

Dramas of Memory: Slavery and African Oral Traditions in the Historical Novels of Manuel Zapata Olivella
and Ana Maria Gonçalves

By

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Dissertation

Submitted to the Faculty of the

Graduate School of Vanderbilt University

in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

Spanish and Portuguese

August, 2014

Nashville, Tennessee

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To Luciana Silva, who made Brazil part of me and came with me in search of more, to Dad, who told me I would be the first Dr. Maddox, and to Mary Margaret, Joyce, and Regina Maddox, who cared for me in ways only they knew how.

Acknowledgements

The Department of Spanish and Portuguese is a team. My professors and colleagues have all contributed to my formation as a scholar, teacher, and professional, but I am especially grateful to Earl E. Fitz and William Luis. They have pushed me to be my best since my arrival at Vanderbilt, and their support and mentorship have led to many victories during my time here, including this dissertation. Emanuelle Oliveira-Monte, Benigno Trigo, and Cathy Jrade have devoted much time and effort to improving my scholarship. The Center for Latin American Studies, under Ted Fischer and Jane J. Landers, provided encouragement, camaraderie, and opportunities that shaped my research. Paula Covington and Kathy Smith supported my work with the Manuel Zapata Olivella Archives. The Joseph B. Johnson Black Cultural Center welcomed me into African Diaspora Studies. Ana Maria Gonçalves and Isabel Allende were generous with their time and attention. The Robert Penn Warren Center, because of the leadership of Edward Friedman and Mona Frederick, provided me with valuable feedback from accomplished young scholars in diverse fields, generous support, and, most importantly, time to work. All translations in the dissertation are mine unless otherwise noted.

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INTRODUCTION

For the first time, a predominantly black group of novelists from throughout the Americas is writing a history of New World slavery that transcends national histories and uses oral and written sources of authority of Western, African, and African-American origin. The focus of this dissertation will be two of its most representative sagas: Afro-Colombian Manuel Zapata Olivella's *Changó, el gran putas* (1983) and Afro-Brazilian Ana Maria Gonçalves's *Um defeito de cor* (2006). My definition of historical fiction as a dramatization of history stems from these novels and it incorporates elements of oral and written discourses. This combination allows syncretic traditions of the African Diaspora to be incorporated into written histories of slavery. These authors use historical fiction to create individual and collective black diaspora identities that redefine the tragic history of the nations of Africa and the New World. "Mother Africa" and maternity are central to how these novels construct black history. These novels are prototypes of a subgenre of historical fiction I call *Nuevo Muntu* ('New World' in Spanish and Bantu) historical novels, which revise the history of slavery in the Americas and bear the impact of American and African racial politics of the 1960s. These texts deserve a place in the literary canon, thus making a step toward specific periodization of "contemporary" Latin American literature, now called "post-Boom" narrative by Hispanists, the dominant force in Latin American literature in the United States (Shaw, *A Companion, Antonio*, "Allende's").

Before describing the dissertation's chapters, I will define the four key terms I have borrowed and modified to facilitate discussion of these works: "dramas of memory," "*guardiero*," "*Nuevo Muntu*," and "Mother Africa." I give full credit to those who came before me, though this dissertation will help develop a language with which to discuss New World history and literatures in a new way.

Incorporating the oral traditions of enslaved Africans into the literary canon means the meeting of oral and written texts to recall slavery. The origins of Western literature lie in Classical Greece, where Aristotle and the Sophists before him developed rhetoric with which to recall speeches. These were based on special cues that were called a "theater of memory" (Ong 111). Today, literary scholars distinguish between the oral, corporeal performance of theater and its written representation, drama. Eugene Vance uses "dramas of memory" to

describe Medieval epic (400), as I develop in Chapter 2. The origins of literary theory and criticism in the West begin with Aristotle's debate with Plato over the function of literature (what they called "poetry," and which was almost all orally transmitted). Aristotle concluded that literature was closest to the ideals beyond the appearances of the world (53). His favored form of literature (oral poetry) was the tragedy (53). This performance's plot structure, designed for the stage, has been taken up by historians from "the last tragedian" Thucydides (20) to Hegel (White 122), and its structure is repeatedly found in historiography. If the novel of today, unlike the poetic genres Aristotle defines, has no specific form (it is, in Latin America, an anti-genre that emulates and often discredits "official" prose for González Echevarría [183]), if it is not the literary critic's task to establish true/false binaries but to study linguistic forms (thus disabling a separation between historical and novelistic narrations), historical fiction, which can be called "dramas of memory," must be a narrative mode, structure, or form. This mode can be part of a work or all of it, though it is constant in historical fiction. The historians and philosophers of history that historian Hayden White studies all create dramas of memory, as do the authors of the *Nuevo Muntu* historical fictions, on which I will further elaborate. This mode of narrative has been present in the New World since the *relaciones* of the Conquistadores and is present in virtually all novels in the New World. However, what literary critic Seymour Menton calls "historical novels" and "New Historical Novels" use this combination of oral and written discourses almost exclusively (15–17). These texts are the written representation of oral performance. Like the epics and tragedies of old, they are centered around transcendental acts of violence, as is the case of Hegel's greater drama of history. Thus, combining oral African myths with written Western myths reveals that the West has its own roots in oral myths, as the tragedians knew, so literary critic Walter Ong's binary of written (European) versus oral (African) cultures cannot be interpreted as a Manichean division between two worlds without considerable common ground. Brazilian Anthropologists have, since Nina Rodrigues, compared Sub-Saharan pantheons of Orishas, Loas, Vodouns, and other spirits to the Greek gods, such as using the word "epopee" for their myths (115). If literary critics do the same, one must question why some pagans have been, since the origins of literature, treated as purveyors of high culture, while others have been consistently excluded from the tradition of the novel. These great gods and immortal heroes

are treated as a pantheon, which modern-day tragedians like Zapata Olivella, Gonçalves, and the novelists that come after them appropriate for their works. The notion of the canon, of high literature, is challenged by the presence of the African spirits. By including these myths in their performances, these authors subvert the Western canon, thus becoming an innovative part of it that changes the rest. These novels have new favorite pagans and perform on a never-before-seen stage.

Like Cuban writer Miguel Barnet and 104-year-old former slave Esteban Montejo's text, and the nineteenth-century enslaved poet Juan Francisco Manzano's autobiography before the novels I study, there must also be a perceived double to these novels, permitting a counter-narrative or supplement to previous notions of history. Historical fiction is a double that points out and ameliorates the reader's ignorance to its new version of history. This is in the tradition of William Luis's scholarship. His *Literary Bondage: Slavery in Cuban Narrative* (1990) shows that abolitionist novels tell the history that history could not at the time they were written. He views these texts as a counter-discourse that nineteenth and early twentieth-century historians silenced and could not provide. This continues in the *testimonio* form in Barnet and Montejo's work. Luis's work is the first to focus on the theme of slavery as the foundation of the literature of a given nation. My dissertation focuses on trans-national works that incorporate both oral and written traditions. *Nuevo Muntu* fictions incorporate the oral theatrical elements of human characters, plot, body, voice, movement, and permeable divisions between the present and past, the living and the dead. The fluid boundaries of the sacred and profane of African mythical time are combined with an awareness of the African Diaspora, the history of slavery, and a desire to reconstruct elements of a past that, before these novels, were unknown to most. This gate is opened by these *guardieros'* voices. These authors and the difficult to represent slaves they invoke are profane New-World embodiments of the spirit Elegua, the trickster who controls doorways. The reader must deal with him before he can hear, or in the novel, read, the performance of the enslaved Ancestors. Elegua is a creature of Africa, and these novels focus on a vision of the Americas that originates in slavery.

All theater requires a stage, which I express using the metaphor of the *guardiero*, the de facto guardian of the plantation who determines the "space" on which history is reenacted by constructing an oral account of

the past. Roberto González Echevarría, building on Luis's work, uses this term to refer to Montejo, who controls access to his memories of slavery, the spirits, and Cuban independence. In other words, *guardieros*, or in the case of Zapata Olivella and Gonçalves, the *guardieros* of today, create geography, the stage of their dramas. This is very important for politics, as legal scholar Carl Schmitt argued in his *The Nomos of the Earth* (2003) (9). The Greek *nomos* could be translated as “convention” (Lebow 41), but its most literal translation is “border,” because it comes from the word for “fence.” It is the basis for sovereignty, or the right to control an area or thing. Recounting the history of slavery in fiction redraws the *nomos* of the Earth, because literary history and its study often continue “national literature” projects of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which often excluded or minimized the contributions of black people. Montejo goes beyond the way his nation's history had been told before the Cuban Revolution, but he does not have the access to his own national literature or that of other nations that Zapata Olivella and Gonçalves's works exhibit. Montejo, whose experience is confined to an oral world, can rewrite his nation's history, but not that of others.

A Western and all-too-often Eurocentric formal education allowed Zapata Olivella to propose the *Nuevo Muntu*, a trans-Atlantic political and cultural unity between the “three races” or “ethnicities” (African, European, and Native American) that gives a new primacy to the African contributions to the New World. One could say he is a *guardiero* working to dismantle the plantation, to alter its borders to the point that it is no longer controllable or even recognizable to the master. *Guardieros* were notorious for aiding slave rebellions. They altered the course of history from the margins to make greater liberty possible in the future, and *Nuevo Muntu* Historical Fictions continue this project. “*Nuevo Muntu*” could be translated as “the new man,” evoking Che Guevara's revolutionary vision for Cuba in *El socialismo y el hombre en Cuba* (1965). However, unlike Guevara's text, it unites the myths of Africa with the history and literature of the Europe and Americas. The *Muntu* is Zapata Olivella's interpretation of a complex Bantu-based ontology that does not separate past, present, and future; man and nature; living and dead; even deities and humans (*Changó*, 730–31). The term *Nuevo Muntu* is not used in *Changó*, but “*Muntu*” is; the author later wrote *Tambores para despertar al Viejo Muntu* (n.d.), further exploring the oral history of the diaspora, so one could say that the *Nuevo Muntu* has not

yet arrived, but that it lies in the hope of an awakening of the unity of the “three races” in harmony. This new light in coming is a *Nuevo Muntu* that synthesizes the best of all humanity in the Americas (16). The *Muntu*, as mapped in *Changó*, encompasses much of the Black Atlantic, but it focuses primarily on the late twentieth-century Americas as the space from which slavery and the Orishas are remembered. The Orishas, while they have analogues in other Sub-Saharan traditions, are of Yoruban origin, and the author’s combination of them with this Bantu cosmology is an example of this text’s poetic syncretism. The *Nuevo Muntu* is different from the pre-slavery *Muntu* because of influences such as slavery and religious syncretism, which often occurred in the Americas as well as Africa. “*Nuevo Muntu*” is a more appropriate term than “Black Atlantic,” because *Changó el gran putas*, the first novel to develop the concept, was begun around 1974 (*¡Levántate!* 334) and completed in 1983, ten years before Gilroy popularized the term “Black Atlantic” and has important differences, as Chapter 3 will discuss. It is part of a long-standing Luso-Hispanic tradition of “theory in the text” in which literary authors develop narrative and political theory through meta-literary commentaries, beginning with *Don Quixote* and continuing in the work of Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis and Jorge Luis Borges.

The *Nuevo Muntu* is an “imagined community.” Benedict Anderson, who coined the latter term, has studied the novel’s vital role in creating national identities (*Imagined Communities* [1991]). However, like inter-American Literature and the Black Atlantic, the *Nuevo Muntu* is not limited to the Nation-State model of community. I do not mean to imply that Manuel Zapata Olivella had a direct influence on all of the authors studied here. Ana Maria Gonçalves did not read *Changó, el gran putas* before writing *Um defeito de cor*, though Nei Lopes’s novel *Oiobomé: A epopeia de uma nação* (2010) is clearly influenced by both of them, as I show in Chapter 5. I hope critics and authors will continue to explore the concept of the *Nuevo Muntu* in different contexts and using different approaches without falling into the trap of expecting authors whose works have, until the 1970s and even more recently, been marginalized from the academy to have the same development as, for example, Spain’s ebullient and prolific Generación del 27. The latter identified with some interpretation of a Spanish national literature and had the infrastructure to access the texts of Góngora and other

“national” writers. Had Gonçalves been trained in my interpretation of an African Diaspora literary tradition, she might have read Zapata Olivella as a student or scholar, and my study is intended as a step in developing that framework, much like the academe’s work on *testimonio* has created a term that encompasses authors from different nations and languages who did not read one another, as seen in Elzbieta Sklodowska’s study.

Questions of “direct influence” have not deterred María Mercedes Jaramillo and Lucía Ortiz from compiling an anthology of essays on black female artists and leaders in Latin America entitled *Hijas del Muntu* (2011), because the *Nuevo Muntu* concept has critical implications for one of the most important literary phenomena of the post-Boom: a new generation of authors revisiting a fundamental but previously under-studied period in world history with the effect of altering the future of literature and historiography.

What these novels say outright is important, but their silences are just as vital to the *Nuevo Muntu* of the future. What lies beyond language and in poetic usage of it is what I call “Mother Africa.” A unified African continent, as it is known today, did not exist until slavery. Africa is a silenced origin, a place that came into being on the slave ships and in the New World. It is a trauma, a silence that indicates an abject origin not only for the enslaved but for the New World they helped to create. Violent, abject origins are best described in Latin America by Octavio Paz, whose “Hijos de la Malinche” allegorizes the origins of Mexico as the rape of indigenous women by the colonizers (89). Before this foundational violation occurred, another took place in Africa with the enslavement that created three continents, Africa and the America. This all-too-often repressed rape is reinterpreted by *Nuevo Muntu* authors, who use their texts as a form of therapy to revisit this origin and work through this collective trauma, just as the Greeks used tragedy. These texts depict history in an Oedipal fashion in which language is associated with the Father of Personal Prehistory and the Mother is repressed in language, which, after Paz, the Post-Structuralists redubbed the Symbolic Order. If Western Subjects, these authors included, are Oedipal subjects, then “Mother Africa,” a Western creation, is an example of Oedipal longings for a pre-subjective state, one preceding the separation of the subject from the Mother, only in this case, the Mother is Africa. She is silence, but she appears in language in many forms. African myths, since before slavery, have created symbols for maternity that have been elevated to the status of goddesses. If the

West symbolizes its Mothers through Marianism and the Greco-Roman goddesses it resignified, then it is valid to view mother goddesses like Yemanyá/Erzuli and Oshún in the same light. Many slaves did this when they syncretized their deity with images of the Virgin. This silenced, abject mother is evoked when the *guardieros* of today attempt to speak with the *guardieros* of the past. The repressed part of the Western subject that comes out in her/his writing as he attempts to represent the subaltern is what Derrida referred to as “the other within.” The “other” in my study is the slaves of the past, but for Gayatri Spivak it was the *sati* widows of India. Zapata Olivella and Gonçalves control what the reader accesses in the past, but that past evokes something in them that is only partially conscious: a wish for a return to origins, Mother Africa, and rebirth for themselves and for the New World.

I will now proceed to a chapter overview. This dissertation shows, in five chapters, five reasons these novels should be considered canonical. Chapter 1 argues that the Latin American literary canon did not have black writers that use the novel form to recount the history of slavery and incorporate African spirits until Zapata Olivella. There were, however, important precursors to his work in the abolitionist tradition, the Hispanic *avant garde*, Brazilian *modernismo*, reception of the Harlem Renaissance and *Négritude*, and the most closely related text, the nationalist *Biografía de un cimarrón* by Miguel Barnet and Esteban Montejo, which is considered by most to be the beginning of the Hispanic *testimonio*. Zapata Olivella and the texts that follow in my study are equally imbued with orality and concern for creating historical counter-narratives, but they have an international scope that includes Africa and the Americas. Like Montejo, these authors are familiar with the oral traditions of the slaves’ world, which was almost entirely excluded from the written world of literature. These traditions include the ability to summon the voices of enslaved Ancestors and speak directly to them, which can be interpreted as an alternative canon to Western Literature. However, unlike Montejo, they have the authority of Western educations. They can speak the language of the lettered city and the world that the West has been conditioned to see in Latin America and Africa through the texts that began with the Conquest. Their formation in written culture allows them to dialogue with the literary, anthropological, and historical documents on slavery and the Orishas that came before them. This archive includes many of the texts I argue

are precursors to the literary subgenre I call *Nuevo Muntu* historical novels, which the following chapters will better define.

Chapter 2 argues that these new works change how historical novels in general are to be read. They combine oral and written discourse. This is much like drama, which is the written representation of theater. The latter is performed live and marked by actors, body, and movement, as Aristotle claims. It is usually spoken. Greek epic and tragedy mark the literary transition from an oral culture to a written one. Historical fiction represents a continuation of oral forms in written discourse. Walter Ong claims that there are residual elements of orality in all writing (171). Most of these elements of oral cultures' relationship to language are optional in moments of historiography (e.g., statistics) but necessary in historical fiction. Presenting history as a drama is necessary to make the reader care about it, because Ong claims that oral forms are more emotive than written ones and more tied to lived experience (111). This is a narrative tendency in history, historiography, and the philosophy of history dating back to Hegel's notion of history as tragedy, as Hayden White shows (122), but it can be traced to the first historians, such as Thucydides (Lebow 78). My return to the source of Western literature notes that Europe, since Christianity, has always had its favorite pagans, the ancient Greeks, so it is no surprise that scholars, myself included, have associated African pantheons with the Greeks. Writing and reading history as tragedy allows for the translation of African spirits into European languages and genres as if they were Greek gods, thus shirking past tendencies to treat them as "superstitions" and, instead, treating them as an alternative, oral canon that alters the written, Western one.

These authors use dramas of memory, historical novels, to create an individual and collective black identity that incorporates yet transcends the nation by becoming *guardieros* whose words control time and space. Ong notes that oral memory is not structured in lists (98), but in theaters of memory. Orators once imagined the places events happened so that they would not forget them. This rhetorical manipulation of space with the end of maintaining the listener's interest and turning it toward a new representation of the past with borders controlled by the speaker is important for reconstructing the borders that exist in the present. This is especially powerful when the divisions are between groups that without this memory seem so stable as to

become “races” and “nations.” Critic Roberto González Echevarría describes the former slave Montejo as a *guardiero*, a colonial position typically held by an elderly slave, who guarded the border between one plantation and another (*Myth* 171). These were the best-informed individuals on the plantation because of word of mouth and lived experience, and they were often involved in rebellions, since they were strategically located at the edges of power. Zapata and Gonçalves use their dramas of memory to redraw the maps that order the world in the reader’s imaginary. They expand Montejo’s stage to incorporate the New World, Africa, and its diaspora.

Chapter 3 shows that the stages of *Nuevo Muntu* historical novels create unique performances of African Diaspora identity. Zapata Olivella recalls that “Africa” did not imagine itself as a collective until slavery forced a “slave,” or “black” identity onto people that often had no other connection (*¡Levántate!* 106). “Africa” is a longing for a home that often never existed as it was imagined by the enslaved, so the spreading of seeds, the metaphor of “dia-spora,” is paradoxical, since the “seeds” were never “together” until scattered. However, this dispersal unites the Americas and Africa in these novels, because the ghosts of slavery haunt the nations of both. Critic Paul Gilroy’s *The Black Atlantic* (1990) popularized a similar black diaspora, but he ignores Latin America, while Zapata Olivella’s novel already chronicles the diaspora as trans-Atlantic and inter-American seven years earlier. There is no attempt in these novels to completely abandon the nation, but to use historical fiction like a *guardiero*’s story (González Echevarría, *Myth* 171): to alter the nation’s borders from the margins, expanding them to include previously invisible areas and silenced speakers.

As any *guardiero*’s tale exemplifies, collective identity is bound to individual identity, since s/he is the only performer. Paul De Mann argues that the function of autobiography (writing a “self”) is present in all narrative, to varying degrees (920–21), as is evident in Gayatri Spivak’s essay “Can the Subaltern Speak?”, which I compare to these two novels in Chapter 4. Their histories of diaspora are a construction of an individual black identity for the implicit author. *Changó* is interwoven with Zapata Olivella’s three autobiographies, *Pasión vagabunda* (1949), *He visto la noche* (1953), and *¡Levántate, mulato!: Por mi raza hablará el espíritu* (1990).¹ Gonçalves explains in her preface that her novel was, in part, the result of a closing chapter in her life marked by leaving a marriage in São Paulo and restarting her life in colonial Bahia (9–10). During revisions,

she was only satisfied when writing in the first person, connecting herself to her protagonist (“Inspiração” 174). When I interviewed her years later, she claimed that the novel was an unconscious search for a black identity that she only felt was fostered through her writing (168). In the cases of both Zapata Olivella and Gonçalves, historical fiction, written with a look to the Black Diaspora in the United States, where they both traveled, as a model for the future, and a look to Latin America’s syncretic religions of African origin as a link to the past, is not only a creation of an “us,” beyond the nation, but of an “I” within both.

Since historical fiction is a form of autobiography, a psychoanalytic reading of the limits and opportunities of written language to communicate “Mother Africa” is a continuation of my concerns with oral African traditions and written Western literature. I use the theories of Spivak and Octavio Paz. The latter’s “Hijos de la Malinche” explains the trauma of colonialism as Hernando Cortés’s rape of his Mexican translator, which is the repressed primal scene that every Mestizo/a in Mexico unconsciously carries to this day as her offspring (99–100). Zapata Olivella goes back farther than the rape of the Malinche to show that the horrifying, violent origins of the Americas began in Africa, which Gonçalves continues in her own way. The rape of Africans in these works is an abject origin for the diaspora and the Americas. Both novels seek to create new origin myths that in many ways recreate the African Diaspora: according to these novels, it did not begin with colonialism or slavery, but, in fact, it has always existed as children of Mother Africa, which repeatedly subverts colonization and exists in the silences beyond its language. European invaders attempted to assume the maternal role of creator through violence, forcing slaves to be “reborn” through obligatory baptism, which functioned to psychologically colonize African slaves. However, due to the continuing myths of the spirits, in *Changó*, the Middle Passage slaves crossed is at once a baptismal font, the waters of the mother goddess Yemayá, and the amniotic fluid from which the African Diaspora in the Americas is reborn in a way that subverts colonization. Using Paz’s code (99–100), Zapata Olivella replaces the rape victim, or Chingada, with the fertile *puta*, free, active, impure, and provocative. Agne Brown, his feminine avatar, attempts to decolonize herself through a cult honoring her African Ancestors, but she is arrested for prostitution (526). This sets off a series of events that the novel depicts as a syncretized Biblical Apocalypse, which represents the death of the

symbols of race and culture that the New World has inherited from the Colonizers. It is a therapeutic attempt at self-decolonization. Gonçalves's is, in some ways, more emotionally and ethically complex. When Kehinde leaves Mother Africa, she becomes gradually less maternal and less connected to the African faith of her childhood. She is raped like the Chingada, and her point of view subverts "racial democracy" myths that sustain that Brazil has always been a harmonious racial mixture, such as those espoused by José Vasconcelos and Gilberto Freyre (Hanchard 61). Kehinde actually rises from oppressed to oppressor as she returns to Africa, having forgotten her "maternal" origins, and hires her own servants, whom she treats as "savages" (867). Thus, her text has another author, her scribe who does not speak overtly in the text, and Kehinde is driven by the urge to be reunited with her enslaved son in Brazil (945). The text opens the possibility for healing, the possibility for the enslaved to speak and for reunion between mother and son. This unknowable resolution to the text's silences is the possibility of a *Nuevo Muntu* in which all are free and the enslaved of the past can speak in a way those of the present can understand. It is the possibility of a comedic resolution to the repeated tragedies of African Diaspora history.

Chapter 5 applies the theory of historical fiction as a dramatization of history to other works of an emerging subgenre that combines the history of slavery with the oral traditions of Africa. I use my theory of historical fiction as tragedy, largely based on White and the novels discussed so far, to show that these works are part of a coherent subgenre. Afro-Brazilian Nei Lopes's *Oiobomé: A epopeia de uma nação* (2010) is a Hegelian "tragicomedy," a utopia based on known history of the New World. It is founded by slaves and indigenous people in the Amazon and interacts with the Brazilian nation and the African Diaspora from the late eighteenth century to the present. It is the brainchild of Domingo dos Santos (61), the tragic hero who creates and leads it before being betrayed and killed in the early nineteenth century. His spirit continues in his descendant Melvina Jackson dos Santos, who realizes his utopian dream by establishing a nation of the future in the twentieth century that heals the traumas rooted in slavery and colonialism (217), a comedic ending to a tragic history. Chilean-American Isabel Allende's *La isla bajo el mar* (2010) is also a tragicomedy. The enslaved narrator of several sections of the novel, Zarité recounts the hopeful marriage of her daughter Rosette

to a white abolitionist (481) and the dashed hope of her imprisonment and death due to the race-based limitations of nineteenth century New Orleans (267). Afro-Latina/Puerto Rican Dahlma Llanos-Figueroa's *Daughters of the Stone* (2009) is tragicomic, because the living characters must cultivate oral traditions to recapture the tragic death of Fela, the family matriarch who must sacrifice herself to the goddess Oshún (54). They must also recall the comedic resolution of the abuses of the plantation in Puerto Rico when Fela's daughter Mati converts it into a just, peaceful community as she leads it with Oshún's blessing (120).

The conclusion summarizes and reiterates my thesis: that these novels are masterpieces of the ever-growing subgenre of historical novels of the *Nuevo Muntu*, which in turn is an example of historical fiction's role of dramatizing history. They are long, complex works that seek to show, in meticulous detail, the extensive effects of slavery and the African Diaspora on the formation of the New World and Africa. More than any other text of the subgenre, *Changó* and *Um defeito* exemplify how much has been previously left unsaid on the African roots of the Americas and the richness and value of oral religious traditions that until very recently were dismissed as "primitive" by the academe.² This subgenre is among the most important developments of what has been called the "post-Boom" Period, and this study is a contribution to finding more useful terms to describe the post-1971 period in Latin American letters than those that define it relative to a previous literary and historical moment. These monumental novels are valuable to scholars interested in the New Historical Novel, historical revisionism, post-colonial studies, foundational fictions and imagined communities, self-writing, and gender studies. This eclectic approach to these texts is a testament to their complexity and what they have to offer a variety of disciplines. I hope this study will provoke debate among scholars of literary criticism, cultural studies, diaspora studies, and gender and women's studies, as well as Latin-, Latino-, African- and inter- American Studies.

Abobó to the present and recent past

This dissertation could not be written until now. History itself allowed slavery and the Orishas to be approached by these authors in this way. Without the accomplishments of the US Civil Rights and Black Power

struggles, the Cuban Revolution, African independence struggles, and Colombia and Brazil's autochthonous black movements, this new academic interest in slavery would not have occurred. Zapata Olivella's text was not widely disseminated in the US academy, though the 2009 translation of it will no doubt contribute to greater visibility. Gonçalves's text was only released in 2006 and has not been translated into English, and the novels treated in Chapter 5 only came out in 2009 and 2010, showing the relevance, scope, and immediacy these texts have for the Americas. *Dramas of Memory* is particularly timely, given the United Nations' declaration of 2011 as the "Year of People of African Descent" and its subsequent extension to "Decade of People of African Descent," which will begin in 2013 and no doubt contribute to greater scholarly interest in this literature (United Nations 3).

I could not have written this dissertation anywhere but Vanderbilt University. I came here to study the narrative of the Spanish American post-Boom in a comparative context with Brazilian literature of the same period. I continue to be inspired by Earl Fitz, who showed me that fluency in Spanish, Portuguese, and English is the basis for the most complete understanding of the literatures of the Americas beyond the restrictions of national literatures. Fitz introduced me to Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis, whose race has been the topic of considerable debate. Fitz's work has led me to ask "to what extent does his race matter to literary study? To what extent should a black author, or any other that bears a mark of difference, be read as any other (Western) author?" The two questions of "universality" (codified in the Western tradition) and the particularities of African American history are constant in this dissertation. The reader will notice my reliance on tradition, both literary and critical, but any attempt to read these authors in a manner that completely ignores racial politics is subverted by the works' constant focus on the history of slavery, the focus on the slaves' point of view, and the oral tradition of the Orishas in the texts. This is not a limitation of how to interpret these texts, but the source of a language that enriches the Western canon of Latin America and is relevant to virtually any reader.

I came to Vanderbilt with a firm foundation in what I believed to be cultural studies, particularly those relating to gender and race. I still consider myself a post-modernist critic of rigid binary oppositions such as high and low art, but I discovered that "high art" is always altered by rebellion against it, and so these

previously marginalized communities' uniqueness actually continues previous traditions of literature and theory in many ways. At Vanderbilt, I found new approaches to literature, which are reflected in my chapters' unique readings, all of which harken back to the reading of historical fiction as drama, particularly tragedy. Carlos Jáuregui encouraged me to read these novels through the Marxist lens of Walter Benjamin, but I found that his "angel of history" who watches one horrifying event after another in mankind's time on earth (Lowy 101) was in many ways preceded not only by Marx, but also by his teacher Hegel, as I saw in White's *Meta-History*. The latter theorized history as tragedy, a tendency that goes back to the first historians, particularly Thucydides, who can be seen as the ancient precursor of historical fiction *avant la lettre*. In short, I tried to go to the roots of literature in the hopes of doing something that is, at least for me, radically different (tearing up roots) from accepting literary theory, or the literary canon, passively.

The intersection of post-structuralism and post-colonial theory comes largely from Benigno Trigo, though the intersection of Spivak and Paz's work is my own discovery, which will hopefully lead to new readings of their work as well as those of the novelists treated here. I learned that cultural studies, often focused on theme, history, and politics, is not the only way to read African Diaspora literature, and that approaches in the tradition of formalism and Great Works can lead to exciting discoveries.

My dissertation's focus on a so-called "minority" community, the people and cultural practices that can be traced back to slavery and Africa, is a continuation of Fitz's work, because slavery has affected everyone in the Americas from their origins. This said, those whose Ancestors were enslaved are a huge population in the Americas, particularly my areas of specialty, the Hispanic Caribbean and Brazil. I view my project as going beyond the racial divides, explicit and implicit, that have kept the history of slavery from being told in the ways these novels do. These novels are an opportunity for a historically white, male academe in the Americas to learn from those to whom it has all too often been deaf. This revisionism must include Latin America, the United States, and US Latino/as, because, as Luis proposes (*Dance* xv), Latino/as have historically been in direct contact with African Americans and often bring their own struggles with the legacy of slavery with them.

Zapata Olivella's work is a point of contact between US Hispanic literature, US African American Literature, and Latin America, so one cannot approach it justly from any single national or linguistic tradition.

William Luis introduced me to *Changó* in his Caribbean literature seminar and continually fostered my interest in Zapata Olivella and the African Diaspora. His lengthy introduction to the English translation of the novel provides an informative way of reading Zapata Olivella's masterpiece, based on Bantu religions, in which the Orishas and the dead are ever-present. My work with the *Afro-Hispanic Review*, first as Assistant Editor then as part of the Vanderbilt Editorial Board under Luis's guidance, galvanized my identity not only as a comparatist but also as a Luso-Afro-Hispanist. I got the chance to read cutting-edge scholarship on Brazil, Africa, and Spanish America. This included two special issues on Manuel Zapata Olivella, one compiled under Marvin A. Lewis and Edward Mullen in 2001 and another from 2006 under the editorship of Luis, along with the vital contributions of guest editors Laurence Prescott and Antonio Tillis. The journal's cosmopolitan philosophy reaffirmed my belief that African Diaspora Studies is a field that opens canonical texts to new readings and permits discoveries beyond the canon, as is evident in this dissertation's eclectic approach.

My work with Luis led me to investigate the novel further, a search that included Brazil, New Orleans, and Vanderbilt Special Collections. Emanuelle Oliveira-Monte's seminar allowed me to read the work of Gonçalves, whom I had heard speak at the Kentucky Foreign Language Conference in 2008. Oliveira-Monte helped me develop my ideas. Through Vanderbilt Special Collections, I accessed Zapata Olivella's archive and thus have read unpublished documents on *Changó* and the *Nuevo Muntu* concept and incorporated them into my study. I interviewed Gonçalves at Tulane University and Allende through the Nashville Public Library. I have incorporated some of their reflections into my dissertation. The serendipity of my meeting the most famous Chilean novelist in Nashville was matched by my happening upon Nei Lopes's *Oiobomé* in a Brazilian bookstore, a case similar to my discovering *La isla bajo el mar* in Nashville. Luis introduced me to Llanos-Figueroa's novel, and I got the chance to review it in the *Afro-Hispanic Review*. I noticed a common focus on slavery and the Orishas and asked myself why this was the case, and what these novels add to literature and other fields, which led to the project as it stands.

I have had great privilege in coming to know these texts and individuals, and I hope that this foundation will encourage others to continue research along these lines. No previous study has ever compared and analyzed these texts, nor have they used these theories. There is very little written about all five works treated in this dissertation, which is most surprising in the case of the prolific Zapata Olivella, who started publishing in 1939 and continued writing fiction at least until 1993 (Vanderbilt Papers). Previous generations' loss in not studying his work will be our and future generation's gain, as I hope they will read *Changó* and note how it alters those texts that come before and after it. It is his best work, but far from the only one worthy of study. I hope scholars in the humanities, particularly literature and history, will continue to explore these novels and the forms and themes they embody. Latin Americanists will do well to use the African Diaspora as a basis for comparative study and collaborations with African American and Latino/a Studies Scholars; historians will do well to continue to question the narrative constructs of their discipline, particularly as it relates to orality; historical fiction's use of oral forms is particularly vital to slave history and will need much more study, though this orality imbues all historical fiction; Classicists will benefit from exploring the contemporary reception of tragedy; scholars of post-colonialism must continue to consider the limits of language in representing the other, a question that is central to writing about slavery; and other novels may be added to the subgenre I develop. These are only a few projects for which this dissertation is the beginning. The texts it compares make an important contribution to the literary traditions of the Americas because they show the foundational importance of Africa and its diaspora to the creation of the New World through syncretic beliefs, practices and identities, art and culture, and compelling oral traditions that change how history and historical fiction are written and read, making them not only history, not only novels, but dramas of memory.

Notes

¹ It was first published in French in 1988 (*¡Levántate!* 7).

² As I show in detail next chapter, Anthropologists like Fernando Ortiz and Lydia Cabrera and writers like Luis Palés Malos, Alejo Carpentier, and Nicolás Guillén began to incorporate these faiths into the Hispanic literary tradition. The Cuban Revolution initially brought them to the fore by founding the Department of Folklore to incorporate African elements into national art, but would later persecute them along with other black groups that were not controlled by the Revolution (De la Fuente, *Nation* 288–91). Carlos Moore describes the association of these religions with a sense of black pride in the 1970s (305–06), Guillermo Cabrera Infante published on them in *Lunes de Revolución* (1959–1961) and *Tres tristes tigres* (1966–1967) (Luis, *Lunes* 9, 97). The often spiritual narrative of Montejo, transcribed by Barnet, is a forerunner of the syncretic poetry of Nancy Morejón and the blossoming of Afro-Cuban religions in the arts of the Special period (1989 to today) (De la Fuente “New Afro-Cuban” 697). All these writers, except the Puerto Rican Palés, were Cuban. Zapata Olivella, his brother Juan, his sister Delia, and Jorge Artel (Lewis 63) were trailblazing authors in their combination of black pride, slave history, and African spiritual traditions in Colombia. In Brazil, Modernists like Mário de Andrade and, most visibly, Jorge Amado, drew inspiration from these faiths. With Abdias do Nascimento and the Teatro Experimental do Negro’s work, such as *Sortilégio* (1951, released 1957) they became associated with black, not only Brazilian, identity in writing, which flowered with the journal *Cadernos Negros* from the 1970s to the 1990s (Oliveira 9). The integrated US academe began, in the 1980s to take notice of spiritual practices in literature as part of various interpretations of Pan-Africanism, as is the case of Richard Jackson, Marvin Lewis, William Luis, and Edward Mullen.

CHAPTER 1

LITERARY HISTORY:

THE *NUEVO MUNTU* IN RELATION TO THE LITERARY TREATMENT OF SLAVERY AND THE POST-BOOM

The historical novels about slavery that this dissertation compares and analyzes occur at the intersection of two histories: the self-representation of Afro-Hispanic and Afro-Brazilian authors and the end of the Hispanic literary Boom (1959–1971). William Luis has shown that Zapata Olivella’s novel has commonalities with the Boom, such as broad scope, poetic language, and an emphasis on national identity (Introduction xiii). The literary representation of slaves can be traced to the very origins of the Americas, but abolitionist literature, anthropology, and Marxist projects made attempts to represent the history of the enslaved and the religious beliefs that shaped their worldview. The Boom occurred almost entirely in Spanish America and was a phenomenon primarily of novels and short stories written by white men.¹ The Boom was a coherent literary movement, and there was a sense of common purpose among its main proponents, but the 1971 debates over the Cuban Revolution and the role of marginalized groups in literature led to a fragmentation of political and aesthetic philosophies that are the result of greater diversity of politics, gender, race, and sexuality among Latin American artists that continues during the first decade of the new millennium.

This diversity has resulted in a new subgenre of the historical novel that I call “novels of the *Nuevo Muntu*,” which I will briefly define. They bear this name because of Zapata Olivella’s work to integrate the history of the African Diaspora into the greater narrative of the New World, expressed in Spanish (“Nuevo”) and Bantu (“Muntu”) and referring to the people who inhabit the land originally populated only by Native Americans. These novels incorporate the history of slavery into the greater narratives of the Conquest and the Age of Emancipation of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. They attempt to recreate the point of view of the enslaved, to rescue their voices from oblivion, since the slave narrative is, with the exception of the Cuban Juan Francisco Manzano, uncultivated in Latin America, unlike the United States. The novels of the *Nuevo Muntu* imitate oral discourses, since the enslaved lived in an oral, usually illiterate, world. This returns

history and literature to their common root in drama, the written representation of oral performance. By using the term “drama” I evoke the Greek tradition, just as Zapata Olivella repeatedly evokes the tradition of the tragic and epic in reference to his novel, as I will show. Of these two choices, I believe the tragedy to be the most appropriate approach to the novel. Nonetheless, the novels in this study pave the way for a comedic resolution to the traumas of history resulting from slavery. Comedic resolution in these works is related to a return of the repressed of a poetic Mother Africa, a lost, imagined origin which is a continued source of creativity today. The emerging vision of the Americas is international and diasporic in scope, as the novels’ plots reflect, and they are part of an interdisciplinary search for the origins of the Americas in slavery.

In Cuba, Colombia, and Brazil, one clearly sees the emergence of a black literature that does not exist in isolation, being written by only one demographic for itself (blacks for blacks, for example), but dialogues with previous literary traditions and has the influence of and on non-black authors. This is inevitable, since most blacks could not read until the twentieth century. My point of departure for what I mean by “black literature” and, therefore the “black authors” it creates, is Eduardo de Assis Duarte’s definition from *Literatura e Afrodescendência no Brasil* (2011) a ground-breaking anthology written in collaboration with Maria Nazareth Soares Fonseca.² I will return to it in my discussion of Afro-Brazil, but for now I would like to nuance its definitions and open them up to a trans-American context. Duarte considers Afro-Brazilian literature to be:

an Afrodescendant authorial voice, explicit or not in its discourse; Afro-Brazilian themes; linguistic constructions marked by Afro-Brazilianness in tone, rhythm, syntax, or meaning; a project of discursive transitivity, explicit or not, focused on the universe of reception; but, above all, a point of view or a place of enunciation that is politically and culturally identified with Afro-descendancy, as a beginning and end. Keeping in mind the fact that we are dealing with a concept in construction, let us start examining each of these elements with more care. (386)

“Afro-Brazilian themes” include the rescuing of slave history from distortion and oblivion (386). They focus on syncretic cultural and religious themes brought to the Americas from Africa in a way that is respectful toward them (386). Relation of race-based injustices and the struggle against them through disquieting story-telling are

another element (389–90). Duarte is careful to note that “nothing impedes black matters or subjects from appearing in the writings of whites” and, one presumes, any other group, but insists on the importance of the black author (387). I would add that non-black authors’ reception of black history, as in my analysis of a novel by Isabel Allende, only reaffirms the importance of the contemporary period, in which black authors are at the helm of writing on slavery and its relationship to the present, because their work impacts well-established non-black authors and other readers. For Duarte, authorship is a “discursive constant” that relates writing with lived experience. This “experience” tends to be associated with oral discourse and the sense that one represents a black community, frequently personified as the *griot* or African storyteller (389), a figure that I pay homage to next chapter in my interpretation of the *guardiero*, or gatekeeper, metaphor. I would argue, however, that the *guardiero* is a better metaphor, because he originates in the New World and controls borders, which is central to remembering the communities of the past. At a formal level, “proper” written discourse is revitalized by rhythms associated with popular speech and the singing voice of black speech (396). The point of view communicates a “discourse of difference” that attempts to “overcome the copying of European models and cultural assimilation” (394). Their language is marked by emphasis on terms of African origin and an attempt to subvert the country’s vocabulary of stereotypes that perpetuate racism, such as the sensual mulatta, the happy slave, or the noble patriarch, all rooted in plantation life (395). I would add that this rejection of Europe through innovative language, a tendency as old as Romantic literature, is limited by the very language that makes it possible, since Afro-Brazilian novelists are writing in Portuguese. These limits occur in works written in Spanish and English, colonial tongues that make narrative subversion possible but limit it, as I discuss in chapter four. For Duarte, the ideal audience of Afro-Brazilian texts is an Afro-Brazilian community of readers that these texts create (397). I, on the other hand, see the texts I analyze as speaking to a world audience, writing the African Diaspora into a new vision of New World history. What they communicate is a black consciousness that can be defined as a community bound by traumas rooted in slavery and discrimination, as well as the repeated denial of these very injustices by those in power, summed up in the term “racial democracy,” as I will detail. Afro-Brazilian literature lies simultaneously within and without the national canon of Brazilian letters

(399), something which I believe alters the imagined nation and also establishes a new imagined community, as I discuss in chapter three. This diasporic vision invites numerous collaborations between literary scholars and those in other fields and validates my comparison of what stands to be a seminal Afro-Brazilian text with a foundational Afro-Colombian novel. I then compare these, in my final chapter, to novels from Brazil, the United States, and Puerto Rico. Duarte's definition is useful, but if I am to apply it to Hispanic contexts, I must include historical and literary context.

Black authors and anti-racist discourse from slavery to the *Nuevo Muntu* Novels

The literary treatment of slavery in Latin America is different in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries than in its origins in the nineteenth century, though authors of both eras owe much to one another. Perhaps the primary difference is that the majority of novelists, playwrights, and poets interested in the history of slavery today imagine that they are writing the history of their own community, that of the African Diaspora. The largely, though not exclusively, colonial institution of slavery influenced the interlocking debates in literature over national independence, *indianismo*, and abolitionism of the nineteenth century. I will show how anthropology emerged as a vital source for understanding the indigenous and enslaved. It partly informed Western understandings of blacks and Native Americans and often coincided with Marxist revolutionary projects. These movements and their heirs were drastically altered by the US Civil Rights and Black Nationalist movements in the 1960s and 1970s, which led to various forms of African Diaspora Studies as a consolidated academic field. All of this history informs today's historical fiction on slavery. My focus is the African Diaspora in the Hispanic Caribbean and Brazil. I will begin with a discussion of Afro-Cubans in literature, one of the most studied aspects of Afro-Hispanic literature and a point of departure for many Afro-Hispanists, before proceeding to a discussion of Afro-Colombian and Afro-Brazilian literatures. My discussion will include references to the history of the treatment of indigenous peoples in literature as a point of comparison. To compare nineteenth and twentieth/twenty-first century literary depictions of slavery, I will allude to studies published after the nineteenth century that have altered how we see it today. These will, I hope, show how and

why Nuevo Muntu novels are innovative, but also place them in an inter-American literary tradition that focuses on the African Diaspora.

Before focusing on the narrative traditions of Cuba, Colombia, and Brazil, I must make an aside to note the slave narratives in English. Among the most famous is *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African. Written by Himself* (1789). Henry Louis Gates considers it the prototype for US slave narratives (*Classic* 9) and it is widely read and studied by scholars in the English tradition like Cathy Davidson, Vincent Carretta, and John Bugg, to name a few. But the reader must not forget the role of Latin America in the narrative. Not only was Equiano a Dominican slave before being liberated and coming to the United States, but he also traveled through South America, the Caribbean, Africa, Europe (including Turkey), and Antarctica. His foundational role in the US slave narrative tradition does not exclude him from the Latin American tradition in my view as a comparatist, and he can be seen as the first of many precursors to *Nuevo Muntu* fictions. Another case that has not received much attention from literary scholars is that of Mahommah G. Baquaqua (1830?–1857?), who escaped from Brazil to the United States, Haiti, and, eventually, Canada in the early nineteenth century, creating what would become one of the first inter-American slave narratives (Noel and Gunther; Lovejoy). Baquaqua's flight to Haiti confirms Luis's position (*Literary* 13) that the Haitian Revolution's triumph in 1804 altered the Americas forever, since it was the first free black republic, the second independent nation in the New World, and a symbol of hope for slaves and terror for owners at the success of a nation- or even continent-wide slave revolt (*Voices* 18), though only with the works of C.L.R. James and Alejo Carpentier would this event's importance be appreciated by intellectuals. Equiano and Baquaqua's narratives in English contextualize Manzano's narrative in Spanish, the only one in that language written by an enslaved man. To understand Manzano's role in writing the history of slavery and therefore historical fiction on the topic, one must understand his place in Cuban letters.

Afro-Cuba: The Epicenter of Afro-Latin American Thought, the Precursor to the Nuevo Muntu Novels

Afro-Cuban literature is the beginning of an imagined nation through historical fiction that includes black history, a process that would lead to the inter-American Muntu exemplified in the novels I study. Afro-Cuban literature involves oral traditions and the representation of the point of view of the enslaved. Cuban literature is heavily influenced by Afro-Caribbean music. Great works like *El contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar* (Fernando Ortiz, 1940), *Tres tristes tigres* (Guillermo Cabrera Infante, 1967), *De donde son los cantantes* (Severo Sarduy, 1967), and the *poemas-sones* of Nicolás Guillén (b.1902–d.1989) are but a few works that are structured around the lyrics and syntax, to name a few elements, of Cuban musical compositions with heavy African influences. The very first written poem in the nation’s history is the “Son de la Ma Teodora” (1580), which is based on the same musical form that Guillén would turn into the most iconic Afro-Hispanic poetry (Kutzinski, “Afro-Hispanic” 171). Even this remote origin has been accused of originating among Romantics imagining artistic origin myths for the nation from the 1830s onward (González Echevarría, *Cuban Fiestas* 47, 295). Alejo Carpentier’s *La música en Cuba* (1945) is a foundational study by a foundational novelist that dialogues with his novel *Ecue-Yambá-O* (1933) on the theme, and it reappears in myriad forms in his other works. What is new about the Nuevo Muntu fictions is novelists with a self-proclaimed Afro-Hispanic/Latino/Brazilian identity, attempting a rescue of the slaves’ point of view, and a diaspora consciousness. Nonetheless, the subgenre is indebted to the oral and musical tradition already evident in Cuban literature.

Manipulation of the subaltern for political ends is also evident in Cuban literature, which was influenced by the discourses of eugenics, miscegenation, and abolition. Britain’s first invasion of Havana brought with it the second slavery in 1762 and a second invasion in 1817 sought to abolish it altogether through an agreement with Ferdinand VII (Landers 222–23). Universal abolition would simultaneously expand British economic influence and present the empire as a beacon of enlightened democracy. Gertrudis de Avellaneda’s *Sab* (1841) dramatizes the relationship between regional independence and abolition. Luis argues that it is an abolitionist work (*Literary* 5), but I am not convinced. In this love story, the slave Sab serves as a

guide to Enrique, a British visitor to Cuba, who will not marry a young *criolla* because she does not have a large enough dowry (140). Despite his own feelings, the noble Sab swallows his feelings to see her happy. He wins the lottery and gives her the money for her dowry. The depictions of the “enlightened” Enrique are complicated, however, by his apparent notions of race. Sab is not only well-treated as a slave, but also his master comfortably sits with him to eat, something the racist British Enrique Otway cannot understand, reaffirming the latter’s role as a foreign invader in benevolent disguise (109). The end result appears to be a justification of the Cuban slave-owning class as fathers who know best for their people, including their infantilized slaves, a reason that Cuba should be left to its business. Literature’s role in defigining and redefining borders and sovereignty will be further discussed in chapters two and three, because Nuevo Muntu fictions use the African Diaspora as a means of moving beyond national boundaries and uniting the Americas in a search for universal liberty with roots in abolitionism.

Nineteenth century abolitionist discourse in Latin America did not always come from abroad, and it was, in Cuba, often intended to wrest power from slave owning oligarchies and put it ostensibly in the hands of the oppressed and their enlightened leaders. As Luis has argued regarding Cuba, abolitionist literature told the history that the history of the time could not, showing the violence perpetrated against Afro-Cubans (35). But it was always strategic: abolition was among the first nation-wide debates in both settings, even before their political independence, in part because it centered on two questions: who will lose his property with abolition and/or independence? And who will the citizens of these new nations be?

Luis is among the most important critics on abolitionist fiction in Cuba. Beginning with Juan Francisco Manzano, the critic’s *Literary Bondage* (1990) shows that abolitionist novels told the history that history of the time could not because of political reasons (2). He also shows how Manzano’s work influenced those that would come after him. Luis forms his narrative this way:

As with the anti-slavery narrative, the history of blacks and slaves in the slavery, postslavery, republic, and revolutionary period reflects the passage of time. What may be understood as synchronic periods separated by transformations in Cuban history taken together offer insight into a diachronic history of

blacks in Cuba. The continuous oppression of blacks has been interrupted by their struggles to gain liberation and political freedom. Thus a meta-historical reading of the lives of blacks in Cuba would inevitably recount over and over again a struggle for liberation, freedom, and self-determination. In literature, the antislavery narrative represents a moment in which the black theme asserts itself, but it always responds to the patterns of history. In history, the oppression and marginality of slaves and blacks and their rebellion against whites are evident especially in three distinct events—during the Aponte Conspiracy of 1812, the Latter Conspiracy of 1844, and the Race War of 1912—and propose to continue into the Cuban revolutionary period” (13).

After the Haitian Revolution ended the island’s dominance of the sugar market, Cuban plantations became the center of the slave and sugar trades. Aponte was an Oni-Shangó, or leader of an Afro-Catholic religious community, that attempted a failed independence movement would include full citizenship for all but failed in a brutal crack-down on blacks and mulattos. The Latter Conspiracy (Conspiración de la Escalera) of 1844 was an attempt to over-throw the pro-Slavery Spanish government in Cuba. The Cuban War of Independence lasted from 1895 to 1898 ended with the US invasion of the island. Slavery was abolished in 1886, but discrimination continued. In 1912, the Partido Independiente de Color, an all-black political party, was brutally murdered in what was called a “Guerra de Razas (Negros contra Blancos),” or Race War (Blacks against Whites) in the press (Luis, *Literary* 17). Luis claims that despite its rhetoric, the Cuban Revolution, even after its triumph in 1959 and its soul-searching after the 1980 Mariel Boatlift (19–22) allowed racist beliefs and practices to continue on the island and stifled a debate about them. Luis’s work is ground-breaking because it precedes Seymour Menton’s 1993 work on the New Historical Novel’s importance to the literary canon (see my section on the Boom and next chapter), and sadly prophetic because discrimination persists through the post-Soviet Special Period of 1989 to today (Fuente 317). The continuities of oppression and rebellion against it through literature follow the slave period allow Luis to connect the slave poet Manzano, the national novel *Cecilia Valdés*, post-slavery abolitionist Works by Calcagno and Morúa Delado, Republic-era works by Novás Calvo

and Carpentier, the *testimonio* and revolutionary fiction of post-1959 Cuba, and the reception of Cecilia Valdés by dissident and exile Reinaldo Arenas (*Literary* vi).

Abolitionism provided Spanish American literature with what are today considered black novelists. With the aid of the intellectuals of the Del Monte Circle, Cuban Manzano's *Autobiografía del esclavo poeta* (1835) is the oldest first-person text by a black writer in Latin America that literary scholars have treated as canonical (Luis, *Literary* 84). It was the basis for many abolitionist novels of the nineteenth century, including the national romance *Cecilia Valdés* (1882) by Cirilo Villaverde (Luis, *Literary* 100).³ Though there is a formal difference between autobiography and autobiographical notations, Jane Landers and Barry Robinson's *Slaves, Subjects, and Subversives* (2006) includes autobiographical accounts from slaves throughout Latin America, showing that slaves told their stories in legal and ecclesiastical documents. It is important to point out that these narratives were orally transmitted and written down by others, unlike Manzano's labored writing of his own account. Though he wrote his own autobiography, one must not forget that the text was manipulated by Cuban abolitionists, however, as Luis has shown, to give precedent to the most grotesque and violent aspects of his account and to "clarify" his language. The importance of his text in the Cuban literary canon cannot be overstated, as Luis demonstrates. He is the prototype of the recurring maroon figure, which would appear in Cuban Miguel Barnet and Esteban Montejo's *Biografía de un cimarrón* (1966).⁴ I will return to Luis's work to place the *Nuevo Muntu* novels in the context of narrative by black authors in Latin America.

Manzano's contemporary, Gabriel de la Concepción Valdés, or "Plácido" (b. 1809) also left his mark on Cuban letters, but it was through his poetry. He was executed in 1844 for his role in the Conspiración de la Escalera that year. Landers studies him as a focal point for Cuba's large population of free people of color before the Spanish crackdown on the population in the years leading up to 1844 (*Atlantic* 239). His impact on Cuban letters extends to the most celebrated literary figures, including José Lezama Lima, the (in)famous author of the novel *Paradiso* (1966). He lauded Plácido for his "cubanness" in his *Antología de la poesía cubana* (1965) (276–78), and Enrique Saíenz notes the autobiographical elements of his poetry (4), but Plácido did not cultivate literary narrative. He is an example of an understudied literary history in Cuba: the impact of

writers of color on the greater literary canon, which William Luis explores in his “En busca de la cubanidad” (391).

Diaspora consciousness links literature and history. The most iconic novel of the Cuban nation, *Cecilia Valdés*, is among the first novels of the literary canon to approach the issue of slavery from an inter-American perspective, though it does not display a diaspora consciousness like *Nuevo Muntu* novels. It was first published in 1839, but its final version appeared published in New York in 1882 and has heavily influenced by his struggle for Cuban independence (Lazo xi).³ This context gave Villaverde the distance to examine the issue of slavery with new eyes. Written at roughly the same place and time, Martí’s “Nuestra América” (1892) advocates equal citizenship for all Cubans, arguing against eugenics, the dominant view of race at the time. However, Brazil is left out of these texts’ scopes, which would be revised in *Changó* and Brazilian Nei Lopes’s *Oiobomé: A epopeia de uma nação* (2010).

Another precursor to *Nuevo Muntu* authors is the literary prose of Cuban journalist and politician Martín Morúa Delgado (1856–1910), who wrote the novels *Sofía* (1891) and *La familia Unzuánzu* (1901). Luis’s *Literary Bondage* shows that Morúa Delgado, the son of an enslaved woman, wrote these texts in dialogue with black (Manzano) and non-black literary precursors (Villaverde and Francisco Calgagno) (146), anticipating Zapata Olivella’s and Gonçalves’s texts, in which self-identified black authors are among those remembering slavery in their fiction. He is also an inconsistent forebear of diaspora consciousness. As Luis puts it, “Although Morúa fought for separatism, freedom, and justice for blacks, his ideas changed after the emancipation of slaves in 1886. After that historic moment, he believed that blacks had obtained equal status to whites and began to press for unity among the Cuban people” (*Literary* 136). This change in position eventually led to a law known as the Morúa Amendment of the 1902 Republican Electoral Law, which followed the 1898 US Invasion (159). The Amendment barred the formation of political groups along racial lines. This would be used in 1912 in the violent government suppression of the Partido Independiente de Color (159). His changing political views are evident in his historical fiction about slavery. *Sofía* is an attempt to revise perceived flaws in the final version of *Cecilia Valdés*. He criticized its lack of a clear moral ending (Luis, *Literary* 142). He revisits the theme of

incest, which reappears in *Changó* and *La isla bajo el mar*, as well as the practice of “mejorar la raza” (improving the race) by having a child with someone of lighter skin and higher status (143). Both novels end with murder at the hands of a spurned black lover who goes free (143). The *simpático* figure Gonzaga in the novel is a precursor to the non-black *ekobios* (brothers) who fight for justice alongside African Descendants in today’s historical fiction (145). Luis claims that Gonzaga and Fidelio are personae of Morúa himself, a tendency of using historical fiction as self-writing (152). African oral traditions are evident in *Sofía* in the form of secretive black *ñáñigo* societies that were believed to be criminal and sometimes were (145). Liberato, the spurned lover who kills his master, is a *ñáñigo* and a *cimarrón* (145), showing that freedom from slavery comes from non-Western sources as well as Enlightenment ideals. Perhaps to make the primarily white audience identify with the protagonist, *Sofía*, the protagonist, is not poor and mulata but rich and white. She is kidnapped to show the arbitrariness and injustice of the slave system. This narrative strategy was also used in the Brazilian novel *A escrava Isaura* (1875) and later in Nicolás Guillén’s *El diario que a diario* (1979). Morúa Delgado depicts repeated rapes in the novel precede those depicted today, showing graphic examples of the gendered nature of slavery and its role as a perverse, violent origin of the Americas.

La familia Unzuánzu shares many characters with the previous novel, but its plot is not a continuation of it, and it includes autobiographical elements (Luis, *Literary* 151). Morúa was outed as a separatist involved in a military uprising and so re-wrote his past through this novel (152). Its focus is social progress through literacy, education, and journalism (152), means of advancement that would return in twenty-first century texts on slavery. But Morúa seems to be blatantly presenting these as a policing mechanism for a population that seemed threatening to the dominant culture (152). Morúa himself was more conservative in his outlook, and his time in the United States changed his perspective on Cuba, as was the case of Villaverde and all the authors studied here, necessitating a look beyond national canons. Morúa notes that oppression of Afro-Cubans continued after emancipation, but he tends to blame blacks themselves (155). Like Manzano and many of the Brazilian authors discussed here, it is anachronistic to believe that Morúa, a mulatto, always identifies with those he saw as “black,” and there is evidence that he saw them as a threat to order (Luis, *Literary* 160). Only with the *Nuevo*

Muntu do black authors identify with the diaspora, seeking a history of it that does not continue this distance between an author who sees himself as a special kind of black, different from the slaves he sees as inferior.

As is evident in *Sab*, an outgrowth of colonialism, “scientific” racism, affected the representation of slavery in nineteenth century Cuba and the rest of Latin America. Lamarck and Spencer were widely read in Latin America, and they provided a roadmap for many thinkers interested in making their nations “advance” (Katerí 21; Eakin 151). Their theories posit that the peoples of Africa and Latin America are “ill” due to geographic and genetic reasons considered spurious today. With the rise of eugenics in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, most scholars and politicians in Cuba viewed African people, genetic heritage, and cultures as a liability to either be ignored or “solved” (Luis, “En busca” 391)). For example, as Henry Louis Gates shows, Cuban social scientists sought ways to explain away the darkness of Independence War hero Antonio Maceo’s skin. The impact of eugenics in the creation of the social sciences and the birth of anthropology as a field led to a fascination in Cuban academies with African folklore and religious practices, which were initially treated as an exotic pathology, though this would come to change.

In both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the representation of Africans and the indigenous owes much to the new fields of anthropology and the study of folklore. Romanticism (re)turned academics’ eyes to the oral tales and songs of humble people of the new nations in search of “authentic” cultures, though popular voices were the original authors of the Hispanic and Lusophone traditions’ Early Modern *cantigas* and *romances*. González Echevarría shows the transition from “scientific” (*Myth* 93) writings of US and European travel writers to anthropologists’ quest for the voice of those excluded from full citizenship in the Latin American republics (*Myth* 152). *Nuevo Muntu* novels likewise draw on anthropology to approximate marginalized oral discourses.

The European *avant garde* movements of the pre-World War II period, which shared many exchanges with anthropology and Latin American *modernismo*, *negrismo*, and Négritude, led to new forms to remember slavery. Sigmund Freud’s *Totem and Taboo* (1912) and Oswald Spengler’s *The Decline of the West* (1918, 1922) tempered and at times rejected Eurocentrism and inspired interest in the “primitive”

cultures of Africa. This would inspire poets and other authors in Latin America to focus on indigenous and African aspects of their home cultures that had previously been dismissed or treated liabilities. This led to a renewed interest in previous anthropological work as well as new discoveries. Expanding their focus to the diaspora, the revolutionary writers of the Pan-African Négritude movement (e.g., Martinican Aimé Césaire, Senegalese Leopold Senghor, and Léon Damas of French Guyana) (Duarte 16) and the Trotskyite and Pan-Africanist C.L.R. James of Trinidad envisioned black history as a revolutionary struggle. The latter's non-fiction *The Black Jacobins* (1938), along with the local Haitian Indigenism Movement, rescued the Haitian Revolution from its nineteenth century depiction as a barbaric disaster and worst case scenario for slaveholders. James reevaluated its heroes as freedom fighters, an image Allende, Carpentier, Gonçalves, Lopes, and Zapata Olivella would continue to revise and promote. Frantz Fanon would continue the Pan-African and post-colonial thought of Négritude in the African context, heartened by the Cuban Revolution and the support of socialist and promoter of black literature Jean-Paul Sartre, who advocated the end of the African colonies and racism that began with slavery.

Arguably, Alejo Carpentier is the single most important figure of the Afro-Cuban movement as it relates to historical fiction and literary prose in general. Roberto González Echevarría shows in his *Alejo Carpentier, el peregrino en su patria* (1993) that the author attempted to use historical fiction about the enslaved and syncretic religious beliefs rooted in the oral tradition of the island to create a uniquely Latin American culture (39).

González Echevarría describes his oeuvre as a search for a new identity through literary language:

Here, however, what is offered is the residue of the repeated and strung-out returns to establish that foundation and institute a history—both a personal history and a broader history within which it will be harmoniously set. Carpentier's choice of the narrative, and more specifically of the historical narrative, appears to result from this desire, as do his historical works, such as *La música en Cuba*. In a sense, as in *The Lost Steps*, Carpentier's entire literary enterprise issues from the desire to seize upon that moment of origination from which history and the history of the self begin simultaneously—a moment from

which both language and history will start, thus the foundation of a symbolic code devoid of temporal or spatial gaps. (31–32).

This quote shows Carpentier's project as a precursor to many of the elements of *Nuevo Muntu* historical novels. First, it makes evident Carpentier's dialogue with African oral traditions. An ethnomusicological standard, *La música en Cuba* (1946) is a nonfiction study on the oral musical and religious traditions of the island. It was preceded by his novel *¡Ecué-Yamba-O!* (1933). Though the novel has not received the praise of his later works, it dramatizes the information presented in the later study, showing that literary and historical presentations of the past are linguistic structures that not only inform but move the reader. He presented these traditions as a means of rupture with a Western tradition that was commonly viewed as decadent since the publication of German historian Oswald Spengler's *The Decline of the West* (1918, 1922), which was translated and circulated in Latin America by Spaniard José Ortega y Gasset's foundational journal *Occidente* (González Echevarría, *El peregrino* 69). Carpentier's personal identification with Cuba was also frequently under question due to his twenty years spent in France and his accent (39), and his constant travels through Haiti, Venezuela, and Mexico, to name a few key examples, no doubt resulted in new questions of identity. This not only made his vision of the African Diaspora international in scope, as is evident in his masterpiece *El reino de este mundo* (1949), but it also made his composition of historical fiction a therapeutic act of self-writing. All of these aspects of his writing—orality, Latin American identity, travel and community formation beyond the nation, historical fiction as therapy—would reappear in Zapata Olivella's novel, which makes constant allusions to the Cuban author. However, the most widely discussed concept of Carpentier's, *lo real maravilloso* (also known as Magical Realism) is based on the impossibility of Carpentier's own literary project. In the aforementioned works, he attempts to describe Afro-Cubans, the supposed font of *cubanidad*, from within their magical, non-Western point of view (belief in speaking with the dead, for example), but he only focuses on selective aspects of African culture. For *lo real maravilloso* to occur, the writer of the novel must be in the position of ethnographer or other Westerner coming in contact with a reality that does not conform to his own, Western, perspective—for example, she or he must believe that the dead do not speak through the living. This cultural gap at the heart of

his historical fiction and his works in dialogue with it are apparent to the twenty-first century Africanist. He is a white, erudite man journeying down the Orinoco in his semi-autobiographical *Los pasos perdidos* (1953) to study a culture that fills a psychological and scholarly need for him yet is implicitly distant from him. His oeuvre, unlike Zapata Olivella and Gonçalves's, is not one in which self-identified black authors are using historical fiction about slavery to include the diaspora in the history of the Americas. This said, one must not exaggerate the difference between Carpentier and the authors in this study. Zapata Olivella and Gonçalves are both formed in a Western academic tradition. They live in a written world and have been formed by university educations. They are remote from the slaves they depict, even when adopting the enslaved's point of view, and that simultaneous distance and contact evokes both poetic creativity and psychological processes as it did for Carpentier. This is why he and the *negrista* movement he represents are important precursors to the *Nuevo Muntu* fictions.

A precursor to Carpentier, Fernando Ortiz, made the leap from a eugenicist criminologist to one of the most important figures in Afro-Cuban studies, as his students' work attests. He coined the term "afro-cubano" in his *Los negros brujos* (1906) (Santí 36). Ortiz was interested in democratic reform for all Cubans and can be seen as the direct heir to the abolitionist discourse of the nineteenth century. His *Contrapunteo* (1940) inherited the abolitionist praise of tobacco production over that of slave-intensive sugar (Aramburu 21). His work records important aspects of Afro-Caribbean spiritual practices and tales of slave uprisings, but he does so from a sympathetic, often laudatory point of view. He disparages then preeminent anthropologist Melville J. Herskovits's use of the term "acculturation," implying the destruction of one culture by another, and praises Cuba's "transculturation" of African and European elements (414). He advocates a nation based on the metaphor of an *ajíaco*, a never-ending Cuban stew of incongruous ingredients (Pérez Firmat 9). This new *mestizo* myth is not a "whitening" project in the way "marrying up" was for mulattas during the colonial and eugenics period. It is an opening to a combination of practices and beliefs in the hopes of creating an entirely new community with new cultural forms.

Ortíz's student, Lydia Cabrera, exemplifies transculturation in her *El Monte* (1954), a meticulous attempt at faithfully gathering the complex oral traditions of the Orishas in Cuba, not only treating her speakers with deference, but being so effective in her work that *santeros* use her text as training materials for new initiates (Dianteill and Swearingen 273). This text shows that dialogues between Western academics and previously marginalized, largely oral groups can lead to narrative innovation in literature (what text better represents a wilderness than the almost impenetrable narrative chaos of the first half of her text?) and unveils an alternative oral canon that existed at the margins of literature (7–287).

Another student of Ortiz, Miguel Barnet, wrote *Biografía de un cimarrón* (1966), a linear history of slavery, abolition and national independence told by a 104-year-old slave, Esteban Montejo. However, like the abolitionists before him, Barnet's political motivations are suspect, given his text's appropriation as the face of the Cuban Revolution, and he is in the problematic role of mediator (Skłodowska 56). One wonders what Montejo would say in Barnet's absence, but Barnet's text allows that question to be asked at all, another triumph of the Revolution: directly linking the struggle to liberate Africans from slavery with the liberation projects of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. I will return to Barnet and Montejo's text in the first chapter, since he is central to my notion of *Nuevo Muntu* historical novels. Retamar and John Beverley do not consider it a novel, and Cabrera's text is not read as a novel either, but for me they are the prototypes of *Changó* and *Defeito* because they attempt to unite African oral traditions with the history of slavery, though there was still no African Diaspora Studies departments as there are today, nor was there racial integration in academia. Early *Nuevo Muntu* historical novel authors like Cabrera and Barnet are mediators of the formerly enslaved, but they are attempting to listen to them in a way that finds something within the mediators themselves that the enslaved and marginalized evoke, a pattern continued in Zapata Olivella and Gonçalves's novels.

Paralleling developments in psychology and anthropology, poetry, drama, and novels of the 1930s were a source of voice of Africans and the indigenous. Closest to the aforementioned anthropological studies and in dialogue with Cuban letters is the *negrismo* practiced by Puerto Rican Luis Palés Matos. His *Tuntún de pasa y grifería* (1937), is syncretic in form and content. Palés Matos was not black, so critic Richard Jackson dismisses him as racist (42). The Puerto Rican's sensual *islas-mulatas*, if taken out of context, can be seen as just sexist, racist, and patronizing as stereotypes rooted in the plantation. However, *Tuntún*'s subversion of racial norms at the time is its satire of the "black within" of the Puerto Rican elite. Puerto Rican *insularistas* categorically denied the influence of Africa in Puerto Rican culture, an expression of "white" families that conveniently forgot their black or *mulata* ancestors (Ríos Ávila 153). This satirical textual transculturation precedes Ortiz's later work. It also anticipates Rosario Ferré's denouncement of the Puerto Rican elite's racism in *Maldito amor y otros cuentos* (1986), which includes stories closely related to *Nuevo Muntu* texts, which focuses on the plantation and its echoes from Spanish colonialism to the Estado Libre Asociado. Though a white woman of the Puerto Rican elite, Ferré criticizes it from within and anticipates Isabel Allende's historical revisionism in *La isla bajo el mar*, showing that black authors and the history of slavery have had a significant impact on readers and authors of a wide variety of backgrounds.

Though a one-time advocate of a "mulatto" Cuban nation, on the US mainland, the Puerto Rican Arturo Schomburg (1874–1938) was a pioneer in envisioning an African Diaspora with its own unique history. Miriam Jiménez Román and Juan Flores hail him as the most "illustrious and self-conscious" Afro-Latino in the United States (7). Schomburg was an active part of the Harlem Renaissance, a teacher, archivist and an advocate for the creation of African and African American Studies as a discipline as early as 1913 (67). He was among the first to break away from Martí's *cubano mestizo* model of anti-racism in favor of a Pan-African vision that valued the African Diaspora as a transnational community united in its struggle for cultural and political freedom. He precedes Négritude in this Pan-African diasporic vision of history.

Cuba is where a diasporic black consciousness emerged in Latin America. The beginning of an Afro-Cuban consciousness in the press is the Partido Independiente de Color's newspaper *Previsión* in 1910 under the

activist Evaristo Estenoz (*La Jiribilla*, n.pag.). The beginning of a diasporic black consciousness in Cuba is Gustavo Urrutia's literary supplement to the newspaper *Ideales* (1928–1931), which was founded, partly, in response to the Ku Klux Klan's installation in Camagüey, Cuba (Kutzinski, "Afro-Hispanic" 170). This publication was a forum for *negristas* such as Palés, translations of W.E.B. DuBois and Langston Hughes, and the black poetry of Nicolás Guillén (170). The latter is a direct link between the Harlem Renaissance, the Afro-Cuban Movement, and Marxist liberation projects. Though Guillén's understanding of Afro-Cuba owed much to anthropological research and not always lived experience, his early "black" poems have been widely anthologized, so much so that Luis Iñigo Madrigal argues that his treatment as a "black poet" has limited his reception and that concerns specific to Afro-Cuba do not return in his career after the 1930s (*Summa* 16). I disagree—in fact, his later work as "Poet of the Revolution" shows him revisiting the history of slavery in *El diario que a diario* (1972) after the triumph of the Revolution. This series of *microcuentos* remind Cubans of the history of slavery. One could read these as one and the same as the sprawling *Changó* and *Um defeito de cor*—a resorting to narrative extremes in a scramble to reconstruct stories that were largely left untold in history and literature classes and force what might otherwise be an apathetic reader to pay attention. This is an example of how literary studies can benefit from (hi)stories that had previously been marginalized from its canon—it alters how canonical writers are interpreted in light of the need to revisit slavery in literature.

The nature of literature itself was altered by the *testimonio* debates centered at Cuba's Casa de las Americas, and Barnet and Montejos's was the first of these. I have already mentioned some reasons his text is important, including a black author telling the history of slavery, though he is mediated by a non-black, lettered individual. The *testimonio Reyita* (1996) by Daisy Rubiera Castillo and her mother, Reyita, note the repeated ignoring of women's points of view in Cuban literature, particularly those of the enslaved, one of whom was Reyita's mother. This gendered revisionism can be seen as beginning with Nancy Morejón's revisionist poem "Mujer negra" (1976), though it does not take narrative form until Reyita's narrative. Morejón has since taken up the mantle of Afro-Cuban dissidence in what she calls "cimarronaje cultural" (cultural marronage) indicating her inspiration in the rebellious slaves of the past as well as her solidarity with blacks everywhere (Fernandes

160). This has created a tense relationship with the Cuban government, but it indicates that, since the Boom, there is a greater awareness of the African Diaspora on the part of authors and a greater interest in the history of slavery. This moment benefits from feminist interventions, which fill in the gaps of masculinist texts of the past, exemplified by Montejo and Barnet's blind spots.

Barnet and Montejo's text had a huge impact on Cuban Revolutionary author César Leante, who wrote *Los guerrilleros negros* (1976) (Luis, *Literary* 218). This historical fiction about maroons ties slave revolts to the Cuban Revolution in order to show that it has an autochthonous, non-Western origin that continues through national independence struggles, as opposed to coming solely from Enlightenment ideals. Its content is in line with a combination of nationalism, Marxism, and political censorship under Castro (Luis, *Literary* 218–19). Similar censorship extended to Afro-Catholic religions under the atheist regime, so the slave rebels do not speak with the dead or return to Africa in death, as in the *Nuevo Muntu* texts, but instead their only recourse is military action (Luis, *Literary* 228).

Leante's text is a far cry from Manuel "Manolo" Granados's controversial *Adire y el tiempo roto* (1967), which describes in dynamic, poetic prose the struggles of Afro-Cubans. Despite Granados's initial loyalty to the Revolution, which was tempered by a critical evaluation of the regime (Martínez-Echázabal 11), the Casa de las Américas first granted the novel its prestigious award, attempted to take it away, then ensured that he was ignored by literary critics (Martínez-Echázabal 9). His counter-narrative to the Revolution's official history, which tells the life of local blacks and Haitians on the island, indicates that Luis's claim that discrimination rooted in slavery continues to affect the themes Cuban writers treat is valid today. Granados signed a public letter with ten other intellectuals in 1991 demanding democratic reforms on the island and went into exile in Paris (Martínez-Echázabal 10). He died there in 1998, indicating that the struggle for liberty throughout the Americas continues (10). Luis and Lourdes Martínez-Echázabal have begun the work of revising Granados's place in the literary canon through a special issue of the *Afro-Hispanic Review* (2005), granting critical attention to an author that, like those of the *Nuevo Muntu*, attempts to create a nuanced representation of Afro-Latin American subjects. Interestingly, the issue opens with a Cuban critic who is relieved that the only black novelist

on the island is Morúa Delgado, and that he is only great because his law helped crack down on perceived black rebellion in 1912. Without him, the critic said, Cuba would be another Haiti, which for the speaker was unconscionable (Martínez-Echázabal 9). In this and other ways, the Haitian Revolution is alive today and so are the ramifications of slavery.

Despite the shortcomings of *castrismo*, Marxism had an impact far beyond the Cuban Revolution in Latin America, which would lead to the *Nuevo Muntu*'s frequent inclusion of indigenous history in African Diaspora history. In countries with large indigenous populations, thinkers like José Carlos Mariátegui, Miguel Ángel Asturias, and, later, Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre and Ciro Alegría adapted Marxism to envision revolutionary models for their societies. Mariátegui was active in Italian Socialism in the early 1920s before returning to his native Peru and adapting Marxist economic and cultural theory to Peruvian issues, particularly as it regarded the oppressed indigenous masses. Among his achievements are the cultural and political journal *Amauta* (est. 1926) and his *Siete ensayos de interpretación de la realidad peruana* (1928). His comrade Haya de la Torre established the Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana (APRA) in 1924, as defined in his speech "The APRA" (23 April 1931). This was, in part, an attempt to wrest the representation of indigenous Peruvians from the elite *indigenistas* who often romanticized classical Inca culture during the 1920s while disparaging contemporary Native Peruvians (De la Cadena 44). This colonial structure was being altered by United States-centered multinational oil companies. The contemporaneous *Generación del 20* in Guatemala included Miguel Ángel Asturias, who adjusted Marxist opposition to oppression (*El señor presidente*, 1946) with a celebration of indigenous culture. He translated the sacred Mayan text, *Popol Wuh* (1965) and wrote a novel on the cultural and political resistance to capitalism by Gaspar Ilom and his indigenous followers, *Hombres de maíz* (1949), using a culturally syncretic worldview not unlike *Changó*. His *Mulata de tal* (1963) links eroticism, associated with the eponymous mulatta, with the apocalyptic destruction of oppressive structures, which I will discuss in my reading of *Changó* in chapter 4. Asturias won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1967 and gained great visibility for Latin America during the Boom. I will soon describe this period in more detail. One outcome of this focus on the oppressed is visions of indigenous-African collaboration in a

struggle for the full citizenship denied by previous empires and nations. For example, *aprista* Ciro Alegría helped Zapata Olivella publish his first novel, *Tierra mojada* (1947), which depicts the plight of indigenous peasants at the hands of corrupt *gamonales*. A continuation of this, Zapata Olivella's *Changó* and *¡Levántate mulato!* advocate this solidarity and show him searching for the silenced *zambo* origins of the Americas that flesh out the blind spots of nationalist *mestizo* myths like Freyre's and Vasconcellos's. Nei Lopes would repeat this *zambo* model of transculturation in his *Oiobomé*, which praises the Cuban Revolution's triumph over racism and imagines it would be an ally with his imaginary republic, founded in the Amazon in the late eighteenth century. *Oiobomé* would not be an ally of Marxist thinker of the Mexican Revolution José de Vasconcelos's plan for the Amazon, a utopia intended to "breed out" the "weaker" races that inhabit *Oiobomé* (31). Lopes's revisionism owes as much to Marxism as to Diaspora consciousness, though it conflicts with Carlos Moore and Alejandro de la Fuente's studies on continued racism in historical Cuba. One might say that his Cuba is what Cuba should have achieved in terms of racial equality but could or did not.

At this point it should be clear that Afro-Cuban literature is an important source of the discourses that make *Nuevo Muntu* novels what they are.⁵ Edward Mullen traces the study of Afro-Hispanic letters to Afro-Cuban poetry, but notes its flourishing in the 1970s (435). Defining moments in this trajectory are, for him, the 1978 Pan-African Congress in Cali, which Manuel Zapata Olivella was central to organizing (Vanderbilt Papers) and the foundation of the *Afro-Hispanic Review* in 1982 (435–36). These created an academic framework for Afro-Hispanic studies that circumscribed a discreet category for them and moved beyond national identity as a limit to studying slavery and the African Diaspora. Though Cuba, from abolitionism to *negrismo* to the Revolution, has been heavily influential on the *Nuevo Muntu* subgenre, let us turn now to the unique context of Colombia and its influence on how slavery is imagined in Zapata Olivella's work.

Afro-Colombia

The imagination of the Colombian nation begins officially with the question of Cuban Slavery, one justification, among many, for independence that was always a white *criollo* oligarchy, not a nation where blacks have a meaningful voice in history or literature. Bolívar's betrayal of the Haitian Revolution's ideals, treated in my analysis of *Changó* in chapter 3, is symbolic of Latin America's repeated betrayals of blacks. The *Nuevo Muntu* novels seek to remedy this historical whitening project, but it has important precursors in Candelario Obeso and Jorge Artel, whose poetry and theater revised Colombian history and enhanced literature. But they remained limited to a national scope.

During the early nineteenth century wars of independence, literary treatment of the enslaved is directly related to abolition and national liberation. Latin American liberator Simón Bolívar's "Carta de Jamaica" (1815), sometimes treated as a Latin American Declaration of Independence, cites Bartolomé de las Casas's *Brevísima relación de las atrocidades de las Indias* (1552) as an example of three hundred years of oppression by the Spaniards in the New World (11). The oppression of native peoples is used as a justification for placing an "enlightened" class into power, which itself was never enslaved and had benefitted from colonial institutions. This would be continued by Rodó and others of the Lettered City. One could see this rhetoric as an example of nineteenth century *indianismo*, which used romantic imagery (in this case the trope of *indio* as victim of Spaniards, not enlightened *criollos*) to justify the imposition of a new ruling elite. African slavery in Cuba and Puerto Rico serve the same function in the letter, providing examples of "millones de almas" (millions of souls) who had been abused by the Spaniards, thus justifying the independence of Gran Colombia (12). The silences in Bolívar's text would be filled by Manuel Zapata Olivella in *Changó* and *¡Levántate, mulato!* (1990) in the twentieth century. What Bolívar does not include in his letter is that his struggle was deeply indebted to the aid of the military of a newly independent Haiti, and there is no condemnation of the French atrocities there. Bolívar negotiated with slaveholders upon independence, and thus *de jure* slavery continued in the Colombian Republic until 1851. The total lack of black or indigenous leadership in these new Hispanic republics allowed for a new, silent slavery to continue for those who were already poor and of low

status during the Colonial Era, though rhetorical idealizations of them continued in literature, as in *Sab*. In the case of the indigenous, it was often part of a project to legitimize independence movements by associating the *indio* with elite whites and mestizos born in the colonies so that both opposed the imposition of the Spanish (Morales 184–85) or the Portuguese (Bosi 138–39), depending on the context of the ideological struggle. Blacks were often depicted in ways that revealed the author’s position on key issues, such as slavery, abolition, and eugenics.

Afro-Colombians were problematically present in Colombian letters from their colonial origins, a fact of which Zapata Olivella is aware. The writings of Saint Peter Claver (1581–1684), the priest and humanitarian, also provide valuable information on the enslaved and the Catholic roots of abolitionism, which can be further traced back to Bartolomé de las Casas’s *Brevísima relación*. Zapata Olivella reevaluates the saint’s contribution to Afro-Colombians in ¡*Levántate!*!. The author shows that he was merciful and benevolent to the enslaved, his evangelization of them destroyed African and syncretic religious traditions in Cartagena (128). Had his religious fervor not been so great, says the author, Cartagena would still have a thriving syncretic culture akin to Bahia, Haiti, or Cuba (37). The traveler Alexander von Humboldt wrote on Afro-Columbians of the Río Magdalena (145). In a note in his papers, Zapata Olivella recalls that there are slaves in Jorge Isaacs’s *María* (1867), widely considered the first Colombian novel, though Raymond Williams shows that this was not the case (Williams, *Novela* 581). However, despite Isaacs’s paternalist vision of blacks, the transition from slavery to “freedom” after abolition in Colombia in many ways made life more difficult for Afro-Colombians, since they were often expelled from the plantations where they worked and given no economic alternative (¡*Levántate!* 78).

These difficult circumstances explain the reduced numbers of Afro-Colombian authors that have been recognized by the academe. The first Afro-Colombian author was the poet and playwright Candelario Obeso (1849–1884). The second to be recognized was the *vanguardista* Jorge Artel (1909–1994). Critic Carlos Jáuregui argues that Obeso’s *Cantos populares de mi tierra* (1877) expresses his disillusion with the dominant paternalist and white supremacist nationalist discourse and subverts the purist language of Bogotá’s elites

through the language of romanticism (578, 584). Using the latter code, he rescues the voices of marginalized blacks from the slave period through a popular, folkloric poetry. Prescott (“Evaluando,” 553) has noted his meager reception by Latin Americanists abroad. This lack of critical interest inside and outside of Colombia is less present in the case of poets Artel and Zapata Olivella’s brother, Juan Zapata Olivella (Prescott, “Evaluando” 553). The Constitution of 1991 led to Artel’s works being taught in schools, though Zapata Olivella already knew him personally as a student and through his work (*¡Levántate!* 158).

In 2010, Afro-Colombianist Graciela Maglia made an important step in promoting Afro-Colombians Obeso and Artel with her critical edition of their selected works. She states that

we propose the publication of a selected works by two Afro-Colombian poets whose works have an indubitable artistic value, but that that also have anthropological and ethnological value, since they register the voice of the Caribbean region as well as that of the Afro-descendant minority that has added to the nation’s profile the flavor, the color, and the accents, of a world that is as much ours as the cumbia, Carnival, mapalé, and Magical Realism. (n.pag.)

She pays homage to Lawrence Prescott, the first US critic to dedicate a scholarly book to Obeso, and to Jáuregui, but she breaks with them by focusing more on the aesthetic value of the texts than their analyses, which highlight the political value of this precursor to Afro-Colombian identity (18). Like Jáuregui, she contextualizes the works historically and literarily. She notes Obeso’s romantic homages to the Afro-Caribbean *bogas* who carried people across the Mompox River as well as the maroons that are central figures of Afro-Latin American letters (22). Silvia María Valero’s study traces the reception of Obeso in Colombia, since he is in her estimation the only Afro-Colombian to remain in the national canon throughout the twentieth century, though often as a token that confirms racist stereotypes and shifting national ideologies influenced by elections and political upheaval (7, 31). David Ernesto Peñas Galindo describes the geography of the region Obeso depicts in his poetry and contextualizes his work culturally (46). Mompox, since its isolation after economic forces caused mass emigration to Barranquilla, has become a living museum of Obeso’s time, and his tomb is there (Maglia 130). It has been a United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization World

Heritage Site since 1995 (53), a monument to the consecrated poet. The marginalized *boga* Obeso memorialized was actually an Afro-Colombian whose constant movement made him impossible to enslave. Self-governing maroon/Native American/*zambo* communities along the Mompo River were influential in the lives of the *bogas*, so they can be seen as a symbol of relative freedom (Peñas Galindo 46). Obeso's *bogas* are important precursors to the Nuevo Muntu's *Zambo* vision for the Americas. Peñas corrects misinterpretations of Obeso as a poet who depicts slave life, since he does not write specifically about the enslaved, and to note that the *boga* works on the river, not the sea. Some readers interpret the maritime poem "Canción del boga ausente" as a realistic depiction of their lives, when it is actually a romantic depiction of individuals alone in sublime nature (52). Peñas is also quick to admonish those who consider Obeso a "precursor of 'black poetry.'" Actually, the clear intention of the poet, above racial or racial revindications, is centered on exalting the value of the region's popular culture. . . ." (51). Peña's concern responds to the stereotyped reception that Valero describes, but I disagree that one must abandon concerns of the African Diaspora when treating Obeso. As with Manzano, one must take into account what "race" meant to him and his contemporaries. Obeso could not have known about his place in the African Diaspora, that a black literature would emerge throughout the Americas over the course of the twentieth century, or that Zapata Olivella would go beyond the national canon to show the diaspora's centrality to forming the New World. On the other hand, Linguist José Alejandro Correa notes that, despite Obeso's use of romantic literary conventions, his *Cantos populares* predate modern linguistics in their record of phonetic aspects of Caribbean Spanish and its clear African and Andalusian influences (55). His study notes the heavy impact of orality in Obeso's poetry, and this orality is of central importance to Nuevo Muntu fictions today.

Maglia's book links Obeso with the other important figure of Afro-Colombian letters before Zapata Olivella. She transitions from Obeso to Artel with photographs, literally giving visibility to frequently overlooked authors. First, she depicts the Mompo Obeso may have known (129–40). In the case of Artel, he is photographed repeatedly singing or reciting his poetry orally (142–43, 146). He appears in the company of his *avant-garde* colleagues Luis Palés Matos and Nicolás Guillén (144, 147). Photos of Cartagena are interspersed

to emphasize his impact on the city. The section opens with a poetic tribute from contemporary Afro-Colombian poet Petro Blas Julio Romero (155). Like Zapata Olivella would later do, Artel's *Tambores en la noche* (1940) uses a *vanguardista*, *negrista* aesthetic to link the cultures and histories of the Caribbean, including Colombia and the Antilles (157). Unlike Obeso, the *negrista* movement was a cultural space where Artel could express pride in being black, as in his poem "Negro soy": "Negro soy desde hace muchos siglos, / Poeta de mi raza, heredé su dolor / Y la emoción que digo ha de ser pura / En el bronco son del grito / Y el monorrítmico tambor. / El hondo, estremecido acento / En que trisca la voz de los ancestros [sic] / Es mi voz" (159). This work is a continuation of the orality and music in black literature, indicated by terms like "digo," "bronco son del grito," "tambor," "acento," and "voz." A concern with capturing history through literature is also evident in phrases like "muchos siglos" and "ancestros." Western literature is central to memory for Artel, since he writes, but it is affected by traditions of spiritual Ancestors that can be traced back to Africa (159). Questions of music and memory are also evident in "Danza, mulata" (159). He problematically represents a sensual mulatta trope that has existed since the first slave plantations, but he also celebrates fertility, a central factor to syncretic religions, as Zapata Olivella would later do in *Changó*. The problems of representing women in a more nuanced manner would be addressed by Zapata Olivella and Gonçalves, who are writing in an era when feminism has made greater strides than in Artel's context of the 1930s. Like Obeso, Artel's diction and phonetic reproduction challenge purist notions of Spanish emanating from the "Athens of South America," Bogotá, showing how marginalized voices provide innovation not only in content but in form as well (162). Prescott traces his black identity through an autobiographical reading of his works. He notes that Artel was born in the historically black neighborhood of Getsemaní outside the city walls of Cartagena, a former *palenque* (maroon settlement) and working-class to this day (167). Prescott is careful to note that Artel did not limit himself to black influences and cites the importance of fellow *vanguardistas* in forming his voice: Federico García Lorca, Pablo Neruda, Pedro Salinas, and Rafael Alberti (169), as well as *modernista* Rubén Darío (170). During the 1948 Violencia, he left Colombia and traveled the Hispanic Antilles, Venezuela, Mexico, and the United States. These journeys led him to revise and expand *Tambores en la noche* in 1955 (172). Artel traveled

Central America and Mexico throughout the 1950s, no doubt crossing paths with his disciple Zapata (173). Prescott believes that, by decrying racial prejudices and reducing the stigma around slavery, Artel created a more receptive climate for Afro-Colombian writers on Colombia's Caribbean Coast (174). He also wrote a novel called *No es la muerte, es el morir* (1979), which bridges the gap between Afro-Colombian poetry and prose, which is my study's concern. Artel is the most studied Afro-Colombian poet after Candelario Obeso, and Prescott has published a book-length study on him called *Without Hatred or Fears: Jorge Artel and the Struggle for Black Literary Expression in Colombia* (2000). Artel was a teacher and mentor to the young Zapata Olivella (*¡Levántate!* 98) and in 1936 he won an essay competition that Artel directed. The chosen work was called "El mestizaje americano," his primary concern throughout his career (99–100). Rodolfo Guzmán Morales notes that Artel's poetry is marked by "pride in African heritage, social resistance, creative sensuality, and optimism for the future" (178). These aspects are all part of Zapata Olivella's greatest novel and the *Nuevo Muntu* that the novels treated in this dissertation encourage in different forms. Guzmán studies how Artel's travels through the Colombian coast and other national spaces create a new topography for the Caribbean that unites Afro-Colombians with the Antilles (178). Luisa García-Conde argues that, though Artel is a celebrated Afro-Colombian artist, he self-identified as *indomulato*, a mixture of indigenous, European, and African elements. This aesthetic is present in his poetry, and it would be appropriated by Zapata Olivella, and later the Brazilian Nei Lopes, in their vision of the African Diaspora as being united with the indigenous by the history of resistance to colonialism (189).

Prescott, Maglia and her other collaborators, and *The Afro-Hispanic Review*, under William Luis, and the organization Afro-Colombia New York have attempted to create an Afro-Colombian canon of poets and authors of narrative. These include Manuel's sisters, Delia and Edelma Zapata Olivella, Artel, Mary Grueso Romero, Obeso, Arnoldo Palacios, Rogelio Velázquez Murillo, Amalia Lú Posso, Carlos Arturo Truque, Alfredo Vanin, Pedro Blás Julio Romero, Lolía Pomare-Myles, and María Teresa Ramírez.

Manuel Zapata Olivella is from Lórica, a small, mostly black town near Cartagena de Indias. The latter was the first stop in the Americas of the Spanish flotilla of ships during the Colonial period and was the seat of

Nueva Granada. It had a large population of slaves to work in the surrounding fields and for their owners' comfort in the city. This political dynamic gave rise to a large mulatto population and a modern day racial dynamic and aesthetic that has much in common with Havana. Antonio Benítez Rojo includes it in his *La isla que se repite* (1989) as part of the Caribbean (9), a claim with which I agree, though it is not an island and though its history has been affected by Colombian national politics since independence. This said, Colombia is a nation divided into distinct regions that were isolated from one another for very long time periods. This is very important for an understanding of the discourse of race in Colombia and how it affected Zapata Olivella's identity and writing on the history of the African Diaspora.

Peter Wade's *Blackness and Race Mixture: The Dynamics of Racial Identity in Colombia* (1993) is an important overview of this topic from the field of social anthropology, which sheds light on how Zapata Olivella understood Colombia. Wade wrote the book due to a dearth of scholarship on blacks in Colombia, which has historically ignored its African elements in the imagination of the national community, which the novelist worked tirelessly to remedy. Wade's study tells of two ideologies that coexist in Colombia. One is a celebration of cultural and racial *mestizaje*, which celebrates the nation as a "racial democracy" where no discrimination exists. The other is "blackness," which has historically been disparaged in the Colombian context in a cultural-political process focused on "whitening" one's identity or keep it from getting "blacker." The two are interwoven (3). Jáuregui reaffirms this simultaneous dynamic, the source of a "paraíso patrio" (nation-paradise) myth designed to diffuse outrage by those discriminated against ("Obeso" 570). The Pacific Chocó region is 80 to 90% black and has a strong black identity (Wade 6). Cartagena is a primarily mulatto or mestizo region (8). Zapata Olivella comes from the culturally *mulato* Cartagena region. According to Peter Wade:

On the one hand, la *Costa* [*Caribeña's*] place in the nation's semantic landscape is not as definitive as that of the Pacific region. It has great intraregional diversity, with some areas and some classes much lighter skinned in appearance than others. It is highly urbanized, and although as a region it is not as wealthy and developed as many areas of the interior of the country, it is plainly more so than the Pacific region. The *Costeños* themselves, while alive to the presence of blackness in their region, or in some

cases identifying themselves as *negros*, do not see *la Costa* as a black region in the same way as they do the Pacific zone, home of *los verdaderos negros*, the real blacks. To this extent, *la Costa* has an ambiguous status. . . . The black identity of *la Costa* regenerates itself from continuing Caribbean developments as well as from its own black history: so much is obvious from the Christmas partygoers in Cartagena and their taste for Caribbean music.” (92)

Wade reports hearing a conversation between two *Costeños* who, in the same conversation called each other “brother,” a US black import, and “cuadro,” a term dating back to the colonial black *cabildos* or black Catholic brotherhoods (93). Exemplifying how blacks in Latin America receive US black cultural influence, the use of “cuadro” evokes the Palenque of San Basilio. It is one of several from colonial times that survives today and maintains a creole language and the only surviving *cabildo* in Colombia (Wade 89). Wade considers these areas to be a factor in the concentration of Afro-Colombians around Cartagena who identify more with African and black culture than with *mestizaje* (88). In 2005, it was declared a United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization Heritage Site for its preservation of black oral heritage, which will be further discussed next chapter.

Wade’s 1993 experience in Cartagena bears the mark of Caribbean and US black influences on Cartagena, but Zapata Olivella began writing before these were as common, though his life and works dialogue with the United States and the Caribbean. Zapata Olivella laments the African diaspora not having the same influence on his nation’s culture as in Brazil. For example, Carnival in Colombia was moved to 11 November to celebrate *criollo* independence from Spain in imitation of Bastille Day (*¡Levántate!* 130). The Palace of the Inquisition maintained a tighter control on religious syncretism than the Church did in places like Bahia. Despite these barriers, African traditions continued in Carnival, often considered diabolic because they were often lascivious in nature and because the Devil was often represented as black (140). This explains *Changó*’s Spanish epithet, *el Gran Putas*, a folk devil with black skin. (Piquero 11).

The declaration of independence of Gran Colombia by Simón Bolívar in 1819 brought with it immigration policies designed to bring in European immigrants (Wade 13), and slavery lasted until 1851 (8). By

the end of the nineteenth century, the national goal was to whiten the nation through *mestizaje* in the name of modernization (11), a policy that was still promoted in the Colombian academy, though not without detractors, until as late as 1962 (15–17). Though romanticized, the indigenous population join blacks at the bottom of the racial hierarchy (39). Even Otto Morales's *Memorias del mestizaje* (1984) promotes mestizaje as a whitening project, a notion of culture that Zapata Olivella's text remedies by showing the importance of black history for the nation according to Wade (18). It is part of a lifelong legacy of working to get past the "invisibility" of blacks in academia, to use Wade's term (40–41). Wade shows that race is "regionalized" in Colombia, that blacks are regionally concentrated, and that non-blacks attempt to dissociate themselves from blacks (43). This said, Colombian "blackness" is associated with erotic, sensuous, physical, and even magical traits. They are often associated with the devil or devilish things, and so they hold a fiendish fascination for outsiders (42). During colonial times, they were seen as less "innocent" than the indigenous and thus were not allowed to marry in some regions (84). There was an incentive for enslaved men to commit *zambaje* (forming black-indigenous families), because their offspring would be legally free from slavery (85). The glass ceiling blacks have faced in Colombia has led to rely on community resources of other blacks for economic and political opportunities (62). Colombia has three general regions with different racial majorities: the Coast (black Pacific and mulatto Atlantic/Caribbean) is primarily black and mulatto, the Andes has a white elite and indigenous lower strata, and the Amazon is primarily indigenous (54). By the dawn of the eighteenth century, white elites were concentrated in Andean cities of Tunja and Santa Fe de Bogotá (55–56). Bogotá imagined itself as a new, white Athens without black people or cultural influence, as well as the region of the country that spoke the "purest" Spanish in the world. Hence black poet Candelario Obeso's scandalous poetry in the late 1800s (Jáuregui 575) and Zapata Olivella's frequent feelings of alienation as he lived and studied there in the late 1930s and 1940s.

The twentieth century was marked by continued political instability and violence in Colombia. Zapata Olivella's identification with the oppressed placed him on the left in a country where political polarization has deep roots. From 1830 to 1903, Colombia experienced nine general civil wars, fourteen regional wars, three

military coups, two international wars, and the secession of Panama (Jáuregui 569). Zapata Olivella's father was friends with the mulatto general Lugo, who led a black and indigenous revolt during the Thousand Day War, and they shared a rebellious, liberal ideology (¡*Levántate!* 78). The 1950s and 1960s were marked by alternating liberal and conservative leaders (an official bipartisan agreement by 1957) but constant turmoil due to political and economic instability (González Cajiao 82). The assassination of liberal leader Gaitán in 1948 marked the beginning of la Violencia, a bloody civil war (1948–1950) (75). International politics relating to the Cold War also influenced Colombia. The conservative government installed by coup in 1950 under Laureano Gómez sent Colombian troops to fight in Korea alongside US soldiers (1974). President Kennedy convinced the Colombian government to join the Alliance for Progress and break ties with Revolutionary Cuba, though these were reinstated in 1975 (110). A militant faction of the Colombian Left formed the guerrilla group Movimiento 19 de Abril (M-19) (102). This group made the symbolic gesture of stealing the sword of Simón Bolívar in 1974 from the Museo de la Quinta (108). By 1979 the guerrilla fighters were becoming more emboldened, taking hostages and cocaine trafficking skyrocketed (116). The next year, a summit was held in the city of Santa Marta to commemorate the one hundred fiftieth anniversary of Simón Bolívar's death, an event which provoked intellectual contemplation of the nation's history and identity (116). In 1981, Colombia broke diplomatic relations with Cuba after a failed guerrilla invasion and paramilitary groups such as MAS (Muerte a Secuestradores) emerge with the support of the drug mafia to fight off guerrilla kidnapers (118). As shown here, Colombia's political strife is intertwined with Cuba and the rest of Latin America, but its problems precede independence, and its infamous violence has roots in slavery and the conquest, as *Changó* shows.

Partly as a result of this over-whelming history of violence, Critic Christopher Dennis laments the challenges faced by Afro-Colombian literature and Afro-Colombians themselves at the dawn of the twenty-first century. He catalogues recognized novelists Arnoldo Palacios, Carlos Arturo Truque, Alfredo Vanín Romero, and Arnoldo Palacios and Manuel Zapata Olivella. But he sees no up-and-coming Afro-Colombian writers. In a 2002 interview with Dennis, Zapata Olivella claims that he also faced barriers to getting published in Colombia because he was black (83–84). Even his masterpiece, *Changó*, has had minimal circulation in Colombian

bookstores, since no publisher has taken up the task of reprinting it, and it has not been widely taught in Colombia (84). If financial barriers keep the majority white and mestizo public from reading the work, black areas like the Chocó, a potential source of authors, face crushing poverty, lack of education, and forced internal displacement due to the violence of guerrilla and drug trafficking groups (86). These challenges demand more study of writers like Zapata Olivella to promote Afro-Colombian literature.

The novelist's childhood was marked by *mestizaje*, which would foster his interest in the history of slavery. His father, Antonio María Zapata, was an anticlerical black school teacher and his mother, Edelmira Olivella, was a catholic mestiza of indigenous ancestry (Garcés 19). He studied medicine in Bogotá with the support of his radical uncle Gabriel (20). According to Garcés, "In the streets, when children saw him, they would grab their parents by the hand. Blacks were compared to the Devil—that's how they were painted in the pages of books. . . ." (20–21). His professor at the Escuela de Medicina de la Universidad Nacional, Alfonso Uribe Uribe, taught him to seek answers in social injustices to recurring medical problems (21). Zapata Olivella struck out on his first journey, headed for Brazil inspired by the route of *La vorágine*'s protagonist Arturo Cova, but he returned to Bogota, traveled to the Chocó region before he returned to Cartagena (23). He then wandered through Central America before settling in Mexico as a journalist. The young idealist then roamed throughout the United States in that function, where his experiences behind the color line and in the Jim Crow South shed new light on racial politics in Colombia. He was fed by Father Divine in Chicago, he was mentored by Langston Hughes, and he heard the greats of Jazz like Duke Ellington and Cab Callaway (31). The young writer met the *aprista* Ciro Alegría, who helped him publish his first novel on the oppressed workers at the hands of *gamonales*, *Tierra Mojada*, in 1947. His politics remained unapologetically liberal, as was exemplified by his idealistic account of his travels to Beijing, as told in his *China, 6 a.m.* He based it on his experiences at the Conferencia de Paz de los Pueblos de Asia y África. Upon his return, the conservative government of Laureano Gómez had him imprisoned. Soon after his release, he won the Cuban Casa de las Américas prize in 1962 for his *Chambacú, corral de negros*, which criticizes the Colombian government for sending poor, primarily black, troops to fight in Korea for the United States (33). His experience regarding Afro-Brazilian culture went beyond

a fascination with Antonio Francisco Lisboa, the Aleijadinho treated in his novel. He traveled Brazil while investigating it. In 1977, alongside Abdias do Nascimento, he organized the first international Congreso de Cultura Negra de las Américas from 24 to 28 August 1977 in Cali (Vanderbilt Papers). His travels and his successes as a writer, teacher, journalist, and researcher led him to rediscover Colombian culture. He published works of nonfiction include *El hombre colombiano* (1974), *El folclor de los puertos colombianos* (1974), and *Las claves mágicas de América* (1989). His *Tradición oral y conducta en Córdoba* (1972) was written with the aid of sociologists René and José Gregorio Clavijo (75). These works also convey his deep engagement with the place of Afro-Colombians within the political and cultural fabric of Colombia, alongside its European and indigenous influences.

The internal conflict of the role of blackness and *mestizaje* in identity was not only national but individual for Zapata Olivella. Zapata Olivella claims that his mother was Catholic but preserved vestiges of indigenous traditions (*¡Levántate mulato!* 53). His Aunt Estebana's faith included syncretic Lambalú practices (based in San Basilio), but she often had to hide these (95). According to Zapata Olivella, "My grandmother and my aunt Estebana, alienated by the Catholic religion, never sang *lambalú* at funeral wakes, but their calm, sore voices carried the African feeling their prayers and their litanies, while the other mourners droned Hail Maries while beating their chests and reciting blessings" (95). Exploring oral slave traditions, including religious ones, is a return of the repressed for Zapata Olivella, because they are traditions that were often marginalized in his upbringing.

Zapata Olivella's father gave him the intellectual foundation, the pride in his black identity, and the value of women that mark *Changó*, and therefore the Nuevo Muntu:

My father, black on his mother's side and quadroon (half mulatto, half white) on his father's, was born in Getsemaní, a large grouping of former slave shacks. . . . I discovered in my own body the musk of blackness [almizcle de los negros]. They were the first conscious flashes of my blackness. Already at forty years of age, a militant in anti-discriminatory movements in Colombia and the United States, I understood what *mulata* Cartagena meant to me, and how much I owed it. (118)

Getsemaní was where he met Artel, his literary progenitor, as well. His father, because of his studies, was the feminist of the family, and he taught Zapata Olivella and his sisters Edelma and Delia that men and women were equal, with the exception of the special gift of maternity granted to women (103–04), an issue I will take up in chapter 4. Because of this environment and their father’s role model as an intellectual figure, all the Zapata Olivella siblings were creative, artistic people. Delia (1926–2001) was a folklorist who published, among other works, *Manual de danzas de la costa pacífica de Colombia* (1998) and a second volume for the Atlantic Coast (2003), and she worked with her brother in his studies and cultural production throughout his career. Edelma was much more domestic and identified with her traditional mother (¡*Levántate!* 104), though she, too, wrote poetry, which appeared in the *Afro-Hispanic Review* (160–64). In all of their works, the oral traditions of Africa and the legacy of slavery have a heavy imprint.

While he wrote consistently about the oppressed, *Chambacú, corral de negros* (1963) was his first foray into the topic of slavery, since the community is descended from a Palenque. However, like his depiction of black activist Saturio Valencia in *El fusilamiento del diablo* (1986), there is a need to go deeper into the roots of Colombian history to unearth the history of slavery in the New World. This took him twenty years of research, and the result, *Changó*, will be further analyzed.

Zapata Olivella sought to raise awareness of slavery, indigenous, and African peoples in Colombia in schools and in the media, as is evident in his efforts to revise Colombian school curricula (Vanderbilt Papers). Now, as new modes of communication emerge, the technology of the future, and the expanded scope of the academy’s understanding of World history, will continue to connect the African Diaspora to its previously lost past and inform intellectual debates on how this history dialogues with literature. The 1991 Colombian Constitution forbids racial discrimination (Capítulo 1, Artículo 13) and provides protections for Afro-Colombian communities, particularly the impoverished ones along the Pacific Coast (Capítulo 8, Artículo transitorio 55). Some of the reforms for which Zapata Olivella fought are finding their way into political rhetoric, but much is left to be done if his dream of universal equality is to be realized.

Historical fiction on slavery is a useful tool in examining the colonial roots of inequality in Colombia and the Americas in general. This historical revisionism is continued in Brazil by Gonçalves, but her novel must be contextualized in the nation's rich, polemic tradition of representing enslaved and black individuals.

Afro-Brazil: From Duarte's History to Ana Maria Gonçalves and the Nuevo Muntu

Afro-Brazilian authors who write historical novels about slavery from the slave's point of view that look beyond the nation are a contemporary phenomenon. Brazil's colonized coast was a slave-based plantation society that held onto institutionalized slavery from the sixteenth century to 1888, and as with Cuba's 1886 abolition of the institution, it was tied to questions of political independence, which had been delayed more than the rest of the continent due to the presence of the Portuguese/Brazilian court in Rio de Janeiro (Castilho, n.pag.). Fleeing Napoleon's armies, Dom João VI left Europe for Brazil in 1808, and his son, Dom Pedro I declared Brazilian independence in 1822, but returned to Portugal in 1831 (Karasch xv). He left the Brazilian Empire under a regency until Dom Pedro II was of ruling age. Due to Britain's patrolling of the seas and gunboat diplomacy *avant la lettre*, the trans-Atlantic slave trade was officially abolished in 1830 and came to an effective end in 1850 (xxii). Slavery continued within the sovereign state and clandestinely (Azevedo 36). Though the 1871 Lei do Ventre Livre ("Free Womb" or Rio Branco Law) provided legal freedom for newborns, they were required to be raised on the plantation and often lived the life of a slave (Bergad 11). The 1888 Lei Áurea, signed by Dom Pedro II's daughter Princess Isabel, ended the institution (Bergad 12). The king was overthrown in a bloodless coup in 1889 and the First or "Old" Republic (1889–1930) was declared (12). Brazil is a country of distinct regions. Bahia, its first colonized area, and later Pernambuco, were sugar-based economies that supported a comfortable life for the white urban elite. The dismal conditions of the cane fields stood in contrast to the relative opportunities of the city, where domestic and even skilled wage labor and opportunities for manumission were possible for slaves, as Gonçalves's novel depicts. When gold and later diamonds were discovered in Minas Gerais, a similar urban/rural binary emerged, where enslaved male workers suffered brutal conditions in the mines, while those in the city, particularly women, could climb the social

ladder through concubinage as well as domestic, skilled, and wage labor (Furtado; Dantas). The 1864–1870 Paraguayan War put pressure on the slave system (Bergad 11), since blacks were often sent to war, trained, and given relative respect, then faced with the continued reality of their family's enslavement at the war's end (Kraay 61). All of these—very briefly described—forms of slavery were paralleled by the urban slavery of ports like São Luís, Recife, Salvador, Rio de Janeiro, and São Paulo. While the cattle ranches of the south had enslaved Africans as well, the landscape has a European feel like much of São Paulo, since free labour from this region was imported to replace slave labor after the slave trade ended and even more intensely when the institution was abolished.

Brazil's dismal literacy rate during its slave-based epoch, particularly among slaves, made the emergence of a written literature by the enslaved a virtual impossibility, though many mulattos and even some former slaves wrote their own stories in poetry, the most prominent among them being Luís Gama (1830–1882), the abolitionist writer who inspired Gonçalves to write *Um defeito de cor*. In fact, the question of literacy was intimately tied to abolition and independence (Loveman 435), so one can see the *Nuevo Muntu* fictions as granting more complete citizenship to Afro-Brazilians.

Among the defining features of *Nuevo Muntu* fictions is the inclusion of self-identified black authors in the representation of the enslaved and their descendants. The identity of the author, implicit in his or her works, is central to Eduardo de Assis Duarte and Maria Nazareth Soares Fonseca's scholarly masterpiece *Literatura e afrodescendência no Brasil: Antologia crítica* (2012). These four volumes include bio-bibliographies and representative excerpts of those the editors and critics consider *afrodescendentes*. The first three volumes are a literary history divided into the moments of evolution of a "black consciousness": "Precursores" born before 1930 (Duarte 35), "Consolidação" by those writing from 1930 to 1949 during the heyday of modernism's radical depictions of the oppressed (36), and "Contemporaneidade's" emerging voices, among which they include Ana Maria Gonçalves and *Um defeito de cor* (2006). What follows is a brief overview of this important history of Afro-Brazilian literature, particularly as it regards historical novels about slavery. It will begin before abolitionism and continue after it due to Brazil's unique history. For example, there were mulatto authors well

before abolition, since some masters not only recognized their mixed-raced children but allowed them to be educated and raised in a world of privilege that included literacy. They are, however, the exceptions that confirms the rule of a general glass ceiling for black advancement throughout Brazilian history (see, for example, Júnia Furtado's *Chica da Silva*). Abolition's impact in 1888 was not so sweeping, either, since literacy rates and income among blacks were kept very low, so Brazil's timeline for the emergence of a black literature is much slower and less abrupt than Cuba's surge of abolitionism that quickly sputters out after the 1844 slaughter that ended the Conspiración de la Escalera until the Cuban Revolution or the solitude of Obeso, the sole Afro-Colombian author of the nineteenth century.

Literatura e afrodescendência's "Precursores" is an act of reevaluating key figures of Brazilian literature as part of the international history of the African Diaspora. This is necessary, because Sílvio Romero and other literary critics have famously whitened many of these figures to the point that they are today commonly imagined as white (Eakin 151). This has the potential to blind readers to these authors' frequent interest in the plight of Afro-Brazilians from the eighteenth century to the 1930s and creates the false impression that Great Works were written only by white people. One recent case of this phenomenon is a television commercial for the Caixa Econômica, a large bank in Brazil that depicts the celebrated author Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis as much lighter in color than he actually was. This provoked outrage in those interested in creating pride in African influences in Brazilian history, including Ana Maria Gonçalves ("A Caixa" n.pag.). This dramatizes a greater cultural whitening tendency that has its roots in the very nineteenth century eugenic notions of race that Machado's literary genius obviously contradicts. The volume "Precursores" can be seen as an extension, with the help of other important scholars, of Duarte's "darkening" of Machado, begun in his *Machado de Assis, Afrodescendente: Contos de caramujo* (2007). A poor *pardo* who pulled himself up from his bootstraps to become the founder of the Academia Brasileira de Letras and the nation's most celebrated author, Machado de Assis was an advocate of abolition, but he worked for the contradictory royal government in its implementation. However, as Paul Dixon and Earl Fitz note, the definition of a "black" writer is highly debatable, and while slavery and promoting abolition are important to his life and work, one cannot consider his texts a "voice of the

enslaved by the enslaved.” Though he did face race-based discrimination (Fantini 147), his erudite writings have parallels with those of his lettered colleagues, abolitionists Castro Alves, Joaquim Nabuco, and Rui Barbosa in being a voice for abolition from outside the bonds of slavery. Duarte shows that slave masters always die in Machado’s novels and that his “incomplete works” include almost none of his abolitionist writings, published under a pseudonym (“*Literatura,*” n.pag.). As readers “rediscover” Machado the abolitionist and non-white author surrounded by eugenicists, they will discover new aspects of his work and its place in the history of Afro-Brazilian prose.

Duarte’s history begins with the mulatto poets of Arcadismo, highlighting the political value of poetry derived from European forms that were in fashion during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and more highly valued than the novel, which would gain more popularity during the nationalist projects of Romanticism. These poets include Domingos Caldas Barbosa (ca. 1740–1800) of Rio de Janeiro (Marques 49), poet and dramaturge José da Natividade Saldanha (1796–?) of Pernambuco (Caldwell de Farias 61), and the first Brazilian publisher Francisco de Paula Brito (1809–1861). The latter displays a greater concern with the enslaved and African elements of Brazilian culture, but his prose takes the form of short stories, not historical novels (Brito 87). Barbosa and Saldanha were children of privilege. In Brazil, it was the expectation that masters would marry white women to ensure the passage of inheritance to legitimate, white children. Marriage between a white man and a black woman was virtually non-existent in Rio de Janeiro, though black-white concubinage was widespread and tolerated. (This was usually a union between a white male and an enslaved female, though Machado de Assis’s mother was a poor white woman married to a free man of color, one of the only cases in the area) (Karasch 291). The same was true in Pernambuco (Freyre 290), but in some cases the white father recognized his son, granting him access to education and upward mobility. Barbosa was the son of an enslaved woman and her Portuguese owner, who financed his formal schooling with the Jesuits, where he learned Latin, music, and letters (Marques 50). He continued his studies in Lisbon beginning in 1763, and by 1777 his poetry had likely garnered him enough attention to found the Academia de Belas Letras de Lisboa, also known as the Nova Arcádia (51). He was a favorite of the Portuguese nobility, so his poetry and dramatic

production reflect this. While his works communicate a desire to succeed within colonial and Eurocentric power structures in a pre-Romantic time when art was not anti-establishment, one must also appreciate his role as a person of color with ties to slavery who excelled at literature. Saldanha was born to a white vicar and a woman of color in rural Pernambuco, a Brazilian center of the sugar trade, in 1796 (Caldwell de Fárias 61). He had the good fortune of being legally recognized by his father, who gave him his own name, gave him the chance to learn Latin, music, and philosophy, and helped him enter seminary (62). He abandoned religious studies for law and became involved in independentist politics in the 1820s. He traveled to the United States and France, both of which rejected him for his color and revolutionary ideas, before joining Simón Bolívar in his struggle (64–65). His historical odes praise *índios* and *negros* (66). Both, particularly the former, were common figures in nationalist works of the time, because their influence was imagined to be part of a uniquely Brazilian identity of non-European origin (Bosi 136). Unlike the former two authors, Brito was black (not mulatto and therefore more likely to have family connections to power), of poor origins, and born in the provinces, the son of a carpenter who became an apprentice at the Tipografia Nacional of the Portuguese court of Rio de Janeiro (77). He would become the first Brazilian newspaper editor and instrumental in the publishing industry, which he used to link the separated readerships in Rio de Janeiro, Salvador, Recife, Salvador, and their provinces (77). His political aims were that Dom Pedro I would create a limited monarchy separate from Portugal (77), which would come to fruition under Dom Pedro II. Later, the author fought for national independence and the abolition of slavery (80). Literature in this context, particularly politically subversive works, were not appreciated by the dominant culture, and so journalism was the only source of revenue for Paula Brito (79). He founded anti-slavery and an anti-racist newspaper called *O Mulato ou o Homem de Cor* in 1833 (81). He published Machado de Assis's first works, playing a fundamental role in Brazilian national letters and the place of Afro-Brazilians in its history (83). His abolitionist short story "A mãe-irmã" (1839) presents an oedipal love affair between an enslaved woman and her son with parallels to *Cecilia Valdés* in its focus on slavery and incest (90).

Almost all of Barbosa, Saldanha, and Paula Brito's works precede or are roughly contemporary with Manzano's poetry, which begins in 1821, and his 1835 autobiography in Cuba, showing that Manzano and his contemporary Plácido were not alone in their attempts to create a literature with black authors. Even his own relationship to "blackness" was problematic, since he did not see himself as the same racial category as the blacks of the fields, as is evident from his father teaching him from very young not to play with black boys (Schulman 132). Notions of a modern-day black solidarity are anachronistic in his context. The Brazilian authors do not always focus on Afro-Brazilians or slavery in their works, but Manzano did not always write about Afro-Cubans.

Another black author that precedes Manzano but that Duarte's collection overlooks is Rosa Maria Egipcíaca de Vera Cruz (1718–1778), a Brazilian mystic who was enslaved in the Costa de Minas, brought to Minas Gerais, and lived in Rio de Janeiro (Guimarães 160). One could argue that, like Gonçalves's title, Afro-Brazilian letters began with a woman trying to remove her "Defeito de cor": the stigma of her dark skin and lowly status, which were obstacles to her being accepted by the Church. After gaining her freedom, she became a prostitute, but she began to have visions, joined a religious order, and had a large popular following (160). Her fame and heterodoxy, in a time when *público e notório* crimes were severely punished, led to a trial of church officials in Minas Gerais for which she was harshly whipped (160). After fleeing to a religious order in Rio de Janeiro, she learned to read through divine intervention (160). She was tried again for her visions, which led to her trusted confessor destroying most of her historically valuable 250-page text *Sagrada teologia do amor divino das almas peregrinas* (1763) to protect her, resulting in yet another loss to Afro-Brazilian prose (160; Sáenz de Tejada 273). (Historians Luiz Mott and A.J.R. Russell-Wood have also written on her.) Duarte may have left her work out of his study because it is a pre-Enlightenment genre and therefore not literature in a Modern sense. However, it is analogous to the eloquent sermons of Father Antônio Vieira (Bosi 43) and thus worthy of mention in this list of precursors to Ana Maria Gonçalves. Her text is the exception that confirms the rule of the overwhelming silence of black women in Brazilian letters, especially those who lived through slavery.

As for Romantic writers in addition to Paula Brito, Marisa Lajolo revisits Antônio Gonçalves Dias as an *afrodescendente*, and his study of indigenous cultures can be seen as anticipating the Afro-indigenous solidarity seen in Manuel Zapata Olivella's *Changó*.⁸ Like Paula Brito, Gonçalves Dias was attempting to break with Eurocentric models by focusing on Brazil's hybrid elements, or *mestizaje*, but his literary production was primarily poetry and drama (Lajolo 95–96). He began an autobiographical novel, *Memórias de Agapito Goiaba* in the journal *Arquivo*, but destroyed the originals before the work could be published in its entirety, a great loss to literature, particularly the history of its representation of blacks and slavery in narrative (Lajolo 97), one that parallels the loss of the second half of Manzano's autobiography in Cuba.

Despite their marginalization, the very origins of the Brazilian novel are tied to mulatto authors. Antônio Gonçalves Teixeira e Sousa (1812–1861), author of what can be considered the first Brazilian novel, *O filho do pescador* (1843),⁵ was mulatto (Lobo 111). He was the son of a white Portuguese merchant in Rio de Janeiro and a black woman in the province of Cabo Frio. The family lost most of their wealth with national independence, so he learned carpentry at an early age in the Royal Court (Ferreira 9). Like Manzano and Machado de Assis, he was sickly, suffering from lung problems, which gave him a sort of leisure time in his convalescence when he read voraciously (9). He studied under a local surgeon before working at Paula Brito's bookstore, where he began to publish poetry. Teixeira e Sousa's mentor and patron helped him publish his first novel, which was intended as a means of making more money than his theater and poetry, but to no avail (11). His epopée *Independência do Brasil* was panned by critics, including Gonçalves Dias, and his financial fortune did not turn up until the last six years of his life, which he spent as the Royal Court scribe (11). He was a mulatto Romantic and a pioneer, but his novel is not a chronicle of slavery. Maria Firmina dos Reis (1825–1917) was the first woman to write a Brazilian novel, *Úrsula, romance original brasileiro, por uma maranhense* (1859) (111).⁷ It included enslaved characters, but, unlike *Um defeito de cor*, it does not adopt their point of view and is narrated in the third person. It does have the distinction of being a counter-discourse to the pro-slave hegemony that was dominant in Maranhão at the time. A mulatta born to a slaveholder, dos Reis was a teacher who became the first female novelist of color in Brazil, the first to treat national concerns, and an

abolitionist who criticized the status quo and depicted plantation life, including the enslaved (Sáenz de Tejada 275). Her tale of star-crossed lovers has strong parallels with *Cecilia Valdés*. Her novel received very little critical attention until 1962, when her novel was rediscovered in a used book store (*sebo*) in Rio de Janeiro by Horácio de Almeida (Duke 61).

Ana Maria Gonçalves's recovery of poet Luiz Gama's (1830–1882) legacy mirrors Maria Consuelo Cunha Campos's contribution to the volume. While questions of influence are difficult to determine, the critic's attention to Luiza Mahin, the protagonist of Gonçalves's novel, may have been inspired by the latter. Campos's inclusion of Gama's description of his mother and his relationship to her, part of his affirmation of what is now considered an affirmative black identity (130), adds veracity to Gonçalves's claims that Luiza (also called "Kehinde" in the novel) was involved in slave rebellions and rejected Christianization (131). Gama wrote satirical poetry, taught himself to read, and rose from slavery to literary recognition (128–29), fraternizing with Machado de Assis and José de Alencar. He was anthologized by Sílvio Romero, Manuel Bandeira (130), and Edison Carneiro (142). But he has only recently been reevaluated as a black writer (see Abdias do Nascimento, Elisa Larkin Nascimento, Luiz Carlos dos Santos), and he did not cultivate the novel form. Gonçalves's depiction of his family's compelling story fills this gap.

There are numerous other mulatto and black authors who could be considered precursors to Gonçalves. One example is José do Patrocínio's (1854–1905) abolitionist novel, *Motta Coqueiro, ou a pena da morte* (1887), first published in the *Gazeta de Notícias* in 1877 (Costa Contié 1). But it is still narrated in a cold, distanced third person, the product of the dominant naturalist aesthetic (see Bosi on Azevedo, 187–91). As Costa Contié shows, eugenic depictions of the racial inferiority of blacks are present in the novel, indicating that its author reflects the dominant theories of race at the time, though the novel shows the brutality of the plantation (4). Its depiction of the enslaved is much more exotic and hyperbolic than Gonçalves's attempt at realistically portraying a woman's life, even as a rebel and believer in voodoo, among other faiths, as will be discussed (Santos 213). Patrocínio describes in grotesque detail the abuses against the enslaved on the Brazilian plantation and shows how slaves fought back using not only violence but irreverence toward the Church,

including syncretic religions (Santos 217). This said, the rebel Motta Coqueiro is cast as an “escravo demônio,” a disobedient figure that Zapata would take up in *Chango el gran putas*, or the “great devil” (213). Diva Cunha’s essay on free, well-to-do woman of color Auta de Souza (1876–1901), who lived in Macaíba, Rio Grande do Norte, depicts her as an author from the elite who searches for her family’s African roots in her poetry at a time when social norms made this undesirable among those of her class (260). João da Cruz e Souza (Santa Catarina, 1861–1898) is a celebrated Brazilian black writer, but he wrote poetry and plays, not novels (230–31). His symbolist poetry has been much studied (Bosi 270), but there is an abolitionist side to his work. His parents were onced enslaved blacks, but he gained the favor of their former owner and was granted access to higher education, which included science and French literature (223–24). This combination of academic access and a personal understanding of the plantation led him to write “A pátria livre” in honor of the 1888 passage of the Lei Áurea, the abolition of slavery in Brazil, a work that he would keep secret for the rest of his life (225). The work of *paraense* poet Bruno de Menezes (193–1963) can be seen as a precursor to *Changó*’s Afro-indigenous cultural and political alliances, as in his *Batuque* (1931). The indigenous influences are part of a regionalist fervor that can be traced back to the *indianista* projects of Alencar (e.g., the novel *Iracema*) and the Romantics mentioned above, though de Menezes’s lived experience in the Amazon no doubt contributed to this focus. His also collection includes “Mãe preta,” an ode to the black mothers, nannies, and wet nurses in Brazilian history and can be seen as a precursor to *Defeito* in this sense, which I will explore in more detail in Chapter 4.

Alfonso Henriques de Lima Barreto (Rio de Janeiro, 1881–1922) depicts the violence of the Brazilian plantation and has developed enslaved characters, but he does not adopt their point of view nor does he go beyond the borders of Brazil in his depiction of the African diaspora like the Nuevo Muntu fictions do. In addition to his literary works, he made plans to write a non-fiction “history of black slavery in Brazil and its influence in our nationality” in 1903, but he did not do so (63). His novel *Recordações do escravidão Isaías Caminha* (1909) is a first-person, semiautobiographical account of a young mulatto’s struggle as he finds his way from the countryside immediately after abolition in 1888 to the intellectual circles of Rio de Janeiro (299),

indicating that abolition was not the resounding change for blacks in Brazil that one may have hoped it to be. Nonetheless, his novel does not provide the detail of plantation life that Gonçalves's text, it does not provide a feminine point of view, nor does it venture beyond Brazilian territory to show the nation's interaction with others. This is partially due to Brazil's relative isolation from the rest of the Americas, the struggle to build a national literature and identity inherited from Romanticism, and to the fact that, unlike in Gonçalves's time, a detailed knowledge of African culture was not easily accessible or desired in the lion's share of the Brazilian academy.⁶

José do Nascimento Moraes's (Maranhão, 1882–1958) *Vencidos e degenerados* (1915) tells the family saga of Afro-Brazilians from the moments before abolition in 1888 to the author's present. Critic Maria Rita Santos notes that

on May thirteenth 1888 (abolition day), the author was only six years old. Based on oral depositions and written registers, he constructs the historical novel of abolition and its consequences in the context of the Maranhão. The narrative often wanders through time, going back and forth between slavery and its aftermath. In doing so it reveals the continuation of the master mentality and denounces the socioeconomic limbo to which Afro-Brazilians are relegated. . . . (313)

This ground-breaking work on the enduring legacy of slavery and the role of historical fiction in recalling it can be read as a precursor to Conceição Evaristo's *Ponciá Vicêncio* (2003), which treats this theme. However, its national scope and limitation to written documents, ignoring syncretic beliefs and other oral traditions (such as interviewing the former enslaved themselves, many of whom were still alive in 1915) that allow for direct communication with the enslaved of the past. There is also a preference for a male point of view, a product of a time when feminism was not as influential in literary circles. *Defeito's* Kehinde will be of a different, more reaffirming, interest to gender studies scholars.

During the first half of the twentieth century, poetry and theater continued to be the primary genres of Afro-Brazilian expression. The poet Lino Guedes (São Paulo, 1897–1951) was born to former slaves and is a direct link between the poetry of Luís Gama, to which *Defect* is narrated, and the international African

Diaspora. Critic Emanuelle Oliveira considers him the beginning of Brazil's version of *negritude* in literature (77). His essay *Luiz Gama e sua individualidade literaria* (1924) celebrates Gama as a black poet. Guedes was active in the Movimento Negro that would be disbanded by Getúlio Vargas along with all other opposition in 1937 (Oliveira 29). Guedes did not join the *modernista* movement and attempted to create a separate black poetry that focused on the memory of slavery and continued injustices carried out against Afro-Brazilians (354). His long poem *Mestre Domingos* (1937) can be seen as a precursor to the *Nuevo Muntu* historical fictions that incorporate slavery and the African Diaspora into the national history and comparisons to Nei Lopes's *Oiobomé* (see Chapter 5) will no doubt yield new discoveries of both texts. *Nordestino* writer Aloísio Resende (1900–1941) wrote poetry that, unlike *modernistas* such as Jorge Amado's exotic and erotic treatment of them, depicts *afro-brasileiras* as much more complex, realistic figures like Gonçalves later would. Nonetheless, like Amado, he includes maternal figures like Iemanjá in his depictions of African motherhood, showing the value of Afro-Catholic religions in remembering slavery and the African Diaspora (Alves and Moraes 369). Pernambucan poet Solano Trindade (1908–) organized the first and second Congressos Afro-Brasileiros in Recife and Salvador (Martins 391). He was part of the Teatro Experimental do Negro alongside Abdias Nascimento (392). His associations were diasporic in nature, including a poetic dialogue with the works of US writer Langston Hughes and Cuban poet Nicolás Guillén (399). He also used his poetry to portray the maroon community of Palmares and its legendary leader(s) Zumbi (401). Abdias Nascimento (Rio de Janeiro, 1914–2010) is one of the most influential figures in Afro-Brazilian history. He was one of three black congressmen and women in Brazil, along with Benedita da Silva and Carlos Alberto Cão (Hanchard 137). He was the leader of the Movimento Negro Unido. His Teatro Experimental do Negro was a forum for respectfully portraying the history of Afro-Brazilians from Zumbi dos Palmares to the twentieth century and decrying the racism in Brazil and its roots in slavery. His exile in the United States as professor of Puerto Rican Studies at SUNY Buffalo in 1971 brought him into contact with Manuel Zapata Olivella (Vanderbilt Papers) and a variety of other scholars of and on the African Diaspora. He portrayed his copious knowledge of the diaspora in his *Africans in Brazil: A Pan-African Perspective* (1991) and *Orixás; Os deuses vivos da África* (1995), for example.

Defeito is a direct heir to the novel *Água viva* by Ruth Guimarães (São Paulo, b. 1920), and the two deserve a more detailed comparison than space will allow here. Guimarães's novel portrays the Brazilian plantation during both pre-and post-slavery eras, it often focuses on female characters, including enslaved women, and it incorporates oral traditions, including Afro-Catholic traditions. It is not narrated in first person, however, and Gonçalves takes great care to travel to and from Africa, showing how the diaspora necessitates an international, often comparative, gaze from critics.

Duarte's literary history, a vital source for my contextualization of Gonçalves in the Brazilian literary tradition, is an attempt to break with previous works centered on *modernismo*, but I believe that one cannot talk about the African Diaspora in Brazil without considering the movement's contributions. In the anthology of criticism in *Literatura e afrodescendência*, Silviano Santiago shows that *modernismo* was the reaction of a lettered Brazilian elite to the Eurocentrism of the 1920s. He shows that, in Paris, modernist icons like the poet Carlos Drummond de Andrade had to metaphorically "come in through the back" of the Quartier Latin's book stores like a Jim Crow-era black man at a restaurant in the United States (170–71). The difference in privilege between the two, and the difference between these privileged "second-class citizens" and the economically marginalized of Brazil is today self-evident, but these authors' alienation led to a rupture with the Eurocentric past in Brazil and Europe itself in order to have a seat at the "global table" of culture (171). Heavily influenced by the European *avant garde*, says Santiago, the *modernistas* cannibalized tropes from nineteenth century abolitionism and *indigenismo* to imagine a *mestiço* nation (174). The most important event of *modernismo* was the São Paulo Semana de Arte Moderna from 11 to 18 February 1922. Bosi describes it in detail (337–43): it was an exhibition of poetry, music, painting, and sculpture that sought an anarchic rupture with all "pure" European models, replacing them with syncretic, autochthonous, cannibalized forms that devoured "civilization" and created something "savage" and untamed in its stead, as poet Oswald de Andrade later elaborates in his "Manifesto Antropófago" (1928). As Santiago puts it:

In the Brazil of the 1920s, access to the universal was provided by maximizing the ethnic plurality of the nation. Interaction between the several ethnic groups was recognized as a form and force of origin:

spontaneous miscegenation. Over the decades, the spontaneous part was concretized and was transformed into the consensual prefabricated aspect of nationality in construction as if, in stacking layers upon the mold, the just aspirations of the ethnic groups were neutralized in the recuperation of identity (166–67).

In this “spontaneous miscegenation,” a national identity was forged along a “pseudosolidarity” that masked and continues to mask an unjust social, political, and racial society (175). This philosophy was institutionalized with the foundation of the Universidade de São Paulo in 1934, where Claude Lévi-Strauss and Roger Bastide studied and taught on Native and Afro-Brazilian cultures, respectively (168).

The institutionalization of *modernismo* corresponds to Getúlio Vargas’s nationalist and populist Estado Novo (1930–1945), where the syncretic aesthetic of Carnival and samba became symbols of the rapidly modernizing nation. As the disbanding of the Frente Negra Brasileira indicates, any group that challenged the national racial harmony was not allowed to maintain a strong footing in Brazil. It is in this political environment, and after studying in the United States, Gilberto Freyre published *Casa-Grande e Senzala* (1933), the text most often associated with the concept of “racial democracy,” though the exact phrase never appears in the text. In his *Integração dos portugueses nos trópicos* (1958), he develops an argument that the Portuguese were not as harsh in their treatment of the conquered and enslaved as were other European empires and became a favorite of Portuguese dictator Salazar during his own Estado Novo (1932–1974) as he sought to justify his country’s colonial possessions in Africa (Skidmore 14). During and after World War II, the Western World began to search for alternatives to Nazi-era Aryanism (Skidmore 13). Brazil’s much celebrated cultural mixture seemed to some to be an alternative (13). The United Nations was formed in 1945, and in the 1950s carried out studies to verify what was presumed to be a place where racial prejudice was not an obstacle to democracy (16). Ample evidence showed that this was not the case and that there was more evidence that “the myth of racial democracy” was, in actuality, “racial hegemony,” an ideology that precluded admitting to social problems and working to fix them. Afro-Brazilian Carolina Maria de Jesus’s narrative of continued race, class, and gender-based oppression in what the world expected to be a paradise formed a counter-narrative to the dominant

ideology of being a “country of the future” without discrimination. Her *Diário de Bitita* ties her suffering to the history of slavery in Brazil.

Hopes that political change might come for Afro-Brazilians was dashed under the 1964 to 1985 Brazilian dictatorship, which did not alter *modernismo*'s institutionalization. Military rule curtailed freedom of speech and freedom of association for all Brazilians, including those who had been inspired by the colonial wars in Africa and the success of the US Civil Rights and Black Power Movements (Skidmore 14; Oliveira 156). An official rhetoric of racial harmony was maintained, and Freyre even spoke in favor of the Military Dictatorship (Skidmore 2). It is in this challenging environment that the Movimento Negro Unido was formed in 1978 (Oliveira 33) and that the cultural group Quilombhoje emerged (105). Nascimento led the MNU and Quilombhoje was formed to sustain the cultural journal *Cadernos Negros*. The latter was the first forum of its kind for thinkers and artists who wanted to construct a black identity that broke with the harmonious rhetoric of a happily mixed-up Brazil that thinly masked a national cultural whitening project (Oliveira 49, 66). These writers reevaluated the literature of the *modernistas*, sometimes rejecting it, others parodying it, still others using it to their own ends (111).

Duarte's rejection of Freyre is understandable, given his text's transformation into a justification for not considering the impact of race in Brazil's socio-economic disparities. But its rich descriptions of life on the Brazilian plantation are what Gonçalves uses to depict it as seen by a slave. Much of the violence her text treats in the first person is already part of Freyre's text, which deserves more critical analysis. Freyre's role as propagator of including African influences in Brazilian culture as a positive thing has nineteenth-century roots. Shortly after the Instituto Geográfico e Histórico was established by Dom Pedro II in 1838, Karl Friedrich Philipp Von Martius wrote in 1843 that the history of Brazil should be told in a way that presents it as an amalgam of three great “races”: white, indigenous, and black (23). The same Dom Pedro II disallowed black groups to form in Brazil because it was a threat to national order and hegemonic rule in 1861 (Chalhoub 73). The modernistas were, in some ways, continuing a practice of disallowing dissent through cultural mixture that

can be traced to the nineteenth century, and Gonçalves's text, while showing miscegenation of all sorts, gives voice to the enslaved as black people who did not live in a racial utopia.

But the reader must not throw out the advances of *modernismo* along with its shortcomings. One can see the ahistorical realization of Von Martius's hybrid Brazil in Mário de Andrade's *Macunaíma* (1928). The eponymous, picaresque hero emerges from the Amazon and morphs from one race to another throughout the novel, but his protean form comes from a spontaneous magic, not the violence of the Conquest or slavery. He communicates with the *Orixás* as well as indigenous magic, but he has no recollection of the plantation. He is jovial, indomitable, and unvanquished by modernization. He is not shuffled into a *favela* or denied a job because of his skin color. One could cast aspersions on *Macunaíma* for its role in what has become a barrier to challenging racial discrimination in Brazil. Andrade assumes the role of a culturally *mestiço* writer and might have identified as mixed, as his dark skin and African ancestry would attest (López 26). He studied Afro-Catholic beliefs at *terreiros* and was deeply influenced by oral traditions, but in the rebellious, carnivalesque spirit of *modernismo*, he did not seek to create a realistic portrayal of Brazil's past, but a radical poetry that could be used to imagine its future. If Duarte's first volume is partly geared toward revisiting classic authors such as Gonçalves Dias and Machado de Assis as "precursors" or Afro-Brazilian writers *avant la lettre*, Mário de Andrade should also be included in this genealogy.

Modernista Jorge Amado is Ana Maria Gonçalves's Cicero who invites her to the Divine Comedy of Bahia in her novel's preface. He has been the world's guide to Afro-Brazil, Rio de Janeiro and more so his hometown Salvador da Bahia, ever since his novel *O país de carnaval* (1931). In the 1970s, Michael Turner interviewed black college students who consider him part of coopting the black image in Salvador da Bahia by the tourist industry and those that benefit from it (79), and if no self-identified black authors are part of the representation of blacks, then this would be true, but Nuevo Muntu fictions are written by black and non-black authors. On the other hand, Gregory Rebassa praises his nuanced depictions of black Bahia, notes the unity he creates between blacks in Bahia, Rio, and the United States based on religions and music of African origin (153–59). Zapata Olivella cites him as an influence in his understanding of Afro-Brazil (*¡Levántate!* 117). His

bucolic descriptions and his vast knowledge of local culture, including Afro-Catholic traditions he reportedly practiced alongside folklorist Edison Carneiro and continues to believe, give the reader a sense that his passion for a multicolored, multicultural Bahia are sincere. He openly opposes Eurocentrism and racism in his novels. He repeats this gesture when racist ideas are taught in Bahia and unequivocally opposed by characters in *A tenda dos milagres* (1967). His *Jubiabá* (1935) is a precursor to the Nuevo Munto texts, because it depicts the history of slavery in a manner that combines African oral traditions with the archive of the lettered West. This novel focuses on the life of Antônio Balduino, who is mentored by Jubiabá, a black man with special powers as a medium and the memory of the slave rebel Zumbi dos Palmares, who would reappear in *Changó el gran putas*. Nonetheless, Amado often repeats many of the “sensual mulatta” stereotypes of Freyre and the proclivities of many a plantation owner, so he is not the best place to look for a nuanced depiction of *afrobrasileiras*. This lacuna leaves a space open for Ana Maria’s feminist text.

Ana Maria’s text marks a new stage in which the national boundaries of Brazil are transcended by the African diaspora, the academy is open to Afro-Catholic traditions, and there is a new focus on detailed, affirmative depictions of women’s lives. This focus on women can be seen in the works of Clarice Lispector and Lygia Fagundes Telles, and Nélide Piñón, to name a few writers associated with feminism.

This struggle between racial hegemony and an affirmative black identity continues in the second half of the twentieth century and the dawn of the new millennium. None of the authors treated in this study denies the cultural mixture of the New World so often associated with Brazilian *modernismo*. But the violence and the traumas around which these texts are centered, the Middle Passage, the plantation, armed struggle between former slave and master, give the lie to claims of a “gentle” slavery or utopian visions of present racial harmony. The spirits of *Changó* are as protean as Macunaíma, and *Um defeito de cor* can be seen as an often brutally frank depiction of the same plantation Freyre so often remembered with nostalgia. They are an attempt to look beyond the denial of long-standing racial injustice and give visibility to the African Diaspora from its formation with the enslavement of sub-Saharan Africa.

In the case of Brazil, mostly white lawyers like Antônio Frederico de Castro Alves (1847–1871) (192) and Rui Barbosa de Oliveira (1849–1923) (1) wrote literature to support their positions, though Ana Maria Gonçalves’s *Um defeito de cor* (2006) shows non-white heroes in this process, rescuing mulatto lawyer and poet Luís Gama (1830–1882) from near oblivion. He was a published poet and legal advocate for the rights of the enslaved. João da Cruz e Souza (1861–1898) was one of the most celebrated poets of his time and, according to Julio Flinn, a forerunner to the Négritude movement. Cruz e Souza has been celebrated by critics as a canonical writer, with minor attention paid to Gama (Comparato).

Brazilian abolitionism’s first black novelist, and in many ways first novelist of local national culture is the free person of color Maria Firmina dos Reis of São Luiz do Maranhão. Assis Duarte’s revisionism has rescued her text from oblivion, a victim of a “whitening” project in the study of national literature. Her *Úrsula* (1859) is among the first Brazilian abolitionist novels and one of the first written by a Brazilian woman. It is a love story like *Sab* (1841). The slave Túlio is manumitted by Tancredo and becomes his eternal servant out of loyalty and gratitude (114). However, Susana, an African (as opposed to *crioula*) slave still remembers freedom before the slave ship (114). Using Catholicism as a basis for abolitionism, the implicit author condemns the slave-holding villain to hell for his crimes (236). Her work is an important precursor to Cuban Nancy Morejón’s *Nuevo Muntu* poem “Mujer negra” (1975), which also describes the Middle Passage from a woman’s perspective, and of *Defeito* in Brazil. Reis’s text was only rediscovered by scholar Horácio de Almeida in 1962 in a used bookstore and published in 1975, and much work needs to be done on this overlooked author.

Personal quests for an autochthonous identity, cultural syncretism, miscegenation, and anthropological studies of African and indigenous beliefs were central to Brazil’s *modernista* project, which began with the 1922 Semana de Arte Moderna in São Paulo and many consider to continue to this day. Part of this new culture was a celebration of all *mestiçagem*, sexual, culinary, and cultural, according to the authors’ worldview (Santiago 165). Unlike racist Europe and the United States, Brazil was a multicolored land without segregation, in their view (167). A textual manifestation of this in the novel form is Mário de Andrade’s

Macunaíma (1928), which imitates African and Native Brazilian oral traditions and can be seen as a precursor to *Changó*. Silviano Santiago claims that in order to not become a copy of the European *avant-garde*, the *modernistas* (including Oswald de Andrade and Carlos Drummond de Andrade) drew on tropes of *indigenismo* and abolitionism alongside anthropological field studies (174). Santiago considers the Universidade de São Paulo the direct result of this celebration of “miscigenação espontânea”: Roger Bastide was called in to study Brazil’s African side, and Claude Levi-Strauss focused on its indigenous (168).

Modernismo no doubt played a role in the “rediscovery” of *Os africanos no Brasil* (1932, written 1890–1905), in which Raymundo Nina Rodrigues catalogues the regional origins and religious practices of Brazil’s slaves. His research was inspired in part by Romero’s collections of African myths in Brazil (12), which is ironic, considering the latter was a Lamarckian partially responsible for the “whitening” of Brazilian literature (Eakin 151). Nina Rodrigues’s research initially focused on pathologies, as was the norm. However, his closing argument is that Afro-Brazilians should not be persecuted for their beliefs, though he continues to presume that they are less developed than other “races” (409). Inadvertently, he created a systematic written document of what can today be seen as an alternative canon to the literary novel tradition: syncretic beliefs and practices related to African spirits and Ancestors, a preservation of oral history.

Gilberto Freyre’s *Casa-grande e senzala* (1933) turns *modernismo*’s mixed-up gaze back on the Brazilian plantation during the slave period, romanticizing the largely benevolent patriarch, the sensual mulatta, the nurturing wet nurse, and the general flexibility of Brazilian slavery (197). Freyre’s work praised racial mixture on the plantation. However, he does not praise Africans as national leaders, but those in servile roles. His work consolidated what would be called “racial democracy” (Hanchard 44–46)—that the country had benevolent slavery in the past and no racial discrimination in the present—by Arthur Ramos, and grip the Brazilian imaginary to this day. Hanchard traces this to images of benevolent slavery used to appease British abolitionists in the nineteenth century (47). However, reading against the grain and showing the violence on plantations like Freyre’s is central to Gonçalves’s twenty-first century text. Like the abolitionist texts of the past, her work reinserts the violent and grotesque into Freyre’s text, which was always there, but conveniently

ignored by proponents of racial democracy. Sérgio Buarque de Hollanda's *Raízes do Brasil* (1936) furthers this national miscegenation myth, declaring the "ausência completa . . . de orgulho de raça" of the Portuguese, which he considers typical of Latin America (53). The result of this tradition is a hegemonic notion that there is no racism in Brazil (Hanchard 13).

Modernista Jorge Amado is the novelist most influential in representing Afro-Brazil in its transition from a slave-based colony, particularly in the Northeast, to a democracy. Like the cases of Palés Matos and the aforementioned anthropologists, it is tempting to dismiss his work, as the appropriation of authorship from Afro-Latin Americans, as Afro-Brazilian poet and critic Oswaldo Camargo does (4: 41–42) because Amado is not black. In his *Bahia de Todos os Santos* (final edition, 1970) he states that his majority black home of Bahia is a model of racial democracy, but he gives the lie to these claims by chronicling the suffering of Bahia's primarily black poor (35), presented as a class issue. However, concessions of isolated or elitist racism appear (15). Amado's *Jubiabá* (1935) is a precursor to the Historical Novel of the *Nuevo Muntu* in Brazil, because it is among the first to revisit slavery and incorporate the spirits in that process. The work is also important because he invites the reader to the *candomblé* that he and folklorist Edison Carneiro attend as worshippers, perhaps one of those the latter chronicles in his *Candomblés da Bahia* (1967) (40). Like Gonçalves and Zapata Olivella, he was an outspoken political activist for the rights of the oppressed, though socialism and oral religious traditions were the venue he chose over racial identity politics. If white intellectuals can be this transculturated, if the Orishas belong to those who are not racially part of the African Diaspora, then Amado can be seen as both within and without African Diaspora literature. This is the case of Allende, whose short stories and novels often include African spirits and, in the case of *La isla bajo el mar* (2009), re-tells the Haitian Revolution, largely from the perspective of an enslaved girl. Amado's texts, like those of the *modernistas* before, have been received and reinterpreted by Gonçalves (10) and US writer Toni Morrison (*Beloved*, 1987) in their own imaginations and investigations of the history of slavery (Allen-Dixon 1). Amado and Allende are examples of a fruitful dialogue that can take place when the Diaspora can tell its own story and those outside it are willing to listen, a dialogue greatly influenced by inter-American racial history.

In the Latin America of the 1950s and 1960s, the Cuban Revolution coincided with the US Civil Rights struggle, reactionary dictatorships, and National and Pan-African liberation projects on the African Continent. In Brazil, the turmoil on three continents inspired two major camps of black movements: *africanistas* and *americanistas* (Hanchard 140, 156). Both shared a common concern that Brazil clearly was not the racial democracy it claimed to be. Florestan Fernandes's Marxist scholarship, most importantly, *A integração do negro na sociedade de classes* (1965) showed the economic and political marginalization of blacks from entering the upper echelons of Brazilian society after abolition. Marxist Brazilian *africanistas* believed that Brazil's black population was so large that it should envision a community more like the emerging Lusophone African nations. Thus, one cannot say that Brazil's black movements and their revisionism of diaspora history came only from US or Cuban sources, though the latter sought to be a leader of African and Latin American revolutions for tactical reasons (Moore 281). This renewed focus on the link between Brazil and historical Africa, not only its religions, is captured in Antônio Olinto's *A casa da água* (1969), which anticipates Gonçalves's saga of Brazilian *retornados* in Nigeria, those who went back after abolition.

Though not the only one, the United States has been a model for the African Diaspora in Brazil, in part because the mixed legacy of Segregation created a clearly defined color line with which to both marginalize and empower a community (Hanchard 88; Oliveira 41). The struggles led by Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X inspired a generation to envision themselves as part of a diaspora community with its own unique history. During the 1970s, the US provided refuge to the exiled Abdias do Nascimento (Oliveira 31), the leader of the Teatro Experimental do Negro (est. 1944), which created many of the first mainstream black actors in Brazil and resulted in plays about blacks written by blacks and acted out by them (44), as opposed to the continuing blackface tradition that came from abolitionist drama (Castilho 10). Nascimento became the face of the Movimento Negro Unido in 1978, which fostered centers to research the history of blacks in Brazil (Oliveira 30). As Oliveira, Hanchard, and the essayists collected by Fontaine have noted, the Brazilian transition to democracy in the late 1970s and early 1980s was defined by political groups based on racial identity. Nationalism itself was marred by the dictatorship in Brazil, which explains Ubaldo's reimagining of the

Brazilian plantation as populated by disgusting, corrupt masters, slaves who own slaves and prostitutes, miscegenation through rape, and elites who conveniently forget their African ancestors. Gonçalves's self-identification as a black female writer of black women's history, like Conceição Evaristo, is a self-conscious revision of the primarily male voices on slavery, reaffirming the role of identity politics in contemporary depictions of slavery. Conceição's *Ponciá Vicêncio* (2003) tells the story of a black family's arduous transition from slavery in Brazil, a trait it shares with *Defect*, though the narration is not in the first person. Evaristo's novel, and in many ways, Gonçalves's, would not exist as they do if not for the poets and other writers that formed the Quilombhoje group in 1980 to support their 1978 literary journal, *Cadernos Negros*, which sought to cut through the legerdemain of "racial democracy" and establish black pride through literature and recovering Brazil's slave and African past in a new way that focused on diaspora and racial consciousness (Oliveira 78; Afolabi).

Bearing the weight of this tradition of slavery in literature comes Ana Maria Gonçalves's *Um defeito de cor*, which she would later describe as a search for her own black identity as she allies herself with an Afro-Brazilian identity politics, as she told me in a 2011 interview. This is part of the reason that she is re-visiting the colonial/imperial period in search of the slaves' perspectives. Her text creates a canon of Afro-Brazilian Writers, including Gama, adding them to the Luso-Brazilian canon through allusions to Padre Vieira and an imaginary slave who wrote one of José Saramago's novels, in addition to the alternative canon of the Orishas, Vodouns, and Loas that are central to the plot. In the introduction to the novel, she pays homage to Jorge Amado. Though she was not in contact with other Brazilian writers at the time, her work is roughly contemporaneous with novelist Conceição Evaristo's *Ponciá Vicêncio* (2003) and historian Júnia Furtado's *Chica da Silva e o contratador de diamantes* (2003). The popularity of the film *Xica da Silva* and the telenovela *A Escrava Isaura*, both from 1976, indicate the continued interest in Brazil's history of slavery, and they both spawned soap operas that aired in the late 1990s and the new millennium. Amado's *Gabriela, cravo e canela* (1958), which Luis considers an important Boom novel that includes depictions of Africans and their descendents (*Voices* 11), was also made into a soap opera in 1975 and was remade last year, indicating a

continued popular interest in history of the slave period. Her work is part of a greater awakening of black consciousness in Brazilian letters that began during the transition from the Military Dictatorship (1964–1985) to democratic rule, as Oliveira, Hanchard, Nascimento, and Duarte have shown.

Democratic *abertura*, or opening, has been paralleled by an opening in academia in the Americas beyond national borders and a new interest in the African Diaspora. This is the intersection where *Dramas of Memory* lies: at a new, inter-American, diaspora-based, comparative approach to the historical novel that goes beyond Boom/post-Boom distinctions to redefine the historical novel on slavery written during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries during and after the racial politics of the 1960s, while acknowledging the precursors that led to the *Nuevo Muntu* historical novels. These novels combine the history of New World slavery with the oral spiritual traditions of the enslaved and their ancestors.

Literary History: The post-Boom

While part of a tradition, these texts are also part of a literary rupture with the past that goes beyond commonly-held ideas of the “post-Boom,” the term most often used interchangeably with “contemporary literature” (Swanson; Shaw). My interpretation of the literary subgenre “historical novel” is a response to Seymour Menton’s work on “new” historical fiction written primarily after 1978, which incorporates the narrative innovations of the Boom. This will be further discussed in the first chapter, in which I propose my own theory of historical fiction based primarily on Zapata Olivella and Gonçalves’s texts.

Any definition of the Boom will inherently define the post-Boom because the latter word has served as a place-marker, like the shifting signifier “contemporary,” until more specific words can be developed. One can define the Latin American Boom in at least two ways: a political definition and an aesthetic classification. Both of these roughly coincide in the entirety of the 1960s and have a clear ending in 1971 (Luis, Lunes 11). A political definition of the Boom places its origin in the triumph of the Cuban Revolution in 1959, which resulted in a national boom (1959–1961) according to critic Emir Rodríguez Monegal (18). With the Cuban government’s support, a later international boom of literary conferences, journals, and book publishing

sought to create a revolutionary new art and identity for Spanish America (18–22). This is directly related to the aesthetic definition of the Boom, because Castro’s Movimiento 26 de Julio supported a foundational literary supplement led by Guillermo Cabrera Infante, *Lunes de Revolución* (1959–1961) (Luis, Lunes 9). This publication’s demise and the banning of the controversial film *P.M.* are outlined implicitly in Cabrera Infante’s *Tres tristes tigres* (1967), through allusions to article topics of the journal, and explicitly in Castro’s “Palabras a los intelectuales” (1961) in which political diversity, often coinciding with aesthetic innovation, are condemned. This forms part of the transition from the 26 of July Movement regime to the Communist regime, both under Castro’s leadership. The US Government, threatened by pro-Soviet Cuba, poured resources into Latin American studies departments in major universities intended on better understanding a region that had been largely ignored until then (Delpar 167). The largely Cuban-based artistic production of the Boom and the largely United States-based consumption of these products were fomented in part by Spanish publishing houses and those of Latin America (Rodríguez Monegal 22–24). US translators like Gregory Rebassa, James Irby, and Suzanne Jill Levine (Rodríguez Monegal 33–35) contributed to international visibility. As with the Casa de las Américas, literary prizes such as the Biblioteca Breve of the Catalan Seix Barral publishing house raised the visibility of Spanish American writers in the United States and Europe (Swanson 61). One of the two most important literary prizes related to the decade was the Prix Fomentor, which Jorge Luis Borges won in 1961, leading to his translation and dissemination in English (33). Twenty-one years later, Gabriel García Márquez won the Nobel Prize (Joset 23). The former acknowledged a patriarch of the new movement, and the latter is the recognition of the First and Third World (as they were known then) of what many consider the generation’s greatest achievement, *Cien años de soledad* (1967). There seemed to be a common sense of purpose for Latin American writers, and stars emerged, all of whom met one another, read one another and sometimes worked together (Swanson 60): García Márquez, Cortázar, Mario Vargas Llosa, and Carlos Fuentes (77). Their most representative Boom texts were, respectively, *Cien años*, *Rayuela* (1963), *La ciudad y los perros* (1962), and *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* (1962). In addition to Borges, these writers considered Juan Rulfo (*El llano en llamas*, 1953), Carpentier (*El reino de este mundo*, 1949), and Miguel Ángel Asturias (*Mulata de Tal*, 1963) to be their

artistic forefathers (Rodríguez Monegal 21, 51, 77). Rodríguez Monegal includes Cabrera Infante among their ranks (35). Luis (Lunes 10) and Ardis Nelson (82) do the same, but Shaw and Swanson consider the Cuban closer to the “post-Boom” because of his humor and appropriation of pop culture (Swanson, *New Novel* 42). This is problematic, since *Tres tristes tigres* (1967) was published the same year as *Cien años*, the most indubitably Boom text. Because these authors wrote and interacted primarily in Spanish, Brazil was largely absent from this phenomenon, with the notable exception of João Guimarães Rosa, whose *Grande Sertão: Veredas* (1956) was read widely by authors in Spanish America (Rodríguez Monegal 77). Clarice Lispector, another canonical Brazilian writer, was not widely studied outside of Brazil until her “discovery” by French philosopher Hélène Cixous in 1979, during the post-Boom, though she was not unknown in Spanish America. Swanson rightly includes her in his articulation of the post-Boom in *The New Novel in Latin America* (1995) as a seminal literary figure, though it is hard to characterize her as “post-Boom,” at least in terms of optimism and accessible style (Swanson 128). I approach her *A paixão segundo G.H.* through the lenses of race, gender, and class in “Las artistas autónomas,” and comparative Afro-Brazilian studies will no doubt continue to reveal other commonalities between her work and authors of the Boom and afterward.

Brazilian literature’s marginalization by Spanish American and US scholars during the Boom is not new. As Leslie Bethell has shown, Brazil has always been viewed as culturally different from Spanish America and the United States because of its language, its late independence, and its frequent alliance with US foreign policy. Writers like Simón Bolívar and José Martí created maps of “Latin American” identities that seemed to ignore the Lusophone half of South America. In fact, the first “imagined community” to include Brazil in “Latin America” became popular as a result of the Allies’ strategic mapping of a Third World during World War Two (Bethell 474). But the success of the Cuban Revolution and the Boom united artists and scholars in the inclusion of Brazil in a grass-roots Latin American identity by Carpentier (“Cuestión”), Rodríguez Monegal, and later by Vargas Llosa (*La Guerra del fin del mundo* [1981]).

Political reactions to the Cuban Revolution also contributed to Brazil’s place in a Latin

American identity. The United States supported the 1964–1985 military government in Brazil that, like so many countries in the region, was marked by censorship and human rights abuses. These often sent writers into exile, leading to cultural exchange. The dictatorship continued a long-standing practice in Brazil of prohibiting explicitly race-based movements (Chalhoub), so while the US Civil Rights Movement inspired many young people in Brazil, it was more difficult to organize a collective movement (Oliveira; Oliveira-Monte and Costa McElroy). However, the oppression of the regime created a political reaction by blacks in Brazil and the United States, as exemplified by the Movimento Negro Unido, consolidated in 1978 (Oliveira-Monte and Costa McElroy 11). Public discussions of racial discrimination gained more prominence in the 1990s and 2000s with the ongoing debate over racial quotas at Brazilian public universities (12). Given the strong influence of “racial democracy” thinkers like Gilberto Freyre (Hachard 127), who may have adopted the term from Arthur Ramos (Alfredo), and the complex racial diversity of Brazil, the binary model of US racial politics had to be altered to fit a Brazilian reality, which continues to spark much debate.

Brazil, Cuba, and the African Diaspora were central to Roberto Fernández Retamar’s “Calibán” (1971),⁹ the essay that can be seen as the epitaph of the Boom, a continuation of the political division established in Castro’s “Palabras,” and an elevation of the conflict to an international scale, using Shakespeare’s slave who curses his master as the symbol for the Latin American *pueblo* and the spiritual Ariel as Calibán’s voice and allies, the revolutionary artist and intellectual (37). He revises Uruguayan essayist José Enrique Rodó’s “Ariel” by inverting its symbols. Rodó argued that the creation and preservation of Latin American culture must come from enlightened youth with access to educations in the Greco-Roman ideals of mind and spirit (Ariel), whom Retamar would call the intermediaries of European and US oppression. Uruguayan essayist Ángel Rama would later describe this vision for Latin America as the “lettered city,” a culture created by Western-educated, intellectual elites, a tradition which the *Nuevo Muntu* novels must continue since they are writing Latin American novels, but which they alter through oral traditions, such as the Orishas and the voices of the enslaved. Retamar proposes that the voice of an autochthonous Latin American culture must come from the oppressed, enslaved Calibán and that it is the task of the enlightened “Ariels” of today to be their

intermediaries against the colonizer and his underlings (64). Many Brazilian writers and politicians are among those whom he considers exemplary in the struggle for an authentically Latin American culture (as opposed to a colonial, Eurocentric culture) (34), and he considers himself to be the heir of the Brazilian Modernists, such as Mário de Andrade and Oswald de Andrade (141) as well as Cuban patriot José Martí (52). Retamar and the revolutionary Ariels are, in his view, working to support Castro's attempt to create revolutionary allies throughout what was then known as the Third World as well as among the oppressed in the First World, mirroring Castro's foreign policy at the time (Moore 281). Writing hot on the heels of the turmoil surrounding the Civil Rights struggles of the 1960s, he decries the abuses of US segregation and the violence involved in desegregation, and he lauds Latin America's uniquely culturally and racially mixed society (20–21). The essay was provoked in large part by the heated international debate regarding the Revolution's public trial and imprisonment of dissident poet Heberto Padilla (Rodríguez Monegal 19) and his failure to reach the Ten-Million-Ton Sugar Harvest (Luis, *Dance* 220–21). He was imprisoned for tarnishing the international moral authority of Castro's government through incendiary accusations, and debates regarding freedom of speech in the island spread throughout the West (Retamar 88; Casal). "Calibán" sought to cut down such "bourgeois" intellectuals as Fuentes, Borges, and Monegal, all of whom are depicted as pawns of the US and European empires who assault the struggling Revolution and its allies from the comfort of Parisian cafés and US universities (49).

Retamar's attack on the Boom described more than provoked the phenomenon's end: the international debate over the public trial of dissident Cuban poet Heberto Padilla (1971) had already divided Spanish America's intellectuals, dashing the idealistic hopes of a unified cultural movement supported by *engagé* artists. However, one must describe the Boom as an aesthetic phenomenon as well, and its influence on *Nuevo Muntu* works have political and aesthetic bases. Retamar's accusations against Fuentes stem primarily from the latter's *La nueva novela* (1969). Here, the novelist admits the impact of largely European and US structuralist and post-structuralist thinkers on his work and that of the Boom novelists, though inspiration clearly came from Latin America itself as well (Rodríguez Monegal 37). In addition to experimental novelists

James Joyce and William Faulkner, the thinkers of Tel Quel influenced Latin American novelists, because they interrogated the relationship between linguistics, philosophy, history, and literature. Among their ranks was the Cuban Severo Sarduy, whose *De donde son los cantantes* (1967), for example, can be seen as a direct aesthetic link between the Boom and the Parisians, though Sarduy never supported Castro. The novel preferred by Tel Quel sought to tear down traditional notions of linear plot, mimesis, and stable characters and encouraged play with arbitrary signifiers, as Sarduy's text shows. French thinker Jean-Paul Sartre's notion of the *engagé* artist would directly influence Retamar, because the latter was educated in France and adopted this socialist ideal (Retamar 92). In short, Fuentes argues that the *nueva novela* toys with non-mimetic language to break with the realist tradition in Latin American narrative best characterized by the *novela de la tierra*, which Roberto González Echevarría would later describe as a fictionalization of the anthropological field study, best exemplified by Rómulo Gallegos's *Doña Bárbara* (1929) (152). Doris Sommer's *Foundational Fictions* (1991) shows that the Latin American penchant for the realist style has its roots in its earliest national novels (3). However, like the novels in *Foundational Fictions*, the *nueva novela* of the Boom continues to be set in Latin America, even though *Rayuela* and Borges's short stories often confuse the lines between urban Europe, particularly Paris, and urban Latin America. Africa remains in the margins. As the titles of Fuentes's and González Echevarría's studies suggest, the Boom was a shift in how prose was written, and the novel, particularly long ones written with complex syntax and diction, was the genre of choice. As González Echevarría shows, the economy of language, non-linear plots, multiple narrative planes, and intense attention to detail of Borges's short stories made him a model for novelists throughout Latin America (161). However, Vargas Llosa's sprawling *novelas totales* attempt to incorporate the perspectives of representative characters from all walks of life, leading to a more complete depiction of a national or Latin American community (Swanson 70). These begin with his *La ciudad y los perros* (1963), culminate in *Cien años de soledad* and *Tres tristes tigres* (though Swanson does not call the latter "Boom"), and end as a Boom phenomenon, according to Swanson, with José Donoso's *El obscuro pájaro de la noche* (1970) (80). One must ask why Sarduy, Lezama,

and Cabrera Infante, whom are among the most talented writers of the 1960s are often overlooked in literary histories of the Boom (Swanson; Shaw).

Monegal, partly as a response to “Calibán,” would remember the Boom as a Uruguayan exile and Yale professor who linked the writers of Latin America with the US and French academies. He was editor of the Paris-based Latin American journal *Mundo Nuevo* (1966–1968 under his direction; ended 1971) (26). His *El boom de la novela latinoamericana* (1972) shows that there was more than politics involved in the Boom, and that, no, he was not a Central Intelligence Agency operative, (27) as Retamar suggests (56). (There is no known evidence that Monegal received funds from the Central Intelligence Agency for his journal *Mundo Nuevo*, but the accusation invites further investigation on the matter.) Like “Calibán,” Monegal finds the roots of the Boom in Latin American literature before the 1960s, but he focuses on its poetry, beginning with Darío and the Hispanic *modernistas*, as the source of narrative innovation (39). He also pays *hommage* to Brazil’s Euclides da Cunha and Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis as precursors of the Boom (53). He includes not only Guimarães but Lispector as well as constituting the Brazilian equivalent of the Boom (93). Opting to avoid political favorites, he notes Carpentier’s centrality to the phenomenon, particularly in the latter’s definition of *lo real maravilloso* (magical or marvelous realism) in his prologue to *El reino de este mundo* (1949) (18). For Carpentier, the awe-inspiring history of Latin America, which for him includes Haiti, is reflected in stories that seem surreal and hyperbolic to the eyes and ears of Western readers. The heavy influences of non-Western cultures, particularly those of Africans and indigenous peoples of the Americas, create syncretic depictions of reality unseen elsewhere in literature, according to Carpentier. This is in many ways a continuation of the anthropological approach to literature described by González Echevarría in *Myth and Archive* (1990). Carpentier’s position in some ways confirms Retamar’s accusation that the Boom’s narrative was Eurocentric, since the “magic” of “Magic Realism” was everyday reality for many Latin Americans. This said, Retamar would never attack a writer working for the Cuban government in the heated Cold War context of 1971. However, the widespread use of the term in the US academy has all but mined it of any meaning, homogenizing authors as diverse politically and aesthetically as those listed here.

Avoiding the terms “Boom” and “Magic Realism,” González Echevarría chose to seek a new model of periodization, which places what were previously called “Boom” authors like Borges, Carpentier, and García Márquez in a new category: authors of “archival fictions” that seek cultural origins for Latin America through the fictionalization of history (an “archive” of “dead” truths) and syncretic myth (3). His work could be seen in some ways as an attempt at answering “Calibán”’s central question, which is shared by Carpentier, Monegal, and Fuentes: “does a Latin American culture exist?” For all of these, the answer is “yes: we have remarkable novels.”

The previous political and aesthetic definitions of the Boom are combined in Chilean novelist, critic, and exiled professor in the United States José Donoso. His *Historia personal del “boom”* (1972) is closest to Monegal’s nuanced political and aesthetic history, though he imbues it with memories of his youth. His debate is with the Boom’s detractors, whom, he claims, treat it as a homogeneous phenomenon, a literary mafia of sorts, out of jealousy (15). His list of *gratins* (128) consists of Fuentes, Vargas Llosa, García Márquez, and Cortázar, but he presents this exclusive group as a party game, then proceeds to include other writers like Lezama, Cabrera Infante, Argentine Ernesto Sábato for *El túnel* (1965), and himself for *El obsceno pájaro de la noche* (1972) to cite only a few examples (217). He uses whimsical names like *proto-boom* (e.g. Rulfo), *petit boom* (Bioy Casares), *boom junior* (Sarduy) (131), and, with vengeful snarkiness, *sub-boom* to describe the resentful losers who treat the Boom like a mafia out of jealousy (132). He contextualizes the Boom literarily like Monegal, whom he credits for giving the movement a firm identity through his journal *Mundo Nuevo*, but he does so with the anxiety of influence of an author remembering his early days of breaking with a national literary tradition supported by educational and publishing structures that had become stagnant, inadequate, and provincial (20). The reaction was a Pan-Latin Americanism and an opening to European and US texts as a means of revitalizing novelistic language (23–24). The sense of a new moment in literature was embodied in the Congreso de Intelectuales de Concepción in 1962, in which Donoso, Fuentes, and Retamar participated (48). Fuentes spoke in favor of the Cuban Revolution there, and the sense of unity among the writers, including UNEAC writer Alejo Carpentier, indicates the importance of the Revolution in a “continental coherence” in

politics and fiction that would end with the 1971 Padilla case in Cuba (60). Of the “mafia,” only García Márquez earned any level of financial success from his literature (66), so Retamar’s accusation of “colonial” intellectuals living the high life in Paris is implicitly rejected (75). Donoso notes that Latin American writers have always traveled abroad, often in exile, to write about their nations of origin (79). Retamar is mentioned as a guest of Fuentes’s, who received invitations from the Cuban government for events, no doubt before the debate over Padilla (116). The end of the Boom for Donoso is not the case itself, but a Christmas party where he and stars like Cortázar and Vargas Llosa were planning a new journal called *Libre* that never materialized due to the polemic over censorship in the Cuban Revolution (123–25).

The Boom was the last Latin American literary movement to be thoroughly defined, which has resulted in the insufficient term “post-Boom.” It could be said to begin with Retamar. The term is insufficient, though, because its definition hinges entirely on what it is not: the Boom. It has lasted over forty years, thus spanning the tensest years of the Cold War and a “globalized” capitalist world in which the United States continues to dominate politically, though not exclusively, and the dominant classes of the former Third World have largely put their hopes in the market, not Revolution (Derrida). As Latin Americanists become more aware of the historical specificities of their object of study, a single vision of the “Latin American novel,” formerly bolstered by what some perceived as a single Pan-Latin American liberation struggle, will not suffice. This is not to say that there have been no attempts at theorizing contemporary literary production, but that this theorization is fragmented into several simultaneous phenomena, many of which occur before and during the 1960s. As readers attempt to better define the texts of the so-called “post-Boom,” the term “Boom” will change, and may disappear altogether as the standard by which Latin American narrative is defined.

When Luis compiled his *Dictionary of Literary Biography on Modern Latin-American Fiction Writers*, he reiterated the list of Boom authors shown here and their world-wide impact, but he placed Cabrera Infante firmly at the heart of the Boom (xi). Like Monegal and Donoso, he also mentions the Brazilian literature of the 1960s that parallels the Spanish American Boom (xi). Among its precursors, he includes Jorge Amado, João Guimarães Rosa, and Clarice Lispector, and Lygia Fagundes Telles and Nérida Piñón are placed alongside the

Boom (xii–xiv). He includes Puerto Rican writers like René Márquez and Luis Rafael Sánchez and calls for an expansion of the literary history of Latin America to include Latino/a and Hispanic texts written in the United States, which my work seeks to partly fulfill (xv). Another of his observations is the importance of women and black authors in the post-Boom period, which points to studies like this one (xv). Most relevant to my study is his inclusion of Antonio Olliz Boyd’s biography of Zapata Olivella alongside the more recognized authors of the Boom period (313). In the introduction to his Latino/a poetry anthology called *Looking out/Looking in* (2012), Luis argues that there is currently a Latino/a boom taking place after the Latin American Boom (xiii), which supports my position that the *Nuevo Muntu* subgenre should include Dahlma Llanos-Figueroa’s novel on slavery in Puerto Rico and other works by Latinos/as and Afro-Latinos/as that revisit slavery in future studies. Luis develops the justification of the prefix “Afro-“ for some Latino/a authors in the United States, noting that their experiences and writing are often different than those who are not darker-skinned due to their marginal status and frequent identification with African Americans (xv–xvi, “Afro-Latino/a” 34).

There are no Boom authors, only Boom texts, an argument Swanson’s literary history shows but does not make explicit (90). This necessitates a new term for fictions about slavery that is not simply a response to the Boom. *Nuevo Muntu* historical novels exist before, during, and after the Boom, and throughout the Americas, though their production increased during the 1970s, as critics Richard Jackson and Ian Smart have shown. Cabrera Infante, Carpentier, Cortázar, García Márquez, Fuentes, Sarduy, Vargas Llosa, and Donoso all continued writing after 1971. These works include many celebrated titles such as Carpentier’s *El arpa y la sombra* (1978), García Márquez’s *Crónica de una muerte anunciada* (1981), most of Sarduy’s novels, and Vargas Llosa’s *La fiesta del chivo* (2000). However, Swanson perceives a shift away from the narrative innovations of the *nueva novela* and a supposed return to “social referentiality” (95). His focus is on the market of the US academy, whose syllabi and journals drive consumption of novels and even employed many authors (83). This was the case of Monegal, Fuentes, Donoso, Vargas Llosa, and Borges. Swanson claims that university departments supposedly needed to justify their programs by seeming more practical than poetic, a hypothesis that is not convincing given the many other political and aesthetic factors of the Boom (83).

However, Swanson's hypothesis correctly notes the role of the academy in creating literary icons and the consumption of literary forms, a practice that is always polemic.

The one post-Boom subgenre, if it can be defined in literary terms at all, which unites the US and Latin American academies in heated debates, is the *testimonio*. Again, "Calibán" is a useful starting point. Retamar's call for autochthonous Latin American literary production that supports the oppressed in their liberation struggle is perhaps best exemplified by Miguel Barnet and Esteban Montejo's *Biografía de un cimarrón* (1966). The "Ariels" of Cuba, La Casa de las Américas, debuted the Premio Testimonio in 1970, creating instant recognition of the form in the academies of the Americas (Skłodowska 56). The *testimonio* form occurs throughout Latin America and is considered its first autochthonous literary form. According to Elzbieta Skłodowska's survey of the *testimonio*, Barnet, Retamar, Jorge Narváez, and Alfonso Reyes hold this view (60). John Beverley stipulates that the *testimonio* has the length of a novel, a first-person narrator who is not a professional writer but who speaks from his own lived experience, and that it is narrated orally to someone else who transcribes it (24–25). This definition is based on the Casa de las América's, which in turn was based on Barnet's text. For Beverley, like Retamar, there are bourgeois works and politically revolutionary writings, and the *testimonio* is the apex of the latter and the nemesis of the former. Skłodowska, following González Echevarría, avoids this binary pitfall by claiming that the novel has no predetermined form (91), and thus Barnet's *novela-testimonio* does not either. It dialogues with non-literary documents, such as legal and travel accounts, a Latin American practice as old as the *relaciones* of the Conquistadors and Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas, and, I might add, Camões's *Os Lusíadas* (1572), the national epic of Portugal. González Echevarría contextualizes Barnet and Montejo's dialogue, tracing it back to abolitionist texts described earlier, most importantly Manzano's, in *Myth and Archive* (166), but the basis of this genealogy is Luis's *Literary Bondage* (1990) (200). González Echevarría claims that Barnet/Montejo's text has two authors: one is Montejo, who edits and constructs his own narrative of the past, which consists of his escape from slavery, the War of Independence, and several Afro-Caribbean spiritual practices and customs (170). The other author is Barnet, the mediator who constructs a hybrid narrator between himself and Montejo in an attempt to transcend literary mediation altogether and come

directly in contact with the lived experience of history (170). I will return to his work in the next section and in following chapters, because they influence my view of *Nuevo Muntu* historical novels. This pattern of *engagé* mediator-marginalized eyewitness-academic composition reoccurs in Elena Poniatowska's *Hasta no verte, Jesús mío* (1969) and Elizabeth Burgos's *Me llamo Rigoberta Menchú y así me nació la consciencia* (1983), the most decidedly *testimonio* works (Swanson 95). Beverley's contention that the *testimonio* is not literature is useful in some cases—unlike a literary novel, Menchú's text was used in a legal setting to pursue justice for human rights violations, something one cannot do with any of the Boom novels (95). This said, Manzano's autobiography and poems were used as eye-witness accounts of the horrors of slavery and contributed to abolition in Cuba (Luis, Introduction 16), so the foundational nature of abolitionist texts for both the *testimonio* and *Nuevo Muntu* novels is evident. Scholars like Beverley have also feared that institutionalizing the *testimonio* neutralizes its ability to provoke readers to political action (23). A counterargument to this could be found in Hernán Vidal's contention that canonical literature can be a place to continue debate and promote awareness of human rights abuses (11), another theory that Zapata Olivella's text anticipates.

Challenging Barnet, Joanna Bartow has argued that Carolina Maria de Jesus's *O quarto de despejo* (1960) is the origin of the *testimonio* form. First-person accounts of abuses in Cuba, such as the partly fictionalized *Antes que anochezca* (1990) by Reinaldo Arenas, along with a general disappointment among several marginalized groups in monolithic revolutionary projects such as the Revolution challenge Barnet and Retamar's notion of the *testimonio* as a socialist project. If one removes the requirement of socialist consciousness from the *testimonio*, one must ask why Lydia Cabrera's *El Monte* (1954) is not considered the origin of the genre, because she, too, attempts to give voice to the Calibáns of the Cuban countryside by focusing on African and syncretic oral spiritual traditions, which Zapata Olivella, Gonçalves, and Barnet's texts clearly show. As history moves away from the Revolutionary origins of the *testimonio*, it will pass from denouncing the violence of the day to memorializing and mourning the violence of the past, and its quest for justice will transcend its initial context to more abstract concerns regarding the nature of language, ethics, and new definitions of aesthetics. The horrors of the *testimonio* are part of a trend of explicit violence in Latin

American fiction, as is evidenced by the crime novels of Rubem Fonseca and Patrícia Melo in Brazil and Fernando Vallejo in Colombia. The *testimonio* also problematizes the treatment of the 1960s as synonymous with the Boom, since texts from 1960 and 1966 are both considered *testimonios*, which Swanson (*Latin American* 95) and Shaw (*Post-Boom* 10) treat as a post-Boom subgenre. Neither of them consider early Cuban *testimonios* like César Leante's *Con las milicias* (1962), Lesandro Otero's *Cuba, Z.D.A.* (1960), as Luis does (*Customs* 123), or the writers of *Lunes de Revolución* in the 16 May 1961 special issue that includes testimonies of the combatants at the Bay of Pigs (Playa Girón) (Luis, *Lunes* 120).

The *testimonio*, for Donald Shaw, is part of a greater “return to realism” in the “Post-Boom” spurred by liberal reactions to the Latin American dictatorships of the 1960s to 1980s. He adds to this definition the greater visibility of women (71) and minority writers and thematic focus on urban settings, popular and youth culture, optimism, and love (*Post-Boom* 10–12, 24). He expanded an essay begun in 1981 that sought to define the Boom and the narrative that followed it (4), which became *The Post-Boom in Spanish American Fiction* (1998) and, later, *A Companion to Modern Spanish American Fiction* (2002) (166–231). Among the works' merits is an extensive annotated bibliography of those who have attempted to define what occurs after the Boom. There are many mentions of the Cuban Revolution, but they are contradictory. How can the Boom be caused by the Cuban Revolution and yet be somehow non-political or non-liberal? For example, Alejo Carpentier's essay on a return to realism is part of Cuba's rejection of Boom writers dubbed “colonial” or “counterrevolutionary,” as I have shown in my discussion of *Calibán*, but not all writers follow Carpentier's call for a “return to immediate realities” (6). Shaw's studies treat an almost entirely Southern Cone-based corpus and yet leaves out the prolific and gifted Roberto Bolaño in his 2002 work. Even his Post-Boom essay on Puerto Rican Rosario Ferré focuses on her studies of Felisberto Hernández, Julio Cortázar, and commonalities with the star of the post-Boom for Shaw, Antonio Skármeta (the focus of another Post-Boom study) and Isabel Allende (118–26). He does not notice the question of race in Ferré's “El regalo,” when a dark-skinned girl is named Carnival queen for the first time, to the scandal of the locals (90–91). This denouncement of racism on the island can be traced back to Tapia's abolitionist play *La cuarterona* (1863) and, explicitly, to the poetry of Luis Palés Matos, but in Ferré's

context, it is part of an inter-American struggle against denial and oppression. In the case of Allende, Shaw rightly notes the wide-spread impact of her *La casa de los espíritus* (1982) in *Post-Boom* and *Companion*, but he does not note the legacy of slavery in her works, such as “La mujer del juez,” which he rectified in a 2011 article on Allende’s *La isla bajo el mar* (2010), though my chapter 5 will show differences in Shaw’s and my approaches to the novel. The African Diaspora’s history and its impact on Latin- and inter- American literatures call into question Shaw’s focus on realism, liberal politics, urbanity, and love. Shaw criticizes Ángel Rama’s claim that Latin American authors are still seeking a unique identity for their national and inter-national communities: “It is interesting that such an old-established (and perhaps old-fashioned) concept as the search for the foundations of national or racial identity should still have currency among young writers today in Latin America” (18). But Shaw’s “racial identity” for the post-Boom is implicitly white. The minorities he notes but does not delve into studying are Jewish and homosexual people (122), who have always been a part of Latin American literature (see Stavans on Jews and Quinlan and Balderston on gays), though until recently their ethnic or sexual identities were frequently closeted. African American and indigenous communities have faced political violence since the conquest, as *Changó* shows, so Cold War dictatorships are a shocking introduction to violence and human rights violations for the Latin American middle class. I say this not to value one suffering over another; I only mean to contextualize it in a greater history of pain. There have constantly been liberal writers in Latin America since Bolívar, and most Boom writers identified with the Left, though writers like Fuentes, Vargas Llosa, and, later, Paz changed course politically after the Padilla case. And, regarding the *testimonio*, Shaw himself notes that it began in 1963, so it cannot be a marker for the start of a historical period he says began in 1975 (*Companion* 230). Regarding style, *Changó*, like Sarduy’s work, challenges the notion of realism well after the Boom in a style that is anything but simple. Shaw accuses Sarduy and Mexican Salvador Elizondo of somehow avoiding reality in their work, though their interest in Chinese torture shows a common interest in very real violence that the *testimonio* exhibits. Part of Sarduy’s complexity is his understanding of Afro-Cuban traditions, which he shares with Barnet and Montejo’s *testimonio*, calling into question how “accessible” these texts are and for whom (171). Shaw does not define the “love” theme in the “Post-Boom”

very thoroughly, though he revisits its most out-spoken proponent, Allende, in his 2011 article, which I treat in Chapter 5. One must ask, though, when love was not a topic of literary concern. The post-Boom, for Shaw, is a bundle of contradictions and at times it does not seem “post-” so much as a continuation and complication of the Boom itself (23–24), though he also calls it a “counter-project” (173). The question still remains regarding Shaw’s thirty-year-long study and Swanson’s commendably broader works: where are the black novelists? More importantly for literary critics, what do black authors’ style, message, and politics contribute to the history of literature? How do they and their concerns regarding African oral traditions and the history of slavery change how novelists like Allende are read? My study will address these questions.

Shaw overlooks those who are not self-proclaimed liberals. Perhaps the political polar opposite of the *testimonio*, and, at first glance, *Nuevo Muntu* historical fictions, is *McOndo*, an alternative map or “país” as it has been called, of the Americas. The term comes from a 1996 essay by Chileans Alberto Fuguet and Sergio Gómez. In it, the young writers relate their frustration at having their works rejected at a US university for writing something that “could have been written in the First World” (9). Latin American writing had become synonymous with a shallow, tired notion of Magic Realism that, to the authors, seemed backward, exotic, and artificial, a sort of show that was being put on for the US academy. The young authors’ frustration speaks to a sense of distance from the Boom in the early 1990s among a new generation. Beginning with Fuguet’s *Mala onda* (1990), there is a predilection for urban settings and cosmopolitanism, here reinterpreted as pertaining to the “global village,” and access to the latest technology, which, say the authors, in turn affects the narrative form of the texts (9). Allusions to a new canon of television programs, movies, and music are combined in literary prose to create new linguistic forms. This aesthetic has class implications, since those with the most access to technology are those in the upper classes. Also, Fuguet has raised eyebrows in an essay praising “magic neoliberalism,” a celebration of capitalism and US mass media culture that in many cases resonates with a generation of readers and writers that have no firsthand experience of the Cuban Revolution’s early days. Fuguet’s own life story is exemplary of this rejection of “Calibán”-style Latin American literature. His family was exiled in the United States during his formative years, and he “returned” to Chile as a teenager

after being raised in the land of MTV (Lowe and Fitz 122; *Missing*). As purveyors of an analogous youth culture in Chile, Fuguet and Gómez were aware that young Chileans liked American products and cultural forms as much as Fuguet did growing up. This bond, combined with the anxiety of influence from Magical Realist Macondo, García Márquez's hyperbolic village that defined the Boom for so many, led to a wholesale rejection of magic in their fiction. In the case of Fuguet's collaborator in *Se habla español* (2000), Edmundo Paz Soldán, a strong interest in science fiction prevails. Simultaneously, the Mexican Generación del Crack, such as Ignacio Padilla and Jorge Volpi, are also attempting to break away from the Boom by setting their works abroad while continuing its linguistic experimentation (Swanson 100). The accusation that this is an elitist genre could be countered politically with Fuguet's *Tinta roja* (1996), which focuses on Chile's marginalized and esthetically by his penchant for realist, accessible prose. Another approach would be to compare outspoken Cuban dissident Zoé Valdés's texts with those of Fuguet and Gómez, because the same rejection of revolutionary hopes, relish of film and popular culture as modes of expression, interest in markets, and rebellious youth culture, are all present in her works.

While the term "McOndo" is useful, it is clear that this global village was not built in a day. Cabrera Infante's passion for Hollywood permeates *Tres tristes tigres*, including wordplay with English, commercials, and *kitschy* US stereotypes of Latin America. Before Fuguet, Manuel Puig was the pop-culture Borges who rejected spells and odes to *hombres nuevos* in his *La traición de Rita Hayworth* (1968) and *Boquitas pintadas* (1969). Puig's masterpiece, *El beso de la Mujer Araña* (1976), which can be read as an epitaph for the revolutionary project and its replacement with the pleasures of Hollywood (Swanson, *Latin American* 89), is also anticipated by Cabrera Infante. If one prefers the radio to the big screen, Puerto Rican Luis Rafael Sánchez's *Guaracha del Macho Camacho* (1976) is the soundtrack of the post-Boom (Shaw, *Post-Boom* 10), though popular music (without the advertisements) has always been central to Caribbean literature. Exalting popular culture and music is also central to *Nuevo Muntu* fictions, because these cultural spaces where ample continuation of Africa in the form of song and dance flourish. They do not reject Magic Realism, but they do not always conform to the political line of "Calibán" either.

In addition to this definition of McOndo I should add what I call Afro-McOndo texts, which include the urban settings, realist style, post-revolutionary politics, and global outlook of McOndo with a continuation of *lo real maravilloso* because its authors are all of Hispanic Caribbean origin. Afro-McOndo texts are usually *Nuevo Muntu* historical novels as well, for their combination of African oral traditions and the history of the African Diaspora. For example, as I describe in another article, Junot Díaz's *The Brief, Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2004) has as many allusions to movies and videogames in its language as it does syncretic, magical occurrences, like the *fukú* curse at its heart, because the author is familiar with a milieu that is different from Fuguet and Gómez's. Similar phenomena occur in the short stories of Díaz's *Drown* (1996) and Oscar Hijuelos's *Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love* (1989) and *Beautiful María of My Soul* (2010). Hijuelos plays with pop culture and stereotypes in cities, but has moments of magic, like Célia Cruz's interpretation of the protagonists as children of Changó and Yemayá in the film adaptation, though it is not a slave history and not a *Nuevo Muntu* historical novel. Other texts that fall in this genre are Julia Álvarez's *How the García Girls Lost Their Accents* (1991) as well as Cristina García's *Dreaming in Cuban* (1992) and *The Agüero Sisters* (1997), which have ample allusions to Orishas and follows young women in the United States and Cuba (see Luis 41–42).

Afro-McOndo also troubles the borders between McOndo works and US Latino Literature, which Luis has argued is a continuation of the Hispanic tradition in the boundaries of the United States, in large part due to massive Hispanic immigration during the last half of the twentieth centuries (*Dance* 3). In “Afro-Latino/a Literature and Identity,” Luis explains that, though Afro-Latino influences have affected all people of the Caribbean, it serves as a “counter-discourse to a homogenizing understanding of culture” like anti-slavery discourse before it (34). Also, when these authors came to the segregated United States of most of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, they experienced marginalization that light-skinned Hispanics did not, such as access to resources and communities (35). Latinos and Hispanics with dark complexions add a new level of complexity to US identity politics (37). Piri Thomas's *Down These Mean Streets* (1967) is considered by Luis (38), Marta Moreno Vega, and the compilers of *The Afro-Latino Reader* to be a foundational text for Afro-

Latino literature and US Latino literature in general. Manuel Zapata Olivella's *He visto la noche* (1954) can be read as the first US Afro-Hispanic novel. Luis has noted another precursor in Pedro Juan Labarthe's *The Son of Two Nations* (1931), which calls for further study and comparison, but the critic notes Thomas's treatment as a classic (*Dance* 21). Both US Latino literature and McOndo literature alter Retamar's initial question and push it toward a new question: "where does one America end and another begin?" Philip Swanson's *Latin American Fiction* (2005) presents it as a separate development (104) from his idea of the post-Boom, which is heavily influenced by Shaw (92). The cultural production and individuals that flow across the borders between the United States and Latin America, make their communities, and the texts that imagine them, a post-Boom phenomenon in terms of quantity of literary texts with these themes (immigration, cosmopolitanism, pop, and youth culture), though the Latin American exile writer in the United States is as old as Bolívar's time in New Orleans and Martí's "Nuestra América." McOndo, US Latino and Hispanic literature(s) will continue to evolve and consolidate themselves both as separate phenomena and as manifestations of the same phenomena of migration, as the US academy has recognized in its creation not only of Latin American Studies programs but also of Latino/a, Chicano/a, Puerto Rican, and Inter-American Studies programs since the 1990s. Zapata Olivella always had a fascination with technology ("Conversación," 17), and Ana Maria Gonçalves's blog is central to her work, because it is among the only places where her first novel is accessible and it played a role in her meeting her future publisher ("Confissão 100," *100 meias confissões*). Cosmopolitanism, popular culture, and emerging digital technologies are key to Goli Guerreiro's claim that there is a new African Diaspora emerging through the connections of the Internet.

As the transculturation of Latin America and the United States indicates, the most important phenomenon of the latter twentieth century and the new millennium is not how one writes, but who writes. This is not to disregard aesthetics in the study of the novel; if anything, it is an exciting opportunity to explore new forms of narration and to investigate how texts written by new populations continue previous literary traditions in new contexts, challenge and alter them, and add new traditions to the literary canon that were previously excluded or ignored. The nation-state as a canonical novelist's only viable option for an

imagined community (Anderson 6), expanded in part by the conflict between Cuban Revolution, the United States, and their allies into a Pan-American cultural battle, has, since 1971, scattered into new patterns of community, often based on identity politics. Women writers, queer writers, black writers, Latino/a writers, and Jewish writers, to name a few, are taking the place of “national” or “revolutionary” writers. This international scattering of individuals, in the cases of racial, ethnic, and religious minorities, has resulted in the diaspora as a useful model of approaching the novel form. The international black diaspora model has its roots in thinkers like Afro-Latino Arturo Schomburg (*The Afro-Latino Reader*), W.E.B. Du Bois, and Marcus Garvey (*Changó*). Gilroy notes in *The Black Atlantic* (1990) African Americans’ debt to Jewish thinkers of the nineteenth century in their theorization of an international minority community (205). In turn, Caribbean exiles and emigrants to the United States and elsewhere have adopted and adapted the diaspora model, sometimes but not always in tandem with the international revolution model, to imagine their communities (Flores 3). I will discuss Zapata Olivella and Gonçalves’s unique visions of diaspora in Chapter 2.

The focus on those marginalized by the political status quo has also been heavily influenced by race and gender studies since the 1960s, which will be central to my analysis of maternal figures in Chapter 3. The Boom was virtually an entirely white, ostensibly straight, male phenomenon. Due in large part to the victories of feminist movements and their own challenging of gender norms, female writers gained much prestige from the 1970s to today, including Brazilians, US Hispanics and Latinas: Clarice Lispector, Rosario Ferré, Isabel Allende, Julia Álvarez, and Mayra Santos-Febres are but a few of the important writers who have broken up the boys’ club.¹⁰ Even white male writers like Puig and Sarduy were excluded from the group of writers that produced the Boom texts. This marginalization during the 1960s and 1970s was due in part to homophobia (Puig, José Lezama Lima, Virgilio Piñera, Reinaldo Arenas). Though eroticism has been at the heart of Latin American literature since the national romances of the nineteenth century, it was primarily hetero-normative. Swanson considers Puig among the pioneers of the post-Boom in part because of his treatment of taboo desires (93). However, Cabrera Infante and Asturias’s novels already treat similar desires and practices. Lezama’s *Paradiso* (1966) is firmly within the canon of queer studies, and it was censored in Spain and Cuba in

part for its depictions of homoeroticism (Herrero-Olaizola xxv). *Paradiso* is a foundation of the post-Boom if one understands it as a time of sexual liberation for queer identities. Sarduy always presented himself as an aesthetic heir to Lezama (“Dispersión”). However, Lezama, Puig (Bacarisse), and Sarduy (González Echevarría) all roundly rejected being the face of any kind of gay movement.

One reason for these authors’ refusal is that reading these texts solely as part of a queer canon (like a black canon, or a female canon) can lead to overlooking the stylistic innovations of their texts, a pitfall I try to avoid regarding the authors of this study. First Lezama and then Sarduy were proponents of the Cuban Neobarroque, a highly erudite style that sought to use the most complex syntax and diction, the most arcane literary allusions possible, in search of a sublime art that challenged the limits of language (“Dispersión”). Lezama’s *Orígenes* was the *tertulia* and journal that constituted a citadel of high culture in the days before the Revolution, so his work is pre-Boom. However, he published in *Lunes* and was widely admired by writers who supported and criticized the Revolution, most notably Cabrera Infante and Sarduy, so he can be viewed alongside his Neobarroque colleague Carpentier as a forefather of the Boom (Luis, *Lunes* 10). Sarduy continued this aesthetic tradition after the Boom, so one could argue that there are writers that are too immense for one literary movement. But if one includes Lezama and Sarduy among the post-Boom, one cannot say that it is marked by accessible language or the voices of the poor, as in the case of the *testimonio*, nor that technological advances such as film, television, and computers are central to their narrative style. Popular culture is evident throughout Neobarroque literature in the form of dance and music, for example, in *De donde son los cantantes* (1967). Like Fernando Ortiz’s *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar* (1940), it mimics a Cuban song (Santí 26). The Neobarroque is a far cry from McOndo’s heavy metal soundtrack, and if one considers *lo real maravilloso* to be mutually exclusive with McOndo, the Neobarroque has more in common with the Boom.

A second look at the music in Sarduy, and by extension, Ortiz’s work, shows that many of Sarduy’s stylistic innovations came not only from the heady French philosophy of Tel Quel, but also from his Afro-Cuban cultural roots, incorporating the innovation of African dance into his ludic signifiers, as Tatiana

Alekseeva (9) has argued. His odes to the Orishas in *Un testigo fugaz y disfrazado* (1993), written in his final years, confirm the Afro-Cuban influence in his writing. Ortiz, while every bit as baroque and lettered as Sarduy, also shared a fascination with the African influence in Latin America and can be seen as a precursor to the *Nuevo Muntu* historical novel, though Enrico Santí is quick to caution the reader not to forget the anthropological rigor of his study when praising its literariness. The combination of the authority of the lettered academy with the oral traditions of the Ancestors, musical or otherwise, is central to the historical novels of the *Nuevo Muntu*, and Ortiz's transculturation (cultural hybridization) is central to the new myths of racial mixture these histories create, and like Allende, they show the influence of the diaspora on those who do not identify as "black."

Sometimes identifying as black, other times as mestizo, Manuel Zapata Olivella's life and works span the pre-Boom to the post-Boom, the entire American continent, Africa, and even China. This is another reason for choosing his term "*Nuevo Muntu*" over "post-Boom," because, as Luis notes ("Editor's," 5) he does not neatly fit the most commonly used models of literary history, which continue to be tied to nation and language (Bosi, Chang-Rodríguez, Morales, Rodríguez, Shaw, Swanson). "Post-Boom" currently refers to a forty-two-year swath beginning in 1971 and does little to specify what traits define this period, which will no doubt be better defined by a more nuanced understanding of the differences and commonalities of Latin American and US cultures, movements, and writers. But Zapata Olivella's work defies even "post-Boom." He wrote constantly from his 1939 publications in local newspapers (Unlabeled Scrapbook) up to his final days in 2004. He cultivated poetry, theater, essay, and narrative. His early fiction represented the stylistic tendencies against which the *nueva novela* sought to rebel: social/socialist realism that advocates for the rural masses, linear plots, simple, clear language, and overt didacticism. However, his work was not provincial. As chronicled in his *Pasión vagabunda* (1949) and *He visto la noche* (1953), he took an abrupt hiatus from his studies in medicine in Colombia, traveled through Central America and Mexico, and spent extensive time traveling the United States. Zapata's first novel, *Tierra mojada* (1947) is a so-called *novela de la tierra*. His decades of US residence and his long-standing friendship with Langston Hughes (Prescott, "Brother") identify him as a US

Hispanic writer *avant la lettre*. *He visto la noche* describes the experiences of a black Hispanic during Jim Crow, and he promoted black rights and culture through literature and other means throughout his career, so his work can also be read as part of an African-American literary tradition. Furthermore, some of the traits of Boom writers can be seen in his early works as well. His *Chambacú, corral de negros* (1963) earned an honorable mention for the Casa de las Américas prize and was published in Cuba six years before it was released in Colombia, indicating his recognition by the most important Latin American writers of his time in the capital of the early Boom. Like many other talented writers in Latin America, he lost favor with critics, losing competitions to Vargas Llosa and García Márquez, so after *Chambacú*, the glory of the Boom passed him by (Prescott and Tillis 12). A twenty-year period of literary “silence” began, during which he taught throughout the Americas and conducted linguistic and ethnographic research, but he did not write novels. But the experimental traits of the Boom novel described by Fuentes and Rodríguez Monegal are all evident in his *Changó, el gran putas* (1983). Chronologically, it is a “post-Boom” novel, and it exemplifies the recent growing interest in diaspora writers. Partly as a reaction to the Boom’s entirely Western white male, heterosexual cast of stars, recent Latino/a, US Hispanic, African, Indigenous, Asian, Muslim, and Jewish writers have gained much attention, as have women and queer writers, in part because of wide-spread US scholarly interest in identity formation, questioning of the nation, and representation of the Other. *Changó* embarks on a journey through the African Diaspora in Spanish America, Haiti, Brazil, and the United States, paradoxically using the scattered nature of diaspora to unite Africa, Europe, and the Americas, including the United States and Brazil. This cultural geography is part of the *Nuevo Muntu*, and instead of neatly fitting into previous frameworks of identity and community, it leads the way to a new one. While international in scope, this historical novel and the *Nuevo Muntu* authors that come afterward alter how national histories are read, focusing on the enslaved and their descendants, but, as I show in Chapter 2, they include slaves’ oral spiritual traditions as well.

Costa Rican writer and critic Quince Duncan proposes the aesthetic of *afrorealismo* to describe this new moment in Afro-Hispanic Letters (ignoring other traditions from throughout the Americas):

The term afrorealismo is justified because this literary current does not use the traditional referents of “main stream” literature, like “boom” writers do. It does not evoke Greek myths or folklore. It is not negrista literature, nor does it follow the negritud current. It is not Magical Realism. It is a new expression that performs an Africanizing subversion of language, calling on unknown mythical referents or those that have been marginal until now, such as the Muntu, the Samanfo, the Ebeyiye, the revindication of deities like Yemayá, and the incorporation of elements of English to the créole of the coast (n.pag.)

Duncan’s *afrorealismo* is presented as a Minerva leaping forth from the mind of a newly awakened diaspora and does not consider the impact of the literary traditions he rejects on black authors and others interested in New World slavery. The novel is a form of European origin, as I show in chapter 1, but *Nuevo Muntu* historical novels add African elements and the history of New World slavery and alter this tradition. *Nuevo Muntu* novels are not purely African, because African purity is neither possible nor desirable in these creative, syncretic works. It is clear that Zapata Olivella’s writing incorporates elements of his work as an anthropologist and linguist, as is evident in Ciro Alfonso Quintero’s study of the author, *Filosofía antropológica y cultural* (1998). He was friends with Boom writers, and interest in African elements of speech, religion, and music are as evident in the work of Ortiz, Carpentier, Cabrera, Amado, Barnet, and Cabrera Infante as they are in *Changó*, though there is no Pan-American African movement to complement the former’s texts. Ana Maria’s research of Afro-Brazilian religions, based in part on Nina Rodrigues and Lopes’s work, is also a part of this folkloric tradition. She and Zapata Olivella also incorporate European elements, including the Greek myths Duncan cites as examples of Eurocentrism. These works show that both Europe and Africa had heroes, gods, poets, tragedies and epopees, but neither culture is absent in these novels.

In this context of continuation of and rupture with the Boom, historical fiction has gained a special prominence at the end of the twentieth century. The Pan-American scope and the diaspora model of studying previously marginalized groups builds on what Menton calls the New Historical Novel of Latin America. Menton’s study claims this phenomenon began in 1978 with Carpentier’s *El arpa y la sombra*, though

he admits it was already evident in *El reino de este mundo* (1949), a foundational text of the Boom. What distinguishes it from the “not so new” historical novel inherited from the nineteenth century’s foundational fictions is its use of Boom-era narrative techniques (20–21). It is a continuation of the *nueva novela* with a focus on the distant past. Menton does well to include Brazil in his massive study, but he does not include the United States as my project does. I will return to Menton’s arguments in Chapter 1, where I develop my own theory of historical fiction, partly in response to his.

What I have coined *Nuevo Muntu* Historical Novels are the products of populations that, for the most part, did not write novels in Latin America until the era now known as the post-Boom, and once they did, they re-visited the past that created the African Diaspora in collaboration with authors who were not marginalized in the same way. This reviving of the Ancestors is among the most important phenomena of what has been called the Post-Boom. It is ongoing and will no doubt blossom as intellectuals and writers interested in the African Diaspora and the literature of the Americas work together to better understand the implications of the contributions of the African Diaspora to the New World. The novel form will be central to this because of its breadth, its flexibility, its popularity, and its prestige, even in electronic format. Writers will continue and break with tradition, but they will have to acknowledge the contributions of writers like Zapata Olivella, Gonçalves, and other descendants of Africa to the history of the novel at the levels of author, form, and content, and the compelling history of slavery has inspired novelists from outside the diaspora like Isabel Allende (*La isla bajo el mar*, 2009) and João Ubaldo Ribeiro (*Viva o povo brasileiro*, 1984) to write *Nuevo Muntu* historical novels. It is a step toward changing notions of where valued knowledge comes from, perhaps the most lasting element of “Calibán”: “is there a Latin American culture?” The answer is yes, and Africa is a huge part of it; her traditions link both sides of the Atlantic and change how Latin America—and the Americas themselves—were previously imagined.

Notes

- ¹ Monegal devotes several pages to imminent Brazilian authors Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis, Euclides da Cunha, João Guimarães Rosa, and Clarice Lispector, along with mentions of others, in his classic study of the Boom (52–55, 58–59, 74–75, 77, 93). Most critics do not share his association of the Boom with Brazil, and the Brazilian literary tradition is much richer than he has space to cover in an essay about the Hispanic Boom.
- ² Richard Jackson was the first to study black authors' contributions to Spanish American literature. Duarte, focusing on the Brazilian national tradition, does not cite his work, but we are both in his debt. See his *Black Writers in Latin America*, *The Black Image in Latin American Literature*, and *Black Writers and the Hispanic Canon*. Jackson is not as interested in literary theory as Darté and Fonseca are, so I prefer the latter's definition of Afro-Brazilian literature. He is a Hispanist, not an Afro-Brazilianist, and my work seeks to speak to both camps.
- ³ For a fuller discussion of the multiple versions of *Cecilia Valdés*, see Luis, *Literary Bondage*.
- ⁴ See also Luis, Lunes 9; González Echevarría, *Myth 152*. Luis also discusses Manzano's impact on Antonio Zambrana's *costumbrista* novel *El negro Francisco* (1875) and Anselmo Suárez y Romero's *Francisco* (1880) in *Literary Bondage*.
- ⁵ This does not pretend to be an exhaustive list of Afro-Cuban authors. See Mullen and Luis, "En busca de la cubanidad" for more extensive discussion.
- ⁶ Teixeira e Sousa broke with copies of French historical novels that circulated in the early nineteenth century to focus on Brazil (Bosi 101–02).
- ⁷ Lobo argues that, unlike Brazilian-born novelist Teresa Margarida da Silva Horta (ca. 1711–1793), author of the novel *As aventuras de Diófanos* (1777), Reis lived in Brazil as an adult and thus portrays the customs of the country, unlike Horta's narrative, based on Greek Antiquity.
- ⁸ It is important to note that Gregory Rebassa already analyzes black characters in Gonçalves Dias, Graça Aranha, and Lima Barreto, noting their color, in 1954 (6).

⁹ The word “Caliban” is unaccented throughout the Spanish-language edition of Retamar’s *Todo Caliban* (2004), which includes all of his essays on the polemic figure. Its most common pronunciation in Spanish is with the accent on the final syllable, but Retamar has said it two ways since writing the essay. I have translated a long quote from the Spanish-language “Caliban ante la antropofagia” (1999) in the collection to shed light on the matter: “No matter what I thought, I had been chosen by the Shakespearian character. First he did it timidly, having me give him his true name in Spanish. If, upon being born, he was called by its prodigious inventor “*Caliban*, with an accent on the first “a,” this was due to the fact that it is an anagram of the English “cannibal.” In French, due to a similar reason, from the word *cannibale*, came *Caliban*, with an accent on the second “a,” of course. And the Spanish caught it from the French, and we accepted and promoted (I did it too, copiously) *Calibán*. We found it in this form in authors like Martí, Darío, Groussac, Rodó, Vasconcelos, Reyes, Ponce, Carpentier, and many more. But Pedro Henríquez Ureña writes *Cáliban*, true to the English original, the criteria which the translators of the Shakespeare Institute likewise assumed when they did *The Tempest* (1994) in Spanish. However, in our language, after all the “mother of the lamb” (the “horse’s mouth”), Columbus, from the word *caribe*, made *caniba*, and later *caníbal*, the logical anagram of which is *Caliban*, a word accentuated on the penultimate syllable (*llana*) that I have been using for some time, ever since a conference that I gave in Santiago de Cuba. I would like for this healthy rectification to be accepted, knowing how hard it is to change deep-rooted bad linguistic habits that have come about through poor logic. To me it seems quite paradoxical that a text that intends to be anti-colonial should begin by not being so in the title itself” (141–42). Nonetheless, the most common spelling is still “Calibán” in Spanish, so the editors have maintained the accent. His “Calibán revisitado” (1986) contextualizes the essay in the debates on the Cuban Revolution and US imperialism, continues his feud with Monegal (92), and notes similarities to the work of Edward Said. All his writings on Calibán are in his *Todo Caliban* (2004).

¹⁰ The late 1960s and 1970s marks a flourishing of women writers, and those listed here are just a handful of the most prominent. María Luisa Bombal's *La amortajada* (1938) was as complex and compelling as her contemporary Borges, and Gabriela Mistral's poetry, though it is not the genre studied here, earned her the Nobel prize in 1945. Just as there were black authors before the *Nuevo Muntu* like Manzano, there were female writers before Women's Studies and feminisms began to flourish in writing and academia the 1970s and 1980s, building on the 1960s *Zeitgeist* of equality for all.

CHAPTER 2

DRAMAS OF MEMORY FOR A *NUEVO MUNTU*

What is the novel subgenre I call “*Nuevo Muntu*,” alluding to a Hispanic New World populated by a new humanity, as the Bantu term suggests? What is its form? In this chapter, I will define the novel and argue that the historical novel and the “new” historical novel (NHN) should be read as a classical genre, because they are the written representation of oral performance. My definition of “historical novel” is a revision of the NHN, which is a Latin American phenomenon. Therefore, Roberto González Echevarría’s panoramic *Myth and Archive* will be central to how I define the Latin American novel, because he theorizes it from the Conquest to the Boom. The NHN and *Myth and Archive* are based on Mikhail Bakhtin’s definition of the novel, which traces the form to classical antiquity. The origins of history in Greek tragedy are revisited by contemporary novels about slavery. Due to the elements of orality and drama in historical fiction in general, and in the historical fictions about slavery and the African Diaspora I study in particular, I conclude that the term “dramas of memory” be used to describe a new approach to historical fiction. Since Georg Lukács was the first theorist to associate this subgenre with historical drama, I will summarize his findings and show how my approach is different. I draw on Richard Ned Lebow’s study of the origins of history and historiography as written practices, which emerged from the theater, the strategic combination of the written letter and living voice to create or revise memory through the creation and manipulation of knowledge and affect. I exemplify this through a close reading of excerpts from Manuel Zapata Olivella and Ana Maria Gonçalves’s novels.

The novel has no specific form of its own; it is an anti-form, a new, written relationship to language. Bakhtin traces the origins of the novel to the epics of Greek Antiquity, such as *The Odyssey* (326). However, he notes resurgences of the modern novel in the Renaissance and the eighteenth century Enlightenment, when a new relationship to time emerges that is marked by a vision of the present as a new start, separate from the past, with an open-ended future and a relationship to the language of the past as plastic (324). It is the only genre born after writing and consumed in silence (321), a decontextualized copy of another document. For Bakhtin, the novel parodies all other genres of writing and itself, making language indeterminate (323). He likens

theorizing the novel to studying a living language that continues to evolve instead of a dead, fixed one (321). “Popular laughter” parodied the epic in the early novel, bringing gods down to the profane present (327). This flexibility notwithstanding, the “creative impulse” of ancient literature was memory, not knowledge (325).

In the Middle Ages, telling the epics of the past was an oral performance of commemoration central to Europe’s Christian culture and structured around foundational scenes of violence. To argue this, Eugene Vance’s “Roland and the Poetics of Memory” (1980) revisits the French epic, noting the psycholinguistic structures of a work that survived for three hundred years as an oral tradition (not unlike many slave and African narratives) before being written down to be consumed in silence by modern scholars (400) like the novel. *La Chanson de Roland* bears many markings of the oral world from which it came. Commemoration served to “fecundate, animate, or make meaningful a moment in the present,” to connect a community with a struggle to the death that gave it origin (374–75). The poet or rhapsode’s function is, in part, to fill a perceived lack in the present, which in turn alters his telling of the past (382). Audiences have always needed to feel compelled to revisit history, even when doing so was to “revive” it, not necessarily to learn something new. Memory poems of this type, a combination of oral and written cultures, are rhetorical and centered around a trauma experienced by a group (378). Vance describes the oral epic as a “drama of memory” (379), a “tragedy” (379) that binds the poet to the traumas of the past, and the audience to him and that past in search of a “therapeutic truth” (381). Vance chooses “tragedy” in part because of the focus on death and its transcendence by the “spirit” of exemplary heroes, but also because oral cultures used mental “stages” to structure memory (383).¹ This was called *compositio loci*, and the “places” on the “stage” were scenes of violence that served as mnemonic devices (383). These tendencies, remainders from oral cultures in historical novels, are what give the subgenre a continued vitality. Recent interest in the African diaspora among readers has demanded a commemoration of the tragedies that resulted from the enslavement of sub-Saharan peoples. This is the foundational trauma that writers of the late twentieth century are attempting to work through, and their function is like that of the rhapsode: they tell of “what once was [and] what has yet to come” (Vance 377), a new vision of the Americas.

Shortly after Vance, Walter Ong revisited the relationship between oral language and the epic, which Bakhtin considered the fluid novel's monolithic origin. Ong's work describes three cultures: oral cultures, written (chirographic) cultures, and cultures of secondary orality. Oral cultures have no contact with the technology of the written word (101). Written cultures process language, even verbal language, as though it were a written word, thinking in lists and linear plots that mimic words on a page (98). Secondary oral cultures may interact verbally through electronic media, but these emerged after the technology of writing altered how humans conceive language (176). This third culture represents a continuation of writing's presentation of words as "things" outside the body, as opposed to experiences, which is how oral cultures tend to view utterances (101). Ong claims that the epic is of the oral world, because its origin precedes the Greek alphabet and thus it had to be learned using mental formulae (101), often centering around episodes of violence (44), and performed with different details every time it was sung, depending on the audience (172). Ong notes that it was not "memorized" verbatim and "recited" as one in a written culture would later do (70).

Ong's focus on voice, the body, and the oral poet (67) inform my theory of historical fiction, which I view as a mode of writing history using oral formulae. The novels I study insert oral traditions of African Ancestors and deities into the written novel. They are incorporated not as monoliths, but as narratives that change every time they are told. Bakhtin's theory of the novel as open-ended parody with an eternal present of reading is useful, however, because these novels explicitly reconnect amnesiac readers and characters with the historical and spiritual past. The oral traditions of Africa do not have the same past/present divisions of western time or the sacred/profane divisions as the Christian and Greek cultures in Bakhtin's theory, so the result in these novels is a combination of linguistic malleability that Bakhtin sees in popular parody and that Ong sees in oral myth. This fluidity with memory subverts the "truths" of colonial and nationalist ideologies in the Americas told in history books at the times and places these novels are written. Unlike Bakhtin's epic, which treats the past as separate from the present, though its narration changes with every telling, the language of historical fiction connects the readers of the present to the past, as Vance claims. The revision of national

histories, such as versions of the colonization of the New World that exclude any attempt at the slaves' point of view, treats the past as questionable, plastic.

The novel's definition in Latin America was greatly altered by Roberto González Echevarría's *Myth and Archive* (1990). He devises a theory of the genre without the words "Boom" or "nueva novela" that have been handed down from the late 1960s and early 1970s. The origin of this theory is his reading of Carpentier's *Los pasos perdidos* (1953). The critic notes that "writing is bound to the founding of cities and to punishment" and that "[Carpentier's novel] is a repository of narrative possibilities, some obsolete, some leading up to García Márquez" (3). The latter's *Cien años de soledad* (1967) is the apex of what he calls "archival fictions," those that gather a series of dead truths, form new origin myths, and open language to new possibilities for the future. Since the novel has no form of its own, it must parody other forms, which in their original context were not viewed as literature but as bearers of authoritarian truths. This begins before the founding of the New World with legal documents and continues through the Colonial Period to Independence (54). In the enlightenment and positivist nineteenth century, "scientific" nature and travel writing cataloguing the flora and fauna of the New World seemed to be telling irrefutable truths about what enlightened observers saw around them (100). This is until texts like *Os Sertões* called civilization's science into question by showing its limits when faced by the barbarity in civilization itself (141) and by the impossibility of knowing for certain what is being seen. Later, anthropologists produce village studies, which were novelized in the *novelas de la tierra* (152). Anthropologists catalogued origin myths, which were also novelized, from those peoples excluded from the modernization projects of Latin America (6). By the time of Carpentier's work, authors were attempting to use the novel form to create their own origin myths. For example, Miguel Barnet and Esteban Montejo create a transculturated written voice in *Biografía de un cimarrón* (1966) (167).⁵ Archival fictions such as Carpentier's and Barnet's contain not only an attempt at a new beginning, but a cemetery of all the "dead truths" (legal, scientific, anthropological), or those that no longer seem to be unquestionably true, that precede the present of narration.

I am as indebted to González Echevarría's reading of Barnet and Montejo's work as I am to Ong in my understanding of orality, because of two of the former theorist's terms for Montejo: "living archive" (170) and

“guardiero” (171). Montejo is “living,” unlike the archives of a court: one can almost hear his laughter as he tells his story, follow his body as it hides in forests and caves, and, of course, he has a human name: we are “listening” to a person, not an inert document (Ong 67). This “living archive” is special not only because of the history he tells, but also the orality that imbues his text. His version of history is told in a way that includes African oral traditions of the Orishas, showing that the slaves had their own ways of communicating with the past, even when they had no access to the western study of history. He is alive, speaking and moving, and he is connecting Barnett and the reader to a previously unknown perspective of the past.

Vance (379) and Ong note that oral memory is not structured in lists, but in theaters of memory (112). Poets imagined the places where events happened so that they would not forget them. This rhetorical manipulation of space with the end of maintaining the listener’s interest and directing it toward a new representation of the past with borders controlled by the speaker is important for destabilizing the borders that exist in the present. This is especially powerful when the division is between nations and groups of people that without this memory seem so stable. González Echevarría describes Montejo as a “guardiero,” a colonial position typically held by an elderly slave, who guarded the border between one plantation and another (171). The critic notes that these were some of the best-informed individuals on the plantation because of their old age and experience. However, they were often involved in slave escapes and uprisings, since they were strategically located at the edges of power. Historical fiction is a drama of memory, because it has elements of orality, memory, and a redrawing of the maps that order the world in the reader’s imaginary. Zapata Olivella and Gonçalves would later expand on Montejo’s theater, creating a greater stage for their works. Barnett and Montejo’s work did not emerge in a vacuum, either, but I will return to their context in the next chapter. For now, I wish to focus on historical fiction as a narrative mode.

Theorization of the historical novel in Latin America owes much to Seymour Menton’s *Latin America’s New Historical Novel* (1993). Menton’s definition shows his debt to previous models centered on the “nueva novela” of the Boom. He sees its aesthetic continuation in the new historical novel (NHN). From Jorge Luis Borges he takes the impossibility of truth and the cyclical and unpredictable nature of history (23). In the NHN,

history is consciously distorted, allusions to other literary texts and meta-commentary on narration are inserted, and historical figures interact with the characters or are the characters themselves (24). He describes it with the Bakhtinian terms “dialogic” (of two conflicting meanings simultaneously), “carnavalesque” (humorous, anti-hierarchical, and focused on carnal excess), “parody” (repeating another texts’ language), and “heteroglossia” (“the conscious use of different types of speech”) (24–25). For Menton, this is the next stage in Latin American narrative after the Boom, marked by “muralistic scope, exuberant eroticism, and complex, neo-baroque (albeit less hermetic) structural and linguistic experimentation” (14).

Just as for the “post-Boom” to exist, there must be a “Boom,” for the NHN, there must exist previous, “old” historical novels and contemporary “not-so-new” historical novels with which to contrast this form. Menton considers every novel historical “in the broadest sense, since it portrays or captures the social environment of its characters.... Nevertheless . . . the category must be reserved for those novels whose action takes place completely (in some cases, predominantly) in the past—arbitrarily defined here as a past not directly experienced by the author,” nor can any of the characters be contemporaries of the author (15–17). Menton traces the historical novel to the founding of the new republics during the romantic period of the nineteenth century (1826–1849). Menton claims that all of these authors were liberals writing themselves into history as rebels against conservatives, whom they presented as a continuation of European power (18). Perhaps ironically, they fashioned these on British Sir Walter Scott’s historical fiction, chronicles of the Conquistadors, and Golden Age drama (18), adapting European forms to their own immediate needs, as González Echevarría shows. Realism (1872–1883) had almost no historical fiction, because it focused on the present, says Menton (19). The modernist period (1882–1915) saw a meager resurgence of novels concerned with “faithful” recreations of the past (19), and the few historical novels of the *criollistas* (1915–1945) sought an enlightened yet often elitist vision of the nation. I agree that the historical novel is a politically advantageous document of history that has been novelized and purports to be a representation of a past that is partially remote from the author and reader, but I do not agree that it need be separate from the present. Menton is sure that Carpentier broke with this tradition, but he is not sure if it was with *El reino de este mundo* (1949) or *El arpa y la sombra*

(1979). He appears reluctant to include the 1949 work because it throws off his timeline, which is centered around a temporal, aesthetic, and political break with the Boom (1959–1971).

To further associate his catalogue with the post-Boom (after 1971), Menton explains the emergence of the NHN as a partial result of the 490th and 500th anniversaries (1982, 1992) of the Encounter of the New World (29). Another explanation is the end of the Cold War and gradual collapse of Latin American dictatorships during the 1980s: “Latin America’s current crisis . . . as well as the long-range outlook, constitute a very bleak picture from which the authors of the New Historical Novels may be turning away, either as an escape from reality or as a search for national or continental ingredients that might offer a glimmer of hope in coping with the future” (29). It seems ironic that, after arguing that the historical novel was central to promoting political projects, Menton should call them “an escape,” which contradicts not only his statements but Philip Swanson’s claim that the NHN shows a trend toward “social referentiality” (95). Escapism is not the answer to why the historical novel exists as it does today.

Changó el gran putas (1983), while it has all the characteristics Menton mentions, shows the shortcomings of his definition. Menton overlooks the history of the African Diaspora to his study’s detriment.³ Zapata Olivella’s text memorializes the “Discovery” of America that simultaneously created the modern world and led to the enslavement of vast populations. African and indigenous histories call into question the “crisis” Menton perceived at the end of the Cold War: the Americas have been in turmoil from their inception, as *Changó* shows. It is centered on the Americas but spans four continents from before the Conquest to the late 1960s. It can do this because of a unique relationship to time, which is central to my departure from Menton: in his study, the “characteristics” of the NHN are not all simultaneously found in all NHNs, but he has one scalpel to cut texts out of his study: the separation of the “present” of the author’s lived experience from the characters and events narrated, which represent the “past.” The weight of the history affects us all. *Changó* approaches the present and the past in a way that changes how historical novels are read.

Zapata Olivella is a *guardiero*: he gets to decide the limits of space and time as he constructs his memory of the diaspora. The novel is narrated using a Bantu cosmovision called the *Muntu*. In this vision of the

world, “mankind” (a paltry translation of the term) is not separated from the plants, animals, and land with which he interacts (Piquero 19). Nor is there a permanent separation between the sacred and the profane, which means that the *Muntu* of the present world can interact with those of the spirit world as well as the dead (19). Returning to González Echevarría’s definition of archive as a “dead truth,” it is important to note that this contact with the dead and the spirits leads to a crumbling of the separation of the present and the past. Zapata Olivella’s novel recreates the New World as the coming of “the Nuevo Muntu,” creating a continuation of the *Muntu* notions of space and time in a new context: América. This crumbling separation of past and present, Africa and the West is already evident in Montejo and Barnet’s hybrid text, but *Changó* further develops it. Barnet, however transculturated he may be, is part of a Western academic tradition, as González Echevarría shows (166). Zapata Olivella is heir to a similar academic tradition as a medical doctor and professor of literature raised and educated by a positivist father (*¡Levántate!* 59, 92). Like the Ancestors of *Changó*, Montejo narrates the past during his final days to a young author whose career is only beginning: the text must be hybrid to exist in writing as it does, because otherwise Montejo would not be recorded, “translated,” and published, and Barnet would not have access to his knowledge of the past, much of which is without precedent in the historical novel. Montejo has contact with the divine and the dead. At times Montejo has a sense of epic, mythical time, but as Ong shows, this is in no way monolithic. Also, Montejo has a sense of the present, noted by his sporadic allusions to how things are different after the Revolution’s triumph. Zapata Olivella’s text, given his anthropological, historical, and literary knowledge, which rival Carpentier’s, gives this syncretic sense of time a name, *Muntu*, and applies it to a Hegelian narrative of the history of the New World, which I will use to develop the notion of “dramas of memory.”

Hayden White’s structuralist study of history and the philosophy of history in the nineteenth century, *Meta-History* (1976), shows the common imagination of history as Aristotelian drama. White largely ignores the epic and focuses on the differences between comedy and tragedy in how history is told. Tragedy emerged from the epic and is centered on the rise and fall of a tragic hero or heroine. These individuals are virtuous in many aspects yet have a tragic flaw, often unmeasured pride or *hubris*, that leads to their downfall. The plot

structure has four parts: exposition, complication, turning point, and denouement (*pathos-agon-peripeteia-anagnorisis*). Its irony stems from the audience's knowledge that the protagonist cannot avoid fate. Tragedies are stories of destiny, gods, sacrifice, and mourning, and the *Nuevo Muntu* novels are no exception. For Hegel, the first to philosophize history, civilization is the quest to turn tragedy into comedy (122). He applies his dialectic (thesis + antithesis = synthesis and new thesis) to the rise and fall of civilizations (124). This four-part evolution corresponds to the four ages of man outlined in *Oedipus Rex*: childhood, adulthood, old age, and the silent stage, death and the four-part structure of Greek tragedy in general (exposition, complication, turning point, and denouement). However, the death at the end of a civilization is simultaneously the birth of a new one, thus making the synthesis of the conflict on which a civilization is based its own, new thesis (123). This begins the dialectic anew. White considers this narration of history to be an attempt to turn tragedy (the decline and death of a civilization) into a tragi-comedy (death with a lesson to be learned, a people's "spirit" which will continue after its death repeatedly until the final synthesis of world harmony and human self-knowledge) (122). Like the tragedies of old, Hegel's characters were great men who lead the masses to new life or to their deaths (90).

One of the first scholars to theorize the historical novel and perhaps the only one to associate it directly with historical theater was Georg Lukács, and while Menton references him, he excludes theater from his definition of the NHN. Lukács's *The Historical Novel* (1937) is foundational but limited in its Eurocentrism. It is a Marxist approach that scoffs at formalism's myopia and naturalism's ignorance of linguistic mediation of events, though it incorporates formal elements of genre into an unapologetically historicist approach (11). Like White, Lukács's point of departure is Hegel, whose philosophizing of history he considers necessary for the first truly historical novel (29), Sir Walter Scott's *Waverley* (1814), because he shows awareness of the "historical peculiarity of their age" and lessens anachronism (15). Hegel's tragic history emerges as a result of Napoleon's conquest of Europe, creating a unified national identity in France, necessary for amassing an army, and leading to nationalist reactions by the invaded nations (22–23). This is the first time in modern history, he argues, that such a large group of people have a shared sense that history is evolving and unstable, and narrative reflects

this. There are classical precursors to this form, however, which also reflect their times of historical turmoil, a pattern repeated by Spanish Golden Age theater and Shakespeare (101). These historical “collisions” of conflicting groups and ideals are personified by great men who rise to their historical destinies and often are destroyed by them. Groping along in the institutionalized blindness of his time, Lukács could not have understood, as Zapata Olivella and Gonçalves do, that history crashed into Africa at the very beginning of the Conquest, and that a shared history can clearly be constructed from the uprooting of so many millions, though they wrote so little.² Oral cultures were the raw material of anthropology during Lukács’s time, not literature or mainstream history. Nonetheless, without naming it, the theorist touches on the orality of historical fiction because of tragedy’s centrality to the evolution of the narrative genre. Compared to the sprawling epic, it uses a limited number of characters and destinies to represent a “collision of social forces at their most extreme and acute point” (111). There is a sense of condensation of events (104), of “immediacy” (105), of “living” (104), “concrete human beings and concrete situations” (actors) (105), that arouse intense feelings in the recipient (104) and cast aside “A purely intellectual reflection of facts or laws of objective reality” (104). As Ong shows, these are elements of oral, not written, communication. This explains why Lukács finds dialogue so central to historical fiction—it makes history “re-livable by the reader of a latter age” (142).

Historical fiction is a dramatization of history: it incorporates elements of oral discourse and written discourse. Drama is the written representation of theater: it has characters, voice, body and the appearance of lived experience, most of which are elements of oral cultures’ relationship to language that are optional in historiography but necessary in historical fiction (Ong 44). This is of special importance for this new period in the novel, because it allows authors to imagine a dialogue: “if you could have a conversation with your ancestor, an enslaved African, what would he say? What would you say?” This conversation is implicit in virtually every sentence of this subgenre, though the answer to the second question is often hidden and incorporated into the way the author constructs how enslaved characters answer the first question. Authors of historical fiction before the works in this dissertation, often basing their investigation on written sources and western authority stemming from university study, overlooked a valuable source in imagining the past that

might answer: “you want to talk to a slave? I just talked to one.” A wide variety of African and Afro-Catholic spiritual traditions share two aspects: a pantheon of African gods, including deified kings, and the ability of the living to communicate with the dead. Study of these practices was confined to the field of anthropology in Latin America until novelists like Jorge Amado, Mário de Andrade, Barnet, Lydia Cabrera (revisited as a novelist), and Alejo Carpentier began to combine the aforementioned dialogues. The canon of novels was combined with the parallel canon of syncretic oral traditions, but the novels’ authors were not black and to this day are criticized for speaking “for” black people “to” an almost exclusively white academia, the product of the political barriers of their time (Oliveira 88; Luis 215). There were representations and approximations of black voices in these works, but, with the exception of Barnet and Cabrera’s mediated informants, no black authors as of yet. However, their dramatization of history was an important step in altering the way historical novels are written, and they show that not only African Americans should be concerned with the role of the enslaved in the construction of the New World, but that everyone should. As Barnet’s text shows, the official literature of the Cuban Revolution was another step in developing this genre, as is seen in Nicolás Guillén’s *El diario que a diario* (1971), which creates historical narrative about slaves by a black author, but these *microcuentos*, which, it could be argued, form a fragmentary novel, do not include African religious traditions nor can the brevity of its episodes capture the sense of saga and the hunger for detail that these new works do. González Echevarría’s reading of Esteban Montejo in Miguel Barnet’s *Biografía de un cimarrón* (1966) as a second author of the text places him and Barnet at a crossroads between the white authors of the past and the black diaspora (and other) authors of this genre, though Cabrera’s text challenges his uniqueness (169).

Manuel Zapata Olivella built on this novelistic tradition and its parallels in poetry, which has been amply studied in the case of Guillén (Iñigo Madrigal 16), for example, to create a historical saga that centers on the African Diaspora from their enslavement in Africa, continues through various forms of enslavement in the New World to what he perceived to be the present of the narration, shortly after the death of Malcolm X in 1965. When does this present begin and the past end? As the author states in his prologue to *El fusilamiento del diablo* (1986), it took him over ten years of writing, revision and publishing negotiations to finish his text (8),

but I view the two dialogues I have marked in quotations as more useful. Menton's study of the historical novel claims that the genre is defined by events that take place before the author's lifetime (15–17). However, González Echevarría's notion of the novel as a "dead" or "dying truth," linking the archive to decay and its representations, is more closely related to the dramatization of history (183). By "dying truth" the Cuban-American critic means that what once seemed "static" and "alive" in these novels, such as the law, are revealed in novels to be linguistic formulae. He sees this process condensed in metaphors of decomposition. One example is the rotting Colombian legal archives at Quibdó, one of the poorest, most neglected Afro-Colombian communities, in García Márquez's *Crónica de una muerte anunciada* (1981) (183). However, *Nuevo Muntu* texts more often draw on oral histories than González Echevarría does. Though Malcolm X, for example, can be summoned and consulted like all ancestors, his time is over, and the next step is happening in the reader's lifetime. History is united with the reader in historical fiction as a dead yet continuing past cast of characters.

Ana Maria Gonçalves dramatizes history in *Um defeito de cor*, as well, taking a second step in portraying the two dialogues in historical fiction, asking two new questions: "would the dialogue be different if it were a conversation between two women? What if the things she says don't make me admire her?" As the previous list of novelists indicates, most of the people who write about slavery are men, because, like blacks, women were largely excluded from publishing fiction and being canonized. Like the issue of slaves in historical fiction without black authors that portray them, black women were also portrayed in historical fiction from the origins of Brazilian literature, in most cases by white men. Gilberto Freyre's memories of sexual initiation with a sensual mulatta is an iconic example of inclusion in historical documents of the group to which Gonçalves belongs, but it is clear that Freyre is not a black woman remembering black slave women (197). Conceição Evaristo's *Ponciá Vicêncio* is an example of a black woman writer dramatizing slavery through historical fiction, but Gonçalves's text is the first to present a mixed character like her Kehinde, who is at times a hero of a struggle to overcome oppression, at times one who passively benefits from it economically, and at times one who thrives by continuing it as she supports the wars that enslave Africans. Unlike previous authors of history like Barret, Evaristo and Gonçalves are just as interested in slaves who were not rebellious as in maroons and

iconoclasts, a tendency still felt in *Changó's* fire. Spirits and ancestors inspire her, condemn her and save her, but they are always present in her text. Her text represents a new moment in historiography when the heroics of revolutionary projects of the kind Carpentier, Amado, Guillén, Barnet, and Zapata Olivella wrote are coming into question (Furtado 19), often ceding to the identity politics and individualism that had always been present even in these collective projects.

Like Greek drama, both *Changó* and *Um defeito* are defined by their tragic endings. *Changó's* final words after Malcolm X's death to Agne, the protagonist of its coda, and, indirectly, to the reader, is that the spirits are still angry because all are not yet free and that there is still work to be done, an anagnorisis to stir the actors of the novel and to stir the reader to action (727). One of Kehinde's last letters ends with the somber realization of her guilt for killing a black man who frightened her and the dramatic irony of finding letters telling her where her lost captive son is now that it is too late (947). In this way, the tragedy is more apt to describe these novels than the epic.

Changó's textual performance is not only tragic, but is also epic in its origins. The author and many critics read the whole work this way, but Piquero specifically defines the term as a combination of historic events, great deeds, miracles, and free verse with musical accompaniment (35). Likewise, the novel begins in a mythical Africa in the poem "Origins." Like Bakhtin's epic, it happens in an undetermined preterit past and it explains the origins of a people. However, the greater circular voyage of the epic is marked by the aforementioned smaller circles of emergence, struggle, and death/rebirth, and the tragedy has all the aforementioned elements. The reader must determine if the work will have a tragic (inactivity), comedic (resolution), and/or epic (foundational) ending. The epic circle back to Africa, altered into a transculturation of North America, has infiltrated every part of América with a synthesis of African, indigenous, and European elements by the end of the novel, so it is an eternal return like Piquero's epic, but marked by repeated tragedy until its Hegelian resolution.⁴

Whether one reads *Changó* as an epic or tragedy, one must admit that he does not abandon Hegel's model of great men, the stars of history. However, he greatly changes which actors fill these roles. In addition to

Bolívar, who is a villain as well as a hero (he liberated some Americans but betrayed others), the cast of *Changó* includes slaves, mothers, and students, for example. Interestingly, no Africans are shown working in the field or doing chores: they are above slavery. In short, Hegel's elitist model of primarily great white men is applied to a different kind of elite, one of inspired individuals who lead their people to liberty. This is indicative of a "heroic" period in the historiography of slavery in Latin America that sought heroes and rebels, which historian Júnia Ferreira Furtado perceives (19), and an exclusive interest in "o negro da floresta," which Africanist Roger Bastide criticized as incomplete, blinding scholars to the "aspectos cotidianos" of passive urban and fully Christianized blacks, for example (27).

Affirming White's claim that modes of recounting history come in waves, Ana Maria Gonçalves's *Um defeito de cor* (2006) narrates the Nuevo Muntu in a moment in which novelists and historians are not only interested in revolution but also markets and the everyday lives of the "ordinary" people that Hegel ignored, affirming that his dialectic, like oral memory, is based on episodes of violence. Gonçalves's work, like Furtado's *Chica da Silva* (2008), shows that not only "great men" have compelling stories, but the ordinary slaves, free people of color, and non-Africans of her novel are as compelling, conflicted, and important a figure as Bolívar, though they are not exemplars like Zapata Olivella's protagonists. Her narrator-protagonist Kehinde is, however, in the background, witnessing key moments of slave revolts, abolition, and the return of Brazilian slaves to Africa from her place in the flock. Gonçalves's text is a tragedy, a dead yet spoken truth, because the novel consists of letters orally narrated in first person by the narrator-protagonist Kehinde, an old, blind woman, to her own slave, Geninha (888). It is written with the intent of telling her son Luiz Gama, who was stolen from her and sold into slavery, who she was and who he is, but she dies without finding him. Other works of the subgenre are comedies: Nei Lopes's *Oiobomé* (2010), like *La raza cósmica*, ends in a resolution of the modern-day *quilombo*'s trials as a just queen takes office and turns her power over to the people (223). *La isla bajo el mar* is a tragicomedy, because the narrator-protagonist of several sections of the novel, Zarité, witnesses the simultaneous death of her daughter and the birth of her grandson at the end of an arduous journey from slavery in colonial Haiti to freedom in the United States (509). *Daughters of the Stone* is more comic than tragic,

because Dahlma Llanos-Figueroa's narrator-protagonist finds fulfillment by becoming a story teller, and she does this as she tells her family saga, which begins shortly before the first family matriarch is taken as a slave, beginning a family history of cyclic births, lives, and deaths (326). I will explain more on the tragedies and comedies of these works in chapter 5.

Historical fiction is drama because it mimics Aristotelean theater's oral voice, characters, and body, and appears to be alive before the readers eyes and ears. It attempts to tear down the fourth wall between the actors in its theater of memory and interact directly with the reader and respond to him or her. Often, this is done by appeals to affect that are best performed orally and in the first or second person, because they are more primal and less separated from the individual's experience by the written word. *Nuevo Muntu* historical novels are those that share *Changó's* syncretic notion of time (present/past/future/epic) and oral traditions, both of which are directly connected to African spirits and Ancestors. They share a diasporic vision of Africans and enslaved African characters. This subgenre of historical fiction alters Menton's notion of the NHN because it does not exclude, but prefers, a direct relationship between the present and the past and problematizes the separation between the two. This is of particular importance for the history of the African Diaspora, since there are many histories of the New World that exclude Africans as active, important agents, as Menton's omission attests, and as González Echevarría's history of the novel confirms, since no black authors narrate any of the works he analyzes except Montejo and his abolitionist precursor, the slave poet Juan Francisco Manzano.

So what distinguishes *Nuevo Muntu* historical novels from any other historical novel? Or any other Latin American novel in general? What distinguishes historical novels from historiography? I agree with Menton that every novel is historical when it portrays social context (15). But this is still too broad, because González Echevarría shows that the history of the Latin American novel rarely departs entirely from narrating historical events, even at its most experimental. Some historians might counter that their record of events is the "true" version of events, but literary scholars can be distracted by a positivistic search for truth.

A narratological model of historical fiction is called for that does not distinguish between realist and historical fiction, nor literary fiction from historiography, and I think that a drama-based model is the way.

Menton's explanation of the recent explosion of historical fiction does not address the underlying question: why do people read historical novels? Politics are always caught up in historiography. Authors shape history, like all memory, to suit the desires of the moment. However, these texts are consumed voluntarily by readers. What compels them? As any teacher or student can attest, history is often unknown or simply boring. Zapata Olivella claims that *Changó's* plot "overflowed" from another historical novel called *El fusilamiento del Diablo* (1986), in which a local revolutionary struggles and dies to liberate his Afro-Colombian village. *Changó* is a narrative that reconnects this village, and the readers, with the history of the diaspora that it is presumed they do not know in this way before reading the text. It creates a new consciousness in a country and a continent that at times, and to a great extent today, has excluded the African Diaspora from their national consciousness in school curricula and elsewhere. Likewise, US exceptionalists often forget the diaspora beyond their borders, as will be discussed next chapter. This is not universal, and the United States seems to currently be at the forefront of revising this, as is evidenced by the important journals *Afro-Hispanic Review*, *Negritud*, *PALARA*, *Palimpsest*, and *Callaloo*. However, there is much left to do. So the first need for historical fiction is ignorance of history or a certain kind of history.

The second need has implicitly been admitted in history from its earliest days, as White shows: people do not usually care about a list of disembodied facts (Ong 46). Historians to this day make people care about history by inserting in it the dramatic elements of representative human characters, voice, body, movement, and a theater of memory. Some are more character driven, and they see history as created by people more than events. Ong affirms that boring people quickly fall away from oral memory, even if they are family members or leaders in a group (70). An example is this quote from historian Inga Clendennen's *Ambivalent Conquests* (2003): "Columbus and his men picked over the cargo, keeping whatever took their fancy, and then let the canoe go on its way, detaining only the old man who seemed to be its captain to test his usefulness as a guide" (4-5). Here, Hegel's great man is brought to life as an ambivalent figure, in motion, making decisions, doubting, seeming simultaneously vulnerable and violent as he seeks to understand the world and the people around him. One cares about history because it is dramatized. As Ong notes, rhetoric has from its oral

beginnings been an appeal to the emotions (111), and oral discourse is more somatic in nature than written discourse (67). The closer to orality the text comes, if it uses the rhetoric, rhythm, humor, or other narrative devices of old, the more engaging its narrative will be: representing dialogue, describing the things with which the actors interact, their physical and emotional sensations, if done well, will create a more engaging narrative than “The Spanish Empire annexed the Yucatán in 1502.”

If the novel is, in Latin America, an anti-genre of “official” prose (law, science, culture) that reveals its linguistic artifice, if it is not the literary critic’s task to establish true/false binaries but to study linguistic forms (thus disabling a separation between historical and novelistic narrations), historical fiction, which can be called “dramas of memory,” must be a narrative mode, structure, or form. It can be part of a work or all of it. The historians and philosophers of history White studies all create dramas of memory, as do the authors of the *Nuevo Muntu* historical fictions. This mode of narrative has been present in the New World since the *Relaciones* of the Conquistadores and is present in virtually all novels in the New World. However, what Menton calls “historical novels” and “NHNs” have this combination of oral and written discourses as their defining feature. The “life” in these texts is the written representation of oral performance. Like the epics and tragedies of old, they are centered around transcendental acts of violence, as is the case of Hegel’s greater drama of history. However, like Barnett’s text, there must also be a perceived double, permitting a counter-narrative or supplement to previous notions of history, a double that points out and ameliorates the reader’s ignorance to this new version of history. *Nuevo Muntu* fictions incorporate the oral theatrical elements of human characters, plot, body, voice, movement, and permeable divisions between the present and past, the living and the dead. The fluid boundaries of the sacred and profane of African mythical time are combined with an awareness of the African Diaspora, the history of slavery, and a desire to reconstruct elements of a past that, before these novels, were unknown to most. This gate is opened by these *guardieros’* voices.

The First New World Tragedy of *Changó el gran putas*

While *Changó* is a form of Western written culture rooted in classical antiquity, it incorporates syncretic New World myths. *Changó* consistently recasts the Greek model of muse and actor as a tragedy performed by the enslaved yet filled with the spirits of Africa and America. The tragic mode of representing slavery is evident in the novel's first section set entirely in the New World, "The American *Muntu*." It recounts a legendary slave revolt from 1603.

Zapata Olivella was as much a tragedian as a storyteller (Vanderbilt). He valued the heart and mind as they relate to historicizing the oppressed. In addition to novels, Zapata Olivella wrote television, film, and radio scripts based on *Changó*, as well as several plays. This indicates his appreciation for oral forms. Zapata Olivella was raised in an environment where Greco-Roman traditions and Afro-Catholic religions were equally influential. His black father directed a Neo-Classicist school in the largely black provincial town of Lórica (;*Levántate!* 53). His father had young Zapata memorize the *Odyssey* and the author grew up with "a very close knowledge of the principle heroes of Homer's tragedy" (Garcés 101). The author's phrasing indicates the slippage between one form and another. Tragedy's *pathos* is central to making the reader care about history. In an interview, he appraised his novel for Margarita Krakusin, lamenting

. . . how is it possible that no [author] realized, that nobody believed it was important enough to dedicate a few written lines, if not a whole epic, then a meaningful, representative poem to the great travesty that was the depopulation of the African continent for three and a half centuries. . . . And that there was not a Homeric attitude. By that I mean to say "here is a human tragedy; we must leave this for posterity." (21)

This reaffirms my position that *Changó* is a novel of tragedy, memory, and slavery. Another reason for the appropriation of Hellenism is that the author did his medical training in Bogotá, Colombia's Athens, where he was one of a few black students (;*Levántate!* 172). Bogotá has historically associated linguistic purity, a point of pride, with whiteness (Peter Wade 56, 93). During the nineteenth century foundational period of the Colombian nation, Bogotá's neoclassicist cult permeated poetry and architecture. As Carlos Jáuregui puts it:

the task of the intellectual in Bogotá and the *criollo* national project were romantic in

their conservative vision of a singular romanticism that embraced the myth of progress and bragged of a Classical Western tradition, whose epitome was the columns of [the] Capital building, raised atop a far-off and false nostalgia to sustain the airs, the emptiness of a design that was architecturally and poetically ostentatious: the nation. (Jáuregui 567)

Zapata Olivella's tragedy is a monument that incorporates black influences into Colombia's history. But it does not stop with the imagined nation. The novel is partly a counter-narrative to Luiz de Camões's 1573 *Os Lusíadas*, which appropriated the *Odyssey* to create a monument to the Portuguese Empire. Zapata Olivella shows that those the Portuguese captured have their own circular voyage through strange lands. Treating Orishas, or Yoruban deities, as Greek gods enhances the pantheon of literature with a new set of favorite pagans. These do not reject the old ones, but enhance them, cannibalize them, and alter their stories. Despite similarities to the epic, the triumphant ending of the epos is nowhere found in the novel. There is a cyclic series of noble struggles to the death and a tragic spirit of freedom that unites them all. The curse of Changó is not only slavery and exile for his subjects. It is also a charge that humanity must free itself from the myriad forms of slavery. This freedom that has not yet arrived in its plenitude.

Historical fiction like *Changó* is a continuation of this dramatization of history as a series of tragedies (Lukács; White). The novel's cycles of success-ambition-overconfidence-destruction/self-destruction are similar to Hegel's notion of historical periods as large-scale tragedies. Though Ong argues that tragedy marks the transition from an entirely oral Greek culture to a written one, the tragedians and Thucydides knew that oral story-telling moved the emotions more than the arid lists, details, and linear structures common to written language. Likewise, Zapata's tragedy exploits the violent episodes, suspenseful oral story-telling, the musical language, and the appeals to the emotions that Aristotle praised in tragedy for their ability to provoke pathos and catharsis.

"The American *Muntu*" is a syncretic New World tragedy set in Colombia during one of its most important popular uprisings, led by the king of slave rebels, Benkos Bioho (d. 1619). His spiritual counterpart is the heretic priest Falupo, who used Catholic catechism as camouflage to continue African religions in the

Americas. Like these mixed faiths, these heroes' tragedies are told in a way that combines the many traditions Zapata Olivella knew.

My focus is on his Africanization of Greek tragedy, so some clarification of Yoruban myth in the novel is necessary. *Changó* tells the history of the African diaspora from its mythic origins, which are recounted in the first section of the novel, "Origins." It is like Thucydides's *Archaeology*, the origin of Greece from prehistory to the earth-shattering Peloponnesian War. "Origins" explains the reason for New World slavery as a curse and a challenge from the vengeful Yoruban god-king Changó. He is a god of war, fire, lightning, thunder, fertility, rage, and dance. His tragic flaw is his hubris, for which he is exiled. This fuels his rage. He returns to his kingdom of Oyó. He banishes the *Muntu*, the African Diaspora, to slavery in the New World. Changó is also an incestuous, even oedipal figure with an insatiable sexual appetite. He is said to have copulated with his own mother, Yemayá. She is the melancholic but nurturing goddess of the sea. In the New World, Changó is reincarnated as Nagó the Navegator. Nagó is a black mutineer who commandeers a slave ship. He is the spiritual father of the Colombian slave king, Bioho. However, it is only with the aid of the babalawo Falupo that Bioho's mother, Potencia, can give birth to him (180). Like Yemayá, Potencia dies in childbirth. But Benkos's epithet "son of Potencia Bioho," keeps her metaphorically alive throughout the story. Benkos's father Domingo claimed to be descended from African royalty like Changó. Like his son, he was arrested, tortured and assassinated before Benkos's birth. His crime was leading a slave revolt in Colonial Colombia.

The novel resorts to Greek tragedy to translate Afro-Catholic myths into something immediately recognizable to the lettered West. The syncretization of African myths with Catholicism is central to this section of the novel, and Bioho and Falupo can be seen as Christ-like figures that are sacrificed for their ideals. One can see parallels between the text and the Holy Bible, to which it constantly alludes and which I will discuss further in chapter 4. However, Greek tragedy is more fitting for these figures because of the central role of the Catholic Church in the Conquest. It is represented by the ethically mixed figures of Jesuits who showed mercy to the enslaved, such as Pedro Claver, and the brutal torture of Falupo by the Spanish Inquisition, which had a strong influence in Cartagena and took as its mission to purge the enslaved of their beliefs, which were viewed as

sacrilege and a threat to order (37). African spirits are a source of rebellion against the brutal state religion, and pre-Christian ideas of the West are revisited in this context. For example, the babalawo preaches that “the *Muntu* had already built great cities and palaces with an abundance of food and gold when the barbarians arrived with their armies and rifles to kill and enslave us” (212). Like Ong’s interpretation of ancient Greek poetry, Falupo’s sermons and stories are not considered fabrications, but a form of memory (141–42).

There are constant allusions to Greek culture in “The American *Muntu*.” Falupo claims that before coming to Cartagena he was a slave and a sailor. He learned many languages, including Greek (223). Falupo has many names, including Xenophon. The latter was probably Thucydides’s successor in telling the history of the Peloponnesian War in his *Hellenica*. Like these historians, Falupo is telling history in a tragic mode. He tells Bioho that his father’s ally Luciano Palomo fell on his own sword so as not to be captured during the ill-fated revolt. This is an allusion to Sophocles’s tragic hero Ajax. It foreshadows the protagonists’ tragic fate (215–16).

Zapata also notes that Africans have their own tragedies. One is that of king Madior, who was forced to drink the blood of his favorite wife as a sacrifice (248). This is an allusion to Senegalese dramaturge Ibrahima Sall’s 1981 tragedy *Le choix de Madior ou le sacrifice de Yacine Boubou*. It is based on an epic of the Wolof. It is as much Madior’s sacrifice as it is his wife’s, because she willingly gives her life for the good of the people of her kingdom, Cayor (Porter 894). In a manner analogous to Sall, Zapata is adapting classical African epics into contemporary tragedies to preserve and promote traditions with roots in Africa.

All tragic heroes must face their destiny, and King Bioho and Priest Falupo are no exception. Through theatrical dialogue, Falupo asks Ancestor Ngafúa to tell him “the *Muntu*’s destiny in their new home.” To this he replies “that the living and dead have no peace while there is the shadow of a chain on their bodies” (179). It is clear from birth that Bioho is the Chosen one. He is called forth by seven African midwives (this is the sacred number of the goddess Yemayá) (181). His shoulders are marked with the serpents of Legba. They are an ouroboros that indicates he will open doors for his people.

Zapata Olivella’s nove reaffirms Ong’s claim that oral performance of tragedy is indicative of a written culture because the work often mimics the oral forms of African song, which in the novel serves a function

similar to the chorus in Greek tragedy. It serves as a leitmotif to provide cohesion to the otherwise fragmented, tripartite section. The section opens with the song of a prisoner of the failed uprising, Pupo Moncholo, who is interrogated by the Inquisition. His tongue has been split by his torturers, a common punishment for blasphemy, but he can speak as a spirit in literature (249). He is a poet and singer like the rhapsodes, as is indicated by his epithet, “the man with the bewitched drum” (201). Moncholo lavishes Bioho with praises not unlike those of oral cultures (Ong 44). The rhapsode gives a boastful mythical background to explain the historical events. His verses are written in octosyllabic *arte menor* like much popular music and poetry and serves as a musical interlude, as can be seen in the *jitanjáfora* and sacred African language of “Achini má, Achini má,” for example (184). There is also an element of concrete poetry, since the poems literally leap from side to side like dancing feet on the page, incorporating unexpected movements of the body (the eyes) into the written text (235). Moncholo’s rhythm and voice infiltrate the prose narration as well, such as in the repetition of Yemayá’s number, seven, as Benkos is born (178). In the same way he opens “The American Muntu,” he closes it with a rhyming explicit moral not unlike a fable or parable: “may no one feel enslaved / with a seal on his behind / a night in chains / does not enslave the soul!” (275). However, this call to arms is presented in a tragic mode, stirring catharsis—fear, empathy, and mourning—in its newly activated audience, as Aristotle notes. As Lebow points out, this tragedy does not prescribe a specific plan of action for the present, leading him to conclude that, for the tragedians, attempts to alleviate suffering will likely result in more suffering (20). Zapata Olivella’s tragedy presents the forces in conflict: liberty versus oppression, the historical Church versus its opposition, the proud heroic individual versus his destiny, the spoken word versus the written one, but he does not say explicitly how the readers should react. He merely stirs their souls to want to take action.

These historical collisions are personified by tragic heroes, as Lukács attests. Like all tragic heroes, King Bioho and Priest Falupo must face their destiny. Through theatrical dialogue, Falupo asks Ancestor Ngafúa to tell him “the Muntu’s destiny in their new home,” to which he replies “that the living and dead have no peace while there is the shadow of a chain on their bodies” (179). It is clear from birth that Bioho is the “chosen one,” because he is called forth by seven African midwives (the sacred number of Yemayá, Changó’s mother [Zapata

Olivella, “Genealogía”]) (181). His shoulders are marked with the serpents of Eleguá, which indicate that he will open doors for his people, and he is born standing up to show his herculean strength (182) and as an allusion to the hero of the African Maghan Sudjata Epic, referenced later in “Ancestral Combatants” (515) and included among the pages of an earlier version of the novel (Vanderbilt). However, he is destined to martyrdom, for Ngafúa cries “He will die in the hands of his enemies, but his *mágara*, [or spirit], the breath of other lives, will be reborn in the *ekobios* [brothers] that rise up against the master” (182). Unlike the tragic spirit of honorable Ajax or wise Oedipus, this *mágara* (left untranslated in the original Spanish) is a memory not only of an admirable but flawed hero but also a radical form of collective memory that subverts the myths of slavery and colonization. It is a tragic history marked by noble yet largely failed struggle.

Like their Ancestors, both heroes have the tragic flaw of hubris, but it manifests itself differently, and like tragic hubris, it is a blessing and a curse. The orphan Benkos becomes Father Claver’s assistant, but he is reminded of his destiny in secret by his mentor Falupo. If Bioho’s prodigious strength is the source of his hubris, Falupo’s is his extensive memory and his willingness to put it into words. Both confront the strongest proponents of the colony: the Crown, the slaveholders, and the Church, so like these institutions, their destinies are intertwined.

Though imprisoned for heresy, Falupo is the psychic mouthpiece that tells Bioho and his followers when it is time to rise up against their oppressors, and the events are told as a tragedy. All Greek tragedies were performed as part of an *agon* or competition at the annual Bacchanalia. Likewise, a carnivalesque atmosphere surrounds the Bioho uprising, but they are the festivities regarding Catholic Holy Week, celebrations widely associated with death and rebirth, like the Dionysian festivals, if only in this aspect. The slave Pupo Moncholo calls the coronation and celebration of Bioho “carnival games” in his confession, and says they are nothing like the “bacanales” that the masters have with young slave girls, turning a confession into an indictment of corruption (218). The secular historical context of the revolt is significant, however, because the holidays of Cartagena were a time of comparative freedom for the enslaved when they could gather with friends and family and celebrate with food and music (Zapata Olivella, ¡*Levántate!* 129). Since the slave population was large,

concentrated, and often unsupervised, the chaos of carnival was a fissure in the colony's armor. During these festivities, the slaves crown Benkos king and lead a widespread attack that kills the slave owner Melchor Acosta, inspired by the hubris of the Chosen One and his prophet.

As is evident in his coronation, Benkos is an oedipal figure. During the ceremony, Benkos takes his place beside his queen, María Angola. Perhaps her name is an allusion to Yemayá, the mother of the Yoruban spirits. She is often syncretized with an apparition of the Virgin Mary (Zapata Olivella, "Genealogía", Vanderbilt). In the novel, she represents "madre África" herself (201). María is much older than the strapping Benkos, so much so that the rhapsode Pupo Moncholo sings that "asking no one / he plunged into the womb of the mother that gave him life" (237). This could mean intercourse with María, inevitable for a son of fertile Changó, but it could also mean a return to his dead mother, Potencia, or both. The hubris that creates king Bioho is also his undoing. Like the anagnorisis of Oedipus, once Bioho assumes his true identity as king of his people, he is immediately blinded (237). Despite his superhuman strength, he repeatedly refuses to flee or fight as the armed guards descend on his short-lived kingdom and shoot him in the eye with a harquebus (237). His head remains unbowed as Father Claver ministers against his ambition and promises him Heaven if he will only repent (238). This dialogue gives him repeated chances to reject his convictions, which Bioho does not do even after his tragic death.

Falupo's hubris also leads to his downfall. In the context of his torture, interrogation, and execution, the spoken word and the written word come into contact in the legal setting of the Inquisition. As Lebow argues, Thucydides showed the conflicting forces leading to war between Athens and Sparta through opposing speeches in the senate (Lebow 78). These monologues were a performance in which his readers could participate emotionally and intellectually as audience members would in a theater. While Ong has argued that tragedy is heavily marked by writing, Lebow shows that the first historians understood that the stirring rhetoric and *pathos*-inspiring narratives that predate writing were still the most effective way to grasp an audience's attention (59). This is why Richard Ned Lebow considers Thucydides "the last great tragedian" (20). In the case of Zapata Olivella, the legal formulae of the Holy Inquisition and the secular Audiencia, which Roberto

González Echevarría considers an origin of Colonial Spanish American literature (*Myth* 45), are juxtaposed with and even subverted by the spoken word. An example is the Jesuit document demanding that Falupo's followers not be told (orally) that their baptisms and communion are null once he is accused of heresy by written, legal mandate, for fear that it will cost the Church power and credibility (245). When he is convicted, his sentence is read in the main plaza of Cartagena in legalistic prose that indicates his hubris: "He has proclaimed himself Satan's chosen one to exorcise, incite, and conspire against God" (272). The Church only functions as a foil for self-affirmation based on Pre-Christian faiths. Like Benkos, when he is asked to repent and confess the names of those he baptized, he refuses until his inquisitors give him pen and paper. These burn in his hands with the fire of Changó, and his statement is not a confession, but a letter to the pope himself denouncing the abuses of the slave owners and the Church itself despite his certain doom (251).

Tragedy is a song of sacrifice. It is the goat song, and Lewis Gordon applies the notion of tragedy as sacrificial rite to the writings on decolonization in Africa and Latin America of Frantz Fanon. Like Gordon's reading of Fanon, and in keeping with the Colombian's mixture of biblical, Yoruba, and Greek imagery, *Changó* metaphorically links blacks with goats—scapegoats, Dionysian goats, goats for Changó. Falupo writes "[The Inquisitor General] knew my black countrymen not only by the color of their skin, but by the smell of their hands, for he says that the stench of the scapegoat always lingers on them when they make their sacrifice to insatiable Changó" (190). Falupo himself becomes the *tragos*. While he is tortured, his skin is "carbonizado," burnt and dark like coal, like sacrifice (260). On the seventh day, melancholic Yemayá's day, he is forced by the Inquisition to fornicate with a goat in public, sacrificing his dignity (274). This leads up to the tragic climax, his public burning for his refusal to repent, which ends in his floating to the heavens as a burnt offering, recoding Biblical images of crucifixion, transfiguration, and ascension.⁶

Falupo's fire is paralleled by Bioho's tragic uprising against the slave owners and the Inquisition, which is plagued by tragic irony. The babalawo leads it from afar. Sacred drums signal the attack, combining body and sound with the written word of the novel as in performance. The slaves also are beseeched by Catholic priests to repent for their hubris, but those like Pupo Moncholo refuse (262). However, Benkos does not consult the

sacred tablets that know the future and is told that, unbeknownst to him, the authorities have been tipped off by the enslaved Orobía Morelos (267). Enraged, Biohos beheads her like he beheads the police and slave hunters in battle (268). The latter unexpectedly spout new heads like a hydra, but their faces are like wolves (268), an allusion to Bartolomé de las Casas's lupine metaphor for the bloodthirsty Conquistadors (Jáuregui and Soto, *Conquest* 24). But it is also tragic that Orobía is probably innocent of this accusation and in fact misleads the authorities in her testimony, of which Bioho is equally oblivious (210–11). His rage, the source of his uprising, is the source of this rash killing. Likewise, the “traitor” Sacabuche is a tragic figure because he only testifies against Falupo and Bioho because he is nearly tortured to death (196). In this collective tragedy, even the spies are sacrifices to Changó, martyrs of the same struggle as its superhuman leaders.

A Mother's Tragedy and the Revolta dos Malês

The Brazilian tragedy in Ana Maria Gonçalves's novel that most closely resembles Zapata Olivella's is the Revolta dos Malês (1835), and it is a useful point of comparison and contrast with “The American *Muntu*,” because both depict failed city-wide rebellions in Latin America. However, there are at least five historical collisions in *Um defeito de cor*. The first is the invasion of Kehinde's village by a neighboring nation and her being sold into slavery; the second is the slaves' overthrow of the master in Bahia, which coincides with her former mistress Ana Felipa's decision to move to the new capital; the third is the Revolta dos Malês; the fourth is her return to Africa; and the fifth is the greater personal collision of Kehinde's *anagnorisis* as an old woman that she has betrayed her spirits and her son and will die without her seeing him again.

The Revolta dos Malês is the wide-scale violent episode that inspired the composition of the novel, according to Gonçalves's prologue (15). The author reportedly happened upon a pile of old papers that contained the beginnings of her manuscript, which Dona Clara, a poor black woman in Salvador, was instructed to throw out by a local church. What caught Gonçalves's eye was the name of Licutan, a hero of the revolt (15). It is telling that nobody in Salvador had given the papers any thought, since colonial history is so important for the city's international image, since it was the first capital, still evident in its architecture. Like *El fusilamiento*

del diablo does for Zapata Olivella, it communicates a *lacuna* of historical knowledge that is needed for people to understand the tragic origins of this city and this nation and an effective dramatization that gives its public an emotional connection to it. However, it is not the hero Licutan, but Luíza Mahin, the mother of the self-liberated poet Luís Gama, that witnesses the tragic rise and fall of the Malês and other revolutionaries, and this collective tragedy is directly related to Kehinde's personal tragedies.

Returning to the island where she first disembarked as a slave in Brazil, Kehinde asks herself "How much suffering in vain do blacks feel when they don't know the *destino* that they have been given? And I'm speaking of destination as well as destiny" (497). This is a chapter about a historical collision, but unlike Zapata Olivella's tightly composed episode, there is a tendency toward fragmentation, a dispersal of destinies and conflicts. Lukács speaks of an epic totality of a work, which is panoramic, as opposed to tragic totality, which is episodic and condensed (122). *Defeito* could be read as an epic, but reading history as tragedy allows the reader to sift through Gonçalves's network of hundreds of characters and sensorial details to see the repeating explosions of Brazil's tumultuous history not from the crest of a historical tidal wave, where tragic heroes crash into the shore, but from the base that simultaneously pushes and is dragged by the crest. There is a direct relationship between the destiny of the Revolta dos Malês, Africans in Brazil, what was then the whole colony, and, perhaps most importantly, for a mother like Kehinde, her family.

The Revolta was part of a greater period of tumult in Brazil, so this slave and free black rebellion was not just a conflict of slave and master, as Biohos's appears to be for Zapata Olivella. Bahia was no longer the capital of Brazil and its influence was waning in comparison to Rio de Janeiro. The royal family fled to Brazil in 1808 to escape the crushing tide of history led by Napoleon. The new capital was the site of the Portuguese court of Dom Pedro I, so Kehinde's former mistress Ana Felipa moves there (308). Bahia had experienced previous slave rebellions, such as one in 1813 that consisted primarily by Muslim slaves led by Mullahs, or Malês (Gonçalves 485). In addition, there were numerous Federalist and other separatist rebellions led by diverse groups throughout Brazil, paralleling the independence projects of Spanish America, which the novel also mentions. These movements failed to achieve independence for Brazil, which would only come in 1890, so

the destiny of the whole nation was in play in the 1835 Revolta dos Malês. Also, the destiny of the enslaved world-wide was in question due to British pressures for the end of slavery, beginning with Her Majesty's navy patrolling the seas to ban the now illegal importation of slaves in Brazil. There was already talk of deporting unruly slaves to Africa, and sailors coming from Africa brought news of the conflicts going on there in Kehinde's birthplace of Dahomey, so the historical conflict is not only local, as was the case of Zapata Olivella's depiction of the Biohos rebellion, but international.

Like Biohos, however, Kehinde's concern with destiny is tied to her syncretic faith. She is resistant to being Christianized from her first moment in Brazil, when she flees from her baptism. However, her personal faith is not just a source of rebellion, but also a series of omens with which she must grapple with emotionally and practically. She is constantly reminded of *abikus*, a Dahomeyan tradition of children born to die in order to return to the *Orum*, or spirit world (466). Both of her children at this point in the novel (1834-1835), Luís Gama, age two, and Banjokô, over the age of seven, are *abikus*. Spirit children are believed to return for these living boys if certain ceremonies do not take place. Kehinde's dislocation complicates this, because she is separated from her homeland, mixed with Africans and Brazilians of a variety of faiths under the domination of a Church that is either intolerant or is only tolerant of other beliefs out of practical necessity. Before the onset of the collective tragedy of the Revolta, Kehinde experiences a more intense personal tragedy: the loss of a son to a historical conflict much greater than the both of them.

Paralleling oral discourse, Kehinde tries to reach out to her lost son Luís with her words by repeatedly using the second person,⁷ such as when she mentions in passing that "your brother left us," foreshadowing the tragic sacrifice (465). The omen and the build-up to his death are tied to questions of orality and performance. She first learns of his passing through a dream in which she hears voices, first of children celebrating, then the nearly forgotten voice of her brother Kokumo, who is killed when warriors storm her village as a child, establishing a parallel between him and Banjokô (466). The dead boy's body is first presented as a *pietà*: her Muslim friend Mussé rushes in holding the silent, bleeding corpse "like Our Lady holding her son," Christ-like but syncretic, not only Christian (466). The silent chaos is given meaning through dialogue, which, like in oral

cultures, is not separated from the rest of narration by quotation marks or other transitions, since the entire novel is the voice of Kehinde, told almost entirely in the first person. Mussé explains to the former slave Fatumbi what happened, and he relays it to Kehinde: Banjokô fell on a knife designed to sacrifice rams for Muslim ceremonies. It had been a gift for Mala Abubakar, one of the leaders of the Revolta, so there is a direct semantic link between this personal tragedy and the greater tragedy of the Malês. His death is also part of the greater collision of slavery, because Kehinde does not have easy access to the ceremonial resources needed to protect him (467). Destiny came too soon for Banjokô, so she ironically begins to purify him after his death, ceremonially washing his body, partly as an act of mourning. However, she herself goes through torment, a sacrifice of sorts, since the *abikus* sometimes do not let the dead rest. With the help of her babalawo, Baba Ogunfiditimi, she must mutilate her son's body so that his spirit will not wander the world (469). Luís is ritually purified on the same table his brother was mutilated, beginning a new cycle for the family (471). In Kehinde's dreams, Luís performs acts similar to his brother, such as playing on his favorite toy, a wooden horse, continuing his spirit metaphorically and foreshadowing the horsemen of the Revolta (470).

Hegel would have overlooked this tiny, personal tragedy of a boy whose destiny leads to a purifying agony much more intense for his mother than the explosion of a revolution. Kehinde's loss is metonymically linked to the loss of family members and beliefs in large part due to the violent cycles of history, or as she tells Luís's father, Alberto:

I told him . . . about my doubt, if it wouldn't have been better, or at least safer for him, to move to the court with my mistress. I always thought of that—what if Banjokô died for my pride in trying to keep him close to me, and I couldn't understand that destiny would have pursued him wherever we were. (472)

The Western concept of destiny is a means of translating *abikus* into something with which the reader can understand and sympathize. Kehinde's pride can be interpreted as a maternal hubris, but not that of a traditional tragic hero. Her primary concern is with the fragmentation of her family, which continues throughout the chapter as Alberto comes and goes from her life now that he is married to a white woman, reflecting the greater

wave of history washing over the enslaved, even those like Kehinde who have purchased a tenuous freedom. She has little familial or legal stability, an instability that will intensify with her participation in the Revolta dos Malês.

Like the Bioho rebellion, the Malês rise up during religious festivities. However, like Kehinde's personal loss, the complexity of Brazilian history leads to a revolt that is not as simple as African spirits and slaves in conflict with unyielding Catholics and colonists. Zapata Olivella states that Cartagena would be as religiously and culturally diverse as Brazil had it not been for the Church's evangelization efforts in this vital colonial port (¡*Levántate!*, 37). In Gonçalves's text, Catholicism's looser grip leads to iconic syncretic ceremonies like the Washing of the Steps at the Church of Nosso Senhor do Bonfim, which originated in part as the slaves' forced preparation of the church for white congregants but was appropriated for their own unorthodox practices (488). However, syncretism occurs between the faiths of diverse African groups. Though Kehinde catalogues these disparate populations (501–02), she focuses primarily on the parallels between her own mixture of spirits (Dahomeyan Vodouns and Yoruban Orishas) with Muslim beliefs and practices. As in the case of Zapata Olivella's text, this spiritual language is part of a formation of a black community that transcends their former divisions of religion and African regional origin, as Kehinde states at the Washing: "I felt really good at that *feira* [celebration/feast], returning to an Africa that I never knew, together with the people I seemed to always know. . . . my closeness to [the Muslims] had no bond of religious faith, but faith in liberty and justice . . . equality" (492). Her first role in the uprising is that of a scout for the Muslims that surveys the city for areas that are left unguarded during the festivities, but she attends the ceremony of her own volition, moving between faith communities.

While at the Washing, Baba Ogunfeditimi revives Yoruban oral traditions in a performance before the gatherers, telling the tale of Oxalufã, an apparition of Oxalá, the Orisha associated with Nosso Senhor do Bonfim, the Catholic pretext of the ceremony (490). This performance includes images that appear in the account of Banjokô's death as well as the Revolta dos Malês: celebrations/feasts, oracles, horses, white clothing, ceremonial silence and washing, unjust imprisonment, journeys, and sacrifice (489–90). King Oxalufã

is an old man who visits his friend, King Changó. An oracle tells him that his journey would be perilous and that, if he is so stubborn as to go, he should wear white for protection and purity. But he is mistaken for a horse thief and imprisoned. Because of this, his sentence brings famine to the kingdom, through a divine curse, making his personal tragedy collective. Changó frees him and seeks forgiveness from his friend and the gods by having his subjects perform rituals of silences and cleansing with water. This story is acted out each year during the Washing of the Stairs at Nosso Senhor do Bonfim.

For Kehinde, the Muslim festival that parallels the Washing is *Lailat Quadar*, Glory Day, which is the start of the apocalyptic yet tragic Revolta dos Malês (510). She notes that the Muslims also sacrifice animals and pray in hopes of good fortune in the uprising, and she associates their white clothing with that of the faithful at Bonfim (517). However, the Muslims' performance is a carefully calculated, violent attempt at overthrowing the government of Salvador and its surrounding cities. One of their leaders is the famous Alufá Licutan, a noble old man who is unjustly imprisoned like Oxalufã and is a driving force of the rebellion (509–26). This enrages his followers, almost leading them to precipitated violence, but reason prevails. The chapter repeatedly alludes to the emotional tension and the many actors and gestures leading to the Revolt, building to a tragic climax. Black and mulatto merchants, such as the cigar makers with whom Kehinde aligns herself, are central to the plot, and the routine of rolling the cigars establishes a rhythm as the tension mounts (505).

The tragic climax is narrated as a series of acts carried out by tragic heroes and an amorphous “we,” a sharp departure from Gonçalves's tendency to use “I,” which indicates that this dramatic act is creating a new community around sacrificial violence, but she is at the base of the wave crashing into the city, not its crest. Her beloved Muslim teacher, Fatumbi, is an example of one of many tragic heroes, and it is telling that he is shot by men on horses, symbolically linking his death to Banjokô's (529). His hubris is like Falupo's. Before joining the plot, he teaches Kehinde to read as many Malês do in the work, initially because it allows slaves to read the Koran, but this new ability leads to considerable agency on the slaves' part and increases the political power of the Malês. Virtually all of the leaders in the novel are Muslim and literate: Licutan, Mala Abubakar, Sulemaine, Manoel Calafate, Mussé, Umaru, and Dandarâ, to name a few (480). Instead of focusing entirely on one tragic

hero or one “great man,” Gonçalves portrays several valiant leaders with the hubris to give their lives in the overthrow their oppressors.

On the other hand, Kehinde is not herself a tragic hero. She is often cowardly, frail, and clumsy with her weapon. She is hesitant about the rebellion because she fears the danger it will cause for her family. During what would be a tragic climax for a hero, a great battle, she runs away in a haze and hides at the local medical school. Tellingly, though, she must feign her own death in order to escape as a friendly doctor carries her out on a cart as if she were a cadaver (535). Her death is only a performance. However, the hubris of the Muslim tragic heroes is limiting and makes them dependent on less visible conspirators like Kehinde. Fatumbi tells her that “what mattered at that moment wasn’t that a person do many things, because it could attract attention to him, but that there should be the greatest number of people to divide the work between them, and that this would be important on the day of the struggle” (500). She and her children are Fatumbi’s cover as they scout the city before the attack. Her humble, illiterate friends Tico and Hilário are messengers for the conspirators, partly because they cannot read the messages (496). On the contrary, all-male ceremonies by the conspirators in a highly visible Mosque in Bahia raise suspicions and endanger the plot. In part, Kehinde, Tico, and Hilário’s meekness allows them to live to tell the story of the tragic heroes who fought and died. They allow the heroes’ spirits to carry on through their voices.

The noble spirit and valiant deeds of these tragic heroes result in the downfall of an old order before the crushing tide of modernization, which parallels Thucydides’s idea of the Peloponnesian War as a mass tragedy. The previous chapters of *Defeito* describe different forms of slavery with deep roots in colonial history. While slavery cannot be described as benevolent, there were forms of upward social and economic mobility and some legal recourse for slaves during the colonial period, especially in an urban context such as Salvador (Dantas; Furtado; Tannenbaum). Kehinde’s family is formed by two institutions of this order: *escravos de ganho* (wage slavery, often those who sold goods in the city), free people of color, and concubinage. While selling cookies, Kehinde met and started a life with Alberto and succeeded in purchasing her freedom. However, the tumult surrounding the Revolta dos Malês and its aftermath not only result in death and imprisonment for many of its

actors, but also for black Brazilians in general. Paranoia sets in among authorities and the privileged that leads to mass deportation, police brutality, and arbitrary taxes on free people of color as well as the enslaved. Local hostility, combined with British abolitionist pressures leads to the mixed blessing of blacks being sent back to Africa around 1840, which leads to some choosing to go voluntarily. Kehinde, because she survives the tragedy of the Revolta, becomes one of these *retornados*. However, the collision of the Revolta leads to the fragmentation of her family and the eventual loss of Luís, who is sold into slavery by his own father. The latter takes advantage of this negrophobic climate and a generally corrupt legal system, which the efforts of the revolt tragically only succeeded in intensifying.

Lebow's claim that tragedy, like Thucydides's history, presents the problem of one world order overthrowing another without resolving the conflicts and contradictions of the political forces in tragic collision can be applied to "The American *Muntu*" and Gonçalves's depiction of the Revolta dos Malês. Lebow's reading of Thucydides, which presents Athens as a tragic hero in the Peloponnesian War, shows a modernization project in which the Spartans' adherence to an antiquated way of life comes into conflict with Athens' modernist order, which seeks to break with the past, resulting in the apparently senseless destruction of both. The inhuman violence of slavery in Cartagena and the entire New World was also central to the emergence of the Americas as we know them. The tragic downfall of Bioho and Falupo is also the end of an order, a valiant, arrogant attempt at stopping the violent churning of modernization. The same could be said for the Malês. However, like all tragic heroes, their hubris gives them a spirit that transcends their downfall.

The non-citizens portrayed in *Changó* and *Defeito* are the silent, enslaved ghosts of history. Human rights scholar Giorgio Agamben, when studying non-citizens in the twentieth century, popularized the Roman legal term *homo sacer*, which means a person with no civil rights (139). The simplest definition of *homo sacer* is an individual who can legally be killed but not sacrificed. Bioho, Falupo, the *Malês*, and the community they lead, while they did not succeed in fighting back vicious modernization, succeed in becoming subjects. While they had very limited rights in life, the enslaved have a right to be mourned.⁸ Like Oedipus, these tragic heroes are part of the contemporary reader's collective memory, and their hubris, struggle, and downfall raise haunting

questions: what is the destiny of this New World, this American *Muntu*? Is the history of the New World a cycle of tragedies without end?

Guardieros of Memory: Setting the Stage

As I have argued, the oral cultures of Africa and its diaspora shared much with Classical Greece's fascination with rhetoric, since the latter emerged, largely as a mnemonic device, before the alphabet. Before leaving my classical grounding, I will discuss why space is tied to memory in the oral tradition. In his *De oratore* (55 BCE), the Roman thinker Cicero tells of a nobleman named Scopas who held a banquet and invited the poet Simonides of Ceos to perform (Yates 1). Naturally, all the guests sat around a great table. The gods Castor and Pollux, disguised as messengers, called Simonides outside. Horrifyingly, the roof caves in on the partygoers and they are mangled beyond recognition. Luckily, Simonides was able to recall the names of all the guests because he knew their places at the table before the horrible event. He allowed the guests' families to bury the bodies of their loved ones and hold funeral rites (Yates 2). This story relates to *Nuevo Muntu* fictions, because like them, it ties together mourning, memory, literature, and space.

Even when a story is written, its setting serves the function of a dramatic stage, because it helps the audience remember the story, which in turn alters how they recall the past. Ong shows that it was born out of the oral performance of the Sophists, who inspired Thucydides to write his first tragedy/history (Lebow 108). Oral communication is formulaic, communal, agonistic, and needs imaginary spaces (Ong 111). Sophists noted how shapes and places aid memory. For them, like other oral thinkers, these spaces included "theaters of the mind" for communal memory. A speaker's "invention" meant "coming upon" "places" (*topoi* in Greek, *loci* in Latin) in the mind that were seats of arguments that could win a public debate, and common proverbs and sayings that could be used in verbal battle with one another (111). Ong notes that the origin of written signs is that visual aids, not unlike theaters of memory, help the spoken word, because they combine the senses. Thus, in many ways, geography or its artistic equivalent, setting, is memory.

This chapter reinterpreted historical novels as a continuation of tragedy, an intersection of oral and written story-telling. All theater requires a stage, which brings me back to the metaphor of the *guardiero*, the de facto guardian of the plantation who determines the “space” on which history is reenacted by constructing an oral account of the past. In other words, *guardieros*, or in the case of Zapata Olivella and Gonçalves, the *guardieros* of today, create geography, the stage of their dramas. This is very important for politics, as legal scholar Carl Schmitt argued in his *The Nomos of the Earth*. The Greek *nomos* could be translated as “convention” (Lebow 41), but its most literal translation is “border,” because it comes from the word for “fence.” It is the basis for sovereignty, or the right to control an area or thing. Recounting the history of slavery in fiction redraws the *nomos* of the earth, because literary history and its study often continue national canons, which often marginalize African elements. In the next chapter, I will compare and contrast the space-time of Zapata Olivella’s *Muntu* and Paul Gilroy’s *Black Atlantic*, which in turn is partially a reaction to Molefi Asante’s Afrocentrism. Zapata Olivella’s *Nuevo Muntu* has much in common with Paul Gilroy’s *Black Atlantic*, but he published *Changó* seven years earlier and its stage is much more encompassing. Both authors base their works, in part, on Hegel’s Master-Slave Dialectic. This dialectic was reinterpreted by W.E.B. Du Bois, who figures prominently in the *Nuevo Muntu* and the *Black Atlantic*. Lastly, I will discuss the space-time of *Um defeito de cor*, showing how it expands the *Black Atlantic*, drawing on the chronotopes of Gilberto Freyre, Jorge Amado, and Antônio Olinto, yet reinterpreting them to show the effects of slavery far beyond Salvador da Bahia and the mutual influences of Nigeria, Dahomey (Benin), various regions of Brazil, and other ports of the *Black Atlantic*.

Notes

¹ I based the title of this dissertation on the Classical and almost universal practice of *compositio loci* and my general theory that historical fiction is the continuation of oral forms in writing, which make it analogous to tragedy. I later learned that Vance had already coined the phrase “dramas of memory” and I incorporated his illuminating insights on memory in literature.

² Slave narratives can be recuperated through legal and ecclesiastical documents. The Ecclesiastical Sources in Slave Societies (<http://sitemason.vanderbilt.edu/ecclesiasticsources>) and the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database (<http://www.slavevoyages.org/tast/index.faces>) provide a wealth of knowledge on their lives, as do the myriad slave narratives of the Anglophone world, such as those at Chapel Hill’s DocSouth (<http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/>). This is not to minimize blacks’ wide-spread exclusion from most intellectual discussions worldwide until the 1960s.

³ See Sonja Stevenson Watson.

⁴ Luis views the novel as postmodern, hybrid, subaltern, and post-colonial, as it mixes poetry and narrative, the living and the dead, the spirit and the natural body, humans and animals, different languages, religions, history and fiction, fact and fiction, oral and written cultures (xiv).

⁵ See Luis on abolitionist fiction as a counter-discourse (*Literary* 1).

⁶ The prophet Elijah is also said to have been taken to heaven in a chariot of fire (2 Kings 2:11).

⁷ Ong argues that apostrophes to “Dear Reader” in nineteenth century novels, like Gonçalves’s use of the second person, is a continuation of oral appeals to a live audience in written discourse (171).

⁸ One can also see parallels with Charlemagne’s commemoration of Roland. See Vance (374).

CHAPTER 3

SETTING THE STAGE FOR THE *NUEVO MUNTU*: ZAPATA OLIVELLA, GONÇALVES, AND GILROY'S BLACK ATLANTIC

W.E.B. Du Bois and his intellectual progeny, Paul Gilroy, Manuel Zapata Olivella, and Ana Maria Gonçalves, revisit Hegel's drama of history in their historical novels, creating a unique stage for their drama, the story of the African Diaspora, a space both enlivened by and with fluid boundaries marked by music and movement. *Nuevo Muntu* novels trace the history of the African Diaspora in ways that revise Hegel's notion of history itself, an act that transcends nationalist histories and challenges Western notions of reason and subjectivity and replaces them with performances, both oral and written. There were trans-nationalist precursors to the *Nuevo Muntu* fictions, such as the prose of Afro-Cuban Martín Morúa Delgado and Manuel Granados. Other examples are Alejo Carpentier's *El reino de este mundo* (1949), and nationalist works like Mário de Andrade's *Macunaíma* (1928). But there were non-black novelists with a diaspora consciousness that included Latin America and Anglo-America until the novelistic tradition begun by Zapata Olivella (1983) and continued by Gonçalves (2005).

Some readers may overlook Du Bois's centrality to *Changó*, distracted by the flamboyance of US icons Marcus Garvey and Malcolm X. Their importance to the work and the history it portrays deserves more study, since the novel is among the few in Latin America that treat their international importance. However, the audience may become so focused on the actors that they overlook the stage. In Du Bois's first appearance in the novel, he delivers a message to Agne Brown, the young African American woman who is gradually recovering her *zamba* (black and Native American) identity by communicating with the Orishas and her Ancestors (605). When the black intellectual appears in the first of over thirty pages in the novel's US section, he is described thus: "Grandfather Burghardt Du Bois will die in Accra and a year later, over in Ghana, he will be re-embodied in the Shadow of Malcolm and return to his America" (Tittler, 369). Surrounded by the crashing waters of Niagara, an allusion to his foundational Manifesto, Du Bois tells Agne that she must return to the past to imagine the future (Tittler 370). He announces to her that she will encounter the "combatant sons of Changó"

that give name to the section “Ancestral Combatants” (Tittler 299). These are Agne’s Ancestors and the reader’s. Du Bois’s role as one of the first recognized historians and intellectuals of the Black Diaspora is reaffirmed, though Zapata Olivella, Gilroy, and Du Bois himself note that the slaves’ songs were themselves a type of oral history (Zapata Olivella, *Changó* 518, 532, 543). Du Bois is the spirit embodied by Marcus, Malcolm, and others who will fight for their people. But he cautions Agne not to overlook the value of collaboration with those from other cultures, even whites interested in universal liberty during the struggles to end US segregation: “Anxious to reach the sun, I forgot that from its height it gives life simultaneously to clouds and clay” (Tittler 369). The white cloud and the dark ground are all the peoples of the Americas. After this dialogue, the novel immediately notes his French, German, and African Ancestors; the latter is the spirit of the African king Kanuri “Mai” (Tittler 369). Du Bois opposes Garvey’s racial purism and separatism (709) and his spirit abandons the Jamaican in protest (710). Agne and the reader walk in Du Bois’s footsteps through the history of US blacks, which is contextualized by the Latin American half of the novel.

To better understand the intellectual steps Du Bois took to write his *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) what follows will be a discussion of Du Bois’s understanding of history, which will start with Hegel’s tragic vision discussed in the previous chapter. The German philosopher himself was partly inspired by blacks to write some of his seminal works, which Du Bois would later apply to African Diaspora history, creating a vast “stage” for it that Gilroy and Zapata Olivella would appropriate in their own writings.

Hegel and Haiti, Du Bois and Gilroy

As part of a wave of historical revisionism throughout the Americas, the tragedy of the Haitian Revolution was discovered in 2003 to be a likely origin of Hegel’s history by political philosopher Susan Buck-Morss, and it is central to the imaginary of the African Diaspora and the history of the Americas in general. Following a brief overview of the European colonial powers driving the slave trade (Spain, Portugal, Holland, Britain, and France), she shows that Hegel had the Haitian Revolution in mind when he devised the Master-Slave Dialectic, the allegory at the heart of his landmark philosophical treatise on the evolution of human

consciousness, *The Phenomenology of the Spirit* (1807). Her central argument is that the event was so earth-shattering and ever-present in his daily reading (the top political and news journal in German, the *Minerva*) during his Jena years, and since the theme of slavery versus liberty was central to the Enlightenment project, he could not have been unaware of the events in Saint-Domingue and their political and philosophical ramifications (Buck-Morss, *Universal* 50). She then argues that he does not mention Saint-Domingue explicitly in his seminal work, on which he would later base his philosophy of history, because he was politically and financially vulnerable (19). He, like the publisher of the *Minerva* (Archenholz), was a Freemason, a secret society that struggled to promote Enlightenment ideals and cosmopolitanism on one hand and maintain secrecy and mystic beliefs on the other (17–18). They were accustomed to silences and cryptic symbolism. In addition to the suspicion this society evoked in others, the young Hegel was facing financial problems and the responsibilities of a new father after marrying his landlord's ex-wife, so drawing attention to the open wound of the loss of Saint-Domingue in his first publication would not have seemed wise (*Universal* 17–19).

For the Hegel of *Phenomenology*, the relationship between master and slave is based on mutual recognition and therefore dependence (115–19). The slave is perceived by the master as an object without consciousness and thus recreates his own perception of a unified, free consciousness (115). However, the two consciousnesses are locked in struggle, the result of which could end in death (113). Therefore, Hegel reasons, the master attempts to destroy the slave, but cannot do so if he wishes to continue as master (114). The slave, because he fears death, the end of consciousness, serves the master and considers the former's will his own, creating an identity through his work, which is ordered by the master (116). Buck-Morss, following Tavarès, notes that the dialectic stops in Hegel's text before the slave throws off the master, though this would be the logical sequence of events if the slave is to gain or regain recognition (*Universal* 52–54). Hegel's dialectic breaks with notions of economics and politics handed down from Rousseau and Locke in that the recognition of the individual in society comes from the oppression of others (52). This dialectic is the psychological and political struggle between the Self and the Other, which continues to be central to history and African American studies, and it would later inspire Marx's notion of class conflict.

Buck-Morss claims, however, that the majority of Marxists have overlooked Haiti's role in Hegel's allegory (850). Slavery versus liberty was central to the Enlightenment, but most thinkers did not associate African slavery with their metaphors, which tended to refer to white colonists seeking national independence or, on the continent, liberty from feudal lords (828). Hegel's case was unique, however, because of the media frenzy surrounding the Haitian Revolution (839). Slaves had overthrown their masters at the height of the sugar trade, which was central to the European economy (827). The slaves' unthinkable seizure of their own humanity snatched recognition from a continent that viewed itself as the master of the New World, the sole free consciousness on the planet (835). It was also the "trial by fire" of Enlightenment ideals of freedom (837). Hegel was a daily reader of the *Minerva*, a leading European political journal that, beginning in 1792, covered the events of the Revolution, and wrote his *Phenomenology* (1805–1806) during the first year of Haiti's independence (1804) (839, 842). Buck-Morss extends her argument in *Hegel, Haiti, and Universal History* (2009) to note that, according to Haitian philosopher Pierre-Franklin Tavarès, the Francophone Hegel was a life-long enthusiast of French historian of the Indies, Abbé Raynal (14). Philosopher Nick Nesbitt finds the continued impact of Haiti in *The Philosophy of Right's* insistence on the right of slaves to revolt in 1821 (18–33), and Buck-Morss considers her book a branch of a series of projects linking the nation and the philosopher (15).

This academic tradition includes Paul Gilroy's *Black Atlantic* (13). One cannot help but be reminded of his work in her reading of Hegel's notion of Smithian economy:

Commercial exchange creates a continually self-reproducing network of relations between persons—
“society’ in the modern sense of the word. The new [market capitalist] society is not an ethnic group or kin-based clan (Stamm). It is the dissolution of the Volk [sic] as traditionally conceived. Compared with civil society in the old sense, bourgeois society is unpatriotic, driven to push beyond national limits in trade. Commerce is borderless, its places is the sea. . . . by the introduction of a political constitution as a different form of interdependency, providing an ethical corrective to social inequalities through laws so that each aspect civil society and the state, enables the other through their mutual opposition (9).

Gilroy's notion of the sea as a place where ideas go back and forth between the colonies of Africa and America with the metropolises of Europe can be seen as having a precursor in this reading of Hegel. Smith is describing the market as a global web of dependency, not entirely unlike globalization today, but Hegel shows the struggle between the state and the market for control over the subject. The German philosopher's abstract vision of the market versus the state, described through the Master-Slave dialectic, finds its historical precedent in Haiti, as Buck-Morss claims:

Conceptually, the revolutionary struggle of slaves, who overthrow their own servitude and establish a constitutional state, provide the theoretical hinge that takes Hegel's analysis out of the limitlessly expanding colonial economy and onto the plane of world history, which he defines as the realization of freedom..." (12).

He reads Robinson Crusoe through the lens of self-liberation and mentions the Haitian Revolution by name in *The Phenomenology of Subjective Spirit* (1830).

Then, like much of Europe, after being shocked, intrigued, and even inspired by the Haitian Revolution, Hegel silences it. He abandons all things Haitian and African in his *Philosophy of History* (1837) (863). Buck-Morss believes this to be because news coverage of Haiti in the 1820s focused on the failures of the island's government and the brutality of its king, Henri Christophe, and racist ideas toward Africa were the norm in the European academy (*Universal* 69, 74). But the dialectic Haiti probably inspired would be reborn in the work of W.E.B. Du Bois, the early twentieth century thinker who popularized the international African Diaspora as a political collective, and his philosophical heir, Paul Gilroy, who has popularized the Black Atlantic model of interpreting Pan-African history.

Du Bois, in his *The Souls of Black Folk*, argues that African Americans, referring specifically to the US context, have a double consciousness. This is based on the term Hegel uses in his continuation of the Master-Slave Dialectic, the "unhappy consciousness" (Hegel 119). Breaking from Hegel, he explains that black people view the world both through the eyes of the enslaved and the master, which allows them a unique, critical vision of the US national project:

...the Negro [sic] is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world, —a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of another world. It is a particular sensation, this double consciousness, this sense of always looking at oneself through the eyes of others. . . . two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife,—this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. . . . to be both a Negro and an American. . . .” (9).

While Hegel’s master was such because his servant recognized him, and where survival of the slave (based on fear) was what continued this relationship, for Du Bois this struggle to the death creates a unique perspective for the African American subject, both excluded from yet supplementary to, Enlightenment ideals of consciousness, freedom, and nationalism. Surviving the struggle meant not assuming the master’s vision of him, but creating a new, synthetic view from both the master’s point of view and the slave’s that was more than the sum of its parts. Abandoning Hegel’s abstraction, Du Bois creates a stage of the United States using the very discipline of history that Hegel’s work first philosophized, attempting to give visibility to a community that was almost entirely invisible to the US academy and the majority of the nation. Shamoan Zamir shows that Du Bois’s position was but one of the double consciousnesses among US Hegelians, many of whom used the German to bolster US exceptionalism and nationalism (124). Du Bois was exceptional in his vision of diaspora, as will be shown, and he is part of a black intellectual tradition that allowed Zapata Olivella and Gilroy to look beyond the nation to an international African Diaspora for their theaters of memory.

Modernity and Double Conscious: The Black Atlantic and the Nuevo Muntu

Gilroy wrote *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (1993) because he was dissatisfied with the absence of black history from debates on modernity/post-modernity. He was also disappointed with the positivist, US-centered notions of Afrocentrism (“Africentrism” for Gilroy) posited by Molefi Kete Asante (*The Afrocentric Idea*, 1987) and the limitations of national paradigms for understanding

the African Diaspora. So he revisited Du Bois's "double consciousness," using a wider lens to capture the international influences and ramifications of this concept. He focuses on the diaspora's international mobility and evolution, attempting to wrest its history from monoliths like the self-knowing subject, linear time, and unchanging notions of race (188–89). Gilroy re-reads the Master-Slave Dialectic in light of plantation slavery and black history. He shows that it actually contradicts commonly held modernist notions of history as progress through reason, such as Hegel's own philosophy of history, based on the rise of Christianity and the nation-state (35; 53). On the other hand, he revisits the influence of European modernism on black authors like Du Bois and Richard Wright, who wrote in Europe and saw the diaspora as their concern, not just the US nation or just Africa:

the need to locate cultural or ethnic roots and then to use the idea of being in touch with them as a means to refigure the cartography of dispersal and exile is perhaps best understood as a simple and direct response to the varieties of racism which have denied the historical character of black experience and the integrity of black cultures. (112)

He lauds Du Bois's focus on dispersal, not only of populations but also on the fragmenting of a purist notion of black identity. The British author shows that Du Bois, like he, embraces "the fragmenting of self (doubling and splitting) which modernity seems to promote" (188). Gilroy does not support Afrocentrism's racial purity based on "positivist certainty" and "invariant tradition," which he associates with Asante (188). Du Bois, like Zapata Olivella and Gilroy, was an advocate of cultural hybridization, not purity (144). The slave's survival, which for Hegel continued his objectification, is for these black authors the source of his unique consciousness. For example, Gilroy revisits Hegel's double consciousness through the autobiography of Frederick Douglass. It is precisely the former slave's willingness to die in struggle with his oppressor that makes him overcome his status as chattel (63). Gilroy has done well to reunite Hegel with rebellious former slaves like those that likely inspired him, and his expansion of double consciousness to a scale much larger than the nation is central to today's African Diaspora Studies.

Zapata Olivella, however, used Hegel's dialectic to map the history of the diaspora through a split consciousness with parallels to Du Bois's ten years before Gilroy. The Colombian incorporated not only the Anglophone, but also the Lusophone and Hispanic sectors of the diaspora, beginning with a unique explanation for slavery as a curse from the gods. These gods begin almost entirely as Yoruban deities, though there are allusions to Vouduns. These are the magic beliefs beyond Western rationalism that the Europeans first encountered in Africa at the beginning of the explorations that would lead to the creation of the Americas. But even in Mali (107) the impact of indigenous beliefs is present in references to (Afro-)Olmec ancestors with special powers (110), Carib beliefs that guavas are the food of the dead (128), African and Carib cannibalism (121), and the ghosts of Incan princesses (128). The mythical Africa that opens the novel even has Manatee Men from Native American lore, since Africa does not have this species (98). Unlike "mulatto" beliefs, these are not just a mixture of "white" and "black," but a mixture of indigenous and African peoples under a name given them by the Spanish colonizers as part of a complex series of *castas*. "Zambo," for Zapata Olivella is not a biological determinist notion of race, but a spiritual consciousness beyond Western logic.

The Evolution of a New Consciousness in Changó

The diaspora in *Changó* is first performed in the most limited space possible; then it grows to a trans-Atlantic scale, constantly moving. Hegel tells history as struggles and tragic collisions for the same reason Homer initiates epics *in media res* (Ong 144): because memory returns to traumas in an attempt to work through them (Lebow 154). This circular element of memory is reflected in *Changó's* geography of the New World. The Orisha Changó's individual exile and itinerancy in a mythic past is repeated on a virtually continental level as a vast group of Sub-Saharanans, reduced once through synecdoche to the term "Muntu," and again to the characters in the dark bowels of the slave ship, the Nova Índia. The Muntu are shackled not by a transcendental race of whites, but by a transcendental spirit, "The White She-wolf" or "la Loba Blanca" (90). This metaphor can be traced back to Rome, which conquered and enslaved millions to support its empire. Romulus, its mythical founder, was nurtured, alongside his twin Remus by a she-wolf, who gave them their names (*rumus* means

‘teat’) (Plutarch 104). He killed his brother Remus for not respecting the limits of his glorious city (120). This spirit of fratricide and imperialism takes two forms in the novel: racial oppression and the Conquest. Fray Bartolomé de las Casas’s lupine metaphor for the cruelty of the Conquistadors (Jáuregui 28) is presented as a continuation of this ill spirit. Its red hair and white skin bear the colors of Changó (Cabrera 224) and are not to be taken literally, since there are racially white characters that become Muntu as they fight to liberate everyone, such as quixotic US revolutionary John Brown (625). Black and Arab (107) traders are a part of the collision of slavery in “Orígenes” as well, and all characters are archetypes for an entire community and are to be taken allegorically, not literally, like Hegel’s Master-Slave Dialectic.

The mutiny of the *Nova Índia* is simultaneously an indictment of the colonial slave trade, particularly that of the Portuguese empire, and an affirmation that the New World can be liberated from its tragic past. By overcoming the fear of death by dying, as in tragedy, Nagó the Navigator’s spirit transcends its bondage and commandeers the ship in the name of the entire Muntu (150). The confines of the slave ship are followed by the pivotal Spanish slave port of Cartagena, Colombia (177). There, rebel slaves escape and form the Palenque San Basilio under the leadership of Benkos Bioho, which survives to this day, claiming the identity of “the first free people of America” since it was founded in 1603 (Ferrari 57), as is commonly believed.

The struggle continues on land in the New World. The colonial rebellion of great local importance for the Afro-Colombian is followed by a rebellion of great global importance in the novel and in history, the Haitian Revolution (277), the probable inspiration for Hegel’s dialectic. This spread Changó’s fire throughout the Americas, striking fear in the hearts of slave owners and creating a sign of hope for the enslaved everywhere (Luis, Introduction, *Changó* xiv). This collision, which lasted from 1791–1804, combined Africans’ struggle for liberation with national struggles, which the work then transfers to the Hispanic and Brazilian independence struggles of the nineteenth century with Simón Bolívar (357), José Prudencio Padilla (368), Aleijadinho (427), and José María Morelos (463) at the center. Luis has shown that these sections appear out of chronological order, since the order should be Aleijadinho-Bolívar-Morelos-Padilla (Luis, Introduction, *Changó* xxvi). The progression in the text shows the ever-expanding fire of Changó in the Americas. The violent Haitian

Revolution is followed by Padilla's failed struggle to right Bolívar's betrayal of the enslaved, but the Aleijadinho shows that artistic creativity is another, more sophisticated form of liberation. Morelos's project shows that the indigenous are part of blacks' struggle for liberation in the Americas. The chronological order of facts is subservient to the lesson that freedom is spreading, imperfectly, partially, throughout the Americas in a Hegelian evolution. The work ends with "Ancestral Combatants" (500–727), which, while set in the United States, encompasses voices from the previous revolutions. Scenes take place throughout the North, South, and West, depicting slave escapes and rebellions (Nat Turner, Frederick Douglass, Harriett Tubman, and nineteenth century black settlers in Oklahoma, to name a few) and portraying these as part of the same struggle as diaspora thinkers of the twentieth century (Marcus Garvey, WEB Du Bois, Malcolm X, for example). The spiritual language of the text allows this transcendence of national histories to occur and yet for the narrative to remain coherent. In it, the diaspora is simultaneously united by yet also fragmented by historical traumas. The implicit author's perception of the diaspora's invisibility in hegemonic imaginations of national history, the product of a Master conscious unaware of the Slave's consciousness, is what necessitates this myth and this new imagined community. However, Zapata Olivella recalls that "Africa" did not imagine itself as a collective until slavery forced a new identity, "slave," or "black" onto sub-Saharanans that often had no other connection. "Africa" is a longing for a home that never existed as it was imagined by the enslaved, so the dispersal of seeds, the metaphor of "dia-spora" is insufficient in this sense, since the "seeds" were never "together" until scattered, as Zapata Olivella argues in his autobiography, *¡Levántate mulato!* (106).

For Gilroy, Asante's Afrocentrism treats slavery as "a cluster of negative associations that are best left behind" in favor of "ornate conceptions of African antiquity" (189). The *Muntu* is a way out of this binary. As noted last chapter, slaves are always in battle, rarely doing the work they were enslaved to do, and thus overcoming a Hegelian slave consciousness. There is an "ornate" Africa in the novel, but it is one based on spirits that exist within and without the space-time of modernity. This is an element in Zapata Olivella's diasporic double consciousness that differs drastically from Gilroy's and Du Bois's, because the consciousness of the enslaved in Latin America was not only double, but radically syncretic and culturally mestizo. The

duality of space-time in the novel is historical and mythical, but this changes drastically given the setting of the diaspora phenomenon. While in Africa, the slave ship, and Cartagena, slaves are split between African faiths and an imposed temptation to slip into slave consciousness. However, the indigenous mothers who, in what would become Central America, rescue Sosa Illamba's child, the *Muntu* (175), give indigenous customs and spirits a new centrality to the Muntu. These in turn are different from those of Morelos in Mexico (473) and from the US blacks and Native Americans of the novel, but they all have in common that they lie beyond a Western worldview. The *Muntu* is a spiritual consciousness beyond Western reason and a counter-narrative to the evolution of nation-states.

An Africa beyond slavery is at once everywhere and nowhere at once. It is a belief, a narrative that gives coherence to the fractured world of the novel and the vision of the diaspora it creates. One cannot say that Africa is a lost paradise, as it was for Gilroy's depiction of Asante, since the world of Changó and the Orishas is as fraught with conflict, struggles to attain a Master consciousness as the world created by slavery and the Conquest. In this way, Zapata Olivella uses a Duboisian approach to correct the Eurocentric histories of Hegel that followed the Master-Slave Dialectic: he makes men of "objects," but he does so through a unique, syncretic poetizing of Bantu notions of time, space, and death—all of which can be transcended through language—Ancestors and Spirits of Yoruban, Dahomeyan, and Native American origin. Unlike Hegel, he shows that a linear, Eurocentric, and nationalist vision of progress is unfounded and that African, indigenous, and perhaps most of all, hybrid consciousnesses are a space from which to criticize, complement, and refine the spirit of humanity in the name of self- and world-liberation through understanding, a Hegelian goal reached by un-Hegelian or revised Hegelian means. Because Zapata Olivella can draw on the syncretic traditions of Latin America, he can perceive of a New World that is not only binary but synthetic of many cultures and traditions. These traditions have been marginalized since the Catholic Conquest, but Nuevo Muntu novels show their importance as a counter-discourse to dominant Eurocentric ideas of modernity.

Marked by these beliefs, *Changó* novelizes a series of Hegelian tragedies of the New World. The result is a revision of José de Vasconcelos's introductory essay to *La raza cósmica* (1925) that gives new recognition to the African Diaspora in the New World, as Antonio Tillis argues (98). Vasconcelos posits that the Latin American "race," with all the eugenic weight of this word, had its "growth" stunted by Napoleon's invasion of Spain and the resulting chaos that led to the foundation of most of the independent Spanish American republics, though the historical reality was more complex than he presents it (9). Later, the Monarchy under Fernando VII could not reach an agreement with the liberal Cortes de Cádiz, which designed a new Spanish constitution in 1812 as Spain struggled to liberate itself from Napoleon with British and Portuguese aid (14). This led to the chaos of the Wars of Independence in Spanish America. Though Brazil was highly influential in his theorization of race, the Lusophone nation is only present in the schema of his prologue as a blank slate (the Amazon, or "Universópolis") in which to start the "cosmic race" of the future, itself a perfect, self-knowing synthesis of humanity (23). Zapata Olivella ameliorates this by depicting a historical Brazil in his chapter on the struggles of Aleijadinho (Maddox 201–05). *Changó* follows this tragic trajectory from a new transculturated perspective. This is evident when the baby Muntu is born as its mother apparently dies in a slave ship, dead slaves conquer the New World in a sunken slave ship with a leader who is at once a corpse and a father figure for the *Muntu* (175), and an executed *papaloa* summons the spirits that inspire the Haitian Revolution in 1791 (281). As in Vasconcelos's essay, Napoleon is responsible for the tragic downfall of the Americas, but it is for the execution of Haitian liberator General Toussaint in 1803 (339), not for invading Spain and losing Louisiana to the "Saxons" (Vasconcelos 10). This inhibition of the American Muntu's evolution is reflected in the fragmentary theater of memory in "Rediscovered Bloodlines," where the growth and triumph of America continues, but in an incomplete manner: some fight off oppression while others remain colonized. However, reversing Vasconcelos's voyage south to Brazil and Argentina to devise the *raza cósmica*, Zapata Olivella's Muntu, generally speaking, heads north to the United States. This path is identical to almost all US slave narratives. The battles of old between black and oppressor are continued in the form of slave revolts, the fight against Jim Crow

and the triumph of the Civil Rights movement, which is simultaneous with the death of Martin Luther King, Jr and the birth of the Black Scorpions (717). Tellingly, it ends with the simultaneous expulsion of Marcus Garvey, the death of Malcolm X, and the liberation of Agne Brown, the leader of the future, whose last words, mixed with those of the gatekeeper Eleguá, are a call to the living to seek liberty for all (726–27). This tragic ending and *anagnorisis* directly connects the narrative of history to the reader's present day as Eleguá closes the novel that has opened the reader's mind to a *Nuevo Muntu*, a spiritually Africanized fight for universal freedom in the New World.

Hegel's model of psychological and social struggle, the Master-Slave Dialectic, is considered by some scholars a means of historical periodization which places the French Revolution at the center of modern thought as Hegel understood it (Buck-Morss 844). However, for Gilroy, Black Atlantic thinkers periodize modernity by starting with the ships of the Middle Passage (197). Zapata Olivella does something similar, though he contextualizes the Middle Passage as part of the greater tragic collision of the Conquest. *Changó's* first chapter, "Land of the Ancestors," sings almost exclusively of a mythical Africa with only the loosest references to history. Like the heroes of the Ancient Greeks, there is believed to have been a king named Changó, third emperor of the Oyó kingdom (Zapata Olivella, "Genealogía"), however his deification through constant retellings over the centuries has bared with it a lack of consistency regarding specific, "objective," "verifiable" details of his life, another element of orality in this written history (Ong 98). The only historical depiction of Africa is that of the arrival of the European slavers, the Arabs with whom they deal, and the slaves who fight back against their captors. Historical Africa does not reappear until Du Bois and Malcolm X return to the motherland and the international debate over Apartheid emerges in the late twentieth century. Pre-slavery Africa, in the novel, is useful because it creates an origin for a community, the African Diaspora, but it does not present this origin as something static or retrievable. In *Changó*, Africa is a mobile spirit, not a stable, historical place. Historical depictions of colonial Africa are almost entirely absent after the voyage of the Nova Índia, following the Hegelian notion that, if one does not rebel from his slavery, he is not a historical consciousness but an extension of his master's consciousness.

Because it is mobile and international, like Zapata Olivella, Gilroy chooses the metaphor of a moving ship on the Atlantic to represent the African diaspora. For him, it evokes the Middle Passage as well as black sailors. Changó's avatar, Nagó the Navigator, the protagonist of "The Slave Trade" who overcomes the *negreros* and pilots the Nova Índia around the Atlantic throughout the novel, coincides with this international vision. However, he is able to transcend life and death, showing the usefulness of African spirits in recalling the past. *Changó's* poetic language calls attention to the multiplicity of origins of the African Diaspora. The novel creates three origins: a mythical Africa, the Middle Passage, and the indigenous-African collaborations that create a uniquely hybrid American people. Creating a hybrid people is a goal shared by Du Bois, who proposes a Hegelian synthesis of consciousness by un-Hegelian, or at least non-Eurocentric, means. The historical actors, slaves and Native Americans, could not conceive of these goals, but Zapata Olivella, distanced from the events in philosophical reflection like Hegel (*Philosophy* 8), can perceive them, as can the reader.

Gilroy's work is not devoid of spirits, religion, or magic beliefs, however. He recalls that Anglophone slaves dreamed of a "Return to point of origin" in Africa after death (208). He notes that Douglass, when faced with the life-or-death struggle of his brutal foreman, was inspired by a conjurer who remembered the "old ways" and gave him an amulet (62). Douglass's spirituality is part of his double consciousness for Gilroy, which *Changó* also demonstrates. For Gilroy, the former slave evolves away from his spirituality, praising violent physical self-assertion in the face of certain death as the means of liberation and becoming more Hegelian in this sense (63, 69). Gilroy praises the Black Church in the Anglophone world as a preservation of tradition where "the dramatic power of narrative as a form is celebrated" in the "dramaturgy of performing these stories" (200). He notes that US black writing parallels the rituals of sacred story telling (203). Therefore, the black novel is a transition from oral culture to written culture, from Du Bois's notion of the marginalized black consciousness, captured in Negro spirituals and sermons, to cryptographic modernity. Unlike Du Bois and Gilroy, *Changó* clearly shows that syncretic religious traditions, largely absent from the Anglophone world outside of nineteenth century Louisiana (both US traditions being shown in *Changó*), are a well-spring of narrative traditions. This is evident from the written call imitating an oral call to the reader: "Ears of the *Muntu*,

listen!” (59), linking body, sound, community, and language, as in oral discourse. The music of Afro-Catholic religious traditions is constant in the novel, which is tied to the syncretic oral traditions it emulates. Returning to “Origins,” Luis (xix) notes that the first part of this narrative triptych mimics an invocation of Changó, the Orishas, and the Ancestors. It begins and ends with a greeting to the semigod of openings and closings, Eleguá (Zapata Olivella, “Genealogía”). Eleguá’s symbol, an Ouroboros of Yoruban origin (*Changó*, 511), is written on the body of all the novel’s heroes from birth and indicates the transition from oral to written discourse. These traditions are inseparable from the body, music, and dance.

Music, Orality, and Gatekeeping

Like Zapata Olivella’s text, music unites the African Diaspora and forms part of its unique consciousness like double-consciousness does in Gilroy’s *Black Atlantic*. For Gilroy:

Music and its rituals can be used to create a model whereby identity can be understood neither as a fixed essence nor as a vague and utterly contingent construction to be reinvented by the will and whim of aesthetes, symbolists, and language gamers. . . . lived as a coherent (if not always stable) experiential sense of self. . . . it remains the outcome of practical activity: language, gesture, bodily signification, desires. (102)

Gilroy claims that the Jubilee Singers, World War I military bands, and vinyl records being shipped around the world would eventually replace the slave ship as the means of giving visibility to the diaspora by popularizing US gospel, Jazz, and, later, hip-hop. Though Zapata Olivella wrote his novel before hip-hop had the global audience it did for Gilroy in 1990 and even more so today, Zapata Olivella also notes the role of music in creating and revitalizing the diaspora. The US section, “Ancestros,” makes constant allusions to Negro spirituals and Jazz’s role alongside the written poetry of his personal friend Langston Hughes (Prescott 87; Personal Letter at Vanderbilt University) and to the *poema-sones* of his literary precursor, Afro-Cuban Nicolás Guillén, in imagining a black community. Gilroy claims that black sophistication in music challenges the privileged conceptions of both language and writing as preeminent expressions of human consciousness, though

he reminds the reader that literacy was forcibly out of reach for most slaves (74). In the absence of a written tradition to construct an intellectual history, Gilroy notes black music's "mnemonic function: directing the consciousness of the group back to significant, nodal points in its common history and its social memory. . . . living memory of the changing same" (198). These fluid, transcendental aspects of diaspora identity are all present in *Changó*, and they are all intimately linked to its infusion of a written text with the music, the gestures, and the spirits of the Orishas that make this work more like theater on a vast stage than mere signs on a page. The "moral basis" of black music of which Gilroy speaks (36) is inseparable from Afro-Catholic religions in the Latin American context, which are much older than the British Empire Gilroy studies, and this longevity makes it instrumental in community formation and resistance from the beginning. Gilroy sees US black music from its origins in slavery as a means of imagining Jubilee, a utopian quest for justice (56). Zapata Olivella presents this imagining of ideals through musical performance as part of the reconstruction of history, sharing with Douglass, Du Bois, and Gilroy a respect for this form of double consciousness.

The *Muntu* exists as representation of the history of the diaspora's past, but it also looks toward an unknown future not dissimilar from Gilroy's understanding of Jubilee among the enslaved. In an interview, Zapata Olivella claims that he examines diaspora history in a means similar to the spirit possession which occurs during the dance and performance of a ceremony for the Orishas:

I look upon history with eyes that are not my own. I simply look at history in its becoming [devenir]. . . . a permanent rebirth, a sort of Phoenix that dies and is born again from its ashes. . . . without the memory of its origins. In this sense, then, let's call it memorization, which has allowed me to treat the acts lived by my ancestors [sic] and lived by me; all of them form part of a historical process that is changing every day, as if every day arrives illuminated by a new sun and as if every night was shined upon by a new moon. (Krakusin 16)

This new light is a *Nuevo Muntu* that synthesizes the best of all humanity in the Americas. The Hegelian notions of death and rebirth through tragic collision are combined with the oral traditions of the Orishas handed down through performance to create hope for a future redemption of the African Diaspora, which has been cursed and

blessed by the Duboisian double conscious forced upon it by slavery. Jonathan Tittler has written on the historical author's spiritual vision of the world (73). In the interview with Krakusin, Zapata describes this vision of history as mimicking a dialogue with the spirits and the dead, as in Afro-Catholic faiths:

When I say that someone was dictating [*Changó*] to me, starting with the Tablas de Ifá, what I mean is that in this African mythology and regarding the Tablas de Ifá, it is said that in them is written the steps that human beings have made in their lives, since before their birth and after their deaths. . . . I had no reason to look for it in the texts written by slavers. . . . How could I interview myself, come to know those steps taken by Africans before birth, in life and after death? Indubitably, I looked for them. I visited many libraries here in the United States, particularly the library of Harvard Universtiy. . . ." (21)

This quote indicates the combination of oral traditions (mythology) with written traditions, like the documents at Harvard, supplementing them and telling tales absent from them. The two traditions are inseparable in the novel. In the interview, he dramatizes his inspiration as a visit to a slave prison near Dakar, where he sees an enslaved child being taken from his family in a magic moment that the spirit Ifá, who knows the past and future, allowed him to witness (22).

In the novel, the tragedy of history will end in a syncretic "Jubilee." But it will be not only a spiritual one, but a Hegelian self-knowledge for all mankind, which is Zapata Olivella's end-goal of historical progress. The novel's final priestess and heroine, Agne, reveals:

The fact that the Black [sic] people have survived so much defamation, recreating itself at every step, is irrefutable proof that we were chosen by Changó to realize our destiny of liberating humanity. Ancestor worship, the bond between the living and the dead, will put an end to the myth of individual, selfish gods. There is no God more powerful than the family of the *Muntu!* (512)

Gilroy, citing David Biron Davis, claims that overcoming slavery is, for Hegel, the source of true emancipation, and so it stands to reason that blacks' fight for liberation is vital to the Hegelian search for universal liberty.

Zapata Olivella's work, as in the Hegelian tradition, is one of synthesis of the best of the dialectics of African

diaspora thought. For example, it praises the hubris of the black nationalism that would lead to Asante. This begins with Jamaican Marcus Garvey's attempt to gather African Americans from Central America, the Caribbean, and the United States and "repatriate" them in Africa. But Zapata Olivella does not fall into the trap of Garvey's essentialism. The Colombian synthesizes the ideals of flamboyant Garvey with his intellectually refined opponent, Du Bois (703), a gesture he repeats with Booker T. Washington (536). In all cases, the Yoruban cosmovision of respect for supernatural Ancestors, which all three thinkers become, forms a new consciousness. Only the best of these thinkers is included in the text, creating with it the Hegelian spirit that transcends the imperfect consciousnesses of these same thinkers.

Garvey's dream of the diaspora's return to Africa is presented as part of the same spirit as Malcolm X's evolving notions of Islam. As a child in 1920, Malcolm is taken to hear the "Prophet" Garvey in Harlem (582). In the boy's mind, he is a substitute for the red-haired, white Jesus (the spirit of the "White Wolf," the continuation of oppression) to which he is accustomed (580). Garvey's message is that of a space on Earth for the *Muntu*, a quixotic challenge to the colonizers of Africa that they leave or face his people's wrath. This is followed by a shift in setting for his vision: "Nobody knows when the hour of redemption for our Africa will be. But you can hear the wind. It is coming! One day, like a tempest, we shall have it here!" (584). Garvey's ideals of black pride are lauded, but Zapata Olivella makes him the voice of liberation on the American continent as well, a Changó lightning-storm that would spin off into Malcolm's international liberation project as an adult. The latter is enlightened on the matter of the color line through his haj or pilgrimage to Mecca, proclaiming: "The days of disunion have passed; I now only live to congregate the dispersed family of the *Muntu*. Only in this manner can the society announced by Changó be built, where the living activate the knot that ties them to the dead, where the *ekobios* of all races can call themselves brothers" (715–16). The spirits of the text transcend race, nation, and religion, proposing an alternative to previous notions of imagined community. While Garvey taught the New World not to shame or be ashamed of Africa, Malcolm X shows that all must work together to create a Kingdom of this Earth. The slave rebellions that began on the African continent, continued on the Nova Índia, and erupted throughout the Americas have by then reached a global scale, encompassing Malcolm X's

sermons against South African Apartheid (702) and his assassination in Harlem shortly after his return from Paris. It is with Malcolm X's international and anti-colonial vision that the historical diaspora is as all-encompassing as the spiritual one that, in the text, begins before slavery and creates a new consciousness throughout its Hegelian evolution.

Garvey and Malcolm X receive the singular distinction of "prophets," which Du Bois does not share. Luis has noted that all three change the direction of the diaspora's course. Whereas the historical events in the Latin American sections of the novel have an overall northward trajectory, Du Bois and the two prophets have a West-East route (Introduction, *Changó* xxix). All three have the goal of a return to what they interpret as "Africa." Garvey has the goal of repatriating the African Diaspora in what he thought was their former homeland. Du Bois dies in Accra, Ghana in 1963. Malcolm's Hajj to Mecca in 1964 was followed by diplomatic visits to several African countries in solidarity with their goal of independence. While the novel promotes Pan-Africanism, it does so in a way that gives prominence to a united Americas that are deeply influenced by African cultures. These three thinkers return to Africa, or attempt to return as in Garvey's case, as primarily Western subjects whose double consciousness is in struggle with the colonial projects of the United States, one of the latest manifestations of the White Wolf of imperialism in the Americas. Africa inspires them to rise up against oppression, but they can never return to a stable Africa as it was before slavery. There is no "pure" Africa to which to return, as there was for Garvey and Asante. Continuing the poetic, Miltonian use of blasphemy and "sympathy for the devil" in the text, which is sympathetic to virtually all the black movements it depicts, these prophets are impure "false" prophets, iconoclasts, an unholy Trinity like the one of the Biblical Armageddon (Revelation 16.13–16).² The novel's Jubilee is not "pure" in a traditional Christian interpretation of the Bible, but impure in its cultural and religious mixture and the fact that it occurs in the profane, imperfect world, as I will discuss next chapter.

The African Diaspora is part of a New World History beyond the Nation

If the history of the New World is shared by all of its inhabitants, then its traumas must be inherited and worked through by all. The term *Nuevo Muntu* is not used in *Changó*, but *Muntu* is; the author later wrote *Tambores para despertar al Viejo Muntu* (n.d.), further exploring the oral history of the diaspora, so one could say that the *Nuevo Muntu* has not yet arrived, but that it lies in the hope of an awakening of the unity of the “three races” in a new consciousness. Likewise, Gilroy argues that “the history of blacks in the West and the social movements that have affirmed and rewritten that history can provide a lesson which is not restricted to blacks” (223). The *Muntu* is not a race in the physiological sense inherited from eugenics, but a seething sea of tempests leading to a possible future redemption for humanity. Like the Black Atlantic, its global scope and lack of racial purism allows for an understanding of world history that includes the intersecting histories of all people, including those excluded by the limitations of previous historians and philosophers of history.

Gilroy notes the root of the international diaspora model in Jewish thought (205). Zapata Olivella’s text acknowledges its debt to Africanist and Jewish exile Herskovits (Farias 328), but is not limited by his view of history of Africans as the losing half of the Master-Slave Dialectic. There is a moment when the text seems to say both “thank you” and “no thank you” to one of the early scholars of the diaspora. “Ancestors” opens with a theatrical dialogue between its protagonist, Agne Brown, and her professor at Columbia University. Originally, this section was titled “Herskovits” (“Changó”), dubbed “Harrington” in the final version (509). He was among the first white scholars to form a vision of the African diaspora that spans the Americas, and Asante based his Afrocentrism, in part, on his works (Farias 328). Agne notes the limitations of Herskovits’s idea of blacks as “Atlas,” the muscle holding up the progress of whites throughout history (511): “We affirm that we belong to the brotherhood of the *Muntu* foreseen by the African Orishas and in the struggles of our Ancestors on plantations, in slums, in factories, wherever Changó lights his rebellion. It will be a new religion for all the oppressed, no matter what their bloodlines may be” (510). Shocked, Harrington replies, “You’re referring to Africanizing the religious attitude of the American White [sic] man?” (510). Agne is dramatizing Zapata

Olivella's vision of the diaspora as being united by African oral traditions of the Orishas and the Ancestors and the liberation projects they inspire in art, philosophy, and politics.

Harrington's reaction does two things: it summarizes a common assumption regarding Herskovits's theory of acculturation,¹ and transfers it to the United States, once again showing what the Hegelian spirit of the African Diaspora's presence in Latin America can offer the United States. Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz rejected Herskovits's use of the term "acculturation" in reference to the cultural contact between Europeans and Africans from colonial times to the present (Santí 85). In his *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar* (1940), Ortiz replaces it with "transculturation," claiming that both cultures influenced one another, forming hybrid identities. Ortiz can be viewed as an intellectual ancestor of Agne, because he unites the magical, oral world of Afro-Cubans with the lettered world of the Hispanic, and eventually, Anglophone academes. Agnes's project, like Ortiz's and Zapata Olivella's, is a transculturation of the Americas. The Orishas and the Ancestors transcend the limits of race and nation and unite everyone in a quest for justice. The spirit of Africa is still visible on this stage, but it is an ideal, not a plan to return to a pure, material space.

"Second sight" beyond a Western vision of the world is central to Alejo Carpentier's Magical Realism. It is theorized as *lo real maravilloso* in the prologue of the novel *El reino de este mundo* (1949) and has become perhaps the most studied aspect of Latin American letters. Carpentier's idea of this unique vision of New World history is a transculturated gaze that combines African oral traditions, like Haitian Vodoun, with an Enlightenment worldview. Zapata Olivella had to know of Carpentier's work, so there must be some reference to him. First, there is evidence that Father Claver's spiritual struggles with Benkos Bioho and Domingo Falupo bear Carpentier's impact, since the author considered developing it into a separate novel called "Aquí en la Tierra como en el Cielo," 'on earth as it is in Heaven' (Vanderbilt 1) the title of which is taken from the Pater Noster and is very similar to Carpentier's title, "The Kingdom of this World." When the Colombian adapted "José Prudencio Padilla: Wars from Beyond that Seem to be Ours" for television, he renamed it "El almirante Padilla y sus pasos perdidos," alluding to Carpentier's novel *Los pasos perdidos* (1953) or 'lost steps,' a work that would return in his chapter on Padilla's heroism, in which the Orinoco river, central to Carpentier's novel,

speaks (357). Zapata Olivella's "La Rebelión de los Vodús" (276–355) gives a detailed history of the Haitian Revolution interwoven with the oral traditions of the Loas (spirits) that inspired it, but there are only three references to Cuba or Carpentier in the novel: Cuban slaveowners send dogs to hunt the Haitian rebels (330) as in *El reino*, the slaves of Guantánamo admire Haitian liberty (400), and Haiti later inspires the mulatto Cuban ex-slave Pedro Romero to fight for liberty in the Spanish colonies (391). Luis notes that Zapata Olivella reveals information that is absent from *El reino*, such as the first-person accounts of the rebel Mackandal and King Christophe and the important roles of General Toussaint L'Ouverture, President Jean Jackque Dessalines, and the mulattos Alexander Petión, and André Rigaud, who opposed L'Ouverture. Racial tensions between mulatto and black rebels indicate not only historical accuracy but some of the nuances in Latin American slavery that were largely absent from the Anglophone Atlantic, where the enslaved had fewer opportunities to vie for power.

The parallels between Carpentier's magical/marvelous realism and double consciousness and the Franco-Cuban thinker's focus on Latin American history illuminate Zapata Olivella's extensive "stage" for the diaspora. The Americas have been imagined as a community of *tres razas* (*blanco, negro, and indio*) since the Conquest. Zapata Olivella is clearly aware of this, but he presents an alternative narrative for the evolution of the Americas from colonies to republics that is *mestizo* and hybrid. This is still a double consciousness, because of the limits of language itself, which I will elaborate here and next chapter. The novel follows the diaspora as it comes in contact with other languages and traditions. Therefore, if one were to choose a colonial term to describe the content of the novel, it could be called a history of *negros*, though Zapata Olivella uses the more encompassing terms *ekobio* (brother) and *Muntu* (a new humanity) to subvert colonial language. This reflects Zapata Olivella's interest in language as the root of politics and its role in the amelioration of psychic colonization. The content of the novel, even when it narrates interactions with the myriad and diverse groups colonized as *indios*, places *negros* center stage, even as they evolve through conflict and creativity into different communities. This focus on *afrodescendientes* alters the representation of the indigenous in the novel, whose importance to the narrative is dependent on their interactions with the African Diaspora, such as the indigenous mothers who save the baby *Muntu* from the slave ship, the indigenous Ancestors of the mestizo hero José

Prudencio Padilla, or the US Indian Reservations were blacks lived with the indigenous. Even depictions of the Olmecs in Mexico are Africanized by the inclusion of the theory that they were descended from African explorers who discovered the Americas before the Europeans (463) and all indigenous, *mulato*, and *mestizo* people of Mexico are children of Yemayá, the great mother of humanity (498). Therefore, the story of the indigenous is part of the history of the African Diaspora. The myriad indigenous *Weltanschauungen*, languages, cultures, civilizations are not directly all linked to one another—what do the culture and civilization of an Inca have to do with a Seminole or these with a Tupinambá?—but unified by a common history of exploitation that begins when the Europeans crash into Africa, colonizing and enslaving. Since the Conquest began in Africa and since the indigenous occupy an oppressed position in regards to Europe and its descendants in the New World, and since they share a common origin myth with the African Diaspora in the novel, they are all *Muntu*, not a separate “race” from the *negros*, a division imposed by the colonizers.

At the narrative level of form, double conscious continues in Zapata Olivella’s attempt to use European language to fight off European imperialism. He knew that language was the instrument of oppression, as he shows in the dialectological study *Nuestra Voz* and “El substrato negro en el español de América,” which focus on how black and popular speech have enriched the Spanish language. But his text also shows that it is the instrument of communication and creativity, as in poetry. Despite the Babel of languages present in the novel (Yoruba, Taíno, Kikongo, Nahuatl, French, Portuguese, English, to name a few), it must remain in Spanish (or English, in the translation) for the reader to understand, and many of the non-Spanish terms are defined in the “Cuaderno de bitácora,” which Luis has placed in the tradition of Lydia Cabrera (Introduction, *Changó* xviii). This comprehension is what allows the reader to have his or her consciousness altered by contact with non-Western terms, such as *Muntu*, *ekobio*, and *Tlálloc*. Therefore, the novel depends on a new consciousness, because the reader is presumed to speak Spanish, which uses terms that bear the weight of colonialism (*blanco*, *indio*, *negro*, *esclavo*) and therefore be able to communicate with the author through the novel for him or her to begin the process of decolonization through language. This process is a struggle analogous to the Master-Slave Dialectic, because the European language remains dominant but dependent on the Other, be that contact with

other languages or the creativity inherent in language to recreate itself as it becomes a new community, a *Nuevo Muntu*.

Zapata Olivella makes the combination of double consciousness with the *tres razas* (three races) of América explicit in “Los problemas de identidad de los escritores afro-latinoamericanos,” one of a 2005 series of essays on the topic of alienation among Latin American novelists in search of a non-Eurocentric aesthetic. He laments:

the writer of African descent’s alienation in Latin America is fundamentally expressed in a borrowed language. *Mulato, zambo, negro, blanco, indio* or *mestizo*, he must express his feelings through a foreign tongue (Spanish, Portuguese, French). Though these languages are our mother tongues in Latin America, they are still foreign in the sense that they were developed and matured before the Discovery of América. Their roots and connotations do not respond to our lived experiences. For these reasons, the psycho-affective connotations, the blackness of the pure African soul or mixed in Hispano-indigenous *mestizaje*, is masked, hidden, and almost always betrayed. (171)

He later reiterates his belief that the Olmecs were descended from African explorers in what is now Mexico (172), a narrative that has been excluded from the those that construct the Mexican nation, an exclusion of African influences that is paralleled in many Latin American nations, as I will discuss in the next section. The double consciousness of black history as a counter-discourse to national history is paralleled by literary language itself in Latin America, which is of European origin and originally imposed through colonialism. Language continues oppressive structures, such as the *castas* he lists that imply that non-white *razas* are inferior, alienating these groups, including their novelists. As he puts it in “El mestizaje en la novela latinoamericana,” an essay from the same series,

. . . the most transcendental phenomenon in the evolution of our peoples is the *mestizaje* that has occurred between the European colonizer and indigenous and African ethnicities. Said antinomy has been characterized as the crossed gazes between the “self” of the colonizer and the “other” of the

indigenous, in the social arena it was revealed as the ‘ethnic purity’ of the European and the ‘infamous races’ with whom he unavoidably had to bond himself. (163)

This quote reaffirms double consciousness (master/slave, self/other) and takes aim at cultural and racial purity projects. The “black soul” he describes in the first essay, while it seems cut-and-dried, is not so stable in his novel. There are commonalities between blacks in Mali, Colombia, Haiti, and the United States, and there are heroes and spirits that reappear in different contexts, but the Other side of double consciousness in the novel is the non-European terms, concepts, and histories that alter the novel’s language. This cacophonous polyphony shows the vastness and cultural diversity of marvelous realism, which can be traced back to the origins of the Americas, when the Conquistadores were the tiny minority among a Babel of peoples they knew as *indios* and *negros*. They marveled at the unknown magic of the Other. Their discoveries, paralleled by Carpentier’s centuries later, were in some ways the polar opposite of the segregated 1903 United States Du Bois knew. For the latter, blacks were the oppressed minority and *indios* were even fewer in number and influence. Double consciousness begins with the Americas for Zapata Olivella, and his novel seeks to create a new language for this community using the multiple influences that make it up, not only those inherited from colonialism. This is evident from the first page of the novel.

The reader, as indicated in the preface “Al compañero de viaje” “To the Fellow Traveler,” is the opposite of what Zapata Olivella asks him (or, presumably, her) to become. S/he is called to enter a new kind of double consciousness unknown before the novel. S/he is American (of the Americas, not only the US), a wo/man who must become a child. S/he finds some words strange like ghosts, and must take them as a “challenge to the imagination” (56). S/he is locked in a struggle that is similar to Zapata Olivella’s, who is simultaneously the “prisoner” and “liberator” of language, the “discoverer” and “founder” of new communities in it, as these terms from the preface indicate. The implicit author writes the “Cuaderno de bitácora,” then he tells the reader to resist it (“no acudas”), I would add, like a slave in conflict with his master (56). The preface ends with the reminder that “Sooner or later you had to confront this reality: the history of the *negro* in *América* is as much yours as that of the *indio* or the *blanco* that will accompany him to the conquest of freedom for all”

(57). Again, this presumes that the reader is ignorant of the black history that will be revealed and that his or her notions of history will be in conflict with the counter-narrative of the novel, which places the *negro* at its center, even while it uses poetic language to reimagine the *negro* as *Muntu*, and *Muntu* as everything and everyone with which it has come in contact. This includes a revised history of the nations of the Americas, as I will argue.

Double Consciousness, the Nation, and Revolution

The Haitian Revolution is the first time black liberation aligned itself with national liberation, and the novel presents it as an expansion of the liberty that the slave rebels in San Basilio, Colombia had begun fighting for in the seventeenth century. While Hegel considered the nation the apex of free consciousness, Zapata Olivella shows that it is tragically incomplete in its nineteenth century form, a curse inherited by the contemporary reader. Before the *Muntu* betrayed the nation, the nation betrayed the *Muntu*. While the US *Muntu* continues to evolve after emancipation, Latin America remains stilted in the 1800s. Brazil remains a colony, the presence of which becomes only a ghost in “Ancestral Combatants” (615). Where is Vasconcelos’s Universópolis in the Amazon? Or the Raza Cós mica Latina to which the Mexican Revolution was supposed to lead? By what betrayal were these dreams lost? In a word, Bolívar. His life and the nations he founded exemplify, in the novel, Du Bois’s claim that African Americans’ striving to be both “Negro and American” are constantly in tension, though Latin America’s history differs significantly from that of the United States.

“El Libertador de América” Simón Bolívar’s final judgment in the novel comes from his admiral, José Prudencio Padilla, the Haitian Revolution, the African spirits he ignored, and his own wet nurses. It is striking how short the chapter on Bolívar is, especially when compared to the one on his *zambo* friend and comrade-in-arms. It is as if Admiral Padilla’s monument stands taller than the man whose image is synonymous with Spanish American freedom; Padilla’s military victories are told in painstaking detail, while Bolívar is literally put on trial by those he failed. Padilla was tried and executed for treason, but his life and death speak to the heart of Latin America and the road to freedom it has not yet traveled. Both Bolívar and Padilla have black ancestry in the novel (Changó 366–67). The theory of Bolívar’s African ancestry is still marginal among

historians, though it has been promoted by Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez, as historians John Lynch and Luis Esteban Manrique argue (Manrique 205). In the novel, Padilla never forgets his African and indigenous heritage. To show this, their childhoods are juxtaposed, as if they were brothers. José Prudencio is the spiritual son of the personified Black Atlantic, Yemayá, and Nagó the Navigator, the slave rebel and sailor that shares so much with the slaves and black sailors Gilroy studies. Luis considers him the beginning of a “black,” diasporic consciousness in the novel (Introduction, *Changó* xxv). José Prudencio remembers his origins to the extreme of recalling his life in the womb and suckling at his mother’s breasts, the waters that would protect and fortify him throughout his life. This is his Duboisian “second sight” beyond Western Reason. On the other hand, “Simoncito” forgets the black “ayas,” such as Hipólita, who care for and nourish him even when his own mother has no milk (360), like he forgot his own Ancestors. Hipólita’s daughter, his “sister of milk” (*hermana de leche*), dies at birth (361). There is an absence in “Simoncito’s” life that is identified with the feminine and the African, syncretized with the indigenous in this context, which comes back to haunt and judge him in death “Before the Court of the Ancestors” (365). “Nana Taita,” his black Ancestor revealed by the speaking Orinoco and who shares a name with Taita Facundo in Nicolás Gullién’s “Los dos abuelos,” “two grandfathers,” joins his *ayas* in asking why he sided with the slave owners when he “freed” five nations from Spain. Taita plays the role of *guardiero* in the text, revealing Padilla’s past. This is foreshadowed by the Sombra Perro in Simón, a continuation of the White Wolf, the race/spirit that seeks to dominate the other two. Already in this chapter, the notion of “mácula” ‘stain’ is challenged, since the white “race” considered immaculate in the nineteenth century is the “impure part that tyrannizes his indigenous brothers” (364).

Bolívar’s trial in death is a foil of the trial in life of Padilla. While Simón’s mother sees five flags for five nations when he is born (367), Padilla’s vision of nation is different: “at Trafalgar, father [Nagó], I lost my captain, my ship, and my King, but I earned a new flag: my race” (379). This is not a eugenic determinism, but a hope for a future mixture of Hegelian spirit that will lead to true and universal freedom. It is also the flag of a presently scattered diaspora between nations. As Padilla’s battles wear on, he finds himself caught between Britain and Spain at the battle of Trafalgar, then between these two and Napoleon’s France as he is treated like a

slave in Cartagena, and between France, Spain, and the Independence fighters during the Bolivarian wars. Amid these nations sails the *negrero*/pirate Aury, who shows that racism and exploitation transcend nation as well (403). Padilla is a man without a country who is simultaneously fighting to create a new, democratic one, exiled like those considered founders today, such as Argentine Domingo Fausto Sarmiento, Cuban José Martí, and Bolívar himself, though Padilla's ideals of liberty are all his own. The admiral's valor and skill lead to the strategic victory at the Battle of Maracaibo that sealed the Bolivarians' hold on the Americas (404). However, his vision for American liberty is greater and more trustworthy than Bolívar's. Along with the Cuban Romero, he wants a free nation for all, not just land-owning self-identified whites. Padilla fights alongside Haitian ships, granted to the rebels by Pétion under the condition that Bolívar abolish slavery in the new republics. However, when the smoke clears, Bolívar betrays Pétion, Romero, and Padilla's ideals and sides with the aristocrats. The Conventionists, who belong to this group, not only reject Padilla's protests for universal citizenship, but treat him as if he were a "threat of uprising against the Republic" and "making the Mulatto (Pardo) Battalion rise up in Cartagena" (420). He is executed by a firing squad then hanged. His bloody wounds, his "*condecoraciones*" ("medals of honor") (422) ally him with the nation, but his hanging body allies him with the African Diaspora, such as those lynched in the United States later in the novel.

If Bolívar and Padilla are like brothers, then it must be noted that Padilla has an important but barely mentioned blood brother in Guyana, Piar in the novel (409). Historically, he and Padilla were executed by Bolívar, a decision that would haunt the Libertador to his death, for fear of them leading a *pardo* (mulatto) uprising, though not relatives (Helg 470). In the novel, he is the leader of an army of maroon slaves, like the Colombian Benkos Bioho and Zumbi de Palmares, who appears in the Brazil chapter (422). Piar tells Padilla that the maroons were free well before the French and their imitators began to chant *liberté* in the Americas. Maroons like these were the armies of the Loas that began the rebellion in Saint-Domingue before the Haitian Revolution knew what it was, and they were the fighters who sought community beyond an eighteenth and nineteenth century notion of nation. These maroons, across Latin America, sought nothing like racial purity and never forgot the oral traditions of the African Spirits. This forgetting is the root of the nation's betrayal of the

African Diaspora and the indigenous because it allows Bolívar to establish Catholic nations led by whites. This forgetting allows Haitians Pétion and Christophe to betray their nation by persecuting the Vodoun that founded it and imitate the French emperor they died fighting. This forgetting allowed Latin American politicians and historians to overlook the contributions of the African Diaspora to their respective nations in language, art, culture, love, war, and anything else that makes a subject human and makes a community great.

The Nuevo Muntu North of the Border and Beyond the Color Line

In *Changó el gran putas*, cultural hybridity defines Latin America in a way that it did not in the United States at the time the novel was written. There is a rupture between the Americas that begins with “Ancestral Combatants” (500). More space is dedicated to the United States than any other country in the novel. This is because of the singular importance the nation played in racial politics in the twentieth century, as the inspirational figures of diasporic thinkers Marcus Garvey (708) and Malcolm X’s presence (530) in the novel indicates. Zapata Olivella traveled the United States from the 1940s to the end of his life in 2004. His *He visto la noche* depicts his clear understanding of what W.E.B. DuBois considered the defining element of the twentieth century: the color line (378). Zapata Olivella felt Jim Crow in the flesh as a dark-skinned mestizo who was aware that there were other concepts of race, diaspora, and oppression that DuBois could not have known in the United States in 1903 when he wrote *The Souls*. Despite his insistence on the cultural hybridity of African Americans, Gilroy does not attempt a synthesis of Anglo-and Latin-America like Zapata Olivella does. The novel shows that the elements that should transcend time and space in Latin American history in the form of memory or Hegelian spirit are the African spirits themselves outlined in “Origins,” which have been marginalized and demonized from the Conquest to this day. “The American *Muntu*” and “The Vodou Rebellion” show slave rebellions that do not come solely from national liberation projects and enlightenment ideals, though the French Revolution and its declarations of equality influenced the Haitian Revolution alongside the Saints and, in the novel, Taíno deities. Another element of the *American Muntu* is *zambo* (afro-indigenous) alliances, parallels, and cultural mixture that are already foreshadowed in the novel’s first section.

These three elements (magic, maroon, and *zambaje*) are minimized in Gilroy's work, because these beliefs were much more tightly controlled in the Protestant-dominant United States. There were not large maroon communities in the post-independence United States like those of Haiti, Cuba, and Brazil, though there were numerous escape stories of those headed to the abolitionist North or Canada. The US indigenous population was more thoroughly exterminated than in the Latin American mainland, where exploitation and oppression were the norm, and those that remained in the United States were corralled onto reservations.

As "Ancestral Combatants" opens, the griot Ngafúa calls out to the protagonist, Agne Brown (501). This inverts the opening of "Origins," in which Ngafúa cries to the *Muntu*, the reading/listening public and he invokes the spirits Elegba and Changó (59). Ngafúa's call to her implies that she and the African Americans she represents do not have the same memory of the diaspora that Latin American practitioners of Afro-Catholic faiths do:

I speak to you with the invisible eyes of your Ancestors, who are present here with me. . . . Listen to your ancestral memory. In it are born, sleep, and live the children of Sosa Illamba, mother of the nameless hungry. . . . Changó has chosen you—woman, daughter, sister, and lover—so you may gather the broken, persecuted, murdered family of the *Muntu* in the great crucible of all bloodlines. (301)

This opening scene presents the departure between the binary, segregated world that Agne is born into in the US South and in different forms in the Midwest and New York. Agne's life begins with strong parallels to Du Bois and Zapata Olivella's, who lived through these harsh conditions. This is evident in the written word, where capitalized terms for race, which do not exist in Spanish, "Blanco" and "Negro" ('White' and 'Black') (510–11), along with "nigger" (590) and "Jim Crow" (643) (untranslated and defined in the *Cuaderno de bitácora*, 740, 744) appear for the first time, reflecting a binary, segregated historical reality. But Zapata Olivella shows that the two Americas in the novel, Anglo- and Latin-America, can and should be synthesized into a sum that is greater than its parts along the lines of Vasconcelos's *raza cósmica*.

Most of the United States in the 1960s, when Agne comes of age, did not recognize the *zambo* elements of its national identity, and much of this aspect of the US fabric is still ignored. Agne's enslaved Ancestor Zaka revises her understanding of her own history and ancestry. He notes that his father was Seminole and that the indigenous helped him escape the plantation (555). He tells Agne of pre-Colombian (Afro-Olmecs), Conquest-era (Estebanico of *Naufragios*), and Native American reservations where blacks work to build a life in the Old West alongside their indigenous brethren (675). This *zambo* alliance is not a whitening project like Vasconcelos's, but a revision of US history that includes black, indigenous, and Latin American elements in the greater narrative of the rise and fall of racial segregation from slavery to the novel's end. DuBois, a product of his time, did not include these alliances in his double consciousness, and Gilroy's focus also overlooks them.

Raised by a white protestant minister, Reverend Robert, in the Midwest (518), Agne is not in contact with oral Afro-Catholic traditions like the Latin American *Muntu*. Her Ancestors must call her in order to be heard. This indicates that a Hegelian synthesis of two Americas, which have been separated by colonial powers (England on one side versus Spain, France, and Portugal) as well as US economic and military neo-Imperialism, which Zapata Olivella harshly criticizes throughout his oeuvre. As these two groups (Latin *Muntu* and US *Muntu*) come together in the twentieth century, not all of their elements are repeated. Agne is a well-cared for individual who has many of the privileges of what was then considered a "white" world, such as financial stability, "white" schooling from elementary school to college (508), and the more limited racist violence of Kansas and, later, New York. She has more options than her enslaved and revolutionary Ancestors to express her identity and be recognized. The violence of the past, such as the slave revolts in Palenque de San Basilio, Saint-Domingue, and even the revolutions of Bolívar, Tiradentes, and Morelos, are no longer the most effective modes of resistance and recognition by the dominant culture. She has the access to education and written culture that Aleijadinho had in his time and more, so she can look back at history with Hegelian distance and determine what elements of that past can be applied to her present. She looks to US black thinkers from Zaka to Sojourner Truth, from Booker T. Washington to Du Bois, from Garvey to King and Malcolm X, but she also communicates with Latin American and Native American elements and the Orishas to evolve in her

consciousness into something new. Agne's coming of age allows her to reconnect with the silenced traumas of her past, such as the lynching of her father in the US South, as well as an awareness of the Americas' trauma bond, which is slavery. Double-consciousness, if understood as a binary, biologically determined notion of race, is not big enough for the *Muntu*. It is a synthesis of the best of the Americas, including the *mestizo* and *zambo* cultural elements that flourished in the Latin America that Gilroy ignores.

In conclusion, Manuel Zapata Olivella's stage is mapped out by valiant actors who overthrew their role as object in Hegel's Master-Slave Dialectic. He does this through his own imagining of the diaspora through the lens of a more extensive Duboisian double consciousness that synthesizes the best of African Diaspora thought with other American traditions with the goal of opening the possibility for universal liberation, recognition, and self-understanding. Zapata Olivella attempts to restore to history a perspective that has been operating in Latin American countries, as the sections on Colombia and Mexico show. He makes it possible to read the history of the United States from the perspective of the *Muntu* and include this nation in the *Nuevo Muntu*, past and future.

Ana Maria Gonçalves, Gatekeeper of Brasáfrica and the River at its Heart³

Ana Maria Gonçalves, the Brazilian *guardiera*, maps the common histories of Brazil, Benin, and Nigeria in a way that is similar yet supplementary to Gilroy's Black Atlantic. The Master-Slave Dialectic is also at work in Kehinde/Luiza's perception, so she is an example of double consciousness, in both Hegelian and Duboisian terms. These struggles are altered by her frequent shifts in geographic location and socioeconomic status. Ana Maria is not the first author to map the African Diaspora in Brazil, and she readily admits that she is building on a longstanding tradition, as is evidenced by her novel's ample bibliography of literary, historiography, and anthropology texts (949–51). Slavery was central to the nation's economy until 1888, and folklorist Raimundo Nina Rodrigues already begins to give visibility, albeit problematically, to the religious and musical traditions brought from specific historical regions of Africa to Brazil. However, there is a tendency among Brazilian scholars to map a one-way path that does not look far beyond national borders. This comes from evidence of black authorship in a Eurocentric national literary tradition that began with Romero's collection of Afro-

Brazilian stories (Nina Rodrigues 12): African traditions did not enter the spotlight until they were brought into Brazilian territory from a largely invisible past and then did not influence the African colonies whence they came. Roger Bastide's *As Américas Negras* is diasporic in scope, but the "scattered seeds" of diaspora never seem to communicate with the Africa they left behind, never knew, or from which they were taken. Gonçalves also draws on Pierre Verger's work from the 1960s (950). Historians of the Black Atlantic, or similar visions of the diaspora, today are doing important work to envision the histories of Brazil and various African nations as ships going back and forth, carrying products, practices, beliefs, and people in constant change. Some examples in history are Jane Landers, Barry Robinson, Paul Lovejoy, Mariza Soares, Stuart B. Schwartz, João José Reis, Celso Castilho, Roquinaldo Ferreira, Daviken Studnicki-Gizbert, Flávio Gomes, A.J.R. Russell-Wood, and Alberto da Costa e Silva.

Gonçalves and Antônio Olinto's Black Atlantic

The first novelist to follow the *retornados*, those who went back to Africa after being enslaved like Luiza Mahin (Kehinde), the mother of mulatto abolitionist lawyer Luís Gama, is Antônio Olinto. His *A casa d'água* (1969), the opening of his trilogy "A alma da África" treats a family's voyage from Brazil to what is now Nigeria roughly during the time in which Kehinde lives, as Eurídice Figueredo notes (52). Gonçalves lists Olinto among her sources for the work, and he is a prime example of an African proverb, one of the novel's epigraphs: "A flame loses nothing by starting another flame" (5). One could say that Olinto himself is an example of a Black Atlantic intellectual. Nonetheless, purist, perhaps well-intentioned followers of Asante might quickly assert that Olinto is not black. Like Gonçalves, Olinto was from Minas Gerais, but he served as a diplomat (*Adido Cultural*) in Lagos, Nigeria (Olinto 2). His African experience made him interested in the African influences in Brazil, particularly in Bahia and Rio de Janeiro (5). While he was serving in Nigeria in 1964, Lusophone African independence movements were starting to take military action, and the Portuguese empire on the continent was beginning the downward spiral that would end in 1975. One could see his work as a ship sailing between the Brazilian literary tradition and the emerging Postcolonial Luso-African novelistic

tradition, best represented by Germano Almeida (*O testamento do sr. Napumoceno*, 1989), Mia Couto (*Terra sonâmbula*, 1992), and Pepetela/Artur Pestana (*Mayombe*, 1989) as well as Portuguese novelists Antônio Lobo Antunes (*Os cus de Judas*, 1979) and Lygia Jorge (*A costa dos murmúrios*, 1988), who have written on the colonial wars in Africa roughly during the time Olinto was living and writing in Nigeria (Filho 2). As a Brazilian writing in a non-Portuguese colony, he has much creative and political freedom which would only come later for Lusophone African authors who were not sycophants for the Salazar regime (1932–1968) (20).

A casa d'água (1968) takes place between 1898 and 1968. These dates roughly correspond to the US Segregation Era, which would end in the racial turmoil of the 1960s, though its echoes continue. The novel begins in Brazil, where the case was much different. After the 1888 Lei Áurea, there was no legal equivalent of the US Black Codes, and the Declaration of the First Republic in 1889 brought a widespread practice of active forgetting or mollifying the memory of slavery among the Brazilian elite, which often excluded the descendants of slaves from sources of social mobility, such as literacy, by tacit means (Loveman 437). The image of former slaves sailing back to Africa, to invoke Zapata Olivella and Gilroy's ships, is central to Olinto's depiction of the Santos family. They are *retornados* in search of opportunities well after the abolition of slavery that granted them liberty, at least in the eyes of the law. Gonçalves depicts roughly the same *retornados* during the 1830s and 1840s. *A casa's* geographical trajectory, like much of Gonçalves's novel, inverts the Middle Passage. Instead of a voyage west in chains, the characters sail eastward in search of self-determination. The geographical center of the novel is a historical, not mythical, Benin and Nigeria (Lagos and surrounding towns).⁵ The area is in transition from its past as various European colonies to its present as an independent nation. Its protagonist, Mariana, sells potable water from her home (173), which evokes the characters' fluidity of identity, of sea on land, and gives the novel its name. In addition to associations with Atlantic slavery, water also evokes mother goddesses like Yemayá (the sea) and Oshún (rivers, fresh water). I will return to these deities in the chapters that follow. The fluidity of identity and cosmopolitanism of Zapata Olivella and Gilroy is evident on the African continent itself, showing that a homogeneous "Africa" is a dream rooted in the scattering of diaspora, though the continent itself is also shown as scattered by slavery's colonial legacy. As in *Defeito*,

Brazilian national identity is exported with the *retornados* to the Portuguese colony of Lagos, primarily to the street Rua de Bangboshe (73). Here, a new colony emerged as blacks and mulattos return to Africa only to find that they are very different from the locals. Language and literacy (79, 94), religious ceremonies (82), music and dance (124–25), folktales like the *bumba-meu-boi* (79, 188); national literature like José de Alencar’s *O guarani* and Amado’s *Gabriela, cravo e canela* (194, 323); and rituals of baptism (165), marriage (106), and death (90) continue a Brazilian national, ethnic, and even colonial identity in an African context. In the novel there is no solidarity or redemptive return, as Garvey or Asante might hope. In Africa, the over 100 characters move amongst Portuguese (Lagos), Spanish (Fernando Poo [114]), and German (Aduni [163]) colonies and speak many languages. The trade networks clustered around the port of Lagos bring people of all races from all over Europe (201–02), the United States (including an African American [100]), Beirut (258), and various regions of Brazil (Rio de Janeiro, 333; Bahia, 209; Minas Gerais, 358). Characters and political boundaries develop in constant change, constant fragmentation of identity and questioning of values, practices and traditions. These in turn are taken back to various regions of Brazil, including the ports of Rio de Janeiro and Salvador da Bahia, as well as the capital of Brasília, shortly after its founding in 1960 (351). Nagó’s ship sails between nations, and a consciousness beyond the nation marks the characters of this novel, which ends with the establishment of Zorei, a new, independent nation that would eventually be subsumed by Nigeria (338).

Because of literary trailblazers of the *Nuevo Muntu* like Olinto, Ana Maria can build an international, mobile, panoramic vision of the African Diaspora that deepens and supplements the national history of Brazil. Her plot starts in Dahomey, which would become Benin after colonialism (19). The course of the novel’s voyage begins with movement within historical Africa at the end of the eighteenth century, depicting the continental wars between African kingdoms of which the international slave trade formed part through business deals and political manipulation (844–48). Kehinde is taken from her village of Savalu to the town of Ouidah, where she is shipped to Brazil with the other slaves (26). Upon Kehinde’s arrival in Bahia, Gonçalves draws on the work of scholars like Gilberto Freyre and recasts it from the perspective of a female slave (Gonçalves, “Viagens” 170). His descriptions of the big house, the small (domestic) slave quarters, and the big (manual

laborer) barracks provide the setting for the work. His description of customs, mores, and demographics of the plantation become Gonçalves's characters. But Kehinde appears to be the only narrator for most of the novel, a strong "I" that belongs to a female slave, though the work has hundreds of characters. This allows her to show the diversity of the enslaved and how, unlike the chattel slavery of the Anglophone world that Gilroy treats, many central aspects of African identity (e.g., language, music, religion) are allowed to continue in many social settings. After the auction block, she is taken to be a house slave and lives in the small *senzala*, or slave quarters, near the master's house (72, 74). Kehinde's mistress blames the girl when she miscarries, and the former house slave must live in the squalid *senzala grande* (104). One of her tasks is to process a whale carcass for oil (117), which is a grotesque invocation of João Ubaldo Ribeiro's *Viva o povo brasileiro* (1983) (109–10).⁴ She is rented out to a British family, revealing the hypocrisy and economic and political pragmatism of British abolitionism (212).

Luís Gama, the Black Atlantic, and the Bourgeoning Brazilian Nation

The course of Ana Maria's novel within Brazilian territory, particularly after she loses her son, roughly follows the biographies of Luís Gama by Elciene Azevedo (1992) and Sud Mennucci (1938) that Gonçalves cites in her bibliography (949). This allows the implicit author to follow the development of the Brazilian nation through the eyes of a slave and a free person of color, not unlike Du Bois's double consciousness. Kehinde, whether on the plantation or selling goods in urban environments, is at times not considered "fully" Brazilian by those around her (most evident in her fear of being deported after the Revolta dos Malês in 1835 and her inability to own land [548–49]), and at others considers herself "fully" part of a black community, whether among the enslaved (on the plantation, 108; as *escrava de ganho*, 243) or as a free person of color at the Washing of the Steps (486). These identities are formed around language, music, and oral storytelling, just like in Gilroy's essay and Zapata Olivella's novel, and they change constantly.

Kehinde's journey beyond Bahia begins with the Revolta dos Malês described last chapter. While she is exiled from Salvador due to the revolt, her lover sells Luís to settle gambling debts, for which historian Elciene

Azevedo provides historical documentation, though there is no record that he is called “Alberto” as in the novel (35). Luís was born in 1830 and sold in 1840 (36). At this time, Bahia’s bustling port benefitted not only from slave ships from Africa, many of which operated illegally, but also from the domestic slave trade (36). Azevedo shows that Gama was loaded onto the Saraiva and shipped south, where he was to be sold to work on a coffee plantation (36). Rio de Janeiro, the capital since 1763, was an important midpoint for such ships, and Gama was handed over to a Portuguese candle maker named Vieira who also worked in the clandestine slave trade (36). This stop is important, because it revisits the capital as a space of ethically mixed figures like Vieira. Gama himself would later cast him as Judas-like. The abolitionist poet claims that Vieira killed himself after allowing slaves in his possession to starve (36). His guilt, whether fact or selective details or even an exaggeration to support the abolitionist counter-discourse to pro-slavery hegemony, is an indictment of the Brazilian nation. It condemns Brazil for its continued exclusion of the vast majority of the African Diaspora in its borders from the national project through slavery and the political structures that emerged from it. São Paulo’s coffee industry, often imagined as a source of political progress beyond slavery through European and Japanese immigration (Masterson and Fudnada-Clyssen 73), wage labor, and greater social mobility, is shown as part of the complex web of the slave trade. Gama could be enslaved by his own father in part because of São Paulo’s involvement in the institution. The boy’s trajectory to Santos, Campinas, and eventually the capital of the province is also revealing of Afro-Brazilians’ role in national history. According to Azevedo, he was not purchased at auction because the Revolta dos Malês (1835) had struck fear into the hearts of those driving the slave trade, and Bahia was the primary source of captives after the British blocked the transatlantic trade. He was seen as a threat to order, even at ten years old, a wide-spread phobia that was an important factor in the Europeanization of São Paulo’s labor force (Azevedo 37). Gama becomes a house slave in São Paulo, and so a houstguest teaches him to read, thus becoming able to leave the oral slave world. He is freed or manumitted by the age of seventeen and works for the Força Pública de São Paulo (38). He would grow up to become one of the most influential and universally loved abolitionist lawyers in São Paulo until his death in 1882 (30).

Kehinde follows her son to Rio de Janeiro, where she becomes part of a black community, though her own black identity is gradually more conflicted. She falls in love with Piripiri, a *capoeira* [sic], a practitioner of Brazilian dance fighting (691). This martial art originated among rebel slaves not unlike Piripiri. Through oral history, it can be traced back to Angola, but today there are two types: *capoeira angola* and *capoeira regional*. This division did not exist until the teacher Mestre Bimba popularized a more disciplined, institutionalized, and full-contact form of the dance called capoeira regional in the 1930s (Barbosa 81). One reaction was a “re-Africanization” of capoeira called capoeira angola under the leadership of Mestre Pastinha, which was spread by the bahian diaspora throughout Brazil (81–82). This perceived “return to African roots” intensified in the 1980s and 1990s as part of a greater concern with Afro-Brazilian identity, which I discussed in Chapter 1. Kehinde’s exposure to *capoeira* occurs before it is codified, revealing an unknown side of a practice that has been appropriated as a “Brazilian” art, revealing an understanding of it as part of her recollection of Africa in Brazil, something that is as of yet rebellious and untamed. Piripiri takes her to a secret meeting on the Corcovado in 1840 (691), though the iconic Christ the Redeemer would not be built until 1931. At the time the novel is set, the Corcovado is “topped by *quilombos*,” escaped slave communities (663), though the same *capoeiras* were used to protect the city as well (672). Their performance on this stage could be read as a previously unrecognized (with the full Hegelian weight of “recognition”), Afro-Brazilian identity that lies in a past of struggle that is all too often cloaked by narratives of racial democracy that continue today (Hanchard 44, 47). *Capoeira* can be used with deadly force, and it is a form of self-assertion and self-defense for its practitioners, all of whom are blacks in the novel (666). Its practitioners historically associate it frequently with the music of the African *berimbau* (667), dances of African spirits such as São Bento/Oxumarê in which “players” flail as if they are “chicoteando,” becoming whips amidst the cries of the music that can be associated with slavery and resistance (668), so it is another example of the bond between syncretism, music, and the body in the intellectual history of the enslaved. However, like other syncretic practices, it remained hidden from the eyes of the elite until the 1930s, a “game” to be “played,” a seemingly harmless clandestine exercise. In a time

before the statue of the Cristo, as the national icon is called, slaves and *libertos* were creating their own community, within and beyond the boundaries of the nation.

This appropriation of national and colonial symbols is repeated with Joaquim Manuel Macedo's *A rua do Ouvidor* (1878) placing a black protagonist in the "Paris" of Brazil during its heyday, changing how a classic author's detailed description of Rio's geography is rewritten by this text and reminding the reader of Macedo's role in abolitionism (699). Kehinde is actively involved in writing his novels, among the first in the nation, thus writing herself (and Gonçalves) into the Brazilian canon (656). Something similar happens when she meets the free-born Kuanza, in Bahia, who gives her the manuscript of José Saramago's *Memorial do convento* (1982), which Kuanza claims was written by his father (615). The latter was a slave at the monumental Palácio Nacional-Convento in Mafra, Portugal, who is able to move unnoticed through the labyrinthine social networks of the eighteenth century, as Kehinde is in Brazil. Kuanza is ninety years old, facing death like the Portuguese empire in Brazil at the time, and he is relieved that his family's story will see the light of day. By fictitiously making Portuguese Nobel Laureate Saramago's work authored by a slave, Gonçalves is once again using the African Diaspora to transcend national boundaries in the creation of her work. This is not a matter of abandoning the nation or even the colonial past as imagined communities, but a clear desire for memories of flexible and mobile identities that she shares with Zapata Olivella and Gilroy. Her imagining of Kuanza in the novel also begs the same question as the novel's prologue: if an eighteenth century slave found a way to write a manuscript like Gonçalves's, would anyone then know or care? Would anyone today know? In any case, the fictitious author, whose manuscript is eventually lost in the Atlantic (777), speaks to a silence in Brazilian letters, an ignorance of a certain kind of history.

Kehinde follows her son from Rio de Janeiro, to Santos, and finally Campinas. In the novel, after learning to read, Gama gains his freedom through escape, making his social ascension seem more laced with hubris, and heads to São Paulo (721–22). Entering the world of letters is what allows him to eventually become a lawyer and advocate for slaves, and Gonçalves's novel is a continuation of this emancipation project today. It is also the point when Kehinde loses hope of finding Luís on her own. Once she loses her son's trail, Kehinde

becomes directionless (727). Her perceived guilt for allowing his brother to die is added to her guilt for letting Luís be sold, and to these is added the guilt of abandoning the search for him to others. She leaves the search to a lawyer, the husband of her former young mistress, Maria Clara, and heads for Africa as a *retornada*.

Defeito presents this decision to leave as something impulsive and carried out with little explanation. Nonetheless, other moments in the text present ample evidence that this return to Africa was not unusual for someone in her context. It is not done in the name of any sort of Brazilian benevolence, by slave owners or the Brazilian government. Nor is it done in the name of some glorious return to an African homeland like Garvey imagined. Kehinde goes because of political and economic pressures. It is impressive that she was able to travel as much of Brazil as she did as a black woman, a conspirator in a slave revolt, and a fugitive. She is separated from her son because of her precarious state, when she must flee to São Luís do Maranhão (593). To give credence to her characters, Gonçalves conducted extensive historical and anthropological research for the novel, as her bibliography indicates (949–51). Foundational Afro-Brazilianists like Raimundo Nina Rodrigues, Gilberto Freyre, and Pierre Verger are listed, all of whom mention the *retornados* in their studies, as historian Alberto da Costa e Silva notes (x–xi). But the source that most speaks to double consciousness in the work is anthropologist Manuela Carneiro da Cunha’s *Negros, estrangeiros* (1985), which shows that *libertos*, manumitted slaves, were not entirely unlike segregation-era blacks in their social and legal restrictions, or as Du Bois put it, “the freedman has not found in freedom his promised land” (2). The white-dominant, slave-based Brazilian nation had built itself upon an ideology in which freed blacks were often barred access to political, economic, and religious power, and even their physical mobility was limited in many cases (68–69). Carneiro argues that someone in Kehinde’s situation is a foreigner in her own land, feared for what she looks like (74). The Brazilian scholar traces the fear of mass black revolt to documents from 1792 (72), when concerns that a Haitian-style revolution (which succeeded, in part, due to a begrudging collaboration between free mulattoes and slave rebels) could take place in Brazil. Paranoia among slave owners intensified with the Bahian revolts of 1826, 1828, and 1830, led by Nagô (Yoruban) slaves (Carneiro 72). Kehinde notes the greater legal restrictions placed on free and enslaved blacks during this time, which included arbitrary beatings, death sentences, and

deportation (538). Revolts were spurred, arguably, by the constant flux of African-born slaves like Kehinde from the Bight of Benin. They were exported to Bahia long after the British prohibition of the slave trade, most famously by the Brazilian-born warlord in Ouidah, Chacha Francisco Félix de Souza (Silva, *Francisco* 9), along with several former slaves who rose to become slavers themselves in Africa (Silva, Introduction x). The constant importation of those who knew a reality outside of slavery made them a threat to the Bahian status quo. It became apparent during the Revolta dos Malês, in which Kehinde fought in 1835, when the Islamic Jihad begun in West Africa spilled over into the Muslim-led struggle that attempted to establish a Caliphate in Salvador da Bahia (Verger, *O fumo* 35–36). The struggle led to mass deportations, which the novel also records (538). Black people in this context, even when they were not slaves, were not Brazilian (12). The empire was happy to ship them back to their place of origin, or anywhere else in Africa, to avoid further problems with the rebels or the abolitionist British.

On the ship, her diaspora identity is once again evident as she interacts with Afro-Brazilians and those from the British colony of freed slaves at Sierra Leon (731, 735). “Africa” is imagined by some to be a lost Paradise (731), though Kehinde quickly learns otherwise. Her experience in Africa parallels that of Olinto’s characters. The spaces of the Rua Bangbash, Lagos, Ouidah, the Portuguese Fort D’Ajuda (769), the celebrations of Nosso Senhor do Bonfim (834) return in her novel. She has new twins, who go to Paris to study (914). One returns to Africa while the other stays in Europe (923, 925). At no point is Africa a static, unified, or ideal entity. It is a place of human struggle with masters and slaves, just as Brazil was.

Kehinde’s African Diaspora identity slips away just as abruptly as it emerged when she was shoved onto a squalid ship headed west. As with Olinto’s novel, this is most evident when she attempts to set down new roots on African soil. But the seeds of transculturation are clearly being planted while Kehinde is still enslaved. These take root in a way that would be unfathomable to the slaves Du Bois and Gilroy describe. As an *escrava de ganho*, she sells cookies to Amleto, a mulatto who is in charge of his absent master’s estate, something she could not have done from the *senzala grande* (269). (It is also an allusion to Ubaldo’s Amleto [108], though Ubaldo’s version is more complex and less flattering.) Luísa models herself after the masters. She hires her

friends as wage laborers (243), but she also buys slaves to carry her in a *cadeirinha* or sedan chair (311). These were status symbols at the time used by virtually anyone who could afford them, and a white man takes off his hat in respect to this black woman whose friends playfully call her “mistress” (311). Elsewhere (“Aleijadinho”), I have written on how perceptions of race are altered by whether one is the slave at the bottom or the passenger atop the chair: this was the case of mulatto icons Chica da Silva and Aleijadinho (depicted in Zapata Olivella’s work), and carriers’ near invisibility for Kehinde is indicative of this reality (311). Economic demands often trumped racial solidarity in all sectors of Brazilian society, and the incentives of manumission and gaining better working conditions were often driving forces in Brazil, especially in urban environments like Salvador (Kehinde), Minas Gerais (Chica da Silva, Aleijadinho) (Dantas), São Paulo (Gama), and Rio de Janeiro. This is not to argue that Brazilian slavery was “better,” but to invite the reader to consider how it operates on Kehinde’s vision of diaspora in a way unlike Frederick Douglas’s, for example.

Like in her perception of the Revolta dos Malês, Kehinde forms her identity around her relationships between family and friends. Daviken Studnicki-Gizbert has shown that the Portuguese empire beyond its terrestrial boundaries was based entirely on family and friend relationships (67), one of the colonial roots of Brazil’s problems with nepotism and cronyism today.³ For the historian, the seafaring Portuguese nation, scattered across the globe not only in its own colonies but also in those of Spain, itself functioned much like a diaspora. In what could be interpreted as chaos, community bonds were centered on personal relationships, not a stable notion of national loyalty. This partially explains the hundreds of characters in Gonçalves’s novel, many of which are flat. Not only is there a tendency in primarily oral cultures like Kehinde’s to narrate more “superficial” or “type” characters (Ong 70), but also, one lived in a world of flat characters in her context—to participate in the local economy was to make friendships or relationships that were functional enough to meet one’s needs. This is to say that the hundreds of characters in the novel reflect the narrator’s historical reality. But one must not overlook Gonçalves’s choice to include that reality in her writing. Instead of focusing on one idealized hero, she includes the crowds of enslaved characters that heroic narratives like *Changó* minimize or overlook. These ordinary lives are written back into history through Gonçalves’s carefully constructed historical

fiction. In fact, there were so many that the author had to cut out six hundred pages and entire lives, indicating her desire to include as large and diverse a group of Brazilians, particularly Afro-Brazilians, as her novel would allow (Gonçalves 175). Also, not all of her characters are flat: Kehinde's friendship with her white *sinhazinha* and her husband, her love for her mulatto children, her lover Alberto, her bond with historical abolitionist and novelist Joaquim Manuel Macedo (699) are steps in becoming more than only "black," as in solely identified with a black community in her own perception, in any purist sense of the word.

The Return to Africa and the Gradual Inversion of the Master-Slave Dialectic

Language is at the heart of Kehinde's transculturation. As a child, she finds pleasure on the plantation in learning new words, be they in Portuguese or an African language. Upon learning to read, she finds more doors open to her, such as the bond with Macedo, formed in a book store through a conversation about João dos Passos's poetry, a conversation that would have been largely impossible for the Anglophone slave system. She learns English from the Cleggs, her British "renters" in Bahia (212). English is a colonial tongue that gives her more opportunities. In learning it she becomes less tied to her fellow slaves, be they on the plantation in Bahia or in Rio de Janeiro, though it also allows her to communicate with Anglophone former slave John (735). He fathers her children in Africa (767). By the time she reaches the capital of Brazil, she has contradictory feelings about her sense of community. She recalls a black porter's confusion at being asked to carry the Afro-Brazilian's weighty trunk of books and other possessions when she disembarks, again feeling different from him (637). She witnesses the coronation of Brazil's self-proclaimed "Enlightened Monarch," Dom Pedro II, on 18 July 1841 and recalls that it corresponds to Yemayá's feast, A Festa da Kianda (675, 677). This resignifying of national symbols through double consciousness (emperor/African goddess) stands in stark contrast to her statements moments later: "... I was ashamed to sell food, because I had already done much more important and profitable things. . . . but today I'm even ashamed of such thoughts. I, who always tried to be fair, who never accepted being a slave because I always thought a white man couldn't treat me as if he were superior, I judged myself to be better than the black women that did humble work" (680–81). Even as she is maintaining close

relationships with Afro-Brazilians around her, the perception of elevated status that comes with economic advancement is altering her identity.

Kehinde, like the other *brasileiros* in Africa (what the *retornados* and their descendents call themselves after disembarking) (757), builds a Brazil on the backs of the *selvagens*. All of this is historically accurate, as Verger (*Verger/Bastide* 67–81), Carneiro (106–216), Silva (1–206), and Guran (1–290) show. In fact, her contact with a *sarô* (freed person in Sierra Leone) would heighten her sense of superiority to the local population (Verger, *Verger/Bastide* 67). This Brazil must be recognized, in a Hegelian sense, by the *selvagens* that live in Nigeria and Dahomey. Kehinde starts a company named Casas da Bahia, which builds houses like those she remembers from the other side of the Atlantic (853–54, 862). She hires workers (867) and collaborates with slave traders (771), combining two economic systems, but she is driven by profit, not a sense of community beyond that of a diasporic *brasileira*. I do not mean that she is any more benevolent or violent than mainland Brazil was. For example, she teaches her house slaves to read along with her children, and her daughter Maria Clara uses part of her family’s profits to establish a school so that integrates *selvagens* and *brasileiros* (921), which was uncommon in Brazil (Loveman 443). This simultaneously empowers these students by giving them opportunities along the lines of those Kehinde herself enjoyed and makes them more *brasileiro*, which can be seen as a psychological form of colonization. The text, however, demonstrates that this is always a transculturation, since Geninha, her servant, is the scribe to whom an old, blind Kehinde narrates the novel. Geninha, who gave Kehinde a master consciousness through recognition, in turn has contributed to Kehinde’s Africanization because there is no delineation in the text between who is creating its language, whether it is only Kehinde or Geninha (888).

Upon Kehinde’s arrival in Africa, Gonçalves ceases to follow the path of Olinto’s Mariana. Kehinde has no *casa d’agua* like Olinto’s protagonist, but a series of businesses that contribute to a new Brazil in Africa, with all the problems of the historical Brazil. Kehinde’s experience in Lagos overlaps with that of the characters in British author Bruce Chatwin’s *The Viceroy of Ouidah* (1980), which also appears in Gonçalves’s bibliography (949). Here, the *retornada* depends on the protection of a viceroy, Chachá de Souza (741), like

Chatwin's *brasileiro* patriarch in Dahomey (8). She abandons her African name, which she always uses in Brazil, and calls herself "Luisa Andrade da Silva." This transformation occurs when she signs the contract on her new land, making her more like the slaveocrats of Brazil (789). It is no coincidence that Chatwin's novel treats the Silva family, who descended from the nineteenth century *chachás* that controlled the market in slaves and other exports between present-day Benin, Lagos, and Bahia (8). Gonçalves and Chatwin both describe the Brazilification of African kings served by *chachás*. The former loved cigars and rum from the New World (Chatwin 8) as much as powerful Brazilians and profited from selling the adversaries they defeated in war. Chatwin's novel links these final African slave traders from the nineteenth century to the end of the twentieth, through the story of Mama Wéwé da Silva, who is over one hundred years old and whose last words, uttered in Lagos in 1953 are "remember, you are Brazilians!" (28). Though it may seem ironic at first glance, Chatwin's Africans actually mourn the days of slavery, because it was the source of their family's riches, and they prize whiteness because they still associate it with status (9). On the other hand, Gonçalves's narrator-protagonist's husband, John, is guilt-ridden and apologetic for their profits from these wars:

I started to get worried, thinking that he had lost the money or the goods, but it was a lot simpler. He had simply made a deal he didn't know if I would have made. He sold my goods in Freetown without any difficulty . . . and used the money to buy guns and powder from the English . . . which he was dealing in Ouidah with representatives of King Guezo. . . . I commented that I probably wouldn't have the courage to buy guns and powder, but if he could guarantee it was good business and the purchase was guaranteed, it was fine by me. He seemed relieved. . . ." (759)

Great Britain, the same country that was spreading abolitionism around the Atlantic, was simultaneously driving slavery economically on the continent, making it as ambiguous an actor as the characters. Like Kehinde, John was freed from slavery, in his case due to British intervention. However, he convinces her to sell weapons in addition to palm oil. The character's discomfort may say more about Gonçalves's own discomfort with this history and that of the contemporary reader. The characters are once again focused solely on profit and their family, which during this conversation is about to include their twins. However, Luisa has been a slave and she

is writing this story to her son, who has been sold into slavery, which would explain her and John's apologetic tone: "because this is how I see all this, as one great mea culpa" (945). Like Vieira, the man who purchased Gama, she is driven by profit and is emotionally conflicted about her participation in an economy she knows is brutal. The weapons in turn drive the wars which drive the slave trade.

An inversion of master and slave for Kehinde is completed in Africa. If a nation in "Africa" starts as a far-off utopia beyond suffering for the *retornados*, "Brazil" assumes this role almost immediately upon arrival. Her vision of those she meets upon disembarking parallels those of Chatwin's characters, though the latter take it to the extreme of believing that one left the continent and returned to Brazil upon death (44), inverting the common slave belief of returning to Africa (Barnet 53). In Luisa's case, "Brazil" evokes national or ethnic pride among the Brazilian Diaspora in Africa (once the African Diaspora in Brazil) (Gonçalves, "Inspiração" 169). However, they are the new elites and landowners, and like the Brazilian landowners, their part in this community is an entitlement. They do not have to fight their way into it, like many blacks who remained behind in Brazil during its first national (or imperial) political project, the Paraguayan War (also known as the Triple Alliance War) from 1864 to 1870 (Kraay 61). When Gonçalves's *retornados* learn of the war's outbreak, none of them want to return to fight (905). In this sense, their "Brazil" in Africa has more in common with the South American slaveocrat elite that Ubaldo lampoons for being cowardly (27). The war was fought primarily by Afro-Brazilians such as the Zuavos sent by their masters or overlords to fight (Kraay 61). It was viewed by many blacks as a new sense of national pride and a pathway to citizenship through dedication, sacrifice, and service. It was anathema to the slave system, as depicted in a drawing of a proud black soldier who returns to the plantation only to be horrified at the conditions of his enslaved black brothers, or in other horror stories of men returned to slavery after fighting for a country they thought was theirs (Salles 102). While the diaspora was becoming part of a nation in Brazil through struggle, in Africa, the *retornados* have become Brazilian when they disembark and fear losing their Brazilianness to the Africans or debasing themselves by fighting a war instead of reaping the profits of war in the transatlantic market. In both cases, a free Brazil is as much a dream

as a free Africa, though these protean desires are central to national and diaspora identities in Gonçalves's novel.

Luísa continues to exhibit a double consciousness because of her syncretic faith and her family ties. Nonetheless, her position in the Master-Slave Dialectic has changed, since she has adopted the language and customs of her former owners along with analogous socio-economic privileges. She may be a *brasileira* among *selvagens*, but the ceremonies she celebrates, such as the Washing of the Steps (831–32, 834) and her devotion to Changó (824–26) are syncretic and primarily African. Her Catholicism is not shared by those she views as inferior, but neither is it shared by the Pope or even the purist missionaries of the Fort of Ajuda (768), the last Portuguese stronghold in Lagos, or the French missionaries there (879). Furthermore, while she is no longer enslaved, she is bound to slavery by her son. It is telling that she has two boys in Brazil, both born into slavery, and twins in Africa, both born into freedom. They are the personification of Kehinde's double consciousness. Both her Brazilian boys were sacrifices to the colonial system that made Kehinde black as well as Brazilian, often in contradictory ways. It is Banjokô's death that severs her emotional ties with her mistress (who largely raises him) (221), a bond with the plantation that temporarily solidified her black identity, and it is the discovery of Luís's survival that severs her ties with Africa (946). Though Kehinde imagines nations and diasporas, her strongest emotional and moral bond is to her family, not the community at large. Perhaps this makes her simultaneously the most Portuguese, Brazilian, and African Diaspora character of all, the founder of nations upon the Ocean Sea.

Conclusion

Kehinde's sailing into and out of an African Diaspora and/or national identities exhibits a flexibility in economic and social opportunities that would have been impossible for the Anglophone African Diaspora, the focus of Gilroy's study.⁷ The flexibility in diaspora identity he studies in authors, such as Douglass, after their enslavement is already present among the enslaved and free people of color in Latin America and was that way until the primarily Anglophone chattel slavery that made identity completely and irreversibly race-based until

abolition (Tannenbaum 121). Zapata Olivella was able to juxtapose the two slave systems (and Haiti, a sort of political/epistemological midpoint between Iberian religion and manumission-based slavery and chattel slavery). He did so ten years before Gilroy, and his work pertains to all of the Americas. For this reason, *Nuevo Muntu* is a more desirable term for both these novels than “Black Atlantic,” though Zapata Olivella, Gonçalves, and Gilroy share an interest in recognizing the African Diaspora as transnational, changing, and of prime importance to anyone interested in the world stage of history.

Zapata Olivella and Gonçalves’s *guardieros* map the boundaries of presence and power from the margins of history, and they control the lives of hundreds of characters across a vast sea with their voices. In both works, ships and songs set this stage before and beyond Gilroy’s Black Atlantic. In this chapter, I have traced the genealogy of Gilroy’s model beyond Hegel, showing how the slaves who refused to be slaves in Saint-Domingue inspired the German philosopher’s tragic vision of history, which in turn was adapted by Du Bois and Gilroy. Brazilian novelists before Gonçalves explored the tragedy of history, yet her text weaves both sides of the Atlantic together with the plantations of Bahia and the villages of Africa in a unique way that incorporates the point of view of a woman who has lived on both sides of the Master-Slave Dialectic and slavery itself. This history of the African Diaspora has precursors before, during, and after the Boom (1959–1971), but it flourishes as a theme beginning with Zapata Olivella’s text and continued in Gonçalves’s. They transcend and revise national histories; the stage they set is not only broad but protean. At the same time, both texts are examples of self-writing that negotiate a hybrid, post-colonial identity for their implicit authors that continues transculturation in a way that opens the possibility of a happy ending to the greater drama of history for themselves as well as their audience. What is the role of literary language in this? More specifically, what is the function of historical fiction in imagining this possibility?

Notes

¹ Santi argues that, upon close reading, Herskovits's theory actually notes two-way communication between Africans and Europeans, though his term seems to communicate the replacement of one culture by another (86).

² *Young's Literal Translation* reads:

¹³and I saw [come] out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs—

¹⁴for they are spirits of demons, doing signs—which go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to bring them together to the battle of that great day of God the Almighty;—

¹⁵“Io, I do come as a thief; happy [is] he who is watching, and keeping his garments, that he may not walk naked, and they may see his unseemliness,”—

¹⁶and they did bring them together to the place that is called in Hebrew Armageddon.

³ I borrow this metaphor from Adélcio de Souza Cruz, who extrapolates on the author's admitted association between the “riozinho de sangue” of her dying brother's lips and the Black Atlantic (478).

⁴ Studnicki-Gizbert's study does not mention Gilberto Freyre's lusotropicalism (*The Portuguese and the Tropics*, 1961, for example), or the study of the unique cultural exchange throughout the Portuguese empire, not just the individual nations that emerged from it. My and Gonçalves's syncretic visions of Portuguese and African Diasporas owe much to Freyre, though he tends to gloss over the more violent and problematic aspects of cultural and “biological” mixture in the context of conquest.

⁵ In Cuba, fractious slaves, particularly those in *abakuás*, or religious brotherhoods originating in Calabar, Nigeria, were also sent back to Africa starting in 1866, as Isabela de Aranzadi shows (37). Manuela Carneiro da Cunha also notes that, since the brasileiros and cubanos passed through the same port of Agudá (Forte d'Ajuda) in Benim, many cubanos adopted Brazilian customs, becoming “brasileiros cubanos” (210). For more on the agudás or “brasileiros” in Africa, see Milton Guran.

⁶ Evoking the grotesque images of abolitionist novels, Ubaldo depicts the grotesque processing of a whale carcass by slaves under the heavy hand of an overseer, denying any legerdemain about “gentle” slavery in Brazil’s past.

⁷ Gilroy mentions the cultural exchange between Brazilian *retornados* with other Nigerians in the 1840s as an example of the transformation of African cultures by those of the diaspora (199). However, his brief, largely un-contextualized note does not do justice to this complex history like Gonçalves’s work does, nor is that Gilroy’s focus.

CHAPTER 4

WRITING MOTHER AFRICA

Nuevo Muntu novels are important for those concerned with the intersections of gender and representations of the other in literature because they unveil the limits of language in telling history. Beyond these limits lies “Mother Africa,” which I will redefine here. As Gayatri Spivak does in her essay “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (1988), Manuel Zapata Olivella and Ana Maria Gonçalves are participating in an act of therapeutic self-writing in which the silences themselves “speak.” These silences reveal traumatic origins, which I do not propose to be the only explanation, but a new direction in reading historical fiction. To explain, I will start with Paul De Man’s notion of self-writing and a series of post-colonial psychoanalytical thinkers to show that these novels’ representation of the silenced subalterns, through the texts’ own silences and unexplained symbols, communicates both implicit authors’ unconscious desires to return to a Maternal Body. This desire has been explored in depth by Mexican critic Octavio Paz, whose work on literature and religion will inform my analysis. The universal trauma of separation from the Mother through birth, infant narcissism, and abject origins in general, are worked through in each novel. The forms in which maternity and silence are treated in each novel build upon previous notions of maternity in the literary traditions that each text appropriates. For Zapata Olivella, these include Paz and José Vasconcelos. Gilberto Freyre and Conceição Evaristo’s notions of maternity in literature will illuminate Gonçalves’s representations of Afro-Brazilian mothers, indicating her novel’s intertextuality. These novels are individual as well as collective searches for a once denied, pre-symbolic Mother: Mother Africa, a traumatic origin of the Americas.

I have been arguing that historical fiction is a written form of tragedy, or a drama of memory. Richard Ned Lebow has shown that one of the functions of Greek tragedy, as well as the first written histories, was to work through the traumas of the past (151). The most widely known tragedy of Antiquity is Sophocles’s *Oedipus Rex*. The play is a common root of written history and Freudian psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis treats the subject as an individual, just as modern novels are read as having one author and, usually, one reader at a time (see Chapter 1). Therefore, the novel is of particular value in the recollection and working through of the

traumas resulting from slavery, because the literary anti-genre copies the stable “realities” of history and recasts them as alterable (see Chapter 1). The past in *Changó* and *Um defeito* is malleable for the author and reader, like a “dead truth,” one that no longer has the same power over them, one that the audience can behold in horror in hopes of reaching a solution or at least catharsis. The wide-spread scholarly interest throughout the Americas in revisiting slavery in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries as a way of working through their continuing traumas—seeking catharsis for discrimination and oppression rooted in slavery and colonialism—is among the most important literary phenomena that occur before, during, and, most robustly, after the Boom of the 1960s. *Nuevo Muntu* fictions alter how one reads the intersections of psychoanalysis and post-colonial theory, as exemplified by their parallels with “Can the Subaltern Speak?.”

Self-Writings: “Can the Subaltern Speak?,” *¡Levántate mulato!*, and *Changó el gran putas*

Spivak uses Marx’s concept of re/presentation, Derridean deconstruction, and Freudian psychoanalysis to critique Foucault, Deleuze, and Guattari’s presupposition that Parisian Maoists can effectively communicate with the subalterns of the “Third World.” She analyzes *sati*, an act that calls into question the West’s ability to advocate for those colonized by its empires, particularly in the case of the triply marginalized poor women of color in the colonies. *Sati* is, in Western eyes, self-immolation on the pyre of one’s husband (93). She concludes that, since local and imperial patriarchal elites monopolized the discourse on the practice (92), and since the practice was bound up in gender roles dating almost from the origins of Hinduism (98), that no, the subaltern cannot speak for him/herself, though “the female intellectual as intellectual has a circumscribed task which she must not disown with a flourish” (104). She is driven by a task that seems impossible, but why?

Spivak’s essay is self-writing. The nature of autobiography criticism has been nuanced by critic Paul De Man, who claims that, as opposed to the common-sense belief that autobiographies are written by subjects (920), these subjects are themselves written by the text. The trope of personification creates a textual “mask” that the reader interprets as the *persona* of the implicit author (926). Autobiography is a mirror-like “figure of reading”: the reader is imagining an “author” that has been simultaneously created and replaced by empty words (921). Hence, De Man’s choice of William Wordsworth’s *Essays upon Epitaphs* (1810) deftly yet ironically

illustrates autobiography, the “self-writing-of-life,” as the words on a tombstone (923). Wordsworth’s text becomes itself an epitaph for the poet, allowing it to replace the “life *or* death” antithesis with “life *and* death” (925), which allows for a “voice-from-beyond-the-grave” (927) with “attributes of speech and of silence” (927). He reminds the reader that language, even that which creates the subject, is always “privative” (930). Like the tragic spirit, autobiography transcends death, but it is itself a death of the illusion of a unified subject, a face behind the mask of language. De Man states that this linguistic subjectification occurs in all texts, be they called autobiographies or fiction (921), so historical novels, which I have been treating as a theatrical representation of a vast world stage, is also a form of self-writing, the mask of a single personage, the mask that creates a single actor, the implicit author. While De Man focuses exclusively on written autobiographical narrative and poetry, language in all its forms is the creation of a self. However, writing the history of oneself or a community is of central importance to those remembering groups marginalized because of race and gender, revealing that an “objective” rendering of the past hides the inclusion and exclusion of signs by the author, the subject “creating” (that is, created by) the text. Reading historical fiction as self-writing reveals that historiography is *subjective*, that it is not only interested and debatable like all linguistic constructs, but that it also creates a subject, the implicit author.

The writers of historical fiction are not only creating the textual illusion that there are real lives beyond their words (their own and those they record), but they also are attempting to transcend death, because these echoes of the past have implications for the creation of a new future. The myriad historical characters of Zapata Olivella and Gonçalves’s texts are not merely an “objective,” “transparent” portrayal of past lives. Following Spivak, this is not possible. However, the Self is coming in contact with the Other every time the historical author enters a dusty archive to read primary sources on slave lives or, more apparently, every time the university-trained black author (or any other author with this training) of the twenty-first century speaks with the practitioner of Afro-Catholic faiths that can invoke the enslaved. Simultaneously, the “other within” of these authors is selecting the details of these lives, partially revealed through written and oral sources, and piecing together an origin for themselves, a hero of the past and, often, an avatar of their present-day concerns.

Therefore, the (re)presentation of the past in the present is a creative act that imagines lives, including the authors' lives, for the readers of the future. The silences in these texts regarding what comes after their end show that historical fiction (re)creates an author and a history. The silences take advantage of the "privative" nature of language, as De Man claims, to open the possibility not only for "restoration" (925) of continents and authors created by tragedy (slavery and the Conquest), but also for an incompleteness in this restoration that will make the language of history an unending semiotic and political process. An impossibly different future can now only be represented as death, "a displaced name for a linguistic predicament" for De Man (930), and the presumption of life after death, the realm of eschatology and religion.

The extreme of Spivak's rewriting of the silent subaltern within the nation's past is Apocalyptic, revelatory, and radical. Like Zapata Olivella, she treats the ideologies of empire as a text with silences:

Although the notion 'what [a text] refuses to say' might be careless for a literary work, something like a collective ideological refusal can be diagnosed for the codifying legal practices of imperialism. This would open the field for a political-economic and multidisciplinary ideological reinscription of the terrain. . . . The archival, historiographic, disciplinary-critical, and, inevitably, interventionist work involved here is indeed a task of 'measuring silences'. This can be a description of 'investigating, identifying, and measuring . . . the deviation' from the ideal that is irreducibly differential. (82)

What if this "reinscription of the terrain" is, from the perspective of the present, complete one day? Pure difference, radical and incomprehensible, can only be perceived as death. Since writing is self-writing, as De Man posits, when the author's concern is the end of race, nation, and gender as they are currently conceived in language, the end of what is known can be imagined as an Apocalypse, not only an individual death, but the death of a system of signs. It presumes that an as of yet unknown order of signs will follow. Zapata Olivella, keenly aware of his novel's relation to previous texts, writes the history of slavery through a syncretized code of Christian and African motifs that create a new language based in part on previous ones. The Christian tradition is Apocalyptic, and the final chapters of *Changó* mimics the Revelation of Saint John, but it does so heavily

bearing the impact of Octavio Paz's *El laberinto de la soledad*. This self-writing focuses on personal and collective death and rebirth.

Spivak's self-writing is driven by a family trauma that ties her to the past she describes. Writing in 1988, Spivak is an Indian woman trained in the West and criticizing it from the center of academic power and knowledge. She is a leading deconstructionist and post-colonialist caught between two extremes: speaking for the oppressed and knowing that language is "privative," as De Man states. One can read her attacks on the Parisians' presumptuousness as an assault on her "colonized" self, treating them as the other within (89). This "other" is the Western intellectual's internalization of imperialist language, which includes western binary notions of the self (empowered group) and other (colonized group) (76). Her reading of Derrida's "other within" can be summed up as the projection of the repressed elements of the self onto what it constructs as an "other in order to understand it," thus "taming" the heterogeneous chaos, "the completely other" it represents for the Western subject (89). This reveals much about the intellectual, who often dramatizes his own desires in his/her representation of the subaltern. However, Spivak has another other: she is culturally and temporally distanced from the voiceless widows she makes her essay's centerpiece. This gulf notwithstanding, she has a unique relationship to the latter. A friend of her family was an activist who committed suicide. Spivak interprets her death as a performance of *sati* in a twentieth century context, an act of protest against British colonialism (104). Spivak is not a suicide widow, but her intellectual crises are motivated by her lived experience as a woman of color, which stem in part from the same systems that deprived the *sati* widows of their voice. She has not only studied the Hindu texts she analyzes, but she has also lived in a place where that religion and culture are as present today as during British colonialism (104). Her argument is that the subaltern cannot speak, but also that it embodies the other within of the Western researcher (89). The subaltern is "apprehended" through assimilation to what the latter understands. Spivak states that the subaltern should be studied, but that she cannot enunciate (89); she is a silence, an absence in language. Subjectivity cannot exist without language. If subjectivity emerges in the presence of language, then the silences in language must logically represent death,

or post-subjectivity. If subjectivity is language, then pre-subjectivity, imagined union with the Maternal Body, must also be (un)represented by silence.

Spivak's postcolonial reading of the silenced other within and De Man's claim that all writing is autobiography are reaffirmed by Manuel Zapata Olivella's *ouvre*. He wrote three works marketed as autobiographies: *Pasión vagabunda: Relatos* (1949); *He visto la noche* (1962); and *¡Levántate mulato! Por mi raza hablará el espíritu* (1990). *¡Levántate!* is both autobiography and historical fiction. Unlike the first two autobiographies, its content extends to the origins of the Americas in Africa and indigenous peoples. The text shows, once again, that Seymour Menton's contention that historical fiction is defined by a separation between the past and the life of the author and reader is mistaken (see Chapter 1). As an intellectual of color highly versed in Western thought, Zapata Olivella found himself in a conundrum similar to Spivak's, and his work is also culturally hybrid self-writing. He was a man of capacious knowledge of history, literature, and folklore. From his university office during the 1970s and 1980s, his perspective must have seemed to him very distant from the slaves and their most marginalized descendants he depicts in his novel ("Curriculum Vitae"). In the autobiography, the author sets out to answer a three-part question: "What is my culture, my race, my destiny?" (17). His use of the first person reaffirms the self-writing in the text. Like Spivak, one of his others within is his image of the white colonizers from which he partly descends and that gave him the language in which he writes, and whose legacy he tries to sort out, taking the good and the bad into account (19). "A hybrid or new man? Am I really a traitor to my race? A slippery *zambo*? A defeatist mulatto? Or simply an American mestizo trying to defend the identity of his oppressed bloodlines?" (21). In response, he revisits all of his major literary works, contextualizing and reinterpreting them. Zapata Olivella uses his lived experience (just as Spivak does with her family friend's suicide) as well as his personal relationship to history to build this textual mask, which he describes as painful from beginning to end: "The long birth of *Changó el gran putas* allowed me to close the life cycle by revealing to me the mystery of myself, of my culture and ethnicity" (349). He dramatizes this "birth" as gathering the thousands of notes he took to compose the novel and throwing them in a great fire, because he adhered to his own memory (348). This fiery rupture with the past is echoed in Agne's dialogue with

Herskovits/Harrington discussed last chapter, which also ends in an attempt to reject the tradition of written language and start anew while still writing a novel. This rupture between lived experience and the writings of the past is clearly incomplete, because much of *¡Levántate!* is *Changó* in uninterrupted linear prose, particularly his family history (22–144), parts of his travels in Mexico (235–244), and his re-reading of his masterpiece (342–50). My interpretation supports De Man’s theory that all language has autobiographical elements, and furthers my contention that historical fiction is a therapeutic act. Like Spivak, Zapata Olivella seeks the spirits that transcend the death of the subaltern: “in the writing river of my bloodlines, whenever someone plays a *quena*, I hear the sobs of my *india* great-grandmother, raped by the white Olivella. . . .” (19). The subaltern is unintelligible, yet still part of him. This rape is his origin and that of the American continent, and he implies that he spent considerable time hating his “Father,” the colonizer. He claims to have only resolved the “Oedipus complexes of colonization” (19) when he saw his blonde uncle Gabriel’s struggle for the oppressed. This led him to seek “spirits,” African and Hegelian, instead of Manichean notions of “races,” in history (349). Like Spivak, he is concerned with what a text refuses to say: “the feeling that there were many motives for *hiding this tragedy* of the black man in the torture device called slavery obliged me to look at the *descuadernada* [outside of the *cuaderno*, writing; also, fragmented] history that appeared in the notes of human traffickers. . . .” (344). Like Spivak, he is revisiting silenced others, but he focuses on American history, particularly the silenced mothers in the texts written in a colonial tongue, which include his own novel. He states that he is the “scribe of the illiterate word of black people” (344). However, this certainty of capturing in writing the words of oral cultures is belied by his own novel, as will be shown, but “illiterate” ‘*analfabeta*’ can also mean “unread” or “without letters” as in that which cannot yet be understood, a vision of the future that comes from a re-reading and working through of the traumas of the past that comes from the author and the reader’s contact with the subaltern: “Which of so many words should I choose to start the tale? . . . From what eye that hadn’t contemplated the inside-out world of the ‘other’? Knowing that the language of the conqueror [Conquistador] is by nature oppressive, which one should I choose so as to impose colonizing experiences?” (345). His solution is syncretic, poetic discourse that includes the “language with no shores of the dead where the present is an echo

of the past; the future [is] lived experience and in which the word has the impalpable sound of thought, intuition, and premonitions. All waters gathered in a single river [*Changó el gran putas*]” (345). Like Spivak, his desire to communicate with the subaltern leads him to create a new idiom that destabilizes previous language and takes it to the extreme of imagining what the ultimate consequences of pure difference could entail: an unknown future now only imaginable through certain forms of religious and poetic discourse. This idiom also has autobiographical roots for the author.

Zapata Olivella’s notion of maternity is tied to his family of origin and his spiritual conflicts, as *¡Levántate!* explains. He claims that the conflict between a *zambo* spiritual identity and a largely Eurocentric Western education has roots in his childhood. His mulatto father viewed the world through the lenses of positivism and Enlightenment thinkers, which made him an oddity in black, poor Lorica, Colombia, where he educated his children along with those of the neighborhood (*¡Levántate!* 53). His father’s progressivism included an emphasis on what he understood to be feminism, which included the social construction of gender norms (53), access to academic education for women, and an immense respect for motherhood (104). On the other hand, the author’s mother and aunt were more traditional in their view of womanhood (53). His mother raised him to believe in Catholic traditions, and his aunt taught him African and indigenous beliefs, syncretized with each other and Catholicism, creating a spiritual conflict that would become the hallmark of *Changó*’s form and content: myth versus reason. Clearly, another autobiographical element is that the author himself faced racial and class discrimination for being black in Colombia (*¡Levántate!* 171) and the United States (“He visto la noche”), so like Spivak, he experienced the effects of colonialism and neocolonialism in the flesh as a man of color. This combination of personal struggles, Western reason, and syncretic traditions is evident in his historical novel’s representation of the enslaved.

The metaphor that best represents Zapata Olivella’s struggles with negotiating his identity and that of Afro-Colombians is his depiction of Cartagena’s city walls in *¡Levántate mulato!* and *Changó*, as I will explain. Spivak argues that, in attempting to communicate with the other (here, the enslaved of the past), any postcolonial intellectual is actually communicating with the deriddean “other within,” a mere reflection of his or

her own unconscious desires (89). This reflection is further complicated by his entrapment in the walls in the prison of language itself, outside of which neither subjectivity nor translation, if these are understood as the presence of signs within a semiotic system, can occur. In *¡Levántate!*, Zapata Olivella summons the Western other within, alongside the enslaved: “This is the Spanish heritage that is present in the memory of my mulatto grandfathers of Cartagena de Indias. Nobles, robbers, rapists, or simply ancestors, they lie in the sediment of my own blood. To accept them or reject them is a simple act of lucidity or inauthenticity” (48). He dramatizes this other within, reenacting King Phillip II’s response from the balcony of his palace-monastery in Spain to an official requesting more funds for the monumental walls in Cartagena: “Where are they? I can’t see them yet” (36). These walls are solid, defensive, centralized, even phallic demarcations of the colony and therefore the empire.¹ Zapata’s text gives them visibility so as to weaken and open them.

They are an embodiment of what Angel Rama, in the same year *Changó* was published, called “the lettered city” in his eponymous postcolonial cultural history of Latin America. Rama argues that, largely as a result of colonial infrastructure and politics, the written word has always been centralized in the hands of a tiny, urban elite, a phenomenon which democratic and leftist politics of the twentieth century expanded but did not do away with entirely, changing the “lettered city” into the “revolutionized city” (103). Like Spivak, Rama notes that, no matter how well-intentioned leftist intellectuals are in their “listening” to the subaltern beyond the lettered city, their project will forever be incomplete and a reflection of their own desires. For Spivak the other will always have something inassimilable about him/her and something that evokes the “other within” of the researcher. The *Nuevo Muntu* novels are an attempt at allowing the subaltern access to the written word, even to form part of the canon, but the novels themselves are part of the lettered city. The subaltern slaves’ voices, once consigned to an exclusively oral world, are represented, but filtered through the codes of known literary forms. Cartagena’s walls represent revolutionary Zapata Olivella’s entrapment in the lettered city, seeking to reach a corner of the oral world beyond it, the world of the enslaved. This is compounded by the Spanish language, which was an instrument used by Catholic missionaries to acculturate Africans and Native Americans. He notes that a Babel of one million Africans from sixty language groups were exploited in building these walls that hold

back the sea and its threats (36). The author seems to see his limits, as a resident of the lettered city, to hear the flowing voices of the sweating, crying, bleeding enslaved: “They spoke such a profusion of languages that all efforts to understand them was lost in a Babel of questions without answers” (107).² Continuing this allegory, *¡Levántate!* follows the construction of the walls with the arrival of Father Claver, treated here in Chapter 1, who spreads the Spanish language and religion, in part through the written discourse of the Church, in opposition to the oral traditions of the African slaves, erecting rigid linguistic and cultural barriers that can themselves be seen as prisons (36). The author returns to these structures in the section “Spanish Ancestors,” which uses terms referring to water or bodies of water more than ten times in the first page (45). The walls of the lettered city hold back the chaos of the slaves’ own vision of history, a different type of history, separating Zapata Olivella from his object of study, which he attempts to make the speaking subject of his history. Like Cartagena’s walls, Zapata Olivella claims that, in the 1940s, Colombia’s universities were almost entirely exclusionary of blacks and Native Americans (171), and, for the author, even the learning within these walls is an act of psychological colonization where the school is a “fort for deculturizing families” (173) and perpetuating a self-centered capitalist neo-colonialism (174). For example, when Zapata Olivella studied medicine in Bogotá in the 1940s, he had only 1 black classmate out of 5,000 (172). Though he does not mention in the 1990 edition of his autobiography how education has changed in Colombia, he took strides to change this, including the proposal of a national curriculum that included the history of Afro-Colombians (Vanderbilt). The 1991 National Constitution included a mandate to modification of school curricula to reflect Afro-Cuban culture, but it has been slow and insufficient in its implementation (Rapoport, Strauss, LLILAS 37). Since his death, Minister of culture Paula Marcela Moreno has declared new efforts to incentivize the study of Afro-Colombians’ culture (Rebollo, n.pag.). There is much left to be done in the study of Afro-Colombians since colonial times. Zapata Olivella was clearly aware of this, and his work is all the more relevant because these barriers remain today, though no longer unchallenged. The walls of the lettered city are apparent to him, yet the knowledge they instill, exemplified in his mastery of written, literary Spanish and the novel form itself, is what allows Zapata Olivella to re-present the history of the enslaved, knowing all the while that he can never reach

entirely beyond his “other within” to understand their point of view. All he can produce is a culturally *mestizo* body of knowledge that simultaneously rewrites the story of the nation, as Spivak proposes (80), and his own lived experience:

without a means of knowing our somatic reactions to the influx of the sea, the plains or the jungle; not knowing the temperaments and the psychology of the Native American, the black, and the white, as well as their mixed progeny; without guides to the psychosomatic behavior of the child, the adult, the woman or the man, we always judge ourselves by norms that are extraneous to our ethnic idiosyncrasy. (174–75)

Here the author is referring to a forgotten Colombian scholar, but he is attempting a similar project in *Changó*, though he makes it clear in the novel that these “guides” will never represent the oppressed without problems of mediation and silences. Like Spivak’s argument, for Zapata Olivella the problems of representation are not an excuse for ignoring the oppressed.

In his autobiography, as in his historical novel, Zapata Olivella finds African traces in the “Convulsive sea of Carnival,” despite the lettered city’s attempts to completely colonize it (143). Also, just beyond the city walls lies Chambacú, once an island *palenque* of escaped slaves that threatened the city as the sea once did and still lies beyond its boundaries, largely uncolonized (145). In the historical novel, as in his autobiography, there is a semantic link between the water (influx, sea), the enslaved, and maternity. All of these appear to lie largely beyond the lettered city, but also beyond the symbolic order of language itself, as Spivak proposes, in its silences (81). Zapata Olivella’s fascination with silence, water, and birth relates to his given reason for writing *Changó*: weaving from previous texts an epopee of the African Diaspora that rivals the Greeks and the Portuguese (343). Greece is the root of Western letters. Portugal imagined itself heir of the Greeks, ruler of the sea, and king of Africa. This is depicted in Luiz de Camões’s *As Lusíadas* (1572), which Zapata Olivella compares to his novel in *¡Levántate!* (343) and to which he alludes in *Changó* (105–06).³ He argues that the diaspora’s painful history is far greater than the Portuguese empire. It is the of “fusión de hombres” that began with 100,000,000 or more slaves: “dispersed far and wide in the [American] continent, they sculpted their

children in the womb [sic] of the *indias*, or they gave birth to the offspring of white fathers before planting their bones to give birth to the *nuevo muntu* [sic]” (343). Zapata Olivella’s concern in the novel, which I read as autobiography, is with the New World from its inception, imagined in terms of fathers, mothers, and birth—his own birth and that of the diaspora.

Mothers beyond Language in “Hijos de la Malinche” and Changó el gran putas

In the novel, colonization and transculturation occur on both sides of the Atlantic, and metaphors of water, prison, and birth, all related to the Mother in language, are prevalent. For example, the walled fortress of Cartagena, in *Changó*, has parallels with the fort in Africa that appears on the coast of the Atlantic Ocean (100). In the novel, this is the profane origin of slavery, the arrival of the Portuguese. The curse of Changó, the mythical origin, is sung in verse (59-100) and mimics an invocation of Elegguá, the semigod of beginnings and endings, and Changó (Luis, Introduction xix). This poetic resistance to Western realism holds out despite the author’s inability to escape the written language of the novel form, a corner of the lettered city, completely. The rhythm of African drums, like the rhythm of the waves in the sea, is captured in the rhythm created by the pauses following each verse. When the fort is founded, the novel’s syntax switches to prose that is, at first glance, completely mimetic, sealed in the phallic words of conquest. However, the language does not obey the expected colonial narrative of vanquishing the wild. The “small,” “lost” fortress is “born” on the African coast as if it were a fragile child, the origin of the words Zapata Olivella is using to re-tell slavery (100). As in *¡Levántate!*, Mother Africa is represented as the Atlantic Ocean, and the men who thought they were creating the New World through colonization and the imposition of their language (a process begun by the Portuguese in Africa), were actually being recreated through their reactions to that landscape, starting with the Atlantic Ocean, which is treated as a mother’s womb, the womb of Yemayá, the goddess of the seas. In the novel, the written record of the conquest of Africa is entitled the “Libro de derrota,” which literally means “book of defeat.” It is a ship’s log that records the exploits of the sailors for the royal court in a formulaic, linear manner as per the dictates of the empire (González Echevarría 45). Showing that these reports are a linguistic construction, this

version of the *Nova Índia*'s loading and transportation of its human cargo is repeatedly invaded by a theatrical recounting of the slaves' resistance to and eventual defeat of the slave traders in death. The slaves, like Zapata Olivella, struggle to ensure that the written Spanish language's victory over the silenced voices of the enslaved is incomplete. Mother Africa is, in Zapata Olivella's language, a poetic resistance to the lettered city and the symbolic order. Every violent act suffered in the repeated tragedies of the history of the African Diaspora is simultaneously an act of creation, a repetition of the original human trauma of birth.

As in *¡Levántate!*, there are psychoanalytic overtones in *Changó* regarding the closed, phallic nature of the Iberian Conquistadors, their fortresses, and their languages, the European languages in which Zapata Olivella and most Latin American authors find themselves trapped, willingly or otherwise. His work precedes and supports González Echevarría's association of writing with conquest, fortresses, and prisons:

The same Herrera who designed the Escorial had a hand in planning the archive [of the Indies in Sinamaca, the storehouse of documents on the Conquest and the colonies], that is to say, in turning a castle that was originally a prison into the archive. . . . Latin America became a historical entity as a result of the printing press, not merely by being 'discovered' by Columbus. Latin America, like the novel, was created in the Archive (29–30).

This prison of language, tied directly to the authority of the written word of law, housed in fortresses and in many ways a fortress itself, compels Zapata Olivella to seek an escape through approximating orality and through the silences in his text. One must remember that the illiterate enslaved Africans and the majority of their descendants were never the lawyers, politicians, authors, and historians who founded the empire and later Latin America on paper. Paradoxically, to undo this, he had to build upon the Archive in his attempt to undo it, which in turn continues the Archive.

A voracious reader who spent several years in Mexico, Zapata Olivella was clearly influenced by Octavio Paz, whose "Los hijos de la Malinche" (1950) from his landmark *El laberinto de la soledad* (1959) describes the psychological, political, and cultural implications that lie in the word family of the ubiquitous Mexican verb *chingar* 'fuck.' Paz associates *chingar* with the mythical rape of the Mexican Eve, la Malinche,

by Hernán Cortés. They are imagined to have produced a mestizo nation that, in Paz's context, still viewed its "pure" European heritage as superior to repressed indigenous influences. This repressed Mother, however, is a silence that rejuvenates language: ". . . for all great poets, woman is not only an instrument of knowledge, but knowledge itself. The knowledge that we will never possess, the sum of our definitive ignorance: supreme mystery" (Paz 89). Like Spivak, he notes how the subaltern alters the Western intellectual, but for Paz the result is poetry, a new language. In the essay, the poetic and the feminine are enigmas, and Paz extends these categories to include "the Oriental [sic]," "blacks," "woman," "the worker," and "Mexico" itself, as perceived by purist, bourgeois intellectuals (89). Feminist scholar Sandra Messinger Cypress strongly criticizes his sexism and Eurocentrism in order to highlight the progressive aspects of his first wife, Elena Garro's fiction. However, she overlooks his faith in poetry and psychoanalysis, which is of interest to gender scholars. Brazilianist Silviano Santiago rightly presents "Los hijos" as a continuation of Surrealism, which treats the unconscious and poetic language as potential saviors for mankind (*As raíces* 132).⁴ Santiago sees three superimposed "Paces" in the essay: the ethnographer that attempts to listen to the marginalized masses (the 'poets' of the angry, ugly word that buttresses the essay), the essayist who uses reason to organize and argue the implications of this language and the history it bears, and the poet who attempts to move beyond reason in search of a new language inspired by the masses (*As raíces* 182). Like Spivak, he is testing the limits of Western knowledge by coming (almost) into contact with the subaltern. But unlike her and like the *Nuevo Muntu* novelists, he is rejuvenating literature with oral traditions that are beyond the lettered city, rebuilding its walls from the ground up. In her essay, Spivak seems to have little faith in marginalized oral traditions and makes no mention of poetry.

According to Santiago, the search for enigmas led Paz to be the first Latin American canonical critic who does not hide (from) the feminine in his treatment of Mexico (*As raíces* 137). His poetics is, for Santiago, founded on a "feminine opening" to outside influences (138). These include the study of women in history, as well as the *chingados*, the "feminine" passive homosexuals of Mexico, who commit what the essay treats as the mortal and original sin of "rajarse": opening up body and mind instead of remaining closed to new meanings, new influences (145). The poetics of his essay center on the conflicts between "closed" ideas and people

(Cortés, machos, conservatives, xenophobes, the institutionalized Mexican Revolution) versus “open” ideas and people (la Malinche, women, *chingados*/gays, cosmopolitans, poets, seekers of a new Revolution) to revalue the open, which had been previously marginalized by scholars (179). Like Spivak, when Paz attempts to understand the subaltern other, an intellectual crisis ensues, since he inherits not only their marginality (the dominant, Eurocentric, vision of history) but also the legacy of Cortés, the violence of colonialism that left behind its language. Paz considers facing this abject origin a working through of the traumas that created and permeate Mexico since the archetypal “first mestizo” was fathered in a mixture of Eden and Hell: the rape of “la Chingada”(178). For Paz the essayist and ethnographer, the postcolonial intellectual and the conservative worker alike (Santiago, *As raíces* 171) must revisit the subaltern of history, because the latter is an oft forgotten part of him/herself.

Looking at his/her abject origins is not enough, however. These must be worked through if a new future, a *devenir*, is to unfold (Santiago, *As raíces* 145, 194). The poet is the only hope for the Surrealist Paz (132). The Mexican Revolution fell into stasis, corruption, and compromise (Paz 167). For Paz, Religion no longer provides the answer to life’s great questions unequivocally, and in Mexico, it is just as closed as Revolution and liberalism (Santiago, *As raíces* 194). However, Religion’s language, and the reinvention of its signs can lead to new poetic possibilities. This reinvention of the past implies two parts: rupture with history by the poet (whose words transcend it) (194) and a search for an unknown future. In a secularized world, the poet assumes the role of prophet for Paz (205). However, the poet is always heterodox, and thus opens language from its prison of dogma (164). Poetry is a means for imagining a radical form of love, which Santiago reads as a profanation of Christian *agape* (love for one’s neighbor, community) and which is based in the profane *eros* (corporeal, sexual, and therefore erotic love) (152). This healing mixture of bodies and ideas is the only way to overcome the Original Sin of la Malinche and Cortés (212) by creating a new idiom. Dominant Mexican culture, for Paz, has not yet known this kind of radical love, because it has excluded those who are open to it: women, gays, and even subaltern voices amongst the stoic, impenetrable masses. The latter, like all Mexicans, hide behind masks, closing off and repressing their traumas. Like De Man’s mask, the Mexican’s mask closes off something

grotesque, but what it hides are abject origins (the rape of the Conquest), not the inevitability of death or the lack of a subject beyond words. Paz sees poetry as a means of removing the masks of language that close the Mexican, becoming naked, renewed, open, recreating language (142). Like the Surrealists, Paz believes this therapy comes from sublimating the drives of the body, turning them into new words and ideas (150). Paz sees this opening as necessary and universal (100). All of Latin America is an “hijo de la Malinche,” product of a silenced rape that marks in the language inherited Conquistador. The search for the silenced Mother in language is a universal need and the source of poetry; however, it has culturally bound starting points, as is the case of Mexico.

Paz’s conflict of “open” and “closed” Latin Americas informs what appears to be another impenetrable fortress, the title of Zapata Olivella’s novel: *Changó, el Gran Putas*. Piquero explains that the epithet refers to a Colombian folk devil but implies “the best” or “most extreme” (11), the *Gran Chingón* in Mexican vernacular: “in business, in politics, in crime, with women” (Paz 97). In Mexico, *Chingón* is always superlative and always taboo, related largely to its sexual overtones if not its sexual denotation. In Colombia, the same can be said of el Putas (Piquero 11). Translators have rendered *Changó*’s epithet as “the Biggest Badass,” “the Baddest Dude,” “the Holy Motherfucker” (in various forms), and, in Portuguese, “O grande fodão.”⁵ Perhaps the latter is closest to the *chingón* Paz describes, but all translations communicate the critique of *machismo* at the heart of the Mexican’s meditations on rape: “The person who suffers this action is passive, inert, and open, in contrast to the active, aggressive, and closed person who inflicts it” (97). The *chingón*, for Paz, is the personification of the Conquistador who simultaneously destroyed and created Mexico by violating an abject mother, La Chingada, La Malinche. Paz claims that for most this trauma is too horrible to speak of in *machista*-dominant Mexico, a land that will not look back at the stains of its hybrid past, nor will it be tainted by the outside influence of other cultures or marginalized Mexicans (95). But these, says Paz, silently define the Mexican (96). Zapata Olivella’s title appears to be as strong and impenetrable as the fortresses of Cartagena and the Slave Coast. But *Changó el gran putas*’s signified is opened by its epithet: el Gran Putas is at once the impure devil himself (*¡Levántate!* 346) and a harem of whores (*putas*). He is paradoxically singular and plural, masculine and feminine, an abject

origin (the curse of conquest and slavery) and a harbinger of the end (liberty, Jubilee), violator and violated. However, the domination associated with rape is never total, because the *putas* 'whore/s' is/are never completely absent or passive. According to Paz, the opposite of the *Chingada* is the *Puta*:

The question "what is the Chingada" can be answered. The Chingada is the open Mother violated or duped by force. The "son of the Chingada" is the progeny of rape, kidnapping, or trickery. If one compares this expression with the Spanish one, "son of a *puta*," one immediately notes the difference. For the Spaniard the dishonor consists in being the son of a woman that voluntarily gives herself away, a prostitute; for the Mexican, a being that is the product of rape. (99–100)

As Zapata Olivella states, the *mestizo* cannot deny his Spanish Ancestor any more than he can deny his enslaved Ancestors. If, for Paz, the Conquistador is the abusive, neglectful father of Mexico, for Zapata Olivella, the Law of the Father, or the Symbolic Order, as expressed in written and spoken Spanish in the novel, must be altered if Mother Africa is to have a presence in him and in the Americas, though she already exists in that language as a subversive absence, *à la* Spivak.

Mother Africa

Zapata Olivella expands beyond the nation to focus on a central, unspoken trauma. This is Mother Africa, an origin of the New World, the "sons of my raped nation" (*Changó* 96). This trauma is the origin of not just Mexico or the African Diaspora, but the entire New World. In his section on José María Morelos, he includes the all-too-often unexplored history of African influences in Mexico, from hypotheses of a Pre-Colombian exploration of Mesoamerica led by Nagó the Navigator (463), to its past as a slave-owning society (495–96), to Morelos's fight to free all races in the nineteenth century (499). Morelos, like Colombian José Prudencio Padilla, does not forget Mother Africa, represented by Yemayá, her forgotten children, or her children that have forgotten her. The author mixes her influence with the Aztec-Catholic icon *La Virgen de Guadalupe/Tonantzin* in Morelos's struggle to free himself from a literal prison and his *mestizo* people from oppression (464). She also appears syncretized with Tláloc, the Aztec rain god, returning her to an "open" goddess of fertility, not a

Virgin (464). Zapata Olivella's recognition of the importance of women and those descended from Africans in Mexico's past, and their shared marginality and frequent invisibility precedes Gloria Anzaldúa's contributions, speaking as a *mestiza* with heritage from Africa in *This Bridge Called my Back* (1983).⁶ Building on Paz's focus on maternity allows Zapata Olivella to shed light on women's contributions to the Americas from before the Conquest to the late twentieth century, even those who were unrepresented or forgotten in the public sphere. It also allows the reading of Mother Africa as an all-too-forgotten, repressed origin of the New World, which includes the United States.

Unlike Paz's "closed" *machistas*, Zapata Olivella looks at the abject origins of the Americas, his own origin, and that of his ideal reader, through the lens of a poetic language that not only provides historical information but also sublimates the feelings of silenced traumas. The original trauma of the Americas is, for Zapata Olivella, the rape of Mother Africa, and the New World is the child who now must remember his Mother, the mother that, in her fertility, destabilizes the seemingly immovable, impenetrable fort of the Conquest and its language and dilates them so that a *Nuevo Muntu* may emerge. This initial rape reoccurs in the repeated rapes at the foundations of the New World, which Paz himself explores in his horrifying portrait of the domination and exploitation of the indigenous and Zapata Olivella depicts in detail once the *Muntu* arrives in the Americas (175). Changó embodies the Conquistador and the poet as Paz understood them. For the Mexican author, God the Father (personified by Cortés) is the "owner of the lightning bolt and the whip, the tyrant and the ogre who devours life" (100). But he is tamed by the poetic muse, because of his feminine side and the influence of his mother, personifying what Paz considers the poet, "the [female] tamer of lighting," the one nourished by a return to the maternal and the one who imagines a new language of love (Santiago, *As raíces* 126). This language can be imagined by men, women, or others, because all writers use language, all language has a maternal component, and everyone has an Oedipal formation of subjectivity. Unlike Paz's rape scene between Cortés and the Malinche, Zapata Olivella personifies the Muntu as the child of the dead slave Sosa Illamba, who swims from Nagó's ship to the shore, where he is suckled by indigenous women, a tender,

amorous scene that shows a bond between the African and the indigenous and a valorization of love and poetry (which can be said to come from pre-subjective, oedipal urges) over violence (175).

Fluidity and openness in language are evident in Zapata Olivella's preface to the novel. There is a directive to disrobe ("¡Desnúdate!"), perhaps borrowed from Paz (97), which invites the reader to begin peeling away the meaning of words, to become a "child" who can invent or reinvent the meanings of signifiers, who can "leave" the linguistic structures of the West like Africans abandoning the "slave ships" and "swimming in a saga, that is, in different seas" (56). The spiritual *guardiero* Elegguá is invoked to open a path to the future through language, not reaffirming a stable, objective, incontestable account of events, but an invitation to give the novel's language rebirth through interpretation. The reader creates new meanings for history in a new context and according to his/her own desires. The preface proposes only one truth, and it responds to Paz's concern of self-imposed amnesia: "sooner or later you had to confront this truth: the history of the black man in América is as much yours as that of the Native American or the white man that will accompany him to the conquest of liberty for all" (57). Already in the preface, there is a working through of unspoken traumas (the widespread "forgetting" of black history, including slavery) and a re-signification of the term "conquest": what was founded through rape will be changed through birth and rebirth. This is an elaboration of the individual "tú" to whom the preface is directed, the intended reader, but also of the author himself, who is simultaneously looking to the abject horrors of his origins (slavery, the Conquest) and searching for hope in the transformative capacities of language. This process is therapeutic for both, but it is never complete, even for Zapata Olivella himself, who communicates an awareness of the limitations of understanding and resolving traumas, personal and collective, even after years of therapy/research. Nonetheless, he presents language as flexible and the future as open, which gives hope for unknown developments. These he associates with the feminine body in the novel.

The Madonna-Whore binary is evident in "The Slave Trade" in the form of the *Chingada* Sosa Illamba and the *puta* Ezili. They are an example of poetic blasphemy as Paz understood it, a "backwards prayer" (98). As in the Bible, the earth is first destroyed by water, which for Zapata Olivella is the territory of Yoruban mother goddess of fertility, Yemayá, often syncretized as a Catholic Virgin. As in the Bible, the Apocalypse is merely a

repetition of the Great Flood's destruction, only in the form of fire, the domain of Changó/Santa Barbara in *santería*. Likewise, the European invasion of Africa and the Americas was the end of a world and the beginning of another. The whore symbolizing the sinful nature of antediluvian humankind in the novel is Ezili, the mixed-blood harlot who deals with the Portuguese slave traders. She shares a name with the Dahomeyan-Haitian Loa who is the equivalent of the Yoruban spirit Yemayá, which is central to one of Isabel Allende's novels, as I will show in Chapter 5. Ezili's face, breasts, and promiscuity, all specified in the narrative, are as "impure" as her body's mixture of white Berber and black Nigerian blood (106–07). She is apparently greedy as well, selling Yoruban slaves not only for work but for sexual pleasure to the Portuguese infidels. She lies to the Portuguese, inflating the captives' price, saying that her *piezas* ('pieces,' slaves) are submissive and allowing the merchants to believe that the women are "intact" (closed, in Paz's language) virgins (129), that they have not yet been "opened" physically or culturally. The Portuguese captain *chingón*, Egas Muñís, attempting to cut out the middleman/woman, has Ezili stripped naked and imprisoned, afraid that she will have a (phallic) dagger (129). Wanton and intoxicated, he attempts to rape her. However, his performance reveals a need for knowing a lost Mother: instead of penetrating her, he claims he will suck the salt from her (as if she were the sea, Yemayá) and proceeds to suckle at her bellybutton as if his mouth contained an invisible, forgotten umbilical cord. Ezili's request "Take me with you," colonial and phallic, if taken literally, is a foreshadowing of Muñís's end: she poisons him with an earring before killing herself (130). Unbeknownst to the Conquistador, she penetrates him with something feminine, taking them both to the impossible world of the dead in language, the revelation of a New World. Ezili is a whore who brings about the end of two world orders: Medieval Europe and pre-slavery Africa, though Zapata Olivella's syncretic language will not even allow such binary purity: she sees the blood in gold from America, the severed breasts of Indian princesses felled to rip it from its temples, abject liquid in the solid wealth of empire (128).

If Ezili is the whore who sold the world, yet created a new one, then Sosa Illamba, a personification of the enslaved, is the *Chingada* whose fertility belies the force of the *chingón negrero*. Sosa Illamba is evoked as an African Ancestor, in song, a syntactic return to Mother Africa through rhythm (145). A slave, she is a mixture

of Zulu and Baluba (“impure” in race and nation, though unified through slavery like Africa) and turned into merchandise when she is sold for a gun, a phallic symbol of conquest (145). Her story is a mixture of prose and poetry, written discourse and oral storytelling, as in the mythical story of her father, Katima Mololo, narrated by the storyteller Ngafúa to Nagó the Navigator so that he might care for Mother Africa in the New World (145–46, 148). Sosa Illamba knows that she will have a child before she is dragged aboard the slave ship. Her tale is an unknown narrative of Africa, just as Nagó’s Ancestor and Columbus’s African copilot Sassandra el Grebo is largely unknown to the West (148). Mother Africa is inseparable from Nagó, and her avatar is Sosa Illamba, a repetition of Changó and Yemayá, these a repetition of the author’s oedipal desires. She cries for her child, who stops struggling in her womb when he hears the sea, but Ngafúa’s music calms her (151). Yemayá knows more than mortals perceive, and she is present in the sea, the rhythms of nature and song, as in Paz’s interpretation of the *Chingada* as a poetic muse.

The paternity of Sosa Illamba’s child, the *Muntu* that will inhabit the New World, is never revealed. However, Captain Muñís threatens to hang anyone who deflowers his slaves from the mast of his ship (129). This is the punishment of the storyteller Ngafúa, who will not reveal the slave’s plan to overthrow their captors (162). Ngafúa’s drum beats, like the heart of Mother Africa, are forced “pleasure,” symbolic rape, obligated by the slavers on the ship, but their rhythms secretly communicate plans for rebellion and recreation in the hands of his successor, Nagó (164). The tragic climax of “The Slave Trade” begins with the phrase “The Wolves are in heat” (168), evoking De Las Casas and alluding to the rape of the Conquest (Jáuregui, *The Conquest* 28). The slavers sexually assault the slaves, but they are drunken, like Muñís with the “smell dispersed by the waters of Sosa Illamba’s placenta” (168). To the captives’ surprise, Sosa Illamba’s rapist has an old, “wrinkled buttocks” and the pants around his ankles are “empty . . . bags” like an impotent scrotum (168). The slavers, Lobas (‘she-wolves,’ as discussed in Chapters 1 and 2), are represented by feminine pronouns as they “sink insatiably into the vaginal bottom of a Malinké woman” (169). Their macho attempts to use rape as a weapon, to use their masculine bodies to subject African mothers to pure pain at the expense of their pure pleasure only leads to the colonizers’ destruction. Nagó penetrates the captain’s dry, bloodless chest with a harpoon, the ship burns with

Changó's fire, and they all sink into the Atlantic, where they remain until the baby Muntu is born again and suckled by indigenous mothers in the Americas (175). As described in my first chapter, this is the beginning of the New World on American soil. The three "races" (black, white, indigenous) are the three sister-concubines impregnated in one dark night, the Middle Passage, by Changó, aided by the sea of his mother, Yemayá (69).

The Loba Blanca (White She-Wolf)'s name and behavior harken to the rape at the founding of Rome, the empire that conquered Iberia before the latter assumed the role of *Chingón*. Plutarch wrote down the oral history of Romulus, the founder of the great city built on the backs of slaves. He and his brother Remus, strong and beautiful like Changó, were born of the Vestal Virgin Rhea to the God of War (98). But since their mother would be killed for sacrificing her purity, they were abandoned by a river but not consumed (99). A she-wolf allowed them to suckle at her breast, or *ruma*, which gave them their names (104). Like the twins, and like the African Diaspora, the slavers bear the unspoken scars of rape, abandonment, and the loss of their mother under the masks of purity, power, and domination. Romulus, in his quest for empire, killed his own brother, because he defiled the sacred city limits by going beyond them (118). The place where Remus did this was commemorated at Lupercalia festivals in which women are beaten with whips to become fertile (157). Some say this is a return to where the boys were suckled by a She-Wolf, or *Lupa*, the common Roman term for a prostitute (101). The Conquerers in the novel attempt to hide this history like *machos* behind a mask of purity, like they hide their debt to their mothers and other women and thus the fertility that comes with love. However, if one seeks poetry, a rebirth or return to the Mother, a fall of Rome as it was and a birth of Rome as it can be, there is a way to work through the traumas at the heart of slavery.

Agne Brown, the Whore of Babylon, or, Mother Africa Returns

At the end of the novel, a *Nuevo Muntu* begins to emerge from the New World, and a pregnant whore is the womb from which it will come. A *puta*, Agne Brown, is Zapata Olivella's transgender avatar: both are children of Changó and Yemayá. However, as in the myth of Changó's escape from prison (*¡Levántate!* 141–42), she wears the god's sister-concubine's skirt that allows Zapata Olivella and the reader to attempt an escape from the

closure of the Symbolic Order as it is now known.⁷ Recalling the prologue and Ezili's rape/rebellion, "¡Desnúdate!" is the first thing Agne Brown is told when she is jailed for prostitution and polygamy, the crimes of a *puta*, in part for serving Changó as a priestess and activist (526), as described here in Chapter 2. This "humiliation" (526) is a symbolic rape at the hands of a female warden, a *chingona* with phallic scissors who loves to hear helpless prostitutes cry as she shears off their locks. Agne's cultural context determines this form of degradation, because during the 1960s it was a form of rebellion and pride for a black woman to let her hair grow into an afro, symbolizing a conscious cultural return of the repressed (actively forgotten memories) of centuries of denial and control of African bodies and culture in the United States, a phenomenon that is vital to understanding black history yet has universal implications regarding the policing of urges and behavior (Freud, "Unconscious" 580). Her cold, naked scalp, deprived of her undulating hair, is like the cold, hard cell in which she finds herself. Like Zapata Olivella's sensation of being trapped in the lettered city, Agne has also been trapped in a seemingly impenetrable lettered world surrounded by an abject silence, which is Mother Africa. When her black biological father is lynched, she is raised by a white protestant minister whom she calls "father." She is taken from the South to Kansas, where she is raised in a primarily Caucasian, Christian world and educated at white schools from childhood to her anthropology studies at Columbia University. Like Zapata Olivella in his autobiography, she is the only black student in her school, and she is jeered by her white peers for her student activism, just as Zapata Olivella was when organizing student protests and a Día del Negro as a medical student (unpublished scrapbook n.pag.). Her way out of this prison house is through the spiritual language of the Orishas, which she discovers as an adult, and which allows for a return of the repressed of centuries of a denied Mother Africa. She is imprisoned for her beliefs, but these give her a means of escape through a subversive interpretation of the events, beyond the comprehension of her jailers. "The number 999999. When I saw it I knew that it is the exact age of my most remote Ancestor. . . . Instead of rubbing my shaved head as my jailer expects, I preferred to placate the serpents of Legba by pressing my breasts under my prison uniform" (528). This "pressing" (*oprimiendo*) is oppressing, indicative of the oppression of blacks she bears in her skin, but the act is simultaneously autoerotic. Mother Africa surges forth in the novel's language,

opening it like the semigod of doorways into a source of creativity, sexualizing it, making it fertile like Yemayá and her son Changó. For Agne, the mark of Changó (the serpents on her body) is an erogenous zone like her breasts and genitalia, sources of pleasure, creativity, and fertility. When stripped, she fights the urge to cover them as she is violated by the warden yet feels them move when she is alone (527). The serpents are called a “mácula,” a “stain” or “tattoo” that, to the warden, makes her more whorish, and it had such importance for the author that he originally called the first section of “Ancestors in Struggle,” “La mácula.” One cannot ignore the association between her “mácula” and the “Immaculate Conception” of the Virgin Mary. In the jail, other prisoners taunt the pregnant Agne, laughing that her children were not conceived by the Holy Spirit (528). This, of course, is not true, because the fertility of Yemayá and Changó is the source of all pregnancy in Agne’s cult of the Ancestors, something beyond written language (represented by the carnet that the police request from the devotees [*Changó* 525]), beyond Western reason, yet flowing through the Symbolic Order.

Agne’s mark is gendered. While her chest bears the Serpents of Elegguá (502), the mark of Changó’s chosen, this mark is also on King Benkos Bioho, the tragic hero I discuss in Chapter 1. Like Agne’s serpents, those of little Bioho are hidden from authorities until their destined time. Bioho’s serpents are mentioned in five key moments of his life. First, he is born bearing them in a ceremony unbeknownst to the Church, which shows that his birth is divinely ordained by the Orishas (182). Second, the snakes appear at his baptism-like yet Yoruban consecration at the hands of a Babalawo, Domingo Falupo (202). When he is taken to the seminary, his Babalawo/priest senses them writhing on his body, a symbol of his rebellion against indoctrination (191). They are visible to all of King Benkos’s subjects at his coronation (234). Nagó the Navigator touches his own serpents of Elegguá to revive Bioho (264–65). His undead words cry “death to the master” as he sets off a slave revolt against the Inquisition and the colonizers (265). Bioho is a chosen one like Agne, but his marks are on his shoulders like the lashes of a whip or the burden of a yoke (182). They are the marks of pain and oppression; they inspire fire, destruction, and war, the side of Changó associated with masculinity. However, within all of these rebellions, there is a cultural mestizo born, like Agne and Bioho, new entities that come from the fertility

of Changó's bond with Yemanyá, the silenced mother in language. There are poetic recreations of language that can be associated with cultural rebirth, an idea associated with maternity, sexuality, and desire.

Zapata Olivella represents the feminine through a Madonna-Whore binary that may be another borrowing from Paz. The Mexican critic juxtaposes the maternal Virgin of Guadalupe with the defiled Chingada (104), showing that both represent the Mother. Agne, like Zapata Olivella and the *Nuevo Muntu* he recounts, is profane and impure, and this is the source of her creativity and her unity with a previously forgotten past. The serpents of Elegguá mark Nagó the Navigator, Changó's first earthly messenger, a "mácula" or "tatuaje" that evokes the ceremony to Elegguá and Changó in "Orígenes":

Red-haired Wolf

you have the snout of a hyena

coagulated blood in your eyes

.....

Your trace ash

the brand of the slave

unforgettable anger is tattooed on my skin

.....

Wherever your spark is reborn

.....

there will be the weeping

memory of a dead mother,

a bone broken into a cross

by the sword of your saints. (90–91)

This explanation of the snakes is repeated and reinterpreted throughout the novel in gendered terms, as I have shown. The serpents are both memory and urges that can be sublimated into creativity. The double entendre of "mácula" is that of the stain as well as that of the eye, or macula. The rigidly divided Américas must thus be

seen in a different, “impure” light that “stains” their symbols to create something new and transculturated. Dark skin, once viewed as a blight or curse, will be a source of creativity like the dark waters of Yemayá pouring forth into dry, hard cultural symbols.

In jail, Agne meets a son of Changó, Malcolm X, who seems to be trapped in a prison of anger, and she says “I don’t think it’s likely you can help me. I have serious discrepancies about the ideas that the Nation of Islam preaches, because I am an enemy of segregation” (529). To this, Malcolm replies “Ala [sic] has given the Honorable Master a double-edged sword to cut the White Devil that has encrusted himself on our mind” (529). Malcolm, like Agne/Zapata Olivella, recalls the abject past that Paz’s Mexicans refused to see, but he cannot look beyond the prison walls as Agne can. He reads a newspaper report on Agne’s arrest (529). His relationship to the language of the segregation-era US equivalent of the lettered city, the white-dominated press, is one that does not see the radical, fertile possibilities in language itself. His dialogue with Agne undermines this written discourse, but in a way that does not create new meanings for it. He is infuriated by the paper’s accusations that she is at once a preacher, a mystic, a prostitute, a practitioner of public polyandry (polygamy), and perpetrator of *proxenetismo* (serving as a Madame). While there is no reason for her to be imprisoned by these charges, she also feels no reason to deny them. She is a priestess of Changó who evokes the Ancestors as his Chosen One, creating most of the characters and narrative of the “Ancestors in Struggle.” Many sub-Saharan cultures practice polygamy, so if Mother Africa is to return in the Symbolic Order for Agne/Zapata Olivella, she must return within language as a fertile, monstrous whore with the hubris to apologize to no one. By “monstrous,” I mean a blasphemous monstrosity (spectacular display) or *demonstration*: a teacher that is not yet understood. S/he preaches prostitution, not for financial gain, but for spiritual gain, altering her/his relationship with language’s illusions and instilling hope for a new world order inherent yet hidden in the Law of the Father/Conquistador’s subject, language.

Malcolm cannot yet hear the waters of Yemayá in Agnes’s words or those of the press, but the goddess’s melancholy marks the vision to which Elegguá opens Agne’s imprisoned eyes. On Malcolm’s masculine chest, instead of the writhing serpents of Elegguá, he has a gunshot wound. Malcolm X, who, through Islam, alters his

macula to see the potential unity in humanity instead of a quest for purity and separation (702, 715), is killed in New York's Audubon Ballroom. His funeral is held at Agne's Temple of Shadows on 147th street, Harlem. Places of profane death are simultaneously places of eternal life, because both spaces are where the dances of the Ancestors are performed, consciously or otherwise. In death, he sees beyond purity. African-rooted faiths like Agne and posthumous Malcolm's do not divide the subject into body and mind/spirit as in the West, so physical and mental creativity are one and the same, or as Malcom X claims, "words divide; action unites" (724). He sees a vision of Sosa Illamba wrapping him in "white waves" and calls out "it is you, Agne Brown, the daughter of Yemayá, the mother who does not need a man's seed to give birth to heroes and martyrs" (724). Because of faiths, Yoruban, Dahomeyan, Christian, Muslim, and syncretic, Agne/Zapata Olivella can arrange the symbolic order into an illusion that gives meaning, love, and imagination to a horrifying history rooted in slavery and the Conquest. Religious discourse is, in fact, poetic discourse that opens language to what it cannot yet represent. This absence is the end of things as they are currently known.

Evoking the biblical Apocalypse, Agne is not only a whore, but "La Gran Puta," as the title indicates. According to the Real Academia Española, "puta" and "prostituta" are synonymous (n.pag.). This is translated several ways in the Bible, which depicts the end of the world in *Revelation* (*Apocalipsis* in Spanish). Saint John has a vision of a woman named "Secret, Babylon the Great, the Mother of the Whores and the Abominations of the Earth" (Young, Rev. 17.5) who represents an earthly empire under what was in the saint's time the unthinkable reign of a woman. Her name is "Secret" (Young) or "Misterio" (Mystery) (Reina Valera Antigua). She is the "Gran Babilonia" (Reina Valera Antigua). Her children are "Abominations" (Young) as well as "obscenidades" (Reina Valera Antigua). They are cursed, "filthy" beings like the poeticized black and *indio* fighters that are constantly depicted as rebelling against a colonially-imposed sense of purity in the novel. This impurity is evident in the ample use of profanity in the work, as well as the "impure" mixture of languages from outside of Castilian to create a new idiom. Her epithet is rendered as "Madre de las ramerás" ("Mother of Prostitutes") (La Biblia de las Américas) and "Madre de las Fornicaciones" ("Mother of Fornications") (Reina Valera Antigua). She probably symbolizes Rome and Babylon, rich, powerful empires beyond Saint John's

comprehension. In the novel, Agne is the beginning of the end of the known world of the Americas, because it is a cacophonous blend of all signs in an arrogant construction centered on mankind like the tower of Babel (Gen. 11.5–7). The whore Agne is the voice of this *Nuevo Muntu*, the Mother that evokes the biblical Eve as well as Yemayá. She is a *puta* because she welcomes all, giving away her purity in the creation of something monstrous, horrifying, yet didactic in its radical possibilities for reimagining the world. She preaches against separation of races and nations, present and past, living and the dead. Like the Apocalypse, this is the beginning of a New Era. She is the return of a silenced Mother Africa in Zapata Olivella’s “prison house of language.”¹⁰

Changó’s language rewrites not only the origins of the New World, but also the end of history as it is known. The end of the familiar is the only way out of the prison of language, because it is tied to the past and cannot yet capture the future, so the unforeseen future can only be imagined in language as the Apocalypse.

The battle of Armageddon in the Bible (Rev. 16.16) is simultaneously the end of the profane world and the beginning of a Kingdom of God. However, the syncretic language of the novel alters Saint John’s symbols. Nakedness is not shame at impurity (Rev. 16.15) but fertility through seduction and intermixture. The biblical conflict corresponds with nature’s fury, a storm of thunder and lightning, all of which Zapata Olivella associates with *Changó* (Rev. 16.18). Like in *Changó*, this final battle (as in “Struggling Ancestors,” the title) has a *puta* at its center, but the Great Whore is a city with many rivers (like the sisters of *Changó*, the personification of African rivers) (Rev. 17.15–18), that seduces the pure and intoxicates them with her wine, which is the blood of the pure (Rev. 17.6). This is to say the “three races” converge in her as they converge in the author and in the new world. An Angel tells the Saint that “the waters you saw, on which the prostitute sits, are nations, people, races, and languages” (Rev. 17.15). Her impurity rivals God himself: “For her sins are piled up as high as heaven. . . .” (Rev. 18.5) like the tower of Babel, but she tumbles: “fall, fall did Babylon the Great, and she became a habitation of demons, and a hold of every unclean spirit, and a hold of every unclean and hateful bird, because the wine of the wrath of her whoredom have all the nations drunk, and the kings of the earth with her did commit whoredom, and the merchants of the earth from the power of her revel were made rich” (Rev. 18.2–3). Agne is simultaneously the symbol of the Empire, which in John’s time was Rome but in Zapata Olivella’s

time the capitalist world led by the white-dominant and still racially segregated United States, the White Wolf in its most recent form. Agne, an African American woman, cannot be racially, religiously, or culturally “pure” in this cultural context, as many white people considered themselves. This being the case, she embraces her own strangeness, a source of creativity that parallels her active, fertile womb. She sees the world through a Nuevo Muntu macula that does not separate man from nature nor the righteous from the vulgar. She is the mother of a future that is as of yet inconceivable in language and thus monstrous, strange, unknown.

The fall of Babylon is at the heart of Rastafarianism, which is represented in the novel by the Jamaican Marcus Garvey, who seeks to decolonize Africa and bring his people home. Rastafarians often view him as a prophet who foresaw an Afrocentric future (Chevannes 102). However, Garvey’s purism is violated by Agne’s deep transculturation by what in Rastifarian parlance is Babylon: the United States and Europe. As explored last chapter, Garvey’s attempt at purity and return to an irrecoverable origin was not achieved, and it is not endorsed by the novel. However, his struggle and dreams of unity are included in the march of history, a flawed flame of Changó, a dream of a land to come, a faith but not a roadmap to be followed *strictu sensu*, because the battles of the 1960s lead to another possibility for a new world.

Agne’s Temple of Shadows in Harlem is the summoning of all the spirits that will fight in Armageddon between races, nations, and cultures around Malcolm X’s corpse. The gathering of the dead is the supernatural equivalent of the March on Washington headed by Martin Luther King, Junior (716). The center of the march is a great stone phallus not unlike the colonial fortresses of old: the Washington Monument. “We seemed like tiny ants trying to topple an atomic missile. . . . They/We all come to plant the seeds of their sons and daughters: [the seeds of] Black, Yellow, White [sic], the solidarity of the *Muntu*: Make love not war!” (716). King speaks against racial supremacy and violence of all kinds (716), and he echoes some of Malcolm’s last words in doing so (715). The pure white phallus represents the “new Caesar” of this Apocalyptic Rome, a political and cultural order dominated by white, male America that sends the dark and the marginalized to die in the wars that support its empires (717). Grotesque birds, “Jim Crows” (in English in the original) descend upon the protesters and attempt to keep them from “planting the tree of justice in America” (717). Amidst them are the Black Scorpions

like the scorpions of the Apocalypse (Rev. 9.3), militants who learned Changó's fire in Viet Nam and Korea and who are willing to fight the Octágono (the Pentagon) (718). These marchers do not give in to the violence that burns within and around them; the end of this world is not consumed in fire but in water. As veterans, recruits, and idealists burn their uniforms and draft cards, phallic symbols of war imploding, authorities descend upon them with paradoxically named "fire hoses" (719). These "whips of water" achieve an equally paradoxical end (719). Instead of destroying the *Nuevo Muntu*, they unite them as slavery once united a simultaneously scattered African Diaspora. "[As we were] On all fours [as if crawling], they filled our stomachs/wombs by shooting gushing water against our naked buttocks" (719). Changó's phallic power to make war and destroy, the same power of the Conquistador, the *negrero*, and the *Chingón*, is incomplete without the healing waters of Mother Yemayá (719). She lies hidden in poetic, non-mimetic language, opening it up to an unknown future.

The unknown future for the profane world is foreshadowed in the afterlife. At Malcolm X's funeral, a sacred baobab, a common maternal symbol translated to the New World as the *ceiba* (Cabrera 114), sprouts from his body. His soul tells Agne that she is "mother Sosa Illamba gathering in her breast the seed of one hundred million Blacks [sic] killed by the White Wolf" (722). Elegguá opens the door to death as he closes the novel, symbolically ending its language's presence. Changó's Chosen Ones, from Nagó to Agne, are in attendance, and Sosa Illamba wraps Malcolm X in the "white waves of the shroud [*sudario*, 'cloth for sweat']" (723). In the unrepresentable realm of death, where the Symbolic Order does not obey the Law of the Father, he can feel Yemayá returning in language to replenish it. Ancestors cry out "the lead of executions has brought us no nourishment" (725). The Black Scorpions and the White Wolf gather around the funeral parlor, ready for war. The undead Malcolm wonders if he will be the gunpowder of an apocalyptic battle, when he pauses. From his silent corpse sprouts a baobab that breaks through his wounded body and destroys the walls of the funeral parlor (726). Changó marches over the sea like a horseman of the Apocalypse. He and his warrior brothers are only held back by the waters of Yemayá: "Ochosí, Rainbow, held firm the spear that wounds the rain. . . . Ogún drowns [the thunder] in his hands. . . . And with his mouth closed . . . the Orisha of rage, Orún, held his fury" (726). Elegguá gives presence to Yemayá's absence, telling the Ancestors and the Orishas to contain their fury,

lest the Armageddon between the oppressed and oppressor begin. However, he calls to the reader as in oral discourse and cries “compare your insignificant acts with those of your Ancestors and you will find the ire of the Orishas justified” (727). If one merely invokes the rage and violence of Changó, one will only see a call to violence, Armageddon, destruction. However, if Yemayá/Mother Africa is “insignificant” as in “absent in language,” “without meaning” and represents not only a home to which it is impossible to return (the Maternal Body), but an unknown future, one must also consider a new meaning for “justified” (727). This can mean a return to the endless cycles of destruction that create human history as Hegel and Zapata Olivella present them, one tragedy after another. This would be accepted, reaffirmed, if one looks back and leaves the relation between signifiers and signified untouched. However, “to justify” could mean to “make just” (727). The goal of the Apocalypse is justice for the Christians, and just as justice is the goal of history for Zapata Olivella. This justice has not yet arrived, but anger and destruction, the masculine side of Changó, cannot achieve this unknown justice. It must come from his feminine side, the fertile, fluid, absent side that he shares with his Mother Yemayá and that seeps into the novel’s language.

Agne is central to this opening of possibilities. Like Sosa Illamba, she is pregnant with a child of unknown origin, the symbol of an equally unpredictable future. She is a US mestiza, someone who, like Zapata Olivella, has been formed in the Symbolic Order and a historically white university system not entirely unlike the lettered city. This is not to say that Agne seeks to be uneducated; she attempts to alter what knowledge is valued and where it comes from, such as that of blacks considered “ignorant” because they do not have access to white universities in this context. Agne is a fighter who does not fear death or imprisonment, just as Changó is, but her erotic side is just as important for revealing a new future for the *Nuevo Muntu*. Half of her is separated by segregation. She is courted by Joe Stephens, a black man of humble origins who graduates from a Historically Black College, because he refuses to be a “discolored *nigger* [using the English original]” (565). He plays the banjo, an instrument of West African origin that he learned orally from his father and generally represents an organic knowledge not found in the halls of (white, segregated) academia (614). He does not know the syncretic oral traditions of Latin America, nor does he have the Columbia education that Agne does.

However, Joe clearly has something to add to this *Nuevo Muntu*. His partial absence in written language is evident in his final love letter to Agne as they are both still in prison. Whereas she is inmate number 999999, pure presence, he is pure absence, 0000000 (719), just as the color black is pure absence (it absorbs all light) and white is pure presence of light (it reflects all light). They must adjust their maculae and their languages to become something altogether different and more perfect in a transcultural synthesis. The prisoner Joe compares US prisons to a stone cold womb where the blacks of the future are gestating as if they were part of the abject slum where many blacks live (720). In prison, where he has no pen with which to write, he goes beyond letters and returns to the oral traditions of Mother Africa to communicate with his brothers through songs and rhythm. However, he must translate his spoken words into writing for Agne to read his letter (721). Its final lines are “this letter is only to tell you that your Joe has never felt so close to you. Love, 0000000” (722). No doubt overcome by the world crumbling around her, Agne never returns his letter during the novel, but it is clear that although she and Joe are separated, there is a possibility for love and rebirth.

Despite the prisons that bind them, Joe and Agne have the ability to create a new idiom through love. Here Paz’s discourse on love is helpful. One cannot know what will become of this unity between Joe and Agne, but it will be something that removes the capital letters from the words “Black and White” that emerge only in the US half of the novel, leading to a new language that itself is a form of Apocalypse: both revelation and rebirth. However, unlike Saint John’s vision, this is a “Kingdom of this World” in which the impure yet creative live in peace and justice with one another. Zapata Olivella’s valuing of poetic language, silence, and faith is his own working through of lost Mother Africa. He is a Western subject trapped in the lettered city and the symbolic order. However, there is hope for a new mestizo world-family and thus a return of Mother Africa silenced by a purity based in violence, a way beyond the Law of the Father and the dominance of the *Chingón*. What if Babylon doesn’t fall at the end of history? What if Babylon is the “Kingdom of this World,” on this land, with this body, with this past and it starts right now? What is this ineffable freedom we have in this moment, beyond the past and not yet in the future?

Zapata Olivella's self-writing is not directed at an individual psychoanalyst with pen and paper but to his "compañero de viaje," the *Nuevo Muntu* in coming, the readers of the future that will continue to struggle and hope until a truly New World is born. Walter Ong claims that the writer's audience is always a fiction (177), since he cannot know who will read his work. Zapata Olivella may be writing for the lettered city and the US academia, but he does not know how these structures will change in the future. His message to the Americas is simultaneously a message of hope for himself. It is a means of writing an identity for the world that synthesizes the conflicting forces within himself: Western writing and oral traditions,⁸ the many races in his family's past, the Conquest and slavery, the *Chingón* and the *Chingada*, father Reason and mother Faith, signs as they are and signs as they can be. It is as if all these pains give birth, through the text, to a *Nuevo Muntu* populated by readers that are his child, like the unknown child in Agne's womb. Zapata Olivella asked, upon his death, to be cremated and poured into the Atlantic in a current flowing to Africa (Arbeláez 2). This text is the ash of the past, his "epitaph" as De Man would say, floating over the transparent waters of Mother Yemayá in hopes of a redemptive but as of yet incomprehensible return to her. This is a desire for return shared by all humanity, but uniquely pivotal to the imagining of a *Nuevo Muntu*. Spivak claims that the subaltern cannot speak and that the researchers of the West can often only communicate with the other within. However, the silenced other is present as an absence in language, a Spivakian silence which creates a desire in Western authors like Zapata Olivella for a redemptive reunion with their abject origins.⁹ This is Mother Africa speaking in the shadows of words we cannot fully understand yet to which we must listen if we want the hope of belief in a world where the subaltern cannot only speak but have justice as well. It will come from poetry. It will be the end of history and the beginning of something completely unknown.

Ana Maria Gonçalves, Mother Africa, and Brazil:

Between the Lettered City "of the Future" and a Crying Black Atlantic

I have reaffirmed Spivak's arguments that the subaltern's worldview, like those of pre-slavery Africans (who, as I have argued, did not consider themselves "Africans" at all), and like those of the *sati* widows of

India, is irretrievably absent in language. However, for the Western writer, their silence and its ability to evoke the other within and traumas of the present that stem from colonialism have radical potential for important reflections on world history as it is known. This is because historiography is “self-writing,” a meditation on life and death, a mask that an individual subject puts on as s/he writes. This text creates the subject, and in so doing allows him/her to sublimate his/her desires, many of which revolve around unconscious oedipal struggles, as Paz argues. Desire in language is a means of therapy, not only for individual traumas, but also for national and racial traumas, as Paz claims, and for world-wide traumas such as the universal loss of the Eden of pre-subjective “wholeness” and the fall from grace that came with the simultaneous formation of a largely African slave-based economy, the birth of the New World, and Europe as a colonial power. This lost Mother is perhaps best exemplified by the massive, marginalized morass beyond Angel Rama’s lettered city. This means that the novel form is a sort of European prison or fortress which authors interested in overcoming the limitations of Western reason for conceiving a voice for the enslaved must infiltrate with poetic (maternal) language that, in Zapata Olivella’s case, takes a spiritual form.

A Second Visit to the Cradle of the Raza Cós mica

In order to understand the cultural milieu that circumscribed a need for Gonçalves’s text, one can return to Mexico and consider the paternal figure against which, in part, Paz was arguing: José de Vasconcelos, whose theories Zapata Olivella appropriates and revises. Paz praises Vasconcelos for fighting Positivism (164) and attempting to rewrite Mexican history from the ground up after the Revolution, praising an “open” spirit that it inherits from the Spain of the Renaissance (165).¹¹ However, as Santiago points out, where Paz created poetry from his contact with the subaltern, Vasconcelos treated her as the essayist and ethnographer. He could not see beyond the limits of his own overwhelming desires (Paz 165) and the ideas of his own time and became trapped in the past (184–85). I have written elsewhere that Brazil was a place where travel writers often imagined a world without violence, hatred, or racism. Vasconcelos was no exception. In the wake of the Mexican Revolution (1910–ca. 1920), which brought the worst fratricide of the nation’s post-Columbian history,

Vasconcelos traveled to Brazil and Argentina as an envoy from the Ministry of Education. The result was his masterpiece, *La raza cósmica* (1925), which argues that racial and cultural mixture, the hallmark of Latin America, would lead, through evolution, to a superior race that would contain only the best elements of the previous ones. As mentioned last chapter, this evolution was loosely based on Hegel's notion of spirit, that which transcends the tragedy of history, such as art and knowledge. For Vasconcelos, Brazil is both an Eden and a Kingdom Come, a model for the perfecting of humanity. He argues, using the reigning eugenic logic of his time, that what the Greeks called Atlantis was located in America, but that it was "lost" to history. Brazil is also a possible location for Universópolis, the stretch of Amazon to which the cosmic race could flee if the cruel world could not accept it (926). Leslie Bethell has argued that Vasconcelos was among the first thinkers of the twentieth century to view Brazil as part of Latin America (469), a political affiliation that was not popularized until the Allies' military strategy of World War II, continued during the Cold War (474). He mentions that Brazil was the inspiration for the *raza cósmica*, but does not show how in his text.

Perhaps the best starting place is Vasconcelos's last glimpse of Brazilian people: "University students, officials, and friends were at the station to say goodbye. I felt tempted to tell them: 'I shouldn't see you anymore; I once saw you as almost perfect, and I have to carry with me only this immaculate vision'; these thoughts made me impatient, distracted, and cold" (1011). Consciously or not, Vasconcelos is confessing to a voluntary blindness, an antiseptic, simplistic vision of a complex group of people at which he has only glimpsed. He wants to see "Latin" people, those who continue "Iberian" values and practices inherited from proud and even benevolent colonizers (991–94). He is attempting to counter the Black Legend of the Conquest, which began with Bartolomé de las Casas's indictment of the Spanish in the Americas and, though lesser studied, the Portuguese in Africa. Thus he resurrects a Golden Legend of a common history stemming from a common colonial experience, literally saying that Mexicans are Spaniards and Brazilians are Portuguese. They are "racially" and culturally "immaculate" like the Virgin Mary, not "stained" by "ugly" people like black and indigenous populations, which Vasconcelos was not very concerned with preserving, since he thought they would eventually be voluntarily bred out of the *raza cósmica*. Vasconcelos is Paz's target when he criticizes

Mexicans for identifying with the Conquistador and consciously forgetting the torn apart indigenous or hybrid people that fall outside what the elite imagine themselves to be (106). As Rama argues, Vasconcelos is working to expand the walls of the lettered city through education as well as national and Latin American pride (123), however, he is still trapped in this city in part due to his eugenic academic formation.

The Brazilians are not passive in Vasconcelos's "immaculate" vision of the "new" nation's history (991). Portuguese is a new language to him and he is constantly guided by dignitaries. He visits tourist sites and schools, and the latter have clearly been prepared for his visit. The Brazil he sees is as anxious to forget its inconvenient origins, like an abject mother, as the Mexicans (including Vasconcelos) that Paz criticizes. His visit occurs in 1921, the year before the *Semana de Arte Moderna*, during the "Old Republic" (1889–1930). Vasconcelos visits a Brazil that is trying to form a united national culture out of culturally disparate regions. This involved some very intentional forgetting in how history was imagined. For example, Vasconcelos writes that the enlightened Republic abolished slavery and everyone prospered after the champion of human rights Dom Pedro II altruistically decided to step down from his post (991). Brazil is a land without violence, hatred, or ignorance for Vasconcelos, an image the administration of President Pessoa was no doubt pleased to see spread abroad. Of course, Dom Pedro II's daughter Isabel abolished slavery under his watch, many Republicans were unapologetic slave owners while others were prepared for a military coup, and Brazil colonized Paraguay (1864–70), in addition to several regional uprisings throughout the nineteenth century. Its history is also a tragedy. Though Vasconcelos claims everyone (except a few blacks and Native Americans outside the cities) is not only literate but well-versed in literature (975), Mara Loveman has shown that the Old Republic actually abandoned all attempts to implement literacy for the marginalized, particularly the enslaved and their descendants, because one had to be able to read in order to vote (443), giving the lie to the universal love of country instilled through the education he perceives (983). Like the disappearing census numbers of blacks in Loveman's study, the black people in Vasconcelos's view of Brazil are glimpsed at, then hurriedly forgotten. Historian Sidney Chalhoub shows that the violence of slavery was actively erased from the history books as soon as it was abolished. Hanchard argues that this was a continuation of a façade used to protect Brazilian

sovereignty from British abolitionists (61), but Dom Pedro II himself outlawed groups that gave visibility to the enslaved and people of color in the public sphere as early as 1861 (73), which was intensified after abolition. Chalhoub sums the policy up as “The best rule is not to talk about this” (84).

Vasconcelos’s trajectory roughly follows the path of the nation’s post-1500 history. He begins in Bahia, the colonial capital. Another anecdote illustrates Afro-Brazil according to Vasconcelos: “I tried to stop at the market to see the black women with their picturesque dresses, to examine the fruits of the tropics, so gratifying to the senses; but I perceived that the official didn’t want me to notice the existence of the blacks; such a spectacle was left off the official tour itinerary; he was probably even ashamed of the oranges . . . civilization is the child of the North” (947). The *baiana*, dressed in white and selling *acarajé* and other local food is to this day a staple of Brazilian culture. Vasconcelos is clearly as attracted to her as he is to the food, but eugenics gets in the way of any kind of further understanding between the visitor of the present (1921) and what is probably the descendent of one of the slaves that, through their labor and culture, gave birth to the Brazilian nation. Gender is another barrier that creates a brief, if memorable, longing in Vasconcelos, but no desire to hear much more of what the *baiana* has to say about the great Brazilian nation that is supposedly the continuation of an ideal past and a model for the perfect future. To put it another way, he wants to eat her fruit, not hear her poetry. After a visit to the Convento de São Francisco, he is quickly swept away to the ultramodern metropolises of the Southeast. Like many historians of the Old Republic (Borges 47), Vasconcelos treats Salvador as a quaint reminder of the past, but not one to be looked at too long or too critically. It is the abject Mother at the heart of Brazilian history. “The Country of the Future,” coined by Vasconcelos (984) and later popularized by Stefan Zweig (Maddox 183), is not one to look back at the *Chingada* whence it came, the slaves of Bahia whose blood build a church for every day of the year. This is theorized in the “raza cósmica” thus: “we have very, very few blacks and most of them have been transformed into mulatto populations” (928). Though it can be argued that there are more blacks in Brazil than most African countries (Gates), they are invisible to a well-intentioned yet, by today’s standards, ill-informed traveler looking for “Latins,” gentle and genteel Conquistadors and *bandeirantes*, not “Children of the Chingada.”

However, Brazilians often had their own blind spots regarding their country's origins. Santiago shows how and why the *modernistas* of 1922 onward imagined a country that was great because it was a mixture of different races. However, if one contested this happy miscegenation, *modernistas* were deaf to them ("Destino" 181). From this vision of the world came Gilberto Freyre's *Casa Grande e Senzala* (1933), which includes an infamous mulatta not entirely unlike Vasconcelos's succulent specimen of the tropics: "... we all carry the unequivocal mark of black influence. Of the slave or nurse that swaddled us [as children]. That breastfed us. That fed us, she herself softening in her hand the ball of food. Of the old black woman who told us the first stories of ghosts and animals. . . . Of the [mulatta] that initiated us in physical love and transmitted to us, in the creaking of the bed in the breeze, the first complete sensation of manhood" (197). Freyre's line of thought, like Vasconcelos's, connects black and mulatta women both to nurturing and feeding, as well as to language. Thought black, they are the mother's milk on the white pages of Brazilian writing. Women of African descent are, for Freyre, the Mothers of Brazil, and they have a tremendous impact on its thought and collective desires. It is not surprising, then, that, in addition to colonial reality of masters' families having virtually complete sovereignty over the bodies of the enslaved, elite heterosexual males had oedipal desires for women with bodies similar to those who raised them. Freyre goes on to say that "The black nurse often did with words what she did with food: she mashed them, took out the thorns, the bones, the hardness, leaving only for the mouth of the little white boy the soft syllables" (243) and he proceeds to show how this eventually infiltrated what Rama would later call Brazil's lettered city. Freyre puts it this way: "... written [Portuguese] refused, with the scruples of a debutante, the slightest contact with spoken [Portuguese]; with that of the people; with that of common [*corrente*, flowing] usage" (244). As in *Changó*, the hard, phallic language imposed by empire, because of the maternal Afro-Brazilian influence on it, is made soft, liquid, nurturing, like a Maternal Body, for Freyre as an individual and much of Brazil's lettered city. Freyre hears a melody in the black women's/white children's speech. This is like the music Vasconcelos heard in the ways Brazilians pronounce the name of their own country (vocalizing what English renders as the "z" in it, whereas in Spanish it is both written and pronounced as an unvocalized "s"), a country he thinks is based on love and unity instead of the violence he remembers at

home. Both writers are unconsciously remembering maternal bodies in subaltern sounds. Freyre's first examples of black influence in Brazilian speech are telling. The black nurses spread shortening and doubling through the words of their tiny masters, altering the latter's own names: ". . . os Franciscos, Chicos, Chiquinhos, Chicós, os Pedros, Pepés; os Albertos, Bebetos, Betinhos" (243). This fluid, redundant play with language makes Portuguese less a fortress and more of a sea with waves of sound that contract (Chico) and expand (Chiquinho, the diminutive). It matters little if this is actually how these names evolved, whether there were Bebetos before the Conquest, perhaps called that by Portuguese mothers; what matters is Freyre's claim that there is an often unconscious maternal substrate in Brazilian language and the ample evidence that Afro-Brazilian women have served a maternal function since slavery, which is commonly associated with the unique development of Brazilian language. This is evident in his first example of shortening and doubling: "O 'doe' dos grandes tornou-se o 'dodoe' dos meninos. Palavra muito mais dengosa" (243). Here, "It hurts" (doe) becomes, for the little ones a much more "dengosa" word. The latter term means "crybaby," "whimpering," "weeping." It is a bond based on pain and a prelinguistic yearning for a maternal love and attention: it is a word ('doe') bound to a whimper or stutter ('dodoe'). It is a pain of separation and yearning for completeness that is a repetition of the trauma of birth and separation from the Maternal Body, which in this case is that of an Afro-Brazilian woman.

Afro-Brasileiras *Write Mother Africa*

During the 1970s, black women writers started their own search for Mother Africa in Brazil, this group perhaps being best exemplified by Conceição Evaristo. Shortly before Gonçalves wrote *Um defeito de cor* (2005), Evaristo published her breakthrough novel, *Ponciá Vicêncio* (2003). As Chapter 1 shows, it was one of the first novels on slavery by a black woman since the largely forgotten *Úrsula* (Maria Firmina dos Reis, 1859) written by an Afro-Brazilian woman who lived under slavery and found her way to freedom, at least in legal terms. Gonçalves's novel can be seen as a continuation of Evaristo's in the emerging Afro-Brazilian canon, though she claims she had no contact with other authors, since she was an unknown writer (169). At a talk at

Vanderbilt University in 2012, Evaristo noted some of the aforementioned passages from Freyre, concluding: “And surely we can affirm that, if in the past the Black Mammy had among her obligations to tell bedtime stories for the children of the manor house, today our ‘life-writings’ can be read not as stories to make the master’s children sleep, but to awaken them to the nightmares of injustice.” She takes as her task giving presence to the previously silenced wet nurses and their descendants, through her own writing as well as others who got their start through the Afro-Brazilian activist journal *Cadernos Negros* (Oliveira 174–75). The “nightmares” are traumas stifled by a country that has, for Vasconcelos, Freyre, and for many of its writers and historians, denied the violence of its colonial roots and its continuation today. She speaks of “life-writings” that come from “lived experience.” This is another example of oral culture (one perceives oral interactions as “lived” more so than the more “removed” language of writing) and that of the novel. This “experience” is not only a self-identified black author (which both Evaristo and Gonçalves are) but also an example of combining oral and written traditions of narrative, a renovation of language that is at once aesthetic and therapeutic for all involved. Like other *Nuevo Muntu* authors, she is concerned with reviving a silenced Black Mother in Brazilian literature that once lay beyond the lettered city, though it seeped into its silences, as was the case of Vasconcelos and Freyre. This past returns in her novel’s abject violence, such as the grotesque scene in which a master urinates in his slave’s mouth, a return to the rape that engendered Brazil as it is today. However, Evaristo does not admit outright that, in using the Portuguese language, she is reviving not only the sounds, words, and experiences of subaltern, enslaved *afrobrasileiras*, but also the “master’s children,” a group to which she belongs if for no other reason than the fact that she is still trapped in the language of Freyre’s patriarch and written language itself. Her novel is a mask that simultaneously creates a black identity yet confirms that much of Afro-Brazil is still beyond linguistic representation like a Maternal Body. Mother Africa is not a historical individual, but the silences outside the Symbolic Order and the lettered city, the “other within” of authors like Vasconcelos, Freyre, and Evaristo herself.

Gonçalves, too, found herself between the words of the “master” and the “nurse” as she was writing. She claims that she wrote *Um defeito de cor* in a search of a black identity for herself. “For a long time, the mestizo

was proposed as a solution to the the Brazilian racial problem. . . . the fact that he's the majority of the population impedes a real dialogue from happening, because it looks like everything is already fixed," which she later found in a black female identity in the United States in a moment of solidarity with African American women who called her "sistah" at an Irma Thomas concert ("Viagens" 168). She is probably referring to the now infamous "mulatto escape hatch," the common practice in Brazil of refusing to call oneself (or call others) "black," thinking that it will lessen racial prejudice (Degler). Gonçalves's novel, however, seems less to state repeatedly "I am black" and more to say "slavery happened," "a great rape occurred," and "I, like Brazil, was born and raised because of it. Estamos *fu*, fucked up, *chingados*, ill, and we can't improve unless we diagnose the source of the pain in order to resolve it."

This examination is what sends Gonçalves back in time. Not unlike Spivak's distance from her immolated widows, Gonçalves has Kehinde start her novel in a war-torn village in Africa (23) and proceeds through a grotesque description of the Middle Passage (61). Her mother is raped and she and her brother are murdered; her grandmother, her twin sister Taiwo, and her friend, baptized Luísa, wither away before her eyes, but they leave their traces in her language, starting with her white name. Gonçalves, who claims to have started the process of writing the novel as an advertising agent ("Viagens," 177) in São Paulo could not be further from either context. However, a search for a lost, perhaps irrecoverable past, and an implicit, if imagined, solidarity with the subalterns of that past, are evident in Gonçalves's novel. It is telling that the latter was going through a divorce in a megalopolis and decided, inspired by Jorge Amado's literary call, "não tenhas, moça, um minuto de indecisão" (10), to go back in time, literally by investigating slavery, and figuratively by going to colonial Salvador da Bahia, the New World city most closely culturally linked to Africa and the birthplace of Brazil. No longer a wife, her feminine identity as well as her racial identity were changing (10). This encounter with a black history she views as her own is dramatized by her discovery of a torn manuscript in an old black woman's house, which a little boy was using as coloring paper (16). The woman, Dona Clara, bears the same scar as the scribe who wrote the letters that make up (at least part of) the novel, connecting the present with the slave past through a prelinguistic trace written on the body, a wound. The novel can be seen as Gonçalves attempting to

fill in the silences of Brazil's history of slavery like Evaristo. Her use of first-person narration, the first time this technique has been applied to a Brazilian novel with an *afrobrasileira* protagonist, is indicative of the novel's attempt to summon an African side of herself and of Brazil, to give presence to a previous colonial absence. She wrote six drafts before switching to the first person: "Then I started thinking of a voice . . . that would tell that story, and I remembered my grandmother telling us stories, of her life. . . . That was the voice I tried to reproduce" (174). She had to imagine becoming Kehinde/Luísia, and in so doing her protagonist became a manifestation of her other within, a representation of her silenced Mother Africa, a memory of her own grandmother and the oral tradition beyond the novel that she represents for the author.

The first-person point of view has implications for the novel because in the syncretic religious traditions centered in Bahia, Ancestors can inhabit the body and voice of the faithful: one can read the novel as her invoking Kehinde and reliving the Africas and Brazils of the eighteenth and nineteenth century. For this reason, there is no dialogue in the novel, only indirect discourse indicating what others said. All voices pass through an enslaved black woman's consciousness like those of the nurses that softened Portuguese for Freyre, made it playful, malleable, yet morose because of the tragedy at its heart. Conversely, one can read Kehinde's verbal selfishness as Gonçalves's own narrative hunger, a yearning to fill the language of historical fiction, and the dominant narratives of "racial democracy" (Hanchard 15) and patriarchy in Brazil, with the silenced voice of the enslaved woman, which is simultaneously the "African" side of Gonçalves that she perceives as silenced. All the documents that she rifles through in the archives of Salvador to resuscitate lost voices are evident in the novel's sprawling network of hundreds of characters from all walks of life, particularly Africans and the enslaved. Simultaneously, Gonçalves's text is an epistolary novel from a mother to her lost son. The form of a personal letter does not typically have explicit dialogue. However, the letters are narrated by Kehinde to a scribe during her last voyage (945), so one could see the narration as being a hybrid between written (epistle) and oral (dictation) narrations, and the text's implicit author as composing it in a simultaneously oral (summoning spirits) and written mode, resulting in the novel as it appears. Gonçalves's use of the epistolary form is a feminization of the lettered city, an altering of rigid public discourse of literature and laws and making it more

like the feminine language of love and the private sphere. However, traditionally, the enslaved and the spirits can speak orally, like the experiences that inspire Evaristo's "life-writings," but not in writing. This combination is what makes Kehinde's literacy special and what makes it a reflection of Gonçalves's narrative style and self-writing, which mixes oral and written traditions.

Freyre's romantic notion of sexual initiation by slave women is oft cited as an example of harmonious, spontaneous miscegenation during colonial Brazil, but Gonçalves, like Paz, presents it as rape. The latter is another element her novel shares with Spivak's depiction of *sati* as a common crime against the mothers of the past and a traumatic origin for the nation (99). Like British records on *sati*, Freyre's text's silences on the perspective of slave women necessitates a novel like Gonçalves's, in which master-slave sex is presented as grotesque sexual violence. In an interview, however, the author notes that violence is a central part of the plantation that Freyre does not ignore, though some overlook these scenes in his work:

They use Freyre, for example, to say that slavery in Brazil was sweet, like Senator Demóstenes Torres did recently, arguing against [racial] quotas in colleges. That there was no rape and that miscegenation was consensual. . . . I don't know that I put the violence in as a reaction. . . . I didn't even read Freyre again to write the book, because I didn't want it to be someone interpreting history. I wanted to really read history and think of how a person saw those things. . . . I had to see the 'tiny' violences of the everyday" (172).

The female slave on the plantation is presented much like Paz's *Chingada*: a silenced, painful, horrifying origin of a country that is often portrayed as peaceful and joyous, even in its collective memory of slavery. Gonçalves's need to behold and to feel "how a person saw" is an example of the traces of orality in her text, how her novel appropriates performance.

An example in the novel of this foundational violence is the rape and torture of the enslaved African Verenciana, which are based on Freyre's more distanced treatment of a similar case in colonial history, though both draw on the oral tradition:

It is a widely known fact in slave-owning societies that the cruelty of female slave owners was greater than that of the masters. . . . Travelers, folklore, oral tradition [say so]. There are not just two or three, but many cases of abuses of defenseless slaves by mistresses. Young ladies who had pretty house slaves' eyes ripped out and brought to their slave-owning husbands at dessert time in a jelly-jar and still floating in blood. Baronesses of age that, out of jealousy or offense had young mulattas sold to old libertines. . . . Kick in their teeth, or cut their breasts off, or rip out their nails. . . . The motive? Jealousy of her husband. Sexual rancor. The rivalry of women against women" (240).

His list of injustices seems almost flippant when compared to Gonçalves's first-person narrative. Gonçalves personifies these slaves by dramatizing these events. Instead of a generalized violence, it is given a persona with a name, Verenciana.

Master-slave sex has different effects on the enslaved women of the plantation and the "immaculate" matriarch of the house. The novel's patriarch, Seu José Carlos, enacting his property rights as owner of the beautiful but ultimately helpless slave, Verenciana, impregnates her (105). Legally, she cannot give consent, so no *mestiçagem* could take place that would not be considered rape in the courts of Brazil today. The master's sovereignty over his plantation would largely preclude action to stop the abuse. In colonial law, the sexual intercourse of this concubinage would usually be invisible, silent to the court. Its offspring would all but magically "appear" in baptismal records, a branch of the lettered city, with a silenced origin. Verenciana's mistress Ana Felipa would be unable to do anything legally to stop José Carlos's behavior, which partly explains her violent reaction. Conversely, Ana Felipa's primary social function, like the women Spivak describes, is to produce an heir for José Carlos, which almost kills her and results in a series of miscarriages (99). Ana Felipa acts out her rage for failing at what she perceives as her reason for being: she cuts out

Verenciana's eyes so that she cannot see her own child when it is born and sells him (106). No scene could be more horrifying, more historically accurate regarding the extremes of slavery, nor more oedipal than to behold the violence at the origin of the New World in this manner. Whereas Oedipus blinds himself after learning he has wed his mother, Ana Felipa's blinding of Verenciana is revealing to the reader that all slaves were *Chingadas* that gave birth to the New World. Like Spivak's suicide widows, Verenciana's blinded eyes can see the ineffable side of history that Freyre cannot.

In the novel, José Carlos, further exemplifying the subaltern slaves' almost total lack of legal recourse, rapes Kehinde when she is twelve in the chapter entitled "A posse" 'taking ownership,' reinforcing that this was a condoned activity (168), and likely alluding to José de Alencar's *Senhora* (1875). The latter is an attempt at a feminist text by a plantation owner, to whom I will return next chapter, about an elite white woman who maintains her purity by choosing when and whom to marry, despite societal pressures to do so sooner than her heart desires. Kehinde has no such resources, nor can "purity" be a goal for her in the eyes of the law as an enslaved woman who is not a property owner. If this is an allusion, it must be the juxtaposition of two opposing forms of patriarchal oppression based on purity. In another instance of foundational violence, José Carlos also rapes and castrates Kehinde's young admirer, Lourenço, for attempting to protect her, showing that women were not alone in this suffering (171–72) and that the wounds of foundational rape are felt by all. Just as it seems unthinkable in modern times for rape to be condoned by the law, in colonial times it was often encouraged in the case of plantation slavery, since it produced more slaves. Sexual violence explains not only certain practices of *sati* but also the sordid silences of Brazil's oft-touted "gentle" slavery. As in Spivak's text, there is an association between rape and the desire for self-destruction. Kehinde yearns for death when she is raped and impregnated by her master on the plantation (187). Rather than have her child be enslaved, she almost decides she would rather die giving birth to him (203). However, her desire for death or miscarriage is overcome by her maternal devotion to her child. Maternal love overcomes death.

Another element of Spivak's family connection to theatrical suicide is promiscuity—the protestor did not want others to think she had had an illicit affair—which is also an element of both novels. In *Um defeito*,

Kehinde cannot marry any of the men on the plantation because slaves usually did not marry. When she becomes a concubine to Alberto, she goes to live with him on his small farm, but he courts and marries a white woman in Salvador, whom Kehinde dubs “A Ressequida” ‘dried out,’ emphasizing that she is not the mother of Luís (447). Alberto has no incentive to marry Kehinde; concubinage was the norm for women of color.

Kehinde’s lovers in Brazil can never be husbands. Her promiscuity is due to her wandering life and the people she must constantly leave behind. Her search for her son and her return to Africa lead to an instability of romantic and family relationships that was endemic to slavery and uniquely experienced by enslaved women.

In *Um defeito*, motherhood is Kehinde’s primary reason for living and writing. Gonçalves might not be telling her story if it were not for her son, Luís Gama. Like Zapata Olivella’s novel, Gonçalves turns the silences of history into presences, which tells the reader much about the author’s search for the “other within,” what could loosely be termed a “black” self. Luís was a leader in the public sphere: he worked as a lawyer and published poet to free slaves (Azevedo 128). For Kehinde, this would be impossible, and so Gonçalves needs Luís for Kehinde to exist just as she needs the Portuguese language and the novel form for her to evoke the voices of the enslaved. Luís mentions his enslavement in his works, but no story was ever written from his lost mother’s point of view, so one could say that Luís created Kehinde as much as she created him, because men controlled the public sphere of the lettered city in her context. In the plot, Kehinde is enslaved when her mother is raped and killed by male warriors (23) and her grandmother and sister die on the slave ship, piloted by an all-male crew. In Brazil, she continues to be largely dependent on men. Alberto can choose to claim Luís through baptism, but he chooses to sell him (631). One could say that literacy itself was a masculine, and usually white, practice in Kehinde’s context, since she learns to read from the Muslim male slave, Fatumbi, making her an exceptional enslaved woman (92). However, maternal figures like Dona Esméria and Nega Florinda not only share gossip but also tell tales of Africa to enslaved and free children (81), unbeknownst to their masters or former masters. This is taken directly from Freyre (243), but presented as a subversion of the patriarchal order of the plantation. Equally subversive in its presentation, Luís Gama is not only as an abolitionist, but also a son of Changó whose fiery personality shares a link with Africa, something of which the hybrid oral/written

traditions of mother kept a record, like his previously unknown African name (404). Fatumbi was hired to teach Kehinde's youngest mistress, the *sinhazinha* Maria Clara (92), but this education was designed to attract a husband from the lettered class, Doutor José Manuel (163). He is the lawyer that tries to help Kehinde find her son again. Thus, Kehinde's novel, made up of dictated epistles to her son, is a mixture of authority in letters that was still largely masculine in her context, while it is driven by the melancholy of a black mother who appropriates the written word.

Descriptions of Kehinde's black female body, which is tied up in questions of maternity, are prevalent in the text. This is not the subaltern speaking, but Gonçalves's construction of a text with a character that personifies the feminine for her, both consciously and unconsciously. The older Kehinde becomes, the less African and fertile she becomes. There are repeated explicit references to her vagina and breasts in her early years (160) and sexual longings and disappointments as her life passes from one male lover and/or child to another. Luís's brother dies at age eight (467), which devastates her and gives her another reason to write these letters: she wants her sons to know one another, even after death. She leaves the pursuit of her son to Doutor José Manoel and returns to Africa when abolition is declared and the Brazilian government finances ships back to former African slave ports. Apologetic, she describes her confusion to her son, but gives no logical reason for abandoning her search: she is driven to Africa by unconscious motives manifested as dreams of unity with her grandmother, mother, sister, and son, a desire to return to Mother Africa (728). Like Gonçalves, she first returns to her "origins," the origin of Brazil, in Salvador, in search of a lost maternal bond (726). In Africa, the shortcomings of abolition are evident, as they were with *sati*. She is much higher on Spivak's colonial hierarchy and distanced from the subaltern (79), resulting in the inversion of master and slave discussed last chapter. Naturally, as Kehinde gets older, she can no longer bear children, but she also becomes gradually more distant from the Africa of her origins, even when she attempt to return to it. She leaves Mother Africa and becomes less and less nurturing, to the point that, in Brazil, while she is dressed as her white former mistress, she stabs a black man to death for fear he will rob her (447). She continues this violence as an arms dealer in Africa, not only far from the subaltern but contributing to the subalterity of others.

On the other hand, there are important female characters in *Um defeito de cor* for whom maternity is not their only function, though their identities are closely linked to it. The most powerful are those in the religious sphere. Unlike *Changó's* cast of all-male priests (with the exception of Agne, who is closely associated with Yemayá), Gonçalves's novel has both male and female spiritual leaders. Among these is Agontimé, the fabled Vodoun priestess who had been a queen in Dahomey and was a spiritual leader in Brazil (596). Kehinde joins an influential Catholic sisterhood that gives her lodging and stability (608). As part of this group, she becomes the creator of José Saramago's *Memorial do Convento* (1982). Elderly women, Esméria in Brazil and priestess Iyá Kumani in Dahomey, while they cannot have children themselves, can predict if others will (748–49). Her novel also includes historical Dahomeyan Amazon Warriors with filed teeth and a reputation of invincibility, showing that black women were powerful as soldiers as well as mothers and priestesses, though in order to do so they had to remain virgins (812).

La Chingada Negra and Religious Syncretism

Like in *Changó*, the Afro-Catholic religions in Gonçalves's text are centered on maternity and fertility. For example, when Kehinde is still enslaved, she desperately seeks manumission. The primary reason for this is the fear of being permanently separated from her son, Banjokô, who is being raised by her mistress. José Carlos, the Freyrian patriarch, has been literally castrated by the slaves, which causes the plantation and the family, the structures at which he was the phallic center, to fragment. Slaves place a snake in his bed, which bites his penis and causes it to rot as he dies from the poison (174–77). He dies with no heir, so his plantation falls into the hands of his wife, who sells it and moves to the capital (185). The fiefdom over which he was sovereign is shattered and becomes matriarchal. Likewise, this novel is showing that Freyre's patriarch, and Freyre himself, is not the sole owner of this history.

The literal, legal, and financial castration of José Carlos has parallels with Luísa's own progression from a patriarchal to a matriarchal area, and African spirits are directly involved. Kehinde has a vision of the snake that killed her master as she frets over manumission. Frightened, she attempts to hit the beast with the nearest

object, which happens to be a statue of “Mamãe Oxum” (Mother Oshún) she has kept in secret so that her syncretic African beliefs will survive. The snake (probably a vision of Dan, a Dahomeyan god from Kehinde’s past) vanishes, and the tattered statue of Oshún is leaking gold dust from its magically dilated vagina (343).¹² Adding to its abject depiction, Gonçalves refers to it as the god’s *racha* or “pussy,” a term that Kehinde uses for her own body and which disconcerts Antônio Risério in his review, because it is an uncomfortable, “impure” origin for Brazil that is still difficult to observe. She splits the statue open and finds enough riches to buy her freedom. However, it is Francisco, her black lover, who allows their escape. Loving him is, for Kehinde, an act of healing after her friend Lourenço is castrated by the master (172), who is later himself castrated. Luísa’s escape, which focuses on seduction over violence, is related to questions of purity and the gender roles of women. The mistress will not accept the payment for manumission until one night when Francisco seduces her and blackmails her, using her phallic “purity” against her. She is physically and mentally locked in rigid codes of conduct, an enemy of change and the possibility of progress. But these norms can come undone. The mistress’s “mácula” or “stain” is revealed to the reader, and her mind is blurred by the smoke of marijuana, called “angola” in the text, as if a pre-logical Africa beyond the language of the West were emerging dreamlike within the Marian logic of the time. Though the snake is Dan, there is no reason it cannot also be the serpents of Elegguá, which open doors to the spiritual world as well as new paths for one to follow in life. Kehinde is destined to manumission and safe passage because of a serpent, and a new era begins for her, just as it does for those chosen by Elegguá in *Changó*. It is later revealed to Luísa that the miraculous statue of Oshún belongs to the priestess Agontimé (596). This money had been intended for the construction of the Casa das Minas, a center for African syncretic religions, where Kehinde lives with the priestess, studying spiritual practices, ameliorating her severed bond with Mother Africa. This is but one example in the novel of how the syncretic religions of Brazil link it to Mother Africa like an umbilical cord for Gonçalves and the reader.

Geninha, the Cry and the Silence of Mother Africa

Because of this yearning for a lost Maternal Body, *Um defeito de cor* has a bleak, but open ending. Again, the epistolary novel form comes into play. If Kehinde is the sole author of the letters, she cannot write the ending of her life. This role would have to fall to Geninha, the scribe who may be the co-author of the text. Geninha is a silence in the text that begs to be filled with some sort of presence and removes some of Kehinde's reliability as a narrator, making her language less phallic.

The character-narrator Geninha represents Africa as a brutalized, lost mother. Kehinde treats the girl like a daughter (899). Geninha's relationship to the novel's language involves voyages, silence, pain, and unintelligible utterances. She is the scribe to whom Kehinde/Luísa dictates the novel as she returns to Brazil from Africa in search of her lost son Luís (733). Kehinde meets the girl's parents, Juvenal and Jacinta, *libertos* (freed slaves) from Salvador, when she embarks the ship from Brazil to Africa. The girl's screams (735) first call Kehinde's attention as they leave for Africa. She is a sick infant on a long sea voyage, and Kehinde gives her medical treatment for her suffering (797). Part of the girls' discomfort is related to her mother's inability to feed her breast milk, again highlighting the separation from the Maternal Body of Africa, though a typical Brazilian substitute (flour water) is given to her (735).

Geninha repeatedly suffers violence and abandonment. She is a little girl when Kehinde is about to leave Ouidah for Lagos, where she will work for Chachá, the powerful Dahomeyan noble and key player in the continuing slave trade. A knife severs the fingers of Geninha's right hand (797). When the accident occurs, Kehinde is writing a letter with instructions for Tico in Brazil (797), who can read. Kehinde's mind floods with painful recollections, because she is outside the house and ignorant of the details. She fears that her daughter Maria Clara, or her childhood friend and mistress, Sinhazinha, has died, and the smell of burning flesh as the women seal the gaping wound with hot coals recalls the enslaved Lorenzo's castration in Itaparica (797). The reader cannot ignore the parallels between the images of adults kneeling with a bleeding child's body, both in this moment and the death scene of her first born, Banjokô. The fateful knife that killed him seems to reappear inexplicably in Ouidah. In this new context, it is not a literal death but a symbolic one in which Geninha is

literally cut off from writing like so many of the enslaved were. Both Kehinde and she lose consciousness in reaction to the event (797). As she fades, Kehinde dreams of the grandmother she lost during the Middle Passage and the late Nega Florinda who cared for her in Brazil (798). Geninha's severed fingers, repeated states of unconsciousness and pre-linguistic utterances can be read as a trauma that is usually silenced but that intermittently cries out in the novel as the return of the repressed. Though Geninha loses a hand, the symbol of writing, Kehinde reacts orally, literally vomiting in reaction to the grotesque lesion and the traumas it evokes (797). Once again, Kehinde tries to heal the little girl's pain, calling for an African healer, *bokonon* Prudêncio (797), an act that can be read as trying to soothe the pain emanating from the horrible origin of slavery.

Geninha's severed hand is just as responsible for the novel as the whole one. Geninha, a privileged *brasileira* in Africa, learns to read and write, but her disability makes it a struggle. Her traumatized mother will not let her out of her sight, but as a shy little girl she stands at the doorway to the room in Kehinde's home where a Muslim teacher is giving lessons (873). Geninha learns to write with her left hand, laboriously forming the letters like Kehinde once did, like Manzano does in his autobiography, and like the maimed Cervantes (Véquez 103) did with one of Kehinde's favorite novels, *Don Quixote* (661). Like Cide Hamete Benengeli does in this classic novel (Mancing 63), Geninha cuts the narrator in two, making her less reliable. Instead of having complete control over the narration of the novel, Kehinde narrates it to the wounded girl, who rarely explicitly inserts herself into the manuscript (912). In fact, her role as scribe is first mentioned in a multi-clausal sentence, almost as an afterthought: “. . . in Ouidah there was a person that was is as or more interested in who I was, and it is this exact woman who is here with me putting all these words on the page, Geninha, Jacinta's daughter” (874). This meek introduction is not a preface like the author's or an interruption of the text, but merely a mention that Geninha exists. If authorship is a question of writing, Geninha is the fictitious author of the novel, the scribe who writes the manuscript that Gonçalves “finds” over a century later in Bahia (14–15). Kehinde is too old and blind to write for herself (912). She must return to the spoken word to narrate the novel (912). Supposedly, the entire 947-page work was narrated to the girl on the sea. Kehinde has learned that Luís is alive, and she takes Geninha with her on the long voyage alongside a hyperbolically huge stack of paper. It is as if,

upon facing her death (912), Kehinde wants to write herself into history. She confesses her life story to the girl in the hopes that she will be reunited with Luís and, if not, that the girl will continue the search for him. A character so important to the work as Geninha is ironically tucked away near the novel's end and speaks very little. Her silence and her suffering are like the silenced trauma of Africa that began with European invasion, colonization, and slavery. But her silence serves the same function as her painful cry; it is largely unintelligible, but it speaks to the diaspora's journey through pain from slavery to the present day. As Kehinde puts it when Geninha loses her hand: "hearing the child's cry was torture, but it was also a relief, almost a sign that she was going to survive and that she was fine, since whoever cried in that state could only be fine" (798). Her injury indicates pain, but also perseverance.

Geninha's youth also speaks to the traumatic nature of slavery, because she never lived through enslavement first-hand. Though she is free, Geninha carries the suffering of slavery and repeated struggles rooted in slavery, presumably beyond the novel's end. She is charged with the task of reuniting Kehinde with her son through the letters that make up the manuscript (912). Like tragedy, Geninha/Kehinde perform a transition from an oral (enslaved) lived reality to a written (novelized/historicized) text that is marked by pain, sacrifice, and a spirit that transcends them.

While in Africa, as discussed last chapter, Kehinde is writing from a point of view that has much more in common with the *Chingón* than the *Chingada*. She is a colonizer who seems to have largely repressed Mother Africa, though she returns in different forms. This trauma is central to the novel's ending, because she is dressed as the *sinhazinha* Maria Clara, who is raised as a fraternal figure alongside her in the *casa-grande*, when she commits an unspeakable crime. She stabs a black man to death, presuming he is a robber, in a moment of unconscious fear and perhaps rage. In Africa, she recalls: "I didn't think that that man that tried to rob me on the road to the farm where we lived in Salvador was included in that type of spirit [human subjects]. That is, I never saw myself as a murderer, just as a person defending myself from another" (947). It appears that, by identifying more and more with the signs of the masters, she gradually sees herself less and less as black to the point of dehumanizing him as the other, or "outra," as it appears in the text. She is defending herself

from a displaced other within. Once she sees the error of her crime, she hopes that the curse brought upon her will be resolved in a spiritual world:

He is still making me suffer (*prejudicando*, prejudicing, judging against), but I know that soon we will even things up. I will look for him in the *Orum*, because I think my guilt for taking his life away has already been expiated a long time ago. And he made you suffer [prejudicou], separating you from me. . . because of the wrong decisions I made, sometimes without even knowing why. Does that explain why we missed each other. (947)

The *Orum* is the realm of the dead, which has been threatening, and sometimes succeeding, in taking women's children back to it as *abikus*.¹³ This *Orum* is a place of origin and final rest that represents a return to the Maternal Body. It is something that the subject must fight off in order to remain in the Symbolic Order, but which informs the fantasies of what comes after death. Kehinde and Luís will be together in death. She will be reunited with the abject black man she killed while displacing and acting out the trauma of her enslavement. This is one way that the silence of the text opens the possibility for the novel to be not a tragedy of a mother losing a son, but a comedy of their reunion. A more profane comedic reunion could come as Luís, simultaneously the enslaved and citizen of the lettered city, is reunited with his mother, the Kehinde who is lost and almost entirely silenced in his autobiography and letters, one of the goals of the novel. In both cases, religious discourse, a manifestation of unconscious desires, is part of attempting to work through the traumas at the origin of the Brazilian nation by giving them presence through the history of slavery yet imagining alternatives through spiritual and poetic imagination.

The End and the Beginning

I have shown examples of how a post-colonial, post-structuralist reading of these texts can illuminate their importance as self-writing for the authors, revisit the unresolved traumas (represented here as the rape of the enslaved and the deliberate “forgetting” or repression of Mother Africa in many forms) of national and diaspora subjects, and reevaluate the role of religion in historical fiction. Theologians and biblical scholars

inherit a language that not only explains the origin of history, but also the end of it as a comprehensible entity. Marxist theorist Walter Benjamin notes this (Löwy 47), though his materialism and collectivism is very different from Paz's view of literary language as therapy for a world that has been unwillingly separated from its Mother. Spivak's proposal that the West can only hear the other within (which is the repressed Mother, in my interpretation) has been largely confirmed by my arguments. But Paz's claim that there are traces of oedipal desires in poetic language allows for Mother Africa to speak through the silence of what a text cannot say outright. These traces of the Maternal Body seep into the walls of the lettered city, splitting it, opening it up to new possibilities for the future. If the subaltern can speak in the future, it will come from these cracks, and historical fiction will be central to this language. Mother Africa may one day infiltrate these texts so profoundly that it will be the end of history as we know it and the beginning of something unheard-of. Authors other than Zapata Olivella, who has returned to the Ancestors, and Gonçalves, must heed Changó's call to imagine a world where the traumas and injustices of the past are not forgotten, but where they are part of imagining a new, more just, American community.

Notes

¹ This reading is influenced by René Prieto's "Rewriting the Body" (181–85).

² In another moment in *¡Levántate!*, his father links slavery to theater this way: ". . . the history of humanity is repeated because the actors of this drama are men themselves. It is the reason why the nations speak different languages, though each language possesses different words to refer to the same fact" (54).

³ See also Julia Cuervo Hewitt.

⁴ His close reading is part of a comparison between *El laberinto de la soledad* and Sérgio Buarque de Holanda's *Raízes do Brasil* (1936), which has broad implications for the histories and literatures of Brazil and Mexico, noting their similarities and differences.

⁵ These translations are from the following sources: "Biggest Badass" (Tittler, *Changó*); "Baddest Dude" (Tittler, "Catching the Spirit"); "the Holy Motherfucker" (Captain Hidalgo, 134), though the author himself rendered it as "Holy Mother . . ." and "Holy. . ." in proposals for television productions now at Vanderbilt; and "O grande fodão" is Brazilian critic Idelber Avelar's translation of the title for a review of it on his widely-read literary blog. William Luis, who wrote the introduction to the English translation, does not agree with Tittler's rendering of "Gran Putas" as "Biggest Badass."

⁶ This theme would resurface in *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, four years later (63). Zapata Olivella's experiences as a black man in Mexico, like the iconic *chicana*, direct his interest to Afro-Mexico, as it does not for Paz. Anzaldúa and Zapata Olivella's experience in the post 1960s United States made the commonalities between the indigenous, the feminine, and the African more apparent to them than the white, male Paz of 1950, who not only ignores Afro-Mexicans (since blacks, for him, live in the segregated United States [94]) but disdains what he understood of *chicanos* (43).

⁷ Changó's androgyny could have begun in pre-slavery accounts of his life, since the story of his escape from prison dressed as a woman is so wide spread. This probably informed the slaves' logic in syncretizing him with Saint Barbara in Cuba, which Cabrera recounts (233). Zapata Olivella tells of an almost identical syncretism in Colombia (*¡Levántate!* 141–42). According to González Wippler, while his most known syncretism is with the

female saint, he is also imagined as Saint Mark, Saint Elijah, Saint Expeditus, Saint George, Saint Jerome, and Saint Patrick, reaffirming his unstable gender identity on both sides of the Atlantic (67). Building on the most respected Brazilian folklorists, Waldemar Valente shows that Xangô is not only Santa Bárbara, but Santo Antônio, São Jerônimo, São Miguel, and São João (81–83, 105). While there may be differences within religious communities, it is clear that many in the New World associate Changó with androgyny, and the disagreement between communities only confirms how difficult it is to categorize his gender.

⁸ Zapata Olivella was familiar with written versions of African epics (Vanderbilt n.pag.). However, these display the same problems of mediation that Spivak describes regarding ritual suicide and the issues Ong describes in transposing oral epics to writing (see Chapter 1). The Afro-Colombian participated in numerous conferences and interacted with contemporary African scholars, who find themselves in the same post-colonial conundrum of speaking the colonizer's language while trying to represent the colonized (Vanderbilt n.pag.).

⁹ There are many similarities between Paz's essay and the work of Julia Kristeva regarding psychoanalysis, the Mother, poetry, silence, faith, and love. However, Paz's essay precedes her work by twenty years and was no doubt central to Zapata Olivella's novel, as I have shown. See her works in the bibliography.

¹⁰ The "Prison-House of Language" is a metaphor popularized by critic Frederick Jameson in his 1972 study of formalism and structuralism. It is based on Friedrich Nietzsche's quote from *Will to Power*: "We have to cease to think if we refuse to do it in the prison-house of language; for we cannot reach further than the doubt which asks whether the limit we see is really a limit. . . ." (283).

¹¹ Historically, this was not true. Américo Castro shows that Spain was open to the influence of Jews and Muslims throughout the Middle Ages. His work on *convivencia* and exchange between cultures can be seen in María Rosa Menocal, for example.

¹² Kehinde's faith of origin is that of Dahomey, the root of Haitian Voodoo, which is important to "La Rebelión de los Vodús" in Zapata Olivella's novel. Kehinde is remembering these events after syncretizing her faith with the Yoruban Orishas, the dominant faith in Bahia among Afro-Catholic groups.

¹³ The *Orum* is defined in the novel as “sky, heaven, or firmament where the souls live while they wait to return to the *ayê* [earth]” (58).

CHAPTER 5

THE NUEVO MUNTU TODAY: ALLENDE, LOPES, AND LLANOS-FIGUEROA

In previous chapters, I compare two exemplary works of a novel subgenre that is among the most important developments after the Boom, and which continues today. Nevertheless, one cannot define a subgenre based entirely on two works. *Changó el gran putas* was published in 1983 and *Um defeito de cor* came out in 2006. The length of time separating these works confirms that Manuel Zapata Olivella's text was not only before its time but also that it is central to understanding the development of the novel over the last forty years. I will briefly revisit the definitions of the subgenre I have based on his novel and which Gonçalves, in her own way, has furthered. What I will argue in the following chapter is that there are novels that are even more recent than her's that confirm the importance of reading these texts as dramas, the combination of oral traditions and written ones. They unearth the Americas' slave past in the hopes of imagining a new future. The authors I have chosen come from throughout the Americas, confirming the subgenre's widespread relevance. For many, Zapata Olivella is still a relatively unknown author, though his recent passing, Jonathan Tittler's translation of his masterpiece in 2010, his memorialization in Bogotá (Color, n.pag.) and his hometown Lorica (Dumett, n.pag.), and the installation of his archives at Vanderbilt University have begun to give him much-deserved recognition. The Anglophone reader may have the impression that he is as contemporary as Gonçalves, which is in many ways true. His work's importance highlights Gonçalves's, because, uninfluenced by him, she set out to write a saga that reunites Brazil with its roots in slavery from a new point of view, and this dissertation is a step toward recognizing works that deserve much more study.

This chapter will discuss two authors of the *Nuevo Muntu* subgenre who are well-known, though for very different reasons, as well as a new novelist whose work shows that *Nuevo Muntu* fictions are not limited to a single nation or the national territories of Latin America. Chilean/US Hispanic novelist Isabel Allende is one of the most popular writers of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Yet she is not commonly studied as an author who is important to understanding the African Diaspora or the Caribbean.¹ This must change because of her historical novel *La isla bajo el mar* (2009), which revisits the Haitian Revolution and has implications for

the shared history, literatures, and cultures of Hispaniola, Cuba, and New Orleans. Perhaps equally famous is Nei Lopes, a top recording artist in Brazil whose sambas are heard all over the world, though his novels remain largely ignored by the academy. This is improving due to Conceição Evaristo's 2010 biobibliography of him, in which she gathers his poetry, prose, and essays on the history, language, and folklore of the African Diaspora, particularly in Brazil (139–52) and Cosme Elias's book-length study of his musical and literary production, *A samba do Irajá e outros subúrbios* (2005). The *Nuevo Muntu* subgenre is a means of appreciating well-researched and creative historical fiction by someone whose performance on paper, *Oiobomé, a epopeia de uma nação* (2010), is as engaging, profound, and informative as his music. It imagines a nation founded in the Amazon by black and indigenous Brazilians immediately after the Inconfidência Mineira (1789), which alters the course of history in the Americas, particularly as it relates to the African Diaspora. These well-established artists share much with a promising practitioner of the subgenre, Nuyorican novelist Dahlma Llanos-Figueroa, whose work traces a family's roots from Africa to Puerto Rico, and from there to New York and back to Lagos, Nigeria. Her work shows that Latina writers are also making important contributions to the Pan-American phenomenon of *Nuevo Muntu* fiction.

The reader will recall that *Nuevo Muntu* historical fictions:

1. Attempt to recreate the point of view of the enslaved.
2. Combine oral and written traditions in a subgenre that mimics tragedy, the first combination of written and oral discourses, as Ong argues (148).
3. Present elements of tragedy in writing and further the possibility or impossibility for comedic resolution to the conflicts of history of slavery, as White argues regarding Hegel (123).
4. Perform on a transnational stage that began with slavery, incorporating song, dance, and the sea.
5. Incorporate myths of African Origin into the tragedy-like form of the historical novel.
6. Often mourn Mother Africa and highlight African maternal figures. Their language often plays with signifiers and mimics a return to the Maternal Body, opening possibilities for an unforeseen future.

7. Are written during a historical context when Afro-Hispanic, Afro-Brazilian, and Afro-Latino authors are part of a search throughout the Americas for their origins in slavery.

As with any subgenre, these elements will not all appear in a given work, nor do they appear in the same way. Subgenres allow genre theory to illuminate the work without predetermining its meaning. Another factor in this study is the limited space I have to study three complex novels. I will approach each of these texts as tragedies, though there are comedic elements in all three novels that give hope for a better future.

La isla bajo el mar: Marriage, Mourning and the Seeds of the Haitian Diaspora

Nuevo Muntu fictions represent the combination of oral and written traditions in the novel form, which makes the latter like drama. In an interview, I asked Isabel Allende about the importance of orality in *La isla bajo el mar*, and so I will begin my discussion of her novel with her response:

[Orality] is fundamental, because orality is the way we relate to one another. It's like a conversation. If the novel were a description of the facts without the voices of the participants, we would be reading a didactic text, let's say, an informative text. But how do we relate humanly and emotionally with that history? It is because we are hearing the voices of the people who are telling history as they lived it. Without those voices, it would not be a novel. (n.pag.)

The author has confirmed my theory that history is best told when it mimics oral forms, which I apply to the texts in Chapter 1.

Orality is of unique importance to the history of the Haitian Revolution in the novel, as Allende explains:

Now, then, African voices are very important, because first they created a language, a private language in which they understood one another and most whites did not understand them. . . . Then they transformed the beliefs that they had brought from Africa. . . . There were Muslims, animists, all kinds. They made a synthesis of all this and created Vodou, which was a cultural form that united them. It was completely oral. Vodou is music, it's drums, it's the tradition of being in a trance. There's nothing

intellectual about it. It has no theory, no dogma. You don't have to believe anything. One has to experience it. . . . This gives them [the enslaved] the strength to face anything. And, furthermore, it unites them in an extraordinary way. It is very difficult to understand the Haitian Revolution without understanding this spiritual practice. When the slaves fight against the thirty thousand men of Napoleon, who had conquered Europe, who had come to this island of Haiti to fight with these naked black slaves with machetes, why do these slaves challenge and defeat the French? Because they are completely convinced that for every man or woman who fights, there are ten thousand souls that have come from the island under the sea to fight with them. They are the souls of dead slaves. . . . (n.pag.)

Allende's novel is a repetition of previous performances, including the Haitian Revolution itself. Like the poets of Greece and the Christian Middle Ages, rebel fighters during the revolution were speaking and acting as if they were someone or something other than themselves. The written novel is a commemoration of these previous oral and corporeal performances. And like the initial syncretism between enslaved Africans, this novel redraws the stage on which the performance of revolution is remembered, expanding it beyond Hispaniola. Remembering Haiti is, for Allende, recalling the common, tragic past of the entire New World, though the work's setting is Haiti, Cuba, and the United States.

La isla is already entering debates over genre, as indicated by Donald Shaw's criticism. He argues that her novel exemplifies the traits of what he dubs "post-Boom" novels because it is more optimistic and reassuring than the pessimistic Borgesian chaos and existential crises of the Boom novels (10). He also argues that her work in general charts the conflict between empathy and cruelty (9). He (20) and I agree that her work does not fit Seymour Menton's definition of the NHN (see Chapter 1), but it is not Shaw's goal to redefine historical fiction. He states that it does not present the past as irrecoverable or as a counter-narrative to official accounts of history (20). I agree with Shaw that it is an important installment of Allende's feminist project that notes the intersectionality of race, gender, and social status (13, 21), but he does not note that the very fact that Zarité narrates almost half of the novel is itself a counter-narrative in tension with the third-person, "objective" recounting of events. The break with official history in the novel is the attempt to leave the male-dominated

world of historiography on Haiti that began with nineteenth-century journalists (Buck-Morss, *Universal* 115), historian C.L.R James, and author Alejo Carpentier, and re-create the voice of an illiterate woman with no hopes of writing her story in her lifetime. Allende implies, by affirming “I have nothing in common with Zarité” (interview), that seeing the world through Zarité’s eyes is impossible, so even this attempt to recreate the past is an act of mourning the irrecoverable, no matter how close to the character Allende became during the research and writing of the novel—so close that she reports having seen her in a dream (interview). If one reads the novel as a tragicomedy, the marriage Shaw mentions (20) and the resolution of the novel are more than merely a novelist reacting to the conflict between empathy and history. It is a continuation of the dramatic forms of comedy and tragedy. This reading takes the text beyond optimism and pessimism and toward a message for the future of a *Nuevo Muntu* that comes more from the combination of oral and written traditions than from a rupture with the Boom.

Hayden White argues that recounting history often takes the form of tragedy, though historians and philosophers of history attempt to find ways to turn that tragedy into a comedy. *La isla bajo el mar* is a tragicomedy. The most important indicator of a tragedy is the protagonist’s death or downfall, as I show in Chapter 1. Marriage or reunion has the same importance for comedy. Paz’s argument that love and poetry are the only means of overcoming the tragedy of history is confirmed by this novel. After a brief plot summary, I will analyze a wedding and a death in the novel that exemplify its struggle to turn tragedy into comedy, though good does not triumph in the end.

As the novel closes, Zarité (Tété) Valmorain, a mother who lived through slavery and revolution, reflects to herself and to the reader: “I very rarely think of it, but one day I would like for all my descendants to get together: Jean-Martin, Maurice, Violette, Justin, and Honoré, and the other children and grandchildren I will have. That day I’m going to invite my friends over, cook the best Créole gumbo in New Orleans, and there will be music until the sun comes up” (511). Like Gonçalves’s Kehinde, Zarité holds a maternal hope of uniting a fractured family, which can be seen as a scattered humanity, divided by slavery yet united by its trauma. This meeting takes place in New Orleans, a US city that is culturally inseparable from the Caribbean, particularly

Haiti. Zarité's first-person narrative, which mimics speech, is presented as a counter-narrative that interrupts and supplements the third-person narrative of the life of her former owner, Toulouse Valmorain. Seeking a wife, he hires the *cocotte* (courtesan) Violette Boisier to decorate his home, and she purchases Zarité (50). Valmorain exercises his rights as owner and uses her for sex, which results in Jean-Martin (148). The slave owner has the boy raised by Violette and her new husband, the French Lieutenant Colonel Étienne Relais, a secret he keeps from Zarité for many years (148; 245). Tété becomes a mother figure to Maurice, Valmorain's heir (158). Violette, Tété, and Toulouse take temporary refuge in Cuba, as did thousands of refugees from the war (193–252). Valmorain starts another plantation outside New Orleans (269). Valmorain marries the haughty, ruthless Hortense Guizot (303), who often manipulates him to gain control of the plantation. By the end of the novel, Tété has started a new life in New Orleans, been manumitted (373) and married to an acquaintance from Saint-Domingue (223), a free person of color named Zacherie, with whom she has two children, Honoré and Violette (510). However, the path to freedom for Zarité is riddled with heartbreaks, and they are central to reading the novel as a tragicomedy.

The loving spirit of Erzuli is constantly evoked in the novel, and the theme of maternity is ever-present. She is a deity of love, feminine beauty, and the sea analogous to Yemayá (842). The women Allende portrays are a valuable supplement to histories of the Haitian Revolution like James's and Carpentier's. In the novel, love crosses Manichean divides of "good" slave rebels and "bad" slave owners and French military men. Love, loss, and maternity unite the parallel tales of Relais, the Lieutenant General of the historical Leclerc's army, and the slave rebel Gambo. Relais is a decorated military hero who is famous for his unyielding sense of honor, patriotism, and focus. But he falls in love with Le Cap's most famous *cocotte* (mulatta escort), Violette (36). She lives in a world that is an open secret, beyond the law but governed by its own rules. She is never referred to as a prostitute, and she always calls her clients "friends" (31). She cannot form lasting bonds with any man for fear of retribution from a jealous lover, but she does bond with her protective "amachada" (masculine) slave, Loula (24). But Violette is getting too old to remain a courtesan and needs a change in plan. She and Relais agree to get married (36). With little explanation, Toulouse Valmorain gives them Tété's child to raise. But

Relais is sent back for one last mission. He supports historical French leader Sonthonax in liberating 1,500 slaves in Le Cap, but he dies in the battle (234). Violette is left alone with her (and Tété's) child Maurice, exiled to Cuba. Love caused Relais to rebel against the norms of his time. A respected military man would be expected to tactfully frequent *cocottes* like the rest of white men in his day, but he would also be expected not to legitimize their relationship by marrying her. It is also surprising that he wishes to raise a son with her, recognize him, and leave him as his heir, indicating hope for the future.

Relais's counterpart is a slave rebel named Gambo. The latter's name means "warrior," and one can see parallels between him and the 104-year old veteran Esteban Montejo in Miguel Barnet's *Biografía de un cimarrón*. Tété's anaphora at the beginning and end of the sections she narrates of "Así lo recuerdo" (74), "Así fue" (109), "Así es" (130, 511) is her version of "Yo lo vide" ("I saw it" in Montejo's archaic Spanish) (186), a redundant formal borrowing from oral discourse. Her use of understatement "Me puse a llorar" (108) 'I started crying' and "Así clamaba yo" 'that's how I yelled' (131) is not unlike Montejo's, who describes scenes of violence that now seem scandalous with a lack of detail, melodrama, or discussion. When describing sweltering slave shacks he simply states that the enslaved "les asfixiaba" (were smothered) (8), or that "El que padece escalofríos tiene que rezar mucho" (when you suffer shivers you have to pray a lot—this referring to the shivers he gets at night that are just like when he was running for his life in the woods, likely a recurring trauma) (25). The first person singular in Allende's novel, as in Gonçalves's text, indicates that it is an individual woman's tale, not an objective notion of history. It is that of a woman who has escaped slavery, not the masculine vision of Montejo. This invites future comparisons to *Reyita*, the *testimonio* that has been called the "sequel" to *Biografía* (Dore 12), but which barely touches on life under institutionalized slavery, a focus of Allende's novel.

The Chilean author shows that the maroon Gambo owes much to a fictional Tante Rose, a maternal figure like Tété. In her *testimonio*, Tété describes Gambo's arrival on the plantation as if it were a painful birth amidst images of death: "Gambo had recently arrived; he looked like a child; he was nothing but bones, frightened" (130). Other slaves' bodies floated in the sea and, according to a common Vodou belief, their souls

returned to Africa beyond the Atlantic or beneath it (Courlander 339). (Hence, the name of the novel.) His frail body is torn open by the marks of the slavers' irons, which in Haiti is associated with the wounded warrior Ogun. He is sometimes the same as or related to Changó (Courlander 357). Only Tante Rose knows how to heal his wounds. It is likely that she is a daughter of the mystery Adja, who controls pharmaceutical herbs (Courlander 352). Using traditional African herbs, she instructs the young house slave Tété on how to care for the young man. She stands in stark contrast to Mackandal, whose only recorded use of herbs is in the form of poison, since he is recalled as a military tactician and a source of fear, not a nurturer. Unlike Mackandal, whose historical role was to struggle against the slave owners, Tante Rose peacefully changes their thinking, as is the case of the enlightened (and anachronistic) doctor Parmentier, who studies her remedies as medicine, and who later marries a mulatta, Adèle, to form a new, loving community in New Orleans. Tante Rose convinces the cruel overseer Prosper Cambray not to add salt and vinegar to Gambo's wounds because of his frail condition (130). Her healing powers are supported by her protection from Légbe (Elegguá), the Loa of "encantamientos" (spells), but also the one who opens pathways. Tante Rose and Tété help Gambo to convalesce. The first time Tété sees him in this space, he is lying face down and covered in flies like a corpse (130). He is barely conscious and he does not speak the same language as Tété. His *bozal* status keeps him childlike, tied to a lost mother Africa, words beyond the dominant French tongue or the Créole that Tété speaks. She bridges this communicative gap just as she would with a child who is not yet able to speak: she sings to him (131). Her voice is soothing, reminding the reader of the importance of orality, even when denotative words are insufficient. Love and mourning intermingle as Gambo's pain, through koiné, through projection, or through tears, tells Tété of the land, the family, and the freedom he lost when he was captured. Her response is to "hold him as his mother would have. Love helps the healing" (131). The two make passionate love, which is healing for Gambo, who is mourning Mother Africa and finding a new nurturing source in Saint-Lazare. But it is also a healing process for Tété, because this is the first time she has relations with a man she loves. This is an oasis of healing from the multiple instances of rape that her owner Valmorain perpetrates throughout the novel (131). She escapes with Gambo to Guinea by staring into his eyes, while she escapes from Valmorain by allowing her

ti-bon-ange (soul) to leave her lifeless body (*corpse-cadavre*) behind to be dominated (131). Their love is simultaneous death and rebirth, just like the saint who gave Habitation Saint-Lazare its name by dying and coming back to life.

In the end, Gambo is separated from his love, Tété, by the Revolution, just as Violette is separated from hers. Gambo is clearly a son of Ogún, a deity shared by the Yoruba and Dahomeyans, and thus shared by Santería and Vodou. Ogún's color is red in Haiti, and he is associated with iron, the hunt, and warfare, as his name suggests (Coates 844). His association with a war fought largely with machetes is no surprise. Gambo joins the slave rebels at Limbé (182) with the aid of Tante Rose, who serves as a clandestine conduit between the slaves of the plantation and the maroons of the mountains like the *guardiero* Montejo (169). He hides until he can meet the rebels in a grotto known only to the Arawaks, showing the indigenous, *zambo* influences in Vodou (168). Of twenty fugitives, he is the only one who survives, once again finding a new path amidst death (169). Rosette, Tété's child by her master and continuation of the spirit of Tante Rose is born during the escape, another birth the destruction. As Tété puts it, the war breaks out as Ogún comes down from the mountains (181). Tante Rose is the powerful mambo that summons the uprising, just as Mackandal was summoned by the powerful Bouckman at Bois Caïman in 1791 when a huge slave revolt began the Revolution of Saint-Domingue. The loving Erzuli leaves her and is replaced by the bellicose deity as thunder spouts from his mouth and calls for blood, justice, and war (Allende 181) as it might from Changó's in Cuban *Santería* (Courander 351). In the conflict, Gambo eventually rises to the rank of captain. After years of resisting his slave name, he assumes one of his own device: La Liberté. He protects Toussaint valiantly until a bloody death that opens his body with uncountable wounds in battle. Like Mackandal, he changes form into an animal upon death, this time a wolf. Unlike Zapata Olivella's use of the wolf metaphor, Allende's wolf is a haunting creature that torments President Dessalines for betraying the Revolution and allowing slavery and exploitation to continue on the island (495). Tété only learns of this through the songs of a mendicant bard in New Orleans after many years of separation from her one true love (494).

In the end, the war costs Relais and Gambo their lives. It shows that violence is one means of moving history forward, just as Zapata Olivella's novel does, but it also posits love and mourning as means of imagined unity. Both men represent revolutions that were only partial successes in achieving liberty for all. Relais planned to take Violette with him to France, where they could be married and start a family together with full citizenship and honor, since the quadroon Violette looks white. Gambo tried to take Tété to join him in marronage, but the Haitian Revolution resulted in only partial progress, deterred in large part by the constant sieges of supposedly civilized nations, and betrayed by its own imperfect rulers, such as Dessalines. Relais, Gambo, and Tante Rose's noble ideals transcend their deaths and are taken up in later struggles.

After the Haitian Revolution, in New Orleans, the possibility of a comedic ending to the novel is opened by a wedding that, even today, is shocking. Though they have the same father and are raised by the same mother, Maurice and Rosette fall in love. The latter does not know that her mother is still enslaved. At a ball held to join young white men with free mulattas in *plaçage* (concubinage) (465), the abolitionist son of a slave owner scandalously declares in front of his family and the rest of high society that he wants to marry his proud, beautiful half-sister. One must not forget that Ogoun Changó is the handsome god of war, dance, and fertility, and his pompous spirit is evident in Rosette, who is named for Tante Rose. Her strong will inspires Maurice to break with the past and seek a new community based on an unorthodox love. Their mother, Tété, is a devotee of Erzuli (Yemayá) (55).

Zarité's fluid, syncretic faith allows for the young couple's love to survive, if for a short while. Through faith she comes in contact with the historical Spanish missionary that became a legend in Louisiana, Père Antoine (312). He converts her to Catholicism, saying that she can keep her Loas and continue the dances and rhythms that unite Senegal, the Caribbean, and Congo Square, New Orleans (312). She turns to him in crisis, and the solution he provides to Rosette and Maurice's predicament is a return to past traumas to seek a new vision for the future. Since Père Antoine cannot marry them on land due to church and legal prohibitions, the sea is the only place this love can exist. Thus, a Portuguese pirate and slave trader, Romeiro Toledano, marries them aboard his ship on international waters and under a Spanish flag (481). The ship had been purchased by

Tété's partner, Zacharie, to help slaves escape (483). Like Nagó's mutiny of the *Nova Índia* in *Changó*, this marriage returns to the ships that brought Africans to the New World, commandeers them, and uses this powerful, traumatic symbol as a beacon calling to a new community. Zacharie toasts "this couple that symbolizes the future, when the races will be mixed and all human beings will be free and equal before the law" (481–82). This change can only happen through love and the sea, the domain of Erzuli (Yemayá). This is redemptive not only for Rosette, Maurice, and Captain Toledano, but also for a minor (yet important) character on the slave ship. A silent maroon, stowed away in a cramped compartment, listens as the young lovers fumble through their nuptials (483). Rosette takes the lead, having been tutored by the former courtesan *extraordinaire* Violette. The maroon voyeur, or better said, *auditeur*, is liberated not only by knowing freedom exists, not only by pursuing it by running away, but also because he feels the pleasure of a new life and a new community being created. Or he just likes the sounds of sex. The reader's arousal in this sex scene, an echo of a previous one from Violette's prime as a *cocotte* in Saint-Domingue, exemplifies that the text's narrative, which approximates oral performance, manipulates erotic desire to make the reader want this union. In the novel, this fleeting hope can only exist for one day and two nights, because the ship returns to land, the lovers are separated, and tragedy ensues.

It is impossible to avoid the parallels between the comedy of Rosette and Maurice and Cuban novelist Cirilo Villaverde's iconic *Cecilia Valdés* (1882). In 1820s Cuba, Leonardo, son of a rich slaveholder goes to a dance and falls in love with his haughty mulatta half-sister, the product of his father's sexual exploits with her mulatta mother. Villaverde's proud Cecilia, like Rosette, is raised ignorant of who her parents are. However, when the secret of her origin in slavery and the incestuous nature of their love is revealed, tragedy ensues. In Villaverde's novel, Cecilia's spurned lover, Pimienta, kills her white half-brother for breaking her heart, though the intended victim was his white bride, Isabel Ilincheta. The murder, precipitated by Cecilia, takes place at a wedding ceremony for Leonardo and Isabel. The tragedy ends with Cecilia in a mental institution (though reconciled with her mother), Pimienta a murderer, and Leonardo a victim. What happens when Allende transposes this tragedy to New Orleans in 1810 (267)? A most basic answer would be to show that these

divisions and conflicts, rooted in slavery, are part of the shared histories of Haiti, Cuba, and the United States. However, Allende, writing over a century later, sees hope in a new loving community that Villaverde's work cannot concede because of the influence of eugenics or the dismal politics of the island. In Allende's work, there is a possibility of reconciliation between *ekobios* and *ekobias* (brothers and sisters) of the same human family, and it will come from love and transculturation, dramatized as marriage. This legitimizes a love that had to remain illegitimate in *Cecilia Valdés*, though the taboo of incest still makes it unorthodox, disquieting, and rebellious. Nonetheless, in attempting to remain true to the legal realities of New Orleans at this time, Allende cannot let the young love last. Its fall demands mourning, a yearning for a community that could have come, but has not yet. This complements the erotic desire created by the wedding and honeymoon themselves: the reader is called to regret what is lost and long for what may come.

In addition to Villaverde's star-crossed lovers, Paulina Bonaparte's affair with her enslaved masseuse, Solimán, told in Alejo Carpentier's *El reino de este mundo* (1949), bears parallels with Rosette and Maurice's wedding night. Paulina Bonaparte, Napoleon's sister and wife of French General LeClerc, the one charged with putting down the rebellion in Saint-Domingue, was sent to Hispaniola aboard a ship filled with ravenous dogs (25). The latter were savage weapons meant to destroy the revolutionaries in battle and to create sadistic spectacles for the Créole elites that were still on the island. In the midst of a military strategy that amounts to blood sport and a cholera outbreak that would claim her husband, the often aloof and ravishingly beautiful Paulina forms different relationships with revolutionary potential (27). Seemingly aware of her beauty, on the ship to Saint-Domingue, she sleeps naked and bathes where she can be seen (26). She entices the all-male crew, but her black masseuse Solemán is the only man on the ship who touches her (26). In his own way, he seduces her as well. In her desperation over her husband's illness, she begins to practice Vodou rituals that Soleman teaches her, even sensually rubbing animal blood and unknown herbs on her body (28). This love ends tragically, though, once they both return to Europe, where Solemán is depicted mourning her death as his hands run over a statue of her nude body at the Villa Borghese, the Venus de Cánova (46). Bonaparte and Soleman's affair appears to never be consummated, however. It is a beautiful, dashed hope, a cold sculpture/cadaver

amidst a grotesquely brutal world. Allende's Rosette and Maurice succeed in consummating their relationship, as her maroon and the reader see, and the lovers have a child, Justin, to continue the hope of a *Nuevo Muntu* beyond the racial and national divisions that have resulted in large part from slavery. Allende's focus on maternity presents children and mothers as a hope for the future. Rosette's dominance in the bedroom presents her as more than a statue to be adored, as controlling her own destiny, and she can be seen as a stronger, more dynamic character than Carpentier's Paulina. Allende notes a greater diversity of erotic desires and physical traits in Allende's text, such as the aforementioned incest, the villainous Valmoraine's homophobia (275), and her treatment of the androgynous Fleur Hironnelle not as a spectacle but as an ordinary character, though, importantly, the latter arranges for the young couple to be wed (388; 481). This shows that the cultural and romantic combination of peoples in the *Nuevo Muntu* occurs in a time and in the hands of an author that is less heteronormative than the implicit Carpentier's more traditionally "masculine" desire for the sensual curves of Bonaparte.

In Allende's novel, as in Greek tragedy, there is a turning point when hubris precipitates a climax in death. The conflict between what is said and done versus what is written becomes evident. When Zarité helps Valmorain escape the armies of the Haitian Revolution, she demands he manumit her with an official letter, which he grants her (205). Nonetheless, she spends decades more as his slave and concubine. She is put off, lied to, and raped (229) to show that she can never be free. However, after much struggle, she and her enslaved daughter are granted freedom in New Orleans in the eyes of the law (373). This liberating document is proven false by a chance encounter. Valmorain's wife, Hortense Guizot, happens upon the recently married Rosette downtown while shopping (502–03). Rosette is waiting in New Orleans to be reunited with Maurice in Boston (498). Hortense notices that Rosette is not only more beautiful than ever, but also pregnant (502). Fearing that Toulouse will become reconciled with Maurice, whom he abandoned after his scandalous declaration of love, Hortense takes action (502). Shouting that black women could not wear gold (which they could not at the time, in order to distinguish them from white women) (283), she rips a necklace off Rosette's neck and slaps her in the face. Rosette's innate pride, stoked by her privileged upbringing, leads her, without thinking, to strike and

topple her assailant (503). For her hubris, she is put in jail, where she wastes away from typhus and must have her leg amputated when it becomes infected (504–05). Though Tété negotiates with Valmorain to have her released, she dies in childbirth (507). Justin, her son, can be seen as a tragic spirit that transcends her death. He is nourished by his grandmother, the daughter of Erzuli, and raised like her own, but his future is unknown. He is the hope for a future resolution to the conflicts that killed his mother, the hope for a new community in coming. To reach this community, the reader must listen to the voice of mother Erzuli, who will create this community through love.

Isabel Allende's work is an important contribution to developing a *Nuevo Muntu*. It looks to the tragedies and comedies of the past to sift out moments of hope for an Americas that understands the traumas of its origins in slavery and the possibilities for overcoming these traumas, such as love and creativity. Though most *Nuevo Muntu* authors identify as black, Allende does not, and when asked to what extent Zarité is a part of her, she responded:

I have nothing in common culturally, racially, [or] physically with her. But why did this novel come about? . . . when I finished the novel I realized that the subject of the novel is not slavery. It is absolute power, which a topic I discuss in other novels. The topic of armies that take over the government and have absolute power and nobody questions them. . . . [likewise] the slave has absolutely no protection and the master can do whatever he likes. That's the topic that interests me. Impunity. (n.pag.)

Can an author who does not identify as black and comes from a country without a past of African slavery (Chile, despite her many years in the United States) be part of the *Nuevo Muntu*? Zapata Olivella's text emphatically says this is possible. White *ekobios* like the Quixotic John Brown, Agne Brown's benevolent white father, the white protestors at the March on Washington are but a few examples of those who have contributed to the building of a New World where Changó's curse of slavery is being fought off in different ways and in different contexts. He might call her an *ekobia* in his brotherhood of the *Nuevo Muntu*. Her sensitivity to enslaved women's issues, their roles as concubines, and their vulnerability when confronted by male and female owners show important commonalities with Gonçalves's novel and highlight the important

contributions of female and feminist writers to historical fiction. Her importance as an influential white Chilean/US Hispanic novelist highlights that *Nuevo Muntu* fictions come from and are written for the entire New World in the hopes of rescuing voices thought lost, learning from them, and feeling compelled to continually listen and to want to continue their struggles for liberty.

Oiobomé: From the Spirit of Dos Santos to the City of Malvina Jackson

If one considers history as a record of verifiable facts, *Oiobomé: A epopeia de uma nação* (2010) is not historical fiction, though White's study, discussed in Chapter 1, shows that history is a narrative construction. *Oiobomé* never existed. But what if it had? This is the question at the heart of the novel. If it were narrated in the future tense, it could be seen as a utopian vision for the African Diaspora and the indigenous of Brazil, like Vasconcelos's *Universópolis* (1926). However, it inverts Vasconcelos's notion of race, which holds that blacks and the indigenous are inferior to Europeans (1933). While at many stages in its history *Oiobomé* welcomes refugees and exiles from throughout the world, it is first and foremost a *cafuzo* or *zambo* nation, a mixture of African and indigenous peoples, transculturated by their experience in the Americas. For this reason, European languages and their creoles are used there, and European political structures (a Constitution, limited monarchy) are syncretized with those of African origin (African models of monarchy and high priesthood). Thus, it is a "nation," a European concept, that is named for the kingdom of Oyó in modern day Nigeria and Dahomey, in today's Benin. The area was once called the "Slave Coast." The new country is founded on an archipelago that is purchased from Amazonian rulers and populated by Native Americans and blacks who have escaped captivity, so it exemplifies the three races of the *Nuevo Muntu*. This combination of cultures, which places Africa at the heart of the Americas, likely exemplifies a direct influence of Manuel Zapata Olivella's novel, since the Colombian thinker is included in Lopes's *Enciclopédia da Diáspora Africana* (2004) (495). Like *Changó's* Agne Brown, *Oiobomé* did not exist in any verifiable sense, but it allows for a backward gaze that asks the question: how would history be altered if this one change occurred? The novel is also an act of mourning for the past and of hope for the future: why has a nation like this never existed? How can it be

brought into being now? Part of this process is understanding what one can learn from the past. For this reason, meticulous historical and anthropological research is evident in the myriad historical characters such as Tiradentes, Portuguese and Brazilian royalty, and historical African kings as well as fictional national leaders of Oioiomé. These historical characters are presented, not in the alphabetical lists and bibliographic citations of an encyclopedia or a linguistic study, products of written culture, but as a comedy at the end of numerous tragedies, with characters, dialogue, and bodies that stir the emotions and grab the reader's attention like oral discourse. The novel form gives life to the lists and entries of his *Dicionário* and *Novo Dicionário banto do Brasil* (1996, 2003), *Enciclopédia brasileira da Diáspora Africana* (2004), and *Dicionário literário afro-brasileiro* (2007), because characters live and speak these words.

His historical, cultural, and linguistic essay *Bantos, malês e identidade negra* (2006) is useful for contextualizing *Oioiomé* as a *Nuevo Muntu* text. Lopes closes the work with the essay "A questão negra no Brasil," which traces a history of cultural, literary, and political racism in the country that continues in various forms today. Lopes takes on the racial democracy myth:

"for external consumption, blacks in Brazil are citizens like any other and they are not subjected to discrimination. But internally a large part of white Brazil, and even some blacks, maintain stereotypes that are sadly crystalized in these attitudes: 'blacks don't have a history or a future'; 'black religions are only magic and superstition'; 'their art is infantile, primitive, exotic, and picturesque'" (229)

What most closely relates to the novel are his concerns of discrimination, religion, history, and literature. The island of Oioiomé is a utopian refuge for blacks (with the aid of the indigenous and a small white minority) in Brazil and the rest of the world. It is a place of religious tolerance during most of its history, but its dominant faiths are syncretic and primarily of African origin. This is part of the historical and literary revisionism that his essay describes as part of Brazilian black movements since the late 1970s (226–27). As Ana Maria Gonçalves was researching her historical novel, she used his *Bantos* and *Enciclopédia* to research the continuation of African history, music, and religion in Brazil (950), and her novel also enlivens these historical characters. But Lopes picks the oral Bantu cultures for his essay and novel to show that these groups were also intelligent and

creative, not only the Malês, the lettered Muslims that Gonçalves depicts (229). It is an attempt to reunite Afro-Brazilians with a lost Africa and create pride in cultural elements of African origin alongside the contributions of Europe and other origins to Brazilian culture (221). Though this is his stated goal, he takes the same narrative route as Zapata Olivella: instead of abandoning the Americas for a romantic, purist, and stable notion of Africa, he attempts to found a new notion of the Americas. He starts on an island that links the Amazon and the Caribbean, American spaces that have seen great suffering but also great creativity through cultural mixture, as his novel shows. Lopes revises the outdated and, by today's standards, racist ideologies of literary scholars Sílvio Romeiro and anthropologist Nina Rodrigues (*Bantos* 101). *Bantos* confirms the historicity of Zapata Olivella's notion of the *Muntu* vision of the world as rooted in Bantu culture, and the dialogue with the dead in Lopes's novel is not unlike Zapata Olivella's (*Bantos* 159–60). He shows that Bantu syntax slips between tenses and semantics, so Zapata's novel is not only following *avant garde* conventions (160–61). He is as interested in linguistic borrowings from African cultures as Zapata Olivella was, showing the phonetic influence of Bantu tongues on Brazilian Portuguese (215). Like Gonçalves, he uses historiographic research to show the links between Brazil and Africa, specifically Pernambuco and Angola (172–73), so Lopes has proven that he is a responsible researcher. The novel allows him to take creative liberties with history without costing him credibility as a historian. *Oiobomé*, like *Bantos*, does not ignore the folkloric and oraliture elements of *Modernismo*: he even cites Bantu influences on Mário de Andrade, though like Duarte and Soares's anthology, he does not delve deeply into the modernist canon, which continues to be a source of anxiety of influence in Afro-Brazilian letters (193). This said, he does not ignore non-whites' involvement in struggling for a *Nuevo Muntu*: in fact, like Gonçalves, he cites Antônio Vieira as an example of isolated Catholic resistance to slavery, so his black nationalism is not based on a false purity of race or culture (183).

Lopes's novel has a broader audience than the academically rigorous *Bantos*, but its relationship with the reader can be more complex, permanent, and thought-provoking than his performances on *Zumbi: 300 anos* (1996), a tribute to Brazil's most famous slave rebel (Evaristo 147) or *Partido ao Cubo* (2003), an album that uses the Orishas and their music (rhythms, instruments, lyrics) to combine the cultures of Brazil and Cuba. As

Evaristo points out, Lopes “uses the freedom of creativity that literature is permitted, recalling what Aristotle once proclaimed to be the difference between the historian and the poet: while one states what happened, the other tells what could have occurred” (145). I agree with Evaristo in this Classicist reading of his novel, and I agree with Aristotle that tragedy (his preferred poetry) is great because it moves the emotions and stimulates the intellect of its audience to reconsider how history is told.

Though *Oiobomé* is only 223 pages long, its stage includes sites throughout the entire Western Hemisphere and its plot covers the late eighteenth century to the present day, necessitating a comparative approach. It begins with the *Inconfidência Mineira* (1789), personified by Tiradentes, which inspires the freed slave Francisco Domingo Vieira dos Santos (Dos Santos) to establish his own nation (61). Napoleon’s invasion of Iberia sends the Portuguese court to Rio de Janeiro, and Brazil attacks *Oiobomé* as a show of force (72). Abolitionism and the British ban on the traffic of slaves send many New World blacks to the fledgling kingdom (85). *Oiobomé* supports uprisings throughout the Americas, including Cuba, Haiti, Jamaica, and the United States (110). Through the twentieth century, it is often threatened by political and economic forces, but the nation manages to remain neutral during both World Wars, since these are viewed as conflicts between two white supremacist powers by the leaders of *Oiobomé*, who crack the clichéd Brazilian joke “eles que são brancos, que se entendam” ‘they’re the white ones, so let them figure it out’ (160). Its president, Jabah, allies with Marcus Garvey and continues the country’s tradition of welcoming black exiles from wars, persecution, and oppression (158). However, he is ousted by a radical African Methodist Episcopal cleric and the country falls into decadence due to drugs, crime, and a devastating hurricane (164–65). A cultural and political golden age emerges under president Apurinã, which includes a continuation of *Oiobomé*’s Women’s Rights Movement (138). This activist upsurge can be seen as reaching its apex when he is succeeded by Queen Afra-Ramana I and her life partner, Prime Minister Malvina Jackson dos Santos (198).

Since the novel is so dense with historical information, my analysis will apply my theoretical framework of syncretized tragedy to the Alpha and Omega of *Oiobomé*: the tragic life and death of its founder, Dos Santos,

and the successes of its present-day leader, Malvina Jackson, who gives the tragedy of history a comedic ending.

Dos Santos is the spirit of Oio bomé. This is evident in his name, which, though Portuguese, alludes to the Ancestors and the African spirits that were syncretized with Catholic saints and indigenous beliefs to form *candomblé*, *santería*, and other New World religions. Dos Santos's bloodline is strong, not only in the novel, but in history as well. The novel opens with an invocation of the "Santos e ancestrais" (5) which mimics "rapsódia" (3) the Greek tradition that, generally speaking, has analogues in the *griots* or story-tellers of African oral cultures. The Dos Santos name belongs to a list of Brazilian artists, thinkers, and political activists, as well as family members of the author and a beauty queen (7). There is a spirit to which the Dos Santos name gives form, and this spirit is necessary for the syncretized tragedy that founds Oio bomé.

Dos Santos is a replacement for the author's disillusionment with Brazilian icon Tiradentes (1746–1792), also known as Alferes Joaquim José da Silva Xavier. He has been celebrated with a national holiday as the leader of the Inconfidência Mineira, a failed conspiracy led by aristocrats from Minas Gerais and intended to free Brazil from Portuguese control. The novel opens in a meeting between the conspirators, attended by Dos Santos, manumitted slave, or *forro*, of the late eighteenth century (12). They refuse to listen to his demands to abolish all forms of slavery in Brazil, dramatizing the wide-spread sentiment (and, with the exceptions of Abdias do Nascimento and Benedita da Silva, the reality) that Afro-Brazilians have been excluded from the conversation regarding the government of the nation. Tiradentes inspires Dos Santos to participate in this meeting, but he repeatedly fails him. The two meet on a dock in Rio de Janeiro, where they discover that they share ideals of progress and liberty, and become collaborators (30). Tiradentes tells Dos Santos of the successful revolutions in the United States and France (37), but disappoints him when he says the new republic will continue to need enslaved Africans to function economically (38). This echoes Zapata Olivella's criticisms of Tiradentes for owning slaves and refusing to embrace abolitionism in *Changó* (450–51). In Lopes's novel, a correspondence between Tiradentes and his supporter, Thomas Jefferson, is intercepted, and Dos Santos must flee Rio de Janeiro (41). This literal parting of ways represents a figurative parting of ways with Tiradentes,

because not only does his revolution include no citizenship for the enslaved, but also because the *alferes* is later revealed to be a secret ally of the King of Portugal. Though it is claimed that he was hanged, drawn, and quartered for the plot, the novel notes that he is actually safely delivered to Portugal, aided by the king, with whom he cut a deal (86). He returns to Rio with Dom João VI (1807), married to an illegitimate daughter of the king (86). This updates *Changó's* depiction of Tiradentes as a misguided martyr who, though he did not free the enslaved, was nonetheless arrested and decapitated (457). Lopes, probably having read the work of historian Marcos Correa, knows more recent theories that depict Tiradentes as having escaped his execution (Silva 10).² The words of Tiradentes, proven false by his actions in the novel, are given new life by Dos Santos.

Domingo is aware of an alternative origin for himself and the kingdom of Oiobomé, showing that it is as much an African creation as much as the result of European ideals. Though enslaved, he knows his family's origins: his father, the Jeje Migan Yovô ("the White One"), served as a minister to King Adjá of Dahomey, who was assassinated, and whose subjects were enslaved (16). Dahomey had reached the height of its splendor, at least for its rulers, in the early 1700s, through conquest (16). However, neighboring Oyó responded to the imperial expansion, invaded, and enslaved many Dahomeyans, including Migan Yovô, and sending them to the New World (16). On the Vieiras plantation, he meets a *nagô* (Oyó) woman, forgetting previous political differences under the more immediate influence of life on the plantation (17). There, another black influence on Dos Santos is the slave rebel, Solonga, who escapes and starts a *quilombo*, but is ultimately tried and executed by the Inquisition (21). Lopes's depiction of Solonga's death links it to the spirit embodied by Dos Santos. This spirit is the syncretic, idealized Africa that emerges on the plantation and to which his spirit returns in death:

A band of *maritaca* birds go toward the sea, making a scandal. They trail Solonga, also looking for that mythical and diffuse Guinea or Rwanda—a place of nature so privileged and beautiful that the gods, when they are tired of the tribulations humans cause them on Earth, go there to rest (22).

Africa is a product of desire, the utopia or the Jubilee of the enslaved, who are themselves a new community in the Americas. The native *maritacas* foreshadow the indigenous's spiritual and political role in Oiobomé, a continuation of the *Muntu's* syncretism. Like Zapata Olivella's children of Changó (Bioho, for example) and

Mackandal's execution at the hands of the French in Carpentier, Zapata Olivella, and Allende's works, Solonga's body takes flight as it burns with the fire of the gods (23), here syncretized with the Inquisition's infamous death by burning at the stake. Inspired by Solonga, the *Inconfidência*, and his African noble blood, Dos Santos takes flight to delay his own tragic death.

In *Grão Pará*, Dos Santos uses European, indigenous, and African aid to found Oio bomé. First, he receives financing from a French banker who supports his ideals, because he associates them with the French Revolution, and uprisings in Haiti, Cuba, and Venezuela (44). He is named Bastide. While the last name is common and refers to a town in France, in the novel no doubt in honor of the Afro-Brazilianist Roger Bastide, reaffirming the influence of Africa on Brazil's culture and history. He introduces Dos Santos to his friend, French Guyana's slave rebel, Pompée, a future ally of the inchoate nation (51). Dos Santos goes to the archipelago of Marajó, populated by indigenous and African slaves and their descendants (46–47). Dos Santos negotiates directly with the leaders of *quilombos* and indigenous groups to found his free country (47). This is represented by a discussion with the chief of the *caxuianas*. Though they are feared by the Spanish for their cannibalism, Dos Santos gives them a sign of his bravery and power (49). He evokes Hevioçô (the Vodoun equivalent to Xangô), fills his mouth with *aguardiente* and blows fire (49). The *caxuianas* dub him Tatá-Ipirungava (Father of Fire), the black bird Japu (50). His name is the first of a series of new symbols for Oio bomé. With the support of *quilombolas*, *índios*, and the powerful Guianese slave rebel Pompée, the by then general Dos Santos expels the colonial government from the archipelago (53) and begins building a new community.

The novel Africanizes a beloved character of Brazilian folklore, Saci-Pererê, as part of imagining an alternative history for Brazil and the Americas. He is a black monopod with a red hat and a pipe is a trickster figure with a long-standing and varied oral tradition. Children's writer Ziraldo gave him a greater audience with his charming comic strips and books (1917–today), which Elise Dietrich believes to promote the myth of racial harmony in Brazil to the detriment of a frank conversation about race and gender (148). However, Zapata Olivella's novel depicts him as an escaped slave, since it was not uncommon for masters to punish them by

cutting off parts of their bodies, including limbs (442). With Zapata, he stops appearing as a trouble-maker and becomes the symbol of resistance against colonial oppression, an incarnation of *quilombo* leader Gunga Zumbi who calls the enslaved to throw of their oppressors (442). Lopes continues this Africanization of a beloved Brazilian national symbol. First, he is not only black but *cafuzo* or *zambo*, a mixture with indigenous blood, which symbolizes the mixture of the two great traditions. He is, in the novel, the first *cafuzo* of the Americas (56). This explains his affinity for tobacco, a practice of indigenous origin (55). Of course, this is not portrayed as historically accurate, but as a foundational symbol, much like the archetypical rape of the Malinche that, for Paz, is the mythical foundation of Mexico. Secondly, he is placed in an African tradition by Dos Santos's attempts to understand what the creature is when he sees him for the first time. The general interprets his red hat, his single leg, his height, his affinity (in the novel) for marijuana, and even his genealogy as being African (55). He is supposedly descended from a Jeje-Yoruban priest who was seduced by a character from indigenous folklore, the Mãe do Rio or River Mother (54–55). He states his own name as its supposed African original, Sací Kpededê (55). Inspired, Dos Santos puts his image on the national flag, which bears the axe of Changó in red to honor the patron saint of the nation for whom all acts of sovereignty, from laws to war, are performed (70). He is surrounded by sixteen cowry shells (those used in Yoruban and Dahomeyan adivination) and stands above the phrase “Irê—Owô—Alafíá,” (70) which is “confirmation” (Apara 61), “money” (33), and “affirmation” (46). These symbols refer to divination practices that are central to syncretic Dahomeyan and Yoruban religions. They are the official religion of this newly formed Republic. Thus, Sací Kpededê's tricks become the symbol of past resistance to colonialism, and his Africanization makes him part of the country's unknown destiny, which is controlled by Changó and revealed by the cowries. Not coincidentally, “Saci” is also the name of one of Lopes's record labels, on which he recorded his 1996 tribute to the maroon king Zumbi dos Palmares. Saci's name is only one example of the dialogue between this written text and oral music of African origin in Brazil.

The Oiobomeyan national anthem, which is performed during the nation's wars, is a syncretic performance. Dos Santos bases the nation's band on the Milícia de Pardos de Santiago de Cuba, who sends

them musical instruments (63), the first of many symbolic gestures linking the African Diaspora in Cuba with Oio bomé. Before going to war to defend the nation, the president requests that the director (*marechal-presidente*) of his military band write a hymn to inspire the troops. Since this is the eighteenth century, Brazilian ceremonial music still mimics European forms, which bores the president. He dismisses the band, but hears one of the musicians, “Bico Doce” (Sweet Beak), playing “um marambirezinho para nós brincar em casa” (a song for cuttin’ up at home) (65). It is named for its author’s *nom de guerre*, which in turn is shared by the historical *sertanejo* musician, Raúl Torres (1906–1970). The son of Spanish immigrants, Bico Doce was a radio star of the 1920s and 1930s who likely influenced Lopes, who is himself a legendary musician (“Raul Torres,” n.pag.). This homage notes the influence of Spanish America in Brazil and the great diversity of Brazilian music, of which the African Diaspora has been a huge part. Like most residents in the nation, Bico Doce’s given name in the novel, Silvério Caripuna, is a mixture of African (his dark skin and red lips, which he shares with Dos Santos) (64), *índio* (his last name is the name of an Amazonian people), and Portuguese (his first name) influences (64–65). The singer’s humility and his folksy speech are homages to the oral tradition in Brazil’s music, virtually all of which emerged from the marginalized. It is telling that he calls Dos Santos “Nossa Excelência,” (Our Excellency”) instead of the more Peninsular (and more “correct”) “Vossa” (64). This poetic “mistake” removes the distance between Dos Santos and his people, making him an eighteenth century populist and making Oio bomé a strikingly democratic nation for its time, one where the masses directly determine national tastes and symbols (64).

The *marambiré* is a folk performance that began in Alenquer, Pará.³ It emerged among the *quilombolas*, who were maroon slaves from the Santarém Plantation and who mixed their traditions with the *índios* that lived with them (65). Its basis is the performances commemorating Congo kings, something it shares with Biohos’s coronation in *Changó* (65). This dance music is sung in a Portuguese creole with African and indigenous terms, and its performances syncretize Catholic saints with spirits from these two traditions. The *marambiré* comes from sacred rituals, but its purpose is entertainment and inspiration during battle, showing the centrality of music to the nation’s *cafuzo* identity and to the novel’s compelling story, which mixes oral and written

traditions like drama. The song is so important to the novel that it is transcribed in sheet music (67–69). The lyrics, penned by another Dos Santos, Eunápio Bilau, records the history of the nation and looks hopefully to the unknown future, like the other *Nuevo Muntu* fictions: “where the slave broke the wooden handle of the whip in two / and the índio broke the colonizers’ ships / based on a great past / we stand contemplating the future / to honor the ancestors [sic] / for the glory of Oiobomé” (66). Dos Santos has the wisdom to understand the importance of this art, because it is “the spirit of a people,” and it remains after its creator has fallen.

Dos Santos’s name spreads throughout the New World on the lips of popular musicians and reaches the ears of Simón Bolívar. El Libertador’s role in the novel allows it, like *Changó*, to bring the supposed African influences in his life and legacy to the foreground. Like in Zapata Olivella’s novel, his black nurses, his black ancestors, and his black allies are central to his fight to liberate the Americas (71). He visits Dos Santos just after writing his legendary “Carta de Jamaica” (1815), in which he advocates for the freedom of everyone in Spanish America. He requests Dos Santos’ diplomatic support to persuade Haitian President Alexandre Pétion (74), to aid him in his struggle against the Spanish. This collaboration occurred in history between the Haitian and the visionary of Gran Colombia and is also recorded in *Changó* (415). However, Bolívar abandons Dos Santos like he does the ideals of Haiti when he allows masters to keep their slaves in the American Republics and does nothing to stop Haiti from being invaded and blockaded. In the novel, he never returns to Oiobomé, even as it burns. Oiobomé, like Zapata Olivella’s biography of José Prudencio Padilla and accouts of Bolívar’s forgotten black wetnurses, is a counter-narrative that permits the reevaluation of the Libertador. These narratives also show him as a traitor who compromised his purported ideals of freedom for political gain.

The first incarnation of the island nation of Oiobomé and its founder have tragic deaths, though their spirit transcends them. As Lukács states, the destiny of the two are entwined (111). Dos Santos’s hubris, displayed by declaring independence from the Portuguese, puts him in the role of human sacrifice (Gordon 307). Influences from several nations conspire to destroy him. By 1810, Napoleon has chased the Portuguese court to Brazil (1807) and Haiti was entering its sixth year of independence (1804). Oiobomé is an ally of French Guyana. The Portuguese, based in Rio de Janiero, have invaded Guyana to weaken France. Dos Santos,

to garner support from the beacon of abolitionism, meets with a British ambassador. His betrayal is a turning point, though, because he notifies the Portuguese, and they decide to invade the country as a “lesson” to other slaves and rebels. Troops are sent under Maciel da Costa to invade the capital and port of Oiobomé. Dos Santos’s response is to burn it to the ground (80). This can be seen as a burnt offering to Changó, a common theme in Zapata Olivella’s novel (The Nova Índia and Benkos Bioho’s execution, for example). The Oiobomeyans then ambush the Portuguese, using guerrilla tactics. They are aided by malaria-carrying mosquitoes, much like the Haitian Rebels, who were immune when the Europeans were not. Like the wars of *Changó*, Dos Santo’s final battle has many parallels with the Haitian Revolution, indicating its central role in imagining the identity of the African Diaspora and possibilities for universal liberty in the Americas. The clearest parallel is the belief in syncretic faiths of African origin, such as Vodou in Haiti and Oiobomé’s “vitalismo,” which plays a central role in all military conflicts and governance, is based on Yoruban and Dahomeyan beliefs mixed with indigenous and Catholic influences (222). Another parallel with Haiti is that the British only supported the Revolution sporadically to lessen French power and wealth, and they participated in the blockade on the new republic. The Portuguese capture, imprison, and kill Dos Santos in virtually the same way Napoleon eliminates Haitian general Toussaint L’Ouverture. As in *Changó* (278–80), dialogue is used to dramatize Dos Santos’s hubris and the colonizers’ cowardice. It is already known that Dos Santos has led the Revolution of Oiobomé, but Maciel repeatedly asks him questions that amount to “who do you think you are”? Dos Santos claims that he has founded a free republic and that he will gladly return the territory of Marajó (Oiobomé) to the Portuguese upon the abolition of slavery (80). Both must know this dream is virtually impossible in the context of a slave-based economy the size of Brazil, but what happens next is a repetition of the death of Toussaint. Dos Santos is apprehended by Portuguese guards during the peace talk and taken to the infamous prison of the Ilha das Cobras in Rio de Janeiro (81). There he is subjected to poison gas (81). Likewise, Toussaint was captured under the pretexts of diplomacy and shipped to a French prison, where he starved to death (Zapata Olivella 277). The way he dies parallels the death of Toussaint, but the place he dies is synonymous with the Inconfidência Mineira: the poet-conspirator Luiz Gonzaga was housed there (Castro

Alves 93), as was Tiradentes, though the latter betrayed his own rebellion (Lopes 81). Dos Santos dies as Xavier should have, had his dedication been true, and Dos Santos realizes the dream of independence from Portugal that the *Inconfidência* claimed to be, so Dos Santos's spirit continues after his death.

Dos Santos's tragic sacrifice is dramatized in a syncretic performance by one of Dos Santos's colonels, Dadá Rueju (82). He excoriates himself on a spiny *saumeira*, a variant of the *ceiba* tree, which is very common in the Americas and, to a lesser degree, in West Africa. It is sacred in Cuban Santería (Cabrera 220). Its indigenous name in the novel reaffirms the syncretic nature of the ritual. Rueju prays to Changó and Yemayá (Hevioçô and Avrekete) in Dahomeyan while he slowly bleeds to death (82–83). The grotesque depiction of his agony evokes pathos in the reader. The novel informs him/her that slave and indigenous rebellions like Dos Santos's have taken place throughout history. But this ceremony also makes the reader feel that violence at a visceral level like the historical novel's precursor, tragedy. This combination of information and affect teaches the lesson that Dos Santos's spirit survives his death and that it must be continued. Dos Santos's sacrifice inspires his grandson, Emperor Jorge I, to rebuild Oiobomé, but it also inspires the reader to seek his or her own Oiobomé.

If Dos Santos's life is the foundational tragedy of Oiobomé, Malvina Jackson's rule is the comedy at the end of its history. According to Hayden White, comedic resolution to political conflicts is the goal of philosophers of history and many of the great historians of the nineteenth century (122). In the novel, she and her queen Afra-Ramana I come from a long and storied history of women in Oiobomé that are active in public life. Female Obomese serve in the military from the eighteenth century to the present, for example (60). The Ialodê, or wise First Lady of Oiobomé, is a head dignitary and advisor (60). This position is based on the laws of Oyó and Dahomey. In Africa, the position belonged to the Queen Mother, not the king's wife or concubine (the similarities between the Yoruban deities Changó and Yemayá are striking). However, President-Divine King Dos Santos's mother is dead, so his Ialodê is the king of Abomé's widow, Agontimé (Maria Mineira Naê) (60). She was sold into slavery by the treacherous son of her husband, Adandozan (61). In *Um defeito de cor*, she is the priestess who takes Kehinde in and teaches her about the Vodouns (131, 203). Kehinde is raped and

enslaved by Adandozan's men (23), so it is fitting that Dos Santos declare Agontimé the symbol of black women's suffering. She also represents their wisdom and strength, and she is remembered as the "Mother of the Fatherland" (89), emphasizing the importance of maternity in diaspora history like Zapata Olivella and Gonçalves do. She holds office until 1822, when she is reunited with her daughter-in-law, Tolo-Ño (Na Tegué), who has been taken to Cuba as a captive (88), and both return to Dahomey (89). Like Zapata Olivella and Gonçalves, Lopes is concerned at showing the influence of women in the history of Americas from their very origins.

In the twentieth century, Malvina Jackson continues the legacy of Agontimé and Dos Santos, the latter of whom is her genetic ancestor. She spends much of her life in Brazil, where she is accomplished as an aviator and an academic (199). She is an activist at the Primeiro Congresso Feminista Internacional in Rio de Janeiro before becoming part of Oiobomé's first democratically elected parliament (199), or Padeoka (221). The turning point in her destiny is the death of Apurinã, whom the novel calls the greatest president of Oiobomé (189). This is followed by a crisis in parliament and the abdication of the residing Prime Minister (189). Parliament resolves the crisis when the parliament chooses a queen, Afra-Romana Apinagé dos Santos (Afra-Romana I), who happens to have been Jackson's life-partner for fifteen years (198). The latter is a beautiful figurehead who is famous for her career as a dancer, singer, and radio personality (199). This consolidates power in Jackson's hands, and she goes about creating a new Golden Age in the name of Dos Santos and her queen.

Malvina's term combines what Lopes judges to be the best elements of Cuba and Brazil, particularly their African and progressive elements, which are distilled to create a utopia at the end of history for Oiobomé. Her term coincides with the Cuban Revolution (1959–present) and the Brazilian Dictatorship (1964–1985). Valdés Johnson, a radical official, proposes the expulsion of all whites due to genetic inferiority, completely inverting Vasconcelos's white supremacism and continued racist attitudes throughout the New World about marginalized groups being a drain on society. Jackson takes the path Brazil is currently taking in many state universities, whose quotas for native Brazilians and, especially, blacks have dominated the debate over race and democracy in Brazil over the last two decades (Oliveira-Monte and Costa McElroy 12). She protects the rights

of the marginalized white minority through educational reforms that include quotas in universities (200–01). This is her answer to the long-standing debate in parliament over the rights of whites. Improved opportunities for minorities is, in Oioiomé, part of a general overhaul of education and the arts that makes both universally accessible. Illiteracy is eradicated and every citizen has the right to study or work under reasonable working conditions (223). Universal housing (217) and healthcare are guaranteed by the state (223). These policies are very similar to the social goals of the Cuban Revolution, which has made great efforts in housing, education, and healthcare up to and even after losing the financial backing of the Soviet Union in 1991, as Alejandro de la Fuente claims in 2001 (316), though even these advances are tenuous and questionable, as Roberto Zurbano has argued (n.pag.).

This Golden Age is financed by technological innovation supported by education, which results in a new, utopian capital, Dominga. Diamonds are discovered and mined humanely (202), unlike African blood diamonds. Shipping and tourism experience a boom (202). All of these are incorporated in a new capital named for Domingo Dos Santos. Dominga's government buildings are designed by Oscar Nimuendaju ds Santos (217), so it is clearly inspired by Kubitschek's dream of Brasília, designed in part by Oscar Neimeyer. Its streets are named for the heroes of Oioiomé, including not only Dos Santos, but also Bolívar, Tiradentes, and leaders of the African Diaspora (215–16). The very landscape continues the spirit of Dos Santos. The city is founded at the meeting of three great "rivers," joined by a man-made canal. The convergence can be seen as the three brides of Changó, the Patron Saint of Oioiomé: the Amazon, the Tocantins, and the Atlantic (218). Once again, the land first inhabited by, and deeply understood by, the indigenous is syncretized with African beliefs.

Progressivism and spiritual traditions are central to Jackson's dealings with the historical Cuba. The Revolution provoked a wave of reactionism in the United States and Latin America that included the Central Intelligence Agency's involvement in the politics of the region, such as the death of Che Guevara in Bolivia and numerous attempts on Fidel Castro's life. Jackson personally looks on the Revolution with sympathetic eyes, but she seems unsure regarding Oioiomé's role in it. Some sense her sympathies and leave for Miami (209). While contemplating what course of action to take, she receives an African newspaper claiming that there is no

black leadership in the Castro administration (207). She counters with her thoughts of Juan Almeida, Cartaya, Agramonte, and Montejo (207), though the novel gives no details on these figures' relation to the Revolution.⁴ She recalls Castro's efforts to counter racism through education (207). This doubt seems to have an effect on her, because she gives diplomatic support not to Cuba, but to Martin Luther King, Junior, Malcolm X, and Huey Newton (207–08), communicating her investment in Pan-Africanism, not *castrismo*. Nonetheless, she dreams of a US Navy strike on her home and consults the African spirits for guidance. For this reason, she meets not with Castro but with Barbarito Vaillant, the half Cuban, half Haitian *santero* from Santiago de Cuba (208–09).

The founding of Dominga is as much a syncretic spiritual act as it is a political and economic one. Vaillant is a colleague of Malvina's *ialorixá*, Eufrásia Teodora (210). The two meet at the historical First Festival of Black Art in Dakar, Senegal (210) and there divine the future of Dominga with the help of Vodouns and Orixás (210). To ensure the blessings of Dos Santos, she makes the first sacrifices to him in 150 years (209). Carnival is moved to the observed weekend of his birthday while she is in parliament, which happens to be 30 October through 1 November. Most Latin Americans will recognize this not only as the Día de los Muertos made famous by syncretic Mexican traditions, but also that his birthday falls on All Saints Day (205). Nonetheless, the *oiobomêses* "remove all traces of Catholic traditions" to bring African and indigenous traditions to the foreground (205). As Jackson declares Dominga the new capital over the radio, she recalls the myths surrounding the foundation of the African cities that give Oioiomé its name. Oyó was founded when Oraniã follows a snake to a mountaintop (216), and Dahomey was founded when Uebadjá killed his rival Dan and built his house upon him, calling it "Dan ho mey" or "On the Belly of Dan" (218). In this way, the comedy of history proposed by Lopes's novel is syncretized with African Myths. The novel looks to the past to envision a utopia for the future, a comedy at the end of the repeated tragedies of history.

Oioiomé is different from *Changó*. While both have a stage beyond the nations known today that alters them from within, Lopes prefers Black Nationalism. While Oioiomé celebrates its cultural mixture and welcomes immigrants from throughout the New World, they are in their vast majority blacks seeking a better life on this side of the Atlantic because they are transculturated and have not known life on the other side of the

ocean. *Oiobomé* can be seen as a roadmap for Pan-African Zionism. Its rejection of slavery through nationalism links it with the historical Liberia, the *brasileiros* of Lagos, and the freed slaves who returned to Sierra Leone, and the numerous *quilombos* of Brazil and *palenques* of the Caribbean. As Gilroy as noted (205), African Diaspora thought has a shared history with nineteenth-century Jewish thinkers, who in turn sought to reunite their scattered family in a single nation, whether in what was then British Palestine or in the Pampas (Stavans 9). There are regions in this novel that escape *Changó*. Lopes's diasporic lense reveals the common histories of Brazil and understudied Guyana, which are treated as separate histories in Zapata Olivella's novel, which has relatively few references to Guyana. Since *Oiobomé* is a novel by a Brazilian intended for Brazilians, the focus on the nation is deeper and broader than *Changó*, spanning historical moments and regions of the nation that Zapata Olivella's novel does not, though it shares Zapata Olivella's revision and Africanization of the *Inconfidência Mineira*. The Colombian consciously chose to avoid stereotyped images of Brazilian blacks, so he avoids Afro-Brazilians of Rio de Janeiro and Bahia for the most part (Piquero 24). The two authors have different narrative strategies. Zapata Olivella is writing for an international audience that knows little of Brazil, whereas Lopes is writing for an audience where images of Carnival, for example, are viewed as national symbols. They are part of his daily life and he has written many books on them, so there is no motive to shy away from sensual *mulatas*, such as *Afra-Romana I*. Lopes is Africanizing them and attempting to give them a sense of purpose, not avoiding them, something he shares with Gonçalves. The Cuban Revolution and the slave uprisings of Cuba, so conspicuously minimized in *Changó*, are front and center in the novel.

These choices are related to Lopes's context. The Cold War ended twenty years before his novel was published, unlike Zapata Olivella's work, published when the Cuban Revolution was much stronger politically and economically, and when the Brazilian Dictatorship was still in power. Brazil's economy has been "taking off" under international market capitalism and becoming a stronger leader in Latin America, so it is not surprising that *Oiobomé* combines socialist housing, education, and healthcare programs with international trade. The archipelago with which it shares so much history, Cuba, is doing the same, though with many more economic and political problems, such as sexual tourism (Fusco 53). Brazil's Workers Party (PT) came to

power under Luiz Ignácio Lula da Silva (Lula) with liberal rhetoric and has instituted welfare and housing projects that one can see amplified in *Oiobomé*. Dilma Rousseff, his successor, was running for office when the novel was published. This is another reason Malvina's persona is female, yet also "masculine" (ambitious, imposing, jovial): Dilma's short hair and pant suits, often satirized, can be seen in the fiery Malvina. For this reason, while both *Changó* and *Oiobomé* end with an opening to a comedic ending under the leadership of women, Agne is young, fertile, beautiful, and traditionally "feminine," as can be ascertained from her sensual body and romance with Joe Stephens. In Lopes's case, though there is no evidence that Dilma is not heterosexual, Malvina's sexuality allows Lopes to weigh in on the current debate over gay marriage in Brazil and make it part of the struggle for universal human rights alongside those of Afro- and Indio-Brazilians. Autonomous indigenous communities and descendants of *quilombolas* are also struggling for autonomy from the Brazil, so *Oiobomé* can be seen as a similar, if more successful, struggle. Lopes is writing when the Movimento Brasileiro Unificado, founded in 1978 (Oliveira-Monte and Costa McElroy 11), has made inroads into politics, such as the 2003 law requiring the teaching of Afro-Brazilian history and culture in public schools and racial quotas in higher education (Sá Capuano 97). These create demand for an epopee focused on Brazil that Zapata Olivella, writing so close to the Movimento's founding, did not have.

Lopes's style is much more accessible and his plot is based on hypotheticals. There never was an *Oiobomé*, just as there never was a *Nuevo Muntu* until Zapata Olivella's novel, but these ideas make the reader look to the problems of the present and the solutions of the future, informed by history. Lopes's look to the past is, in this way, a vision of the future, and his imagined community interacts with historical characters and nations much like Zapata Olivella's imagined characters (Agne Brown) and internal dialogues between humans and spirits, which are a question of faith and authorial creativity. The constantly varying characters, syntax, and point of view of *Changó* make it more of a challenge to read, if more *avant garde*, such as tense shifts, unexplained allusions, and constant shifts in point of view. Lopes' own linguistic experimentation includes play with his characters' names, which in turn reflect the emerging, imaginary, and inter-American language of *Oiobomese*. The names combine three traditions (European, Native American, African) and recent immigrants

that make up Oiobomé in names like Iracema Traorê (190), Josephina Juquiá, Peri De Rocaille, Pacova Duchaise, Manuel Potiguá, Baré McRae, and Ubiratã Samori (195–96), to name a few. Both novels share unexplained allusions that create a sense of pride in knowing African and indigenous traditions, such as words in Yorubá, Dahomeyan, and *Tupi*. Though neither author is particularly reverent (Changó, the maximum authority among his followers, is not commonly called a “Gran Putas,” a “Holy Motherfucker,” or a “Badass”), Lopes resorts to humor more often, such as when, after christening Dominga, Malvina turns to her queen and shouts, “Alright now, my queen, go on! Govern me!” (219), ending the plot on a note of levity that stands in stark contrast to *Changó’s memento mori*: “the time of the living is not endless!” (727). Changó is often marked by righteous anger, as is evident in the title “Ancestral Combatants”, a reference to not only the military leaders of the past, but also those who stood up against oppression with uncompromising voices, such as Marcus Garvey and Malcolm X. The Orishas declare that they are furious that all are not free by the end of the twentieth century as a syncretic Armageddon is on the verge of breaking loose. *Changó’s* rhetoric is more somber and aggressive in its appeals to the reader, while *Oiobomé’s* is often more charming and less disquieting, as its comedic resolution without many obvious loose ends shows. The reader finishes the novel with a smile on his/her face, not concern like his/her ideal response to *Changó’s* continued curse. The apocalyptic elements and numerous biblical allusions in *Changó* are comparatively absent from Lopes’s work, partly because the latter starts in the Age of Reason, not the Catholic Conquest and partly because he is attempting to Africanize his language and reject Afro-Catholic syncretism as much as possible. Lopes is struggling to reject the superficial depiction of religious syncretism that has come to define tourism in Salvador da Bahia, for example, and show that the faith of Oiobomé is not determined by colonial Catholicism. This is part of a nation-wide Brazilian movement with influences and parallels beyond the nation that has the intent of re-Africanizing Afro-Catholic faiths, as Alejandro Frigerio shows (23–24).

Despite these important differences, *Oiobomé* shares with Zapata Olivella and Gonçalves the goal of turning the repeated tragedies of history, ultimately, into a comedy. Gonçalves’s novel ends with a mother tragically separated from her son. This crime is set right in Lopes’s novel, in which two “Mothers of the

fatherland” create a Kindom of this World in which all are free to reach their full potential, African and indigenous histories are told through syncretic education and the arts, and a new vision of America emerges. Oioibomé is the island utopia where a *Nuevo Muntu* begins to emerge.

Daughters of the Stone: Tragedy, Comedy, Memory, and Mothers

Dahlma Llanos-Figueroa’s *Daughters of the Stone* (2009) shows that *Nuevo Muntu* fictions are being written by Latina writers in the United States. The novel itself mentions the influence of US black writers like Robert Williams and Claude Brown (271). One can also see parallels between giving voice to the all-too-often unspoken traumas resulting from slavery and magical beliefs of Toni Morrison’s *Beloved* and Llanos’s five generation saga from slavery to the 1970s. She is, in this sense, part of a US black literary tradition. She is also part of a Latino/a tradition. To paraphrase William Luis’s distinction between US Hispanics and US Latinos, when Latinos are asked “Where are you from?” they answer “The United States” (Luis, Introduction, *Mixtura* xv). Despite widespread marginalization from and misunderstanding by dominant US culture, Latino/as no longer feel immediately rooted in the country of their families’ origin and often do not speak the tongue of their forebears with fluency. This US ethnic community claims an ever-expanding literary tradition, the origin of which widely considered the English-language autobiographical novel *Down These Mean Streets* (1967) by Piri Thomas. This work is also alluded to by Llanos-Figueroa as an influence on her primary narrator and literary persona, the Nuyorican *griot* Carisa (271). The latter is writing as part of Afro-Latino literature, which has gained new visibility as a further subset with the publication of Miriam Jiménez and Juan Flores’s *The Afro-Latino Reader*, which shares her praise for Thomas’s foundational role (219). However, one must not forget Manuel Zapata Olivella’s foundational role as an Afro-Hispanic author in the United States, a subject that has already been studied by Olga Arbeláez. In this sense, it is clear that Zapata Olivella is Llanos-Figueroa’s Afro-Hispanic literary forefather, but he also shares her interest in the intersections between African American struggles in the United States and Latin America, as the second half of *Changó* clearly indicates. His Agne Brown is as interested as Llanos-Figueroa’s Carisa in recovering the past of slavery in the Americas and linking

it to the struggles for equal rights throughout the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. But Llanos-Figueroa shows a historical reality that *Changó* appears to overlook: Afro-Latinos. Agne Brown is a US black woman raised by a US white, protestant minister. She learns about African religions through a combination of study under the anthropologist Harrison, a thinly-veiled Herskovits, and she is called directly by her ancestor Ngafúa and the Orishas as her story opens to see a reality beyond her black and white world (501). On the other hand, Afro-Latino/as are part of communities where syncretic traditions of the Caribbean are continued, often openly, so Llanos-Figueroa does not have to invent such a unique and hypothetical character as Agne and can draw on the experiences of those who can visit a New York *botánica*, look up a *santero/a* online, or openly visit a place of worship where the Orishas are not hidden. Cuban American Dolores Prida's Nuyorican play "Botanica" is an example of this reality. In short, Llanos-Figueroa's narrator, Carisa, is an Agne that she had to invent in name only: she represents a cultural mixture of US, Latin American, and African influences that are elements of what I have called the *Nuevo Muntu*.

Another factor that distinguishes the two authors is the unique history of Puerto Rico, the world's only Estado Libre Asociado. Technically, Concha, Elena, and Carisa never leave US territory until the novel's end, even when Elena takes her daughter Carisa from the island to New York. These three generations of women, those who still live at the novel's end, are constantly marginalized because of race and gender both on and off the island. Poet Tato Laviera might call this diasporic homelessness "nideaquinideallá" as he does in his Nuyorican ode to urban *boricuas* (4-6). This creative malaise is confronted by the three protagonists, whose individual stories recount Concha's traumatic loss of her mother, Mati, in the catastrophic San Cristóbal hurricane of 1939. This hurricane did not happen in history, though numerous analogous disasters have affected the island, such as San Felipe II (1928), San Nicolás (1931), San Ciprian (1932), and, more recently, Tropical Storm Dean in 2001 ("Tropical Storms" n.pag.). Puerto Rico is regularly affected by the 1 June to 30 November "Hurricane Season" ("Tropical Activity" n.pag.). With so much danger, destruction, and suffering from which to choose, why would Llanos-Figueroa invent one?

San Cristóbal (Saint Christopher) is the most common syncretic representation of the spirit Aganyú Solá, though Saint Michael is another form (González-Wippler 61). Saint Christopher in the Catholic tradition carried a miraculous apparition of a young Jesus across a river, and so the saint is commonly depicted carrying a child (61). Aganyú Solá is a deity of paternity and travels (González-Wippler 61). González-Wippler claims that he is “responsable for earthquakes and all the cataclysmic upheavals that change the face of the planet. . . . the boiling core of the earth and the eruptions which give birth to new land masses and mountain ranges. . . . the beginning and the end of all living things” (62). In modern times, this applies to natural disasters as well as automobile accidents (65). He typically represents a volcano, but there are none on Puerto Rico, so the hurricane is his most logical manifestation for a destructive death and rebirth for the family. His personal attributes are his gigantic size and his fiery temper, which he shares with his son (and, in some versions, his brother), Changó (63). In Zapata Olivella’s *Changó*, he is the son of the first male entity, Odumare Nzame, and brother and husband to Yemayá (67–68). He is jealous of his first son’s beauty, which leads him to kill the child and send Yemayá into exile, where she gave birth to the greatest Orishas, including Changó (68). Like his son Changó, he is a bellicose fire deity, and he is often depicted as one who carries travelers across water like Charon in the Greek tradition (González-Wippler 64). Given this cosmology, evident in other allusions to Orishas, it is appropriate that the hurricane occurs in 1939. Aganyú Solá’s offerings are to be given in groups of nine (64) and that, in ceremonies in his honor, sacred cowry shells must fall in a pattern that reads 1, 3, 9 (Okana, Oggunda, Ossa) in order for his spirit to be invoked (65). One can see Mati’s death as a sacrifice to Aganyú Solá, an angry father who will cause his daughter Oshún’s earthly children to “brincar el charco” (leap the puddle, a common expression) and head for the United States, far from the island that had become their conflicted home. In *Nuevo Muntu* fictions, the spirits have as much influence as Western history and empiricism, and they link historical, religious, and psychological discourses in a way that moves the reader to sympathize with the characters and engage with history at the level of affect.

Mati’s literal death dramatizes a figurative death of the memories of slavery and Africa that Mati embodied. Concha is the first in the family to read and go to school, and she soon disregards Mati’s oral history

and syncretic religious beliefs as bedtime stories and superstitions (143). Concha is so traumatized by her mother's death that she becomes catatonic (179). Elena is parentified and actually helps her mother recover through a therapeutic remembering of the past (189). However, Elena becomes doubly removed from her family's history when she takes Carisa and her brother Danilo to live in the United States (203) around the time of Operation Bootstrap (1949–1970), which sought to industrialize Puerto Rico and reform its economy, but which mostly resulted in mass emigration. Carisa's family traditions are discouraged at school (253), which stifles her creativity as a storyteller all the way through her university studies (270). However, like Zapata Olivella, Gonçalves, and the other authors studied in this dissertation, Carisa gathers the tales of the *abuelas* of other cultures who live with her in the Bronx. Like Gilroy's recollection that the word "diaspora" is used to describe Jews scattered by the violence of history, Llanos-Figueroa has Carisa listen to the memories of Mrs. Goldberg, the last Jewish refugee of World War Two still living in her building (262). She shares these alongside an African American woman, Mrs. Jackson, who left Atlanta seeking refuge in the North (263). These voices appear in chorus with those of Carisa's grandmother and her friends in Puerto Rico (274–85), since Carisa returns to the island (273) disillusioned with what was, in the 1970s, canonical US literature (270). These marginalized voices allow her to create her own voice as a writer, which she shares with the author of the novel, who is simultaneously gathering the tales of the past. This is a working through of historical traumas through the telling of a history beginning in slavery and belief in the Orishas. Carisa's voyage takes her from New York to Puerto Rico and finally to Lagos, Nigeria (an origin she shares with Kehinde in Gonçalves's novel) in search of her family's roots (323). However, the novel's journey to the source leads not to Africa but to the plantation, the place where her great-great grandmother could only imagine Lagos as "home—the old place across the big water" (19), of which only loosely coherent mental flashes remain for the enslaved matriarch, Fela. Her story and that of her daughter Mati will be the focus of the following analysis. Their biographies are the tragedy and the comedy that the living women of the book's 1970s "present" seek to recover. Though Mati lives on after the "book" (series of chapters) that bears her name (63–127), its plot is structured like a comedy, which stands

in contrast to the tragic structure of her mother Fela's life and death (5–60). Both depict the slave period of Puerto Rico using a syncretic tragic structure, which translates oral traditions into Western-style history.

Unlike *Changó's* complex pantheon, Llanos-Figueroa's characters are all children of Mother Oshún. They are proud and loving, and they are spiritually bound to water, particularly her domain, rivers (120). Like her, they have explosive tempers. Her colors are yellow and white (106), she is the aunt and concubine of Changó (Cabrera 236), and she has many incarnations, as the novel attests (120). She appears to the five women of the family, sometimes in the waking realm, though mostly in dreams, because they all share a spiritual gift that allows them healing powers and which they owe to her.

Oshún curses Fela. The punishment, like Changó's curse of the *Muntu* in Zapata Olivella's novel, is the burning of her village and her exile to the New World (11). It returns as traumatic flashbacks throughout her tortuous life on two plantations, showing how the trauma of slavery created an imagined homeland among the enslaved. Oshún is enraged because Fela did not give her village Oshún's message that invaders would come (11). Fela falls asleep after performing a sexual rite with her husband Imo, in which she promised Oshún a child in her honor (22). The stone used in this ceremony is the only concrete heirloom that the women of this family hand down through the generations. It gives the novel its name, and the family's traditions give it life, just as they give their genealogy life through oral memory.

Fela's story begins *in media res* with the chapter "Arrival," and it begins on the plantation (5). Africa is a memory to be pieced together along with her new "home" in Las Mercedes, where she is provided a comparatively privileged place for a slave in the tiny barracks near the big house (8). The reader begins his/her journey through the novel in a disorienting manner, and like Fela, s/he must be guided by Tía Josefa, the mentor figure who takes the enslaved young woman under her wing (19). The reader's questions of origin—who is Fela? How did she get here?—are left largely unanswered, because as the novel opens Fela's tongue has been literally cut out: she offers only the fragmented memories of the river, Imo, and Mother Oshún (10). She does not speak directly to her superiors, but this is not out of place, since she is enslaved. Her silence provokes a yearning in the reader to know more about who she is and what her origins are, and it is indicative of a silence

in history and literature that the narrator Carisa seeks to fill regarding her origins and the origins of her family through the oral traditions she writes down, turning their oral performance into written drama.

Like the Orisha that has cursed her, Fela is proud to the point of hubris. She is beautiful, even in her silence: in some ways it makes her more enchanting and unattainable to the men around her: she seems to constantly be in another realm, the spiritual realm of Oshún and the Ancestors (50). However, her body communicates with others through gestures and sexual attraction. She is only protected from lechers by her role as a skilled slave: she is a seamstress for Don Tomás's wife, Filomena (40). As she makes deliveries to town, slave-owners salivate over her curves and imagine sexual escapades, creating foreshadowing of further sexual advances made on her speechless body (40). This also keeps her out of the hands of the mulatto foreman Romero (43), whom she confronts in the first scene of the tragedy (8). Her pride is evident in her unyielding stare that disorients him to the point that he cannot bring himself to whip her. Tía Josefa's aside gives voice to Fela's silence: "For black people, pride is a sin punishable by death" (8). This is not to say that this slave society has no privileges or chance of advancement for someone like Fela—as a craftswoman she is not working in the merciless fields, and she gains favors due to her looks—but it does indicate the existence of often severe limits as to how these advancements take place and so foreshadows her tragic end. Her death actually comes at the hands of Oshún, to whom she owes a child and her own life for her selfishness in not warning her African village that it would be destroyed (54). As in tragedy, destiny catches up to Fela for her hubris, since "Oshun [sic] [is] an unforgiving mother" (35).

Fela's pride as a slave leads to her story's turning point, the rape that sends her to las Mercedes. She is completely silent in the second plantation, objectified, though her dreams, her handicrafts, her far-off gaze, and her gestures of defiance and dignity fight against this objectification and are interpreted as pride. Before having her tongue cut out, she only pronounces two utterances as a slave: "Señora, el patrón, he do this. You know? . . . Your *marido* do this to me. . . . the patrón . . . he . . . he . . . look, *señora*" (47). Her holophrastic stutters indicate at least three things: she is a *bozal*, she is traumatized, and she is silenced. Being *bozal*, as opposed to *ladino*, is primarily a function of language (12). Since *bozales* were born in Africa, they had not yet mastered the

colonizer's tongue and through it the cultural norms of the New World, which *ladinos* understood. The term was often associated with ignorance, which only accentuates Fela's prodigious gift of sewing. Though she cannot speak coherently, her skill overcomes that weakness. Being *bozal* is already a form of silence, because their limited communication skills bar them not only from writing down their memories but also from communicating them through the oral tradition. Being *bozal* is also an ignorance of what, due to mores and power politics, should not be said on the plantation, because the mistress is mortified to hear Fela's stammers, which accompany a torn dress and a torn body (19). Fela is, for her, a shameful spectacle that interrupts her card game with the ladies. Gender roles are central to this scene, because it is clear to the mistress that her husband has raped his slave, but she blames the victim, as occurs in *Um defeito de cor*. Whereas Verenciana has her eyes carved out and her children sold in the Brazilian novel, in Llanos-Figueroa's work, Fela's silent body is sold on the market without a tongue. Her silence is a physical and psychological trauma. It only springs forth in fragmented dreams that she can tell no one. Captive, raped, muted, and mutilated, she has been thoroughly excoriated by Oshún for her hubris. These thoughts haunt her as she contemplates her last chance to placate the "unforgiving mother," Don Tomás's courtly advances on Las Mercedes.

The second plantation is where Fela's death and childbirth pay her debt to Oshún. Though Don Tomás is a slave owner, he attempts to be a more refined and ethical one. Unlike the salivating brutes of the city square and his colleague that raped Fela in a barn like an animal (48), he sends her gifts and admires her from afar (43). He even saves her from his own brutish mayoral, Romero (43). Nonetheless, Fela maintains a modicum of control over her body because she has much control over her spirit. For her, Don Tomás is the chance to set things right with destiny, the opportunity for a final sacrifice to Oshún: "the man who bought her body would unknowingly release her soul" (48). He does not have complete control of their encounter: she stands tall as she walks beside him to where Don Tomás "has his way" with her (48). She stares off into the distance, apathetic to his movements. Flashbacks to her previous rape associate the polished master with the brute in the barn, showing that both exemplify an inherently brutal political system. However, these thoughts are quickly replaced by memories of her night with Imo in Africa (49), and her fear and disgust are overcome by the mantra of "for

you, Oshun [sic], for you” (49). Though Don Tomás is the biological father of Mati, the child that would result from this heinous union, her spiritual father, the one remembered most often and most fondly by the family to Carisa’s day in the 1970s, is Imo (54). Mati later remembers him as her “soul father” (95). Yoruba beliefs subvert the plantation’s cliché of mulatto nations fathered solely by white owners, such as twentieth century Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freyre’s and nineteenth century Cuban novelist Cirilo Villaverde’s, and show that there is an African origin to the Americas, personified by Imo and Oshún. Fela dies in childbirth, but her spirit continues, literally as a ghost (87), but figuratively as the matriarch of the novel’s matrilineal saga. Like the dress she weaves for her daughter, the stories she weaves in Mati’s dreams give her life after death and gives her daughter the gift of communicating directly with Oshún (67). Her mother’s tragic sacrifice makes Mati’s comedy possible.

Oshún gives Mati the gift of healing (66), which allows her to set right many of the ills that the curse of captivity inflicted on her family. Yoruban faiths are nature-based. This is already evident in her first abode, an ornate box her mother had carved for her (64). Melchor, the father of the artisan who made it, Cheo, knew the “old ways” of asking trees permission before using their wood (53). This already establishes a parallel of birth and death, since the wooden cradle parallels a coffin in many ways: it was carved for Fela, who knew she would die in childbirth, and it foreshadows the coffins of her masters (82), which allegorizes the death of the slave system. All boxes are made by Cheo, who would grow up to marry her (82). Her life begins the healing of Fela’s brutal, slow death. When Cheo and Mati are adolescents, the young man brags about abandoning her to chase *putas* with the *macheteros*, the powerful young sorceress knocks him to the ground in her rage and breaks his leg (72–73). She then sets this right by healing it with her powers, which strains their relationship but keeps him out of the dreaded cane fields and safely in the craftsman’s shop (74). His skill sends him to the city, where he finds greater freedom and even learns to read, crossing from the oral world of the slaves to the written world controlled by the masters: “just the fact that they don’t want us to have it tells me that we *must* learn to do this” (85). This transition is itself a healing that the novel repeats, because it seeks to record voices that were previously excluded from the written literary canon.

Don Tomás's final dialogue with his illegitimate daughter demonstrates her hubris and is the point when the wounds and silences of Fela's tragic life begin to be healed through writing. The oral world of Fela begins to slip away when a single document appears: Don Tomás's will (88). Just as he imagines himself different from others in his class—more refined, more gentle—in engendering Mati, so, too, he imagines his death. Everyone else in the slave-owning class considers him a traitor when, lacking a legitimate heir or heiress, he leaves the entire plantation to Mati and frees his slaves (89). This shows the power of the written word and those who control it. He calls Mati to his deathbed, where dialogue is used to demonstrate her hubris. When he tries to explain what happened between her mother and him, she refuses to listen and interrupts him: “‘Don't you say her name' Forgetting he was the *patrón*, she looked at him as the man who had taken her mother on the ground, like an animal; a woman whose severed tongue silenced her words of revulsion” (87). As she is about to storm out, Fela appears amidst the smell of Oshún's flower, freesia, and convinces her to take the will from the man's moribund hand (87). This resentful grabbing of her master and father's will dramatizes the greater seizing of the Las Mercedes plantation, which shares a name with the Catholic camouflage for Yoruban Obatalá, and the white world of writing for herself. She never learns to read, and, unlike her husband, she even fears it (85), but she sees it as necessary to gaining ownership of this new land, the only one she has ever known. It is as if she is repeating Manuel Zeno Gandía's *Garduña* (1896), the foundational fiction that asks who will control the destiny of a plantation, allegorized by the fight over a dead patriarch's will (21–22), and which symbolizes control over the destiny of the entire island. Llanos-Figueroa's novel asks how that question is different for an illiterate female slave in *Garduña*'s time, a question that is only asked now by *Nuevo Muntu* novelists.

Since Mati is an illiterate slave, her road to freedom through writing is long and arduous, but it exemplifies the strategic control of her pride, the wisdom that allows for her healing of the plantation to be complete. Anyone involved with the will and the legal apparatus that gives it value owns slaves and cannot conscience a *liberta* owning a plantation. They conspire to hide the document and divide the arable land among themselves (92). They free the slaves, fearing a revolt due to Don Tomás's liberalism (94). Only the house goes

to Mati, and only this because the family priest is too guilty to see this injustice done (94). Mati's pride will not allow her to settle for this, though. She uses her powers to strike all the usurpers ill and then has them sign the land over to her in exchange for her herbal *remedios*, prepared with Oshún's healing gift (116). She threatens them with a worse death if they do not comply. They give in, unaware that she has avenged her mother's suffering by making them sterile, a punishment from a goddess of fertility (116). This vengeance bears strong parallels to the iconic Haitian maroon leader Mackandal, who poisoned numerous whites and their livestock, and who was believed to have an understanding of magic herbs (Carpentier, *El reino* 9; 13; Allende, *La isla* 65). Like this famous shape-shifter, Mati catches her enemies by surprise using her supernatural powers.

Llanos-Figueroa uses historical fiction's freedom from having to recount only events that are considered verifiable to work through the traumas of slavery in search of a comedic end to the tragic past. Comedies tend to end in resolution and marriage, which in Mati's time is still an exchange of land symbolized by the union of man and wife. The reuniting of the plantation, the product of a spiritually reunited father, mother, and daughter, is much like a marriage. Mati has gained her freedom and her home, but a hindrance stands in the way before she can move on to her usurpers: Romero, the mulatto *mayoral*. Like the protagonists of the novel, his relationship to his mother and Mother Africa explains much about his acts and demeanor. Romero, like Mati, is the product of the illegitimate union between master and slave. Mati rejects her father as best she can and clings to her mother by dreaming of Oshún, who guides her through the trials of the plantation and gives her powers her father never could. Her foil, Romero, rejects his mother, repressing her memory and making her abject. He identifies with the father he fears, whether that is Don Aurelio, another white man of power, or the personification of his emotions toward the whites who could end what he considers a good life for him as an overseer on a whim. A repressed mother and internalized father are evident every time he relishes in beating or raping the captives he dominates. This internal conflict is dramatized, for example, when he thrashes a slave so badly that he is indistinguishable from him, both exhausted and soaked in blood (25). He has a modest house opposite that of his master (14) until Mati inherits the latter (96), which brings forth a return of the repressed in him. Having lost his imagined control of the plantation, he seeks to destroy it by burning down the big house

(96). Mati and the recently freed slaves foil his plot and burn his house to the ground, provoking him to rant at the new owner: “You and your mama both thought yourselves better than me. ¡Hija de la gran puta! Your mother and you are the whore’s litter” (97). His curses are an impotent violence, the death throes of a moribund world. He can no longer flay or rape as his whips burst into flames. His Spanish insult evokes *Changó’s* cult of the maternal and its refusal to look away from the often repressed origins of the Americas in the horrors of slavery. Mati, too, no longer needs to be silent regarding Romero’s origins: “You’re a strutting mulatto bastard who can’t stand to look at his own face. Who was your father? How was my mother any different from yours?” (97). Enraged like the explosive Oshún, Mati is transfixed: “The guttural, multi-tonal voice of her mouth was as much Mati’s as it was Fela’s as it was his mother’s” (98). This anaphora highlights her union with the mothers of her past, and the great mother, Africa, as she overpowers the horrified fool who has denied his origins for so many years. Attempting to escape, he catches fire and jumps into the nearby river, never to be seen again (98). It is unknown if he was consumed by the vengeful Oshún or if he emerged from those waters with more insight into his previous life, but it is clear that the healing of Las Mercedes, its rebuilding, has an origin in Oshún’s waters.

After Romero’s submersion, the estate is rechristened “La Caridad” in honor of Oshún’s saint (González-Wippler 103). This change from “Mercedes” to “Caridad” also relates to religious syncretism, since the original name refers to the apparition of the Virgin during the Reconquest to whom Christians prayed for prisoners of war to be released (77). Afro-Cubans syncretized her image with the progenitor of many Orishas and the universe itself, Obatalá (79). This origin under oppression was patiently suffered by Obatalá’s children on Las Mercedes until it is liberated by La Caridad, Oshún. Then, a collective of *libertos* live without ostentation under Mati, the matriarch whose healing powers make her a wealthy *curandera*, the most popular source of medical care even after modern medicine finds its way to the countryside (105).

Mati’s comedy ends with an unorthodox marriage ceremony, which can be seen as the culmination of a feminist inversion of her mother’s journey as a slave. Fela has almost no control over where her body is sent. Men invade her village; men captain and man the slave ships; men sell and use her as a captive. She owns

nothing solid but her stone. In contrast, Mati inherited “everything” as Romero puts it (96). She not only owns the entire plantation, eventually, but she also decides to stay on it when Cheo proposes to her (102–03). Cheo, like Mati, is *ladino*, but he is also urban. Even before their liberation, he has more agency than the slaves on the farm. He has worked alongside poor whites and carved out his own tiny corner of the lettered city (83). He lives under the roof of a rich black concubine, María Candela (83). Candela belongs to the modest population of free people of color that lived in San Juan, a population Mati never saw on the plantation: “Unbelievably and shamefully, there were rich *negros* who sometimes had slaves of their own” (84).

This shock is anachronistic, because it was not unheard of in slaveholding societies for the enslaved to exploit one another for political gain or personal comfort. One need not leave the text to notice that Romero is a case of an intermediary who is clearly exploiter and exploited, depending on the situation. However, the fact that the power to exploit is not only in the hands of men and not only in the hands of white masters highlights the options Mati has as the heiress of Fela and Don Tomás. Her strange inheritance, which was, historically, highly improbable, nullifies Cheo’s plan to manumit her and take her to the city with him and makes her the matriarch of the house. She divides up the expensive accoutrements of the house among the *libertos* of the plantation and makes it into a sanctuary or palace to Oshún, complete with a triptych of tapestries depicting the goddess alongside Mati’s husband and Tía Josefa, her mother’s mentor (120). Unlike Romero’s repressed mother, Mati’s matriarchal and spiritual lineage is robust and prominent, changing the prison house of slavery into a holy place of memory. For the slaves, it is holier than the Catholic church they cannot attend (125). It is in the sanctuary of La Caridad that Mati and Cheo are married, following Yoruba traditions, by the elders of the plantation (126). But the inversion of slavery is incomplete: the *libertos* remember the language of their elders imperfectly, syncretizing it with Spanish, which is further mediated by the text’s use of English as the dominant language (105, 126). Furthermore, they no longer live in the villages of their forefathers and foremothers, so the reality that their sacred languages describe is lost. When Cheo asks why she used her gift against what he thinks Oshún’s wishes are in order to get her land back, she replied “the gods were the gods but we lived here. . . . We could never go back home. . . . it was worth whatever price I had do pay” (125). This price is never revealed in

Mati's book (63–127). Its comedic structure avenges Fela's suffering and, against all odds, resolves some of the most severe conflicts of the plantation. It ends in peace, hope, and love.

The diptych of the *bozal* Fela and *ladina* Mati is cut off from the “present” of the narrative, embodied by Concha, Elena, and Carisa. Mati is literally cut off from her daughter by the apocalyptic Hurricane San Cristóbal. Mati's intimate relationship with Oshún, cultivated and relevant to her everyday life to the end, begins to slip away with the same written language that allowed her to own La Caridad. Her arguments with Cheo over whether their daughter should learn to read or not say much about Carisa/Llanos-Figueroa's project of recovering the memories of the plantation and the Orishas. Cheo says school will help her find “her place in the world,” or in dramatic language, her role (136). Incredulous, Mati replies: “Show her *her* place? These books, they are the thing of the *blanquitos* de la capital. Are you telling me they were thinking of us when they made these books? I've seen them. There's never a picture of anyone who looks like you or me or her. . . . They will teach her to be a slave again. . . .” (136). Cheo argues for a double consciousness in the family: “She'll have two ways of knowing and two ways of living, all right? Mati, that's why we're here—we can help her find a way of walking both paths” (137). Like Llanos-Figueroa, Cheo argues for a use of the written word that does not exclude African oral traditions or the memory of slavery. Once San Cristóbal separates Concha from her mother, the search to reunite the family through storytelling begins and is the ostensible origin of the novel. Carisa's quest to gather the oral stories of her Ancestors, both genetic and spiritual, takes her throughout the island. Alongside the *engagé* photographer María Luisa, she takes pictures of the descendants of the enslaved and writes their stories, incorporating their voices and her own (317). This does not propose a complete cultural return to Africa, though her journey takes her to Lagos, Nigeria. Even Mati's comedy was incomplete in its resolution of the ills of slavery.

Carisa's text points to a *Nuevo Muntu*, because it does not reject faith in the Orishas or the emotionally difficult to discuss past of slavery. It is a relationship with the Father, represented by the Symbolic Order, and the Mother, the contact with which allows language to flow between the rational and the irrational, imagining different histories and different realities, such as the magical abilities granted by Oshún and passed down from

one generation to the next in this lineage with no last name. Like *Changó's* stage, it does not limit itself to the borders of Puerto Rico, which legally circle the archipelago and culturally continue in Manhattan. The African Diaspora and *Nuevo Muntu* fictions necessitate a trans-national approach to literature that allows the incorporation of Africa and the African Diaspora's unique yet syncretic history and its effects on the present-day lives of every reader. Drama informs them of this and manipulates their emotions to desire a comedic resolution to the tragedies of the past. Thus, historical novels are the best way to recapture and to imagine recapturing the history of slavery in Africa and throughout the Americas.

Three New Offerings

In this chapter, I have shown that one of the most popular writers of Latin American history, Isabel Allende, is also among the most important in recovering the silenced stories of the Haitian Revolution, such as that of enslaved women like Zarité. Lopes imagines an alternative Brazil that recognizes the struggles of its African and Indigenous inhabitants, not just a joyous mixture of races. He uses tragedy's element of transcendental spirit to establish a constellation between the nation's founder and its last prime minister. Llanos-Figueroa, like Allende, unearths enslaved women's buried voices. While this chapter focuses primarily on turning the tragedy of slavery into a comedic resolution of universal liberty in the New World/*Nuevo Muntu*, I have also taken care to note the role of the maternal in the representations of Africa. Zapata Olivella was the first to show that, before Cortés raped the *Chingada*, figuratively founding the Colonial New World, the Europeans started founding their empires through the exploitation of women in Africa. The international scale and magical thought processes represented in these works show that Paul Gilroy's *Black Atlantic* is and was bigger than he imagined, including not only British territories, but vast areas of Latin America and Africa itself. Now that these arguments have been substantiated, I will look to the future, as the *Nuevo Muntu* always does, to question where the *devenir*, the unknown future of history, will lead literature next.

Notes

¹ Donald Shaw is an exception.

² Correa's theory first circulated in Carlos Eduardo Lins da Silva's article in the *Folha de São Paulo*, reproduced in the journal *Saráo*.

³ A performance and information appear in the documentary *Moro no Brasil* (2002).

⁴ One example is William Luis's questioning of information that was likely left out of Montejo's biography in *Literary Bondage* (212).

⁵ See also Luis, "Hurricanes" and Mark Anderson's "Disaster and the 'New Patria'" on natural disasters and politics in Caribbean literature.

CONCLUSION

OPEN GATES

What are the greater implications of this project and what potential does it have for further research? I will begin by discussing a few unexplored areas of the authors and texts themselves, then discuss the theoretical concerns that have emerged from my study. Manuel Zapata Olivella's work is vast, important, and unexplored. Without leaving *Changó*, scholars have ample territory to study well-known figures like the heroes of the Haitian Revolution, Simón Bolívar, José María Morelos, Marcus Garvey, and Malcolm X, to name a few. Zapata Olivella's self-conscious intertextuality invites much more comparative work on the reception of foundational writers like Alejo Carpentier and Luis Palés Matos. Zapata Olivella read and befriended Langston Hughes, Ciro Alegría, Abdías do Nascimento, and Gabriel García Márquez. Articles have been written on most of these personal relationships, but close, comparative readings will alter Zapata Olivella's work as well as some of the most famous writers of the Americas, treating them as producers of knowledge, not only celebrities. *Changó* (1983) is not one novel, but many. In addition to its five-part structure, it is part of a series of narratives that appear before and after it. More study is needed in how the stories of *Changó* relate to its self-proclaimed prequel, *El fusilamiento del diablo* (1986), the author's reflections on it in *¡Levántate mulato!* (1990), and the novel that followed it and marks the end of Zapata Olivella's career as a novelist, *Hemingway, el cazador de la muerte* (1993). Beyond a focus on content and comparison, the complex, poetic language of *Changó* is a treasure trove of linguistic borrowings from the three great *razas* or traditions of the Americas, and its syntax demands more study of a work that, as shown here, tests the limits of what language can communicate and evoke. My background as a scholar of the African Diaspora in the Caribbean and Brazil, and the type of comparative study I have performed necessitated that I focus on the African elements of the novel, which make up its center (it follows an ever-changing group of individuals and signs from Africa through Latin America to the United States). I am nonetheless highly aware of the importance that indigenous terms, concepts, and individuals play in the novel and yet remain largely unexplored because I, like most Zapata Olivella scholars, have focused on his place in Afro-Hispanic and Afro-American letters, culture, and history. More work needs to

be done on Zapata Olivella the *indigenista*. I have touched on Changó's and many of the characters' queer identities, but gender and sexuality are such broad topics that the novel seems virtually inexhaustible in its possibilities for gender scholarship. The Orishas are a vast, alternative canon, so a study that goes beyond Changó, Yemayá, and Eleguá would be a welcome addition. This is just a glance at what the work has to offer.

Beyond approaching the work as a potential for scholarship, readers should consider how one can incorporate such a monumental text into the classroom. It has been translated into English, which expands its audience, but it is a challenge to teach an 800-page novel. It can be broken up and incorporated into courses on a variety of genres and topics. Its opening, "Origins," has been published as poetry and can be taught in a class on the *avant-garde* or *negrismo* or any other pertaining to this genre. The accounts of the Middle Passage and the Inquisition are a counter-narrative for the Colonial class. The Haitian Revolution and Colombian independence sections fit well in a class about magical realism, specifically Alejo Carpentier's novels. *The Rebellion of the Vodouns* through *Bloodlines in Contact* are re-writings of what Doris Sommer calls "foundational fictions" on the imagined origins of Latin American national literature. Any course focused on Benedict Anderson's "imagined communities" would benefit from a fragment of *Changó*. African American history and literature classes will do well to consider the reception of slave narratives, the Harlem Renaissance, Rastafarianism, the civil rights movement, and Black Power abroad. This was one motive for my comparison of Paul Gilroy and Zapata Olivella: to start a dialogue of students and teachers on the African Diaspora in more than one language. How does Zapata Olivella's work relate to other imminent scholars of African Diaspora thought, such as Stuart Hall and Henry Louis Gates? These comparisons, syntheses, and antitheses will enrich the classroom and international scholarly dialogues alike.

Ana Maria Gonçalves's text provides all the tools for an interdisciplinary study of Afro-Brazil and its implications for the development of the entire Brazilian community. Her understanding of the Orishas and Vodouns invites literary scholars to continue studying them as part of an alternative literary canon that has only since the *modernistas* been viewed as a source of literary inspiration and only since Abdias do Nascimento's work with the Teatro Experimental do Negro been associated with a unique Afro-Brazilian identity and sense of

black pride. Her text includes an interdisciplinary bibliography on these religions alongside history, sociology, literature, and anthropology texts on the transatlantic slave trade, colonial Brazil, and Africa. Each of these entries has the potential for multiple studies of this work from interdisciplinary angles. The novel's epistolary form, a common technique of the nineteenth century that adds distance to it for the readers of the digital age, invites further studies of a genre that, like the letters it imitates, seems to be fading as electronic communication becomes the norm. What more does *Um defeito de cor* say about the epistolary novel? Even the elements that seem unimportant to the plot at first glance deserve more study: the rich descriptions of clothing, mores, and practices invite studies of the body (and related issues, such as gender, race, and sexuality) as a series of performances and appearances without a unifying, unchanging essence. Ana Maria noted this concern in our interview, and she relates it to one of her current projects, which is a book on the male-to-female sexual reassignment of a US sociology professor. More gender studies work needs to be done on Gonçalves's work, including her first novel, *Ao lado e à margem do que sentes por mim* (2002), which is written in the vein of the iconic Brazilian writer Clarice Lispector and explores issues of desire and gender. More work should be done to place her novel in the tradition of Afro-Brazilian studies, which has been given form by Eduardo de Assis Duarte and Maria Nazareth Soares's *Literatura e afrodescendência no Brasil* (2011). Her work is also part of a tradition that explores the Brazilian and Cuban *retornados* in Africa, which links Brazilian literature to Luso-African literature of the post-colonial era and begs more comparative work regarding emerging nations in a continent ravaged by war and slavery. In 2013, Gonçalves gave a speech on the relationship of slavery and human rights, and her novel demands more research on literature's role in advocating and interrogating the understanding and implementation of human rights in formerly slave-based nations. Any scholar interested in foundational fictions, history, and public memory will find valuable lessons in *Um defeito de cor*. Her career as a writer is on-going, so scholars can look forward to great things from her. She currently resides in New Orleans, and she is beginning to write about US characters in addition to her concerns with Brazilian racial politics (though she is writing on a transgender US sociologist, she continues to write on affirmative action and education in Brazil). Does this mean that she is a US Latina writer? If so, her work and her identity in it beg

questions on what it means to be black, female, and Brazilian and write in and about the United States. Studies along the line of Luciano Tosta and Robert Moser's are a possibility.

My four chapters on Zapata Olivella and Gonçalves are only a beginning of discussions of their important works. This being the case, my single chapter on the literary icon Isabel Allende, the encyclopedic knowledge of Nei Lopes on African Diaspora cultures, and the discussion of Puerto Rico's conflicted history regarding race and emigration that Dahlma Llanos-Figueroa dramatizes is the beginning of a beginning. My point of departure for these three novels were the themes of slavery and the African spirits in the Americas. Allende has a long and storied career as a Chilean and US Latina writer, but minimal work has been done on her interest in slavery, blacks, and people of color. In addition to *La isla bajo el mar*'s depiction of black and colored New Orleans, more work should be done on her depiction of the famous and sometimes infamous witch and free person of color Marie Laveau in her rewriting of *Zorro* (2005). Her short story "La mujer de juez" (*Cuentos de Eva Luna*, 1991) briefly but importantly touches on slavery's implication for the concept of justice in the Americas, and "La vendedora de palabras" has a character named "El Negro." What place does Allende hold in African Diaspora studies and how can this approach to her work illuminate new areas of it that have previously been unexplored or only glossed? Her most famous work, *La casa de los espíritus* (1982), is grounded in a combination of beliefs in the supernatural and how they influence memories of historical events. How did the spiritual traditions of her literary persona, perhaps her own, influence her study of Haitian Vodoun? Where do these eighteenth and nineteenth century African and Afro-Haitian spirits fit into Allende's oeuvre as one of the foremost practitioners of what has come to be known as *realismo mágico* and this style of writing in general? Much has been said on the topic, but much is left to say. Does her representation of black characters and non-Chilean characters form part of a general transition from an identity as a Chilean writer with national concerns to a US Latina writer who sees herself as an ethnic minority in the United States who has commonalities with other minorities and nations?

Nei Lopes has virtually no work done on his novels. He is known as a musician, and his song lyrics invite collaborative work between cultural studies scholars interested in music and popular culture and those

interested in more traditional forms of literature. This sort of work could be extended to Lopes's place in Brazil's tradition of musician-novelists, which includes Chico Buarque and Caetano Veloso, and its much longer tradition of writers who incorporate oral traditions into their writing, such as João Guimarães Rosa does in his landmark *Grande Sertão: Veredas*, to mention only one example. His novel about a black-led nation that secedes from Brazil invites further investigation into what Black Nationalism and other forms of Pan-Africanism mean to a widely published, well-read, experienced scholar of Afro-Brazilian traditions. The greater questions his work asks are: what does Brazil's now ubiquitous celebration of cultural mixture contribute to a *Nuevo Muntu* conception of the Americas that includes African influences? At the same time, what does a discreet Afro-Brazilian political and cultural identity contribute to the national fabric of one of the most racially and ethnically diverse nations?

Dahlma Llanos-Figueroa's novel is part of at least two inseparable literary and cultural traditions that have emerged in the United States since *Down These Mean Streets* (1967): Latino/a texts and Afro-Latino texts. The separation of these two categories continues to be motive for heated academic and political debates, and the studies of William Luis, Miriam Jiménez, and Juan Flores are only a starting point. What I have endeavored to show is that Llanos-Figueroa performs on a Pan-American stage as part of the African Diaspora's collective search for origins through historical fiction. Her work is of interest to Puerto Rican Studies, Latino Studies, and Latin American studies because of her unique depiction of the world's only Estado Libre Asociado, which, despite its lack of an independent nation-state, has a rich national literary tradition. More work needs to be done to place her in the context of the multiple literary canons her novel represents. My study focuses primarily on the first two matriarchs of the novel. Scholars more interested in contemporary identity politics will no doubt discover new facets to this text. Llanos-Figueroa's clear, descriptive language makes it accessible to a wide audience, and it bears comparison to the young adult novel, which many Latina writers are cultivating in recent years, including Allende, Marta Moreno Vega, and Julia Álvarez. The greater question then becomes what the role of the young adult novel is in Latino/a letters and in making the history of slavery and questions of black identity accessible to as many readers as possible.

These three novels provide more opportunities for teaching classes on the African Diaspora than do Zapata Olivella and Gonçalves's behemoths. Allende's work, the most extensive, can be divided into a Haitian/Cuban half and a New Orleans half to discuss the role of slavery and abolition in both contexts, for example. Lopes's brief work can be taught as-is, or it can provide the framework for a survey course on Brazilian literature so that it can fulfill its role as a counter-narrative to previous literary depictions of the African Diaspora in Brazil. Llanos-Figueroa can be taught as a whole, or its episodes can be taught as short stories to illustrate historical moments in Puerto Rico and the US mainland, again as a counter-narrative.

Scholars may wonder how to make these texts more accessible to those who read only English. Jonathan Tittler's masterful 2009 translation of *Changó* is a watershed moment, and it allows non-Spanish-speakers access to a contemporary Great Work, which my study likewise attempts to facilitate. Ana Maria's text has yet to be translated into English or Spanish for a mass audience, though the Casa de las Américas version in Spanish received very modest circulation in Cuba. Allende's novel was released simultaneously in Spanish and English and is already circulated as *A ilha sob o mar* (2010) in Brazil. Lopes's text only exists in Portuguese. Llanos-Figueroa's novel was written in English and remains un-translated. This continued dearth of literary translation is an opportunity for translators to be part of the interdisciplinary recuperation of slave history and for multilingual comparatists to serve as conduits for international, multilingual, and interdisciplinary discussions on the crucial topic of slavery in the Americas.

In addition to providing close readings of the five novels I have treated here, I have labored to show that they have an important role in theoretical debates. One cannot just say a work is canonical, but she or he must show that a Great Work can do great things for one or more fields of knowledge. This said, I have also worked to not passively read or "apply" literary or theoretical texts to one another, but to show how these novels open new possibilities for reading. This compelled me to question what historical fiction is as a literary subgenre and, in many ways, a form of historiography. In seeking its origins, I returned to tragedy. This neoclassicist approach to African American and Afro-Hispanic literature is not common, and I would love to see more work done on the Classics in Latin American texts. Classicists may challenge my interpretation of tragedy and give reasons

for using the term “epic” or “epopee” (used by Zapata Olivella and Lopes) or “rhapsody.” Studies can be performed on writings regarding African pantheons from early anthropology to today’s *Nuevo Muntu* texts that note the tensions, simplifications, and elisions that occur when one translates one religious system into another. For example, Changó is not Zeus, and this difference invites more contemplation of the limits of Greek and Western literature in general to capture and communicate the vast spectrum of African religious traditions and their equally complex syncretic forms in the Americas.

My admitted debt to the Greeks as a Western reader points to the limits of Western languages, often imposed upon other cultures through conquest, colonialism, and slavery, for providing a wholesale rejection of colonialism. This ties *Nuevo Muntu* fictions to the *testimonio* debates over whether or not Miguel Barnet and Esteban Montejo’s text is literature or not. Some could argue that none of these works are literature and that they represent some kind of rejection of Western culture. I have endeavored to show that, even in their rebellious attempts at altering the Western novel, these authors are faced with the limits of language itself to alter the past as well as their own political limitations as Westernized subjects who write about a subaltern group who is greatly different from them. I am aware that this is a polemic position that can lead to accusations of Eurocentrism. I propose, however, that these works create a narrative of the America’s history that looks toward a just *devenir* that includes the African Diaspora’s contributions alongside the myriad other cultures that have influenced the Americas. They are part of imagining a *Nuevo Muntu* to come that remembers the injustices of the past to create something greater than the sum of its parts in the future. The historical novel, rooted in the European tradition but radically revitalized by African American influences, among others, is part of beginning to imagine the *Nuevo Muntu*.

This subgenre of historical fiction is also a ship sailing between Latin American Studies and Peninsular Studies, a common divide in Spanish and Portuguese programs. In Chapter 3, I mention some of the commonalities between Gonçalves’s novel, Antônio Olinto’s work, and Luso-African authors like Mia Couto, Germano Almeida, and Pepetela. They share a traumatic experience with their former colonizers, the Portuguese, as is evidenced by the works of Lúcia Jorge and Antóio Lobo Antunes. What commonalities and

conflicts can emerge when texts on slavery from these two perspectives are compared? Similarly, Spanish literature has already begun to recreate the history of slavery through historical fiction, and this new approach to it allows for a newfound appreciation of authors not treated as canonical. Ildefonso Falcones's *La catedral del mar* (2003) has appeared in three literary articles on the Medieval Period (Cohen; Espada; Sabés). But he followed this best-seller with *La reina descalza* (2013). This lengthy novel (747 pages) is equally hungry for historical details as those analyzed in my study, and it is set in a trans-Atlantic world that is part of the *Muntu*. It tells the story of Caridad, an enslaved queen who was taken to Cuba in the early eighteenth century, but who escapes to Sevilla, leaving her son behind. There, she forms a bond with an individual from another marginalized group, the so-called Gypsies (Roma) and they support each other in their struggles. Their story has parallels with the *zambo* alliances of *Changó* and *Oiobomé* and with the multiple bonds at the margins that Kehindé forms. More work needs to be done on this novel addressing questions of diaspora, orality, mediation, gender, and race, and the possibilities for comparative work are numerous and exciting.

Though the utopian thought of the *Nuevo Muntu* refers to a vast, intercontinental stage, I hold that imagining a just future and working through the traumas of the past is a therapeutic act of which historical fiction, often imagined as collective in its scope, is an important part. I invite other scholars to consider how the notion of self-writing as being imbued in “objective” works like literary essays and historical novels, can lead to new discoveries on historical works. What other historical novels, or histories for that matter, are self-writing? And what implications do they have for history, literature, and psychoanalysis?

Gender has been pivotal to my discussion of “Mother Africa” as an abject, traumatic origin that lies beyond language and yet alters it. What other forms does this trope take? What differences exist in different contexts? What else does the crime of rape, so often associated with women and the feminine, say about the institution of slavery and its fallout today? Also, what other gender differences are noticeable in how the enslaved are remembered? Gender scholars will immediately associate the term “performance,” used so often in this dissertation, with Judith Butler, and I readily admit her inspiration in my work. What ideas can come from the tensions that exist between Butler's notions of race and gender discourse and those presented in these texts?

Religion has been central to my study because of the syncretic oral traditions that constitute a living archive of knowledge on slavery in the Americas, particularly in Brazil and the Caribbean. Perhaps I raised some eyebrows by focusing on Zapata Olivella's penchant for blasphemy, which he seems to have inherited, partially, from Octavio Paz, and he from Friedrich Nietzsche. This blasphemy occurs in the context of a radical narrative that shows the role of religion in slavery and the Conquest. It provokes questions on the role of religion in culture, particularly if its intent is to combine elements of Afro-Catholic syncretic religions with beliefs as disparate as Rastafarianism and the US Black Church. His text, perhaps more than any other treated here, begs the question: can there be any purity if Changó's revolutionary fire brings us all together as a truly equal community? Does purity have any role in the *Nuevo Muntu* besides that of the enemy, as it has in the past? What will the new sacred look like if it is no longer pure? The novel does not answer these questions, but other works may. Theologians and other religious scholars have ample grist for their mill as the syncretic faiths of *Changó* reenact biblical scenes that culminate in the Apocalypse I describe in Chapter 4. The Afro-Catholic beliefs portrayed in the other novels, perhaps in a more palatable way (or at least with less profanity) give new value to an understanding of these faiths as part of being a well-rounded literary scholar, something that has implications for how many other texts of Brazil, the Caribbean, and US Latino/as of the twentieth and twenty-first century are read.

I have worked to convince the reader that *Nuevo Muntu* historical fictions are among the most important literary developments of the late twentieth century and the first decades of the new millennium. I reject the term post-Boom, because the seeds of *Nuevo Muntu* fictions are already present in Miguel Barnet and Esteban Montejo's dialogue, a conversation that these works continue, amplify, and make more complex. The *Nuevo Muntu* is not anti-Boom: its emphasis on spirits and magic can easily be considered a continuation of the Boom novel and the Magical Realism that defines it for many. However, the fruition after 1971 (the end of the Boom as I have defined it) of historical novels about slavery with Afro-Hispanics, Afro-Latino/as, and Afro-Brazilians has far-reaching implications for literature, theory, culture, and other fields of the humanities, as I have

endeavored to show here. This is why these dramas of memory should not be forgotten as part of the literary canon. They point it toward a *Nuevo Muntu*.

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