Gomera. The second part is The Eye (*el ojo*)'s narration of his journey with Columbus on the Niña until the arrival in Cuba. In both parts, the reader is invited to follow the narrator's doubts about Columbus's intentions, and the evolution, in a daily report written on board, of his feelings for the Chief Captain (*El Gran Capitan*). In fact, all the negative preconceived ideas that the spy had against Columbus are dissipated gradually, and his admiration for Columbus grows deeper during the voyage at sea.

Columbus is described and celebrated as humble and reliable, and as a man able to deal with any critical situation on board. He is a man of action and a leader, able to get his men out of the worst scenario, not quite in the middle of the Sierra Maestra or on the eastern coast of Cuba like Fidel Castro and Che Guevara did, but at sea. The epic tone of the novel is clearly pointing at the epic of the Cuban revolution in the manner of an allegory: "El Almirante, el Señor Colón, el genovés humilde sube a bordo y ordena izar las velas. El viento es bondadoso y las hincha sin regate. Las costas de Gomera se tornan ya una forma brumosa. Desaparecen. Es mar abierto." (Pita, p.38). The name "Chief Captain" points at a military rank, recalling some of the leaders of the revolution. Like the latter managed to put their charisma into the service of the people and design a route for the country, the Captain of the Niña, at a moment of great anxiety at sea when the winds were not favorable to the sailing and when all the mariners were frightened of the possibility that they

would never to reach the land, managed to reassure his men and be efficient to achieve success in the journey:

> ¡ Cómo no admirarse de su boludez y su disposición para sacudir el esqueleto de las tres carabelas y empujarlas como sea, con el mismo aire de sus pulmones si faltase el viento! [. . .]¡ Ah, Señor! Si le hubieseis visto levantar su dedo índice amarfilado en dirección a la estrella del norte, rebosando el deseo de embrujo que dominaba a sus lobeznos de mar.
>
> (Pita, p.43)

Reading such a description of Columbus, the Cuban readers would have in mind a major episode of the Cuban Revolution that happened at sea. In November 1956, Fidel Castro left Mexico with 82 Cuban fighters on the boat *Granma* to land in Cuba in December. Though the military expedition was a failure, since the boat ran aground, the episode is part of the highly celebrated moments of the revolution, as part of the chain of events that started with the attack of the Cuartel Moncada in July 1953 and ended with the Victory of the revolutionary guerilla in 1959. The *Granma* literally got stuck in the mangrove as Columbus's caravel is stuck in the middle of the Caribbean Sea. Like Fidel, Columbus exhorted his men to continue to believe, and eventually led his expedition to a success.

It is no surprise then that while making a distinction between two types of men in the world, the narrator puts Columbus on the side of the achievers, who had charisma and faith to transform their dreams into reality and to convince the others that nothing was impossible. Indeed, Columbus in the text has the capacity to unite his troops: "Nada de conjuros, Alteza. Ni golpes, ni amenazas, ni consultas de horóscopo. Sólo habló. Habló atando palabras y estrellas. ¡Ni el mismísimo Rey Salomón le alcanzaba entonces" (Pita, p.42). Columbus in the novel is not a representation of Fidel Castro, but he has some aptitudes and talents to which the Cuban reader will be sensitive finding them characteristics of their leader; among them is the art of giving long discourses.

Quite similarly to Pérez Guzman's use of anachronism, the story of Columbus at sea imagined by Ramón Pita is also in resonance with the doubts, the anxieties, and the hopes of the Cubans at the time of the Special Period. Columbus's story at sea is framed as a national allegory. Indeed, the Special Period in Times of Peace was a challenging moment for Cuba, when a new route was to be found, but when it was a worry not to sully the achievements of the revolution. In the novel, Columbus's mariners become terrified when they learn from two members of the crew that the hands of the compass, no matter what, are indicating the west of the North Pole. Columbus

will reassure them and convince them to keep faith in the fact that they will reach the New World. Similarly, Cuba in the Special Period was like a floating boat unstoppably driven to opening and negotiating with the West and capitalism after the loss of their major ally, the Eastern Block. The text therefore emulates the epic moments when a nation sticks together behind their leaders, in which they trust, to adjust the compass and find their new way.

Additionally, some elements of the novel can be read as direct references to the social transformations accompanied by this moment of adjustment, presented as temporary at the time. For example, the beginning of Columbus's journey, with the mention of the open sea (mar abierto), starts with the dreams of Columbus's crew and their idealization of the New World as a place for gold and for lascivious women. It is difficult not to think about the situation of Cuba at the time, who was opening to foreign currencies, foreigners, and tourism, among which sexual tourism was an important component: "Tierras donde las mujeres exceden en mucho el número de sus varones, y están deseosas de que llegue algún extranjero para refocilarse con él, y donde el aire huele a hembras maduras y a hembras que se pudren" (Pita, p.40). The word *extranjero*, meaning foreigner, is noticeable as a contemporary word within a text written with an archaist style; the term resonates with the context in which the novel was written and Pita was surely conscious that his Cuban reader in 1996 would associate the lascivious Indian women that the Spanish mariners dreamt to possess with the Cuban women selling themselves for fresh foreign currency after prostitution had increased on the island with tourism.

The arrival to Cuba happens in the last 20 pages of the novel and presents an idealized perspective on the good Taíno Indian, in tune with the Latin American 1992 commemorations. The Indians are described as beautiful, dark skinned, and naked, as a sign of their innocence. Nowhere is the violence of the encounter mentioned. Instead, the Taínos are presented as a peaceful people, in front of whom the narrator is mesmerized: described as healthy adult children. In this description lies a representation of the Cuban New Man, at the heart of the National myth, innocent men who showed a new humanist route to the entire world. As in Pérez Gúzman, Cuba is presented as the most beautiful land ever seen and as Paradise on earth, glossing Columbus's diary in order to celebrate the myth of a united nation with an exceptional destiny.

Given that the revolution modelled a strong feeling of collective identity and national pride in Cuba, the presence of Columbus in the commemorative literature of the 1990s could appear puzzling. But rather than a whimsical historical fascination, we can see that Columbus was an instrument to manipulate memory: the story of his journey and arrival in Cuba was adapted to

resonate with the collective anxieties and fears felt by the population in their present, at the time of the Special Period. Mainly, the commemorative discourse had a view to comfort the Cuban people on the island and reinforce the collective faith in the exceptional destiny of Cuba at the heart of the national myth. As a matter of fact, no matter how positively Columbus is represented and fictionalized, the character does not stand for the Spanish heritage like it was the case in Puerto Rico and in the Dominican Republic. Columbus is a puppet with two local symbolic uses: either representing the arrival of the foreigners, the currencies, and tourism to Cuba, or standing for a military leader at sea able to achieve his dreams and lead his men to victory. The story of Columbus in the New World in fact gave a basis for imagining new fictional scenarios and repeating them to serve a national allegory and commemorate the national myth of the revolution.

In the Dominican Republic, the cultural actors stayed mostly at the periphery of the commemorative spectacle. They were reluctant to participate in the official commemorations organized by Balaguer's government, which, as we saw earlier, were unpopular among the Dominican people. The major cultural reaction to the commemorations on the island was therefore silence, and we can notice a striking absence of interest for exploiting Columbus or any other themes related to the Discovery in the literature and in the arts at the time. Quite representative is the fact that *Casa de Teatro*, one of the most active literary and cultural nurseries in the country, with annual literary competitions for short stories, novels, and plays, did not receive any manuscripts dealing with the 1992 commemorations. Even from an ironical and symbolical approach, the historical *anamnesis* of the Spanish colonization was not a theme on which the Dominican cultural actors wanted to focus their inspiration.

There is one exception though: Avelino Stanley's historical novel, *Al fin del mundo me iré*, published in 2006 but which he started to write in 1991with the 1992 commemorations in mind and with obvious references to the 500th anniversary of the Discovery.[33] Stanley is a famous and mediatized writer in the republic, specialized in the genre of the historical novel and in the vulgarization of Caribbean history to the wider audience. His work tends to disseminate historical knowledge with a view to emulate the Dominican nation and the feeling of patriotism of his readers, as shows his last book, *Los Valores en la vida de Juan Pablo Duarte*.[34] In *Al fin del mundo me iré*, published with the popular editorial Planeta, he celebrated the importance of both Columbus and the Taínos in the national heritage, in a story that, at the same time, redeemed two unpopular figures of the Dominican collective imagination, the Admiral Columbus and the cacique Guacanagarix, and erased the "Haitian problem" from the collective imagination.

The novel is about the encounter between the two men in an idealized fashion, after Columbus's arrival, not in 1492 but in 1481, in the *cacicazgo* of Marién, a territory ruled by Guacanagarix in the northwest of the island.[35] The plot is mostly focused on the mutual fascination between Columbus and Guacanagarix, tainted with the romantic story of the nonreciprocal infatuation of the cacique for the Genovese. The novel consists of 51 chapters equally giving voice in first-person pronoun to Columbus and Guacanagarix, both alternatively narrators of the story. The novel ends with Guacanagarix's death, out of love despair, and with Columbus's last confession about his real encounter with the New World, which he kept a secret for 500 years.

Stanley's approach to historical fiction is pedagogical and entertaining. In this novel particularly, he manipulated the historical facts and their canonical version in the national collective imagination in order to create the basis of a scenario of marvelous encounter that would catch the interest of a popular audience by challenging their sense of historical awareness. Indeed, the historical fact, as any Dominican reader would know them since his school days, is that Columbus arrived in Marién in 1492 and that Guacanagarix let him build the fort of Navidad next to his village. When Columbus left the island, the rival tribes led by another cacique, Canoabo, attacked the Spaniards and destroyed the fort, a couple of months before Columbus's return to the island, on his second voyage in 1493. Guacanagarix is famous in the Dominican collective imagination for having refused to participate in the rebellion led by Canoabo and his wife Anacaona, and he is remembered as a traitor to his people and as an ally of the Spaniards.[36]

Stanley rewrites this version in the novel in order to redeem both Columbus and the cacique from their respective sins, colonization, and antipatriotism. His point was to create feelings of empathy and forgiveness toward the contrition of Columbus and an infatuated Guacanagarix, in order to stimulate the Dominican readership to rediscover their past beyond the polemics of the quincentenary. The first historical distortion in Stanley's thesis is that Columbus's journey to Hispaniola in 1492 was in fact a return. Extrapolating a quote taken from Columbus's diary, when the latter mentioned "the last time he came,"[37] the author assumed that Columbus's first arrival to Hispaniola happened in 1481, when he was sailing from Portugal for the family Di Pietro, merchants in Genova, as the Captain of their commercial armada. In the novel, Columbus is actually named with his Portuguese name, Colom, and it is only at the very end of the story, in the extremely brief Chapter 37 describing the 1492 voyage, that Columbus will make a point in being called Colón, his Spanish name, as he was this time sent to the New World by the Spanish Crown. Second, Stanley extrapolated on Guacanagarix's feelings for Columbus. In the novel, the cacique falls deeply in love with Columbus

and because of his enamored feelings, refuses to fight against the Spaniards; instead, he erects a golden statue of Columbus, representing his features. The perspective of the novel is that those actions were motivated by love and not by patriotic betrayal. Homosexuality, mentioned as a natural inclination of the Taíno cacique, is also a strategic theme, considering the intolerance against homosexuals in the very catholic and traditional Dominican society. Using a love story between two historical male characters, both unpopular, and integrating passion as an alternative explanation of the weakness of the Taíno against the Spaniards, were part of Stanley's narrative provocation: he exploited the social and historical taboos of his society to offer an alternative scenario to the official commemorations, with a view to capture the interest of the Dominican readers who were saturated with Columbus-related celebrations. Stanley desacralized the official history of the colonization, against the monumental arrogance of the Dominican state; yet, he also proposed another kind of consensual reading of the Spanish conquest, and instead of dealing with war, enslavement, forced evangelization, and elements that would picture the extermination of the Taínos, he chose to displace the theme of violence to the field of emotions, feelings, and romance, using the strategies of the popular historical novel. The playful manipulation of historical memory in the text is meant to facilitate the collective reconnection of the Dominican reader with his Spanish and Indian heritages, and thanks to the lies of fiction, create a mourning process in the country, allowing the people to make peace with their past, as said by the title of Chapter 50: *El presente debe forjarse sobre un futuro sin rencores*/ The present needs to be built on a future without resentment. Aware of the negative reaction of the Dominicans toward Columbus's Lighthouse and Balaguer's national commemorative politics, Stanley's position was to humanize Columbus, using the style of the confession, thanks to which he could be forgiven and accepted within the national history. At the very beginning of the text, Columbus asks for forgiveness: "Ya no es mi voz de almirante la que habla, sino mis culpas. No importa que hayan pasado quinientos años de muerto; todavía mi alma anda vagando por los tugurios de la Tierra y ni siquiera a mis restos los dejan en paz" (Stanley 2006, p.11). Stanley clearly had in mind the celebrations of 1992, and in this sentence, Columbus refers to the transportation of his remains from the cathedral to the Lighthouse. The image of Columbus coming back as a spectral figure calling for redemption is certainly not new in Latin American literature, if we think about Alejo Carpentier's *The Harp and the Shadow* and Carlos Fuentes's *Christopher Unborn*. But Stanley used this device to humanize Columbus and facilitate an emotional bond with the reader, rather than to nourish a straightforward critical approach to the implications of remembering Columbus. Therefore, the first part of the novel tells the story of the

Genovese sailor before his arrival in the New World, when married and having a family life in Portugal. It eventually focuses on his adventures at sea and portrays him as a good Captain, with navigation skills, though avoiding the common hagiographic mystification. Stanley's idea is that the more the reader would know Columbus as a person, the more he would be inclined to redeem him as a historical character. Fiction is therefore giving humanity to the character, endowed with moral qualities, like his concern for his men on board; but he is not deprived of moral failures, like his appetite for glory, which grew with time until he took possession of Hispaniola in 1492.

In an exact parallel fashion, the cacique Guacanagarix is the chosen other narrator of the story; a more traditional choice would have been to focus on the hero Canoabo, but as we said, Stanley's approach was to unblock the taboos at the heart of the Dominican collective imagination and to redeem the figures that were problematic in the national myth. As a consequence, Guacanagarix is given the same chance as Columbus to be cleaned of the impure image with which he has always been remembered in the Dominican imagination. While the confession was the mode for creating empathy toward Columbus, it is the detailed story of Guacanagarix's infatuation and erotic desire for Columbus that serves as mitigating circumstances to account for the cacique's infamous refusal to fight against the Spaniards.

The book was clearly targeted for a popular audience. The title is a reference to a standard piece of Dominican popular music, quoting a famous bolero of Luis Kalaf ("aunque me cueste la vida, al fin del mundo me iré" / even if it costs me my life, I will go until the end of the world). Kalaf was a popular figure of the Dominican musical scene, mostly famous for his merengue songs.[38] Stanley's goal was to facilitate to his readers the understanding of past events. This is how we can interpret the didactic and explanatory digressions of both narrators: Columbus comments in detail on the conditions of navigation in the fifteenth century as to inform the modern readers; in parallel, the chapters of which Guacanagarix is the narrator regularly insert summaries of the main foundational myths of the Taínos, as well as descriptions of their daily life, like in a tour of a pre-Columbian museum exhibition, of which Guacanagarix would be the guide: "me han enviado los dioses para que hable un poco de las verdades de los taínos, pero desde nuestro punto de vista" (Stanley, p.34). In the same vein, all chapters have a very descriptive title that serves as summary and illustration of its content, in order to facilitate the reading effort.

Obviously, Stanley's romanticized story of the encounter of the two worlds is serving the cause of Dominican patriotism. Stanley's Columbus is a variation of the catholic *Christoforos*, not because he facilitated the evangelization of the Indians by bearing the Christ to the New World, but rather because

he is able to acknowledge his guilt, feel contrite, and therefore, be forgiven and reintegrate the Dominican collective memory in the twenty-first century. In parallel, Guacanagarix, represents the original and first culture of the island, and the Taínos as the cradle of the Dominican Republic. The miscegenation between Spaniards and Taínos is presented as the origin of the Dominican people, like in the emblematic Chapter 36, significantly entitled *El Rastro de los visitantes: los hijos que dejaron* / The Trace of the Visitors: The Sons They Left. I would say that this is when the mourning process becomes obviously manipulated by Stanley's own nationalist and patriotic reading of history. Indeed, the historical fictionalization allows us to erase totally the existence of the black nation of Haiti from the map. Guacanagarix is the cacique of Marién, a region set in Haiti, originally called Ayiti by the indigenous habitants. In the second sequence of the novel, Guacanagarix tells the myth of the birth of the Caribbean sea, which associates the origin of Dominicanness with a Taíno and Spanish encounter, erasing totally the story of black slavery and the existence of Haiti, the other part of Hispaniola, from collective memory.[39] The rivalries between the caciques are barely mentioned, and it seems that only love can explain why Guacanagarix did not participate in the rebellion against the Spaniards. The Dominican Republic is therefore described wholly as a *mestiza* island, born out of the marvelous encounter between the indigenous Taíno people and the Spanish colonizers. This utopia is proposing a version of Dominicanness that can suit one category of Dominicans and maintain the strong patriotic, often anti-Haitian, feeling of identity.

Cultural memory in the Hispanic Caribbean can certainly be critical of the mainstream state cultural nationalism. But it would be a mistake to interpret the artists' and writers' approach as being dissident or antinational. The cultural actors in the Hispanic Caribbean islands are megaphones of citizenships speaking directly to the people. They transport state cultural politics into the arena of popular culture, translating it into related topics and themes that can be more significant in people's everyday life.

The exploitation of Columbus on the cultural stage and in literature in 1992 shows how differently the three islands dealt with their heritage and recycled the past in their present. Cuba focused on the Special Period readjustments, while the Dominican Republic was concerned by reinforcing a patriotic Taíno Spanish collective imagination against the growing numbers of Haitian migrants. In Puerto Rico the spotlight was on the elections about the political status of the island. Historical memory seems to be organically linked with politics in the Hispanic Caribbean. It appears to be held by a hegemonic official culture, but its evolution is shaped by the work of cultural actors within popular culture.

CHAPTER 6

Christopher Columbus in the English Caribbean: Commemoration and Performance in Jamaica

The anti-Columbus protest that emerged in Jamaica at the time of the 500th anniversary was as strong as it was limited. It came almost exclusively from popular culture on the island, and it was not part of a wider, cohesive, and anti-commemorative project organized between the English-speaking islands of the region. Jamaica's response to the 1492–1992 anniversary mirrored the problem of individual-island nationalisms in the Caribbean, which is today limiting the strength that federative attitudes to collective memory might represent for the multiple Caribbean nations, if they were to unite politically by remembering together. Columbus-oriented scenarios in Jamaica show us how much collective memory in the Caribbean has been molded since the 1990s to fit with narrow nationalist stories of heritage that are still hindering the power of memory as a weapon with regard to matters of justice, pride, and identity.

It is worth considering that Columbus emerged as a meaningful symbol in the English Caribbean collective memory precisely at the time of the Federation of the West Indies. As a character from the Spanish colonial heritage, Columbus remained for a long time an outsider to West Indian historical memory. But during the period of the Federation of the West Indies just before the independence,[1] the Anglophone Caribbean islands united on the basis of their common historical heritage, of which European explorers were a part. As a result Columbus became a stock-character and anti-hero in the strategy for collective remembrance established by the Federation; together with other British navigators and sea merchants, like Hawkins, Raleigh, and Morgan,[2] he appeared as a symbol of imperial exploitation and therefore, became a trigger to memory in the English Caribbean imagination.

At the time to construct the independence in the late 1950s, the educated West Indian intelligentsia launched early postcolonial cultural projects to promote collective remembrance onstage. They intended to educate their peoples to remember together. This *anamnesis* was a challenge given the differences between the multiple islands of the archipelago and performance appeared to be the privileged vector for expressing collective identity and representing a common past and heritage. While Derek Walcott's federative theater focused on the European colonization in Trinidad, Rex Nettleford created the National Dance Theatre Company in Jamaica, mostly based on the commemoration of the rituals, religions, and body language of the slaves on the plantation. Imagined by the educated elite to touch the people, a play like Derek Walcott's *Drums and Colours* in 2002[3] and a dance show like Rex Nettleford's *Roots and Rhythm* in 1962[4] wanted to awake historical memory to federate feelings of belonging and solidarity between the different islands instead of raising their local differences. Columbus was not the central character of those works, but he was present in some of them, as a negative symbol, to unite the Anglo-Caribbean people.

In contrast, in 1992, the 500th anniversary of the European colonization of the New World did not give birth to any federative debate, neither among the elite nor onstage. As B. W. Higman noted, "no specific platform for a debate on the significance of Columbus in the History of the Caribbean was created, as was the case in 1988 for the 150th anniversary of emancipation" (Higman 1999, p.204). A few anti-celebration movements appeared locally but they were not part of a collaborative effort to question the notion of the discovery from a regional and extended Caribbean perspective. Remembering Columbus, and his relevance in Caribbean history, was not a federative topic among the former colonies of the British Empire in 1992. In fact, the reaction to the commemoration of the 500th anniversary of Columbus's arrival in the New World was limited to local initiatives in the Anglophone Caribbean. In general, the cultural actors on all the islands (artists, writers, and academics) strongly criticized what they considered to be a European and colonial commemoration and hailed instead their national identity by putting the emphasis on their non-European, African, Arawak, and Indian cultural roots. But if they really agreed that Columbus did not deserve any celebration, nothing like a collective anti-Columbus project between the main islands of the former Federation would have been necessary.

For Higman, "the problem with Columbus was that he was too easily cast in alternate roles of hero or demon" (Higman 1999, p.208). I believe that Columbus was in fact a rich and exploitable cultural symbol in the 1990s but only when articulated with the celebration of nationalism and

with the defense of a strong national heritage. It was the case in Jamaica, where Columbus was so unpopular that the Universal Negro Improvement Association led by Marcus Garvey junior renamed the October 12 "African day holocaust." The Jamaican perspective on 1992 was to consider history as a continuous struggle against oppression for 500 years. The first world and the globalized economy were blamed for perpetuating new forms of exploitation, imperialism, and economic slavery established by Columbus; the local heroes, from Nanny to Marley, were praised for their maroon resistance.

Nevertheless, in terms of commemorations and public celebrations in 1992, the Jamaican elite remained very shy. The state was not willing to invest either time or money in contesting the symbolic value of Columbus on the public stage. Interestingly, Rex Nettleford, who had not been particularly interested in staging Columbus in his 1960s choreographies, was among the few scholars who criticized the 500th anniversary openly.[5] In *Inward stretch, outward reach*, in 1993, he explained why Jamaica should not participate in any of the UNESCO events for commemorating "the Encounter of the two Worlds":

> The year 1992 must not be seen in terms of celebration of a quincentennial of "discovery" by an explorer whose accidental arrival, admittedly of great historical significance for humankind since 1492, has been distorted by the chroniclers and shapers of world history to herald and justify the exaggerated claims of one set of human beings in their subjugation of other sets of human beings. Those who were decimated by the cruelty of imported diseases and physical suffering through the exploitation of labour enough to earn the support of the Spanish cleric Las Casas, are not amused by the pratings of organisers and advocates of the Quincentennial Celebrations softened in UNESCO-ese rhetoric as the "Encounter of the Two Worlds."
>
> (Nettleford 1993, p.6)

The same year Nettleford was to participate and co-edit a volume for the Smithsonian Institution Press where scholars of different regions of the Caribbean proposed alternative views on the notion of discovery—anthropological, historical, cultural, or theoretical (Lawrence Hyatt and Nettleford 1995). Nettleford's contribution was a reaction to the colonial revival underneath the 1992 celebrations,[6] but such an explicit anti-commemorative view remained isolated in Jamaican cultural politics. Besides, Nettleford's essay was not as much addressed to the Jamaican people as to the First World, to whom the scholar wanted to make clear that the colonial debt was not erased (Nettleford 2001). The little interest for a debate on 1992 in the former West Indies on the part of the elite shows that the belief in

progress through federalism, which was the stamina of the early postcolonial anamnesis and performance, had faded with time. It also signals that the gap between national insularisms on one side and between popular culture and state politics on the other, of which both Walcott and Nettleford were very conscious in the 1960s, had become wider. This unveils the failure of the federative aesthetics that both Walcott and Nettleford, from different perspectives but with similar goals, had envisioned in the 1960s.

In fact, at the turn of the twenty-first century, it was not the educated elite but the popular performers who voiced and questioned the mutations of their Caribbean cultural identity and the meaning of memory and heritage. In the 1990s, *anamnesis* and performance happened on the musical stage in Jamaica, where music has been the strongest medium of nationhood and collective belonging. Therefore, this chapter will shed light on those Caribbean transcultural and popular performances that addressed and exploited the symbolic potential of Columbus onstage, from reggae to dub poetry. This will allow me to examine the function of Columbus in the Jamaican popular imagination, as well as the political, ideological, and cultural symbol he is for Jamaicans when addressing collectively their past, commemorate their heritage, and remember their origins. To understand the specific place Columbus held within the island's cultural anamnesis in the 1990s, I will first focus on the anti-Columbus tradition of Jamaican reggae and eventually examine his mutation from a stock-character in the 1970s/1980s reggae music, to a symbol for debating national identity in dub poetry in the 1990s. The second part of the chapter analyses the work of the dub poet Mutabaruka, and the commemorative dimension of his 1994 record *Melanin Man*. This album offered a platform to the Jamaican people for performing a critical *anamnesis* of their national heritage. I will examine in detail the two poems dedicated to Columbus to question their symbolic resonances with the meaning of the Caribbean heritage on the island.

Dubbing Columbus

Dub Poetry in Jamaica: Drama, Rhythm and Popular Performance

Dub poetry emerged from reggae and from the urban subculture of Kingston in the 1980s, after the void left by Bob Marley's death. The word "dub" comes from the English verb "to dub" and refers to the superimposition of words on a soundtrack or to the mixing of two tracks in the vocabulary of studio recording. The poet speaks over music—often, but not always, reggae—pacing his words on the drum and beat rhythm. Purists of dub poetry, such as Oku Onuora,[7] would say that a dub poem is "a poem that has a built-in reggae

rhythm; when the poem is read aloud without a reggae rhythm backing, one can distinctly hear the reggae rhythm coming out of the poem" (Habekost 1993, p.3).

Dub poetry is not reggae poetry. Such a definition would put too much emphasis on the music and would give the impression that words are just improvised performances on music, called "toastings" in Jamaica, such as the talk-over-music developed by the DJs in the 1960s, with the sound systems[8] phenomenon who improvised very creative rants on the flip side instrumental version of the disc they were scratching. Nor can we say that dub poetry is just poetry, despite the fact that dub poets call themselves poets: as an originally oral art, dub poetry is characterized by the mnemonic performance of the artists who mostly memorize their words by heart; however, some poets eventually publish their creations in poetry books. For the purpose of this chapter I am considering dub poetry to be a declaiming-over-music performance, onstage, in the studio recording, and specifically in Jamaica.

In reggae, it is not melody but rhythm that is the most important. In dub poetry rhythm is of musical (drum and bass) and of poetic (declamatory) nature. Language plays a crucial role, and while music speaks as much as words, at the same time, words create a musicality inherent to the popular nature of the language used by the poet; the Rastafarian vocabulary and the Jamaican patois provide the poet with possibilities for stressing and pronouncing the words in a way that differs from standard English and with unexpected rhymes.[9] Therefore, the poet disposes of an eclectic palette of sounds and tunes to perform multiple voices, and to create a strong emotional effect onstage.

Born with and out of reggae, dub is a result of transculturation[10] and a hybrid oral genre, both in its form and in its content. Technically, it is a music genre that derives from the continuum of Jamaican musical identity—countercultural and rebellious—from ska in the 1950s, rock-steady in the 1960s, reggae in the 1970s, and roots reggae in the 1980s. For the sake of clarity, I will briefly present those musical movements. Ska resulted from the musical transculturation of the Jazz and Rock'n roll, broadcasted on American radio and to which Jamaicans managed to tune in via Miami radio stations. In the 1960s, ska was adapted to a slower bass beat and became rock-steady (the legend says that the summer 1966 was so hot that people asked for a cooler dancing beat). Eventually, rock-steady slowed down again and adopted the "double skank" beat that identifies reggae. In the 1980s, the topics and themes of reggae became clearly oriented toward Rastafarism[11] and turned into roots reggae. To understand the specificity of dub poetry, it is important to consider it as part of this musical continuum, of which dub is a specific political and poetical variation.

Dub poetry exploited not only the protesting but also the self-reflective power of performance. Ideologically, dub poetry is an artistic platform for political and national consciousness and for the expression of the lower classes. Born within the Cultural Training Centre founded by Michael Manley's socialist government to incorporate "angry young Jamaican" men's creativity within the institution, in the late 1970s dub poets emerged from the Drama School of Kingston, where the artists met around the backyard *Lignum Vitae* tree, and created a group—the Poets of the Unity—with major personalities such as Oku Onuora or Jean Binta Breeze. The Drama school considered itself a counter-cultural place, as opposed to the institutionalized culture of the University of West Indies. While Nettleford's national dance theater used folklore as a material to promote a homogeneous nationhood, dub poetry grew from popular everyday language to react against injustice and racial discrimination but also against divisions of class and gender in contemporary Jamaican society. In the last decades of colonialism and at the beginning of independence, the sound system culture allowed an itinerant public scene to be a stage for popular cultural resistance. In postcolonial Jamaica, reggae projected a message of political worldview that gave an international visibility to Afro-Caribbean identity and particularly to issues of black pride and social justice. In the 1990s, dub poetry conveyed a strong political dimension and served as a megaphone of citizenship, adapted to contemporary issues on the island, as Onuora put it: "The aim and purpose of what I'm doing is to dub the unconsciousness out of people head and to dub een consciousness" (1993, p.4). The majority of the dub poets in Jamaica are Rastafarians, and they converge in the cult of Haile Selassie I and of the Black Nation of Zion in Ethiopia. As such, they consider their national belonging beyond the boundaries of the island and they do not obey the political Jamaican rulers. By aspiring at a time and space—eternity and a promised land—located outside of the island, Rastafarism decentered the popular national discourse and the collective imagination into a wider, more abstract, and transnational pan-African kinship.

Poetically, dub implies the manipulation—with the incorporation of silences, sound emphasis, musical fragmentation, and displacement of original lyrics—of a piece of Jamaican music, most frequently reggae. It allows for a resignification of the song in the manner of a self-conscious palimpsest. Dub music emerged in the studio recording at a time when technology allowed the sound engineer to craftily manipulate the instrumental part of a song (the flip side of a disc) to create meaning with sound effects. Dubbing often consists in using the mute button to fade the voice of the singer (and keep the words selected by the sound engineer), the use of reverberation to create echo and slow motion effects, and to transform the musical piece into a hypnotic

chronotope with a floating effect (Veal 2007). This allows for a very creative poetics that recontextualizes the present of the Jamaicans in a space and time continuum before and beyond the postcolonial nation.

In the case of dub poetry in particular, the poet achieves another meaningful manipulation and resignification of the music with his voice, which he uses as an instrument, not to sing, but to perform rhythmical patterns, given by the many possibilities of spelling and misspelling, of syllabic stressing, and of the power of the rhyme. As a perfect hybrid of oral and literary culture, dub poetry is therefore very close to theater, and it usually incorporates theatrical effects to create a communion with the audience,[12] including the performance of different characters onstage, embodied by a particular tone performed and accompanied by a mimic or gesture, and a specific way to dress or appear onstage, as an actor would do.

Dub poetry in Jamaica in the 1990s became the theater of the people, a cultural stage for the representation of the lower class, and a stand for stating aloud very contemporary social issues in Jamaica, based on the renewal of the pan-Africanist perspective by and for the lower classes. Dub poetry was born to praise black African pride and Rastafarism; but in the 1990s, it had become the expression of a third-world class consciousness, located in Jamaican popular culture and from the uneducated urban space. The message was to foster a third-world transnational community of black people, including Ethiopia, Haiti, and South Africa.

While reggae reconciled and united the culture of the national elite and the culture of the uneducated people in the 1970s, dub poetry in many aspects responded to the ethical failures of a globalized reggae music industry and took over to promote a purer dramatic language of the folk to the folk.[13] It was accompanied by a poetic transformation. Reggae conveyed resistance and solidarity through the use of repetitive and poetic minimalism, letting short sentences and single words, pronounced in Jamaican English, be enhanced by the drum-and-bass slower double-skank line. Dub poetry expanded on the major themes of struggle developed in reggae but added the possibility of a distancing: for example, in dub poetry, history is not only taught to the people, but also performed as a dramatic material, enhanced by the possibilities of rhythm and rhyming storytelling. This creates a metapoetic chronotope, where the poet can freely modify his style thanks to drama and irony, so to be an in-between, and to smuggle the elements of the collective consciousness and question their meaning at the time when he speaks. Onstage, the words and music of dub poetry are instruments used to create a scenario, often in the manner of a pantomime of protest,[14] meant to trigger the audience's reaction in their very immediate present. I consider that dub poetry is the expression of the anamnesis of the Jamaican people.

Columbus from Reggae to Dub Poetry

The figure of Columbus as a liar, a false hero, a pirate, and an enslaver, became a topos of Jamaican music with rock-steady and reggae. Peter Tosh and the Wailers in 1973 with *You Can't Blame the Youth*, Toots and The Maytals in 1981 with *Never Get Weary*, and Burning Spear in 1986 with *Pirate's Dub* are representative of the passing of Columbus, as a stock antihero, from reggae to dub. Those three songs belong to a socio-musical continuum on the island and are all variations of a protest against acculturation, thanks to a transcultured musical discourse calling for equal rights, to get the attention of the world on the Jamaican condition of constant struggle. Sentences against Columbus in those songs wanted to make clear that the heroes of the European history should be removed and replaced by the local Jamaican heroes descending from the black slaves. I will examine below the lyrics of the songs and see how the musical and declamatory potential of dub poetry transformed the representation of Columbus as it used to be in the reggae tradition.

Columbus in Bob Marley and Peter Tosh's, "You Can't Blame the Youth," 1973

The first stanza of the song goes back to the absurd nursery rhymes taught at school, and criticizes the English colonial education system established in the West Indies: "you're teaching youths to learn in the school/ And that the cows jump over moon/ you teach youths to learn in school/ And that the dish runs away with the spoon/ So you can't blame the youths of today/ You can't fool the youths."

The refrain reverses the image of the youth as rebels and outlaws and instead, valorizes anger as a sign of intelligence and resistance against a stupid and false institutional curriculum. Eventually, the second stanza specifically targets the teaching of colonial history at school: "You teach the youth about Christopher Columbus / And you say he was a very great man/ You teach the youth about Marco Polo/ And you say he was a very great man."

Justice must be done and truth said about who those great men were in reality, no matter how different Marco Polo's travels were from Columbus's, since simplification is a didactic tool of protest: "All those great men were doing/robbing, raping, kidnapping and killing."[15]

Repetitions and alliterations provide a strong ironic representation of the institutional brainwashing and of the acculturation perpetuated by the establishment in the nation, using the same patterns as those used in British colonial times. The last part of the song puts forward anger and violence as

legitimate reactions on the side of the people who, even in the independent nation of Jamaica, are continually infantilized: "When every Christmas come/you buy the youth a pretty toy gun / So you can't blame the youths when they get bad. / Cause what was hidden from the wise and the prudish/ is now revealed to the babes and the suckling."

Tosh and Marley establish a connection between awareness, regeneration, and resistance: the youths are enlightened, but not by school. The satirized target of the song is the establishment and the educated black and national elite.

Columbus in Toots and The Maytals, "Never Get Weary," 1981

In this song, Toots and The Maytals addressed the major themes of reggae's social concern at the time—poverty, slavery, and delinquency—in a time continuum where historical chronology is erased in order to idolize the everlasting energy and courage of the subaltern, who never gets weary.

The first stanza highlights the low social condition of the protagonist and narrator of his own life story: "I was down in the valley for a very long time/ and I never get weary yet/ I was born and raised in a little old shack with my poor family."

The second stanza compares him to Jonah in the belly of the whale, after he was thrown overboard: "I was walking on the shore when they took me on the ship/ and they throw me overboard/ and I swung right out of the belly of the whale/and I never get weary yet." The biblical episode, which describes Jonah's sacrifice to calm the sea and his eventual rescue by a whale sent by God, is transformed so as to echo the scenario of the slave trade, from the capture to the middle passage. It therefore highlights the never-ending courage of the character who actively made his way out of the whale. The faith of the Prophet in the Bible is replaced by the cunning and the hope that inhabit the character in the song and keep him from getting weary.

The last stanza portrays the hero suffering from a new injustice, in jail with no possibility of bail and condemned for something he has not done. Despite his continuous subaltern situation, he does not get discouraged: "They put me in jail and I did not do no wrong/and I never get weary yet/Say they put me/in jail and I didn't get no bail/ and I never get weary ye."

In the song, the role of Columbus appears in the refrain and as a poetic and musical recurrence: "I was born before Christopher Columbus, yeah/And I was born before the Arawok Indians /Trying creation, before this Nation/I always remember, I can't forget." The faith of the character who never gives up is linked to his pre-Columbus origin and to the strength of

his ancestral roots. The Jamaican hero of *Never Get Weary* has the aptitude to escape injustice and to survive his enslavers. His ancestors are the maroon African slaves. Though the word maroon is absent from the song, maroon culture is the subtext of *Never Get Weary*: the narrator makes clear that "he came before the arawak Indians." He considers himself as descending from African ancestors and from the runaway slaves, called maroons, who escaped from the plantations and united into free communities in the hills.[16] It allows debunking Columbus as a false originator: Jamaican identity began before Columbus's arrival and in Africa.

Columbus in Burning Spear, "Pirate's Dub," 1986

After Marley's death, a crisis in reggae led to the production of less and less creative reggae songs, reproduced and formatted to please the international musical market. This was when dub poetry took over the role of the griot[17] but in a more secular and theatrical way than the one embodied by Bob Marley: if the latter was a sacred prophet and icon, the dub poet is more like a trickster,[18] a guardian of history but capable of self-criticism and irony, with a protean talent to mimic, tease and generate collective feelings of togetherness through the creation of mixed and ambivalent emotions. Dub became harsher while enumerating the charges against the forces responsible for underdevelopment and economic dependence on the island, hence connecting colonialism and episodes of the colonial history with neocolonialism and renewed forms of mental slavery in the 1990s. Columbus in Peter Tosh/Marley songs was a bad guy among other rogues of European history; in Toots and The Maytals's opus, he was a marker of the inferiority of European history in comparison to the black ancestral culture, actively resisting against injustice. In both songs, the young men are entitled to protest and to rebel, even though the dominant laws of the establishment and of the penal systems made them out to be criminals.

In *Pirate's Dub*, Burning Spear attacks Columbus personally. Like many Jamaican reggae artists of the 1980s, he rearranged his older reggae songs into instrumental dub versions. His piece *Pirate's Dub (Columbus)* follows the spirit of *You Can't Blame the Youth* but pushes the stigmatization further, since Columbus is no longer one among the false heroes and elements of lie institutionalized by the educators on the island, but the personification of evil and corruption.

The song is clearly framed in a Rastafarian perspective and begins with a didactic invitation of the Rastaman to show the truth to the collective "I and I," an equivalent of the pronoun "we" in Rastafarian vocabulary (see Note 9): "I an'I/all I know/I an'I all I see/I an'I reconsider/I an'I see upfully

that: / Christopher Columbus is a dawn blasted liar, /Christopher Columbus is a dawn blasted liar, /yes jah."

Columbus is given speech only to be unmasked as a pirate and a liar by the people (I an'I), united by a common knowledge of their past and of their history: "He says: /I'm that the first one Who discover Jamaica. / And I an'I say that: /what about the Arawak Indians? / And the few black men who were down here before him?"

The call-and-response is here incorporated to produce the effect of a confrontation, as if Columbus was in the stack of the accused, put to the test and proved guilty by the collective Jamaican voice. Burning Spear is anticipating the general protest in Jamaica a decade later against a possible celebration of the 1492–1992 anniversary. Like in Toots and The Maytals's song, Spear puts forward that black people were on the island before Columbus and therefore, he did not *discover* a new land. Burning Spear triggers the people's sense of belonging, and sounds the horn to gather *the twelve tribes of Israel*—a Rastafari community on the island—while the sentence "Christopher Columbus is a dawn blasted liar," is repeated in the manner of a leitmotiv. If the reference to the prophet of Israel, Jonah, was implicit in Toots's song, Burning Spear makes explicit his Rastafarian reading of the national history. The dub performance in this album is achieved at the musical level only, and the songs sound more like reggae pieces with long instrumental arrangements and mixing effects. Burning Spear is actually singing and not declaiming. Nevertheless, his 1980 album *Living Dub* shows how much Columbus, who was an antihero among other historical characters in the reggae protest music, became a scapegoat and a collective symbol at the moment of the passing from reggae to dub.

While reggae called the attention of the world on the inequalities suffered by the Afro-Caribbean people and gave legitimacy to the youth as part of the national culture, dub poetry in the 1980s enumerated charges, named the ones responsible for the poor situation of the country and revived the collective stamina of the young generations. The critical commemorative perspective that appeared amongst the dub poets in the 1990s did not contest UNESCO's concept of the "Encounter of the two worlds" in an explicit manner as Rex Nettleford did; rather, they were strongly mobilized against the First World global hegemonies, and aimed at creating a Caribbean solidarity on the ground of a common tradition of struggle. Three decades after the independences of the West Indies, poverty was still a morbid element of everyday life in Jamaica, class discrimination was still an issue, and racial pride still a demand, in the effort to construct a complete and unified citizenship. Protest performance in the 1990s felt the need to identify the blockages of social improvement. The guiding line of dub protest in the 1990s consisted

in calling for solidarity, unity, and collective awareness among the Jamaican people, beyond the boundaries of the nation, and against the political and economic Masters of the world, oppressors of the Caribbean nations.

Mutabaruka: Dub Poetry and Commemoration

Melanin Man: Cultural Politics, Commemoration, and Heritage

Mutabaruka's 1994 album, *Melanin man*, is a dub poetry album that fostered the national and collective Jamaican sense of belonging in a hybrid dubbing style. Allan Hope, a Kingston-born Jamaican, changed his name to Mutabaruka, which means "the one who is always victorious" in Rwandan, after he converted to Rastafarism. In the late 1980s, when he emerged and became popular on the dub poetry scene, Mutabaruka incorporated a certain amount of self-criticism toward reggae music and against the popstarization of the Rastaman.[19]

Mutabaruka is a Rasta, but he also allows ambivalence, double entendre, and self-criticism to question the traditional values of the Black Nation onstage. The commemorative dimension of the 1994 album *Melanin Man* enlarged the problem of the national imagination in Jamaica, addressing the unity of the African and Caribbean third world and performing characters and topics that were not represented in the mostly Rastafarian dub poetry, such as women heroes, early twentieth-century folk peasant culture, Hindu musical traditions, and non-Jamaican Creole languages. I consider this album to be an example of the Jamaican Post-Columbus *anamnesis* of which the artistic goal was to debate the content, form, and boundaries of national memory.

To unite Afro-Caribbean people as part of the same kin, the poet dubs for a bigger audience than the black and Rastafarian one. The guiding themes of the album coincided with the reactivation of symbols of Africanity, Black Pride, and Black Resistance to trigger a strong feeling of collective "bewareness" as in the second poem of the album entitled *Beware*: A combination of collective consciousness, based on the commemoration of popular Jamaican identity, and awareness of the fact that the people were threatened by new forms of exploitation and oppression resulting from neocolonialism and economic dependency. The point was to generate a feeling of self-protection through popular solidarity on one hand and a feeling of distrust against the First World and the leaders of the globalized economy on the other. Ultimately, the spirit of the album is to create bonds and brotherhood between the Caribbean people of the World, within and beyond national territories.

The heroes of the album are, as expected from any dub poet, for example, Marcus Garvey and Haile Sellassie I, but also Louise Bennett, a popular

singer, poetess of patois, and actress of the colonial Jamaica. The antiheroes are Mengistu, as the murderer of Selassie, Mussolini, as the colonizer of Ethiopia, but also Mandela, who is criticized for not speaking loud enough to make the voice of Azania, the pan-African continent, rise.

If the heroes and antiheroes commemorated by Mutabaruka are quite traditional, this is not the case for the musical arrangements: the 11 poems of the album form a collection of heterogeneous musical influences; each piece is based on a principal reggae beat, on which words are imposed but to which additional influences are experimentally mixed; for example, African shading (in *Beware*), Indian shading (in *Dance*), Mento and colonial Folk popular music (in *Miss Lou*), Hip Hop and Trip Hop (in *Killin*), or Operatic tunes (in *People's Court Part II*). Each time the choice is significant. For example, ska, as the first black self-conscious Jamaican music, is the music on which the poem *Garvey* is dubbed. This poetic collusion, in the manner of a pleonasm, commemorates the originator of black pride with a musical style that was the first explicit expression of Jamaicanness. Another example of musical and thematic dialogue happens in the poem *Miss Lou*. Mento was the first Jamaican music in the colony and it was a style popularized by Louise Bennett. *Miss Lou* is therefore an embedded musical tribute to the heroin of Jamaican Popular Culture dubbing a famous tune of the female singer. Another example is the poem *Dance*, which celebrates togetherness at the sound of the drum, with the following refrain: "lets dance to the rhythm of the drum." However, this is not a drum but a techno beat box with a Hindu shading that gives the tempo, as a marker of a post-plantation and neoslave economic condition, that touches the miscegenated people of the Caribbean and not only the blacks. *Dance* is the last piece of the album and in the manner of a conclusion, the musical hybridity of the song is a reminder that Jamaican culture is about fusion, collective catharsis, and solidarity between Indo-Afro descendants.

Commemoration in the dub language of *Melanin Man* is a poetic segmentation rather than a fragmentation. It is a process that wants to bind together fragments of a scattered identity and make the Jamaican kinship repeat its sense of belonging in unison. It is explicit at the beginning of the poem *Killin*, the main theme of which is the need for historical remembrance in Jamaica, 500 years after the arrival of Columbus: "everyone remembers their past/buildin monuments museums writin books/so that their children will never forget/we must all learn from de past/so as not to repeat those things/ that have kept us back for over 500 years."

The *Melanin Man*, which gives its name to the album and to the introductory first poem, plays an allegorical and pivotal narrative role, recalling the griot, with a talent for historical storytelling, but also echoing the Anancy,[20] the spider trickster of the African folk tales. Anancy is the clever one who always manages to survive and to come through difficult situations at any

cost, using tricks to make its way, unlike the lion—the Rastafarian symbol *par excellence*—who is moral, proud, and plays a fair game. *Melanin man* is a history teller but also a riddle-maker capable of ambivalence and transformation. He is neither good nor evil, neither friendly nor wary, but a character speaking in the first-person pronoun and who binds together the eclectic musical pieces of the album. Thus, his voice facilitates at the same time recollection and commemoration. The *Melanin man* is able to eclipse common beliefs and to question stereotypes: "I am de melanin man/a com from de melanin land' / i am de melanin man/look at me and you'll understan / I absorb the lite/I am the darkness in your night."[21] He is able to distort and manipulate the meaning of words and to produce enigmatic riddles. Poem after poem, the blanks he left at the beginning of the album—like eclipses of the light—are filled in with significance and meaning, through metaphorical echoes and connections between the different poems inviting the audience to participate in solving the riddle of the whole album.

The name *Melanin Man* replaces the traditional *Rastaman* that reggae culture adepts would expect, and sounds like an invitation to go back in time, before Rastafarism, to a fundamental black performance: the Melanin man becomes a substantial a-temporal and inerasable power, a pigment, that keeps the power of memory and of struggle alive against anyone who attempts to fool him. Like Anancy, the *Melanin Man* is invincible, adaptable, ubiquitous, and eternal, but as a dub version of the amoral trickster of the rural Jamaican folk imagination, he has the force of the lion and its ethical posture is able to unify the collective imagination.[22]

Mutabaruka-Melanin Man's tricks consist in recontextualizing and recycling the old issues of Jamaican history and adapting them to the reality of his time: he is indeed turning the dubbing space into a courtroom where the people will be able to judge the men responsible for the oppression, the poverty, and the injustice suffered by the Afro-Caribbean communities in the world. But the trial must happen in the present, with an accurate and ironic perspective on history, presented as nothing but fiction. Africanity is considered an important but incomplete myth, that needs to be revitalized by a contemporary popular culture, with the eyes wide open on contemporary issues. Melanin Man is at the same time a myth performer and what I would call a "demystifyer."

Mutabaruka's Columbus

The eighth and ninth poems of the album are dedicated to Columbus. At first sight they could fit the paradigm of the archetypical condemnation of the evil Columbus, in the tradition of reggae. But upon deeper analysis, it turns out

to be a conscious first and last attempt to drive Columbus out of the Jamaican heritage, as a figure that does not belong to Jamaican culture and should be removed from the collective imagination of the people on the island. Thematically and musically, the two poems perform a complementary reading of the 1992 commemoration as nonsensical and irrelevant. *Columbus Ghost* is a dry and cynical poem that combines silence and noises to create a poetic soundscape representing the colonial experience as a continuum of 500 years. I apply here Michael Veal's idea of soundscape (coined from sound and landscape) to analyze the different effects produced in dub music thanks to the technological craft of the mixer. For Veal, reverberation is the simulation of echoes in sequence, by adding reverb the music sounds as if it was performed in an arena, in a cave, giving a live effect (Veal 2007). In the poem *Columbus Ghost*, the dubbing effect is to create the illusion that Columbus is speaking from his ship at sea. The next poem *People's Court II* is a loud farce and a grotesque pantomime where Columbus is ridiculed and judged guilty *in absentia* during a trial where Catholic religion sits this time in the bench of the accused.

Columbus Ghost

Columbus Ghost is the eight poem of the album Melanin Man. As indicated by the title, the dead figure of Columbus speaks from the tomb, in a very long and detailed monologue recalling all of the evils he committed in the past and their consequences in contemporary Jamaica. This narrative strategy sounds like an antiheroic prosopopoeia;[23] without any feeling of remorse, Columbus's ghost[24] is stating all the facts that will become charges in his trial in the following poem *People's court II*, as if the character was talking from the witness box. Such a device creates the effect of a historical catharsis since it reveals the true and evil intentions of the European discoverer. Mutabaruka's voice all through the poem adopts Columbus's sepulchral tone, dramatized by the addition of noises on the soundtrack, such as the waves of the sea, the squeaking of the ropes and of the wood on a ship. Columbus's voice is the voice of a ghost, of the captain of a haunted vessel.

Two significant transformations are achieved by the dub poetics. First, there is no music at all. Columbus is removed from the reggae tradition and is denied the right to be musicalized, and henceforth to belong, even as an antihero, to the Jamaican collective imagination. Moreover, Columbus is the puppet of the poet: Mutabaruka as the Melanin Man is performing Columbus, speaking in the first person. This embedded ventriloquist device, where the voice of the poet is at the same time that of the narrator and of the character, makes explicit that the ghost speaks only out of the will of the Melanin

Man: he exists as long as the latter allows the ghost to borrow his voice and to speak, under Mutabaruka's poetic control. The latter is focused on three major themes—the persona of the ghost, the ownership of history, and the quincentenary—and I will now analyze them in more details.

As a ghost figure, Columbus begins by stating the original mistake he made: with irony the poem puts the notion of discovery into perspective. The landing of Columbus was at the same time a navigation mistake and an act of illegitimate European possession: "i am christopher columbus/just call me cris / i am de who did miss the land india/ i thought i'd discover/that which was never /how clever of me to see the land/beyond i came/to tame/and claim/in the name of spain."

The Ghost takes responsibility for his acts, with the arrogance of a self-confident antihero, achieved through Mutabaruka's voice modulation. The stressing of the words creates a series of significant rhymes—internal rhymes, such as cris/miss—or final rhymes, such as tame/claim/name/Spain. A combination of those rhymes gives the illusion of the sound of a drum. However, it only makes all the more audible the absolute absence of drumming, creating a symbolic and dramatic ghost scenery that negates Columbus. Mutabaruka is creating a dialogue with the musical tradition that came before, saying that Columbus must be removed from it since he does not belong "here," as the poet reminds us.

The question of the ownership of history appears in the poem when Columbus, becomes the epitome of imperialism and of an evil desire for absolute power and possession. In *Columbus Ghost*, he is proud to have inspired adventurers, conquerors, and imperialists from the sixteenth to the twentieth century, of which he gives a significant and anachronistic list: Hawkins, Livingstone, Mussolini, Botha, and Bush. Interestingly, the common element between those five historical figures is Ethiopia, the heart of the Rasta Nation.[25] Nevertheless, no explicit mention of Ethiopia is made in this poem; rather it serves as an implicit marker to evaluate the racial prejudices and the damages of imperialism, Ethiopia being representative *in absentia* of Europe's universal crimes. The poem remains at an allegorical level: it refers to Africa as a myth rather than as a nation and to Columbus as "Cris," a fictional ghost figure, rather than a flesh-and-bone historical character.

Lastly, the theme of the 500 years anniversary is developed in the second part of the poem, which clearly adopts a position against the celebration. Columbus appears as a malevolent ghost, cynically raising his glass to his 500 years of domination: "i am christopher columbus/i gave europe power over all the earth/500 years of blood sweat/ and tears/and now you celebrate/recreate your death/let the glasses touch/with the blood of your fathers and mothers/give a toast/HOST/my arrival/you dyin my survival."

The internal rhymes—Ghost/host/toast—Celebrate/recreate—arrival/survival—are full of cynicism and they resonate with the hypocritical nature of the fifth centennial. Columbus appears arrogant, powerful, and convinced of his eternity. His coming back restores eurocentered history, erases indigenous history, and brainwashes the young generation in a manner that is typical of colonial acculturation: "you shall celebrate my victory/your children praise me/i am their only history" or "your ancestors' cries will not be heard/word after word/pages of history written/the victims are once more bitten."

In the last two verses of the poem, Columbus declaims his victory, as if he had colonized again the Caribbean: "1492 to you the beginnin of western world democracy / 1492 to me the beginnin of white supremacy." But while Columbus wants to come back, his voice fades away and vanishes, and the poem ends with the sounds of the waves.

History, performed by the *Melanin Man*, becomes the material for a farce, and in the case of *Columbus Ghost*, a macabre one. History provides elements for a theatrical pantomime and for a poetics of illusion and exaggeration, with a potential for performance and entertainment. This allows Columbus to portray himself without any subtlety, as an exterminator of all the non-white races of the earth and a manipulator of the historical facts: "i exterminated/perpetuated / hatered/against redmen / yellowmen / with blackmen i made no friend / i attack/arawak/cut off their head / wrote instead/that the caribs hate them like bread." For Mutabaruka history is regarded as nothing but a play or a trick; the winner in History—the one who is canonized in history books—is the best liar or at least the one who is good at tricking the fools. Mutabaruka's self-irony and wit submits the tricksters, both the European white ghost and the Jamaican black Melanin Man, to the same trick. Columbus is the most obviously audible liar in the poem, the one talking as a ghost. The Melanin man is like a backstage second tricked-trickster: he is the puppeteer, wearing Columbus' outfit—since we have been warned in the first poem of the protean powers of the *Melanin Man*. He is talking as if he were a dead Columbus back from the past but he is identified by his language—would Columbus call himself Cris?—letting the poem exhibit its fictional nature. Dub poetry becomes a theatrical device to perform the lies of history, mock them and debunk them, with the goal to produce collective and critical self-awareness and catharsis.

People's Court II or The Trial of Columbus

The ghostly and *mala fide* tone in *Columbus Ghost* is eventually followed by a grotesque pantomime in *People's Court II*, poem 9 of the album, based on caricature and creating humor. As soon as the voice of the ghost and the

squeaking of the wood vanish, the rock-steady piece begins with a drum and bass explosion, along with an additional brass riff played by a saxophone—recalling a cheerful brass band marching tune. In addition, a recurrent operatic chorus of high-pitched soprano voices creates an acoustic counterpoint in the poem. Each of these musical expressions, based on rhythm and melody explosions, has a meaning and plays a specific role in the trial performed in *People's Court II*. The short instrumental introduction of the song begins with the successive sound of the drum and bass, while the saxophone and the operatic chorus, as main characters of the story, are introduced onstage before the trial.

First, the very melodic reggae bass follows an up-and-down line, which remains unmodified during the six-minute length of the poem. This drum-and-bass line dialogues with the fast drumming beat in the rock-steady style. *People's Court II* is indeed a remake of Prince Buster's 1967 Rocksteady *Judge Dread*.[26] By choosing a popular Jamaican song, which belongs to the musical repertoire of the early years of the independence, Mutabaruka exploited the symbolic power of musical intertextuality. *Melanin Man* is in fact a commemorative album that celebrates Jamaican culture and identity but also shows the dysfunctions of the national collective imagination on the island since independence.

Then, the saxophone, the sound of which is recurrent after each sentence enounced by the judge, simultaneously plays the role of the clerk typing the minutes of the trial and of the metronome, marking the tempo and the measurement of time. The courtroom is therefore created thanks to music as the location for the enunciation of the law.

Finally, the chorus of feminine angel-like and ethereal voices performs the role of the victims, singing their acculturated alienation in an operatic and European-like style[27]: "Whiter than snow / Whiter than snow / Please Lord wash me / And make me whiter than snow." Mutabaruka gives his voice to both the judge and the prosecutor, while other artists provide additional voices to play the counsel for the defense, the usher, and the backing vocal chorus, like the reggae singer Cocoa Tea. The two presumed-guilty characters are Mr Religious belief and his henchman, Mr Denomination, who will both remain mute. The allegorical device of the poem, inherited from the tradition of pantomime theater, associates the characters with personified values or ideas. The Catholic religion is presented as a hypocritical and enslaving system: Mr Religious belief embodies the dogmatism that controls people's thinking and Mr Denomination represents the resulting practice that controls the believers. Mutabaruka is famous for his strong positions against the Roman Catholic Church and against what he considers to be religious dogmatism. Interestingly, in the 1967 rock-steady piece of Prince Buster, *Judge*

Dread, the accused were rude boys who had stolen money from children and from poor people. Prince Buster's famous piece belonged to the contest of Jamaican rebellious society where the *rudie* was an ambivalent figure, a matter of fear but also of pride for the people: the *rude boys* were the ones who could contest through misdemeanor the values of the colonial society perpetuated by the establishment after the independence (Hebdige 1974, and 1987). Mutabaruka continues to pay homage to the tradition of protest music on the island as he already did in 1991 with *People's Court Part I*, which sentenced politicians to 1,000 years. However, the second part of the trial addresses all the colonial experiences and the continuum of 500 years of oppression, of which the Catholic Church is responsible for: "i see where you also have been promisin / black people / but you are worst than the politicians you promise/them good livin after they die / yes you say their reward will be in heaven."

The main charge against Columbus consists in having been an accomplice to the Church, responsible for the murders and crimes perpetuated on the pretext of evangelizing the souls of the non-Christians and black people. The whole enumeration of charges produces a condensed summary of the history of the slavery system on the island after the Middle Passage: "you taught black people to pray / with their eyes closed / when they opened them you had their land and they had the bible / with bible and gun/you robbed / raped murdered our fore / parents/in the name of jesus / you have divided black people in / to groups causin them to / distrust each other/the first charge is for misleadin / black people into their colour."

The ultimate charge against the Catholic Church is that the latter is considered responsible for the fact that Jamaicans still wish to be white 500 years after Columbus' arrival. The soprano chorus stands for the stigmata of the colonial acculturation of which contemporary Jamaican society still bears the scars. At the same time, the judge wishes that Jamaicans could open their eyes and stop being blind to their color: "everything in heaven is white / everything in hell is black / is a lucky thing jamaicans start to / visit hell and really see for themselves."

The double entendre meaning is provided by the implicit connotation of black associated with hell. At the first level of meaning, the judge criticizes the synonymy of the word "white" with positive connotations against the word "black," charged with the opposite negative meaning. If Jamaicans could visit hell, they would see for themselves that it is not black, and that as much as white people go to hell for their sins, black people also have their place in Paradise. As a second meaning, the judge invites Jamaicans to "visit hell and see for themselves." In other words, the judge is telling his people to "go to hell" and to learn to think by themselves. The judge, who is at

the first level of meaning an avenging figure supporting the people, is also, at a second level, an ironic mirror of Jamaican passivism, dependency, and self-victimization. According to Mutabaruka, Jamaica must unite and be conscious of the hell they're living in, not to complain, but to construct a better future for themselves and by themselves.

The first target of the poem remains Catholicism. As in *Columbus Ghost* where true enlightenment was attributed to the Moors, the church is here accused of misinterpreting the Bible, and of mystifying the text of god, to "suit white supremacy," while Egyptians—a black people—had a true knowledge of God's words.[28]

The last part of the poem establishes a strong connection between the crimes of the Church and their consequences in contemporary Jamaican society. The best example is sexism and discrimination against women. According to the judge, the Church constructed a negative image of the woman, considered impure as opposed to the Virgin, a figure invented by the Catholic religion to control womanhood:

> you have painted an image of woman / as the originator of sin / you have made women look / inferior in all your religious books/you have been preachin a sexist doctrine to our people / from eve till now / you have blamed women for the / downfall of the world / you blame delilah for samson/stupidity / you have even placed sin on sex / saying mary was a virgin all her life.

As in the *Melanin Man* warnings, the dimension of self-criticism and self-irony is very important in this poem. The judge is a caricature as much as Columbus was in the previous piece, and the final judicial sentence corresponds to a summed-up reading of colonialism and of the evil participation of Catholicism, simplified on purpose for comic effect. The farce and the pantomime, like the lessons of Anancy in Jamaican folk tales, are part of a reservoir of images that belong to popular culture, where the difference between good and bad is taught through ambivalence. *People's Court II* is a pantomime where the art of dub poetry enables the poet to remain faithful not to the letter, but to the spirit, of popular common sense learnt by children from Jamaican folk tales. Mutabaruka knows that the history of slavery and of colonialism should by now become stories of the past for the Caribbean. The purpose is not to make a real trial of history but to use the illusion of the trial, as both an entertaining and a critical cultural space, as for example the ridiculous distortion of Columbus's name into "Cumbusus" by the judge, showing how foreign to Jamaican culture the carnivalized historical figure is. The purpose is to trigger collective solidarity for a struggle adapted to contemporary

issues in Jamaica, questioning what contemporary economic slavery means in a globalized world.

Commemoration of the past, sustained by the performance of *Melanin Man*, is based on the belief that collective struggle and awareness can lead to a better future. The performer is an artist of memory. For Mutabaruka, history is a fiction that offers material to get a reaction from the audience. It is not their historical past that the Jamaican people need to recover in 1992, as was the case in the early postcolonial discourses at the time when the elite was constructing the nation in the 1960s. Indeed Mutabaruka calls for them to open their eyes to the present. The problems that the Jamaican people must face and the reason why they should unite belong to a different context. They must be aware that Columbus is nothing but a ghost, a nobody, and he needs to be condemned as a zombie to remain a body without a soul. Columbus is punished because he has sinned and hence expelled from the collective memory of Jamaicanness: it is an eye for an eye, it is the sentence of the Rastafarian people ("I and I"). And the final condemnation at the end of the poem is therefore merciless: The sentence for Denomination and Religious Belief is 500 years of jail for each of them, as a punishment for the oppression of black people. Columbus, absent in the stack of the accused, and his accomplices, Denomination and Religious Belief, are condemned to the No Man's Land where they lead the Caribbean: doomed, they are condemned to fight for existence and visibility. The bass rhythm fades away gradually, as is usual in reggae music, the voice of the judge continues, uninterrupted, but is lowered by the sound engineer, until it becomes completely mute. This is the sign of a trial that could never end but, as announced by the musical arrangement and by the diptych formed with the previous poem, the Melanin Man, with both the outfit of Columbus and of Judge Dread, is putting an end to it: it is time now to move on to a constructive and active united collective memory, says Mutabaruka.

It seems that the English Caribbean cultural stage did address Columbus as a symbolic marker of a present condition at the time of the quincentenary. This was not the result of a uniform project of the state's cultural politics. It was Kingston's popular and urban reggae subculture that incorporated the explorer in the list of the antiheroes and false values inculcated by the colonial education. Dub poetry, in the creative album that Mutabaruka produced in 1994, took over this tradition and addressed the presence of Columbus in Jamaican history as the out-of-date trace of unsolved issues of identity, and as an intruder that did not belong to the present.

What does this say about the present Post-Columbus condition of Jamaica? It seems that Jamaica cannot get out of the colonial experience

of modernity (a quest for progress and happiness through progress) and postmodernity (the fragmentation of stable norms of discourse). The country was reading its history within a continuum of 500 years of economic, sociopolitical, and geographic oppression in 1992. The Jamaican Post-Columbus syndrome addressed postcoloniality as a moment that need to be recontextualized. This led Jamaican popular culture to renew strategies to remembering national history, and to read the latter as a history of subaltern self-representations perpetuated in the perspective of globalization.

CHAPTER 7

Columbus in Guadeloupe and Martinique: Amnesia and Commemoration in the French Outremer

In Martinique and in Guadeloupe, the fifth centenary of Columbus's arrival in the region went unobserved and did not occasion any commemoration. Neither France nor the heads of the local French administration on the islands encouraged any cultural events for the 500th anniversary of the Discovery of the New World; not even in the memorial dedicated to Columbus in Guadeloupe, built in 1916 in Capesterre-Belle-Eau, or on the island of Marie-Galante, the place where Columbus first touched land on his second voyage and which he described extensively in his diary.

At the same time that Columbus was totally absent from mainstream cultural politics, he appeared to be the central target of intense memorial debates in Martinique that were kept on the periphery by the central powers. Accused of crimes against humanity and of genocide against the Arawak people, Columbus was sent to court from December 9 to 11, 1993, and judged in the municipal theater of Fort de France over three days. Organized by the *Cercle Franz Fanon* and by the nationalist and anticolonialist lawyer Marcel Manville,[1] this trial respected all the legal and judicial procedures of a trial in camera. Witnesses were called to the bar, confirmed their identity, and testified under oath, either for or against Columbus. The main languages of the Caribbean were represented, and although French dominated, English, Spanish, and different Creoles were also spoken and simultaneously translated in the courtroom; the debates were transmitted to a screen outside in the main hall of the building. This was the setting of strong criticism of the memorial damages caused by French acculturation on one hand, and a reaction against economic exploitation on the other, renewing the anticolonial discourse that

Césaire inaugurated in the 1950s. The struggle was clearly recontextualized to match the present needs of the Caribbean region: while Césaire's négritude wanted to recover the African origins of the French Antilleans, the Columbus trial shed light on the Amerindian heritage of the islands. The debates praised the regional solidarity between the islands, and put forward Caribbeanness as their first heritage, as opposed to the amnesiac condition in which French acculturation had maintained their previous colonies.

The Columbus trial went almost unnoticed in the local mainstream press and was limitedly mediatized, mainly through the leftists and pro-independence associations and medias.[2] Though the trial was open to the public, the camera hearing format and the limited space of the municipal theater minimized its impact in Martinique and in the French Antilles in general, not to mention France, where it was totally ignored. On the islands, the local powers of Martinique did not facilitate its advertising—nor did they prevent it from happening. The French Antillean ruling elite was simply not interested in promoting a Columbus trial. Césaire, who was then mayor of Fort de France, did not get involved at all, and his newspaper, *Le progressiste*, did not write one single line about it.

This paradox, for me, reflects the very specific nature of the memory syndrome in the French Caribbean. In the 1990s, a certain awakening from a long-term institutionalized amnesia was happening in the civil society, and at the time of the fifth centennial of the Discovery of the New World, Columbus played the role of a memory catalyst. Though very shy and disorganized, a strong and meaningful criticism of the memorial acculturation in which the French Antilleans had long been kept was growing, but without any coherent, collective, and united plan of action. It was only a decade later that a movement for the recuperation of the memory of slavery grew out of the mobilization of the Antillean community in Paris (Chivallon 2013).

In the first instance, this chapter examines how Columbus was used as a symbolic device to trigger the first phase of a scenario of *anamnesis* in the French Caribbean. The symbolical exploitation of Columbus reflected the collective desire to remember and to demand justice and historical repair. In the 1990s, this wish was still embryonic in Martinique and in Guadeloupe, because of the lack of collective unity and of the fragility of the French Antillean collective imagination. Therefore, I will first analyze the meaning of the complete absence of Columbus in mainstream French Antillean cultural politics as a mirror of the memory syndrome of the French Antilles. I will then focus on the Columbus trial in 1993 and examine first how the debates and their judicial performances impacted the collective memory, and second, how they resonated with other Columbus related theatrical events that happened on the island at the local cultural level.

The absence of commemorative cohesion on the islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe in 1992 reveals the extent of the amnesia syndrome, heavily and historically institutionalized by France. My view is that some sort of *anamnesis* was happening at the local level in the 1990s, but it was fragmented, isolated, and still lacking unity and collaboration between the different cultural actors who were participating in the recuperation of memory. As a result, in the second part of this chapter, I will question to which extent the awakening of *anamnesi*s in the civil society of Martinique coincided with the major literary productions from Martinique but also from Guadeloupe. The Antillean writers at the time imagined historical scenarios to help the awakening of collective remembrance on their islands. Interestingly, they fictionalized and reimagined the history of slavery in Columbus-absent stories that were nevertheless embracing the themes of colonization, discovery, and settlement in the New World. This is for me another sign of the paradoxical nature of the *anamnesis* of memory in the French Caribbean, awakened but soft, as if memory was recovered like a melody played in soft pedal.

The Invisible Columbus in the French Antilles: The Psychogenic Amnesia Syndrome

One way to explain the silence around the 500th anniversary of the Discovery of the New World would be to say that Columbus does not belong to the French colonial history and heritage, on which collective identity has been built in the French Antilles since the corsair Bélain d'Esnambuc started to colonize Martinique and Guadeloupe on behalf of Richelieu in the early seventeenth century. The argument would be that Christopher Columbus, because he belongs to the history of the Spanish colonization, has no place in the French collective imagination, neither in the costume of the antihero, nor as a Christ figure who united the two hemispheres.[3] Such an explanation erases the Caribbean origin and identity of Martinique and Guadeloupe. And in fact, this erasure resonates with the construction of the French *Outremer* beginning in 1946.

Although Martinique and Guadeloupe geographically belong to the Caribbean and the Americas, respectively, they are the first and foremost *Départements d'Outremer*, the abbreviated name of which is DOM in French. The DOM is a specifically French administrative and political structure, built upon a geographical illusion in which the plantation colonies of the Caribbean became integrated as administrative regions of France with the 1946 law of *Départementalisation*.[4] The latter formalized the territorial hegemony of France—as the mainland, also called the hexagon or the *métropole*—over its appending lands overseas and legally set up their

assimilation with France. Transforming the colonies into *départements* and giving them a number (971 for Guadeloupe and 972 for Martinique) was a way to make them administratively equal to the other 95 *départements français* located in mainland France (the *métropole*), and therefore, to create the fiction that the tropical islands of the Caribbean belonged in the French bosom and were part of the body of the nation no matter the distance. After the traumatic experience of the Haitian Revolution in the early nineteenth century, and when tensions were growing with Algeria after the Second World War, France invented with the DOM an in-between way, between colonization and autonomy, to deal with its Caribbean colonies, maintain its domination, and contain any wish of rebellion on the part of the Afro-Antilleans. This device was based on acculturation, and it was achieved thanks to a strong colonial administrative structure and with the creation of a local elite, for whom France was the model and the epitome of progress, modernity, and civilization. This in turn led to black culture being bastardized as savage, only maintained in the form of an inoffensive and regional folklore, and to the complete erasure of the history of slavery, of slave rebellions, and of the maroons, from the collective memory. Slavery became a taboo subject associated with shame. The *Départementalisation* institutionalized the syndrome of psychogenic amnesia from which the French Antillean imagination has suffered since then. In clinical terms, psychogenic amnesia is characterized by the oblivion and erasure of a specific and highly traumatic event of the past; in the case of Guadeloupe and Martinique, slavery, considered a sin of which the Antilleans will carry the guilt and shame, was repressed, erased from memory, and it disappeared from the collective imagination.

More specifically, this memorial erasure was achieved thanks to a delusional scenario called Schœlcherism, a system of representation named after Victor Schœlcher, the French politician who signed the decree that abolished slavery on the French Caribbean plantations in 1848. Schœlcher was a liberal who believed that it was the duty and the mission of France to educate and bring the light of civilization to the inferior peoples she had colonized. Against the lobbies of the white planters (the *békés*), who were conservative and monarchists, Schœlcher believed in the values of the republic and was a strong abolitionist. A minister of the colonies under the Third Republic, he applied in Martinique and Guadeloupe the principles of liberalism and progressism, based on the humanitarian justification of the colonial expansion. He considered slavery as inhuman and, instead, thought it was the duty of the French people to educate "their" blacks to become French citizens. At school, the children of Martinique and of Guadeloupe learnt to worship Schœlcher after his death as the great man who freed them from slavery. Schœlcherism is not only the main doxa that has been taught after 1946,

it is also rooted in the monumental and physical memory of the French Antilles where streets, libraries, squares, museums, and neighborhoods are named after Victor Schœlcher all over the islands (Jolivet 1987).

The damages of Schœlcherism in collective memory come in pairs: First, the people of Martinique and Guadeloupe cannot be proud of having won their freedom by themselves, second, in a neat twist, it is not slavery but its abolition that is remembered as a foundational heritage of the islands, born out of the Republican and French humanism (Vergès 2006). Therefore, with the assimilation that came with the *Départementalisation* law, the memories associated with slavery and slave culture were totally repressed. Creole language and black cultural traits inherited from the slave plantation society—like music, food habits, Creole language, and family relationships—have constantly been disparaged as backward traits needing to be corrected by the generous and superior French civilization, even though they continue to be the heart of everyday life and popular culture.[5]

The repression of the history of slavery from the collective imagination resulted in feelings of inferiority, frustration, and subalternity among the French Antilleans and blocked the cohesive construction of a collective myth of origin, based on slave culture and transculturation, as was the case in the other English Caribbean islands when they became independent in the late 1960s.[6] In Martinique and Guadeloupe, even the *négritude* that valorized blackness and African origins, remained an elite movement, mostly because Césaire's texts were not accessible to the Creole-speaking, uneducated people on the islands. The pride of being black, chanted by Césaire, did not manage to produce a foundational myth of identity and unite the people of Martinique and Guadeloupe on the basis of their Caribbean history and identity.[7]

Since 1946, the collective imagination and identity in the DOM has been even more forgetful of Caribbean history, heritage, or territorial belonging, and was built on the fact that the *départements* were microcosms of France, and administrative divisions of the motherland overseas, which is the meaning of *Outremer* in the French perspective. The geographical contours of Guadeloupe and Martinique, and their location in the Caribbean Sea, disappeared with the neocolonial device of *Départementalisation*, replaced by the administrative frontiers of the *départemen*t. In the French collective imagination, Martinique and Guadeloupe, even with their administrative number, have remained places considered with the same pejorative stereotypes as those with which they were characterized when they were colonies: tropical weather responsible for laziness and backwardness among the inhabitants, mostly of black skin, and cultural traits regarded as exotic and black-related, like rum. The *Départementalisation* did not facilitate the expression and valorization of

the Antillean identity on the islands; instead, it reinforced their total assimilation as ex-colonies reborn into *départments français*, according to all the ideals and values of French acculturation. The people of the DOM are still considered in the French collective imagination as secondary zone citizens, French but black, French but from the Caribbean. This problem is at the heart of the Antillean complex that David Murray called the "cultural citizen":

> In a nation-state where individualism is valued and all individuals are declared to be equal, hierarchy officially disappears and with it, the immediate attribution of authority to a ruling agent. Left with a collection of individuals, the problem of justifying a power above them can be solved only by supposing the common sense of the fellowship. It is in the interest of those in power to expound the idea of a collective identity, that is, an ideal individual who represents all that is French. Thus despite the emphasis that French nationalism places on the individual to become uniquely itself, "itself" means to be uniquely French.
>
> (Murray 1997)

The cultural citizen syndrome consists of a paradoxical negotiation of individualism as a sacred ideal, within a community where egalitarian principles make each individual representative of the whole collective body, negating difference. This conception is inherited from the Enlightenment and from a set of consequent metaphorical representations, created to establish new relationships between the nation and the self, in order to break free from the organic representation of the monarchy: in the feudal absolutist system, the King was the head of the kingdom and received his power directly from God, the Church was the spiritual representation of God on earth, and the people were the body, called the third state or *tiers état*. Rousseau's social contract was based on the negotiation of individualism: a central and inalienable element of mankind on one hand, individualism also needed to be contained and controlled in order to prevent private interests from destroying collective well-being. This paradox is well represented in the French motto "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity": One principle inevitably limits the other two. It is all the more paradoxical in a plantation context where the negation of the three principles all together—freedom, equality, and brotherhood—served to justify the importation of black slaves to the island for mercantilist purposes.

While in Haiti this paradox led to the black Jacobin rebellion and to the earliest independence that ever happened in the Caribbean, on Martinique and Guadeloupe the Enlightenment nourished acculturation and produced a Caliban complex. The language of Prospero-Schœlcher was given to the *Antillais* so that they define themselves as nothing but French citizens, while their Caribbean identity was minimized as a secondary, local, and tropical

complexion. The very ideals that allow the people living in the DOM. to feel proud of who they are as individuals, are also the ones that historically negated them as a people; expressing one's identity implies participating in the collective Republican fiction of Schœlcherism and reinforcing one's Frenchness. To express his difference, the Antillean subject can only reiterate his being French. Following the French education received in the post-plantation era, the expression of one's subjectivity annihilates the possibility of any other identity but French. This dilemma takes the form of a figure of rhetoric called synecdoche: Not only is the part (the DOM) representative of the whole (France); but the part belongs to and is held by the whole: the DOM is one of the *départements* held by the mainland, holding a subaltern administrative position inside of French territory. This containment is based on a collective representation and not on geographical facts, as for the other *départements*. This institutionalized the idea in Martinique and in Guadeloupe that it was a privilege to be a French, admitted to its bosom even at such a geographical distance, and a curse to be *Antillais*, so far away from the mother country.

In such conditions, the building of a Caribbean awareness within the collective imagination was difficult and slow. This can give us more clarity about the lack of interest for Columbus in the mainstream French Antillean politics of memory in the 1990s. Yet, I believe that the years 1989–1992 saw a combination of events that facilitated a shift in the collective memory in Martinique and Guadeloupe, which would result in the explosion of memory ten years later.

The economic, political, and cultural context in France and in the DOM at the time was particularly tense, because of the overlap of different events at the forefront of French cultural politics. In terms of historical memory, the commemoration of the 200th anniversary of the French Revolution in 1989 was at the heart of the cultural discourse and reflected the wish to celebrate not only the national heritage, but also the political and philosophical meaning of Frenchness, and to reinforce French national identity, of which the Antilles, as *départments*, were fully a part. 1989 was also a year when Paris hosted the debates of UNESCO concerning the commemoration of the Encounter of the Two Worlds. Cultural memory in the metropolis was therefore at the crossroads of two memory lanes: commemorating the foundational myths of French identity on one hand, and dealing with the history of the Discovery of the New World in universal terms on the other. Needless to say, none of the territories of *Outremer* was associated with the UNESCO debates, even if historically the islands of Désirade, Marie-Galante, Guadeloupe, and Martinique were named by Columbus when he found them in his second and fourth voyage. No French Antillean personality was invited to speak for the French Antilles and no panel of the debates touched on the

relationship between the notion of "encounter between the two worlds" and the *départements* historically and geographically part of the New World.

Second, it was also a moment when the building of the European community triggered intense feelings of anxiety among French citizens, in the mainland and in the DOM; the latter were afraid to lose the privileged funding and support (for agriculture and exportation) they had been receiving since they became *Départements* of France. This also resulted in a collective need for reassurance among French people about their sense of belonging, in a time of transition and uncertainty. This was particularly true in the DOM where the wish for economic protection reinforced the already existing bonds with Paris and the sense of being French before being Antilleans.

Lastly, at the highest level of the state, commemorating the persona of Columbus was not particularly welcome. Jacques Chirac, who was then mayor of Paris and in charge of all the cultural commemorative events in the capital, was explicit with the fact that Columbus had been responsible for a genocide in the New World. At the time of the quincentenary, he launched an exhibition on Taíno Art in Paris, reflecting his own personal passion for what he called the *arts premiers*, with a tone typical of French neocolonial humanitarism.[8] If indeed Paris put forward the beauty of the pre-Columbian arts in the New World, it was certainly not to celebrate the indigenous Antillean heritage as the cultural origin of Martinique and Guadeloupe.

The consequence of those coinciding factors was that the French Caribbean collective imagination was more obviously than ever de-Caribbeanized, and the historical and territorial illusion of its exclusively French heritage was celebrated, at the very same time that in the DOM a feeling of discontent, social anxiety, and economic fear was growing. The main issue was the inclusion of the islands in the European Community. The French Antilles, whose already weak economic health would not be protected any longer by metropolitan laws and would depend on supranational and world economy decisions, had just been through the damage of Hurricane Hugo in September 1989, unveiling the weakness of the local economy.

This climate of anxiety resonated with a crisis on the political front. In 1989, the Guadeloupian members of a revolutionary movement for the independence of Guadeloupe, Guyana, and Martinique—the ARC (*Alliance Révolutionnaire de la Caraïbe*)—were judged guilty of the bombing attacks against French national companies on Guadeloupe from 1983 to 1987. After some hesitation on the part of the judicial power, they were granted an amnesty a couple of weeks after being arrested.[9] As soon as they returned to Guadeloupe, they publically declared that their struggle would go against the inclusion in the European Community, condemned as it was as a threat to the already very fragile economy of the island. As a matter of fact, the year 1989

saw many local pro-Independence candidates appear in Guadeloupe first, and in Martinique eventually. Such a political solidarity between the two "sisters" was rare enough to alert the Parisian powers, as shown in the words of the Minister of the Departments and Territories Overseas at the time, Louis Le Pensec:

> The protest and demands regarding Identity are very strong at the moment in the Caribbean. They have taken the form of a refusal to be integrated into the European Community. The unique market of 1993 is perceived as a forced inclusion into a foreign and external body, which negates the Caribbean identity. Significantly, this topic feeds the growth of movements for Independence and questions the very status of the Department of Overseas Territories. This will be a very delicate and difficult case in the years to come.
>
> (Reno and Gold-Dalg 1990, pp.107–108)

The debates surrounding the entrance of the DOM in the European supranational structure pointed to unsolved problems concerning the integration of the former colonies and to the limits and taboos of the *Départementalisation* system. In such a complex context, Paris did not have any interest in allowing the commemorative public stage to become a political tribunal of unrest, protest, or opposition to celebration. Clearly, any Columbus-oriented events would have disturbed the French myth that Martinique and Guadeloupe were children of the French Mother. The void and quasi-absence of commemorations of the Discovery of the New World—that could have triggered questions of citizenship, of political status, and of economic autonomy—coincided then with a parallel emphasis on the celebration of the bicentenary of the French Revolution, in order to gather all French people around the same national myth, and to elude the problem of the supranational European debate.

In their majority, the Antilleans were not asking for independence. The fear of being included in a supranational structure like the European Community was not the result of the fear of losing their Caribbean identity (as France on one hand, and isolated advocates for independence on the other, claimed), but of losing their French identity. Clearly, the commemorative space, in the hands of the French and local powers on the islands, was not sufficiently based on historical memory to trigger any coherent contestation of the foundational values of the French Republic. Surely, this can be a first explanation for why Columbus was not the mainstream symbol to use in any claim for historical repair and postcolonial compensation in Guadeloupe and Martinique, in contrast to their neighbors in the Americas.

In psychogenic amnesia, the cure starts when fragments of the traumatic forgotten episode emerge at the surface of memory. I believe that Columbus,

apparently absent from the historical scene, was one of those fragments. He became a meaningful trigger at a moment of terrible anxieties when some sort of collective wish to reclaim their origins was awoken, but not clearly formulated, among the Antilleans.

Columbus and the Slow Recuperation of Historical Memory in Martinique

The Trial of Columbus

The trial that took place in Fort de France in December 1993 was in fact the trial of colonialism for which Christopher Columbus provided a multifaceted symbol. The target of the *Cercle Frantz Fanon* was as much to demand justice and repair for the damage caused by colonization in the past—such as genocide and cultural destruction—as a political act of struggle against the neocolonial and economic exploitation that was still going on in the Caribbean in the present. The main concern was to foster collective remembrance by awaking memory, with the idea that historical knowledge empowers the people with a sense of solidarity, collective strength, and political awareness. The whole trial was an act of *anamnesis*, a self-cognitive dialogue between the past and the present, to recuperate memory with a view to construct the future. In *Meno*, the process of anamnesis is triggered by the specific questions addressed by Socrates to a young boy, awakening his knowledge of trigonometry; by analogy, the counts of indictments against Columbus, examined one by one by the court over a period of three days, were the questions that the people of Martinique needed to ask in order to cure themselves of their historical amnesia. Marcel Manville clearly announced the memorial goal of the trial: The people of Martinique, Guadeloupe, and of the extended Caribbean region would be given the tools to remember their origins and their heritage, to remember the history of violence that was theirs, not to call for revenge, but to obtain reparation, and therefore to become proud and self-aware, for a better construction of their present:

> Nous avons voulu comme tous les peuples connaître notre passé, sans mensonge et sans falsification, car qui ne connaît pas son passé peut être un jour condamné à la revivre. 1492 fut un séisme terrible que nous devons rappeler à la mémoire de toutes les générations de martiniquais, de guadeloupéens et de guyanais. / Like any other people, we want to know our past, without lies or falsifications, because if you don't know your past you might be condemned to live it again. 1492 was a terrible earthquake of which we must remind all the generations in Martinique, Guadeloupe and Guyana (A.P.A.L).[10]

The trial was born out of a strong critical reaction to the politics of memory in the DOM that continued to be ruled by a heavily institutionalized amnesia. Manville started his speech by recalling how difficult it had been to make this event happen, because of the blockages he encountered at the highest level of cultural politics on the island. The opponents to the trial, whose position was that sending Columbus to court was absurd, compared it with an act of intellectual necrophilia since the victims of the Hispanic colonization had long been dead. For Manville, such a view was both hypocritical and delusional: To say that violence belonged to the past was to perpetuate the subaltern condition of the region, and to confiscate the Antilleans's heritage and their right to commemorate it. The project of the Columbus trial was born in reaction against the proposition, quite informal, that the mayor of Paris, Jacques Chirac, made in a letter to the mayor of Saint Pierre in 1992. Chirac suggested 1492 be considered an anniversary date worth celebrating in Martinique and in Guadeloupe, because the Discovery of Latin America marked the time when the continent entered into modernity. Manville quoted Chirac's words at the beginning of the trial and qualified them as obscene and unacceptable, for they associated colonization with modernity. I will add here that Chirac's words were very close to Schœlcher's views a century earlier, which is further proof that in the 1990s, the DOM was regarded with the same colonial disrespect as the colony in 1848.[11] Chirac condemned Columbus but not colonization. The trial of Fort de France did exactly the contrary. It condemned colonization, but not the persona of Columbus: after three days, the final verdict was that Columbus was guilty of crimes against humanity but his sentence was to pay one symbolic franc to the Arawak people.

The point of this verdict was to ask for collective *anamnesis* and repair: "Le tribunal demande solennellement que chaque pays, chaque nation, chaque peuple, chaque individu se remémorent l'événement de 1492 et s'acharnent à combattre tous les actes de barbaries, d'ignominie et tous les crimes de notre temps contre l'humanité" / The court solemnly asks each country, each nation, each people and each individual to remember what happened in 1492 and to continue to fight against barbarian and ignominious crimes against humanity in our time (*Justice* 1996, p.4).

The Court and the jury members were selected so as to make the *anamnesis* as powerful, collective, and democratic as possible. The jury consisted of Dr. Pierre Aliker, an important figure in the struggle for autonomy in Martinique, very close to Césaire, with whom he cofounded the PPM (the Martinican Progessist Party) and Dr. Louis Sala-Molins, a French philosopher and professor who was among the first to study the history of slavery, racism, and of the *Code Noir* in French Academia. Very symbolical as well was the

fact that the Court was presided over by a woman from Martinique, Thérèse Yoyo-Likao, respecting gender equality. The solidarity among Antilleans was the main message of the trial. Therefore, Martinique and Guadeloupe were equally present in the prosecution, with lawyers for both islands, namely Félix Rhodes and Hermance Constant, both from Pont-à-Pitre, in addition to Marcel Manville, from Martinique. The jury members represented the interest of the victims of French colonization in Africa, with personalities like Kapet de Bana, professor and economist, who was at the time president of the Human Rights League in Cameroon, and Béjir Boumaza, ex-minister of Algeria, who fought for the independence of his country.

Beside those symbolic choices, the *anamnesis* was achieved thanks to performances of a different nature, all meant to demonstrate the violence of Columbus's colonization in the courtroom and create strong feelings of empathy for the victims. A strong performative moment was, for example, the testimony of the Carib chief Auguste Kent, from the island of Dominica. In English and in Creole, with simultaneous translation into French, Kent enumerated the charges against Columbus, giving a sense that the violence perpetrated in 1492 was still damaging the Carib culture, up to the present day: For Kent, Columbus destroyed the Carib way of life, their culture, their religion, their fishing, and their clothing. But beyond the content of his accusation, it was the emotional dimension of his performance that impacted the audience very deeply. His words were strong, sometimes ill-tempered—as when he called Columbus a rascal—and full of imagery, as for example when he said "Columbus would tear a pregnant lady in two and he would take it as a pleasure." Kent managed to gain the interest of the audience and their full support by the time he got to the main point of his speech: before Columbus, the Caribbean had a better system of life, which was respectful of the environment; the system that Columbus left continues even today and divides the different people of the Caribbean. As an example, he mentioned the control of the Dominican immigration in Martinique, and the racial tensions between the Caribs and the black People, whereas before Columbus, the Africans dealt with the Caribs without problems. Kent finished his discourse with the topic of the genocide and of slavery, linking the pains of the Indians whom Columbus exterminated like animals, and the pains of the black people whom Columbus brought in replacement of the Indians he killed, and who died in the Middle Passage. With the audience applauding, this was one of the emotional peaks of the trial.

Other strong moments of collective solidarity in the courtroom were achieved thanks to the theatrical performance of four actors, who played the part either of the Spanish Kings, or of the Caribs, and who read texts describing the violence of the colonization. Those theatrical scenes were directed

by Yvan Labéjof, an important figure in the French Antilles for his roles in Césaire's plays. Those theatrical pieces were fully part of the audition procedures and were considered with the same importance as the testimonies of all the other witnesses. Clearly, the trial was built on the belief that memory needed to be acted out, like a historical reconstitution, to allow the people in the present to feel closer to the past, thanks to emotional and intellectual triggers.

The intensity of the debates during the three days that the trial lasted shows that the French Antilleans of the DOM were eager to remember their history and to recover their Caribbeanness. Mainstream cultural politics was still heavily blocked by Schœlcherism in the 1990s, limiting the collaboration between cultural actors on the island and preventing the construction of a coherent and united counter-memorial plan of action between the local powers, unlike what happened in Latin America with the anti-Columbus protests (Summerhill and Williams 2001). Proof is that other cultural events based on a similar *anamnesis* as the one achieved by the trial appeared in Martinique at the time, but since they belonged to other local contexts and were held by cultural actors with different political views than the *Cercle Franz Fanon*, there was no intention to unite forces and no collaboration happened. This caused memory to awaken only very slowly, and in fragments, in the 1990s.

Popular Theater and the Redemption of Columbus

An interesting example is the historical theater born out of the encounter among the writer Vincent Placoly, the director José Alpha, and his company, *Téatlati*—meaning street theater in French Creole. Their project, called "Théâtre de l'histoire," exploited the same ingredients as the Columbus trial: performance as a strategy to ask for reparation and for acting out the trauma of colonization, and theatrical testimonies to stimulate the popular interest in the history of Columbus as a trigger for stimulating interest in the history of slavery. Out of the six plays they coauthored, two, in 1989 and 1991, specifically focused on the history of the Carib people and their violent encounter with Columbus: *Guanahani* and *Le choc des mondes*.[12] Both plays proposed performative strategies to recover the heritage of Martinique before Columbus, and to commemorate the Antillean identity beyond Schœlcherism. They resonated with the *anamnesis* achieved by the Columbus trial, despite the fact that they were born out of a very different commemorative context.

Placoly and Alpha wrote *Guanahani* in 1989, after the mayor of Schœlcher asked for a cultural event to commemorate the anniversary of the town. Named after Victor Schœlcher in 1889 to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the French Revolution, Schœlcher, a few miles from Fort de France, is

certainly a highly symbolic place in terms of institutional memory in Martinique. A play called *Guanahani*, to celebrate its birth, could appear odd but it was in fact charged with important memory implications. Guanahani was the Carib name of the island of San Salvador that Columbus touched upon when he first arrived in the region in 1492. With this reference, the play questioned the meaning of origin and discovery for an island like Martinique, and commemorated, rather than the birth of the town, the hidden heritages of the island, such as the Carib culture and the slave rebellions. Schœlcherism was a format with which the writers had to negotiate for obvious reasons, since the play was an official command of the mayor. But the scenography was enriched with performative strategies in order to construct onstage, and for the audience, the historical *anamnesis* of their non-French origins. The whole point was to commemorate the history of slavery rather than that of the abolition.

The play is based on three different historical plots: the birth of the town of Schœlcher in 1889, the arrival of Belain d'Esnambuc and his violent encounter with the Caribs in 1635, and a slave rebellion at some unidentified date before 1848. A storyteller and a dwarf, whose role is to tell the history of the town of Case-Navire and its rebirth as Schoelcher in 1889, perform the first plot. They dialogue in Creole and in French, as it is always the case with *Teatlari*, a company that plays popular theater for the people (in Martinique and Guadeloupe, the main popular language is Creole). The sudden appearance of the characters of the two other plots onstage, interrupting the storyteller and the dwarf, disrupts their reading of Schoelcher's words. Indeed, this first plot serves as a façade to match the commemorative context for which the play was written but it is never developed properly onstage, because of the constant interruptions by the two other ones. The second plot, set in the seventeenth century, tells of the love affair between a mariner who came with d'Esnambuc, and a Carib woman, that causes a war between the Europeans and the Amerindians. When landing on the island, D'Esnambuc performs the ritual of planting the cross to take power over the land in the name of the King of France, being for Martinique what Columbus was for Guanahani. The plot then goes back to 1889, and the storyteller asks the dwarf if the Caribs were exterminated; the dwarf answers positively and adds a long homage to the Caribs, described as a great people. This is when the actors of the plot, set on the times of slavery, take power onstage. As in the Columbus trial, the commemoration of the Carib heritage leads directly to the commemoration of slavery and of the victims of French colonization.

The third plot set in the time of the slave plantations is therefore the one that is developed the most, despite what we would expect of a play entitled

Guanahani. While Carib culture is celebrated, it is the history of black slavery that is the main subject of the play. The scenography gives a sense that as a topic and a character, the history of slavery needs to fight for its place in the collective memory of Martinique, and has to physically erupt onstage. The slavery plot consists of two major scenes: the first one, called "scene of humiliation," reveals the pains of being a slave in the colony and the inhuman treatments suffered by the black people. The second scene focuses on a family of rich planters, their racist consideration of blacks as animals, and the rebellion of the slave Amè (meaning bitter in French Creole) who takes the planter's daughter hostage to escape. At this point, the storyteller and the dwarf come back onstage to represent the shcoelcherist system: the storyteller tries to reassure the audience, telling them not to worry, that this kind of violent behavior belongs to the past, in reference to the white planter's daughter held under the gun of the black slave. In other words, the storyteller is trying to force memory to return to the commemoration of the end of violence and to erase the trauma of the long-lasting slavery. This is when the slaves set fire to the planter's mansion, sabotaging again the efforts of the storyteller. The play ends with the plantation on fire, the choirs of the Carib women and the black slaves singing together, and the last words of the storyteller, describing history as an endless struggle.

The second play, *Le Choc des Mondes*, was Placoly's adaptation of Lope de Vega's *El Nuevo mundo descubierto por Cristóbal Colón*.[13] Composed in the early seventeenth century (1603), Lope de Vega's play was singular in Golden Age Spanish theater, in the sense that it gave a more complex view of Spanish colonization in the New World than the other plays of his time. Though very faithful to the Spanish Empire, the playwright criticized the idolatry of the Spanish mariners who were craving for gold; he also presented the resistance of the Amerindians as legitimate given the violence of the Spaniards' aggression. Columbus in Lope de Vega's play is portrayed as torn between his Catholic ideals and the violence he is compelled to exercise. This is the ambivalent version of the Columbus myth that Placoly exploited in *Le choc des mondes*, very similar to the defense of Columbus offered by Michel Lequenne during the 1993 trial of Fort de France: Columbus was a man of his time, he was not cruel but completing a mission for the Spanish Crown, and he believed strongly in his dream to find the paradise on earth that Pierre D'Ailly has depicted in his *Imago Mundi*.[14]

In *Le Choc des mondes*, Columbus appears in the second act as an agent of Providence, whose destiny is to conquer the New World on behalf of the Catholic Kings. The first act focused on the Taíno chief Huaca and the determination of young soldier Abankay to fight against the rival tribes. As in Lope de Vega's play, Columbus appears in the play while looking at his map, he is

transported by the Imagination into a decontextualized and allegorical space, set up as a courtroom. There, the Idolatry and the Catholic religion argue about who is going to rule over the New World, Columbus being the agent of the second. The battle ends with the verdict of Providence, who decides that the conquest will happen. Columbus is then transported to the court of Spain, where he convinces the King and the Queen to support his expedition. The rest of Act 2 is set on Hispaniola, where Columbus encounters the Indians, asks for gold, and begins the construction of the Fort Navidad. There is not yet any violence on stage; rather, the scenography exploits the idea of the "encounter" as a cultural misunderstanding and a territorial expropriation. The scenery is a construction site, with bulldozers, and the Spanish mariners wear construction helmets as they build Fort Navidad. They make fun of the Taíno language, clothing, and customs, and trade with them with all sorts of objects brought from Europe. For Placoly and Alpha, adapting history for the popular audience meant to make them laugh and be entertained. Anachronism was therefore used as a strategy to make the audience engage with the events of the past, as for example using modern phones and credit cards onstage as objects exchanged between Spaniards and Indians.

While violence, war, and blood are totally excluded from Acts 2 and 4, when Columbus is present onstage, Act 3 is set during Columbus's absence and focuses on the rebellion led by Abankay against the Spaniards, and on the racial hatred of the latter for a people they consider savages. Columbus comes back in Act 4 and finds this state of war. He becomes an agent of pacification and decides to forgive the Taíno rebels and work on the restoration of peace. His last words express regret at being compelled to establish slavery in the New World, while he solemnly leaves a wooden cross on the chest of the dead hero Abankay.

If *Guanahani* was about commemorating the history of slavery and uniting the pains of the Arawaks and the blacks, *Le Choc des Mondes* pleads for reconciliation, and uses Columbus as the facilitator of historical healing. This is certainly a totally different Columbus from the one that was judged in Fort de France a year later. But beyond this antagonistic use of the character, the perspective was identical: the point was to awaken the people from their historical amnesia and invite them to remember the pains of the past in order to construct a better present. Certainly, Placoly and Alpha's approach to colonial history was milder than Manville's and they chose to propose negotiation onstage rather than condemnation. This is another explanation for the lack of coherent anti-commemorative approach in Martinique in the 1990s, since the cultural actors and the political powers were not quite ready to collaborate.

From the DOM to the Imagined Antillean Community

The claim for the right to remember and commemorate the history of slavery existed in French Antillean society in the 1990s, as we saw with the symbolic use of Columbus in Martinique. But it was only a minority of the people on the islands who had a view that they should be proud of this heritage. In Martinique and in Guadeloupe, the mainstream cultural politics of memory was held by the Schoelcherist administration, which was only very locally and punctually capable and willing to allow the fragments of the epic of slavery to be rescued from amnesia and reintegrated in the collective imagination of the islands. In the DOM, the *anamnesis* was scattered among local associations, and therefore fragmented and disorganized. Most of those attempts happened on the local stage but were not disseminated to foster a sense of collective awareness beyond the local context for which they were created. Columbus was part of this local recovery of memory.

Yet, some writers proposed new myths of origin to reinvent the Antillean collective imagination in a wider scope, either national or regional. They worked at the local level but with a view to fostering a sense of collective awareness between all the Antilleans of the Caribbean region and beyond the territorial boundaries of the island. Those writers did not use Columbus as an explicit symbol. Rather, they expanded some Columbus-related topics to tell the history of slavery as a common heritage between the francophone, hispanophone, and anglophone slave-descendants of the Caribbean. I will examine two examples of those broader *anamneses*, one happened in Guadeloupe, the other was from Martinique but with Paris as the cultural target.

An Tan Revolysion and the Memory of Black Jacobinism in Guadeloupe

In 1989, Maryse Condé answered positively to the request of the local council of the town of Gosier in Guadeloupe to write a play for the commemoration of the Bicentenary of the French Revolution. It was a meaningful invitation and an important opportunity for the writer to come back to her native land and work with the local community. Famous in the United States as a black Antillean writer and scholar, she was in fact not as well known at home.

Within the framework offered to her, Condé diverted the consensual scenario that would be expected of a play commemorating the foundational French Republican values. The play *An Tan Revolysion*, with a title in Creole meaning "In times of Revolution," questioned Guadeloupe's collective sense of belonging and the toxic feeling of Frenchness, incepted by the theories of the Enlightenment and reinforced by the *Départementalisation*. The play

criticized the institutional falsification of the history of slavery, and unveiled the limits, taboos, and friability of the Antillean collective imagination. For the plot, she selected historical and symbolic events from three different places and times: Guadeloupe in 1789, France in 1794 and Haiti in 1804. The scenography accordingly displayed in three different arenas each of the plots on stage. In three steps—slavery, its abolition, and its eventual restoration by Napoleon—, the black imagined-community of Guadeloupe was the backbone of the play. Based on the events that happened in the French Antilles as a consequence of the French Revolution, the play exploited the major episodes taught at school—such as the 1789 epic of the people of Paris, the Terror and Robespierre, the Empire and Napoleon. But they only served as a background to the central question of the play: the failure of the slave rebellions in Guadeloupe.

Like the historical trial of Columbus, Condé condemned the violence of colonization and used the past as a mirror to reflect upon the ongoing issues of identity and autonomy on her island. The ironic subtitle—"*Elle court elle court la liberté*" / Freedom runs away, runs away—borrowed from a French nursery rhyme, gave a sense that freedom was something that still needed to be captured in the Antilles, for it was escaping like a ferret,[15] leaving the citizens of the DOM in 1989 in a similar and renewed condition of cultural, political, and economic enslavement, despite the humanist ideology of the revolution. Condé used the commemorative space to perform the failure of the ideas established since the Enlightenment as the foundations of the French Nation. Her historical theater performed them as hegemonic colonial mystifications still responsible for the dysfunction of the Guadeloupian imagined community and for perpetuating the status of the Antilleans as subaltern subjects, assimilated to a distanced but idealized motherland, even two centuries after the events described in *An Tan Revolysion*.

The invention of three dramatic arenas on one stage,[16] illuminated alternatively as the story was performed, together with the choice of Guadeloupe and Haiti (and not Martinique) as the two Caribbean mirrors of the impact of the revolutionary decisions taken in Paris, created a new historical narration of the colonial past, beyond the chronology of history and beyond the *Départementalisation* Law. *An Tan Revolysion* performed the fragmentation of the black collective imagination in Guadeloupe and its dissolution into a Republican colonial abstraction, whereas Haiti, on the contrary and much earlier, had achieved its own revolution. Martinique was not part of the setting of the play since the island was occupied by England from 1794 to 1814, which limited the impact of the French Revolution. Condé was clearly writing *An tan Revolysion* for her native land, Guadeloupe.

The pivotal character of the play is the narrator, named Zéphyr after the west wind,[17] and also called the storyteller (*le conteur*). His role is to link together the three historical arenas onstage, to direct the performance of the actors from one to the other, and to announce and comment on the action happening in each dramatic scenery. Zéphyr is a typical trickster of Caribbean theater, a performer of irony and of history (Vázquez 2012). He is the postcolonial voice whose unconventional perspective on the past sheds light on the neocolonial dysfunctions of the *Département* in the present. Whereas the main slave characters are talking in Creole, Zéphyr always speaks in French, recalling the figure of Aimé Césaire. Like Césaire, Zéphyr loved French literature at school:

> Ah Victor Hugo! We can say what we want but he is the prince of the poets. Immortal genius! When I was a child, I wrote on my school textbooks 'I want to be Victor Hugo or nothing. Yes, Victor Hugo or nothing. Can you imagine? Me, a little nigger meaning nothing, that was how big my dreams were.'
>
> (Condé 1989, p.32)

Those words of Zéphyr are almost word-for-word quoting Césaire. But beyond the reference to the father of négritude, Zéphyr is setting up the ironical device with which he will play tricks on history all through the play. By mentioning his fascination for Victor Hugo, Zéphyr is preparing the audience to hear about another historic character named Victor, Victor Hugues,[18] who played a role in the history of the revolution in Guadeloupe. Founding father of the Republican epic in Guadeloupe, Victor Hughes is described by Zéphyr at the beginning of the play as the one who discovered Guadeloupe, in the sense that he exported and transposed the ideals of the revolution on the island. As a representative of the Parisian revolutionary power in the Antillean colonies, Victor Hugues abolished slavery and planted the French Revolutionary flag on the island, just as Columbus planted the Catholic Cross in the New World. In this discovery scenario *à la française*, performed onstage by actors while Zéphyr is telling the story, it is secularism, as a primary principle of the republic, that replaced the Catholic mission that Columbus performed in the name of the Spanish Catholic Kings: "I am the Commissaire de la Convention Victor Hugues. For the first time a squadron has approached America without bearing any cross. Columbus's fleet had crosses painted on its Sails as a sign that slavery would oppress the men in the New World" (Condé 1989, p.20).

The same Victor Hugues who abolished slavery in Guadeloupe is also the one who re-established it on the island, after the fall of Robespierre and the rise of the Napoleonic order.[19] Condé did not develop further in the

play the persona of Hugues; rather she tackled the problem of the origin of the nation and the delusion that the Guadeloupe of 1989 was born with the enlightened epic of 1789. Thus, she demystified the idea that the Republican ideals born with the French Revolution marked the birth of the history of Guadeloupe.

The fascination of Zéphyr for Victor Hugo triggers another ironic connotation. Victor Hugo, an author canonized in French literary history after his death, like Césaire, was one of those political voices of the Third Republic committed to progressism and to defending the rights of the poor and of the pariahs, like another Victor, very famous in the French Antilles, Victor Schœlcher. And Like Victor Hugues, Schœlcher abolished slavery in 1848. The similar names create a chain of sounds leading the audience from Victor Hugo to Victor Hugues to Victor Shœlcher. That is the power of the trickster, to play with words, and to carnavalize official history, in a performance where anachronisms and manipulations of space are used.

Zéphyr, as the guardian of history, is witness to the violence and the repeated failed efforts of the black people of Guadeloupe to unite from generation to generation. He described how in 1789, when it was the time to claim their right to be free men with equal rights, as stated in the French *Déclaration des Droits de l'Homme et du Citoyen*, slaves and free men of color hated each other "like salt hates water" (Condé 1989, p.2). The assimilation led free black men to be ashamed of their blackness—Condé reminds her audience that *négritude* was not yet invented. In 1802, after slavery had been established again, Zéphyr tells how the black leader Ignace invited his black fellows to join the antislavery rebellion of Louis Delgrès at Basse Terre, on the west part of the island. But once there, Delgrès's discourse[20] remained misunderstood by his brothers: he delivered his speech in French, with metaphors and stylistic rhetorical effects that could not touch the audience, whose main language was Creole. Delgrès spoke *français français*, the language of Prospero. And it was not sufficient to unify the people of Guadeloupe. The Départmementalisation reinforced this acculturation and established this *français-français*, mocked by the slaves in the play, as the norm. Condé used this episode from the past, performed onstage in Creole with the comments of Zéphyr in French, to criticize the damage of French acculturation which was already operating at the time of the French Revolution and maintained by the black enlightened mulattos of France.

Zéphyr is very harsh toward the foundations of the French Republic, sometimes witty and ironic, sometimes bitter and sad. He comments the performance on the sages of the three groups of actors playing slaves and free men of color, who attempted, but failed, to create a kinship and Antillean feeling of belonging in each epoch. Characters like Jean Louis, Pierrot, and Sergélius use the vocabulary of struggle of the maroons, close to the words of

Caliban in Césaire's *A Tempest*. Pierrot and Sergélius in particular, claim the legitimate recovery of their land and the right of independence and freedom: Pierrot asks, "Why do we need white people to govern us? This land is ours" (Condé 1989, p.27); Sergelius wonders, "Would the General Victor Hugues have managed to get rid of the English men without the niggers? I tell you that if us, blackmen, take this country in their hands, this will be paradise" (Condé 1989, p.37).

But what Zéphyr highlights is the failure of their rebellions. Condé invited her fellows from Guadeloupe to accept that they were descendants not of maroons, but of Caliban, the one who sided with the wrong people and who did not manage to get rid of Prospero. In this sense, Zéphyr reversed all the positive values of the Enlightenment into their negative opposite, presenting the dream of the black Jacobins in Guadeloupe as a tale of delusion. He also uses a wide range of metaphors and personifications to create a sense of emotional connection with the pains of the past. He first portrays the revolution as a victim, like a woman raped by savage soldiers who gives birth to an aborted fetus. Then he goes further and corrects himself with even harsher terms: "I made a mistake. The revolution is not a woman but a witch. She feeds herself with fresh blood, she covers her mouth with it and sucks her fingers with delight. And in the colourless early morning, she gives birth to monsters. How far away are the hopes of 1789" (Condé 1989, p.24). This is the whole revolutionary project that Zéphyr asserts to be a lie and a trick of evil. The historical failure of the 1789 ideals also echoes the breaking of the primary pan-African dream of *négritude*, and there is a lot of Césaire's last aesthetic phase—the deception he explored through his *theâtre nègre*—in Zéphyr's fatigue and bitter analysis of the commemoration as hypocritical and useless: "Let them celebrate, those who have something to celebrate. Let them send up 1789 balloons into the three-coloured sky. We, again, have nothing more than our dead people to honour."

This statement of Zéphyr's shows how much Condé was using the commemorative framework to invalidate it. Instead of using the official history as a text to mimic, Condé selected and reorganized elements of the past to suggest a metaphorical performance. She invalidated the myth of the Discovery of Guadeloupe as a territory born to the Enlightenment and modernity with the French Revolution, just as Manville in Martinique debunked the myth that Columbus's discovery allowed the Antilles to enter modernity. Furthermore, like Alpha and Placoly in their théâtre de l'histoire, Condé used anachronism to create self-reflection in the present-day audience. But while *Guanahani* and *Le choc des mondes* made anachronistic references to entertain and create humor, Condé went for a more serious and critical tone that was not well understood by the audience. For example, in the third act of the play, the Guadeloupians fleeing the reestablishment of slavery seek asylum in

Port au Prince. First mistaken for white people, they are finally identified as black brothers and well received by the Haitians. This reference is particularly ironic in the context of the year 1989 when the play was performed. At the time, many Haitians were fleeing to Guadeloupe to escape chaos, poverty, and the terrible political crisis in which Duvalier left the country after he fled in 1986. Xenophobia against the Haitians was strong in Guadeloupe, even more that the Haitian identity, based on the pride of their successful Black Revolution in 1804, exacerbated the frustration of the people of Guadeloupe to be assimilated citizens of the DOM (Brodwin 2003).

Condé criticized the alienation of the citizens of Guadeloupe as secondary citizens haunted by unspoken inferiority complexes. Indeed, it is important to bear in mind that Guadeloupe is twice subaltern in the collective French imagination, since it is considered to be more rural, less educated, and more black than its great sister Martinique.[21] With *An tan Revolysion*, Condé questioned the identity issues of the Calibans of Guadeloupe, in a way that the audience disliked. The play was not a success in Gosier. For Condé, the local acculturated administration on the island sabotaged the show.[22] I would say that self-criticism and historical irony did not touch or convince the popular audience of Guadeloupe, which at the time was trying to recover pride in their slave heritage, as we saw with Placoly/Alpha's plays. In Condé's case, the complex and rich scenography did not suffice to gain the approbation of the audience. This misunderstanding is a sign that memory in the DOM was awakening in the 1990s but not ready for a total recovery from amnesia yet. Condé's external and critical position about her island did not resonate with the anxieties of the Guadeloupians at the time, who needed to be reassured and given a sense of collective pride rather than be reminded of their historical failures. They wanted to see onstage successful slave rebellions. In addition, at the time when the inclusion in the European Community created a general wish for more protectionism, Condé's criticism of the xenophobia against the Haitians was certainly not something the people wanted to see onstage. The people of Guadeloupe were not ready for such a perspective, and the lack of coordination between local events on the island, in addition to the lack of interest in Paris in the history of slavery, led *An tan Revolysion* to a failed encounter with the public. The play was not performed in Paris at the time, and has been in fact performed only once in France. It has never been published.[23]

In Praise of Creoleness: A Manifesto for Commemorating the Caribbean Heritages

While Condé's theater remained invisible in Paris in 1989, a controversial book was at the center of the questions of memory and identity in the

Parisian-Antillean cultural stage. The linguist Jean Bernabé, the historian Raphael Confiant, and the essayist and novelist Patrick Chamoiseau, published the essay *In Praise of Creoleness* in 1989. This cultural manifesto, written in French, praised Creole as the true language of Martinique and promoted its dissemination in written texts in order to increase the interest of the popular audience for their own literature, culture, and history on the island. From their different disciplines, the three authors united their skills to tell the origins of the French Caribbean as based on a pre-Columbus heritage.[24] In their scenario, the culture of Martinique was the result of a cultural cross-breeding born in plantation society. As a result, the people of Martinique should be proud of their *créolité*: though it came out of slavery and violence, it is the result of a positive process of cultural miscegenation. Creole, instead of being disparaged as a bastardized French dialect bearing the stigmata of slavery, as in the Schœlcherist perspective, was newly erected as the totem of the Antillean imagined community by the essayists: the people of the French Antilles were empowered, suddenly, with a heritage of which they could be proud.

The authors, also called the *créolistes*, wanted visibility and respect for their island and demanded Martinique to be respected as French and singularly Antillean. *In Praise of Creolessness* was hoping to create the possibility of a cultural and linguistic hyphenation in the very enclosed French frame of mind that we analyzed before as the cultural citizen syndrome. The word Creoleness—*Créolité* in French—refers to a status and an essence; it is very different from Creolization, that Brathwaite used for analyzing Jamaica (see Chapter 2), which implied the idea of a process. *Créolité* named the cultural identity of Martinique as achieved, as permanent, and as a given fact. It was therefore legitimate to claim the cultural rights that go with it, on the basis that being *Martiniquais* was as important as being French. In times of Post-Négritude, the Creolist generation wanted to break with the language of Prospero and, not only to speak in Creole, but to write and be published in what they considered to be their true and original language. It was not a demand for independence, but for cultural autonomy, which also implied the dissemination and commemoration of a Creole heritage on the islands.

Though not explicitly commemorative, this manifesto, published in the year of the bicentenary of the French Revolution by the prestigious and elitist publisher Gallimard and by three authors of the cultural elite of Martinique, was a message to the Parisian cultural deciders that the Creole heritage of the French Antilles needed to be commemorated. At a time when France was celebrating the foundational myth of the French nation, Bernabé, Confiant, and Chamoiseau proposed a different and alternative way to deal with the tension between identity and nationality on their island-*département*. They

chose to present miscegenation as a positive and new foundational myth for Martinique, in order to redeem the Antillean subject of being a second-class citizen. It was a way to accept a political subaltern status without renouncing the pride of being culturally different: "Collective memory is the first thing on our agenda," said the collective voice of the essay (Bernabé, Chamoiseau and Confiant 1990, p.896). *In Praise of Creoleness* was a tale of miscegenation and interculturality, which continentalized the identity of the Antilleans as Caribbean, African, and American before they were French. As a seed ready for insemination and replanting, Creole would be a language loaded with memory, and therefore, the most appropriate to use now:

> We may then collect a new harvest of first-hand seeds. We may then, through the marriage of our trained senses, inseminate Creole into the new writing. In short, we shall create a literature, which will obey all the demands of modern writing while having roots in the traditional configurations of our orality.
>
> (Bernabé, Chamoiseau and Confiant 1990, p.896)

Creole, as an oral language dating back to the plantation, was for the authors of the manifesto the instrument of a cultural project for acknowledging, strengthening, and legitimizing the territorial French-Antillean identity.[25] They systematically metaphorized this demand around three Columbus-related episodes: the discovery, the conquest, and the colonization of the New World, as we will see now.

In the essay, *Créolité* is conceptualized as a discovery that forged "a new humanity" (p.890) and "liberate(d) us from the old world" (p.903). Any author who writes in Creole becomes a planter and harvester of the New World—as was Columbus who imported sugarcane and exported tobacco—and a "discoverer of the Creoleness of the Creole" (p.890). The keystone of the argument is that Creole is the original language of the Antillean community. Based on the adaptation of Arawak, African, and French words, invented by slaves to communicate on the plantation and repressed by the French colonial powers, Creole transformed the language of the master, adding African and Arawak idiomatic structures and sounds.[26] For the three authors, writing in Creole was meaningful as a commemorative act, remembering their people's heritage of struggle, adaptation, and resistance. Writing and reading in Creole would cure the collective amnesia imposed by French colonialism.

The essay used many metaphors associated with the idea of recovery, like the image that true Creoleness had been sunk, immersed, or drained: "Our imaginary was forgotten, leaving behind this large desert where the fairy Carabossa dried Manman Dlo. Our refused bilingual richness remained a diglossic pain" (p.801). In the same vein, the writers made an explicit reference to the

myth of Atlantis, while they mentioned the Haitian *doudouist*[27] movement and its positive effect on the region: It saved "Creoleness from the glorious but definitive fate of Atlantis" (p.896). What the manifesto *In Praise of Creoleness* wanted to achieve was indeed a discovery and recovery of the sunken Creole language and culture that French acculturation erased of the memory of the people of Martinique.

Créolité was given a central place in the French Antillean culture and celebrated as the origin of collective identity in Martinique; as such, it was the foundation upon which to construct the future: "Creoleness is our primitive soup and our continuation, our primeval chaos and our mangrove swamp of virtualities" (p.892). Following the metaphor of the discovery, the authors implied that their island had to be discovered again by its own inhabitants; this recovery, like an excavation, was the new tale of origin at the heart of *In Praise of Creoleness*—like the *Chroniques* of the Indies written by the European discoverers—but this time in Creole: "Our chronicle is behind the dates, behind the known facts: we are Words behind writing. Only poetic knowledge, fictional knowledge, literary knowledge, in short, artistic knowledge can *discover u*s, understand us and bring us, evanescent, back to the *resuscitation of consciousness*" (p.896).

For the *créolistes*, the time had come in 1989 to wake up, forge, and disseminate the syncretical essence of the Antillean culture. They proposed a sort of *anamnesis* to the people of Martinique, so that they could feel proud of their slave heritage, without renouncing their French belonging. For this to happen, they needed first to claim their rights to France and its cultural elite, which was the target audience of the manifesto. This echoed the perspective of Puerto Rico at the time, where commemorating the Hispanic origins in the American Free Associated State allowed the Puerto Ricans to feel proud of being the cultural result of a double colonization, Spanish and American (see Chapter 5). As in Puerto Rico, this battle took the form of a linguistic claim: As we saw in Chapter 5 with Awilda de Palau's book promoting Spanish as the official language in Puerto Rico, the essayists wanted the Creole language to become respected as a true and written language, implying that Creoleness needed to be conquered as a new cultural and literary territory: "Out of this compost, we must grow our speech" (p.899).

The authors of the manifesto claimed the right to read their past in Creole, and criticized the French Republican education system that put French first as the only valid language: "School teachers of the great period of French assimilation were the slave traders of our artistic impulse" (p.899). They wanted to be proud Calibans who could talk in Creole to Prospero. Promoting Creole as the nation-language of the island-*département* was meant to repair the damage of centuries of acculturation. Their essay, written with six hands, praised

miscegenation as a way to recover the forgotten part of the Antillean heritage without getting rid of Frenchness, French culture, and French identity. It was not a political manifesto for independence, but a cultural demand for regional inclusion and hyphenation, as in Puerto Rico. Martinique claimed the right to be visible, considered, read, published, studied at school, as much as other regional specificities in hexagonal France. The answer of the metropolis to this demand was the "promotion" in 2003 of the DOM into an ROM—meaning *Région d'Outremer*. The *région* is the next highest administrative level after the *département*; it normally comes with more autonomy since the *région* is the combination of several *départements* and it is therefore bigger and richer. But in the DOM, the islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe, too small, geographically distanced and isolated in the Caribbean sea, became *régions* but that continued to consist of one single *department*, something that would be seen as totally absurd and impossible in mainland France. Dressed with the costume of more autonomous regions overseas, the islands remain what they had been since 1946, DOM. The status quo is another common trait that Martinique shares with Puerto Rico.

In the 1989 manifesto, the references to Columbus were at best implicit and metaphorical, given the Parisian audience for which the book was written and the Columbus-unfriendly commemorative context in which it was written (as we saw at the beginning of the chapter); but in the last five years, when Bernabé, Confiant, and Chamoiseau have been asked to comment on the meaning of *Créolité* and on the relevance of the Creolized Antillean identity in the twenty-first century, they have mentioned Columbus as an important symbol and as the historical marker of the beginning of the globalized world system.

For Patrick Chamoiseau, Columbus marked the end of the hegemony of the monocultural civilizations: "La conquête des Amériques réalisée par Christophe Colomb marquera le premier temps de la mondialisation / The conquest of the Americas by Christopher Columbus marked the first step of globalisation" (Chamoiseau 2013). Chamoiseau considers that with Columbus, the identity markers (*les marqueurs d'identité*) were challenged, disrupted, and reorganized according to a new cultural miscegenated cultural reality, where single foundational myths converged into syncretic and multiple truths:

> Toutes ces rencontres ont pratiquement anéanti les absolus véhiculés par les cultures anciennes. Je fais donc partie d'un peuple composite dont tous les marqueurs identitaires, toutes les structurations habituelles ont été effacés./All those encounters almost destroyed the conceptions considered as absolute truths by the old cultures. Therefore, I belong to a composite people for whom all the identity markers and the usual structures of identity have been erased.

Chamoiseau sees a clear continuity between the new multicultural nature of the world system born with Columbus's violent conquest (he even uses the word genocide in the interview), and the transcultural societies in which we live in the twenty-first century: "Nous vivons désormais dans des sociétés multi-transculturelles, un peu semblables à ce que nous vivions dans les plantations esclavagistes, en tout cas à ce que nous avons vécu dans les Amériques/ We live today in multi-transcultural societies, quite similar to the slave plantation societies."

Raphael Confiant's attitude toward Columbus was similar in the presentation *Matinik. Créolité, Diversalité, Mondialisation* he gave at the 2005 book fair in Fort de France. Confiant spoke in French but with clear references in Creole (naming the island by its Creole name, Matinik). As Chamoiseau in the interview mentioned above, the concept of diversity (le *divers*) theorized by Glissant allowed Confiant in his talk to link the globalization, as a phenomenon born with Columbus at the end of the fifteenth century, and the global world as it stands in the twenty-first century:

> Christophe Colomb en 'découvrant' l'île de Guanahani dans l'archipel des Bahamas, puis la future Hispaniola dans celui des Antilles, a, on le sait, bouclé l'espace-terre, mettant du même coup fin à l'ère des grandes explorations. Après lui, il aura fallu que l'homme aille sur la lune pour se trouver des horizons inconnus/ By 'discovering' the island of Guanahani in the archipelago of the Bahamas, and eventually Hispaniola in the Antillean archipelago, has, as we know, closed the planet space, putting an end to the big explorations. After him, men will have to go on the moon to find unknown territories.

For Confiant, the first phase of the globalization, which started with Columbus, was the brutal and violent encounter of the major civilizations of the time: the Amerindian, the European, the African, and the Asiatic worlds. But while the Antillean archipelago (and Martinique) had been the center of the first globalization in the times of Columbus, it has been prevented—says Confiant—from being part of the globalized world economy in the twenty-first century, because of the law of *Départementalisation* in 1946. The main point of the speech was to criticize, with striking images of dependency, the neocolonial and protectionist politics of France that has kept Martinique out of the scope of global exchanges:

> Notre économie a été mise sous perfusion, notre société sous respiration artificielle et notre culture sous étouffoir. La Martinique est hors-jeu quant à la mondialisation. C'est un espace surprotégé, infantilisé même par les pouvoirs locaux et français, qui subit de manière feutrée les contrecoups de ce formidable phénomène qui, hélas, ne se déroule, pour nous, Martiniquais, Guadeloupéens et Guyanais, que sur l'écran de nos téléviseurs./ Our economy has been put

> on a drip, our society on artificial respiration and our culture under muffle. Martinique is offside when it comes to globalisation. It is an overprotected space, infantilised by the local and by the French powers, that endures mutedly the repercussions of this extraordinary phenomenon, which, unfortunately, we Martiniquaians, Guadeloupians and Guyanese, only watch on the screen of our televisions.
>
> (Confiant 2005)

It is interesting to see that *Créolité*, designed as a claim for cultural hybridity in 1989, has become the major political weapon in the last decade to reflect on globalization and to criticize the neocolonial French *département* as a backward protectionist structure in the world system. This reveals a striking similarity between the multiple islands of the archipelago, if we think for example that in Jamaica, 1992 coincided with the fear that globalization would reinforce exploitation and triggered the desire to unite under a common Caribbean heritage at a transnational level (see Chapter 6). Twenty-five years after the publication of *In praise of Creoleness*, the authors of the manifesto continue to engage with *Créolité* on their island to promote Antillean identity as resulting from miscegenated, multiple, and Creolized heritages and to put Martinique on the map of globalization. For me it shows that the 1989 Manifesto was clearly rethinking *Créolité* in the context of the 500th anniversary of Columbus's arrival. The latter remained understated at the time, for contextual reasons that prove my point that first, there was a pan-Caribbean awareness in matters of cultural memory in the 1990s, but second, that this trans-Caribbean consciousness was limited and muffled by nationalist and individual-island perspectives (as the case with the book *In Praise of Creoleness*).

In Martinique and Guadeloupe, many projects, events, and perspectives were working toward the recuperation of the slave heritage as the key to constructing a collective feeling of historical and cultural pride in the French Antilles in the 1990s. Nevertheless, they failed to unite and establish a strong counter-commemorative platform at the time. They remained local attempts, more or less successful, that addressed specific and small audiences, either on the islands or in the mainland. One reason that prevented their collaboration was that those projects often considered themselves as rivals or as unrelated, since their target was a specific island rather that the dialogue between the French-speaking islands of the Caribbean. For example, the views of Maryse Condé have often been presented as antagonistic and not reconcilable with those of the Creolist group. While the latter criticized her for not knowing and not writing in Creole, she dismissed their manifesto as addressed to the Parisian elite with the consequence of reinforcing their cultural subaltern belonging to France (Condé and Cottenet-Hage, 1995).[28] But both positions

were actually targeting a specific stigmata of amnesia: the lack of historical self-awareness among the people and the cultural arrogance of the elite. They certainly used different tools and a different language to perform their memory project, but they both used the themes and images of the discovery, conquest, colonization, and land appropriation to trigger the questions that would lead to the awakening of memory and to the end of the control of France over the collective imagination of the *Outremer*.

Another example of the limits of the collaboration on the memorial stage would be that none of the writers of *In Praise of Creoleness* was involved in the Columbus trial; neither did they participate or interact with the popular historical theater in Creole, though their goals coincided. Like Manville in the Columbus trial, the Creolists wanted compensation and reparation for the historical amnesia institutionalized by France, which they described as a castration: "The tragedy lived by many of our writers comes from the castration which, linguistically, they were victims of during their childhood" (Bernabé, Chamoiseau and Confiant 1990, p.899). And like Placoly/Alpha's theater, the encounter between the two worlds was presented as positive, since it led to a cultural miscegenation. The violence of colonization was excluded from the manifesto and replaced by the utopia of miscegenation: "Creoleness is the interactional or transactional aggregate of Caribbean, European, African, Asian, and Levantine cultural elements, united on the same soil by the yoke of history" (p.891). The focus was clearly on the unification and reconstruction of a community enriched by its different origins, as in *Guanahani* and *Le choc des mondes*: "Creoleness is the world diffracted but recomposed, a maelstrom of signified in a single signifier: A Totality" (p.892).

Beyond their differences in format, target audience, and creative sensibilities, what the Columbus trial and the use of Columbus by *Teatlari* in Martinique, the ironic and critical theater of Condé in Guadeloupe and the publication of *In Praise of Creoleness* in Paris, all had in common was their performance of memory in the form of anamnesis and their fostering of a new way to remember collectively the meaning of being Antillean in the French Antilles. Cultural memory was working toward healing and reconstruction, even if cultural feuds prevented collaboration from happening on the front of memorial politics. France was still holding the joke of memory and amnesia thanks to the division of the Antillean cultural actors regarding strategies of anamnesis. Columbus was the symbol of the similarities of their perspectives as well as their disagreements.

CHAPTER 8

Columbus, the Scapegoat, and the Zombie: Performance and Tales of the National Memory in Haiti

In 1992, Haiti did not commemorate the fifth centenary of the Discovery of the New World at all. While the Dominican Republic constructed a Lighthouse to Columbus in Santo Domingo, as we examined in Chapter 5, the Haitian cultural politics did not engage with the event, not even in reaction against their Hispanic neighbor. This is quite understandable if we think of the country at the time had just endured the violent coup of Géneral Raoul Cédras, in September 1991, eight months after Jean Bertrand Aristide had been democratically elected president of Haiti. Cédras had the full support of the Bush (senior) administration and of the military-CIA forces, sent on the island. From 1991 to 1994, when Aristide returned from exile and was reinstalled in power with the support of the Clinton administration, the country went through a period of upheaval, tensions at all level of the society and massive migration. In such a difficult context, public commemorations were certainly not on the agenda.

Jean Métellus was one of the few Haitian writers who showed some interest in Columbus and his encounter with the native people of Ayiti, the name given by the Arawaks to the island before Columbus renamed it Hispaniola.[1] Métellus wrote two plays, *Anacaona* (1986) and *Columbus* (1992), as a theatrical diptych to represent the Caribbean heritage of his country. The approach was quite conventional and resonated with UNESCO's "Encounter of the two Worlds": Columbus is portrayed as a visionary adventurer who achieved the ecumenical gathering of the two hemispheres. It was not as successful as the author would have wished: the audience did not identify with the heroes on stage and laughed when, in the first act, the cacique Guacanagarix, while having his early morning walk on the beach,

discovers, mesmerized, the three Caravels of the Admiral landing on the shore (De Cauna 2004, p.45). The cold reaction of the audience to Métellus's plays should not be surprising if we think that Arawak culture has been marginalized in the Haitian collective imagination. Indeed, the national myth is entirely based on the epic of the black and mulatto liberators who achieved the first revolution of the Caribbean and led a slave plantation to become a black republic in 1804.

Nevertheless, when Jean Claude Duvalier, Baby Doc, fled the country with the help of the American Air Force in 1986, the Haitians toppled the statue of Columbus in Port au Prince and threw it into the sea. This act of *déchoukage*—meaning both to unbolt and to discredit in Haitian Creole—reveals that Columbus was in fact a meaningful symbol for a performance of popular discontent. The vandalism against this specific statue can be interpreted as the symbolic punishment of Duvalier as a thief and an impostor, as wicked as Columbus was; also, we can see it as the impulsive and collective expression of a feeling of frustration and betrayal; and, lastly, as a protest against neocolonial dependence and international imperialism in Haiti, facilitated by the hypocrisy and dictatorial greed of the rulers of the country. All three interpretations converge in accusing Columbus of being a symbol of oppression undeserving of remembrance in the country. It also shows that the people of Haiti were strongly aware of their history, to the point of acting out collectively what they valued as their true heritage. This is essential to understand how collective memory works in Haiti.

At the time when Latin America and the Caribbean were reacting to Europe's wish to commemorate the 500th anniversary of Columbus's arrival in the New World, the statue in Port au Prince had been rescued by the police and secured in a dark corner of the town hall, a shameful symbol sentenced to be forgotten. Toppling Columbus's statue, in a collective impulse of rage was an act of scapegoating. Columbus was sentenced to historical oblivion, since he represented the continuous oppression of the people of Haiti over the last 500 years: Like Columbus who robbed the resources of the New World from the Arawaks, and like the French who enslaved the Africans on the plantation to make profit, Baby Doc had stolen what belonged to the people. Contrary to appearances, the Haitian people were not that distant from Jean Metellus's views on Columbus, who considered the "discoverer" to have initiated the globalization through which Haiti has been exploited for 500 years (Métellus 2010).

In comparison to the other French Caribbean islands in the 1990s, it seems that the political and popular performance that Glissant had wished for Martinique did exist in Haiti. We saw in Chapter 7 that if the people of Martinique could not manage their collective identity and construct a feeling

of pride, it was mainly because the history of slave resistance in general, and of the maroon heroes in particular, was erased by French acculturation; this blocked the development of collective self-awareness and favored instead the institutionalization of amnesia on the island. The collective anger transferred to the Columbus statue in 1986 in Port au Prince is very different. It reveals the importance of the slave heritage in the Haitian imagination and the collective instinct of the people to unite forces thanks to meaningful symbols of their past. It is obvious that in a Caribbean country like Haiti, black national pride is powerful. Still, there was not any anti-Columbus project in Haiti in 1992, and no desire to engage with other Caribbean islands where the anti-commemorative struggle was rooted in the defense of the black heritage, as in Jamaica for example. Toppling Columbus statue was an impulsive, unpredictable, and popular performance, with which the ruling elite did not want to deal at all.

This, for me, reveals a case of *anamnesis* specific to Haiti: While the celebration of black freedom is the keystone of the national identity, the Haitian collective imagination is nevertheless split between two opposed and competing historical scenarios for commemorating black heritage. If we follow the image of a person suffering from temporal amnesia, and for whom the cognitive zones of the brain containing memories are conflicting and causing body dysfunctions, it is as if a different scenario of heritage and pride was located in a different zone of the Haitian social and cultural body, causing memorial blockages. In Haiti, those two scenarios are held by two social groups, separated by class and language: On one hand, the educated elite has commemorated since the nineteenth century their story of black Jacobinism, where Haitianity is told in French, as the result of the canonization of the black enlightened heroes like Toussaint L'Ouverture and Dessalines. On the other hand, the people of Haiti act out their heritage in Creole with vodoun. In this case, the celebration of the past is a performance with a social meaning in everyday life. The traditional Haitian popular culture relies on social networks, where metaphysics, magic, and politics converge in the service of their deities and ancestors, the *lwas*,[2] and within which the maroons are commemorated as their foundational father figures. Both the elitist and the popular perspectives perpetuate the memory of 1804, but in competing heritages, thus dividing the *anamnesis* in Haiti into antagonistic approaches that prevent any reconciliation to happen. What is commemorated is a traumatic past, continuously told or performed, to maintain the power of the few (either the heads of state or the heads of the vodoun societies) over the many.

This is where Glissant's analysis of French neocolonial acculturation in Martinique is not sufficient to explain the blockages of national memory in Haiti, even if both countries share the same colonial heritage. As in the

French *Département d'Outremer*, a homogeneous and hegemonic narration of the republic (the black Napoleonism) served as a demagogical device for the elite to take power. But at the same time, this narration continued to coexist with a traditional one in Haiti, contained in vodoun. The latter is based on cultural performances of memory in everyday life, and has been as much, if not more, powerful nurturing feelings of solidarity among the people against the rulers who oppressed them. Such a collective energy, based on the performance of the memories, the faith, and the rage of the masses, can explain the toppling of Columbus's statue in 1986. It was a popular and political performance resulting from traditional forms of collective memory, even more if we think that at the same time Columbus was toppled, Duvalier's empty coffin was carried through the streets of Port au Prince as a sign that he had been judged guilty of betrayal by the law of vodoun.[3] Likewise in 2004, in the anniversary year of the Haitian Revolution, Jean Bertrand Aristide's demagogical use of Makandal, Toussaint, and Dessalines in a public discourse triggered anger among the people who took possession of the public urban space, exactly as they did in 1987 (Najman 2004). Those collective and popular political demonstrations will be considered as the little emerged parts of a much deeper collective black heroic memory, performed in Creole and in oral stories and rituals, not only in the city, but also in the rural and illiterate regions of the country.

In the first part of this chapter, I will examine the idea that in Haitian society, the Post-Columbus memory syndrome takes the shape of a conflictive *anamnesis*. The elite commemorate the national myth by repeatedly celebrating the black Jacobins, while they tend to erase the oral, Creole, and popular cultural memory from the collective imagination. At the same time, the people commemorate their maroon heritage with vodoun, in which zombism appears to be a commemorative strategy based on the manipulation of memory and amnesia as a way to discipline and punish, like toppling Columbus's statue was a way of sentencing the scapegoat to historical oblivion. Memory is the keystone of power over the masses and it is a matter of class in Haiti.

In the second part of my analysis, I will question the position of some Haitian writers regarding historical memory and national identity. Since the 1980s, the position of the Haitian intellectual has changed in Haiti and writers have found themselves at the crossroads of several memory lanes. Particularly since the 1990s, fiction has become the tool with which to diagnose and question the dysfunctions of national memory in the country. I will consider the representation in literature of zombies and zombie making as a way to act out the spell under which the nation seems to be condemned to perform an idealized story of pride in order not to confront the feeling of shame.

Anamnesis in Haiti: A Tale of Two Nations

National Commemorations, the Elite, and the Myth of the Black Jacobins

In 1804, the victory of Toussaint-Louverture and Dessalines came as a shock to the colonial world. France and the European empires could hardly believe that Saint-Domingue, the richest plantation colony in the Caribbean, had become the Independent Republic of Haiti, or in other words, the first free nation of black slaves (Mintz 1995). Since the early days of independence, the Haitian collective imagination constructed feelings of identity and pride on the epic story of black rebellions, and on their success, leading to freedom. But the particularity of the Haitian postcolonial and national myth is that it kept alive over centuries the memory of the major French myth of origin: the revolution of 1789, and the philosophy of the Enlightenment.

For example, in 1954, for the 150th anniversary of the independence of Haiti, the Haitian president Magloire and the French Ambassador to Haiti launched a huge national exhibition to celebrate the figure of Toussaint-Louverture and the Haitian independence, in the French Institute of Port au Prince. The French Review for the History of the Colonies (*Revue d'Histoire des Colonies*) described the event with enthusiasm at the time, and celebrated Haiti as the sister of France and the most beautiful colony France ever had. The words are strong enough to show that the Haitian elite and France still enjoyed a privileged relationship, in between nostalgia and resentment. The Haitians were portrayed as heroic champions of the French language and as the heirs of the French Revolution. France was at this point ready to redeem the "pearl of the Antilles" for its betrayal: if the debt of 90 million francs claimed by King Charles X a century before was still of actuality in 1954—and still will be for another 50 years—the moral penalty owed by the black maroon nation was suddenly cleared up. Haiti was forgiven and redeemed for its betrayal to France because both nations shared the ideals of the 1789 Revolution. This perspective continued to mark the national commemorations in the country, as in 1989, when a colloquium hosted by the Haitian Committee for the Bicentenary of the French Revolution in Port au Prince celebrated Toussaint-Louverture extensively (De Cauna 2004).

From an international point of view, the tradition of the black enlightenment, and the impact of C. L. R. James's *The Black Jacobins*, was facilitated by the context of the Harlem Renaissance movement in the United States, which gave birth to many literary works, mostly plays, based on black revolutionary epic writing (Hill 1986). This was the result of an Anglo-Caribbean, US-Caribbean and Afro-American connection, reinforced by the strength of Marxist philosophy. The black enlightenment—from Garveyism, Pan-Africanism, and Négritude, to Fanonism, black power, and

black nationalism—proposed a new set of concepts and theories to free the black man from his subaltern condition as a black person and as a proletarian.

Nothing like this happened in Haiti, where the epic of Toussaint served only to establish the legitimacy of the mulattoes, mixed-blood sons of the white planters from whom they inherited their property and their name, to lay claim to and keep the land for themselves. The division between the mulattoes and the people was so clear that none of the educated and illiterate leaders—the General Toussaint, the King Christophe, or the Emperor Soulouque—managed to construct a national narration that would gather all the Haitians together as one people. The society was split between the elite, the heirs of the enlightened mulattoes, and the people, the descendants of the slaves. The national commemorations celebrated the first rather than the second, even though they had to find a way to deal with the importance of the maroon leaders in the popular collective memory. As a result, from the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries to the present, the Haitian leaders negotiated with the maroon heritage;[4] sometimes they minimized it or diluted it into folklore; at other times they created a hybrid national myth in order to join the military elite and the popular forces in a strong network of state mercenaries, as François Duvalier did with the *macoutes*.[5] In addition to this social division, which reinforced the importance of the black Jacobins in the national memory, we also need to consider the 15 years of American occupation, which started in 1915: this was the other factor that reinforced the feeling of francophilia among the Haitian elite, as an alternative and cultural resistance to the American occupant.

The educated Haitian elite rewrote the myths of the nation, modified the content of national memory, and erased as much as possible the souvenirs of the slave rebellions, the heroism of the maroon leaders, from Makandal to Boukman, and the importance of vodoun, as the Afro-Caribbean religion that gave faith and courage to the slaves to become wary rebels. Debunked as superstitious or idealized as supernatural, vodoun became, for the ruling class, material to tame. When considered an atavism that blocked the progress of the modern nation, the elite replaced vodoun and slave culture with an indigenist version that made it in their view more civilized (that is to say French-like) and politically self-conscious. In this scenario, the Haitian hero was not the angry black slave but the hardworking black peasant, as in the texts of Jean Price Mars (*Ainsi parla l'Oncle* 1928) and Jacques Roumain (*Gouverneurs de la Rosée* 1946). But the elite from the educated black middle-class also understood that the maroon heritage was a huge reservoir of faith that could galvanize the numerous people into a potential army capable of taking power in the country. This view led to the construction of another

scenario of memory, called *noiriste*, where patriotic feelings were aroused by the pride of blackness.

The multiple versions of the historical event called Bois Caïman, a vodoun ceremony that took place in Morne Rouge on the August 14, 1791, exemplify how the French-educated black elite manipulated the historical memory of their country. The ritual of Bois Caïman led to one of the most important slave rebellions and it is a major episode in the national history, taught at school as a founding Haitian myth. For Leon François Hoffmann, it was not so much a historical event as "a legend, whose origins can be traced to the malevolent imagination of the French planter" (Hoffmann 1999, p.159). In his dense study of the topic, Hoffmann goes back to the first version of the episode written in 1814 by the French Doctor Antoine Dalmas after he fled to the United States when the French lost control of Haiti. Dalmas presented vodoun as a savage and cannibal religion that justified French colonialism as something that would bring civilization to Haiti. Dalmas's version nurtured a feeling of irrational fear of the black slaves. The other French versions of Bois Caïman in the nineteenth century that Hoffmann examined were written by abolitionists, who minimized as well the importance of vodoun in the Haitian Revolution. For Civic de Gastine, for example, the ceremony happened to revenge Ogé,[6] another figure of the black enlightened hero; For Schoelcher,[7] the leader of the ceremony was the Jamaican Boukman. In both cases, the gathering of the slaves was seen as political and not religious, and it resulted from a revolutionary self-consciousness and not from the impulsive anger and faith of the people, as in the toppling of Columbus's statue in 1986. For Hoffmann, the educated elite continued to tame the meaning of Bois Caïman in the national memory all through the twentieth century: Hoffmann quotes Hannibal Price, for whom the slaves pretended to adore African gods in order to foment political rebellion; and Chavanne Douyon, for whom the slaves did not have any notion of the meaning of freedom and thought their destiny was in the hands of the loas. Both versions despised vodoun as a backward trait inherited from Africa. Hoffmann also signals a quite different version, in a lecture given by the *noiriste* Lorimer Denis in 1944 in the Port au Prince Town Hall, for the 40th anniversary of the revolution. After celebrating the slaves of Bois Caïman as heroes, the lecture was illustrated by a play that galvanized the myth of the maroon heritage. For Hoffmann, this African-focused performance reflected the exasperation of the black middle classes before domination of the Mulatto aristocracy (Hoffmann 1999). This *noiriste* reading of Bois Caïman was part of the politics of President Dumarsais Estimé, elected in 1946, and eventually of François Duvalier, the dictator of the country from 1957 to 1971. Duvalier's father, nicknamed *Papa Doc*, understood that he would keep power if he could control the

masses and therefore their collective imagination, based on the slave rebels and on vodoun. Duvalier was pantheonized as a vodoun deity after his death. This could be partly explained by the fact that he is the very first who incorporated the maroon culture into the national imagination and enabled the uneducated black people to gain access to the highest positions in the state (Sylvain 2013). In Haiti, collective memory is a matter of power and of class ownership. I agree with René Depestre, for whom the epic of the 1804 Revolution served to "paint in black" the national values, to give them the abstract homogeneity of ideological faith, and contributed to maintain two classes, living in two parallel worlds, completely impermeable to each other in the country (Depestre 1989).

From Vodoun to Zombism: Popular Strategies of Memory through Commemorations

While the Black Napoleon Heroes were canonized by the elite, the people had already constructed a strong collective memory with creeds and rituals to help them survive on the plantation, which eventually served them to resist to the mulattoes. The religion of the Haitian people consists in the collection of diverse rites coming from Africa and gathered into the collective representation of a mythical homeland called Guinea. The peasants consider themselves to be the children of Guinea (*Ti Guinée* or *Ginen*). They serve their gods/ancestors through many different rites, such as Rada, Nago, Ibo, Petro, Congo, and Dahomey, names that refer to regions of Africa from which the rite originally came. Each of them has a different body of rituals, where magic can be more or less represented.

In the popular and traditional culture of the slave-descendant black peasantry, the runaway slave who succeeded in escaping from the plantation is a key figure of pride. He exists in the popular memory as the originator of the free communities of slaves in the hills, also called maroon societies. The maroon is remembered as the one who offered an alternative to slavery to his black brothers. In the maroon community, vodoun was a religion that established metaphysical creeds and at the same time social practices to protect the group from exploitation and oppression. It reinforced the feelings of belonging and solidarity among the runaway slaves, by providing them with an explanation of the meaning of life, pain, and death; and with a way to act upon it, thus making bearable the passage from the lost motherland Africa to the Caribbean. At the same time, it provided the group, isolated in the hills, with mechanisms of social support, guaranteeing order and providing protection to all the members. Laws and strict hierarchical relationships in maroon society were borrowed from the French military and aristocratic

system, from the Emperor to the Prince, from the General to the Soldier. And since the condition of existence of the maroons in the hills was based on the maintenance of secrecy, guaranteed by the strict observance of collective laws, their transgression was considered a threat to the life of the community, and harshly punished. The most terrible punishment was not death, but enslavement, which consisted—and still does—in the magical and pharmacopic use of poison to turn the guilty one into a zombie (Davis 1988). The maroon societies born in the eighteenth century became and still are powerful secret fraternities in Haiti, which provide welfare in the manner of a mutual benefit society and a cooperative labor group. They are responsible for a strong sense of belonging, the aim of which is to protect the interests of the rural peasantry and of the weakest among them. Their heroes and father figures are not Toussaint and Dessalines, but the maroons of Bois Caïman. Their religion, philosophy, and politics are held by vodoun, as the main collective imagination, in which the zombie is a slave, punished by amnesia.

In terms of memory, the strength of vodoun comes from its capacity to reverse the trauma of enslavement, and its equivalent in modern times, into a positive representation of the maroon, and to commemorate the act of running away from the plantation as a positive epic of rebellion. The main rituals of vodoun are performances in which each individual surrenders his free will by entering a state of trance, either because he seeks the protection of a god or because he is inhabited by a deity. In vodoun subjectivity is very important. It is at the same time the strongest and the weakest part of the human being. The reason for this is that it gives meaning to the traumatic experience at the heart of the maroon heritage: running away from the plantation was the equivalent of a total disappearance, the becoming of nobody, in the limbo of the hills, and away from all social networks. The vodoun creeds consist in justifying, glorifying, and making positive the need to become nobody to gain freedom, and to pass from a status of slave to a status of pariah, the latter being the epitome of strength. To turn the pariah (the maroon) into a hero, and give a positive value to their betrayal of the master, the vodoun invented a narrative strategy to get out of the dilemma of nothingness. This strategy is zombism.

The zombie *corps cadavre*—body corpse—is the mortal remains of somebody who, after he died of unnatural causes rises up from his tomb thanks to a magical ritual performed by the bokor to steal his soul. The *bokor* practices black magic, while the *houngan* and the *mambo* are the male and female priests of vodoun, in charge of the rituals of death, called *desounen*, meant to accompany the healthy separation of the soul from the body and the return of each part of the self to where it belongs after death, such as Guinea and the community of the ancient spirit (Desmangles 1992, p.69). The *bokor*

performs a wicked ritual that allows him to still the purest part of the soul. After being awoken from death, the dead body is rebaptized with a new name, and since he has lost all trace of willpower and self-decision, he is resocialized in another place to work as a slave. From the Haitian point of view, the zombie is a dead-alive person. In fact, no death happened but the appearance of death was given to the body thanks to the use of a strong poison—made out of many different psycho-neurotic substances—that makes the temperature of the body go down, creates cyanosis of the skin, and slows the heart beat until its total disappearance, creating a perfect mimesis of death. After three days in the grave, if the poison has not killed the victim (and in that case, it would be interpreted as a proof of natural death, and that God took back the soul of the innocent, now safe from the evil power of the bokor), the person awakes—in a very damaged state due to the effects of the drug and to the experience of being buried alive, most frequently aphasic and with amnesia (Davis 1988). With a new name, the zombie is sent to work as a slave to clear his debt to society. Indeed, capturing the soul of a man is not normally meant to be an act of evil magic, performed out of malevolence, but instead it should be the result of a fair sentence. Zombie making was meant to be a punishment, decided upon by the community, after one of its members is denounced for threatening one of his counterpart's or family member's integrity, willpower, and/or personal possessions. People turned into zombies have in many cases been judged guilty of theft (of property, wife, land), in many different senses of the word, by their community.

Zombism is designeda purifying act, where one individual is punished to protect the whole group. In this particular practice of scapegoating, the sentence is not death but the fiction of death, which is performed thanks to a three-part narration charged with historical symbolism dating back to the trauma of slavery. The time before the grave, in the grave, and after the grave, are temporal markers that metaphorically commemorate the story of the transshipment of slaves, from their departure from Africa to their arrival in Haiti. Before the passage, the men and women who eventually became working bodies for the French planters were slaves captured, sold, and kept as cattle, before the arrival of the slave ship, by African communities such as the Efik on the slave coast. The buried-alive phase corresponds to the Middle Passage. Those who recover their faculties after having been zombified describe it as a journey that gives the feeling of floating, with a complete awareness of the noise and voices around one and a deep sense of consciousness, an experience of fear and frustration, but with a total incapacity to move or to open one's eyes (Davis 1988). The raising up is the moment when, upon arrival, the slave is given a new name, his master's or the plantation's, and is turned into a working body with no willpower, a *zombi jardin* (zombie garden).

Historically, becoming Haitian meant becoming a zombie on the plantation. Separating families and members of the same ethnic group was the most brutal manner for the white masters to control the 100 times more numerous black slaves. The process of separation, with a view to annihilate the willpower of an individual, is analogically at the heart of zombification. But by making it to be a fair punishment to protect the community against greed and individualism, the three-part scenario of zombism turns the negative fragmentation into a positive segmentation, at the end of which injustice will be repaired. It is a narrative strategy that properly derives from transculturation, in the manner Ortiz defined it as the transformation of a violent trauma into a positive cultural creation. The Haitian vodoun has a very accurate sense of the protection of the subject, reflected in the division of the human into body and soul, and by the compartmentalization of the soul in two elements as well, embedded together in an organic interrelation.[8] None can live without the other but the most precious of them, and also the most fragile, is the aura of an individual, his personality and willpower, called the *Ti bon ange* (the little good angel). During the passage of death, the five elements are separated and this is why the *Ti bon ange* becomes vulnerable to the taking by the bokor. In this elaborate segmentation of the human essence, willpower is the most important element in the individual and this provides him with a strong faith in individual freedom that must be protected at any cost. The history of the maroon tells the story of this epic struggle for freeing and protecting subjectivity.

In the eighteenth century, in the Afro-Caribbean context of the maroon communities of Haiti, zombie-making was an elaborate mechanism of collective protection thanks to the control of memory. Vulnerable and isolated, the existence of the maroon community totally depended on the solidarity of the group. They needed to construct a feeling of identity, pride, and solidarity among their members to protect their freedom, and this was done thanks to the inverse reproduction of the rules of the plantation, but transformed and adapted to protect freedom and solidarity. The maroon society created a new heritage where the runaway slave, considered the "bad slave" by the master, became a hero. In addition, those who were slaves became entitled to enslave and punish, thanks to zombie making: as a slave with no memory, the zombie could pay his debt to the society he betrayed without revealing its secret location. In this scenario, the scapegoat is useful to the group, while on the plantation, all the slaves were often punished for the fact that one of them had run away, creating even more division and bitterness within the slave community.

The collective and popular memory in Haiti is based on the redemption of slavery for the control of memory. In 1992, nowhere in the Caribbean was the

absence of Columbus in cultural politics more attached to historical memory than in Haiti. Toppling Columbus's statue was a collective demonstration of the importance of historical memory, a force that empowers men with freedom and pride, while slaves are condemned to amnesia. The Haitian popular culture and religion are deeply concerned with the commemoration of the slave resistance, but as opposed to the elite who celebrate their revolutionary heroes in national discourses and commemorations, the people carry their historical memory as a collective energy, the purpose of which is protection and resistance in everyday life. The secret societies of Haiti directly descend from the maroon societies, whose heritage and collective imagination are at the heart of Haitian popular culture. Scapegoating Columbus and sentencing him to historical oblivion was a way to make him a zombie in order to avenge and protect the pride, the freedom and the solidarity of the people. There was a battle for memory in Haiti, and both the elite and the commoners were conscious that the one who remembers the past has the power to control the present, while the one who has no memory is condemned to be a slave.

Literature and Memory in Haiti: Writing the Zombie Nation

All along the twentieth century, Caribbean literature has dealt extensively with the dilemmas of historical heritage in Haiti, and the class division responsible for the antagonism between two collective imaginations. The Janus-faced leadership of the country, split between modernity and tradition, and the conflictive relationship between the ruler and his popular alter ego, have been the central topic of many plays and novels. For example, in Césaire's *The Tragedy of King Christophe*, the fool Hugonin echoes the king's journey from tyranny to madness. In Alejo Carpentier's *Kingdom of This World*, the slave Ti Noel, initiated to vodoun by Makandal, stands for a counter-Christophe when he becomes the king of an imaginary kingdom, whose subjects are geese. In Derek Walcott's *Henri Christophe*, Vastey, a Machiavelian, educated, and enlightened figure of the revolution, is the personal secretary to Christophe; he mirrors the cycles of power in Haiti, where leaders repeatedly tend to be inspired by political hybris. A last important example is Glissant's *Monsieur Toussaint*. In the play, Toussaint-Louverture is visited by the spirit of his ancestors Makandal and Maman Dlo, while imprisoned in the Jura Mountains, in a last attempt at reconciliation with the *lwas* he walked away from. In those Caribbean and non-Haitian texts, the authors considered Haiti as a political mirror of the struggles of their own islands, Martinique, Cuba, and Saint Lucia.

But when it comes to examining the position of the Haitian writer in Haiti, we must remember that literature and politics have been holding hands

in the country in a more complex way. The political leaders were often writers committed to literary movements, like Duvalier and *Négritude*, before ruling the country. Until the mid-1980s, there was the belief that the intellectual was capable of leading his country. Marie-José N'Zengou-Tayo showed that the representation of the intellectual in Haitian literature changed after the end of Duvalier's regime from that of a committed intellectual to that of a powerless witness (N'Zengou-Tayo 2004). Haitian writers who had traditionally participated in the *grand récit* of the collective history of their country were marginalized from the political scene. They started to reflect on the meaning of national identity in their fiction from their isolated perspective, as individuals in quest for justice and truth. Particularly, those who wanted to question the dysfunctions of the collective imagination, and the relationship between power and historical memory, exploited the figure of the zombie in their novels.

After anthropologists began to visit Haiti in the twentieth century, zombies became the subject of many fantasies, literature clichés, and scientific debates. The Haitian elite disliked the fact that the rest of the world could think that zombies existed for real, as the American William Seabrook claimed in his carnet de voyage, *The Magic Island*.[9] For them, zombies had to do with superstitions and criminal practices attached to the creeds of the uneducated black peasantry, descendants of slaves. And it is punished by the penal code.[10] Others, who were politically engaged against the regime, such as René Depestre, gave a Marxist version of the zombie, which he used as a metaphor of colonialism and of the exploitation of the body force of an individual for profit. For decades, zombies were characters to be found in oral folk tales or in forensic medical records, when a zombified *corps cadavre* had been found or reported. But, zombies were banned from entering the literature written in French by the elite.

This changed with Jacques Stephen Alexis, when he proposed for the first time to blur the limits between written and oral culture. He imagined a zombie character to diagnose the illnesses of collective memory in his country. Though Alexis was a pre-Duvalier committed intellectual, borrowing Marie-José N'Zengou-Tayo's classification, I will first examine how he used the zombie in the short story *Chronique d'un faux amour*, since I consider that it is the foundational text that led to the creation of a zombie literary paradigm in Haitian literature after the 1980s. I will then focus on two novels published in the last decade in which the zombie became a mirror of the Haitian memory syndrome and a tool used to criticize the damage done by national commemorations in the country. Letting zombies speak in literature became the privileged story line of the politically marginalized writer.

Jacques Stephen Alexis and the Female Zombie: Tyranny and Memory

Jacques Stephen Alexis proposed a completely new kind of zombie story in *Chronique d'un faux amour* (Chronicle of a False Love), a short story published in the collection *Le Romancero aux étoiles* in 1960 (Alexis, 1960).

The protagonist and narrator is a young Haitian girl from the mixed-blood elite in the nineteenth century. She speaks in the first person, in the manner of a confession, from the convent in France where her father sent her after she became a zombie ten years before. The use of the confessional narration is a key to understanding to what extent Alexis broke with the traditional representation of zombies. On one hand, he transferred the zombie from the black rural culture to the Haitian upper class. On the other hand, the zombie girl with no name is not a positive case of cathartic scapegoating. She is the innocent victim of a patriarchal decision, commanded by the laws of masculine gender domination. After being beaten up by her father for falling in love with the "wrong" husband—who happened to be her bastard stepbrother—she was forced to marry a wealthy black husband. But because she fell in love with the man chosen for her, her father sold her soul to an old bokor of the countryside on the day of her wedding. Turned into a zombie, as a virgin, she was sent to France, where she has been living since then among nuns in a convent.

The story alternates between the confession in the present and the memories of the past. It describes the monotonous, colorless life of the feminine soul in the cold climate of Anjou, and the asexualized context of the convent, following the chronology of the seasons and the calendar of the Catholic liturgy. But the girl cannot forget her previous life in Haiti, and memories of a happier time come to the surface, like her 16th birthday when she felt she was becoming a woman, and the day of her wedding when she died a fake death before she could even have her honeymoon. She reveals to the reader that she was zombified just after her wedding and secretly sent to France without anybody knowing about her new condition. The day of her birth as a zombie corresponded to an official public death and to a rebirth within a perpetual asexualized condition, in a limbo existence where any emotions, feelings, and physical pleasure are forbidden to her.

Memories are therefore painful for the zombie girl because they remind her of what she has lost. They are attached to the glorious time when she was like a princess on the plantation of her father, and particularly the desire she felt and aroused when she was one of the most courted *demoiselles* on the Island. As a way to fight the return of those souvenirs in her memory, she clinks a silver spoon against her golden wedding ring, hoping the noise will prevent her from falling asleep, since it is while sleeping that the memories

come back. But the opposite happens: the spoon, which reminds her of the spoon that was used to feed her the zombie potion in the coffin, when clinked against the wedding ring, creates a symbolic communion between present and past. This immediately brings back into the narration the chronological recollection of the life prior to zombification from her passage when buried to her arrival in the convent. This narrative strategy continues all through the text, allowing the reader to know the details of her story at the very same time that she is suffering the pain of remembering the episodes of her past.

Clearly, Alexis distorted the cathartic narrative strategy of zombism: the girl was a slave in the black Haitian upper class, she was forced into a reversed Middle Passage from the New World to Europe, and was resocialized in a convent in France as a zombie. Zombification is presented as the weapon of the father, and of the patriarchal and colonial hegemony he represents, to desocialize and desexualize his daughter. While zombie-making is an obvious abuse of power, the zombie story, told in camera by the victim to the reader, becomes a cathartic device that gives justice to the enslaved girl. Alexis kept the cultural elements attached to the Haitian zombie, but reorganized them into a literary paradigm as a mirror to denounce the control of the weakest by the strongest. Indeed, the father did not manage to tie up the free will of his girl and to get rid of the *Ti Bon Ange* within her, since it is her voice that performs the secret diary we are reading. She can't help remembering, as if the potion that normally creates the amnesic state of the *corps cadavre* had failed. Also, she has not lost the feeling of hope and imagines that her husband is going to come and rescue her from the prison she is kept in. The female zombie narrator has lost neither speech nor willpower.

Interestingly, a fairy-tale pattern is superimposed upon the reversed zombie tale. It shows how much Alexis mixed different oral and written traditions. Like a princess sacrificed by her father/master because of the rigid laws of his cast, she was zombified against money to be kept virgin and pure, and literally remain the little good angel of her father. The *Ti Bon Ange* becomes a captive soul of a masculine dungeon erected by the malevolent father who denies sexuality to his daughter and wants to keep her in an incestuous condition of domination.[11] Like the *Sleeping Beauty* kept from becoming a woman in the highest tower of the castle and whose bleeding finger is the metaphor of menstruation (Bettelheim 1976), the protagonist's first souvenir prior to her zombie life recalls the time when she cut her hand, bled, and fell unconscious after she opened oysters on her own out of greed and desire for this favorite food of hers. She is symbolically guilty in her father's kingdom for becoming a woman and a sexualized subject, desiring and desirable, and not any longer the innocent girl and father's property. The absence of the mother in the family is another clue to the incestuous scenario.

The zombie girl with no name that Alexis imagined is a talking, feeling, and willing subject. Her zombification is the result of an unfair trade made by her father for money and out of an Oedipus complex scenario. Speaking in the first person in a secret diary, the character expresses her everlasting frustration, letting the *Ti bon ange* say what it is not allowed to say and should not be able to speak about (since zombies can't speak). Its secret is trapped in an incestuous and colonial scenario of relationships of power between father and daughter, men and women, acculturated and aristocratic black elite, wealthy mulatto middle class, and poor uneducated black people.

One of the practices of the peasantry when burying their dead is to sew their lips shut with wire, in order to make sure that the corpse won't be able to respond when the bokor calls him out of the tomb. Here the diary corresponds to a reverse act of unstitching the mouth and letting the *Ti Bon Ange* speak, from an embedded Zombie location—body, convent, France—in a desperate attempt to recover a sense of life by sharing her secret with the reader. The soul of the zombie girl portrays her "living death" existence—in the body of a well-educated girl of the aristocratic francophile elite—as a purgatory and a limbo between life and death from which the narration could free her. The spell of storytelling, mastered by the narrator-character invented by the writer, and the antidote of story reading, that the reader is entitled to perform, are responsible for freeing the *Ti Bon ange* out of the limbo fiction she is trapped in, in a never-ending passage. The reader is indeed participating in a Zombie-raising effort, where the being nobody would be reversed into a becoming someone.

Jacques Stephen Alexis seemed to believe that fiction was the only witchcraft that created maroons in Haiti and for him writing was the real act of rebellion. As proved by his assassination, ordered by Duvalier, still not officially recognized in Haiti. Alexis used the zombie as a subaltern figure to create an unprecedented story of gender alienation that neither obeyed the national literary Haitian canon from which the zombie character is excluded, nor corresponded to its traditional representation in oral popular culture. Instead of turning a zombie folk tale into a literary piece of folklore set in the black peasantry, that would be part of an indigenist style, he turned zombism into a narrative strategy for performing alienation in everyday colonial life, from the perspective of a young girl of the Haitian elite.

The whole collection of short stories, *Le Romancero aux étoiles*, is particularly representative of Jacques Stephen Alexis's will to grasp Haitian popular culture and what is considered folklore in Haiti, in order to put the spotlight on a collective past, prior to the creation of the nation in 1804, of which the Haitians could be proud as well. His poetic and political posture offered to remap the national collective memory beyond the totems of the ruling elite. The main narrator of *Le Romancero aux étoiles* is sitting on the lap of

the Old Carib Wind. The latter represents the ancestor who was there before Columbus and before Toussaint, at the very beginning when the country was called Ayiti. Among the stories told by the Old Carib Wind, *Le Dit de la Fleur d'Or* celebrates Anacaona a female hero; this is quite uncommon in Haitian literature. Alexis proposed another pantheon of heroes: instead of commemorating the black liberators of Haiti, he celebrated a Taína princess and a non-black zombie girl. The collection of short stories *Le Romancero aux étoiles* was an attempt to provide the Haitians with a heritage larger than the black Jacobins and the maroons. Alexis's fiction reinvented Haitian collective memory. I consider *Chronique d'un Faux Amour* to be a literary pivot between oral and literary culture that provided the Haitian collective imagination with a possibility to link pre- and post-plantation history. The free imagination of the educated writer transformed the oral and popular culture into a new story of national heritage. Alexis broke with the norms of respectability elaborated by the black and mulatto ruling elite without falling into the idealization of vodoun as is the case in popular culture.

The Zombie Novels against the National Myths

Other novelists in Haiti have recently made a similar attempt to tell the lies of Haitianity within other variations of the zombie motif. The period between the 1989 bicentenary of the French Revolution, and the 2004 bicentenary of the Haitian Independence was particularly charged with national and public celebrations that aroused collective reactions on the public stage. The novels I will examine now were born in this context. They are set in the urban ethnoscape of Port au Prince and they represent nightmarish scenarios of commemorations, where everyday life in the capital is portrayed as a disenchanting, violent, and/or grotesque struggle.[12] As said the novelist Lyonel Trouillot, memory was dysfunctional at the time and "things were the same and the years were alike beyond anniversaries" (Trouillot 2008, p.71).

The poetic purpose of those stories is not to tell any zombie tale, but to create protagonists that behave and feel like they are zombies. Their life is a soulless performance in a world where all national values and all senses of ethics have become fake, leaving collective identity in a schizophrenic and amnesiac condition. The zombie character wants revenge and asks for justice. His story is that of a man's disenchanted and last attempt to rescue a sense of collective pride and freedom for his people.

The Enraged Zombie of Gary Victor

In Gary Victor's 2003 novel, *A l'angle des Rues paralleles* (At the crossroads of the parallel streets),[13] the protagonist, Eric, is an angry and frustrated man,

who lost his job at the Ministry of Economy after all decisional powers were passed to the International Monetary Fund to increase foreign capital investment in the country.[14] As the victim of an unfair punishment that took away his social status and his life (after he lost his job, his wife left him), Eric wants revenge. He is like a zombie fed with salt who wants to dig out the ugly truth about his nation and the corruption of the politicians.[15] The novel is constructed like a journey in two parts where Eric goes from an individual to a collective quest for demanding reparations for the oppression, exploitation, and control of the Haitian people by their head of state. Eric is on a mission to awake his people whose memory, like that of the zombies *corps cadavres*, is controlled either by politicians or by vodoun leaders.

Port au Prince is portrayed as a city in chaos whose collective imagination has been intoxicated, as if all Haitians had been fed with a zombie potion. At the beginning of the novel, the mirrors go blind. It is the first symptom of the social illness of a dead-alive nation whose soul has been captured by malevolent chiefs, in the elite political society, and in the popular secret societies. In both cases, the Haitians are enslaved in a delusional and powerless life. On the surface, Port au Prince is in the hands of political crooks and the wealthy elite who sold the soul of their country to foreign capital. Underground, another city has been built in the sewers as we learn in the second part of the novel. This world is the shelter of poor prostitutes, drug addicts, corrupt policemen, and all sorts of delinquents; it is ruled by the black magic of a powerful Secret Society that takes possession of the whole city at the end of the novel. This echoes Michel Laguerre's theory that the secret societies are a quasi-political arm of the vodoun society, and that they are ubiquitous—if and when linked together, they would represent a powerful underground government capable of competing head-on with the central regime in Port au Prince (Laguerre 1989). In Victor's novel, Eric's dream of purifying his people from corruption is put to test in both the open world and the underworld.

Eric finds a companion to follow him on his avenging lost journey: the statue of *P'tit Saint Pierre* (Little Saint Pierre). The statue escaped from his pedestal and was wandering freely in the streets of Port au Prince when he met Eric. Saint Peter, bearer of the keys to paradise in the Catholic tradition, is worshiped in vodoun as Papa Legba, the guardian of crossroads and the intercessional figure who has the power to bridge the supernatural world of dead ancestors with human and mortal reality. Tired of his task of miracle-maker for the desperate people, Lil' Saint Pierre performs an act of *self-déchoukage*, unbolting himself to escape from the pressure of his worshipers. Saint Peter is an avatar of the maroon, of which he is an ironic version: Greedy and selfish, he refuses to devote himself to nurturing the hopes of the people, and instead he just wants to enjoy life. While Eric lost his job, Saint Peter quit his. Both

characters become a pair of unconventional avengers, in love with the same woman who lives in the underworld city. The absence of Saint Peter/Papa Legba at the crossroads opens up a vortex between parallel streets and contributes to the chain of events that will eventually lead to the victory of the leader of the underworld over the open City, a *bokor* called the Chosen One, a new impostor father for the country. At the end of the novel, the last words of the protagonist are written in reverse order, forcing the reader to use a mirror to decipher them (recalling some practices of the vodoun). The grotesque style of Victor stresses the fakeness of heroism in the country. While Eric is an enraged zombie and a lonesome avenger in the first part of the novel, he teams up with a disenchanted god, who becomes an anti-maroon.

In the novel, vodoun is powerful in both above-ground and underground Port au Prince. In the first part of the story, while chasing the minister responsible for his disgrace, Eric sneaks in a political banquet totally supervised by one of the vodoun societies of Port au Prince. During the party, Eric learns that the vodoun priest, the *houngan*, is the one who actually rules the country, by controlling the president and the highest ministries of the state. During the ceremony, Eric fakes a trance and urinates on the president while pretending to be possessed by the snake god Damballah (the spirit of creation and movement). This attitude will allow him to become a hero for the popular organizations in the slums, run by the popular party Lavalas.[16] But there again, Eric's quest for justice will be denied. The groups of young and angry rebels that run the popular opposition are fed with revenge, frustration, and the desire to reverse the order just to establish their own. The name of their rival brigades, set in the heart of the shanty Port au Prince, are indicative of violence: the Cannibal Army, *Gèp Panyol* (the Killing Wasps), *Rach Kou Poul* (The Hen Rippers).

The second part of the novel takes the shape of a farce where Eric helps the statue of Lil' Saint Pierre to break free of the demands the desperate inhabitants of Port au Prince endlessly make on him. The walking statue becomes another frustrated self, an anti-maroon, wandering the streets of Port of Prince, in quest of a woman to satisfy his long frustrated sexual desire. Both Eric and the Statue fight for a young prostitute and avenge her by killing the Minister of Education responsible for her social enslavement in prostitution. They eventually meet God, who transports them on his donkey where the parallel streets meet from where they enter the underworld city. In this underground world, Eric and Saint Pierre witness powerlessly the victory of Chaos and the election of the Chosen one. The latter finally takes possession of the upper city and of the souls of all the Haitians. After Saint Pierre's death, Eric begins to talk in reverse and loses consciousness: the zombie fed with salt has been trapped again in a new zombification. Disenchanted in his quest for

justice, Eric has witnessed how each Haitian individual he met was bound to perform his life as a *corps cadavre*, playing the living dead role required by its condition, controlled by a superior power.

The Bicentenary according to Lyonel Trouillot

Lyonel Trouillot's novel *Bicentennaire* (Bicentenary), published in 2008 is the chronicle of a death foretold, on the day when the national police together with members of the popular organization supporting Lavalas shot and fatally injured students peacefully protesting in front of their university. It is based on true facts: on December 5, 2003, students of the Faculty of Humanities and of the National Institute of Administration were savagely attacked by members of the Popular Organisations Lavalas attached to Jean Bertrand Aristide's Party, with the complicity of the National Haitian Police. Lucien Saint Hilaire is the main protagonist through whose eyes, thoughts, and feelings the narration is told, in the third person. The novel takes place on the day of his death, from early morning into the afternoon. Recalling in reverse the leitmotif in Césaire's *Notebook of a Return to My Native Land*, each sequence of Trouillot's novel begins with the sentence "the student was going down the hill." Lucien is neither going up the hill nor marching "*at the end of daybreak*," like in Césaire's poem; he is performing the last part of his enslaved life and walking to encounter death and his zombie fate. This is significant if we think that Césaire's Notebook marked the beginning of the Négritude, which had become fake and instrumentalized by the corrupt rulers of Lucien's Haiti in the twenty-first century. The novel consists in the unfolding of different episodes that chronologically interrupt Lucien's last day like symbolic vignettes. They reflect the rigidity of class boundaries and the oppressive social order that does not provide the young generations with any better destiny than that of being dominated subalterns in a world of no dream, no change, and no future.

The question of national representation is epitomized in the novel by the commemoration time chosen by the students to perform their protest and by Trouillot to portray the uselessness of their gathering. This creates at the same time a scenario where the myths of the past are performed to veil the real motivations and protect the interests of the political hegemony. Within this narration of power, the political discourse takes possession of memory and controls collective remembrance, identity, and willpower. The boundaries of law, crime, and order are blurred since the state is as much delinquent as the young slum boys that either break into the wealthy houses of the bourgeois, kill and rape out of frustration, or accept money from the Lavalas Party to help the police to stop the protest and beat up the students. Port au Prince

appears as a zone with a total absence of legislation, a third world neighborhood, where no interrelations exist apart from those ruled by dependency, fear, and frustration.

The protagonist is rarely called by his name but repeatedly referred to as "the student." The social status he bears and performs like a zombified self in Haitian society makes him part of two different triangular family relationships. In both cases, Lucien participates in a family dynamic where violence, struggle for power, and class boundaries are the rule. The first triangle is the one he forms with his brother and his mother. The philosophy student Lucien is sharing a slum cabin in the shanty town area of Port au Prince with his little brother, called the kid, and nicknamed Lil' Joe, since he joined one of the many street gangs of Port au Prince. The kid is illiterate and does not believe either in school or in any ideology. He sleeps with his Glock revolver under the pillow and his thumb in his mouth. He is a zombie like his brother but from other, uneducated, kin. Baptized by his brothers within the gang, Lil' Joe is a zombie mercenary, called a *chimé* in Creole Haitian, a *Chimère* in French, a Chimera.[17] The mother, Ernestine Saint Hilaire, sent her sons to the city to escape from the poverty and hunger of the Grand Plateau[18] while staying behind on her own. Proud of being black, Ernestine humbly dedicated her life to the loas and to her sons. She belongs to the black peasantry. Her heritage is that of the runaway slaves and of the maroon community outside the plantations. Nevertheless, as a woman who also suffers from gender discrimination, Ernestine does not speak with the heroic posture of the male figures of the Haitian history books and her voice in the novel is humble, melancholic, and powerless. None of her sons followed the proud example of their maroon ancestors: the elder, Lucien, followed the path of the Enlightenment, education, and university, believing that progress comes with education in his country. Lucien has the ideals of the pre-Duvalier committed intellectual but he lives in a time when the ideals of justice and progress have become marginalized from the political scene, as the repression of the students show; the other son, kid, joined the young urban boys, and despises his mother for giving him life but nothing to deal with it. The three characters inhabit different conceptions of the world, with values and models that cannot be reconciled.

Yet they depend on each other and their inner thoughts are connected by the narrative strategy chosen by Trouillot. Ernestine's voice rises, shown in italics, together with the leitmotif: I, Ernestine Saint Hilaire, black. She regularly interrupts Lucien's thoughts as a haunting figure, complaining and lonely, sometimes nostalgic and often desperate. Since he left the Grand Plateau, Lucien has forgotten about the creeds and religious practices he performed as a child. In fact he belongs to the students' kin, portrayed as trapped

within an acculturated and class segregating educational system at the university where being modern is necessary to climb the social ladder. This implies renouncing the traditional Africanity associated with backwardness, such as vodoun folk dances like Yanvalou and Preto. Or at least he has to pretend to do so, like his philosophy professor, who hides the discs of Haitian folk music in unmarked folders. Ernestine's narrative invasion, as a ghost voice within Lucien's stream of consciousness, creates the divided expression of his soul, alternately going back and forth, moving from present to past, from his fears to his dreams, torn between a quest for purity and the antagonistic and cynical affirmation of the soiled dead-end of reality. The absent but haunting mother is a trigger of subalternity, a reminder of his zombie destiny.

As a scapegoat figure, the student's quest for purity emerges at random, like the floating reminiscence on the surface of the narration of the happiness and of the future he once dared to dream about but that always turned out to be false, in the no future and never-ending present of zombieness. He keeps those forbidden and impossible dreams deep within himself, as relics in his pocket—like the one and only letter the American journalist he fell in love with sent him when she went back to her country. He also fights them with a disenchanted and cynical self-control, particularly when he meets the members of the family he works for. This is the other triangle where Lucien encounters that class boundaries are impenetrable. The doctor whose son Lucien teaches French grammar is the epitome of the Haitian black educated middle-class and of their bourgeois values. He despises and feels disgust for the poor but feels the moral duty to dedicate a minimal portion of his time and money to them. Hiring a poor philosophy student to read French grammar to his son is part of this logic, exactly like the cigarette-smoking time he shares with him after each lesson. Their conversation consists of a false and hypocritical dialogue and the embedded italics reveal to the reader the true inner thoughts of both characters: The doctor imagines that Lucien is jealous and frustrated in the face of what he will never have; Lucien knows that while the major topic of the discussion remains descriptive and unemotional, the doctor despises him for who he is. While feeling erotic desire for the doctor's wife, Lucien terminates his day-dreaming fantasy with a cynical analysis of the situation, forcing himself to remember that he is nobody and that he just stands for what this woman has lost: her youth, her innocence, her feeling of being alive. In the house of the doctor, guarded like a prison by a gate, a watchman and a dog,[19] Lucien plays a zombie-scapegoat role for each of the frustrated members of a family trapped within subaltern relationships, where money, respectability, and property are what they fear to lose and what they live for, as zombies themselves, but of another kind than Lucien and his *chimé* brother.

The zombie narrative strategies of Victor and Trouillot's novels offer a self-reflective device with which to measure Haitianity. They lend the frustrated Haitian view voice to speak of the collapsed and fossilized values of their Black Nation, trapped within a national narration that feeds itself with the absence of interrelation between the dominating culture of the elite and the culture of the people. This dead-end constitutes a limbo space where the characters are condemned to perform a fake and useless zombie role.

This zombie-malaise corresponds to the Haitian version of the contemporary Post-Columbus syndrome in the Caribbean. While Columbus's statue was toppled in 1986 in Port au Prince, slogans reading "Down with Voodoo! Liberation of the Zombies" expressed another collective anger against a corrupt nation that was working with the occult forces of the vodoun culture. In those slogans, definitely written by nonbelievers of the cult of the loas, the vodoun is made responsible for creating a people of zombies and for taking advantage of the people's faith to turn them into subalterns. As a nation within the nation, ruled by another kind of elite, which has the power and authority to protect and to punish, the vodoun rites design a closed imaginary that is so powerful as to take possession of the willpower of the masses. If we add to this that since Duvalier's regime, the recruiting of the *Chimères* and of the *Macoutes* was made among the vodoun secret societies and created a civil army of urban mercenaries for the president, it seems that on both sides of the acculturated and of the Africanized national myths, the Janus-faced Haitian imagined community is confiscating individual subjectivity to justify collective belonging.

The Haitian Post-Columbus syndrome is rooted in the convergence of two enclosed narrations of the Haitian Nation, connected from city to countryside, from older to younger generations, from rhetorical to oral performance, like parallel lines that meet for the worse. This is where the feeling of belonging of the community, renewed by a cathartic narrative strategy, becomes a performance, the purpose of which is to feed power, justify order, and control the selves in the manner of a nation of zombies. Political self-awareness and nationalism are not always the key to freedom and self-fulfillment in the Caribbean.

Conclusion: Toward an Archipelagic Memory

Postcolonial nation-building in the Caribbean shaped the collective memory of the archipelagos into specific national scenarios for commemorating the *true* origins and the *authentic* roots of the people on each island. Times and plots varied in the Hispanic, French, and English Caribbean, and on each island, the people's and the state's versions of the meaning of collective memory often disagree. In this study, my goal has been to examine comparatively the cultural representations of those multiple national memory-blocks, at the regional, national, and local levels, in order to grasp the meaning of remembering and forgetting in the Caribbean today. I argue for a specifically Caribbean approach to memory, which I call and define as the Caribbean Post-Columbus syndrome. The commemorative engagement with the year 1992 has been the template with which I have evaluated the resonances and differences between Cuba, Puerto Rico, The Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica, Martinique, and Guadeloupe, while telling the story of their past in times of threat. The 500th anniversary of Columbus's arrival in the region coincided with times when the islands felt in danger of being dissolved by supranational and oppressive forces located outside the islands. This impacted on their need to heroize their heritages and challenged the narrative modes and scenarios with which they did it.

Constructing and reinforcing national myths as a way to resist oppression was certainly not new in the region. In fact, from the nineteenth to the twenty-first century, the islands of the Caribbean were repeatedly confronted with the fact that they were postcolonies, still subaltern to a power imposed upon them, even when they were in theory politically autonomous. In some cases, after they wrested freedom and independence from France and Spain (Haiti, Cuba, and Puerto Rico in the nineteenth century), they continued to struggle with issues of economic dependency, economic exploitation, or even military occupation throughout the twentieth century (especially in the cases of Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Haiti); in other cases, sovereignty came in the second half of twentieth century with economic

impoverishment and deep social crises (as in Jamaica); in the case of Martinique and Guadeloupe since 1946, and in Puerto Rico since 1952, the islands were politically incorporated into, and administratively subordinated to, their former colonial motherland, leading to a renewed institutionalization of their colonial status.

From this, we can see that the Caribbean archipelagos are a heterogeneous combination of political exceptions, at the heart of which lies a shared scenario of oppression in the *longue durée*, and multiple stories that tell how to act upon it. Stories of insular resistance and collective unity vary according to the local historical conditions on each island and to their stages of nation building. Beyond their common history of repeated struggles for freedom, the Caribbean postcolonial islands are characterized by a constant need to show pride in their Caribbeanness, which they have had to redefine in each specific context of threat since Columbus's arrival. Repeatedly, expressing the meaning of Caribbean origins has consisted in remembering hybrid and multiple heritages, but the selection of what was worth including in the collective memory has varied according to local, national, and regional factors. In 1992 in particular, the cathartic effort to come to terms with the past has been motivated by a claim for visibility in the present. The multiple national representations of the character of Columbus were variations of a struggle for recognition common to the whole region: the islands used the 1992 anniversary as a platform to express, first, their refusal to be taken for granted by the rulers of the world and, second, their demand to be considered by the international community as a region of exception that has been affected by the globalized economy, and therefore, as something more than the exotic no man's land in between Europe and the Americas, the liminal space with which the region has constantly been associated. The Post-Columbus syndrome has been the mechanism for producing and processing memory in such a context; it was common to the Caribbean postcolonial region, in order to resist and to exist on the world map. It relied upon the strength of cultural nationalist discourses that formatted the past as stories of origins, and in the efficiency of the latter to convince the peoples on the islands to subscribe to them as a mode of protection and affirmation. The commemorations I examined in this book were the result of those selective, incomplete, and symbolic scenarios of memory. Following Michel-Rolph Trouillot's critical analysis of the 500th anniversary of Columbus' "discovery," I demonstrated that public celebrations "impose a silence upon the events that they ignore and fill that silence with narratives of power about the event they celebrate" (Trouillot 1995, p.118).

At the end of this book's journey, I want to stress that each of the many 1992 commemorative scenarios was a variation of a core archipelagic memory

paradigm. This mnemonic paradigm is key to understanding the Caribbean Post-Columbus syndrome as a mode of remembering, specific to the hybrid and multiple archipelagic cultures of the Caribbean. It recycled the past into specific, local, and multiple scenarios of resistance in the present. It was a protective strategy of remembrance, which affirmed identity and instrumentalized cultural pride, as protective force fields against external cultural influences, located outside of the island. The latter were considered as already known, as repetitions of violence in the *longue durée*; therefore, Columbus has been the symbol of the ongoing colonial exploitation, and of its collateral damages, enslavement, and acculturation, that took different forms since the plantation economy right up to the globalized economy. Each island eventually negotiated the meaning of acculturation and enslavement by including, rejecting, or polishing the Columbus-related scenarios, according to the meaning of their national myths, creating dissonances between the official versions and popular versions of heritage.

Since the 1990s, the Post-Columbus Caribbean produces memory and oblivion according to a dilemma, revived by a postcolonial reading of the past. First, an epic reading *in the longue durée*: a multifaceted history of violence, and the continuing affirmation of a sense of Caribbean pride in reaction to it, are at the core of all Caribbean collective imaginations. In this scenario, an ancient heritage is galvanized to minimize the importance of the culture of the European colonizers (who we could call the "Columbuses"). Second, a heroic reading in a specific context that demands collective struggle: at a moment when the whole region was facing new forms of globalized exploitation in the 1990s, the national collective memories tamed their heterogeneous heritages into new myths of origin for a protective purpose against different invaders—multiple in nature (the IMF, the EEC, the United States, the global economy). In this case, national identity was advanced to protect the island from what was considered as a threat of exploitation from outside. The relationship between those two modes of reading the past produced different strategies of commemoration. The French *Départements d'Outremer* are remarkable for they had to reinforce a national-heroic mythology (their Frenchness) on the basis of the absent and silenced heritage of slavery, while in Haiti and in Jamaica, national identity was rigidly reproducing the myth of Black pride (the Black Jacobins and the Maroons). The Hispanic Caribbean integrated Columbus to reinforce the Hispanic component of their national myth, in reaction to the *other* that needed to be excluded, or at least represented in such a way that the national myth could continue to exist in the form of a successful scenario of pride and cultural autonomy: Black Haiti in the Dominican Republic, the capitalist countries of the world in Cuba, and the United States in Puerto Rico.

While being the protective mode that reinforced a sense of belonging and identity at the local level, cultural nationalism has also been responsible for blocking the collaborative and inter-Caribbean process of memory at the regional and archipelagic levels. Columbus could have been a unifying symbol to foster a cultural pan-Caribbean dialogue on memory and heritage, as we saw with the importance of the character in the works of Ortiz, Brathwaite, Glissant, and Benítez Rojo in the first part of the book. The examination of the local reactions to Columbus in the Hispanic, English, and French Caribbean islands showed that national memory separated the islands from one another instead of uniting them. While finishing this book, I was sojourning in the eastern Caribbean and recent events gave me a more optimistic vision that the Post-Columbus syndrome is now in mutation, though very slowly, and that there is some hope for the awakening of a collaborative process of collective memory at the archipelagic level. I will just focus on two examples.

On the night of September 11, 2013, the statue of Victor Schœlcher, in the town of Schœlcher, neighboring Fort de France in Martinique, was vandalized. The bust of the man who abolished slavery in the French Antilles was covered with red paint, and inscriptions read "freedom is to be taken not to be given" ("la liberté ne se donne pas elle se prend") and "Honor, dignity and recognition for our African ancestors" ("honneur, dignité et reconnaissance pour nos ancêtres africains").

From September 15 to 17, 2013, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines held the first regional conference on reparations for the genocide and exile of the Garifuna people by British and French colonial powers. The Garifuna were deported from Saint Vincent to Central America at the end of the eighteenth century. Commonly called Black Caribs, the Garifuna were the result of relations between Black slaves and the local Carib population during the Spanish, French, and English colonization of Saint Vincent. Though they contributed highly to the regional economy of Honduras, Belize, Guatemala, and Nicaragua, they occupy a liminal cultural position, either seen as *mestizos* or as Blacks, yet they continue to have and defend a strong traditional cultural identity and a specific language (Anderson 2009). The purpose of the September summit was to declare that people with Garifuna, Amerindian, and African origins represent the majority of the population across the Caribbean, and that therefore they are entitled to remember their heritage and to claim for reparatory justice.

I see both events as a proof that commemorations in the Caribbean can go beyond national enclosures and foster feelings of belonging at the archipelagic level. Whether in the case of Martinique, where recovering the right to remember the history of slavery is a claim for social justice in the DOM, or

in the case of Saint Vincent, where the Garifuna associations were calling for a recognition of their identity at the regional level, it seems that remembering common origins beyond national identity allows for pan-Caribbean collaborations, dialogues, solidarities, and links between the islands, all of which promises a better and healthier relationship to memory in the Caribbean. Both the vandalizing of the statue of Schoelcher and the Garifuna summit are based on a demand for legal reparations. Movements calling for reparations for slavery have increased in the last years (Shepherd 2008, Beckles 2013). Reparations imply not only looking at the past and demanding apologies for the trauma of slavery, but first and foremost they intend to claim greater equality in the present, based on the idea that the descendants of slaves should have had the same chances to succeed socially. Reparatory movements are based on the belief that slavery continues to damage the quality of life of the people descended from slaves. And because it brings into dialogue transnational heritages, prenational origins, and international law, it fosters new way for thinking, processing, and telling memory in the Caribbean archipelagos. Hopefully, the Post-Columbus syndrome is mutating into a pan-Caribbean feedback machine.

Notes

Introduction

1. In 1913, the Spanish politician Faustino Rodríguez San Pedro, who was at the time president of the Ibero-American Union, established October 12 as the date to commemorate Columbus's discovery of the New World. It was called "día de la raza" in Spain and in Latin America, to celebrate the union and cultural fusion between Spain and its former Spanish-speaking colonies in the Americas. In preparation of the 500th anniversary, Spain promoted actively all manner of Columbus-related celebrations, such as the *Regata de Cádiz* (a boat race following Columbus's route), the Seville "Expo'92" and the celebration of October 12 as the national day of the *Hispanidad* (renamed as such in 1981 with the restoration of the monarchy to reinforce a sense of national unity after the end of Francoism). In Paris, UNESCO launched an international commission to commemorate the anniversary and facilitate cultural collaboration between the former European empires that were moved by colonial nostalgia and Latin American countries that were reluctant to take for granted the representation of Columbus as a hero.
2. In Chapare, a region in central Bolivia, the peasants from indigenous origins survive thanks to the agriculture of coca leaves, and they are called *cocaleros*. Morales, himself from Aymara descent, has supported the cocaleros syndicates against the several attempts of the Bolivian government to destroy the fields of coca to fight against Bolivian cocaine trafficking.
3. In parallel to the indigenous movements in Latin America, the Latinos in the United States took the opportunity of Columbus Day to protest against the reduction of their rights as citizens under the Bush government. The celebration of Columbus's discovery became the epitome and metaphor for the perpetuation of inequalities in everyday life suffered by American citizens of non-WASP origins, whose ancestors "were there before Columbus." It soon expanded to minorities, such as Gay and Lesbian, Latino and black women, and became an umbrella debate for American subaltern citizens to claim greater visibility and equal citizenship.
4. Braudel's major text, *La Méditérranée à l'époque de Philippe II*, was translated in Spanish in 1953 by Fondo de Cultura in Mexico and it was a very popular text in Cuba's intellectual circles; it was translated in English by Harper and Row, New York, in 1972, and by Fontana Collins, London, in 1975, disseminating

Braudel's work in the Anglosaxon academia. There is no doubt that Brathwaite, Benítez Rojo, and Glissant knew well Braudel's work.

5. For the sake of clarity, I recall briefly the facts. The island of Grenada was an English Colony that became autonomous in 1967 and independent in 1974; in 1979, Eric Gairy's government was overthrown by the People Revolution Government of Maurice Bishop; over the years, internal disagreements between Maurice Bishop (whose politics was characterized by the charismatic leadership of one man) and Bernard Coard (the leader of the People Revolutionary Party), led the latter to stage a coup against the PRG on October 13, 1983, and to put Bishop under arrest. Bishop had the support of the people who freed him from jail but, caught by soldiers of the PRG, he was executed on October 19, 1983. The United States under Reagan invaded the island on October 25 (a day that is celebrated as a national "thanksgiving" day on the island) while Cuba sent planes and soldiers to support the revolution. It is only recently that the name and memory of Bishop started to be remembered on the island with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2006, Nadia Bishop's (Maurice Bishop's daughter) public forgiveness to the man who killed her father on the radio in 2008, and the renaming of the Airport after Maurice Bishop in the same year.
6. Positivist cultural historians tend to consider cultures as organisms and to personify them in a wide range of natural metaphors, cyclical human ages for Spengler, cycles of regeneration for Toynbee, *Kulturkreisen* for Frobenius. Ortiz personifies cultures as individuals and cultural transformations as organic evolutionary patterns.
7. Jorge Luis Borges's short story, *Funes el Memorioso*, in *Ficciones*, 1944, is centered on the character of Funes, who has a prodigious and pathologically developed memory, and suffers from Hyperthymesia. He has a huge autobiographical memory that prevents him from having a peaceful and normal life.

Chapter 1

1. Besides their obvious ethical discrepancy, tobacco and sugar are also gendered in Ortiz's story. Don Tabaco belonged to island and to the Antillean heritage, it was exported and therefore "conquered" Europe; on the contrary, Doña Azucar was brought by the Europeans to the Antilles for mercantilism and exploitation. For a complete analysis of the contrapuntal binary paradigm, see Enrico Santi's edition of Ortiz's *Contrapunteo* (Santi 2002).
2. The term fetish is particularly appropriate if we think that sugar economy continued to be essential in Cuba long after the end of the plantation system. Until the collapse of the Eastern Block, the USSR was the exclusive purchaser of Cuban sugar, and purchased it at ten times the price of the market, in exchange for manufactured goods.
3. In fact, transculturation was essential to Caribbean commemorations in the 1990s and it was the *présupposé* of Brathwaite, Glissant, and Benítez Rojo's pan-Caribbean memory systems, as we will see in the following chapters.

4. This was in fact the implicit message of the 1992 Celebrations of the "Encounter of the two worlds" in Europe, grounded on a nostalgic neocolonial revival at a moment when the previous European empires were attempting to continue to be agents of the world capitalism, by participating in supranational structures such as the European Community created in 1992.
5. Ortiz's first work on afro-Cuban criminology was born directly from this positivist school of which the main purpose was the study of cultures for the sake of civilization and human progress. His book on black African delinquency in Cuba, *Los Negros Brujos. Apuntes para un estudio de etnología criminal (The Black Sorcerers. Notes for a Study of Criminal Ethnology)* in 1906, was influenced by the Italian criminologist Cesare Lombroso and his 1876 study *L'Uomo delincuente* (*The Delinquent Man*). Ortiz borrowed and transferred Lombroso's idea of a criminal determinism based on the physiognomy of individuals and applied it to the Cuban syncretic and transcultural society, and particularly to the Yoruba culture, to demonstrate that the source of the criminality of the Afro-Cuban community in Havana was to be found in their religious atavism as a barrier against moral progress.
6. Díaz Quiñones examines how the early Ortiz used a hybrid method of positivist, spiritualist, and scientific approaches to explore the relationship between nation, reason, and citizenship in Cuba.
7. The anti-eurocentric historical discourses of the time, such as the theories of Toynbee, Spengler, or Frobenius, were clearly in favor of the primitive cultures, idealized for their vitality as opposed to the decay of the European civilizations. They introduced metaphors of circularity (cycles, spirals, spheres) to understand history as an organic process of the growth and decline of culture. Those perspectives were born from the pessimism engendered by the First World War in Europe. They were part of a European mind-set and designed by Europeans with European philosophical tools. Ortiz's intellectual training, after a formation in law and anthropology in Spain, made him familiar with this current.
8. The Taínos were themselves the product of the transculturation of Caribs and Arawaks. Their goddess Atabey was worshipped as the feminine principle of all things, and as the mother of Yucahu, the primary god in the Arawak mythology, whom she engendered without any man. The Taínos therefore recognized Atabey in the Virgin Mary, a figure to whom the European mariners were praying in their dangerous adventure to the New World. The representation of the Virgin Mary was herself a mixture of different regional virgins of Spain: the Catalan mariners worshipped, for example, the black virgin of Montserrat. The blackness of Montserrat became meaningful for the Yorubas at the time as a representation of the gods of their own pantheon.
9. Ortiz based his explanation of the Taíno/black transculturation of tobacco on the fact that the black people understood the expurgatory signification of the Indian rituals of tobacco more easily than the whites, since the latter first regarded smoking as a diabolic and infernal habit. The reason was that the blacks themselves had similar rites or at least did not consider those rites as totally unknown. Ortiz puts

forward a ñañigo rite (Afro Cuban) as a significant example. When the *diablito* (little devil) comes to the members of the congregation, the latter, to greet him, blow gently in the air, miming the expulsion of smoke from the tobacco smoker, to send into the air the secret breathe or effusion of his soul. This ecstatic gesture is like smoking without smoke, a rite that mimics the tobacco-smoking practice, which was a religious and spiritual habit for the Indo-Antilleans. Ortiz then explains how, much later in the seventeenth century, tobacco was transculturated by the white first for medical and then for aesthetic purposes, until the point when it became extremely fashionable in social and intellectual gatherings. For Ortiz, this radical change happened at a time when Europe was in a quest for regeneration.

10. Columbus was born in a sea republic, Genoa, which belonged to Spain. Ortiz was Canarian, another territory possessed by Spain. The Canary Islands were a supply port on the route to the Antilles and the Columbian legend is very strong in Canarias (we can think about Columbus's museum house in Las Palmas, or of Columbus's diary while describing La Gomera as the terrestrial paradise). Ortiz's fascination for the character dates back to childhood when he played Columbus in the school play commemorating the Discovery.
11. Batista submitted Machado in 1933 and was elected president in 1940.

Chapter 2

1. At the beginning of the text, Brathwaite comments on the multiple meanings of the word *criollo* in the Americas. He finds it fascinating that the same word defines many different kinds of racial transculturations between the people of the New and the Old World according to the local linguistic and cultural contexts where it is used: in Latin America, the *criollos* designate those who were born from Spanish fathers in the New World, and most frequently belong to the upper class. In Brazil, a *criollo* is a negro slave born locally; in Louisiana, the name refers to white francophone population, called mulattoes in New Orleans; in Sierra Leone, the criollos are the slaves born in the New World or in British colonies and, eventually resettled, they belong to a social elite that differentiates them from the African population; in Trinidad, the *criollos* are the black descendants of slaves, different from the coolies of Asian origins.
2. The British West Indies became independent states one after the other and this is why I will use the plural when referring to the independences of the archipelago: Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago were the first islands to become fully independent in 1962; Barbados and Guyana followed, in 1966; The Bahamas in 1973; Grenada in 1974; Dominica in 1978; Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and Grenadines in 1979; Belize and Antigua in 1981; and finally Saint Kitts and Nevis in 1983.
3. The term is from Antoni Kapcia to qualify Cuban identity and the feelings of belonging on the island, in *Havana, the Making of Cuban Culture*, Berg, New York, 2005.

4. Born in 1930 in Barbados, Brathwaite gained a scholarship to study History at Pembroke College, Cambridge. He eventually worked in the Ministry of Education in Ghana, where he was a witness to events leading to the independence in 1957. Brathwaite's African sojourn, from which he took his second name "Kamau" and his education in African history and primitive mythology, together with a strong historical interest for Jamaica in the context of his PhD, led him to study Caribbeanness and the potential of the former West Indies to become independent. In 1968 he completed a PhD on the history of Creole society in Jamaica at the University of Sussex.
5. Speaking for and about are the main characteristic of Subaltern Studies, as epitomized by the narrative perspective of G. C. Spivak's canonical piece, "Can the Subaltern Speak?"(1988).
6. I refer here to the fundamental dichotomy between *muthos* and *logos* in Greek civilization. *Muthos* refers to myth as oral narrative, where supernatural elements binding mankind with gods participate in a metaphysical and political collective fiction, accounting for the origins of the community. In contrast, *logos* involves a linear narrative to tell those stories in a written, didactic, and often nationalist discourse, such as in the Greek epic. Brathwaite's work, and particularly his poetic voice, is a never-ending negotiation of *muthos* (on the side of imagination) and *logos* (on the side of reason) to compensate the erasure of the primary myths (by the genocide of the Indians, by the Middle Passage and by the Slave plantation system) and the oblivion still at stake at the time of the building of postcolonial nationhood, still dependent, on many economic and social levels, on the former mother Kingdom.
7. I experienced this attitude with undergraduate and postgraduate students at the University of Cambridge from 2009 to 2011. Our discussions on this topic confirmed my wish to establish a visibility of Brathwaite's postcolonial performative language: while his theory is a system that is perfectly coherent a posteriori in postcolonial studies, his poetry is the modality through which the theory takes shape and resonates with Caribbean Studies at large.
8. Brathwaite will later explore the tradition of the epic genre in a second poetic trilogy, called *Ancestors* (1977, 1982, and 1987).
9. All the following quotations of *Rights of Passage*, *Islands* and *Masks* are from the 1974 Oxford University Press edition of *The Arrivants. A New World Trilogy*.
10. In *The Tempest*, there is no possible miscegenation between Caliban and Miranda, and the idea of sexual intercourse between them is condemned as a taboo and as an offence to the rules of nature. Brathwaite expands on this thematic to the point that Caliban inherits a genetic patrimony that nobody wants to recognize. He must therefore gain the pride of being Caribbean through the use of a poetic, political, and anthropological discourse of unification. Caliban is no longer a monster in Brathwaite's displacement but his speech remains a monstrous speech—performative in the etymologic sense of *monstrum*: what needs to be shown, a foretelling sign. His speech, unrecognizable by European standards,

is a combination of *Muthos* and *Logos* and it is entitled to perform aloud the collective archipelagic imagination.

11. See Introduction. The 1990s are a moment of political, economic, and social crisis in all the islands of the Caribbean. The end of the Cold War and of the socialist Eastern Bloc opened the path to globalization while the European Community in 1992 opted for a supranational economic structure.
12. Brathwaite has been for a long time very close to Cuba, and his poetry has been regularly published in the Review *Casa de las Americas* since the 1970s, a time close links were established between Cuban and Jamaican cultural institutions.

Chapter 3

1. The scholarship in the last decades was marked by the debate of whether Glissant would move toward a depoliticized aesthetics in the later stage of his life. Peter Hallward (Hallward 2001) and Nick Nesbitt (2003) commented on Glissant's betrayal of his early political activism and writings, while Celia Britton (Britton 2009) considered that Glissant's view on sustainability in Martinique was not incompatible with political action. Valérie Loichot's magistral analysis of Glissant's grave, carved by his friend and artist Victor Anicet, reconciles the two opposite visions (Loichot 2013), presenting Glissant as a "lifelong militant," for whom nature, ecological consciousness, and spirituality were continuing the political struggle of the early years of his career.
2. For Nesbitt, the novel *La Lézarde* contains an early rejection of a radical Fanonian politics of the Martinican nation (Nesbitt 2013); for Murdoch, this story of young Martinican militants who commit political murder resonates with the 1946 elections that bear Césaire to power in Martinique (Murdoch 2012). My view is that Glissant's overtly political texts are in fact reporting the political dysfunction of the island and the need to construct a Martinican collective identity.
3. After the riots in Martinique in 1959, Glissant created with his friend Paul Niger the Front Antilleano-Guyanais, which was dissolved in 1961 by Général De Gaulle. Glissant was arrested, forced to remain in France and forbidden from returning to Martinique. The text that determined the political aims of the Front, *Les Antilles et La Guyane à l'heure de la Décolonisation* (Glissant 1961b), is still difficult to find in France (one copy *in repair* at the Bibliothèque Nationale). Nesbitt has shown how important was Glissant's role in drafting and formulating the statements of this report, the aim of which was the transformation of the political structures of Martinique and the alliance among Martinique, Guadeloupe, and Guyane at the political level (Nesbitt 2013, pp.136–137);
4. In 1965, he created the IME (Institut Martiniquais d'Etudes) and its journal *Acoma*, which focused on the psychological and cultural dispossession made worse by *Départementalisation*. Whereas statistics and economic analysis provided arguments deeply critical of the structure of Martinique's economic situation and

the absence of any self-supporting productivity, texts by Nicolas Guillén, Alejo Carpentier, Pablo Neruda, and William Faulkner broadened the debate from a narrow island/metropole perspective to a wider Caribbean American vision, with a pendular relationship between the continent and the islands. *Acoma* is by definition a cultural result of Glissant's belief in transculturation and political commitment against *Départementalisation* and in favor of independence.

5. The local and cultural specificities of the Caribbean Islands are considered peripheral and secondary (in this sense, Martiniquais are indeed like Bretons, Normands, Corréziens . . .) but they are the only French who were slaves before becoming citizens, on an overseas colony-island, which was a plantation. As such they are considered *citoyens de seconde zone*.
6. Césaire and his work were extremely important for Glissant who had great respect for the man and for the intellectual. There is an obvious filiation between the pupil and the teacher, and Glissant would not be Glissant without Césaire. Glissant's issue is not with Césaire but with the instrumentalization of Césaire and *Négritude*, pantheonized *après coup* by the métropolis. For Glissant it is part of the strategy of zombification operated by the métropole: the *Antillais* must and can only remember their Frenchness.
7. *Le Discours Antillais* is the result of Glissant's editing of older texts mainly published in *Acoma* while in Martinique, and in his thesis for the *Doctorat d'Etat ès Lettres et Sciences Humaines*, which he defended in 1976 at the University Paris Sorbonne, with the title "Le Discours Antillais: le passage de l'oral a l'écrit en Martinique." Michael Dash's translation of *Caribbean Discourse* in 1989 gave Glissant recognition and visibility as a writer, intellectual, and theorist of postcolonial literature in the English-speaking academia where he has since become part of the canon of postcolonial theories and literatures. It is important to bear in mind that such recognition happened in France later on and only because Glissant was read and appreciated in US academia (he relocated to the United States in the late 1980s). More important is to be aware that the recognition of Glissant's work in French academia not only happened much later, but also due to the impact of Dash's translation. In French universities, where Postcolonial Studies have slowly become visible since the late 1990s and fashionable since 2000, Glissant is read primarily for his literary criticism (his work on Mallarmé, Segalen, Saint John Perse), his intertextual connection with French philosophy (as suggested by Jean Wahl) and with deconstructionists (such as Deleuze and Guattari). Glissant's novels, theater, poetry, and theory before 1990 were not part of any literary or theoretical Caribbean or postcolonial canon at the university. They are now part of institutionalized and politically correct Caribbean cultural productions, accepted as decontextualized philosophical texts by the Parisian intelligentsia (after all, Glissant is *Docteur Es Lettres* of the Sorbonne), but not as a creative system to study the Caribbean as a specific literary field, as Glissant wanted it, and certainly not to question the problem of the *Départements d'Outre-Mer*. We must be very careful while considering Glissant's work as part of the canon.

8. In a long note in the chapter "Le Relatif et le Chaos" in *Poétique de la Relation*, Glissant makes very clear that he disagrees with the eurocentric vision of Culture at UNESCO:

> Quelques fonctionnaires occidentaux de cette Organisation, en place depuis longtemps, s'étaient offusqués de l'arrivée de ressortissants des pays du Sud, y voyant comme une trahison de l'idéal de "culture" qui avait présidé selon eux à sa fondation. Allant plus loin, ils assimilaient les cultures de ces pays, si manifestement éloignées de ce qu'ils pensaient être un accomplissement humaniste, aux divers régimes de gouvernement qui y faisaient autorité. C'était donc la barbarie qui pénétrait l'Institution, et on y entendait d'honorables personnes bougonner à part soi: "bientôt nous travaillerons sous les cocotiers".
>
> (Glissant 1990, p.232)

9. A maroon or *cimarron* in Spanish is a runaway slave. Runaway slaves in the Caribbean escaped in the Hills where they created secret societies and communities called *palenques*, mingling with other runaways of indigenous, Taíno and Arawak background. (Price 1996, Navarrete 2003).
10. The Acronym for *Département d'Outre Mer* in French is DOM. From this, Glissant coined the depreciative adjective *domien*—meaning the one who lives in the DOM but also interiorizes the subaltern and depending relationship between the overseas *département* and the metropolis.
11. In Vodou, salt given to the *Zombi corps cadavre* awakes his consciousness and brings back his willpower. Feeding the zombie with salt is the way to trigger his anger and rebellion. Glissant looks at the collective memory of the *domiens* as if they had forgotten—but knew deep within—that they are *Antillais* and not French. Glissant was as a matter of fact very polemical at home since the majority of the *Antillais* did not want independence.
12. Léon Bloy, from a didactic, rightwing, anticommunist, and conservative reading of the legend, promoted Columbus as the hero who joined together the hemispheres and as the ecumenical guardian of a stable catholic order of the world in *Le Révélateur du Globe* at the end of the nineteenth century. Paul Claudel, within a mystic perspective of *théâtre total*, wrote a play in the form of an Oratorio to the glory of Christophoros (meaning the bearer of Christ in Latin) in 1933, called *Le Livre de Christophe Colomb*.
13. All the quotations of *Les Indes* are from *Poèmes complets* (Gallimard, Paris, 1994). The translation is mine.
14. Poet and musician of the Greek Antiquity, Terpandra was punished by Sparta after he won the contest of *Sparta Karneia*; he stands for the *alter ego* of the poet and of the following Caribbean heroes eventually represented in the poem.
15. This metaphor developed in the *Caribbean Discourse* resonates with Benítez Rojo's image of the European "forceps" used to uproot the treasures of the Caribbean from their original womb, in the later published *Repeating islands*. Glissant, Benítez Rojo, and Brathwaite were in constant dialogue, while coming

from distinctive national approaches to the transnational and entire Caribbean region, though this intertextuality between them remained most of the time unformulated.

16. Being naive, simplistic, and often Manichean, the Caribbean folk tale is according to Glissant a common tool of acculturation for the hegemonic colonial and neocolonial power. In another Caribbean context, we can think of Mighty Sparrow's 1963 Calypso, "Dan is the Man in the Van," based on the dislocation of an English nursery rhyme, where Sparrow criticizes the colonial British school system that makes young Trinidadian boys be nothing but "blockheaded mules." Glissant has in mind the naive duet of characters of the rabbit (*Compère Lapin*) and the goat (*Zamba la chèvre*), very similar to the Haitian folk characters of Bouki and Malice, where the mulatto stands for the clever and malicious one who manages to make his way by abusing the stupidity of the uneducated and naive black. The transfer to animals, in the enlightened manner of the didactic allegories of eighteenth-century French literature, erases the socio-racial context and the representation of a homogeneous Antillean people, and is replaced by a bourgeois model of success where acculturation is the way to gain respectability.
17. By *epos* I mean the primary scenario at the heart of the epic narration. The national poet's imagination modifies it in order to adapt its epic creation to the particular socio-historical context of the nation he is singing for, for example by changing the order of the episodes or creating new elements (names, locations, time, relationship between characters). For Glissant, the absence of a self-aware Martiniquais epic is the symptom of the erasure of the primary epos of the New World and of its narrative components (Discovery, Conquest, Middle Passage . . .) by the French acculturating *logos* (the Age of Reason and the Enlightenment). This is the primary scenario, a narrative strategy that is closer to the myth and prior to the epic that the poet of *The Indies* wants to grasp. Glissant is indeed in a quest for historical sense similar to Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutic proposal based on *muthos* (primary scenario of a myth) and *logos* (the myth made coherent by its narration).
18. The proof is that the Prospero/Caliban paradigm is not of much interest for Glissant, while it was definitely a target for Césaire. In 1969, the latter questioned the failure of *Départementalisation*, that he had himself favored 20 years before, in his masterful rewriting of Shakespeare's play *The Tempest*, titled *A(Une) tempête*, which transfers the story of Caliban to the Antillean context.
19. The shifters (words like "today," "yesterday," "tomorrow," "here," "I," "you," "me," "my" . . .) change meaning according to the situation of enunciation. Shifters allow an utterance to be understandable and meaningful by anchoring it to the very context when it was performed (*la situation d'énonciation*).
20. The image of the rhizome borrowed from Deleuze and Guattari, and from their analysis of subjectivity, is in fact much closer to Brathwaite's considerations about uprootedness as part of the Creolization process in Jamaica. Yet, Brathwaite makes a historical and diachronic survey of Jamaican society whereas Glissant looks at the perpetuated, constant and permanent stage of immobility of

Martiniquaian society, turning a socio-historical paradigm into a psycho-cultural analysis.

21. If we think in parallel to the carnival parades in other Caribbean places, such as Trinidad where calypso contests are a political tribune, the case of Martinique is very representative of the particularity of French colonial acculturation, where no such things happen.
22. I am using the term "performative" in the linguistic sense of Benveniste's definition of the "performative statement," where the speech is uttered at the very same time the action is performed, and as such, speaking validates the action performed. Political theater is for Glissant a cultural production of speech that opens up a self-aware performance where the Antillean subject is able to contextualize his present, thanks to an un-sentimentalized knowledge of his past, and to build a collective future. Performance is the result of a scenario where the metaphysical revolution of the acculturated *domien* would happen.

Chapter 4

1. All the quotations of Antonio Benítez-Rojo's essay in this chapter are from *La isla que se repite*, ediciones del Norte, Hanover (1989). The English quotes are from James Maraniss's translation of *The Repeating Island*, Duke University Press, Durham (1992).
2. Benítez-Rojo does not quote *The Death of the Author* but he refers several times to Barthes in *La isla que se repite*, mainly in the post-structuralist approach of the works of Las Casas, Ortiz, Guillén, or Carpentier.
3. Columbus colonized the Caribbean islands, Cortés the Yucatán Pensinsula and Mexico, and Menéndez de Avilés, Florida.
4. The mention of Adorno disappeared in the English translation of the essay, presumably to avoid a precise intertextual connection with the philosopher: as with Lyotard, the author referred to Adorno as representative of a eurocentered intellectual attitude that did not take into account the importance of the Caribbean as a cultural region of thoughts.
5. Benítez-Rojo in fact lamented the fact that Cuba was becoming a satellite of the USSR.
6. I agree with Román de La Campa that Benítez-Rojo used Lyotard's theory as a blurred palimpsest and omitted the latter's engagement with postcapitalist culture (De la Campa 1997); the point for Benítez Rojo was to transcribe in theoretical terms his true convictions about Caribbean cultural identities, which he had already explored in his previous works of fiction, such as the novel *El mar de las lentejas/Sea of Lentils* published in Cuba in 1979, and in the short stories written, edited, and published after his relocation in the United States, such as *A View from the Mangrove* in 1998. Benítez-Rojo's view of the Caribbean as a premodern, modern, and postmodern environment at the same time, started years before he read Lyotard and any other postmodern theoretician, when he decided to

leave economy for literature, as a richer mode to engage with Caribbean cultural studies.

7. Trained as an economist, Benítez-Rojo had clear views about the Cuban planned economy; he became a writer because he thought it could be a more fruitful means to engage with the people in his country.
8. Carpentier merged Vico's cyclical readings of history with Spengler's analysis of the cycles of culture and civilization, and the German philosopher's perspective on the decay of Europe to present a cyclical and dialectic vision of time that justified, legitimized, and praised the Cuban Revolution as a climax of political, collective, and national self-awareness.
9. Benítez-Rojo's fiction has a lot in common with Guillermo Cabrera Infante's, and interesting connections could be made between the works of those two Cuban writers before and after exile, particularly between Cabrera Infante's 1974 short novel *View from Dawn in the Tropics/Vista del Amanecer en el tropico* and Benítez-Rojo's *Sea of Lentils/El mar de las lentejas* in 1979.
10. This collection of short stories, published in 1998 in English with the title *A View from the Mangrove*, gathered stories written in Spanish in Cuba before the exile, and in the United States after he left the island. The first story of the volume, "Gentlemen's agreement," continues one of the main plots of *The Sea of Lentils* (John Hawkins's triangular trade). The note of the author makes an explicit connection among the aforementioned novel, written in 1979, the 1989 essay *The Repeating Island*, and the short stories published on the anniversary year of the Spanish-American war, in 1998. The author presents those three works as a "trilogy." It is essential to treat them as parts of a whole system for understanding and facilitating new perspectives on Caribbean memory, remembrance, and commemoration in the last decade of the twentieth century and after the fall of the Berlin wall. Columbus is present in the two first texts and this is where I will focus my analysis in the last part of this chapter.
11. In the novel *The Sea of Lentils*, and in the short stories *Full Moon in Le Cap*, and *A View from the Mangrove*.
12. If historians like Jacques Heers doubt the fact that Columbus was a Jew (see Jacques Heers, *Christophe Colomb*, Hachette, Paris, 1991), his Jewish background is nevertheless an element frequently exploited in the Latin American New Historical Novel such as Carlos Fuente's *El Naranjo/The Orange Tree* (1993). Benítez-Rojo makes a reference to Don Cristobal's "long, thin and curved" nose (*nariz afilada, larga y corva*) when he first appears in Chapter IV of *El mar de las lentejas / The Sea of Lentils*.
13. The statue in Cardenas is from the Spanish artist José Piquer y Duarte and the one in the City Museum of Havana is from the Italian J. Cucchiari; both are from 1862. See Rodrigo Gutiérrez Viñuales, *Monumento conmemorativo y espacio público en Iberoamérica*, Cuadernos Arte Cátedra, Madrid 2004, pp.402–412.
14. In 1975, Benítez-Rojo wrote an article, entitled ¿Existe una novelistica antillana de lengua inglesa? ("Is There an Anglophone Caribbean Novel?") in Revista

Casa de las Américas, num 91, 1975, pp.185–192, where he reviewed Brathwaite's work. The year 1975 was indeed a year of collaboration between Casa de las Americas and the University of the West Indies, the magazines of which, the *Revista Casa de las Américas* and the *Caribbean Quarterly*, were at the time respectively directed by Roberto Fernández Retamar and Rex Nettleford. Both men have been involved in a vision of the extended Caribbean, and in the 1992 commemorations (for or against the 1992 anniversary, as we will see in the next section of this book in Chapter 5 on Columbus in the Hispanic Caribbean, and Chapter 6 in the English Caribbean). For an extensive analysis on the relationship between Cuba and Jamaica at the time, see Luz Rodríguez Carranza and Nadia Lie, "A comparative analysis of Caribbean literary magazines, 1960–1980," in *A History of Literature in the Caribbean, Vol 3, Cross-Cultural Studies*, 1997, pp.119–158.

15. Among many, we can name Carlos Fuentes's *Cristobal Nonato* (Fuentes, 1987) and *El Naranjo* (Fuentes, 1993), Abel Posse's *Los perros del paraiso* (Posse, 1987), Augusto Roa Bastos's *Vigilia del Almirante* (Roa Bastos, 1992).
16. For example, the adaptation of the novel into a play, by Daniel-Henri Pageaux, directed by Jean Louis Bihoreau, at the Théâtre Atelier du Luxembourg, Paris, June–July 1992, see Daniel Henri Pageaux, "En marge du cinquième centenaire de la découverte de l'Amérique: De la Harpe et l'Ombre à Saint Christophe Colomb? ou les aventures et métamorphoses d'un découvreur passé au théâtre" in *Christophe Colomb et la Découverte de l'Amérique: Mythe et Histoire*, ed. Jacques Houriez, Presses Universitaires de Franche-Comté, 1994, pp.63–71.
17. In the Latin American Novel, Juan Rulfo and Carlos Fuentes inaugurated this technique in *Pedro Páramo* in 1955 and in *The Death of Artemio Cruz* in 1962.
18. It is not surprising then that the literary texts that emerged on the occasion of the 1992 anniversary in Cuba were closer to Carpentier than to Benítez-Rojo's model, as we will see in the second part of the book.
19. Michel Foucault, "Qu'est ce que la critique?," Conférence du 22 Mai 1978, Société Française de Philosophie, Bulletin de la Société Française de Philosophie, n°2, avril/juin 1990, p.38. Foucault's definition goes: "la genèse consiste à s'orienter vers l'unité d'une cause principielle lourde d'une descendance multiple; la généalogie restitue les conditions d'apparitions d'une singularité à partir de multiples éléments déterminants dont elle apparaît non pas comme le produit mais comme l'effet."

Chapter 5

1. The First *Conferencia Iberoamericana* took place in 1983 in Santa Fe de Granada, Costa Rica, with only 11 Latin American countries participating. The decision was taken to encourage the creation of multiple national commissions for the commemoration of the fifth centennial of the discovery of the New World. For further details, see Celestino del Arenal, *Politica exterior de España hacia iberoamerica*, Editorial Complutense, 1994.

2. Ricoeur's analysis is that at the heart of the problem lies the vulnerability of identity: first because identity is changing and evolving: it is nonsense to pretend that identity remains the same throughout time, nevertheless narrating memory implies to fix it in one stable foundational story; second because of the fear that a different and other identity will be a threat to one's own; this leads to manipulate memory in a homogeneous narration; and lastly because violence is at the origin of all historical community, the narration of identity is a mediation of the violence of the past.
3. The two essays of Freud considered by Ricoeur in "Vulnérabilité de la mémoire"(1998) are first *Erinnern, Wiederholen, Durcharbeiten* (1914) and *Trauer und Melancholy* (1917).
4. The funding came mostly from Spain, and to a smaller extent from Ecuador, Peru, Colombia, Brazil, Venezuela, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Cuba, and the Bahamas. The project received some private sponsoring from San Vincent, Saint Lucia, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Dominique, Saint Kitts, the Virgin Islands and Anguila, and some support from Mexico's CEESTEM (Centro de Estudios Economicos y Sociales del Tercer Mundo). UNESCO gave its moral support on the basis that this was a collective project with a direct connection to the commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the discovery. Oswaldo Guayasamín, the Ecuadorian artist from Quechua origins, and a strong activist for the defense of the rights of the indigenous people in the Americas, designed the logo of the expedition. It was printed on the T-Shirts of the members of the crew, painted on the Canoes, and used on the publications related to the expedition.
5. Hatuey was an Indian cacique of Hispaniola in the early sixteenth century, who became a hero in Cuba. A statue of him has been installed in Baracoa, at the east of the island, which celebrates him as the first rebel of the Americas. The legend says that he travelled from Hispaniola to Cuba to warn the Taínos that the conquistador Diego Velázquez was about to attack their island; thanks to him, the united tribes pushed the Spaniards to the east of Cuba. Hatuey was eventually caught and killed by the Spaniards, who burnt him on Hispaniola. He became an example of heroic solidarity and collective resistance among the Caribbean islands. Simon Bolivar was the Venezuelan general and political leader of the nineteenth century. He created the first federation of the united Latin American countries against the Spanish Empire that led them to independence.
6. Several books were published based on the expedition: the first one in 1989 was published in Ecuador, and dealt with the first voyage only, like the following 1992 Puerto Rican edition; in 1994, the Dominican Republic published a version describing the second voyage; in Cuba, a first tome, on the first voyage, was published in 2009 and the second tome, on the second voyage, in 2011.
7. In 1954, his book *Geography of Cuba* was censured by the Batista regime and later in the Sierra Maestra rebellion, it was among the books the Ernesto "Che" Guevera had with him.

8. The ALBA—Alianza Bolivariana de los Países de Nuestra América—was launched in 2004 by President Hugo Chavez, and in 2005 by Fidel Castro in Havana. Bolivia joined in 2006, Nicaragua in 2007, Ecuador, Dominica, Saint Vincent, and the Grenadines in 2009, and Saint Lucia in 2012.
9. See, for example, Luis N. Rivera Pagan, *La Esperanza de los vencidos*, 1989. The book consists of three essays defending the rights of the Indians of the Americas, with a reference to the first Ixmiche declaration during the Congress of Indigenous People that took place in Guatemala in 1980.
10. Both have extensively worked on the indigenous and African heritages of the island. See, for example, Jalil Sued Badillo's *Los caribes: realidad o fabula. Ensayo de rectificación histórica*, Río Piedras, Editorial Antillana 1978, and *Puerto Rico Negro*, Río Piedras, editorial cultural, 1986.
11. Created in 1955 by Ricardo Alegria, just after the island became a Free Associated State, the ICP resisted culturally to American acculturation mostly via the valorization of Spanish culture. The seal of the ICP shows the Spanish conquistador Juan Ponce de Leon (who founded San Juan in 1509 after he travelled with Columbus in the second voyage) with a grammar book in his hand and in between a Taíno Indian holding a cemí (a religious statue) and a black slave holding a machete (used to cut sugarcane in the plantations). A caravel is in the background. On this seal representing the myth of a harmonious miscegenation, the three cultures—Spanish, Taíno, and black—are equally represented but with attributes that already connote their importance in the Puerto Rican imagination: Spain brought culture, language, and civilization; the Taíno had a religion, and therefore a soul, in the vein of Las Casas's defense of the Indians; lastly, the blacks are remembered only as a working labor force for the plantation.
12. In the interview I had with her on the February 13, 2013, at the University of Puerto Rico, she mentioned extensively her commitment to the pro-independence journal *Claridad*, that led her to develop bonds with Cuba since the 1980s.
13. The agreement between Cuba and the USSR was that the latter bought Cuban sugar at privileged prices and provided in exchange cheap petrol and manufactured goods to the island. Cuban economy was planned and extremely specified. The loss of the USSR coupled with the imposition of American Embargo left the island in a terrible crisis of primary goods.
14. The publication of a bilingual text in Guarani in Cuba, where no one speaks Guarani, shows how disconnected to popular culture were the commemorations of Casa de las Américas, a window of the official culture in the urban and elitist setting of Havana. We will see in the last part of this chapter that Cuban writers who engaged with the fictional potential of Columbus were in fact trying to reconnect the people with the national commemorations of the fifth centennial of the discovery, and make this event meaningful for the Cubans of 1992 as a way to cope with the socioeconomic anxieties they were facing at the time of the Special Period in Times of Peace.

15. In 1992, the book was republished in Chile, by the united Latin American publishers of LAR (Literatura Americana Unida). I use this book and its Chilean edition as a reference in Notes 37 and 38.
16. Roberto Fernández Retamar has been the director of Casa de las Américas since 1975, and represented the official and revolutionary cultural nationalism at the highest level of the state.
17. Cuba sent troops to Angola in 1975 and 1988, and ended its intervention in 1991.
18. In this novel, translated as *The Orange Tree*, Columbus is turned into a carnival puppet, in the streets during the commemorations of the discovery, and he becomes a brand, bought by the Japanese, to develop tourism in Latin America.
19. Rafael Trujillo ruled the Dominican Republic from 1930 to 1961. He was well known for his cruelty, clientelism, and corruption, and for the racist ideology he imposed on the Dominican Society. Joaquín Balaguer was the right hand of Trujillo during his dictatorship.
20. Historically, the island of Hispaniola was the only island of the Caribbean where Columbus established a settlement. In 1992, the Dominican Ministry of tourism promoted the country as "the land that Columbus loved best."
21. A prominent figure of the University of Santo Domingo, Hugo Tolentino Dipp is a Dominican historian, politician, lawyer, and professor of International Rights. Member of the Revolutionary Dominican Party (PRD, Partido Revolucionario Dominicano), Tolentino Dipp is against Balaguer's government (the PRD has a history of anti-Trujillismo, since its creation by Juan Bosh in 1939, at the time exiled in Cuba). Tolentino Dipp's publications have focused extensively of the General Luperón, father of the Dominican nationalism. He also wrote on the problem of race in the republic, but mostly from the perspective of the discrimination against Indians (like in his book *Origenes del Prejuicio racial contra el Indio en América*).
22. The US Army kept the island under its occupation from 1916 to 1924 and then from 1965 to 1966. The United States was still in Hispaniola, occupying Haiti from 1915 to 1934.
23. Gregorio Luperón is a national hero for he led a rebellion to restore the republic against Spain in 1863.
24. The myth of a Hispanic, Catholic, and white nation is deeply rooted in the national imagination. Historically, the Dominican Republic tended to consider itself belonging to Spain as a protection against Haiti, since the two countries have a long history of violent and genocidal border conflicts between them. An example of affinity toward Spain is that in 1861 President Santana wanted the country to again become a colony of Spain in order to avoid being taken over by Haiti.
25. I do not include those texts in my analysis, first because they were unproblematic and doubled up the official commemorative discourse, without proposing any further debate on collective Puerto Rican memory; second because they were of a very weak literary quality. I have in mind Carlos Passalacqua's Los *Pergaminos del*

abismo. La Leyenda de las Olas, 1986; Luis López Anglada's *Padre del Mar*, 1988; and Francisco Matos Paoli's *Odo al Quinto Centenario*, 1990. Passalacqua's text is an epic poem, telling the creation of Borinquén and the foundational myth of origin of the island, born out of God Vulcain's desire from the depth of the sea, as a beautiful paradise island. López Anglada's *Padre del Mar* is based on selected episodes of the story of Columbus, told in an epic style glorifying Columbus, recalling Leon Bloy's 1927 *Le Revelateur du Globe*: Columbus is represented as Cristophoros, the bearer of Christ in the New World and the hero who joined the two hemispheres. Matos Paoli's epic poem is close to surrealist poetry, in which Columbus, with contrition, asks for forgiveness.

26. The jury was composed of Latin American and Spanish art critics such as Ted Carrasco (Bolivia), Patricia del Canto Vargas (Chile), Alvaro Diego Gomez (Colombia), Rolando Lopez Dirube (Puerto Rico), Jose Ramon Rotelline (Dominican Republic), and one Spanish member, Victor Ochoa. The president of the jury was the Argentinian art critic Damián Bayón.
27. Born in San Juan in 1946, Jaime Suárez studied arts, ceramics, and design at the Catholic University of Washington, D.C., and Columbia University, New York. He co-founded alternative artistic movements such as Grupo Manos in 1976 and Casa Candina in 1980. Outside Puerto Rico, his works were exhibited in the Bienal of Arts of Sao Paulo, Brazil; the Bienal of Arts Havana, Cuba; and the Bienal "Barro de América" in Venezuela. He teaches design and architecture at the Universidad Politécnica de Puerto Rico.
28. Figure of the Puerto Rican independence, Hostos is a nineteenth-century national hero.
29. Proof is that the only attempt to erect a statue of Columbus in Cataño, a province of San Juan, failed. The mayor bought a statue of Columbus in Russia and brought it to the island and got it reassembled in his town. It is still not mounted and lying in pieces in the port of Mayaguez, as something that the Puerto Ricans are not interested in. The only statue of Columbus, in Aguada, the place where he allegedly landed when he arrived in Puerto Rico, is part of the local celebrations of the city. Columbus is holding in his hand a cemí, an indigenous receptacle for religious devotion, in a very humble posture, celebrating the myth of the Spanish versus Taíno encounter, with a striking absence of the Taínos themselves, except as in the shape of an object.
30. Ramos Perea chose two historical characters and based part of the plot on historical facts, but he used his imagination and his irony to distort the historical facts. Casanova's autobiography mentions the Count of Saint Germain and the feud between them. Saint Germain wrote in a treaty of mysticism entitled "La Santíssima Trinosofía" that Ramos Perea consulted at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France while writing the play. If Saint Germain allegedly invented a magical potion, the title *Mistiblú* is an invention of the writer, as a symbolic term representing the nostalgic quest for a delusional eternity and a refusal to accept and mourn the past.
31. Perea did not know at the time that this anachronistic character would become a true symbol of polemic on the island: two years later, in 1993, the singer gave a

concert in Puerto Rico where she rubbed the Puerto Rican flag between her legs, creating a huge scandal.

32. The book won the *Premio de la Crítica* in 1992 and was republished in 2006 following the author's death. It shows that the project was very much in tune with the official cultural perspective for the fifth centenary in 1992 and was matching with the principles of the revolution. It was a cultural adaptation of the official discourse for the Cuban people, in a way that they could find meaningful.
33. According to an interview he gave to the cultural Dominican TV show Yola Yelou in 2007, Stanley's reason for the late publication of his book is that he got caught in a dense historical investigation, the result of which was that it took him 15 years to write the novel he initially wanted to publish for the commemorations in 1992.
34. The text was published in 2013, for commemorating the bicentenary of the birth of Juan Pablo Duarte, the Father of the Dominican Republic, who liberated the country from Haiti in 1884.
35. The island that Columbus renamed Hispaniola was called Ayití by the Taínos and divided into five cacicazgos (a region rules by a cacique). Of all the caciques, Guacanagarix is famous for having teamed with the Spanish in 1493 to fight the cacique Canoabo. The two cacicazgos of the west, Jaragua in the south, and Marién in the north, were located in the part of the island that is now Haiti.
36. In the Dominican Republic, a Dominican who is considered more interested by foreign culture than by his own country is still nowadays described as having "the Guacanagarix complex."
37. In the novel, Columbus quotes his own diary and the passage written on the tenth day of the navigation: "por demás yo ya había venido a las Indias, y que así lo había de proseguir hasta hallarlo con el ayuda de nuestro Señor" (p.159). Stanley has talked a lot of this thesis in various interviews and confirmed that he considers this scenario totally possible, though Columbus had no interest to reveal it and kept it secret.
38. The merengue is a popular musical genre in the Dominican Republic, coming from the peasantry and the working-class cultures. Trujillo facilitated its development among the elite and encouraged its adaptation to suit the tastes of the upper classes of the country. It became since the national music of the Dominican Republic, popular at all levels of the society. Luis Kalaf received the award of "Embajador de las Artes de la República Dominicana" and was decorated with the most patriotic cultural distinction—the orden Duarte, Sánchez y Mella—from President Leonel Fernández Reyna in 2010.
39. Stanley felt concerned with the black heritage on the island and with the problem of social and cultural racism toward the black foreign migrants in the Republic: for example, in his historical novel *Tiempo Muerto: Cocolos* (1998), he dealt with the English-speaking Afro-Antilleans who came in the Dominican Republic to cut sugarcane, and who experienced both economic slavery and social stigmatization. It is important to note that those workers were not Haitians, but Anglophone Caribbean peoples, coming from Nevis for the major

part: obviously, the problem of Dominican cultural nationalism is not that much a problem of race and skin color as that of a fear of Haiti, seen as a dangerous nation next door, with which the Spanish-speaking, Hispanic, and whitened Republic has been in perpetual conflict since the early twentieth century.

Chapter 6

1. The Federation of the West Indies, created in 1958, was the political union of several English Caribbean islands against the British Empire to prepare ground for independence. It collapsed in 1962 because of conflicts among the islands. They eventually became the sovereign states of Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.
2. John Hawkins was an English navigator, a slave trader, and an important figure of the Elizabethan Royal Navy in the sixteenth century, as was Walter Raleigh, who explored South America in 1594 in search of the legendary city of gold of *El Dorado*. Sir Henry Morgan was a privateer for the Royal Navy of the seventeenth century.
3. From the late 1950s to the mid-1970s, Caribbean drama was the main cultural field to address topics and characters of the colonial history. The theme of the discovery, and the character of Columbus in particular, were not very popular. Derek Walcott's *Drums and Colours* was an exception. This play was written in 1958, after the government of the Federation of the West Indies asked Walcott to support their project. However, the Saint Lucian playwright chose to represent the Spanish colonial history in the play as a part of the West Indian European heritage. Four ages of violence are successively represented: the discovery with Columbus, the conquest with Raleigh, slavery with Toussaint-Louverture, and colonialism with George William Gordon. Those historical characters rub shoulders onstage with fictional and local characters, named after their multicultural origins: Mano and Ram, black maroons; Pompey, a shoemaker, preacher, and calypsoldier; Yette, a female slave; Yu, a Chinese cook; and Calico, a ruined white planter. They perform a carnival pantomime onstage to represent the history of violence in the Caribbean. Columbus is one among other European colonizers represented in the play.
4. After he graduated from Oxford, Rex Nettleford came back to Jamaica to take a position at the University of the West Indies. He created with Eddy Thomas the National Dance Theatre Company (NDTC) of which *Roots and Rhythm* in 1962 was the opening show. *Roots and Rythm* brought together dancers of the Hazel Johnston Ballet School, the first dance school to admit non-white girls in Jamaica, and of the Ivy Baxter Creative Dance Group, the first dance company that incorporated the sacred and secular dances of the African slaves into modern American Ballet. Both schools had developed innovative body techniques to perform a specific Jamaican artistic style. Nettleford merged them with the conviction that drama, dance, and rhythm would be the cultural discourse for

praising political unity in the Caribbean. The NDTC innovative choreographies wanted to highlight and celebrate the underappreciated Caribbean indigenous rituals and body languages of Jamaica, inherited from the slave culture on the island. The recovery of the Jamaican African heritage was not only the result of a black-nationalist project, but of a will to resurrect folk and popular practices, to represent the history of the Jamaican people, which had long been considered backward by the elite, and to celebrate the Jamaican people as part of a wider Caribbean culture.

5. Nettleford was at the time a prominent figure of the UWI, of which he would become vice-chancellor a few years later. He was among the first scholars in Jamaica to work on Rastafarism and on the history of the black power movements in Jamaica.
6. Nettleford was very close to the Latin American anti-celebration perspective on the fifth centenary, and considered 1992 as an excuse to perpetuate inequality and hierarchy between citizens. He was in favor of the inclusion of Jamaica in the Americas, of strengthening the bonds between a wider American community, and of Afro-Caribbean and native American political activism.
7. Oku Onuora, born Orlando Wong in Kingston in 1952, was educated in the streets and the slum culture of eastern Kingston. After he stole money to create a ghetto school and a community center, he went to prison where he started to read and write poetry. In jail he performed with the group Light of Samba in 1974 and his poems became so popular that they were smuggled out of prison, they won literary prices and they were broadcasted on the radio. Onuora became a mentoring figure for the generation of the dub poets in the 1980s. See Christian Habekost, in *Verbal Riddim: The Politics and Aesthetics of Afro-Caribbean Dub Poetry*, Rodopi, 1993, pp.19–25.
8. The sound systems in Jamaica were mobile musical squads touring the islands to broadcast music, and party with the people who could not afford to buy hi-fi and stereo material for themselves. They were the meeting point of a new rebel identity among the youth (reflected by "the rude boys" or "rudies," represented by the character played by Jimmy Cliff in the 1972 Film *The Harder They come*). In the sound system, the amplifiers made the booming bass line very loud; in fact, the bass was the instrument of cultural resistance, later called "bass culture" by poet Linton Kwesi Johnson. The louder the angrier.
9. The Rastafarian language does not follow the rules of European semiotics. The latter, since Ferdinand de Saussure's *Writings in General Linguistics* (1916), has been based on the principle of the arbitrary of the sign and on the idea that any word is structurally divided between a signifier and its signified. The Rastafarian creative vocabulary completely broke away from this rule and proposed instead to make the word sound like what it means, which led to the creative and metaphorical manipulation of the signifier to mirror the signified. For example, if we take the word "oppression," it begins with a syllable that sounds like the preposition "up" and like the word "hope" (in Jamaican English, the "h" is not aspirated); Rasta English changed "oppression" for "downpression," so that the

word really means what oppression is about. Another example is the word "kingdom," transformed into "queendom" (beautifully performed by Peter Tosh in his famous reggae song "Babylon Queendom"), to reflect the context of the British colonization. Also, the pronouns referring to the first person in the grammatical position of the complement (the Latin accusative case) become active agents (the Latin nominative case), "me" becomes "I," "us" becomes "we" and "our," and "we" becomes "I and I." Rastafarism is both a philosophy and a religion based on the protection of subjectivity within a communitarian environment, where possession does not matter but where the collective sense of belonging comes with rules that protect the balance and the morality of the group (dress code, food, and attitudes). Language is the main guardian of those values. The elite and the Academic scholars in Jamaica mostly consider, still nowadays, patois as bad English or "baby talk," a form of backwardness resulting from a lack of education. For a complete analysis of the Rasta language, see Velma Pollard, *The Speech of the Rastafarian in Jamaica*, Caribbean Quarterly, Vol.26, no.4, December 1980; pp.32–41.

10. Dub poetry is characterized by a creative process of incorporations, able to absorb any kind of musical rhythm, from African traditional music to R'nB and ghetto black fusion. Dub poetry is indeed the epitome of the creative cultural process described by Brathwaite as early as 1977 under the name of "Creolization," referring to a process of creative cultural adaptation, both diachronic and synchronic, based on three major elements of collective consciousness in Jamaica: race, and therefore African History and slave culture as the roots of the Jamaicans; class, through popular culture, considered as the expression of the majority; and language, through the debasement of the norms of standard English and the valorization of rhythm (called "riddim"), Jamaican patois and oral culture.
11. Present on the island since the 1960s, Rastafarism was marginalized and repressed by the colonial administration. Rastafarism in many aspects created a nation within a nation: the Rastaman's philosophy and religion go with a specific diet and dress code; a disinterest in appearances; a holy herb (ganja); an Ethiopian King (Hailé Selassié); heroes and prophets (such as Paul Bogle, Marcus Garvey, and eventually Bob Marley); and a proper flag (a lion on a three-color striped banner). This was a very powerful cultural and symbolic cement to unite the people on the island, particularly thanks to the diffusion of Rasta culture through reggae music.
12. Jean Binta Breeze, the major female character of the Jamaican dub scene in London, wears different dresses and performs the voice of different characters within the same dub poem. Mutabaruka, in the 1994 *Melanin Man* album that we will study in detail, also performs many different characters onstage to create the scenery for a popular trial of contemporary issues.
13. It is important to differentiate between the reggae on the island and the reggae international industry. If the latter had the positive effect to give an international visibility to Jamaica, it altered the drum-and-bass essence of reggae, changed into more melodic musical arrangements in order to suit the taste of the non-Jamaican

international audiences. Dub poetry wanted to follow the spirit of the pure local reggae while incorporating new studio recording possibilities.

14. The pantomime in Jamaica comes from the English tradition of pantomime, usually represented during Christmas. It has been adapted to the Jamaican audience, and it is based on the aptitude of the actor to "mime everything." See Norman Munroe, "The Jamaican Pantomime: A National Institution," Visiting Arts, number 42, spring 2000, pp.8–9.
15. The criticism against the British colonial education system has been a privileged theme for the English Caribbean writers of the diaspora. It is the case in Jamaica Kincaid's novel *Annie John* (1997), focused on the childhood of little Annie in the British colony of Antigua. In the chapter called "Columbus in chains," the figure of Columbus is the object of the child's anger at school. Very gifted and keen on history, Annie is a bright and strongly opinionated pupil. While turning the pages of *The History of the West Indies* up to the episode of Columbus's third voyage, a portrait of "Columbus in chains" triggers her creative imagination and she writes down below the image: "The Great Man Can No Longer Just Get Up and Go." This is a sentence of historical justice, to give Columbus the punishment he deserves. Austin Clarke's *Growing Up Stupid under the Union Jack* (1980) is another example. The book describes everyday life in colonial Barbados in 1944, during the Second World War. One central episode tells how the protagonist, the author when he was a schoolboy, painted in black the face of Anne Boleyn and of the Tudors in his history book. The child's desire to identify himself with the historical figures of the British history that forged his repressed imagination pushed him to commit the sacrilegious act of creating a black Royal family.
16. In the song, the narrator makes clear that "he came before the arawak Indians." He considers himself as descending from African ancestors and from the runaway slaves, called maroons, who escaped from the plantations and united into free communities in the hills. Most of the maroons in Jamaica were slaves from the Akan-speaking group brought from Ghana. See Alleyne, Mervyn C., *Roots of Jamaican Culture*, Pluto press, 1988 and Campbell, Mavis C., *The Maroons of Jamaica 1655–1796*, Granby, Massachusetts: Begin and Garvey Publishers, 1988. The character of *Never Get Weary* has a lot in common with the protagonist played by Jimmy Cliff in the 1972 film *The Harder They Come*, a postcolonial archetype of the maroon. In the film, Ivanhoe is a young countryside man who leaves the poor mountains of the islands (the epicenter of the maroon societies in Jamaica since the seventeenth century) for 1970s Kingston. In the city he becomes a singer, exploited by the big-label group that has a monopoly on the island. To survive, Ivan turns to drug trafficking and violence and becomes an idolized figure in the slums for eluding the police as well as the drug dealers he works for. The lyrics of the eponymous song of the film *The Harder They Come* are very close to the spirit of *Never Get Weary*: "I keep on fighting for the things I want / Though I know that when you're dead you can't / I'd rather be a free man in my grave / Than as living as a puppet or a slave / The harder they come / The harder they'll fall one and all."

17. The griot in the African society is the guardian of oral history and of the origins of the kin. He has oratory and musical skills to perform the stories of the past. He is a key-figure in the society, associated with the king-warrior. In Jamaica, the worship of Bob Marley, who united the black and the poor people, is very close to the devotion for the griot. Dub poetry merged the oral tradition of the griot as a storyteller and the theatrical and popular tradition of pantomime. The power of the dub poet lies in the strength of his performance to galvanize the audience, most of the time around issues of nationhood, popular justice, racial pride, and for the struggle against globalization.
18. The trickster is a figure of the Caribbean folktales, mythology, and eventually theater. Often a god or a deity, sometimes an anthropomorphic animal, the trickster challenges the rules of nature and plays tricks to the humans he meets. Oshu in the Yoruba mythology is one example, guardian of the crossroads and of the destiny, he is the provider of the notion of the multiple and of the possible. It is a recurrent figure of Caribbean theater, from the fool Hugonin in Césaire's *Tragedy of King Christophe* (1969) to the Obeah man of Erol Hill's *Man better Man* (1964) to give only a few examples. The trickster can change its gender, its appearance, and its nature (see Sam Vásquez, *Humour in the Caribbean Literary Canon*, Palgrave, 2012), just as the dub poet can embody many characters according to his voice modulations while dubbing on music.
19. For a complete analysis of how subculture gains visibility by entering the dominant mass media, see Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson, *Resistance through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain*, London, Routledge, 1993; and Dick Hebdige in *Subculture, the Meaning of Style*, London, Methuen, 1979.
20. Anancy the Spider Man is a character of the West African folk culture who traveled to the Caribbean through the middle passage. See Philip M. Sherlock, *Anansi The Spider Man: Jamaican Folk Tales*, London and Basingstoke, 1983.
21. Mutaburaka performs in Jamaican English, which implies de-punctuation, phonetic writing, and patois spelling. He often does not capitalize the first pronoun, as it is the case in nation language.
22. Mutabaruka is like Anancy the spider: always sorting out any situation thanks to his wit and his talent for tricking his enemies. For an analysis of anancyism, see Ruth Minott Egglestone, *A Philosophy of Survival: Anancyism in Jamaican Pantomime*, Society for Caribbean Studiesm Coventry, 2001.
23. The prosopopoeia is a figure of rhetoric commonly used in the epic genre, consisting in giving speech to a personified concept or abstraction, an animal or a dead person, to reassert the collective values conveyed by the poem through the authority of a figure representing wisdom. Here, Columbus is the opposite: cruel and arrogant.
24. The title *Columbus Ghost*, without the possessive case " 's," gives the impression that Columbus is the first name and Ghost the surname of the character. It is the Ghost of Columbus who is talking.
25. Hawkins was among the pirates involved in the slave trade between Africa and Caribbean Plantations; Livingstone was strongly in favor of evangelization and

colonialism, that he considered to be an enlightened doctrine to bring civilization and progress to Africa; Mussolini colonized Ethiopia from 1922 to 1942; Botha was a South African leader who invented the racial theory of Afrikanerdom on which the apartheid was based; Bush in 2006 supported Somalia's invasion of Ethiopia.

26. *People's Court Part I* was an opus of fifth album of Mutabaruka, *Blakk Wi Blak..k..k..*, which came before *Melanin Man*. In *People's Court Part I*, the music was also a sampling of Prince Buster 1967 Rocksteady, *Judge Dread*, with new lyrics that sentenced all the politicians to 1,000 years of jail after they made false promises to the black peoples of the world.
27. Mutabaruka incorporates the feminine chorus, traditional in reggae when we think about the *I Three* performing with the Wailers—alias Rita Marley, Judy Mowat, and Marcia Griffiths. But here, the chorus performs ironically a soprano duet in the pure tradition of European opera, recalling the style of the *Flower Duet* of the French nineteenth-century composer Leo Delibes. There is obviously a lot of irony in both the form and the content of this repeated high-pitched call for whitening, which is a symptom of acculturation and colonial brainwash. Mutabaruka mocks the European musical norms as he incorporates them within the reggae rhythm.
28. The Rastafarians believe that their ancestors were the Egyptian people, and therefore belonged to an ancient culture and religion that was much older than the European kingdoms represented by Columbus. Mutabaruka's concert flyers, CD covers, and website reproduce symbols of the Egyptian culture. It was already something that Rex Nettleford exploited in his 1962 ballet *Rites* with Egyptian-style costumes.

Chapter 7

1. Marcel Manville (1922–1998) was a nationalist from Martinique who played an important role in the struggle against colonialism. In 1949, after fighting for France in the Second World War, he co-founded with other ex-servicemen the MRAP (Movement against Racism and for the Friendship between the Peoples). In 1984, he created the Independentist Party of Martinique, the PKLS. Manville was very close to Frantz Fanon, with whom he shared the same commitment for the struggle to free Algeria, and in 1982, he created the *Cercle Franz Fanon* to commemorate Fanon's work and continue the fight to abolish all forms of colonialism. As an international lawyer, Manville defended the rights of the victims of French colonialism until his death, in 1998, in Paris, while he was on his way to the law court to defend the Algerian soldiers who fought during the French-Algerian war of independence.
2. A couple of short and descriptive paragraphs mentioned the trial in *France-Antilles*, on December 10 and 11. France-Antilles is the main newspapers on the island, and the only one with a daily issue. Only the specialized and left-wing newspapers, such as *Le Naïf*, *Justice*, and *Antilla*, reported in detail the debates of

the trial, with further comments about its symbolic implication. Those three periodicals are known and read in Martinique by the communist, pro-independence, or scholar audience.

3. The Black Legend of Columbus, in which he is considered to be a product of the eurocentrism, imperialism, and intolerance of his time, is well known among French scholars thanks to the works of the Mexican historian Edmundo O'Gorman (*The Invention of America*, 1958), well distributed in France, the French philosopher Tzetan Todorov (*The Conquest of America: the Question of the Other*, 1982) and the Cuban and francophone novelist, Alejo Carpentier (*The Harp and the Shadow*, 1980). None of these books belongs to the French national cultural patrimony, but they have helped disseminate some interest for the figure of Columbus at the time of the 500th anniversary of the "discovery of the New World." As regards the golden Legend of Columbus, it was praised in France by writers at the periphery of the mainstream culture, such as the ultra-reactionary and Catholic Léon Bloy at the end of the nineteenth century (*Le Révélateur du globe*, 1884), Paul Claudel's mystical theater (*The Book of Christopher Columbus*, 1933) or more recently, the Haitian writer and playwright Jean Métellus (*Colomb*, 1992). None of those texts is part of the canons taught at school. Overall, Columbus is not part of French cultural mainstream interests.
4. The division of France into Departments is a result of the 1789 Revolution. The political and administrative reorganization of the Kingdom of France into the Republic of France was meant to divide the modern state into equal, administrative, and decentralized portions of space that could represent democratically the needs of all the French citizens after and against the previous Monachist absolutist system. The *département* corresponds to a second-level administrative division of the country, the first one being the region (*région*). The political and economic powers of decision depend on the size and administrative level of the territorial division, the *région* is therefore at a higher level than the *département*.
5. Simone Schwarz-Bart's 1972 novel, *Pluie et Vent sur Télumée Miracle*, described this colonial system of representation. When the protagonist Télumée starts to work for the family Désaragne, Madame Désaragne tells Télumée off reminding her that a black slave girl like her should be thankful for learning French manners and be redeemed of her black savagery.
6. Saint Lucia and Dominica are very close to Martinique, with frequent and cheap connections by boat; this has facilitated, in the last decade, the increase of the influence of the English Caribbean National culture in Martinique: for examples, streets and squares started to be named after Derek Walcott ten years ago. The influence of Jamaica came earlier thanks to music, and there may be connections, though not explicit, between the Columbus trial in 1993 and some anti-Columbus actions in Jamaica, analyzed in Chapter 6.
7. Thanks to a scholarship, Césaire was among the very few black students who went to Paris to the elitist Lycée Louis Le Grand. He eventually succeed to enter the Ecole Normale Supérieure (ENS); it's important to have in mind that the ENS was, and still is, an elitist school to train the teachers in France and to

become the elite of the civil servant system, at the highest rank of the administrative ladder. The ENS is the incubator of the cultural elite of the country, and it pursues the celebration and dissemination of French culture as the epitome of civilization, intellectualism, and scholar work. Césaire represented a black and colonized elite, and he was with his fellows Senghor and Gontran Damas, a minority. Césaire's language was that of a young man, scholarly educated and who read the canonical texts of French literature. He appropriated for himself and transformed French language to praise and defend his Antillean identity, and the early texts of négritude were a new form of surrealism, enriching French with the virtuosity of politically conscious images, neologisms, and grammatical creativity. Those texts were therefore not easy to read for the people of Martinique. It is only very recently that the efforts of the young generations of academics on the island to translate Césaire into Creole led him to be more visible as a writer. Nevertheless, even though very few people in Martinique have read Césaire, they do worship him as a political founding father.

8. http://www.parismatch.com/Culture/Art/Chirac-hommage-a-l-art-africain-148755.
9. Among them were important leaders of the movement for independence, like Luc Reinette, condemned to 33 years of prison after being granted an amnesty, and Henry Bernard. The bombings of the ARC happened against major town halls (*mairies*) in Paris, and against companies owned by France in Martinique and Guadeloupe.
10. All the quotes are from the audio recording of the trial made available by the communist radio station APAL—*Asé Pléré Annou Lité* (which means in French Creole: we have cried enough, now we must unite and fight). I thank Frédéric Maitrel, president of APAL for giving me access to the recorded archives, at 8 Rue Pierre et Marie Curie, Terres Sainville, Fort de France, Martinique.
11. Manville's tone revealed a contained rage against the disrespect of France for the DOM. He used the expression "we, the bastards of Europe and Africa" to point at the contempt with which Martinique has been historically treated since Schœlcher.
12. None of the plays has been published. I thank José Alpha for allowing me to consult both manuscripts.
13. Vincent Placoly was a Hispanist and Latin Americanist scholar, with an extended knowledge of the Spanish Golden Age theater.
14. Michel Lequenne is a French scholar, historian of Christopher Columbus. He translated Columbus diary into French in the 1950s. In 1992, he published a biography of Columbus, *Christophe Colomb, Amiral de la Mer Océane* (Paris: Gallimard); and in 2002, he wrote a critical study on the use and representations of Christopher Columbus, *Christophe Colomb contre ses mythes* (Grenoble: Jerôme Millon).
15. The lyrics of the French nursery rhyme are: "Il court, il court, le furet, le furet des bois jolis / The ferret is running away, the ferret is running away, the ferret of the lovely woods is running away."

16. Condé borrowed this dramaturgic mode from Ariane Mnouchkine, the famous French play director who founded the Théâtre du Soleil in the Cartoucherie at Vincennes, near Paris in France. Mnouchkine invented a visual theater, with multiple scenes in motion, and chose to direct plays with strong political and philosophical topics. At the Cartoucherie, where the Théatre du Soleil was founded in 1964, the actors of her troop live together and the audience can see them get dressed, made-up, and rehearse before they come on the stage. Mnouchkine is particularly famous for her adaptations of Greek tragedies (mostly of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides), performed in an amphitheater-like space and with actors wearing masks. Her theater, very visual, triggers the commitment of the audience and the interactive philosophical questioning between the stage and the public. It is a conceptual, committed, and participative theater. It is important to mention that Maryse Condé chose this format for her historical play, while she already wrote many plays in a more traditional style. Clearly with *An Tan Revolysion*, she wanted to touch her people and go back to her island with a historical lesson to perform, hoping this would shake the passivity of the collective assimilated imagination of her fellow Guadeloupe inhabitants. Unfortunately, the play did not meet its public.
17. Zéphyr is the wind of narration, allowing historical perspective and self-reflection; he is an element of narration in motion that could hopefully trigger a new way to consider the subjectivity of the Guadeloupian citizen.
18. Victor Hugues, almost forgotten by French history books, was revived by Alejo Carpentier in his novel *El Siglo de las Luces* / Explosion in a Cathedral (1962), set in Cuba, Guadeloupe, and Guyana during the French Revolution. The novel portrays the rise and fall of Hugues, from his faith in the humanism at the heart of the revolution, to his eventual blind obedience to the Napoleonic order. Carpentier's point was to distinguish the ideals of the revolution and the men who performed it. The failure of the French Revolution in the novel comes from the gap between the idealistic hopes and the materialistic ambitions of the men involved in changing the society. Carpentier considered that what happened in the French Caribbean won't happen in Cuba, and that the achievement of a revolution lay in the purity of its leaders. This is a totally different use of Victor Hugues from the one Maryse Condé is performing in her play.
19. Martinique was occupied by England from 1794 to 1804, and did not live the consequences of the French Revolution in the same way as Guadeloupe.
20. Louis Delgrès was a free man of color, son of a white planter, and a black slave. He was sent to France to receive education, where he began a military carrier and came back to the colony where he fought against the reestablishment of slavery.
21. The general view in France considers that Martinique is more urban and more civilized than Guadeloupe. At the time the Départements were established, Césaire was the only representative for both islands. Guadeloupe has a subaltern position in the triangle of acculturation overseas: the island is dependent on Paris but also on Martinique since the latter comes first and is the visible one in any political, economic, and social debate.

22. Actor Gilbert Laumord, who played Zéphyr, remembers that Condé encouraged him to perform Zéphyr with a gender ambiguity and queer manners. This shows how much the scope of the commemoration was used to question the social norms of identity. I interviewed Gilbert Laumord in Havana, Cuba, on November 19, 2010.
23. I thank Christiane Makward for the copy of the original leaflet of the play.
24. The Manifesto explicitly includes Haiti but does not really consider Guadeloupe, except to mention once the French writer Saint John Perse who lived and was inspired by Guadeloupe in his poetry.
25. French Caribbean history and literature is not part of the national school curricula in mainland France.
26. Glissant completely rejected such an explanation of Creole. For him, imposing Creole as a written language would dangerously participate in widening the already existing folklorization of indigenous and Afro-Antillean culture by the public state in Martinique.
27. Doudouism is a literary movement that presented the French Antilles as exotic, named after "Doudou," a colloquial term of affection in Créole.
28. Condé was educated as an assimilated little French girl in Guadeloupe, and her parents did not speak in Creole to her (see her autobiography *Le Coeur à Rire et à Pleurer*). She discovered her *négritude* when she arrived in Paris at the age of 17, but she chose to write literature in French. Condé never believed that talking and writing in Creole was the proof of a more genuine Antillean identity. On the contrary, she considered that the *créoliste* perspective would strengthen the regional dependence between the island and the *métropole*.

Chapter 8

1. The German-Haitian Hans-Christoph Buch is the other writer who exploited the anniversary date of 1992 to reflect on the character of Columbus in Haiti, with the novel *Amiral Zombie* published just after the 1992 quincentenary (Buch, 1993). The style of the novel recalls the postmodern style of the Latin American new historical novels that flourished in the 1990s, with the use of anachronism and irony (such as Carlos Fuentes's *The Orange Tree* or Salman Rushdie's short story *Christopher Columbus and Queen Isabella*). Buch is a professor of postcolonial studies at the University of Dresden. The novel adopted a postcolonial perspective addressed to the European readership; therefore, I will not include it in the cultural production that questioned the meaning of historical memory in Haiti at the time.
2. The lwas or loas are the gods and ancient spirits of Guinea. They are the ancestors and protectors coming from Africa.
3. In contrast to François "Papa Doc" Duvalier, his son Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier walked away from the black folk culture; he married Michelle Bennett, a woman of the mulatto elite. François Duvalier courted the vodoun societies and contributed to the resurgence of their secret societies; ironically it was one

of the powerful secret societies (Bizango) that was in no small part responsible for the collapse of Jean-Claude's reign. The power of folk culture is so important in Haiti that after the 1987 revolutionary events, the new constitution adopted vodoun as the official religion and Créole as the official language.

4. Toussaint hated vodoun, exactly like President Dumarsais Estimé who considered it to be an atavism that blocked the possibility of the Haitian people to deal with the problems of everyday life. Estimé was François Duvalier's mathematics teacher before the latter became his minister of public health. Duvalier built his paternalist aura in an ambivalent position that was as much an inheritance of the positivist, scientist, and hygienist vision of his mentor (and Duvalier became popular for having eradicated the infectious disease of yaws), and including his curiosity for vodoun. He gained the protection and political support of powerful representatives of the vodoun cults in the country.
5. The *tonton macoute* was an agent of the personal and paramilitary militia of Duvalier, empowered with legal and extralegal powers, including spreading terror. François Duvalier understood the force of the popular societies serving the Guinea cult and their importance in the collective popular imagination. He courted them to win their political support and in exchange, gave political powers to their members. He created a strong network solidly anchored thanks to the transfer of powers between the masses and the politicians. The rise and fall of the Duvalier era is closely related to the support the father had and the son lost from the voudouisants in Haiti.
6. Vincent Ogé defended the rights of the Mulattoes of Saint Domingue at the *Société des Amis des Noirs* (Society for the Friends of Black People) together with Robespierre in Paris during the French Revolution. He was tortured and killed by the French planters on his return to Saint Domingue. He is counted since then among the sacrificed figures of the Black Liberators with Toussaint and Dessalines.
7. Victor Schœlcher signed the decree of the abolition of slavery in Martinique and Guadeloupe.
8. Voudou conceives Humankind as created by Bondye (God) in his own image by giving his divine energy to the physical body (Bondye is the Creole word for Bon Dieu in French). The body is divided into two elements: the *corps cadavre* (the body corpse) is the most material part of the body, constituted of blood and flesh, the body machine, whereas the *n'âme* (the soul) is the spirit of the flesh that allows each cell of the body to function, a gift of God which, upon the death of the *corps cadavre*, begins to pass slowly into the organism of the soil. The decomposition of the corpse is the result of this transference of energy, a process that takes 18 months to complete (that's why no coffin should be disturbed during that period) (Davis 1988). The soul is also divided into two elements, a container and a contained one. The *gros bon ange* (the big good angel) is the life force from which all motions in the body are created (breath, palpitation); it gives the individual the power to act. At clinical death, the *gros bon ange* returns to God. The *ti bon ange* (little good angel) is the part of the soul directly associated with the individual, it

is first his morality and willpower, allowing an individual to evaluate his relationship with the others: that is to distinguish love from hate and good from bad; to feel happiness, satisfaction, pride or guilt, joy or regret. The ti-bon-anj is also the ego-soul, the essence of an individual's personality (Desmangles 1992).

9. Neither Alfred Métraux nor Melville Herkovits believed in the existence of the zombie. William Seabrook's *Magic Island* in 1929 was a shock in the scholarship at the time, since the book presented the case of nine zombies exploited by the Haitian American Sugar Company. The book caused rage among the intellectuals, particularly in the Haitian elite, such as Jean Price Mars, Lorimer Denis, and François Duvalier.
10. The Haitian penal code, Article 249, punishes zombism:

> to be considered as attempted murders the use that may be made against any person of substances which, without causing actual death produce a more or less prolonged coma. If after the administering of such substances the person has been buried the act shall be considered murder no matter what result follows.

11. It is a common fear in Haiti that the bokor can abuse his power to rapt girls and turn them into sexual slaves.
12. This is recurrent in contemporary Haitian literature. Port of Prince is called Port of Dirt (*Port aux Crasses*) by Louis Philippe Dalembert in his novels *LeSonge d'une Photo d'Enfance* (1993) and *Le Crayon du Bon Dieu n'a pas de gomme* (1996). The city is like a rotten and dirty womb colonized by flies in almost all Gary Victor's short stories and novels from *Treize Nouvelles Vaudou* (2007) to *Maudite Education* (2012). The town is divided between labyrinthine shanty towns and overprotected wealthy bourgeois neighborhoods, and split into night and day, underworld and upperworld in Kettly Mars's novel, *L'heure hybride* (2005), written in the manner of the diary of a male prostitute.
13. Neither Victor's nor Trouillot's novels have been translated into English.
14. Haiti has been a member of the IMF since 1953. After 1986, the involvement of the IMF in the economy of the country became stronger and in 2004 a special program for post-conflict crisis was set up.
15. Voudouisants believe that feeding the zombie with salt awakes him and arouses his rage.
16. Lavalas in Haitian Creole means "l'avalanche" in French, that is "the flood" in English; it is the name of the political party created by the leftist and demagogic party of Jean Bertand Aristide in 1991, so popular that it won and took away all suffrages like a flood.
17. The *chimè* or *chimères*, meaning chimera, were the personal militia of President Aristide. Often composed of young and poor boys of the shanty-town, they spread violence and terror from 2001 to 2005.
18. The Grand Plateau is a rural and extremely poor area at the frontier with the Dominican Republic.

19. Lucien's arrival in the morning before the manifestation is an echo of the arrival of the poor peasant Julien Sorel at the gate of the bourgeois De Renal Family in a masterpiece of the French nineteenth-century realist novel that depicts the society at the moment of the Napoleonic order in France, *Le Rouge et Le Noir*, of Stendhal. The doctor's wife appears in her nightgown arousing the desire of Lucien, like Julien when he saw Mme de Renal's ankle. This is meaningful as to contest the values of the Haitian bourgeoisie as much as the corrupt political elite of the country.

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