TRANSNATIONAL DISCOURSES, GLOBAL ENTANGLEMENTS: AFRO-LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN LITERARY AND CULTURAL PRODUCTION FROM THE NINETEENTH CENTURY ONWARDS

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DEDICATION

To mum who bequeathed us the three most prized possessions for success in life: faith in God, value for education, and love of sports.

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ABSTRACT

Fashioning a critical discourse analysis, the dissertation centers the ongoing debate within the (re)emerging field of Comparative (World) Literature as a lens for theorizing the literary and cultural production of the Afro-descendant populations of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). It thus situates itself within the burgeoning contemporary academic fields of post-colonial, transnational, and world literature. Focusing specifically on two countries and one sub-region–Haiti, Brazil, and Hispanic America–the project calls attention to and advocates for the integration of the highly prolific and creative aesthetic and critical production since the nineteenth century of the region's large Afro-descendant populations into the global LAC historical literary and cultural discourse as well as into the contemporary framework of the diverse literatures of the world presently being embraced as world literature. In so doing, it reclaims the Haitian imaginary and the place of this territory within the cultural and intellectual space of the LAC region as the indisputable precursor of its Afro-descendant universal perspectives, demonstrating in addition the convergence of these perspectives within the global Black diaspora as well as with leftist and anti-assimilationist Western literary and cultural movements both within the region and throughout the world. Engaging a corpus of aesthetic and cultural works that equally foregrounds male and female intellectuals and cultural producers, the project expands on critical analyses previously presented on LAC global literature within and beyond the present debate, hence advancing a more integrated and comprehensive understanding of the region's transnational literary and cultural trajectory.

PREFACE

As I sit to pen this dissertation, my mind turns to the many groundbreaking studies that have emerged over the past two decades because of the varying efforts aimed at widening the scope and reach of world literature. These works either focus on broadening the canon, as do the three anthologies of world literature produced at the beginning of the millennium–the Norton (2002), Bedford (2003), and Longman (2008 [2003]), or alternately on charting a more expansive landscape of world literature today, as does David Damrosch's recent work *Around the World in 80 Books* (2021), or finally on presenting national and/or regional literatures, authors, or aesthetic movements as world literature, as do the Bloomsbury *As World Literature Series*, the De Gruyter's *Latin American Literatures in the World* collection, and the studies based on a common language, such as the Encyclopedic volumes of *World Literature in Spanish* (2011) and works on the literatures of the Francophone and Lusophone territories.[1]

While the above constitute only a representative sample of the texts generated over the period, they point to a growing trend towards the recognition of a larger corpus of works, including in translation, more comprehensive fields of study, as well as multiple and multi-layered places of enunciation, of the rich and diverse literatures of the world. As has been reiterated in theory (in Pheng Cheah's or Eric Hayot's studies, for

[1] Two such texts are *Francophone Literature as World Literature* edited by Christian Moraru et al as part of the Bloomsbury *As World Literature Series* and "Comparative World Literatures in Portuguese" by Helena Carvalhão Buescu and Simão Valente. Both of these can be sourced from the recently updated 2nd edition of *The Routledge Companion to World Literature* published in 2022. These studies range from the more conservative to the more expansive, with of the listed works the Encyclopedic volumes of *World Literature in Spanish* and the Bloomsbury *As World Literature Series* offering the most promise in terms of their inclusion of non-canonical and non-Western authors.

instance) and exemplified in practice (in the Bloomsbury and De Gruyter studies to cite two examples), a 'world' can be both spatial (transnational, diasporic, global) and temporal (historical), internal (internalized or imagined) and external (experienced or engaged with)[2], making for the existence of myriad worlds and multiple ways of being in the world or imagining/constructing a world, then, of communicating these worlds both aesthetically and critically. These communications may then resonate with specific worlds, influencing the kinds of networks, affinities, and/or entanglements that are formed, shaping in their turn present and future engagements with these or other worlds. As Ignacio Sánchez-Prado correctly affirms in the introduction to his work *Mexican Literature as World Literature*:

> world literature is … a symbolic product of the ways in which institutions of concrete literary fields (regional, national, linguistic, global) and its actors practice world literature materially. There is no such thing as a singular world literature, but rather multiple world literatures that exist and evolve according to the ways in which fields envision and imagine the world. (2)

A parallel thought that crept into my mind as I considered the concepts that I was setting out to (re)present in this dissertation can be summarized in a popular expression of the English-speaking Caribbean: "some things are better felt than telt." Submitting to the gentle but persistent prodding in the back of my mind to dig beyond the surface for the root of an expression that any native English-speaking Caribbean person would be forgiven for believing was of their own authorship, part of their own creative poetizing

[2] See Pheng Cheah, *What is a World? On Postcolonial Literature as World Literature* (2016) and Eric Hayot, *On Literary Worlds* (2012).

('telt' rhyming with 'felt'), their own vernacular (creole or creolese), I googled the term only to discover that it owed its origins to the Scots and that the word that I assumed all along was no doubt a "corruption" of the colonial British English was in fact a *de facto* word in the Scottish language representing the past tense of the verb "to tell." This led me to thinking, how does one separate the parts? How does one in these highly creolized times, to use an authentic Caribbean expression, speak to origins? How does one know for sure, for instance, that the above phrase issuing from the mouth of a given native-English speaking Caribbean person is not of their own creation, but points instead to an intertextuality of which most common speakers are understandably oblivious? Any Latin American or Caribbean native worth their salt would tell you that one doesn't, or indeed, one simply can't, for, the region was born global. Indeed, not only was the region born global, but it has been raised syncretic, persisting in its globalizing and syncretic trajectories through the worlding of the colonial processes[3] and the continuous arrival of migrants from within and without its shores since achieving political independence in the nineteenth century.[4]

[3] In a speech entitled "Thoughts on the American Mind" delivered by Mexican humanist Alfonso Reyes, he noted that Latin Americans were characterized by their innate internationalism, suggesting that "in the computation of errors or partial misunderstanding in the European books dealing with (Latin) America and the (Latin) American books that deal with Europe, the balance is in our favor." In other words, Latin Americans know more than Europeans, because we know their culture well, but they know our culture in a limited and poor way. Cited by Ignacio Sánchez-Prado in *Mexican Literature as World Literature*, 2022.
[4] Apart from the many European migrants who came to the region fleeing the World Wars and racial persecution from Fascism in Germany, Italy, and Poland, many Caribbean blacks migrated to the region, particularly Central America in pursuit of economic opportunities with various transnational companies.

Born Global … Raised Syncretic

Like all Blacks in the Americas, Afro Latin American/Caribbean cultural producers–defined within the parameters of this dissertation as self-identified Afro-descendants of Haiti, Hispanic America, and Brazil–share a common etiology that links them trans continentally ('trans-oceanically' per Paul Gilroy) [5] to Europe, Africa, and the Americas. This shared transcultural heritage, together with its social, economic, and political ramifications over time, have shaped the production, reception, and circulation of the works of these populations in the globalized Western world and beyond. On the one hand, they have led to the hybridism that characterizes much of the better known and more globally recognized Afro Latin American/Caribbean cultural production, while, on the other, they have given rise to bodies of work that seek to memorialize the lesser acknowledged, yet more prevalent African descended cultural traits of these populations, together with their associated philosophies, ideologies, and epistemologies.

Moreover, beyond the above-mentioned historical space of global contact and interaction, multiple trajectories, shaped by the original cultures of the Africans themselves, the diverse forms of colonization experienced, their distinct routes to independence and abolition, their respective national post-independence projects, and the geographical locations they came to inhabit, have been forged. These differences have led recent Latin American scholars to transcend Paul Gilroy's 'Black Atlantic' and its seeming focus on Afro descendants from the USA, Britain, and the Anglophone

[5] According to Gilroy, the transatlantic trade and the colonial system of slavery produced connections that created a transregional space inhabited by the slaves he called the 'Black Atlantic'. See Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic, Modernity and Double Consciousness*, 1992.

Caribbean to conjure up 'Black Atlantics'[6] and the 'Black Pacific'[7], deeming these terms more applicable to the Latin American reality.

To be sure, Afro-Latin American and Caribbean cultural producers englobe a broad spectrum, ranging from the transnational, hybrid, and creolized and/or mixed-raced groups that inhabit the urban spaces, primarily of Brazil (*pardos*), Venezuela (*morenos*), Haiti and the Dominican Republic (*mulatos*), Cuba, Colombia, and Ecuador, together with the more recent diasporic spaces, such as the USA, to the isolated and segregated communities of some of the aforementioned countries, as well as other parts of South and Central America, and Mexico.[8] From within this vast heterogeneity of Afro-descendant populations of the region have emerged, since the nineteenth century, aesthetic and critical expressions that have aimed to represent these disparate worlds. It is, however, not only out of their heterogeneity that Afro descendant Latin American/Caribbean cultural producers have created their art. Sérgio Costa and Manuel Góngora-Mera point to a shared history of social inequality that affects the African diaspora in Latin American countries–here their analysis refers specifically to the regional and national Afro

[6] Some authors, namely Miguel Vale de Almeda, Robert Stam and Ella Shohat have observed that the Black Atlantic concept seems to privilege the history of Anglophone America, in the process diminishing the visibility of other transatlantic histories, choosing therefore to pluralize their chromatic geographies by referring to the 'Brown Atlantic' (to consider the ambivalences of Portuguese colonialism in Brazil) and the 'Red Atlantic' (to transcend the black-white duality and incorporate indigenous populations). See Almeda (2002) and Stam and Shohat (2012), xv, 3-5).

[7] The term 'Black Pacific', coined by Lioba Rossbach (2009) in her article "¿Qué pasa con el Pacífico negro en el Atlántico negro? El Atlántico negro de Paul Gilroy frente a los acontecimientos (afro)colombianos," cited by Sérgio Costa and Manuel Góngora-Mera in "Studies on the Black Atlantic and the Black Pacific" (186) refers to the isolated, segregated black communities of Latin America formed primarily by runaway slaves and their descendants, located in the Pacific rim of Colombia, some parts of Central America, and Mexico, predominantly based on small-scale mining and other activities of subsistence. The classification stands in contrast to Gilroy's 'Black Atlantic' which refers to the predominantly plantation-based economies that are transnational and hybrid.

[8] See map of the Afro-Latin American and the (Latin) Caribbean region at Appendix 1.

descendant minorities of Hispanic America and Brazil– that reveal general tendencies that can be analyzed schematically in four encompassing regimes: slavery, racist nationalism, *mestizaje*, and compensatory multiculturalism (187).[9] The above scholars further posit and demonstrate through their studies of the Black Atlantic and Pacific the notion of entangled histories proposed by Shalini Randeria (2006), according to which the various national histories of Hispanic America and Brazil, although narrated as individual histories and disconnected from one another, present nexuses and interdependencies which form shared and entangled histories. This is a concept that I will return to on several occasions throughout the dissertation, particularly as I perform close readings of the critical transnational discourses that have emanated from the two countries and sub-region, externalizing thereby their hidden worlds.

Externalizing Hidden Worlds

It was in the above vein, therefore, that nineteenth century Afro Hispanic American and Brazilian authors, Juan Francisco Manzano (Cuba 1797-1854)[10],

[9] While there has existed social inequality between the ruling class of Haiti and the majority peasant population, being all Afro-descendants, the Haitian trajectory towards nationhood since independence in 1804 differed markedly from that of the minority Afro-descendant populations in Hispanic America and Brazil. Describing the attitude of the Haitian ruling class as "a certain imperialist racism" that would see them denying the African cultural heritage, Jacques Stephen Alexis firmly states that the majority of the Haitian people, spearheaded by the Avant Garde intellectuals, claim their negro attributes and the permanence of an African cultural heritage. See Jacques Stephen Alexis "Du Réalisme Merveilleux des Haïtiens" (2002), p. 100.

[10] Juan Francisco Manzano (1797-1854), an urban slave who taught himself to read and write, and who ultimately achieved fame as a poet in Cuba's colonial slave society, wrote the only known autobiographical account of Latin American slavery. His narrative, composed in two parts, is a heart-rending history of the systematic, unrelenting destruction of human dignity and individual will. It bears the marks of slavery, not merely by virtue of the countless oppressive autobiographical events and the cruel punishments that are narrated, but also because of its unorthodox syntax and orthography in the original manuscript, and the destruction of the second half of Manzano's history which disappeared mysteriously during his lifetime and has never surfaced since.

Candelario Obeso (Colombia, 1849-1884),[11] Martín Morúa Delgado (Cuba 1856-1910)[12], Maria Firmina dos Reis (Brazilian; 1822-1917)[13], Luis Gonzaga Pinto da Gama (Brazilian; 1830-1882)[14], Auta de Souza (Brazilian; 1876-1901)[15], and João da Cruz e Sousa (Brazilian, 1861-1898)[16] to cite just a few, in their respective works, provide a window on the world of their lives as slaves and freed persons within the colonial globalizing/modernizing project of Western capitalist expansion in the New World. It is, thus, primarily from their worlds of enslavement and post-abolition within the contexts of individual and collective struggles for freedom and national independence that the first Afro-Hispanic and Afro-Brazilian cultural producers emerged, pouring out their energies and lives into anti-slavery and post abolition ethnographic projects.[17] Many of these singular works have been 'recovered' during the twentieth century, reprinted, and now added to the corpus of Afro Latin American and Caribbean literature itself.[18] They can

[11] Candelario Obeso was an Afro-Colombian poet known as the precursor of the *Poesía Negra y oscura* (black and dark poetry) in Colombia, a literary style that focused on describing the daily activities performed by the Colombian black communities. He wrote his narrative in the first person using the language the Afro-Colombian communities spoke. An example of this is his first book of poems, *Cantos Populares de mi Tierra*, published by Imprenta Borda in 1887. He was also a translator of Shakespeare, Victor Hugo, Byron, Musset, Longfellow, Goethe, and Jonathan Lawrence.
[12] See Appendix A, p. 211 for a profile of this author.
[13] Ibid., pp. 211-212.
[14] Ibid., p. 212
[15] Ibid., p. 212
[16] Ibid., pp. 212-213.
[17] While for the most part, nineteenth century Afro Hispanic and Brazilian authors used their cultural production in the projection of their extant realities, producing work more in keeping with a social realist orientation, some like the Cuban free mulatto romantic author, Diego Gabriel de la Concepción Valdés (Plácido, (1809-1844)), produced works that more resembled the Western European aesthetic movements of the period.
[18] The boom of the Latin American novel sponsored by the USA in the 1960's drew international attention to the region's literary production, providing in its turn publishing outlets and markets for many poets and novelists of African descent, whose works received special attention and support from newly founded organizations, such as the Afro-Ecuadorian Studies Center in Quito, Ecuador (1979), the Center of the Black Culture in Bogotá (1977), and the Afro-Hispanic Institute at Howard University in Washington D.C (1981). In addition, several local publishing houses, including Casa de las Américas, Ediciones Universal,

presently be found placed alongside other more mainstream strands of Latin American and Caribbean literature in world-renowned literary histories.[19]

Beyond the above cited celebrated authors, who were fortunate to have had at the time managed to master the Western introduced technology of writing, the majority of the Afro-descendant cultural producers of Hispanic America and Brazil, deprived of access to formal education, were constrained to express themselves exclusively in the oral genres, making fundamental use of performance–dance, storytelling, music, and religion– as their aesthetic and critical forms. While those more isolated communities, such as the *cimarrones, palenqueros, garífunas, quilombolas, and cumbes* tended to reflect worlds more closely associated to Africa from where their ancestors originally came or to the indigenous peoples with whom they sometimes shared these interior spaces, those who inhabited the plantations exhibited more syncretized forms that mixed Western European and African components, generating musical, dance and religious genres, such as the Tango, Contradanza, Santeria, Candombe, and Capoeira, all modes of aesthetic expression that have since been globalized, though sometimes problematically so, creating what can be considered the proverbial "elephant in the room."

and Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana started to reprint "classic" twentieth century Afro-Hispanic texts. See Vera M. Kutzinksi, "Afro-Hispanic American Literature" in the Cambridge History of Latin American Literature, Vol. 2, p. 164.

[19] Some of these literary histories are: *The Cambridge History of Latin American Literature* whose 1996 publication included for the first time in its Volume 2 a section of Afro-Hispanic Literature and in its Volume 3 an entire section on Brazilian literature as part of the Latin American literary imaginary; *The Cambridge History of Latin American Women Writers* (2021), *The Routledge Companion to Twentieth and Twenty-First Century Latin American Literary and Cultural Forms* (2022); *Afro Latin American Studies: An Introduction* and *The Routledge Handbook of Afro-Latin American Studies* (2022).

Confronting the Elephant in the Room

Regrettably, some of these authentic Afro-Latin American/Caribbean global genres have ofttimes been misread, misinterpreted, even not read at all, while embraced and transformed by those in the outer world. A prominent example of this are the Hollywood zombie films of varying quality. Repackaged for Western audiences at great profits, many of these films have been globalized to the discredit and denigration of their original creators, sometimes even being returned to the region as new genres.[20] Born in Haiti and transformed in diverse times and contexts abroad, Christopher Garland commiserates that the contemporary cinematic zombie has been largely divorced for much of its life from its Haitian origins (Garland 273). In fact, as stated by Philip Kaisary, many of these films have sought to demonstrate vodou (sic) as a sexual threat to white women, and have evoked fears of zombies, black revolt, and miscegenation as their dramatic themes. Invariably, Haiti is depicted as infested with these threats and potent in black magic (Introduction, 8). Some prominent examples include Val Lewton's *I Walked with a Zombie* (1943), produced for RKO Pictures and directed by Jacques Tourneur, the James Bond film, *Live and Let Die* (1973), Victor Halperin's *White Zombie* (1932), and

[20] Returned to the Latin America and Caribbean region, the Zombie phenomenon has exploded in places like post-revolutionary Cuba, where it acquired a postmodern configuration within the genre of Horror Films. According to Antonio Cardentey Levin, since the appearance of George A. Romero's *Night of the Living Dead* (1968), these films have projected allegorical readings in accordance with the sociopolitical context in which they are produced. Such is the case of *Juan de los Muertos (Juan of the Dead)*, film produced by the Cuban Alejandro Burgués, that narrates the zombie invasion of present-day Cuba and whose protagonists engage in all manner of activities to survive. (See Cardentey Levin's "La Revolución Zombificada. La alegoría del trauma cubano en Juan de los Muertos, de Alejandro Burgués" (2014). Another notable film is *Recuerdos de un país zombie* by Erik Mota, whose potential has been explored to satirize the Post-Revolution Castro-led Government, particularly during the years of the Special Period.

more recently Wes Craven's *The Serpent and the Rainbow* (1988), the latter two being the only films among them to be set in Haiti.

Even some of the region's recent literature has suffered a similar fate on the global market, falling prey to a hedonistic clientele, lying in wait for the next consumerist product, as was the case of Paulo Lins' semi-autobiographical novel, *Cidade de Deus (City of God).* Published in 1997 after eight years of writing, the novel recounts the tale of three young men and their lives in Cidade de Deus, a *favela* (slum) in Western Rio de Janeiro where Lins grew up, depicting the growth of organized crime in the *favela* between the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1980s. In an interview had with Bom Dia RN, Lins indicates that his novel issued from an anthropological project.[21] Having lived the reality about which he was writing and knowing firsthand the inevitability of the situation for the vast majority of slum dwellers if there was no social change effected by those in power, Lins wrote the book in an attempt to sensitize the Brazilian national elite to the violence with which the residents of the *favelas* contend daily, in the hope that it would spur them to action to try to bring an end to the violence. Hailed by critics as one of the greatest works of contemporary Brazilian literature and subsequently made into a feature film that went on to be nominated for four Oscars, neither the book nor the film has generated the kind of social capital for which Lins had hoped.[22] In an interview with blackfilm.com, Kátia Lund (one of its co-directors) in

[21] See Bom dia RN Entrevista Paulo Lins, escritor de "Cidade de Deus" – 29/05/2023, https://globoplay.globo.com/v/11656293/ accessed on July 02, 2023.

[22] The film was also Brazil's nominee for best Foreign Language Film in 2003. Although it did not end up being nominated as one of the five finalists, its international recognition led to the translation of the book into several languages, including Italian, French, Spanish, and German. An English translation of the book was published in 2006.

response to the question why she thought the film had been embraced by so many people across the world, stated that "the story was similar to what happens in New York City or in Paris, the hate that you get when you create exclusion, it's happening globally between the first world and the third world as well. It's a relationship that is universal."[23]

The Afro Brazilian writer, Miriam Alves refers to this misreading of black literature in the following statement taken from her bilingual work coedited with Carolyn Richardson Durham, entitled *Enfim...Nós: Escritoras Negras brasileiras contemporâneas / Finally...Us: Contemporary Black Women Writers* (1995), where she calls attention like many others before her to the need to read Afro-Latin American literature for itself:

> The white critics when they talk about black literature, almost always do so by reducing it to content and theme. What I know about it is its universality in specificity. I know only that this literature that we produce is rich; we are a universe of words that should be analyzed starting with its own manifestations. (Introduction)

Due to the failure of the Western literary centers, including those within Latin America and the Caribbean itself, to correctly read and therefore appropriately recognize the creative, innovative, and even world shaping endeavors of the region's Afro-descendants since their emancipation in the nineteenth century, many contemporary Afro-descendant cultural producers have dedicated themselves to re-presenting these forms and content in their present works. Despite ongoing attempts by scholars of world literature, a subset of the European originated field of Comparative Literature, to revisit

[23] *City of* God: An Interview with Co-Director Kátia Lund and Author Paolo Lins, conducted by Wilson Morales. http://blackfilm.com/20030509/features/cityofgod.shtml. Accessed on July 2, 2023.

the scope, meaning and cultural geographies of the field in light of the above-mentioned global changes, they have to date been unable to totally free themselves, from the ways of understanding and analyzing the world bequeathed to the field of comparative literature by the hegemonic developed north, as posited by various scholars and evidenced in recent studies carried out within the ongoing world literary debate and associated studies within the Bloomsbury "As World Literature" series, some of which I will analyze in the dissertation. Profound structural changes will be required in the field to ensure that the promising future of world literature be realized, one that recognizes and celebrates all literatures and viewpoints once they are provided within the global accepted standards of scholarship. The institutional space created within The Harvard Institute of World Literature for conversations to be had that can involve a wide cross section of the world, including, in particular, scholars from the Global South and the enthusiastic participation that Latin America and Caribbean scholars and literary critics have had in these ongoing discussions is indeed encouraging. From this space have emerged several notable single authored and collective studies, such as Mariano Siskind's *Cosmopolitan Desires: Global Modernity and World Literature in Latin America*, published in 2014, Hector Hoyos' *Beyond Bolaño: The Global Latin American Novel* published in 2015, and Eduardo Coutinho's collection of essays *Brazilian Literature ad World Literature,* published in 2018 that form three of the main theoretical and conceptual frameworks with which the three chapters of the dissertation will dialogue as elucidated in the ensuing introductory chapter.

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Visibly Invisible: An Introduction

This study has its genesis in a moment of reflection, when, after completing the reading of two recent notable Latin American studies, Héctor Hoyos' *Beyond Bolaño: A Global Latin American Novel* (2015) and Mariano Siskind's *Cosmopolitan Desires: Global Modernity and World Literature in Latin America* (2014), both produced within the context of the ongoing world literary debates aimed at revisiting the meaning, scope, and cultural geographies of the field, I was struck by the extant incongruity between the predominantly homogenous cultural geographies analyzed in these texts and the present heterogenous concrete cultural reality of their stated objects of study, the global / transnational cultural production of Latin America (and the Caribbean). Hoyos' monograph does offer a measure of hope of expansiveness as alluded to in its title, eschewing as it does the hyper canonization of Roberto Bolaño and his representation as a synecdoche of the region's global literature, all while showcasing and advocating for a place in the world literary canon for works of other skilled contemporary Latin American authors who also write on global themes. This, notwithstanding, his corpus of more than eight authors includes but one female and one non-Hispanic American, the Brazilian, Chico Buarque, the others being Euro descendant, Hispanic American, and male. What is heartening, however, is that among the conclusions of his study factor possible next steps that include what he deems "a more radical version of his project" that would in fact "consider the literary cultures of authors who not only are marginalized within international circulation, but those with local limitations to begin with" (Conclusion 210).

Mariano Siskind's study, on the other hand, offering an historical overview of the region's engagement with the world from 1870 onwards, was unapologetically male dominated and oriented. In his words, "the hero of this book, if I may call him that, is a Latin American cosmopolitan intellectual (a distinctively male writer)" (Introduction 9)). Not only is his corpus principally European descendant and male but he also equates Latin America with Hispanic America in his study, referring as he does to the "peripheral position of Brazil and Latin America at the beginning of the twentieth century" (Introduction 4), even though admittedly his analysis does include authors from both the country and sub-region. Both studies unquestionably constitute groundbreaking contributions to the ongoing debates on world literature as it pertains to Latin America's participation in them as a literary corpus, field of study, and place of enunciation, where previously such participation had been undeniably minimal. Moreover, they unarguably provide useful theorizations on the region's global mappings and critical discourses for any future such study. However, the absence of any mention of the transnational cultural production of the region's majority Afro-descendant, mixed, and Indigenous populations and the only mere token representation of its prolific transnational female cultural producers leave a gap in the investigations that begs to be filled.

Three other noteworthy studies of critical relevance to this dissertation are the collaborative texts *Brazilian Literature as World Literature* (2018), edited by Eduardo Coutinho, *Francophone Literature as World Literature* (2020), edited by Christian Moraru et al, and *Mexican Literature as World Literature* (2021), edited by Ignacio Sanchez-Prado, all published within the Bloomsbury "*As World Literature*" series. These

more recent publications have taken up the referred-to challenge thrown out by Hoyos in his concluding chapter and have attempted to fulfil the "promise of multipolarism" that the present convergence of the world and globalization offers (*Beyond Bolaño* 189-221). This they have accomplished either through their integration and analysis of works from historically marginalized spaces or by highlighting the conceptual, theoretical, methodological, and/or epistemological peculiarities of these works, distilling from them theorizations that are inherent in them and calling for the integration of these into the extant world literary frameworks and methodologies. In this vein, Coutinho's work advances the promise of multipolarity that issues from Hoyos' analysis, presenting Brazilian literature historically as dialoguing on equal footing with its global interlocutors, including those who have contributed to its formation from its colonial past. Moraru's study, in its turn, examines French-language works from a range of global traditions, showing how these literary practices draw individuals, communities, and their cultures and idioms into a planetary web of tension and cross-fertilization. Yet, despite these more progressive regional attempts, there still is evident in these two works a lack of expansiveness in their presentation and examination of marginalized works of key spaces in the Latin American and Caribbean context that are relevant to the thrust of the dissertation, such as the critical contributions of Haiti, the transnational mappings of female writers, and the diasporic and world entanglements of the region's Afro descendant cultural producers, particularly of Brazil and Hispanic America.

This dissertation sets out, therefore, to both bridge the gap identified in the studies done by Hoyos and Siskind and to advance the world literary analysis of the region's

literature that has begun within the framework of the Bloomsbury "*As World Literature*" series. It will to this end focus specifically on three areas of the region, two countries, and one sub-region: Haiti, Brazil, and Hispanic America, providing a critical overview of the marginalized and peripheral spaces of these areas from the nineteenth century onwards. In so doing, it envisages the presentation and analysis of world literary theorizations from Latin America and the Caribbean that have so far not been considered, and if so, marginally so, within the millennial world literary debate and series. The project's specific objectives will be therefore to 1) present a critical review of selected representative transnational discourses and global mappings of Haitian, Hispanic American, and Brazilian authors and works from the nineteenth century onwards that have been so far marginalized within and peripheral to the present debate and series on world literature, highlighting their world literary validity and value; 2) distil from the analysis performed possible additional Latin American and Caribbean literary and cultural theoretical/conceptual frameworks; and 3) put these theorizations in dialogue with those that have been historically mainstreamed in the region. Ultimately, the study aims to bring together in one place a substantive collection of Latin America and the Caribbean's transnational cultural production from these marginalized and peripheral spaces that can serve both as a point of reference for future world literary discussions and as a first step towards the compilation of a possible anthology of the relevant authors and their works. The period selected mirrors those covered by Siskind and Hoyos in their respective studies that envelop the contemporary era of the region's literature, the former going from the 1870s onwards, moment that englobes Latin America and the Caribbean's

entrance into literary modernity through the Haitian Indigenist movement, then the Hispanic American and Brazilian modernist movements. The latter author while also incorporating critical works of this earlier period, focuses on aesthetic texts from the post-1989 period, reflecting for him the latest phase of globalization initiated with the end of the Cold War that continues to the present day.

Incorporating works of various genres as characteristic of the cultural production of the marginalized and peripheral spaces of the region, i.e., (performance) poetry, dance, religion, (science) fiction, non-fiction, theatre/drama, short stories, painting, and film, the study inserts itself into the world literary trend of comparing cultural products thought previously incomparable. This trend that has now taken root, and that is characteristic of recent scholarship, has forged back the erstwhile inflexible boundaries of the area of Comparative Literature, opening new horizons for scholars in the field. Hoyos himself exemplifies this statement in his work, demonstrating through the examination of advertisements and other forms of creative expression that these share a role with novels in formulating, contesting, and transforming ideologies of the global (200). David Damrosch captures the new moment very well from his vantage point as a literary scholar and critic in his recently published book *Comparing the Literatures: Literary Studies in a Global Age* (2020) where he argues that Literary studies are being transformed today by the expansive and disruptive forces of globalization and more works than ever circulate worldwide in English and in translation, and even national traditions are increasingly seen in transnational terms. To encompass this expanding literary universe, he surmises,

scholars and teachers need to expand their linguistic and cultural resources, rethink their methods and training, and reconceive the place of literature and criticism in the world.

The dissertation project adopts a hybrid method of analysis, performing both the close reading and the synthesis and analysis of the selected texts. The analysis performed within this method of analysis uses a dialectic and reflective approach, putting the readings in dialogue with existent theoretical and conceptual frameworks that have emerged from the area of Comparative/World Literature as well as from associated fields, such as Anthropology, Sociology, and Political Science. To fulfil its stated objectives, the research comprises an Introduction, three chapters–each addressing one of the three selected geographical spaces, Haiti, Hispanic America, and Brazil–and a Conclusion. Chapter 1, that presents Haiti's worldliness from the nineteenth century onwards, focuses its attention on two critical essays of the twentieth century by the author Jacques Stephen Alexis, his proto manifesto on Marvelous Realism and his treatise on the novel, "Où va le roman?" ('Where is the novel headed?'), providing counter discourses that go beyond Western humanism and the global novel. In so doing, the chapter reinstates Haiti into the Latin American and Caribbean regional imaginary where it justly belongs, setting the stage for the theoretical mapping of the many regional and global entanglements and confluences that the literary and cultural imaginary of this country ensues. Chapter 2, in its turn, revisits the marginalized and peripheral spaces of Hispanic America, particularly the Afro-descendant and female/feminist spaces, showcasing their world literary contributions and making a case for their inestimable value to the region, both in terms of their potential to resolve the pesky issue of the sub-region's cultural identity discourse

and as a way of (re)imagining a (re)new(ed) Latin American and Caribbean world in which its marginalized and peripheral (Afro descendant) populations are integrated as full and equal citizens. Chapter 3 highlights the transnational discourses and global mappings of the marginalized and peripheral spaces of Brazil, particularly its Afro descendant critical and aesthetic production from the nineteenth century, highlighting their confluences with the mainstreamed national discourse and calling for the necessary expansion of the extant theoretical/conceptual and methodological frameworks that will facilitate their inclusion in the mainstreamed literary histography.

The dissertation is also preceded by a preface that offers key definitions pertaining to the study, providing a preview of its scope and thrust. Finally, the Conclusion brings the study together, pointing towards the expansion of the geographical and conceptual borders of comparative/world literature and a concomitant expansion within the literary and cultural discourses of Latin America and the Caribbean as the path towards the fulfilment in the region of the "promise of multipolarism" initiated by the convergence of the forces of globalization and the world and advanced through the millennial debates and Bloomsbury "*As World Literature*" series. Since the project cannot and should not be totalizing, there are many manifestations of the transnational that have not been captured here; hence the project also points to what possibilities exist for future studies. Indeed, there are many limitations to such a study. First, as Hoyos astutely points out at the very beginning of his seminal work "the world does not quite fit into a book" (Introduction 1), even less so I would hasten to acknowledge into a dissertation project with a very restricted timeline. In fact, the present project does

envisage the analysis of the Latin-American and Caribbean transnational literary and cultural 'world', where 'world' is ofttimes understood both as a concrete geopolitical entity and a space of literary totalization. Yet, in the latter regard, the project is constrained, in view of the limitations of time and effort required, to select from the wide gamut of existent critical and aesthetic cultural production of the region, a representative sample that may aptly showcase the rich critical transnational discourses of the marginalized and peripheral populations of the Latin American and Caribbean region, many of which have become obscured over time. In relation to the former–the Latin American and Caribbean world as a geopolitical entity–the project enlarges even further the borders of the region as cemented in the definition offered by the Argentine scholar and critic, César Fernández Moreno–"region located south of the Rio Grande or Bravo, (which delimits the U.S. border with Mexico), where there has been successive historical dependence on an external power"[24]– to incorporate the (Latin and Caribbean) diasporic populations present in the USA and Canada, arguing for their legitimacy as part of the LAC cultural identity and, by extension, that of their works as *bona fide* contributions to the region's world literary critical discourse.

[24] The translation has been provided by the author. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations shall be similarly provided. The full original text reads as follows: "este complejo que insiste en llamarse América Latina, entidad todavía no definida, pero que presenta a simple vista la consistencia de lo real" [ubicada] "sur del río Grande o Bravo, (que marca el límite de Estados Unidos con México), [donde existe] "cierta homogeneidad cultural, política, racial, lingüística, religiosa"; [caracterizada por] "sucesiva dependencia [histórica] del conjunto respecto de una potencia exterior" and [la] inmersión en la más fuerte polaridad histórica de la actualidad: el abismo que se abre entre los países ricos y los pobres, oposición más vasta que la anterior, pero no contradictoria con ella, ya que se ilustra en el conjunto de las Américas, donde la anglosajona es la rica y la latina es la pobre." See César Fernández Moreno's "Trayectoria y presencia de América Latina in *El Correo de Unesco,* pp. 7-8.

Despite the totalizing definition offered by Fernández Moreno, it is undeniable that the place of enunciation of the Afro-Latin American within this marginal geopolitical space differs markedly from that of their Euro descendant counterparts, who as Siskind deftly points out, derive as Latin Americans their "specific cultural subjectivity from [their] marginal position of enunciation and from the certainty that this position has excluded [them] from the global unfolding of a modernity articulated outside a Latin American cultural field saturated with the nationalistic or peninsular signifiers that determine its backwardness" (Introduction 9). Indeed, it is anticipated that Afro-Latin American cultural producers, like all other cultural geographies, would also in their engagement with the world derive their cultural subjectivity from their position(s) of enunciation. Moreover, Siskind's analysis does corroborate this finding, pointing as it does to cosmopolitan desires as the main motivator for Latin America's transnational cultural production and to a shared epistemological structure among the critical and aesthetic cosmopolitan discourses in the region (as in other global peripheries) he calls *deseo de mundo* (desire for the world) that see them invoking the world either as a signifier of 'abstract universality' or as a concrete and finite set of global trajectories travelled by writers and books (Introduction 3).

Against this background, the project, in contrast to Siskind's conclusions, sets out from the premise that the Afro-Latin American cultural producer (as in other similarly dispossessed groups) would be rather more motivated by a desire to refigure and socially transform the present world and/or imagine and configure alternate worlds, invoking the world thereby either as a signifier of universality in specificity or as a space traversed in

pursuit of identity, place, and belongingness. The prominent contemporary Brazilian writer, Luiz Ruffato, in a controversial speech proffered as guest of honor at the 2013 Frankfurt International Book Fair aptly summarizes the place of enunciation and extant creative ideology and commitment of the Afro-Latin American subaltern in the following rhetorical question and response:

> What does it mean to live in this region situated on the periphery of the world, to write in Portuguese for readers who are nearly non-existent, to fight every day in the midst of such adversities, to try and construct a sense of life? I believe, perhaps naively, in the transforming power of literature. As the son of an illiterate washerwoman and a semi-illiterate popcorn vendor, having worked myself as a popcorn vendor, a salesclerk, a textile factory worker, a metalworker, a manager of a diner, my own destiny was altered through a fortuitous encounter with books. And if reading a book can change the course of a person's life, and given that society is composed of people, then literature can change society. (14)

The project further argues that the place of enunciation of the Afro-descendant cultural producer of Latin America and the Caribbean, like many of their counterparts from localities where popular culture remains the mainstay of their artistic and aesthetic expression, is not restricted to the spatial (geographical, political, economic, and/or social), but extends to the historical, the mystical, the mythical, the magical, the communal, and the spiritual. It is from these spaces that ofttimes these artists create and project their inner and inhabited worlds, thereby reinventing themselves and transforming these worlds through their aesthetic expression, as well as finding the strength and

resilience to engage, contest, disprove existing outer worlds in their critical discourses while continuously working towards the refiguring and configuring of new and alternative worlds for themselves and their future generations. The final collection of essays on *Mexican Literature as World Literature* cited above perhaps offers the most to the region in terms of the possibilities the "promise of multipolarism" holds for its marginalized and peripheral spaces, a promise whose historical trajectory I will now outline through the presentation of an overview of the comparative/world literary theorizations and frameworks from its original European conception by Goethe of *Weltliteratur* to its extant more regional manifestations of World literature(s), Literatures of the World, *littérature-monde*, and *literatura mundial*.

Comparative/World literature Theorizations: Challenges and Opportunities

From *Weltliteratur* to World Literature: Connecting the Dots

The term 'world literature' locates its origin formally in Western Europe, with the German poet and critic, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) being critically acclaimed as the one who has given it its widest currency, to our present moment (*World Literature* xiii).[25] The practice of world literature, however, can be located much sooner or much later, depending on the definition given to the term, seeing it range within Western scholarship from as early as the Hellenistic world of late antiquity to as recent as

[25] See also John Pizer's *The Idea of World Literature: History and pedagogical practice* where he explains in greater detail the context for Goethe's concept.

the past fifty years (David Damrosch *Toward a History* 483).[26] Despite Goethe's regular use of the term between 1827 and 1832, the year of his death, as evidenced by his own writings and recorded conversations, some scholars posit that none of these texts provides a real definition of what should constitute *Weltliteratur* (world literature). In fact, Juan Andrés described Goethe's concept of world literature as a future-oriented conceptual rumination without a practical application (1).[27] This may derive from the fact that Goethe conceived of world literature as a "dynamic process of literary exchange, intercourse, or traffic, exemplified by the international character of his own relations with foreign authors and by the revitalizing movement of mirroring brought about by the reception, translation, review, and criticism of literary works in other languages" (10). For Goethe, world literature was "an active space of transaction and interrelation … an ongoing work of negotiation between a range of particulars in order to arrive at the universal." This transaction and interrelation derived from as well as acted upon the existing world, fostering the creation of a new one where 'world' is conceived not as "an object of great physical extensiveness" or a globalized space but as "a normative phenomenon, a higher intellectual community that opens up a new universal horizon" (Pheng Cheah 27, 29). Goethe's view of world literature as a relational process whose ultimate end was the creation of something new and larger, fell to disuse over the years

[26] If world literature is defined as literature of genuinely global scope, whether in authorial intention or in its circulation among readers, then we are only just seeing the birth of this literary form, if however, a work's movement from a national context to the sphere of world literature is its reception within a different cultural and linguistic realm, then its birth can be located much earlier, long before the age of national literatures. Read more in *Toward a History of World Literature* by David Damrosch.

[27] Until recently, it had been commonplace to credit Goethe with the coining of the term *Weltliteratur* in 1827. It is however known that at least two others, the historian August Ludwig von Schlözer and the writer Christoph Martin Wieland had used it earlier, but it does remain true that Goethe's use of it has had the greatest impact *World Literature* xiii).

with the evolving of the term into an academic field of study. Since the advent of globalization, however, world literature as a creative process has seen a return, although possibly not quite as envisaged by its most ardent historical promoter. The supposed lack of a clear definition of the concept by Goethe has resulted in the term being defined within Academia both historically and presently as "an open-ended discussion influenced by particular interests and the uses made of it in particular situations" (*World Literature* XI). While, historically, one can identify two main concepts of World Literature, one that sees it as the part of the world´s literature that is both the 'best' of what literature has to offer and that provides universal appeal, in other words a super canon, and the other that considers it to be all of the world´s literatures, without pronouncing on questions of quality or influence, more recent attempts to redefine the concept can be summed up as a move from seeing world literature as an *object*, either as a small canon or a vast ocean of texts, to a *paradigm* for approaching texts from, or within, diverse contexts and making connections between them (*World Literature* XI).[28]

Moreover, the existent scholarship neither defines world literature as a super canon nor as a smorgasbord of all of the world's literatures, recognizing as they do the differences and disparities that exist between national and international canons, as corroborates the recent volume *The Canonical Debate Today: Crosing Disciplinary and Cultural Boundaries* (2011) edited by Liviu Papadima, David Damrosch and Theo

[28] While the questions of canonization and all-inclusiveness enter into this paradigm, they do so alongside a much wider array of problems. These range from questions of how literature travels across borders, how translations are used, how genres influence each other and how they move across cultures, whether there is a specific poetics of texts that gain global recognition, how highly canonized works can be read in conjunction with lesser ones, what is the role of institutional factors such as changes in publishing and dissemination, reviewing, advertising, literary agents, teaching, anthologizing, etc.

D'Haen, Martin Puschner's essay "Teaching Worldly Literature" (2022) and Damrosch's *What is World Literature* (2003). These texts can be situated within the recent revival of the conceptualization of world literature linked to the agenda of globalization and its effects on culture and conceptions of identity. Seen in this light, the renewed interest in world literature is a response to a need for thinking of literature's role beyond the nation state in a world where cultural exchanges are becoming increasingly more intense and far reaching. The other factor has to do with the internal organization of literary studies.[29] Interestingly in some corners of scholarship, this revival has fostered a return to Goethe and his thoughts on the concept. Pheng Cheah, for instance, extracts from Goethe´s conception of world literature what he refers to as its cosmopolitan vocation. Defining cosmopolitanism as primarily the viewing of oneself as part of the world, a circle of belonging that transcends the limited ties of kinship and country to embrace the whole of humanity, Cheah argues that world literature is an important aspect of cosmopolitanism because it is a type of world-making activity that enables us to imagine a world (26). To this end, he utilizes Goethe's conceptualization of 'world' as distinct from 'globe', the former representing a higher sense, defined as spiritual intercourse, transaction, and exchange aimed at bringing out universal humanity, the world as a form of relating or

[29] Nominally, world literature for the longest time made its academic home in departments of comparative literature programs. However, for various reasons, comparative literature in practice had difficulty living up to the ambition of being sufficiently inclusive to the literatures of the world. One reason certainly had to do with the enormity of the field. Another resided in the proven lack of interest in so-called "minor" and particularly non-Western literatures. Much of the world's literature was left to specialists in national or regional literatures to deal with, while comparative literature programs limited themselves to the larger Western literatures, even if many seminal works from all over the world became even more widely available in translation (*World Literature* x).

being with as opposed to the globe, which for him constituted a lower sense, i.e., the totality produced by processes of globalization.

This distinction made by Goethe between ‘world’ and ‘globe’ is also embraced by both Kant and Marx in their ethical projects of worldwide solidarity and construction of a universal proletariat society respectively, all three using the word ‘world’ to describe the transcendence of particular local and national barriers and limitations. Cheah picks it up and theorizes it in his paradigm of ‘world literature as a world-making activity’, where he proposes a definition of both world and literature while arguing for a cosmopolitan vocation for world literature. Encouraging us to conceptualize the material world not as the one given to us through commercial intercourse, monetary transactions, or the space-time compression of the global culture industry, but rather as the one comprised by a non-negative force that is intimately linked to literature, Cheah argues that world literature must be understood primarily as a process that keeps alive the force that opens up another world, a force that is immanent to the existing world. It should be conceived more narrowly, he posits, as the literature of the world–imaginings and stories of what it means to be a part of a world that track and account for contemporary globalization as well as older historical narratives. It is also a literature that seeks to be disseminated, read, and received around the world, so as to change that world and the life of a given people within it (35, 36). It is useful to note that Cheah’s focus of interest in the area of world literature is a particular type of postcolonial literature that explores the various negotiations between commercial and financial flows and humane social development (or lack thereof) in different parts of the postcolonial South with the hope of crafting new

figurations and stories of world belonging for a postcolonial people. He ends his article by proffering an example of such literature, giving the impression that, like Hoyos, his paradigm flows out of the close reading of the literature.

There are several important similarities between Cheah´s cosmopolitan and Hoyos' globality paradigms, both emerging as they do from the close reading(s) of a selected text or corpus. One of these relates to the hierarchical structure of world literature, which they both lament, but recognize as continuing to raise its ugly head within the context of the era of globalization in the form of the globalized print culture industry. As Cheah appropriately sums up the situation, "post-industrial techniques of marketing, advertising, and value-adjudication form a seamless web in the production, reception, interpretation, and criticism (academic or otherwise) of a given object of world literature, and these techniques in turn shape the form and ideational content of any work of world literature as well as the kind of world it enables us to imagine" (33).

Karen Thornber, addressing the challenges facing world literature makes a clear distinction between the theory and practice of this phenomenon as an academic endeavor, thereby perhaps providing a justification for Hoyos' definition. She summarizes these challenges as being primarily two-fold: 1) the field's continuing biases, and in particular its tendency to privilege literature that not only has been embraced by Western readers but also conforms to the expectations of Western scholars; and 2) its failure to integrate the study of literature more comprehensively with urgent matters of global significance. Speaking from a theoretical perspective while claiming that now is the appropriate time for this, she calls on world literature scholarship to "connect more meaningfully with life

on the ground, with the ultimate goal not only of deeper engagement with a broader array of texts, pathways and processes than ever before, but also of providing much needed insights into global problems and ideally working toward their amelioration" (116). She also points out the challenges related to this call, citing a few works which knowingly because of the subject area addressed have been deemed anathema by world literature critics, therefore never being able to make it onto the list of works that are promoted and published as world literature, hence the continuing presence of synecdochical representations, such as Bolaño's works in the Latin American context (world) as pointed to by Hoyos. On the other hand, there is the issue of the local, even non-Western publisher, such as the case of many African publishers who tend to prefer buying rights to books that have already sold in the West. So, to circulate even within Africa, a situation that is replicated in many other literary/cultural pathways and geographies, often requires a writer to adhere to Western expectations of that literature. This notwithstanding, it is important to note that there can and do exist counterpoints to this center-periphery model of world literary circulation, for example, the circuits of modern Jewish literature composed of multiple centers in Asia, Africa, Europe, and North America.

World poetry faces many of the same challenges as world literature. Stephen Owen, in his discussion of the concept of world poetry, distinguishes it from what he deems its other more lucrative counterparts, pointing to the audiences for which poems are made, which he declares are always imaginary ones. World poetry, he surmises, apart from that written by poets in the dominant languages of the world, is condemned to be mostly read in translation. This form of poetry can be differentiated from its national

counterpart by virtue of its lack of a history or landscape, or shape that is neither fixed nor defined by its place in such a typography. The international poem is an intricate shape on a blank background without frontiers, a shape that undergoes metamorphoses (28, 32). The view of world literary production as a non-historical, apolitical, non-combative space is taken up by Pascale Cassanova in her *La République mondiale des Lettres* ("World Republic of Letters"), who proposing to "bring about a change of perspective, a new tool for the reading and situating of literary texts, by situating a work on the basis of its position in world literary space", puts forward the idea of a literary universe that is "relatively independent of the everyday world and its political divisions, whose boundaries and operational laws are not reducible to those of ordinary political space," while still bound by the center-periphery structures that dominate therein. (Preface v).

World Poetry or 'poetry as a world' is of great importance in the context of this study which focuses on Afro-Latin American and Caribbean literary production where there has been a tendency for some time towards poetry as the preferred form of literary expression for various reasons: its performative nature and its ability to connect directly to and stir up its audience, to cite just two. This type of poetry is in the main also quite combative, political, and historical, focusing on the pesky global themes to which Thornber directs world literature critics in her call for them to connect more meaningfully with life on the ground (116).

World Literatures, Literatures of the World, *littérature monde* and *literatura mundial*: Mapping the Millennial World Literary Promise

Since the monographic studies done by Siskind and Hoyos, other Latin American and Caribbean scholars and critics have both individually and collectively presented analyses on transnational works of the region that seek to extract from them their own theorizations and conceptual frameworks.[30] Many, like Hoyos, have sought to offer alternative pathways for the field either from their own analyses and conclusions or through the appropriation of newer, more polycentric concepts from leading regional thinkers. Some such authors are Gustavo Guerrero, Ignacio M. Sánchez Prado, and Alejandra Uslenghi. In his article, "Literatura mundial y multilateralismo: cambiando de rumbo," Gustavo Guerrero claims that the resurgence of the discussion around the idea of a world literature in the 1990s can be linked to the emergence of multiculturalist and postcolonial streams of thought and the consequent defense of a poetics of global diversity capable of embodying a new cosmopolitan ideal as put forward by the Martinican poet Édouard Glissant in his work *L'introduction à une poétique du divers ('A Poetics of Relation')*. He underscores the challenges faced by researchers invested in establishing a critico-theoretical paradigm open to cultural diversity and complex transnational inscriptions that is less unilateral and ethnocentric while capable of accounting for the dynamic challenges posed to scholars by today's international

[30] One such forum is a meeting that took place at the University of Cologne on January 24th and 25th, 2018, in the form of an "Exploratory Seminar" as part of a cooperative program between the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures at Harvard University and the "Reading Global" project. The meeting produced a recent Volume (4) entitled "World Literature, Cosmopolitanism, and Globality: Beyond, Against, Post, Otherwise" sponsored by the European Research Council (2020) as part of the series *Latin American Literatures in the World*.

translation market. Rather than giving up on the project of world literature in the face of the sense of dissatisfaction brought up by some of its hegemonic institutionalization, Guerrero's proposal is to double down on it and reorient its methodology towards modes of collective intellectual labor inspired by multicultural discursive formations. He suggests that this re-articulation of world literary research could be particularly fruitful in the case of large-scale studies of international literary circulation and the historical and material processes of translation, publishing, and reception.

Ignacio M. Sánchez Prado's "La literatura mundial como praxis: apuntes hacia una metodología de lo concreto" looks into a conference given by Juan Rulfo in 1965 in Chiapas (later published as "Situación actual de la novela contemporánea") in order to trace a world literary cartography that differs from those put forth by scholars like David Damrosch, Franco Moretti, Pascale Casanova, the Warwick Collective or Pheng Cheah.[31] Rulfo's mapping is entirely other. Both its place of enunciation and the system of references made up of non-canonical, peripheric texts and objects point to the existence of vectors producing world literature which are invisibilized by the totalizing critical accounts of the aforementioned critics. Sánchez Prado concludes his article by proposing a methodological shift that approaches world literature not through the kind of determinism – or, in some cases, voluntarism – seen in the framework of world-systems, but rather "from below," in other words, beginning from the ways in which concrete

[31] These scholars have all provided critical studies within the framework of the world literary debates with the first three, David Damroch's What is World Literature (2003), Franco Moretti's *Conjectures on World Literature and More Conjectures* (2000 and 2003), and Pascale Cassanova's *La République Mondiale des lettres* (1999 translation, 2004)) together with Emily Apter's *Against World Literature: The Politics of Untranslatability* (2013) usually considered the four leading studies from the developed world.

actors produce and practice world literature. Sánchez Prado's analysis connects with and furthers that made by Héctor Hoyos in his monograph *Beyond Bolaño: A Global Latin American novel* that theorizes the place of Latin American fiction from the 1990s and the 2000s within a global framework by studying ways in which authors reflect upon the experience of globalization and situate themselves beyond the boundaries of national literatures. Challenging the traditional top-down method of the canonical ethos of World Literature, Hoyos like Sánchez Prado advocates for an understanding of the global from the ground up, that is, from the works themselves, through the internal dynamics of actual cultural products.[32] Hoyos' text also successfully challenges and subverts the prevailing Eurocentric concept of 'world literature', defined by its author as another 'ism' of the ilk of 'Latinamericanism' that seeks to constitute a (super) canon based on fixed *a priori* methods of selection facilitated and guaranteed by its trans(national) partners in the areas of marketing, circulation, and reception. This dire reality which he states has led to the synecdochical representation of Latin American literature in modern times by specific authors and their works, such as the Boom authors throughout the 1960s and 1970s (my inclusion) and Roberto Bolaño in the 1990s, constitutes a (mis)representation of the region's literary expression and a disservice to other reputable writers of the region who find themselves marginalized within world literary circles.

[32] While these authors highlight the importance of this methodology for the approaching of texts, it is important to note here that they were not the initiators of this call neither historically nor within the context of the ongoing debate. Within the latter, for instance, it was David Damrosch himself who first put forth and embraced this methodology as early as 2003 with his critical work *What is World Literature?* made up entirely by a set of very diverse and non-Western individual case studies of literary works from Ancient Egyptian love poetry to Nahuatl poetry and the Serbian Milorad Pavic's *The Dictionary of the Khazars* that become world literature in time.

The disjuncture between the present world literary paradigm and the post-1989 world (conceptualized as the latest stage of globalization) is perhaps nowhere more evident than in the present 'crisis of cosmopolitanism' described by Siskind in his recent article "Towards a Cosmopolitanism of Loss: an Essay about the End of the World," where he attempts to recalibrate the political potential of the discourse of cosmopolitanism today, during a historical juncture defined by the total collapse of the imaginary function modernity had assigned to the world−the world understood as the symbolic structure that used to sustain humanistic, cosmopolitan imaginaries of universal emancipation, equality and justice. The world today, he states, can no longer fulfill the role of a feasible signifying horizon for cultural and aesthetic forms of cosmopolitan agency. The generalized experience of crisis that defines the present (which Siskind calls "the experience of the end of the world") renders evident to his mind the obsolescence of world literature, cosmopolitanism and globalization, which depended on an affirmative notion of the world as the ground for cosmopolitan cultural exchanges and translations that set the foundation for a universal (intellectual) community to come based on justice and equality, or for the capitalistic extraction of surplus literary and economic value and for the commodification of style, ideas and subject positions.

In thinking through the present precarious world as outlined by Siskind and its associated crisis of cosmopolitanism, Alejandra Uslenghi in her essay "The Contemporary Cosmopolitan Condition: Borders and World Literature," historicizes a new brand of empirical, plural, descriptive, postcolonial cosmopolitanism from below that emerged in the 1990s as a response to a normative and rather abstract, institutional,

disinterested, humanitarian and universalistic cosmopolitan ethical imagination. Uslenghi deploys this particularized cosmopolitanism of the underprivileged to think about the technological infrastructures that lend themselves to experiment with the reproduction and distribution of cosmopolitan narratives and images at an unprecedented speed, this while connecting local events with a worldwide audience through multiple platforms that may likewise allow for brief moments of communal empathy and grieving. She concludes by vindicating a concept of cosmopolitanism capable of effecting a "societal shift in the treatment of marginalized people" and of bringing the experience of the border home "closer, accessible and comprehensible."

In a bid to free himself from the prevailing top-down methodologies of the institution of World Literature, Hoyos proposes alternative ideologies from within the Latin American region. Thus, he equates the functioning of the term 'globality', understood as "a broadening consciousness of the world as a whole," with the Borgesian 'Aleph', defined as "an objectification of the idea of much in little carried to its final logical consequences," i.e., "not only a world in miniature, but an infinitude of points of view, where recursiveness is unavoidable and where time and space–succession and distance–lose their meaning" (7). He anticipates as a consequence that each Latin American author who engages with the global would bring their unique background, experience, and perspective to the globalizing, totalizing project, hence representing a plethora of views of the global that may present common themes. These expectations he manages to validate through his close readings of the texts that lead to conclusions that point towards multipolarity as the place where the world and globalization converge, one

that presents several possibilities for the positioning of contemporary global literatures (Conclusion 189).

Siskind, for his part, through the adaptation of a historical and critical-theoretical lens, ascribes a level of agency to those authors who engaged with the world on their own terms through the prioritization of indigenous processes, such as the aesthetic experimentation of the Hispanic American avant-gardes, José Luis Borges being the most notable amongst them, the anthropophagic pathway of their Brazilian counterparts, and the more recent transculturation of the magical realists, acknowledging the space created for themselves as world literary subjects via these means while constrained to deem their efforts failures when viewed from the standpoint of the ultimate goal of a more equitable, just, and universally evolved intellectual space. Still other scholars have looked beyond the boundaries of world literature conventionally defined to find theoretical frameworks that offer more polycentric models of analysis, as well as that may be more directly relevant to the Afro-Latin American and (Latin) Caribbean region. Affirming that from the perspective of literary theory, the resolution of the existing dichotomies in world literature is a crucial idea for a truly universal, or at least border-crossing, analytical model for the field, Gesine Müller proposes the examination of the programmatic orientation of the idea of 'literatures of the world', a notion that has emerged since 2000 in a variety of German institutions working on literary and cultural subjects and striving to expand their horizons, that connects with the 'classical' idea of world literature yet is based on a completely different foundation. It revolves, rather, around the claim to set aside, from a global perspective, the distinction between center and periphery in literary

productions, thus conceiving of the genesis of cultural production in transnational constellations (45).

While the new world literary turn (since the 1990s) has from its inception embodied the concept of 'literatures of the world', Müller affirms that definitions of the latter have been merely descriptive and analytical rather than programmatic leading in both areas ('world literature' and 'literatures of the world') to depictions that have been characterized by implicit assumptions of Western hegemony – even though these attempts critically address the institutional, economic hegemony of the Global North vis-à-vis the South. To counter this, she engages in a conceptual reconsideration of polycentric dynamics in the context of the agenda of 'literatures of the world', arguing that the concept of the transnational is instrumental to overcoming the differentiation of center and periphery that underlies even recent approaches to world literature and 'literatures of the world' while demonstrating how Caribbean literatures illustrate the potential of the concept. In fact, she reiterates that:

> Caribbean literatures stand like hardly any other literary tradition for the interplay of deterritorialization and topographic ascertainment, for transcultural processes of translation and transformation of epistemes and aesthetics, and for the literary modelling of trans-territorial connections. They therefore call for a method of observation appropriate to the many-layered, fluctuating, and discontinuous dynamics of geopolitical and geo-poetical orders. In view of the ineluctable limitations of global and local configurations, Caribbean literatures have always

opened up attempts to refigure worlds in new and different ways–namely, from a subaltern perspective. (49)

In contrast to the concept of 'world', which promotes the utopian view of a globalized space in which nation-states no longer exist or have any influence, leading to a concept of a world (literary) system as proposed by Franco Moretti that is one but unequal anchored on the vision of a (developed) center and an (underdeveloped) periphery, the transnational recognizes the existence and influence of nation-states as the space beyond which it operates. Like world literature, the concept of the transnational has had its own literary turn in the 1990s although both concepts can be traced back to much earlier. Within the context of Latin America, for example, the "Manifesto for an Independent Revolutionary Art," published under the names of and signed by Diego Rivera, and André Breton in Mexico City in 1938, spoke of overcoming national and linguistic boundaries and envisioned a form of revolutionary art, like surrealism, as a transnational movement–an aspect that has been at the core of surrealism from its very beginning in the early 1920s. Taken together, however, as Kai Wiegandt accurately indicates, the overlapping categories of world and transnational literature have shifted the geographical and cultural organization of literary studies in two important ways: they have focused attention on the transnational aspects of literature's production, circulation, and reception, while at the same time fostering new interest in literary works from formerly marginalized or ignored regions of the world, many of which are about cross-cultural or transnational experience (Introduction 4). On juxtaposing the notions of world literature(s) and 'literatures of the world', Müller identifies five characteristics that are

comparably binding to both concepts: 1) multilingualism; 2) movement; 3) global-local; 4) non-settledness; and 5) the dominance of Europe and the United States. She, however, points to the fact that these characteristics are often focused upon from diametrically opposed perspectives, standing as they do for two possible paradigm formations in literary theory and cultural affairs. It is therefore not surprising, she surmises, that their criteria often overlap in major ways when selecting primary texts, revealing itself in a special and meaningful way in the international marketing and reception of Caribbean literatures. Literary examples from the Anglophone Caribbean abound that illustrate the referred-to phenomenon of a major overlap between the two concepts. Indeed, as Müller indicates, one could go as far as to say that it is precisely those texts from the English-speaking Caribbean that have been canonized as world literature that can comply with the change in perspective towards 'literatures of the world'.

Another important consideration in the context of world literature logics and processes of international recognition is whether a text has to be translated into English – the most important language for global circulation processes, a factor that clearly favors the sub-region. Whatever the underlying reason, what is clear is that while literatures from the Anglophone Caribbean have been received as world literature and can simultaneously be pioneering for concepts of 'literatures of the world', global recognition in world literature for Hispanophone, and especially Francophone Caribbean literature, has only taken place in exceptional cases, if at all. Notwithstanding the aforementioned, the beginning of the 1990s would see the worldwide advent of a group of Francophone writers who, along with literary production, are able to refer to a philosophically

motivated essayistic oeuvre informed by their Caribbean experience. The concerns of the authors gathered around Patrick Chamoiseau and Raphaël Confiant from Martinique can be read as one version of the conceptual implication of multilingualism in literary texts, which was earlier identified as a feature of 'literatures of the world'. Their affiliation with 'literatures of the world' finds its strongest expression in the fact that it connects not at the level of content, but rather at the aesthetic level, to an act of rebellion against cultural assimilation, act that represents an essential element of the literary debate of the Antilles.

More recently, in 2009, the world witnessed the prestigious Prix Médicis ('Médicis Prize') being awarded to the transnational Haitian author, now Montreal resident, Dany Laferrière, for his *L'enigme du retour* ('The Enigma of the Return') and multiple awards granted to the non-resident Haitian (vagabond) writer, Louis-Philippe Dalembert, although these still remain exceptional instances. It is interesting, however, to see that the publishers at Gallimard, which were the first to publish Glissant, Confiant, and Chamoiseau, have represented authors from the Francophone Caribbean with increasing frequency. Previously, Gallimard had a strong tendency to represent authors from Cuba, such as Alejo Carpentier. We should also note that these 'new' Gallimard authors from the Francophone Caribbean are very strongly aligned with the 'literatures of the world' criteria. The initial spark may have been the oft-cited manifesto entitled *Pour une littérature-monde*, initially published in the *Le Monde* newspaper in March 2007 then later in the same year by Gallimard. Many renowned authors were involved in this manifesto, including Maryse Condé, Édouard Glissant, Fabienne Kanor, and Dany

Laferrière, and it turned decisively against the center-periphery logic of the Francophonie concept.

Müller concludes that Caribbean literatures are predestined for inclusion in the canon of 'literatures of the world' due to their inherent eclectic nature. At the same time, in view of her brief inventory of Gallimard's authors, she observes that there is an increasingly established interplay between the world literature criterion of the number of extant translations and literatures of the world emerging at the level of publishing house canonizations. This has already applied for a long time to literatures in the Anglophone Caribbean, and we can currently see the same thing on the French book market, namely that the criterion 'literatures of the world' is becoming increasingly important in the publishing industry for the selection of Caribbean authors. Along with the transnational dimension of this criterion, a certain dissolution of the center-periphery dynamic is taking place (in terms of content, literary language, and to some extent in cultural politics). Literary texts that have successfully passed through this first selection filter then have to go through the authorities that are decisive for international canonization, which are still located primarily in the Western world, in the case of the Francophone Caribbean in France. This is a development, she continues, that we can welcome with regard to the potential of the concept of 'literatures of the world'. A new world literature, oriented towards literatures of the world, must shake off Eurocentric perspectives, incorporate new dynamics, new spaces of reception, and considerations related to the theory of power in order to interpret a highly complex system of global selection and circulation processes for our time and to enable critical reflection on their asymmetries. At the level of

production and distribution processes for Caribbean literatures on the global book market, there is no sign that the hegemony of the North is being revoked, as is postulated in many fields of research on global interconnectedness. However, a programmatic re-orientation is emerging among globally active publishing houses, one that is assigning new value to literary traditions formerly relegated to the periphery.

Chapter 1

Haiti

Beyond Western Humanism and the Global Novel: Desires to Refigure and/or Socially Transform the World

Haiti's 'Worldly' Literature

Owing to Haiti's unique circumstances in which its cultural production emerged out of a revolutionary war that drove the French colonial rulers out of St. Domingue in 1804, it has from the very inception been inspired as much by the need to affirm the uniqueness of the Haitian nation as by its redemptive mission in a world dominated by colonialism and slavery. Immediately following independence, however, like most newly independent societies, the nation's cultural identity would remain anchored through mimetic practices to the dominant Western (particularly French) cultural mores although discussing themes relevant to its concrete historical reality and time. Some of these early Haitian cosmopolitan authors of note were Juste Chanlatte, Jules Soline Millicent and Antoine Dupré, who imitated French authors of the 17th and 18th centuries, to whom they looked for images, a style, and fixed forms.[33]

Later would emerge the Generation of 1836 that included the Nau brothers,[34] one of whom, Emile, launched the watchword "soyons nous-mêmes" (let's be ourselves) and spoke of "brunir la langue Française sous le soleil d'Haiti" (darkening the French language under the Haitian sun), pointing to the inadequacy of the French language to both capture and convey the Haitian reality. While the cultural producers of this

[33] See Louis-Philippe Dalembert and Lyonel Trouillot's *Haiti : Une traversée littéraire*, p. 13.
[34] The most famous members of the Generation of 1836 group were the two Nau brothers (Emile and Ignace) and the young poet, Coriolin Ardouin, deceased before his thirtieth birthday.

generation, under the influence of Romanticism that had begun to impose itself in France around that time, continued to imitate European models, they undoubtedly had changed masters, each one trying to express their own sensibilities (Dalembert and Trouillot, 13-15).

The end of the nineteenth century would be a period of political turmoil, during which time writers and poets, in particular, Masillon Coicou, Tertulien Guilbaud, and Oswald Durand would write patriotic songs and other calls to unity, without breaking with the romantic tradition. Fiction would flourish with a group of realist novelists, including Fréderic Marcelin, Justin Lhérisson, Fernand Hibbert, and Antoine Innocent. The subsequent (pre Indigenist) phase of cosmopolitanism, spearheaded by a group of poets associated with the journal *La Ronde* (1898-1902), would continue to advance the tropes of Haitian cultural uniqueness while adopting a more eclectic approach in their poetics.

This Haitian cultural trajectory from practices of imitation to more independent ones may be compared to those of their Euro descendant counterparts within the Latin American and Caribbean region, who themselves continued to embrace Western European cosmopolitanism as their chosen path to cultural modernity during the Romantic period and beyond while attempting to consolidate their own national and regional cultural identities. It would not be until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with the Modernists and Avant-garde movements that emerged in Hispanic America and Brazil respectively that the intellectuals of these countries would begin, so to speak, to flex their cultural muscles, leading to the start of what according to Roberto

González Echevarría and Enrique Pupo-Walker one could then truly describe as a(n) (independent) Latin American literature.[35]

It would be in the early twentieth century as well, during the decade of the 20´s, in the throes of the US occupation of Haiti that the country's intellectuals would achieve their cultural independence with the emergence of their first national avant-garde movement known as Indigenism (*L'Indigenisme*). In the words of Louis-Philippe Dalembert and Lyonel Trouillot, Haitian cultural production would finally with this movement "rid itself of the straitjacket of European (French) models" (15) choosing thereby to engage with Western cultural forms on their own terms.

The movement's beginning is associated with two signature events: first, the launch in 1927 of *La Revue Indigène ('The Indigenist Magazine'*), cofounded by a group of young cultural producers,[36] who formulated and promoted a collection of cultural and literary propositions throughout the magazine's short life of just six publications (6 months), that extolled (Western) modernity while advocating for the Haitian identity (*L'Haïtianité*) and second, the publication in 1928 of Jean Price-Mars' seminal work *Ainsi parla l'oncle ('So Spoke the Uncle'* (trans 1983).[37]

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[35] See Introduction to *The Cambridge History of Latin American Literature* by Roberto González Echevarría and Enrique Pupo-Walker eds., Vol. 1, p. 7.

[36] The founding authors of *La Revue Indigène* and, by extension, the *Indigéniste* movement were: Ëmile Roumer, who also served as the magazine's director and one of its founding editors together with the poets Jacques Roumain, Carl Brouard, Philippe Thoby-Marcelin, and Normil Sylvain.

[37] Jean Price-Mars was a Haitian-born diplomat, Minister of Foreign Affairs, intellectual, physician, ethnographer, educator, novelist, biographer, critic, editor. He was the author and founder of Philosophy of Haitianism and the Spiritual Father of *Négritude*. During his lifetime he served as Education Director-General of Haiti and Ambassador to the Republic of San Domingo, the United Nations and France. He was also distinguished as the Secretary of the Haitian U.S. delegation to the Berlin Embassy and Commissioner of the Missouri Exhibition.

Providing the author's assessment of the folklore of the Haitian past and contemporary customs of the early 1900s, based on contemplative thought and the accumulation of factual evidence, Price-Mars' book primarily demonstrated that history is a continuous societal process based on the accommodation of folkloric past to changing behavioral patterns, irrespective of color, and that therefore the role of blacks is an integral and consequential part of the history of civilization.[38]

This scientific work would substantiate Haiti's post-revolutionary universalist discourse first articulated by the nation's freedom fighter and statesman, Toussaint L'Ouverture, in his many letters to the Empire, then later consecrated in the Haitian Constitution of 1801 drafted by him that recast the then global discussion on human rights set within the Eurocentric frame of mankind and citizenship to the more indigenous one of inhabitants and finally memorialized in the subsequent 1805 Constitution.[39] Moreover, the latter constitution instituted by the Revolution would provide rights of citizenship for Africans and mulattoes that existed nowhere else in the world (save for a handful of African territories, such as Ethiopia and the area currently known as Rwanda), a fact that should not be discounted.[40]

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[38] See Jean Price-Mars (1876-1969), *Ainsi Parla l'oncle,* Compiègne, Imprimerie de Compiègne, 1928 ; rééd. Montréal, Mémoire déncrier, 2009. Cited by Louis Philippe-Dalembert and Lyonel Trouillot in *Haiti, une traversée littéraire* (2010).

[39] The Haitian Constitution (1801) can be found in *Jean-Bertrand Aristide presents Toussaint L'Ouverture: The Haitian Revolution* edited by Nick Nesbitt (2019 [2008]).

[40] Additional achievements of note of the 1805 post-revolutionary Haitian Constitution were: the abolishment of slavery, the recategorization of all citizens as 'Black' whatever their racial or ethnic antecedents, and the redistribution of plantation lands to Blacks and Mulattoes, including peasants. See Myriam Chancy's *From Sugar to Revolution:Women's Visions of Haiti, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic*, 2012, p. 22.

Decades later, in 1885, the essayist, Anténor Firmin, would provide further critical support for Haiti's humanist position by circulating in Paris his essay *De l'égalité des races humaines. Anthropologie positive* ('*On the Equality of the Human Races. Positive Anthropology'*)[41], challenging thereby the basic tenets of Western humanism, in response to Comte Arthur de Gobineau's widely promoted *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines* ('*Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races'*)[42] that had been reedited and circulated the previous year in the French capital.

Based on the above world-shaking and world-shaping texts, Michael Merriman argues that Haiti should rightly serve as its own model of world literature[43] with the afore-mentioned documents being recognized not only for their engagement and contestation of global Western philosophical ideas of the period, of which the Haitian Revolution was the greatest disproof, but for the global impact of these events in the then known world. Indeed, as Philip Kaisary aptly states:

> [The Haitian Revolution] was an entirely novel historical event that was […] universal in its political aspirations and ideological implications […] Initially, it had shocked the Western world and its rising consumer culture, reshaped the debates about slavery, accelerated the abolitionist movement, precipitated rebellions in neighboring slave-holding territories, and intensified both repression and anti-slavery sentiment on both sides of the Atlantic. The Haitian Revolution

[41] See Joseph-Anténor Firmin (1850-1911), *De l'égalité des races humaines. Anthropologie positive*, Paris, F. Pichon, 1885 ; rééd. Montréal, Mémoire d'encrier, 2005. Cited by Louis Philippe-Dalembert and Lyonel Trouillot in *Haiti, une traversée littéraire* (2010).
[42] See Arthur de Gobineau (1816-1882), *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines*, paris, 1855. Cited by Louis Philippe-Dalembert and Lyonel Trouillot in *Haiti, une traversée littéraire* (2010).
[43] See Michael W. Merriman's "Haitian Literature as a Model for World Literature" in *World Literature Today* (2015).

must thus be accounted for as a world-historical event of paramount significance that galvanized people throughout the Americas and across the Atlantic world as no other event has done before or since. (Introduction 1).

In light of this unquestionable fact, many Caribbean scholars purport that the Haitian Revolution should occupy a place alongside that of the French, and I might add, its hemispheric counterpart, as the universal fulfilment of the former's promises of *Liberté, Égalité, et Fraternité* ('Freedom, Equality, and Fraternity') to the world and as a localized enaction of the declarations of the latter of humankind's equality at creation and their endowment of the unalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.[44] Still others maintain that the tragic events in the Caribbean country that have followed since the Revolution should by no means obscure the transformative consequences of this catalytic event within Latin America, the wider Caribbean, and the world.[45]

Although the promise of universal freedom, equality and brotherhood remains today an unfulfilled one and for some a distant utopia, one that is unfulfillable in this present age, a grim perspective, reflective of Mariano Siskind's cosmopolitanist 'end of the world scenario', the reverberations of the Revolution continue to be felt both

[44] See US Declaration of Independence in 1776 as presented by President Thomas Jefferson to the US Congress of July 4, 1776, para. 2, the first line of which reads thus: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

[45] Apart from serving as a catalyst for abolition movements throughout Latin America, the Haitian freedom fighters provided both advice and men to aid Latin American states in their independence struggles, for instance, Dessalines and Pétion to the Mexican general, Mina, Miranda and Simón Bolívar as well as the many Haitian volunteers who shed their blood on Latin American soil during these battles. See Jacques Stephen Alexis' *Du réalisme merveilleux des Haitiens,* p. 12. The Haitian Constitution of 1801 that declared all persons who were born, lived, or died in Haiti free and French as well as the later Statutory Law of 1939 were universal in their scope, supporting local struggles for freedom from oppression throughout the world as well as welcoming the oppressed to its shores as in the case of the Jews during the period of Nazism and Fascism in Europe. See *The Haitian Constitution (1801*) and Haitian Statutory Law 1939.

materially and in the literary imaginary of the region's intellectuals to this day. Philip Kaisary's commitment to return in 2021 to the Revolution's "project of universal freedom" and the similar engagement of the scholars and critics involved in the "Literature and Ethics in Contemporary Brazil" project conducted in 2017 attest to this fact.[46] In support of these noble ends, Mariano de Carvalho and Nicola Gavioti affirm that to speak about Comparative Literature and 'World Literature' in 2017 and not address ethical concerns (from bioethics to eco-ethics, from human rights to animal rights) seemed ideologically conservative, academically retrograde and politically authoritarian (4).

One should also not forget the impact that the Revolution as an historical event has had on the cultural imaginary and, by extension, representational forms throughout much of the world since its occurrence. In the West, for instance, notable nineteenth century writers seeking to celebrate, appropriate, or dramatize the event for their own social and political milieu produced, in its wake, literary and historical works, travelogues, memoirs, and artworks.[47] More recently, from the 1930s onwards, the Revolution has repeatedly drawn international interest, particularly from the wider Caribbean, North and Latin America, Africa, and black communities in Europe, inspiring imaginative and political writings, visual arts, music, and other art forms and cultural practices in all of those regions (Kaisary 5, 6).

[46] The project was subsequently transformed into the eponymous collection of essays that was coedited by Mariano de Carvalho and Nicola Gavioti in the same year.
[47] Some of these authors include the English writers, William Woodsworth and Harriet Martineau; the French writers, Victor Hugo and Alphonse de Lamartine; the German writer Heinrich von Kleist; and the American poet and abolitionist John Greenleaf Whittier.

Still another important contribution of Price-Mars' groundbreaking work was the humanizing of the African through the equating of their popular culture with that of Western hegemonic cultures. Stating that Haiti could only accept itself and progress by acknowledging all of the components of its culture, of which the African is an essential one, Price-Mars affirmed that only then, literature, but also music, dance, as well as painting would open up to modernity and popular culture, as well as to daily life and lived experiences and will explore new themes and new forms (Dalembert and l Trouillot 16).

Price-Mars' affirmation preempts in a sense the critical universalist discourse of the late nineteenth century Cuban freedom fighter and poet laureate, José Martí, who recognizing, like the former had earlier, the myth of race, called on his fellow Latin Americans to both consider and embrace what he labeled 'the natural man' in their cultural identity formation. While Martí focused, however, on the opening to Western modernity (the reading of Western literature) as a means of preserving a nation or region's cultural identity *Nuestra América* (Our America) from the hegemonic aspirations of any one of the extant dominant cultures, i.e., the more developed and powerful *Otra América* ('Other America') situated to its North,[48] Price-Mars had as his ultimate aim the categorical contestation of Western assimilationist humanism that continued to dehumanize, denigrate, and culturally destroy autochthonous societies and cultures like his own.

[48] See José Martí's essay "Nuestra América" in *Nuestra América,* Prologue by Juan Marinello, ed. Hugo Achúgar. Caracas: Biblioteca Ayacucho, 1977.

Moreover, the Haitian ethnographer's definition of his country's national cultural identity as one that would, of necessity, embrace both Western modernity and popular culture consolidated an emerging Haitian brand of cosmopolitanism, or perhaps as Martin Munro more accurately labeled it, worldliness,[49] that was truly *sui generis* at the time within Latin America and the Latin Caribbean and that found expression in the populist novels that would be later produced by authors such as Jean-Baptiste (Jacques) Roumain (1907-1944),[50] Jacques Stephen Alexis (1922-1961), and Frankétienne (1936-)[51] to cite just a few, that not only recounted the daily lives of the Haitian people, but did so by employing the authentic language of the people, the Haitian creole.

Indeed, Haiti's 'populist' cosmopolitanism stood in contrast to that of much of Latin America and the Caribbean at the time, which as Mariano Siskind convincingly illustrates was permeated by cosmopolitan desires (a desire for the world (Western modernity)), that I might add eschewed both the *de juris* and *de facto* social, political and cultural inclusiveness of its non-Euro-descendant other.[52] History records, for instance,

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[49] See Martin Munro's "Haiti's Worldly Literature", *Small Axe*, Vol. 14, No. 3, 2010, pp. 69-77.

[50] Born Jean-Baptiste but known globally as Jacques, Roumain was a Haitian writer, politician, and advocate of Marxism. Educated in Catholic schools first in Haiti and then later in Belgium, Switzerland, France, Germany, and Spain, upon his return to Haiti, Roumain became active against the struggle against US occupation of Haiti, founding the Haitian Communist party. Later exiled, Roumain worked with and befriended many prominent Pan-African writers and poets of the time, including Langston Hughes, who translated some of his works. He also lived for a while in neighboring Cuba. Considered one of the most prominent figures in Haitian literature, Roumain's most famous novel, *Gouverneurs de la Rosée* (*Masters of the Dew*) has become a classic of Caribbean literature, been adapted to film, and translated into several languages apart from English, including Hebrew, Spanish, and Swedish.

[51] Frankétienne, born Franck Étienne is a writer, poet, playwright, painter, musician, activist, and intellectual. He is recognized as one of Haiti's leading writers and playwrights of both French and Haitian creole and is known as the father of Haitian letters. As a painter, he is known for his colorful abstract works, often emphasizing the colors blue and red. He was a candidate for the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2009, made a commander of the *Ordre des Arts et Lettres* (Order of the Arts and Letters), and named UNESCO Artist for Peace in 2010.

[52] See in *Cosmopolitan Desires: Global Modernity and World Literature in Latin America*, Introduction p. 3.

the adoption of national policies of *mestizaje / mestizagem* (miscegenation) and *blanquecimiento* / *embranquecimiento* (whitening) by the Brazilian and many Hispanic American political elites, who in contrast to their Haitian counterparts, embraced Western modernity while eradicating, at worst, and invisibilizing and/or exoticizing, at best, the African and Indigenous components of their national cultures. Moreover, within the universal philosophical, ideological and epistemological parameters of Western humanism embraced by the Euro descendant intellectuals, Western modernity and popular culture, interpreted through the lens of the trope of *Civilización y Barbarie* (Civilization and Barbarism), were rendered mutually exclusive.

In the above sense, Haiti's worldliness adds another layer to the body of (regional) modes of global cultural engagement and, by extension, the universalist discourse of the early twentieth century, and should therefore be received as such. Moreover, undergirded as it was by a broader and more inclusive humanism that sought to embrace the contributions of the dehumanized African, his culture, and his daily life into a universal cultural production of human civilization, it laid the foundation for the advocating for similar processes in contiguous spaces and the emergence of future 'new' humanists who would contest Western humanism, universalism, and what they saw as the over representation of Western man in culture. To this point, Martin Munro convincingly argues that much of Haitian literature, with its emphasis on 'the humanity and worldliness of Haiti and its people', anticipates many aspects of *littérature-monde*[53] and

[53] The commonly called *Littérature monde* manifesto is a short text entitled 'Pour une littérature-monde en français' that first appeared in the *Le Monde* newspaper in 2007 that declared that the center, the point from which was supposed to radiate a Franco-French literature, is no longer the center. ('le centre, ce point

concepts put forward by theorists such as Edouard Glissant.[54] He continues that 'Haiti and its authors were worldly phenomena of their time and intimately connected to the wider world, and in particular to the broader emancipatory movements that continued to rumble throughout the nineteenth century (Munro 70).

Within the Latin American and Caribbean region, one needs not go very far to cite an example of the direct impact of and/or confluence with this act of embracing popular culture in the region's cultural identity discourse. In the early twentieth century (1939), for instance, neighboring Cuba would engage in a National (Primitivist) Debate which would later affirm the centrality of the African element in Cuban national identity. In this debate would participate Alejo Carpentier and Alejandro García Caturla[55], who would first express this acknowledgement aesthetically through the production and internationalization of their joint opera buffa, *Manita en el suelo.*[56] Other equally notable

depuis lequel était supposer rayonner une littérature franco-française n'est plus le centre'). Written by Michel LeBris and Jean Rouaud with 42 co-signatories from around the French-speaking world, the manifesto expressed frustration with 'francophonie', a term they deemed redundant, fraught with imperial overtones, and inconsistent with the recent successes of the non-metropolitan writers in the 2007 season's literary prizes as proof of the emergence of a world literature in French that was consciously affirmed, open to the world, transnational ('une littérature-monde, consciemment affirmée, ouverte au monde, transnationale'). See Pour une littérature-monde en français, Le Monde, 16 March 2007 https://www.lemonde.fr/livres/article/2007/03/15/des-ecrivains-plaident-pour-un-roman-en-francais-ouvert-sur-le-monde_883572_3260.html

[54] Glissant, one of the distinguished co-signers of the *Littérature-monde* manifesto is the author of the much-celebrated *Poétique de la relation* published in 1990, a (world) theory of poetry of multiple cultures in contact modeled on the Caribbean. He had previously also dedicated much of his career to thinking through the issues raised in the manifesto. See Edouard Glissant, *Traité du Tout-Monde*, Gallimard, 1997.

[55] Although neither Carpentier nor García Carturla were of African descent, they can be both viewed as advocates for and promoters of the popular culture of Cuba. Carpentier, moreover, is important for his attempts to interpret Latin American and Caribbean Black aesthetic production and thought to the white world, as well as for the role he evidently played in the constellation of Magical Realism within the region and the explanation he offered in his world-famous text *El reino de este mundo* on the difference between the Marvelous Realism of the Haitians and the primarily Euro-descendant Magical Realism of the Boom period.

[56] See Anna Martija Perez's "La contribución de la ópera bufa *Manita en el suelo* de Alejo Carpentier y García Caturla en el debate primitivista de principios del siglo XX", UTK_Digital Commons_TRACE, https://trace.tennessee.edu/vernacular/vol7/iss1/1/, accessed on 5 August 2023.

persons within the region, albeit more problematic in some cases,[57] would be the writers and intellectuals associated with new ideologies of racial inclusion, namely Gilberto Freyre in Brazil, Fernando Ortiz in Cuba, José Vasconcelos in Mexico, and Juan Pablo Sojo in Venezuela, who as Alejandro de la Fuente and George Reid Andrews indicate:

> acknowledged the role of Africans and their descendants in creating new, distinctly Latin American national cultures, societies, and identities that were neither African nor European in form nor content, but rather a mixture of African, European, and Amerindian elements, combined in a centuries long process of cultural and racial mixture that had produced something completely new in world historical experience: a "New World in the tropics," in Freyre's formulation, or a new "cosmic race," in the language of Vasconcelos. (Introduction 5)

It is also unquestionable that Haiti's new humanist discourse as articulated by Price-Mars stands as a precursor to the other new humanisms that would emerge within Pan Africanist and anti-colonialist ideologies, such as Aimé Césaire's and Léopold Sédar Senghor's *Négritude* humanism,[58] expressed aesthetically in the former's epic poem *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* (1939) and the latter's *Oeuvre poétique* and Franz Fanon's anti-colonial humanism embodied in his seminal text, *Les Damnés de la terre*

[57] These concepts of miscegenation were used to advance a narrative of racial democracy in these countries, leading thereby to the sweeping of the issue of racial discrimination under the carpet and the seemingly justified continuation of exclusion of Afro-descendant populations from aspects of national life to which they were legitimately entitled as citizens.

[58] Césaire's contestation of Western humanism appeared as early as 1935 in the first issue of *L'Etudiant noir,* where he describes how the black youth "veut contribuer à la vie universelle, à l'humanisation de l'humanité". See 'Negrèries: jeunesse noire et assimilation' in *Les Temps Modernes,* Vol. 675, No. 5, 2013, p. 248. Some fifteen years later, in his *Discours sur le colonialisme,* he would extend this idea, equating colonialization with objectification. Cited by Scott Newman, "From Marvelous Realism to World Literature…", p. 17.

(…). Haiti's own Jacques Stephen Alexis[59] would later both distil and consolidate many of these ideas in his radical populist universal humanism articulated within his two groundbreaking essays, « Du réalisme merveilleux des Haïtiens » 'On the Marvelous Realism of the Haitians') and « Débat autour des conditions d'un roman national chez les peuples noirs: Où va le roman? » ('Debate around the conditions of a national novel among Blacks: Where is the novel headed?').

Mapping the Marvelous: Alexian Social (Marvelous) Realism as World Literature

Published in 1956 in Paris in the quarterly Pan Africanist journal, *Présence Africaine* ('African Presence'), the Alexian proto-manifesto « Du réalisme merveilleux des Haïtiens »–the second essay would be published a year later in the very same journal[60]–was originally presented at the First International Congress of Black Writers and Artists *('Le Premier Congrès International des écrivains et artistes noirs'*) held at the University of Sorbonne, Paris, from 19-22 September 1956.[61] It would be, therefore,

[59] Born during the period of the US occupation of Haiti (1915-1934), Alexis (1922-1961) was a communist, novelist, poet, and activist who co-founded the left-wing journal *La Ruche* (1945-1946) in late 1945 with René Depestre and other students. Political activism would remain an essential part of Alexis' life, taking him on trips to the USSR, throughout Europe, China, and Cuba where he resided for a few years. Despite his short literary career, Alexis would earn a place in the canon of Haitian letters with his three novels *Compère Général Soleil* (1955), *Les Arbres musiciens* (1957), and *L'Espace d'un cillement* (1959) and a collection of short stories *Romancero aux étoiles* (1960), all published by Gallimard, making him the first Haitian to be published by the prestigious Parisian press. In addition, Alexis' own use of the marvelous realist mode has enjoyed international acclaim, as indicated by the re-edition and translation of his fiction into eleven different languages. Cited by Scott Newman in "From Marvelous Realism to World Literature," p. 9, who indicates that he was able to track down translations of Alexis' fiction into Czech, English, German, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Spanish, and most recently, Haitian creole.

[60] Intended as a series, the later work projected to be a debate was, however, short-lived, receiving only one brief response. See Léonard Sainville, 'A propos du « Débat autour des conditions d'un roman national chez les peuples noirs »', *Présence Africaine,* 18-19 (1958), 217-220, cited by Scott Newman, *From Marvelous Realism,* p. 7.

[61] The Congress, which would be reproduced three years later in Rome, Italy (March 26th to April 1st), saw the participation of hundreds of eminent black intellectuals from all geographical zones (Africa, Europe,

before this group of eminent Black intellectuals from all across the globe that Alexis would first delineate his original concept of universal cultural production from his perspective as a twentieth-century Haitian political activist and author.

Many of these intellectuals, who themselves were left-wing writers and activists, Alexis would meet while studying medicine in the French capital, some of whom, Césaire, Fanon, and Senghor, for instance, would become important world interlocutors for his revolutionary ideas and propositions. Beyond this close circle in Paris that influenced his critical discourse, however, Alexis would curate a worldwide canon of intellectuals from within the region and beyond. These cultural producers include the pioneering Haitian realist novelists, Frederic Marcelin, Fernand Hibbert, and Justin Lhérisson, the Brazilian, Jorge Amado, the Guatemalan, Miguel Angel Asturias, the Peruvian, Ciro Alegria, the Americans, John Steinbeck and Ernest Hemingway, the world-renowned artists, Shakespeare, Michelangelo, and Beethoven, as well as a host of Soviet novelists and their predecessors, including particularly, Gorki, Tolstoy, and Dostoevsky.[62] Indeed, as Scott Newman demonstrates, Alexian Marvelous Realism draws inspiration from wide-ranging cultural and political discourses across the Atlantic world,

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the Caribbean, and the Americas). Some of the attendees included Léopold Sédor Senghor, Cheik Anta Diop (Senegal), Ferdinand Oyono (Cameroun), Jacques Rabemananjara (Madagascar), Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon, Édouard Glissant (Martinique), Léon-Gontran Damas (French Guiana), Jean Price-Mars (Haiti), Richard Wright (USA), etc. Not only was the Congress the first such one to be held at the prestigious *Université de la Sorbonne* (Sorbonne University), but it was also widely supported by Western intellectuals, namely Jean-Paul Sartre, André Gide, and Michel Leiris, with the official badge designed by the Spanish painter, Pablo Picasso. All of the aforementioned accompanied the cultural combat that followed.

[62] See Jacques Stephen Alexis' « Du Réalisme Merveilleux des Haïtiens », cited by Scott Newman in "From Marvelous Realism to World Literature: Rethinking the Human with Jacques Stephen Alexis", p. 2.

including those from within Haiti itself.[63] His most significant transnational ideological influences undoubtedly, however, were Marxism and anti-colonial humanism, with which he first engaged in Port-au-Prince and later within the community of African and diasporic artists and intellectuals based in Paris (3).

Organized through the initiative of the *Sociéte africaine de culture* ('African Cultural Society' (SAC)) headed by the Senegalese, Alioune Diop, who also founded the *Maison d'édition* ('Publishing House') *Présence Africaine* ('African Presence') in 1947 and the journal by the same name, the Congress had as its central theme the crisis of culture, aiming at reaffirming the eminent dignity of Black civilization and culture and of promoting the idea of the "civilization of the universal." Thus, the papers presented not only externalized the different cultures of African/Black peoples but also analyzed the elements identified as the causes of cultural crises around the world: the trans-Sahara and Atlantic slave trade and slavery, racism, colonization, industrialization, and Christianity.[64]

At the end of the international event, it seemed indispensable to the participants that black writers and artists should contribute to the rehabilitation, revalorization, and development of the cultures of blacks to integrate them into the whole of "human

[63] Newman demonstrates in his article "From Marvelous Realism to World Literature: Rethinking the Human with Jacques Stephen Alexis" (2019) that within Haiti, Alexis builds on the nation's tradition of universalist thought that goes at least as far back as the 1804 Revolution. In this regard, he draws from the scholarship of J. Michael Dash in his work "*Haiti Chimere:* Revolutionary Universalism and its Caribbean Context" in *Reinterpreting the Haitian Revolution and its Cultural Aftershocks*, ed. Martin Munro and Elizabeth Walcott-Hackshaw, UWI P, 2006, pp. 9-19; Martin Munro, "Haiti's Worldly Literature" in *Small Axe*, No. 14, Vol. 3, 2010, pp. 66}9-77; and Michel-Rolph Trouillot, "The Odd and the Ordinary: Haiti, the Caribbean, and the World" in *Cimarron*, Vol. 2, No. 3, 1990, pp. 3-12.

[64] Antilla Martinique, « 20 Septembre 1956 Paris : Le 1er Congres des intellectuel noirs du monde », No. CPPAP-0524 X94923, September 22, 2022, p. 1.

culture." In addition, the participants estimated that the flourishing of black culture had to be conditioned on the end of colonialization, racism, and the exploitation that blacks were undergoing. Finally, they also advocated for the recognition of black thought. [65]

Following, as it did, the Afro-Asian conference held the previous year (April 1955) in Bandung, Indonesia, that consecrated the Non-Aligned Movement,[66] its cultural and political repercussions can be said to have consolidated those of its predecessor. While, in the words of the Senegalese poet and politician, Léopold Sédor Senghor, "Bandung consecrated the death of the cultural inferiority complex of the peoples of color," it was the 1956 Congress that killed this complex amongst Blacks, as posited by his compatriot, Cheik Anta Diop, who pointed to the period following Paris that was an extremely prolific one for black writers, artists, and university students in terms of intellectual production" (*Présence Africaine Cinquanténaire* 174).

Alexis' presentation, subtitled "Prolegomena to a Manifesto of the Marvelous Realism of the Haitians," can be subdivided into three principal parts: 1) the theorization

[65] Although many black intellectuals had been expressing themselves critically since the nineteenth century, the idea of officially recognizing this practice, thereby highlighting the intellectual contribution of Blacks to humankind's understanding of the universe, its history and its progression, should be seen as one of the critical outcomes of the Congress. See Antilla Martinique, « 20 Septembre 1956 Paris : Le 1er Congres des intellectuel noirs du monde », No. CPPAP-0524 X94923, September 22, 2022, p. 1.

[66] The Non-Aligned Movement was a political movement based on an ideological confrontation between East and West. Although it did lead to some measure of increased cultural production among its members, this was not as significant as that of its successor. The membership of the Non-Aligned Movement that continues today despite the collapse of the Soviet Union includes 120 developing world states, presently including ten Latin American states, that during the cold war era were not formally aligned or against any major power bloc. After the United Nations, it is the largest grouping of states worldwide. Originating in the 1950s, the movement was firmly established in 1961 in Belgrade. Yugoslavia, through an initiative of the Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, Yugoslav President Josip Bros Tito, Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser, Ghanaian President Kwame Nkrumah, and Indonesian President Sukarno. In the years since the Cold War's end in 1991, it has focused on developing multilateral ties and connections as well as unity among the developing nations of the world, especially those within the Global South.

of a new humanism based on love of justice, freedom, and man above all, that would comprise the core of a projected universal human culture; 2) the consolidation of Haiti's cultural nationalist discourse through the highlighting of the aesthetic distinctiveness of the nation's then emergent artistic school of Marvelous Realism while simultaneously articulating its confluence with other forms of social realism within the region and throughout the world; and 3) the proposal for the integration of the marvelous into a projected theory of universal cultural production (i.e., Haitian Literature as World Literature). The text also provides an alternative and more accurate way of reading for the globalized Western world and/or the human (racial) 'other' of Black cultural production, in particular, and social realism, in general–the premier aesthetic mode of expression employed by Black and Afro-descendant populations–of which Marvelous Realism was presented by Alexis as a localized variant.

In sum, Alexis theorizes in this first text a non-Eurocentric (non-assimilationist) path to universal cultural production (world literature) that valorized the aesthetic modes of expression inherent in marginalized cultures everywhere (those that remained relatively untouched by Western capitalist intellectualization). In his second later published essay, he would further extend this theorization to incorporate the genre of the novel, arguing that this aesthetic mode appropriated by the Western Bourgeoisie to aid in their expansion throughout the globe was in fact an ancient aesthetic form that represented a culture's progression to maturity (from the oral to the written form) by virtue of its mastery of the appropriate technology (literacy) acquired by man in his advancement as part of human civilization.

Within the above understanding of the novel, Alexis advances another critical use of this global form within Latin America and the Caribbean–one that was increasingly being employed during the 1950s by Haitian cultural producers in particular, as well as by other social realists within the region and throughout the world–that of staging and demanding social and political transformation. Hence, Alexis theorized the novel as capable of performing an additional role alongside the two presented by Siskind: that of the previously referred-to aid in the process of Western hegemonic globalization (the 'globalization of the novel') and, as more recently employed by Latin American and Caribbean cosmopolitan cultural producers, that of presenting and discussing global themes from the region's perspective (the 'novelization of the global') (*Cosmopolitan Desires* Chapter 1). Of course, since then as Myriam Chancy indicates, the novel has been used by Caribbean authors as a primary medium to build an archive giving testament to the region's varied history; to elucidate the experience of societies and individuals in the region; and to investigate and project the inner experiences of the West Indian community (*From Sugar* xi).

Alexian New (Cultural) Humanism

Inspired by the explosion of widespread global movements and international meetings aimed at fostering a freer and more just world[67] that had been occurring since

[67] These included the Black Parisian networks, the African Movements of Decolonization, the Communist International Movement, the Non-Aligned Movement and its Bandung Conference, the Black Liberation Movements and their Associated Cultural Arms (the American Civil Rights Movement and the Harlem Renaissance, for instance); The *Négritude* Movements (the Césairean and Senghorean versions), Pan Africanism and the International Congresses of Black Writers and Artists (Paris (1956), Rome (1959) and

the early twentieth century as a result of the increased cross-border flows of peoples and ideas facilitated by the revolutionary technological advances of the period, Alexis theorizes the emergence across the world of what he labels a 'new (cultural) humanism'[68] that he perceived as capable of transcending Western humanism, leading to the constellation of a universal human culture that would be based on the externalization of local, national, and regional cultural production that reflected the historical specificities and concrete realities of the peoples of the world. It was only natural therefore, Alexis concludes, that the fundamental content of works of art would tend to reflect the problems that confronted men everywhere ("Du réalisme" 91).

In fact, so convinced was Alexis of this reality that he was moved to pronounce that from then onwards it was possible to say that "we are moving towards a harmonious concert of national cultures. The spirit is blowing everywhere and in no part, no area of the world, is there a monopoly on culture; the reality of today's world demonstrates this" (Du Réalisme 102).[69] One can therefore identify a dual mandate in Alexis' critical thought: the development of a notion of world or universal literature from outside of

Montréal (1968)); *pannegrismo* (1918-1945) Garveyism, and the Cuban Revolution. In addition, one should not fail to mention the United Nations, the largest post-World War II group of nations and its cultural arm UNESCO that continues through its publications to advocate for and promote the cultures of the world broadly speaking and writ large.

[68] Alexis defines this 'new humanism' as "the inevitable encounter of the art of all peoples on the plane of aesthetic content: the love of the real, of nature and life, love of freedom, justice and truth, love of man, above all." In the original it reads : « Il y a … une rencontre inévitable aujourd'hui de tous les peuples sur le plan contenu esthétique : amour du réel, de la nature et de la vie, amour de la liberté, de la justice et de la vérité, amour de l'homme par-dessus tout, en un mot, humanisme nouveau »). See Jacques Stephen Alexis, « Du Réalisme Merveilleux des Haïtiens », p. 91.

[69] The text in the original reads as follows: « nous nous orientons vers un concert harmonieux des cultures nationales. L'esprit souffle partout et nulle part, nulle zone du monde n'a le monopole sur la culture ; la réalité du monde actuel le démontre »

Europe and the redrawing of the equally Eurocentric lines of a restrictive and racialized category of 'the human' (Newman 2).

Indeed, one cannot deny the importance of addressing the issue of the (re)definition of the concept of the human in any attempt to include non-Western literatures in a universal concept of world literature. The literary critic, Gayatri Spivak, addresses the many levels of the problem that world literature presents, including translation, canonicity, and pedagogy, and ultimately demands a critical assessment of Western humanism's role in literary studies as she states perfunctorily: Insofar as Comparative Literature remains part of the Euro-US cultural dominant, it shares another sort of fear, the fear of the undecidability in the subject of humanism. Who slips into the place of the 'human' of 'humanism' at the end of the day? [70] (24).

Similarly, Edward Said, the author and critic whose work helped inaugurate postcolonial and world literary theory, dedicated much of his career to studying the Western humanistic tradition. Said's work brought to light the epistemologies of Orientalism and empire entrenched in Western humanism, but he remained committed to a new ethics of humanist reading practices.[71] More recently, Aamir Mufti has built on Said's work in his book *Forget English! Orientalisms and World Literatures.* Mufti evaluates the dominance of English in short-sighted contemporary discourses on world literature and reminds us of the phenomenon's dubious origins and complicity with "the

[70] Spivak's comments on Comparative Literature could easily be applied to world literature. The two approaches to studying literature across boundaries (national, ethnic, linguistic, etc.) diverge at times, most notably on the importance of reading in the original language. However, they have at least one common root in humanism, the subject that Spivak invites us to scrutinize.

[71] See Edward Said's *Humanism and Democratic Criticism.* Columbia U P, 2004.

structures of colonial power and, in particular, the revolution in knowledge practices and humanistic culture more broadly initiated by Orientalist philology in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries" (Newman 19). Even the advocates of the much later *Littérature-monde* it could be argued, although seemingly addressing a different issue, were dealing with the same elephant in the room.

This future Human Culture (with capital H and C) belonging to all men, the core of which is comprised by the very new humanism, for which hundreds of millions of men were then fighting, Alexis saw as being "in fact the product of a sorting, of a critical choice of the consciousness of all 'men of progress' in all that is most positive, most valid, most dynamic in the various existing national cultures" (Du réalisme 101).[72] For Alexis, moreover, a culture could not be reduced to the few works of art and literature of value and of global reach known to the world (generally produced by cultured individuals or bourgeois art) but must rather go beyond to embrace the sense of truth, of beauty, of the human, not yet translated by those known works (proletariat art). A work of culture must be understood, therefore, as "a totality that testifies for humans" ('une oeuvre de culture est une somme qui témoigne pour des humains' (Du réalisme 95).

In the above sense, therefore, Alexis' universalist discourse articulates a non-conflictual relationship between the local, national and/or regional and the universal advanced in his own country's narrative, perceiving rather the cultural production of the former as the building blocks out of which the latter would be ultimately constructed

[72] The original text reads as follows : « est en fait le produit d'un tri, d'un choix critique de la conscience de tous les hommes de progres dans tout ce qu'il y a de plus positif, de plus valable, de plus dynamique dans les diverses cultures nationales existantes ».

and/or renewed. The Alexian approach provides thus a contrapuntal position to the binaries of local, national, regional versus world and universal that continue to plague local, national, and regional cultural production, in general, and that of Latin America and the Caribbean in particular, leading to the acceptance among some Latin Americanists of an irresolvable split in the region's aesthetic and critical production.[73]

This broadened vision of local, national, and regional cultural production as part of something larger, preempts, in great measure, the concept of 'literatures of the world' that has recently emerged because of the attempts to broaden the scope and reach of Comparative (World) Literature. In fact, Alexian universalist discourse, as I will demonstrate momentarily, did not limit itself to the mere recognition of the validity of all literatures as world literature in the sense that they present to the world the universe that they inhabit and the ways in which they understand, engage, and relate to these worlds and those that surround them, but advances the idea of a one-world civilization (le monde est un 'the world is one' ("Où va" 83)) to which all cultures belong and in/to the improvement and advancement of which, therefore, they all have the potential not only to participate but also to contribute. This, he exemplifies by pointing to the development of Western culture which itself constitutes an improvement on and/or renewal of more ancient ones, such as those of the Greeks and the Romans. Hence, Alexis affirms that "the cultures of all peoples are sisters, of different ages, but, nonetheless, sisters" ('Les

[73] Mariano Siskind very ably addresses this dynamic in his chapter on the rise of Latin American World Literary Discourses (1882-1925) pointing to the generalized feeling that this split evident amongst the Modernists might have been resolved with the emergence of the narrative of transculturation, but ultimately concluding that it remains unresolved to this day amongst Latin American (Eurodescendant) cultural producers and perhaps may well be unresolvable, continuing to be with them into the foreseeable future. See *Cosmopolitan Desires* pp. 104-107.

cultures de tous les peoples sont des soeurs d'âge différent, mais des soeurs' (Du réalisme 95).

While acknowledging that cultures of the West had led the movement of humanity in the creation of universal cultural production over the past centuries, Alexis interprets the global cultural movements crystallized in Bandung, Paris, and later Rome as History offering Blacks and peoples of color a chance to contribute to the forward march of humanity, to become cultural leaders (coryphées), and to make use of an entire aspect of the human that had been neglected, underestimated, and seriously atrophied in the old cultures of the West ("Où va" 82).[74]

Notwithstanding the above celebrated opportunity, owing to the many roadblocks that still persisted against the flourishing of the Black artist in the world, Alexis affirmed that the Afro-descendant cultural producer could no longer be engaged in merely bearing witness to the real and explaining it, but must through his artistic production create to transform the world; each one working in his own sphere (the novelist, poet, dramatist, musician, plastic artist). This project of world transformation entailed for him "helping in the blossoming of what is born and developing [and] in the liquidation of what decays and constitutes an obstacle to the development of man"[75] ("Du réalisme" 92).[76] Finally,

[74] The original text reads thus: « L'histoire nous offre une chance de contribuer à la marche en avant de l´humanité, de devenir des coryphées, d'utiliser tout un aspect de l´humain qui a été négligé, sous-estimé et s'est sérieusement atrophié dans les vielles cultures d'Occident ». See Jacques Stephen Alexis, « Débat autour des conditions d'un roman national chez les peuples noirs : Où va le roman? » pp. 85-86.

[75] The text in the original reads as follows: « d'aider à l'éclosion de ce qui se nait et se développe , d'aider à la liquidation de ce qui dépérit et constitue une entrave à l'essor de l'homme ».

[76] contending that given the historic alienation that Black creators and those of color have suffered, and in view of the present structural configuration, their mission is to sing the beauties, the dramas, and the struggles of their exploited peoples while rethinking the canons brought to fruition by the West by virtue of the cultural treasures born on their soils[76] ("Du réalisme" 85).

he proposes an art that is conscious, intentional, and geared towards the above universal objectives, yet national (local) in its expression and content.[77]

In the above sense, Alexian Marvelous Realism also challenges the Western notion of 'pure art' or 'art for art's sake',[78] laying the groundwork for a Black cultural production that is also political. In this vein, he declares that the Western genres and ways of thinking bequeathed to us (Haitians) must be resolutely transformed in a national sense and every work of art must unsettle this peculiar sensibility of the Haitians, offspring of three races and so many cultures. It is, thus, against this background that he informs that Haiti's Marvelous Realism proposes: 1) "to sing the beauties of the Haitian fatherland, its grandeurs and its miseries, with the sense of the grandiose perspectives that the struggles of its people have bequeathed to it and solidarity with all men: to attain thereby to the human, the universal and to the deep truth of life"[79] (Du réalisme 109).

Infused with Haitian historic universalist sentiment, communist proletarian fervor, and a perceived 'new (non-Western) humanism' emerging within early twentieth century anti-colonial, anti-racist, and non-aligned sovereign national movements, Alexis argued that the West, through its modern processes of industrialization and intellectualization of

[77] In fact, the idea of Haiti belonging to a wider world while maintaining its distinctiveness is one that is reiterated repeatedly by Alexis in the two texts being analyzed.
[78] Again, Alexis repeatedly makes this point in his two essays, specifically citing the Surrealist movement as an example of this kind of art, or tendency, which he describes as consisting of "launching oneself into intellectualized and cosmopolitan experiences that have no link to the history of one's country, no contact with the native land, no solidarity with man of one's time and his struggles" ('se lancer dans les experiences intellectualistes et cosmopolites qui n'ont aucun lien avec l'histoire de son pays, aucun contact avec la terre natale, aucune solidarité avec l'homme de notre temps et ces combats' (Du réalisme 103).
[79] In the original : « Pour se résumer le Réalisme Merveilleux se propose :
1e – de chanter les beautés de la patrie haïtienne, ses grandeurs comme ses misères, avec le sens des perspectives grandioses que lui donnent les luttes de son peuple et la solidarité avec tous les hommes ; atteindre ainsi à l'humain, à l'universel et à la vérité profonde de la vie. »

cultural production, had lost its ability to connect with the marvelous, the mythical, and the mystical in the way(s) that the non-mechanized, pre-capitalist societies could and still did. Thus, Alexis' revolutionary vision maps a new path to becoming world literature by reimagining a way of being that has not only historically been neglected or atrophied in the West but that is inherent to the ways of doing art of the many peoples whose non-Western cultures have been marginalized through Western colonialism and imperialism.

World Literature as Regional and Global Confluences and Affinities

Apart from the concept of universal cultural production, or in a narrower sense, 'literatures of the world', as a concert of local, national, and/or regional cultures and/or literatures, one finds embedded in the Alexian populist universalist narrative the idea of world literature as regional and global confluences and affinities. This is a concept that appears particularly relevant when addressing Afro-Latin American and Caribbean literatures as world literature, as it contains the idea of a sense of belonging to a wider world that is organic and concrete, as opposed to imposed and abstract.

While emphasizing the distinctiveness of the Marvelous Realism of the Haitians based on their nation's historic specificities and concrete realities, Alexis underscores the artistic mode's confluences and affinities with other aesthetic movements, racial groupings, and socially marginalized peoples of the world. Specifically referring in the two analyzed texts to Social Realism, Black cultural production, and formerly enslaved and colonized (neo-colonialist) societies, the Alexian essays present an innovative

methodological world literary approach that maps worlds based on the existence of confluences and affinities.

To the above end, he first signals the convergence of Haiti's Marvelous Realism with realist works, in general, and then with Social Realism, in particular. Indeed, although distinct modes of aesthetic and critical expression, one would be hard pressed to deny the confluences and affinities that exist between the Marvelous Realism of the Haitians, the European (French) Surrealist tradition, and Hispanic American Magical Realism, for instance.

Similarly, Alexis points to the extant affinities between works issuing from countries of negro origin, which he affirms share a very personal vision of the sensitive reality and the movement of rhythm and life, as well as a deep realism and functionalism of their artistic production, linked regularly to myth, symbol, the stylized, the heraldic, or even the hieratic, but leading always to man, to the struggle, and to hope.

In addition, Alexian universalist discourse recognizes regional cultural confluences with countries in the Caribbean basin, as well as Central and South America that have had similar historic experiences and migrations, where the semi-feudal and pre-capitalist state still exists and that experience similar forms of political and economic dependance. Moreover, he wondered in face of the regional cultural confluences taking place elsewhere in the world, in Central Europe, Asia Minor and North Africa, Southeast and Northern Asia, as well as Black Africa, whether one was not witnessing the beginning of the constitution of regional cultures that at a later stage would even be capable of overtaking national ones (101).

Ofttimes, worlds that converge, such as the above, engage and interact with each other organically through processes of mutual collaboration and assistance often perpetuated through interchanges and encounters between its principals. Indeed, as Alexis intimates, it was almost impossible in the world of the early twentieth century not to be globally influenced and/or associated, as people and ideas flowed freely across borders. André Breton's move to New York via Martinique and the Dominican Republic in 1941, then on return visits to these countries from 1945 to 1946 further elucidates this point. The Surrealist leader would also visit Mexico from France in 1938 and then again in 1941. Many Latin American and Caribbean cultural producers who had either met Breton in Paris or heard of him from his travels throughout the world revered him for his poetry and long fight for freedom.[80] Invited by his friend, Pierre Mabille,[81] to conduct a lecture series in Port-au-Prince on the occasion of the establishment of *L'Institut Français d'Haiti* ('The French Institute of Haiti'), Breton would travel to Haiti with his wife on December 4, 1945, from New York where they were residing at the time. Alexis' journal, The *La Ruche, Organe de la jeune génération* ('Organ of the Young Generation),[82]

[80] Read more of the globalizing of the Surrealist movement in Delia Ungureanu's *From Paris to Tiön: Surrealism as World Literature*, Bloomsbury Academic Publishers, *Literatures as World Literature series,* 2017.
Apart from the afore-mentioned cultural producers, of note is the Domincan, Aida Cartagena Portalatín, cofounder of the short-lived *Poesía Sorprendida* movement, which had global connections to the Surrealist movement and where Breton would visit twice, in 1941 and again in 1946 after his visit to Haiti.
[81] Mabille, recently name French cultural attaché for Haiti, was himself the author of a surrealist inspired work, *Le Miroir du merveilleux* (1940). See Michael Löwy, "The Founder of Surrealism Helped Inspire a Revolution in Haiti", translation by Myrna Bell Rochester, Jacobin, 2022.
[82] The Weekly Literary Journal began in late 1945 as a cultural, literary, and political journal produced by left-militant youth who would go on to become some of Haiti's most important intellectual and political actors. The journal's editorial board comprised a group of fifteen students, the most important being Alexis himself, Depestre, Gérald Chenet, Théodore Baker, Gérard Bloncourt, Gérald Montasse, George Beaufils, Raymond Pressoir, and Max Menard. Although only lasting one year (7 December 1945 and 9 December 1946), the journal would publish forty-two French-language issues, during which time its editorial board

would headline the visit on their front page with the words "Welcome to the great Surrealist André Breton," chronicling the excitement of the young Haitian writers in relation to the visit. Apart from the deep interest the Black culture of the Caribbean held for the surrealist cofounder, including as it did surrealist artists whom he admired profoundly, such as Clément Magloire Saint-Aude, Aimé and Suzanne Césaire, and the painter Wilfredo Lam, Michael Löwy would allude to a process of 'elective affinities'[83], namely a reciprocal attraction based on close affinities of spirit and feeling ("shared passions" (7)).

Moreover, Breton's lectures (eight in total), lasting for a little over two months, from December 5, 1945 to early February 12, 1946, would echo many of the philosophical underpinnings posited by Alexis *in pro* of the mapping of a more inclusive world that foregrounded the marginalized peoples of the earth: basic tenets such as the peculiar sensibility of the so-called 'primitive cultures' (the understanding that these cultures maintained a privileged relationship with the deepest sources of the human spirit, a relationship unpolluted by the capitalist alienation prevailing in "advance" Western countries); the necessity for the integration of politics with culture and the poetic; and a nostalgic view of Romanticism. However, as Löwy aptly points out, what made the encounter unique both in the history of Surrealism as well as the history of Haiti was the "coincidence" of Breton's visit with the outbreak of the January 1946 Revolution that overthrew the hated government of President Lescot (7).

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would spearhead a popular uprising that would lead to the overthrow of the then US supported president, Élie Lescot.

[83] Here Löwy refers to the concept presented by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's in his famous eponymous work originally published in 1809.

In similar fashion, the Cuban novelist, essayist, and musicologist, Alejo Carpentier, perhaps the regional cultural producer that best symbolizes the convergence in the region of Surrealism, Magical Realism, and the Marvelous Real of the Haitians, published in 1949 his world-renowned novel on the Haitian Revolution, *El reino de este mundo*, in the prologue of which he would specifically address the differences between Haiti's Marvelous Real and the more globally circulated Magical Realism, displaying thereby his in-depth knowledge of both the confluences and divergences of the two aesthetic modes. Possessing first-hand experience of the French Surrealist movement, Carpentier would be initially attracted to the Marvelous Realism of the Haitians due to these converging sensibilities that he first felt on his visit to the island in 1943. While in Haiti, Carpentier would be struck by the ruins of the Citadel of La Ferrière, a remarkable fortress built by the black King Christophe Henri, which he considered "without architectural precedent, foreshadowed only by the Imaginary Prisons of the [Italian artist] Piranesi."[84] Celebrated as the precursor of Magical Realism in the region, Carpentier not only traveled throughout South America, to Mexico, and Haiti to understand the history of Hispanic America and the Caribbean but wrote extensively in Spanish, making his work accessible to writers of the larger Spanish-speaking region.[85] In addition, apart from the figure of Carpentier, many prominent Afro-Latin American and Caribbean cultural producers, such as Wilfredo Lam and Aida Cartagena Portalatín, were themselves part of

[84] Cited by Katy Wimhurst in "The Kingdom of this World: Alejo Carpentier and Magical Realism."
[85] Wimhurst indicates that although boom writers claim no literary 'fathers', Gabriel García Marquez did acknowledge his debt to Carpentier. For instance, he is said to have discarded the first draft of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and rewritten it after reading Carpentier's work, especially *Explosion in the Cathedral* (1962). Ibid.

the Paris network of the post-World War II period, from where Surrealism would take off to expand throughout the world. It is, thus, unquestionable that it is possible to map a Marvelous Realist world that connects Afro-Latin America and the Caribbean with Europe. Two global Afro-descendant regional authors that were largely influenced by the three movements and/or mapped routes that crossed worlds inhabited by them are the Cuban, Wilfredo Oscar de la Concepción Lam y Castilla, more familiarly known as Wilfredo Lam and the Dominican, Aida Cartagena Portalatín.[86]

Smacking of both the radical and the revolutionary, Alexian marvelous realism has not received much purchase within the majority pro-Western wider Latin American and Caribbean region. Even the symbolic capital that could have been gained through Carpentier's early presentation of the concept in 1949 in the more widely used Latin American language, Spanish, and in what some Caribbean scholars and critics consider a somewhat reductionist mode,[87] failed to achieve this end. Of course, one can neither ignore its association with the Haitian Revolution nor the fact that with the emergence of the regional magical realist discourse sanctioned by the West[88] it would become largely obscured within the region outside of Haiti.

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[86] See Appendix B, pp. 215- 217 for a detailed profile of these authors.

[87] Scholars like Philip Kaisary in his work *The Haitian Revolution in the Literary Imagination: Radical Horizons, Conservative Constraints* (2014) groups Alejo Carpentier amongst the conservative authors, namely Edouard Glissant, Derek Walcott, and Madison Smartt Bell, whose works on the Haitian Revolution "convey visions of obscurity, tragic circularity, senseless violence, and history as eroticized fantasmics" in comparison to those of Aimé Césaire, C.L.R. James, Langston Hughes, René Depestre, Jacon Lawrence, and Kimathi Donkor, for whom "the recuperation and representation of the events of 1791-1804 offered the opportunity to articulate a narrative of emancipation in which black agency and universal intent were central" (1-2).

[88] Magical Realism unlike Marvelous Realism received the support of the West within the context of the USA's policy of openness to Latin America and the Caribbean in order to stymy the spread of Communism within the region. Gabriel García Marquez's world famed novel *Cien años de soledad* (1967), considered the representation *par excellence* of the genre, was adopted by the US Academy and first published in

It is noteworthy, however, that apart from the Haitians who have remained in Haiti, in many of the texts by transnational Haitian authors that have received worldwide recognition, including those by Louis-Philippe Dalembert and Myriam Nancy, one can find clear evidence of many of the characteristics of this truly Haitian aesthetic mode that consolidates the distinctiveness of their writing and marks the cultural contribution to the world of the Afro-descendants of this Caribbean nation. Indeed, in a sense, one can identify the mapping of a supernatural, mystical, mythical, spiritual, and inner world in these texts that connects Caribbean, Latin American, and European traditions in a way that perhaps is truly singular of the region.

Given the progressive direction in which the world literary debates have taken over the past decade in their recognition of multiple strands of and pathways to world literature, I argue, as does Ignacio Sánchez-Prado in presenting the case for Juan Ruflo's non-conventional world literary mapping as world literature,[89] that the Alexian universalist discourse should rightly be considered alongside the other more conservative and reductive critical and aesthetic discourses of Latin America and the Caribbean

English in 1970 by the Harper & Row in the USA and Jonathan Cape in the UK. The novel which is often cited as one of the supreme achievements of world literature went on to win for its author the coveted Nobel Prize for Literature in 1982.

[89] Sánchez-Prado in his article "La literatura mundial como praxis: hacia una metodología de lo concreto" argues for world literature as customary practice, pushing for a methodology capable of correctly reading representations of concrete realities, such as those produced by the famed Mexican national (indigenist) author, Juan Rulfo–other similar authors would be the Peruvian, José Maria Arguedas and the Brazilian, João Guimarães Rosa–whose frictional aesthetic, transcultural narrative, and content of rural Latin American modernization transcend the sphere of (magical) realism, to which semi-peripherical regions like Latin America and the Caribbean are condemned within The Warwick reality of combined and uneven development of the world system (Warwick 2015). Rulfo's canon included authors from rural France, rural Italy and the Nordic countries, authors like Dino Buzzati, Knut Hamsun, Halldor K. Lakness, Miodrag Bulatóvich, Jean Giono and John Steinbeck that are generally ignored in general accounts of world literature (63-64).

articulated within the contours of Western epistemologies proffered by celebrated authors and critics such as Mariano Siskind.[90]

It is also my considered opinion after having performed the close reading of Alexis' two afore-mentioned essays that by ignoring this innovative scholarship, the region and the world may have failed to recognize a regional precursor to the more recent literatures-of-the-world and utopian post-nationalist *littérature-monde* concepts proposed by the *Francophonie* authors. More importantly, Alexian marvelous realism presents a plausible frame for the inclusion of the cultural production of Afro-descendant populations and peoples of culture in any discussion that pertains to world literature, whether within the confines of Latin America and the Caribbean itself, or within the broader context of the globalizing Western world.

Not only does Alexian Marvelous Realism offer an alternative pathway to doing universal (world) literature that falls outside of the world system scenario, but, more importantly, it references historic specificities and concrete realities of much of the extant Global South, including Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as many parts of non-Western Europe. In addition, the revisitation of this discourse would allow for the re-presenting of the Haitian concept of 'the human' in the battle for global recognition and representation alongside 'other' modes of being human (Frank Fanon's anti-colonial

[90] Although acknowledging detours by some Latin American avant-gardists and modernists in their cosmopolitanist engagement with the wider Western world, as occurred for instance in the individual cases of Ruben Darío, Jorge Luís Borges, and Gabriel García Marquez, Siskind is constrained to recognize the parameters within which they all desired to and did indeed function as being within the reductive dominant world literary system set by the West and its expansionist, globalizing culture.

humanism and Aimé Césaire's *Négritude* humanism, for instance)[91] that have since been proffered but historically excluded by evolutionary theory and the pseudo-science of racial difference that justified colonial conquest.

[91] See Doris L. Garraway's "What is Mine": Césairean *Négritude* between the Particular and the Universal (2010) and Franz Fanon *Les Damnés de la terre* (2002 [1961]), cited by Scott Newman in "From Marvelous to World Literature: Rethinking the Human with Jacques Stephen Alexis" (2019).

Chapter 2

Hispanic America

World Literature as a Space Traversed in Pursuit of Identity, Place, and Belongingness

Global and regional confluences amongst the Black diasporic populations become even more pronounced as one contemplates the works of Afro-Hispanic cultural producers throughout the twentieth century. The American literary critic, Brent Hayes Edwards, in his monographic study, *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of Black Internationalism*, convincingly argues that diaspora is less an historical condition than a set of practices; the claims, correspondences, and collaborations through which black intellectuals pursue a variety of international alliances.[92]

As the international contexts of the radical Left, Pan Africanism, and the struggles of the 1930s against colonialism, capitalism, racism, and fascism raged on in the wider Black and globalized Western world, Afro-Hispanics were continuing to confront similar ghosts at home. This universal reality of the Black condition would engender similarities and continuities in Black intellectual thought and aesthetic expression across the region and the wider transcontinental Black world, even in the presence of extant historical and linguistic differences and geographical distances. This circumstance has led to the acknowledgement by many Afro-descendant scholars and critics of not just a continuum

[92] Although Hayes study while revisiting black transnational culture in the 1920s and 1930s paid particular attention to links between the intellectuals of the Harlem Renaissance and their Francophone counterparts in Paris, it is relevant to the transnational connections that took place between Afro-Hispanic Americans and the Black diaspora throughout the Americas and the world.

but rather an evolution in the global engagement of Afro-descendants throughout the world.

Paul Gilroy, in his extraordinarily influential work, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (1992) seeks to resist simply understanding Black cultures from around the Atlantic basin as being marginal to or derived from dominant national cultures that result in specific subcultures that have a closer relation to hegemonic Western cultures at large than to each other, arguing instead for a long, complex history of African-diasporic intellectual culture that is specifically transnational (Pete Nowakoski 2-3). In more recent times, he posits, there has been the philosophical posturing by some of these individuals of a concept of modernity that centers around blackness. The transnational and diasporic nature of the black cultures have made for a double consciousness which sees Afro-descendant authors claiming homes in both their adopted and original places of origin.

Antonio Tillis presents the concept of cultural transnationalism begging the notion of culture as a transferable commodity in the global Black cultural economy. He further introduces the concept of "black globalization" to replace the essentialized thought of "globalization," thereby problematizing the construct, as often when pondering issues of globalization, the discourse of race is absent from the deconstructed understanding, rendering an unconscious "racing" that almost exclusively implies "Western," or white (Cultural Transnationality 51). He asseverates that it is indisputable that the history of "Blacks" in the Americas, and arguably beyond, is an exemplar in terms of the notions of migration, immigration, and transnational citizenship. Trans- and intercontinental shifting

from localized spaces of "home," whether imagined or real, and mutable citizenship represents Black globalization, spanning over five centuries of Black mobilization and cultural realignment (Cultural Transnationality 51, 52).

Dorothy Mosby in her article "Roots and Routes: Transnational Blackness in Afro-Costa Rican Literature" puts forward the conception of transnational blackness,[93] alerting to the fact that because of the peripheral or marginal status of peoples of African descent, there sometimes emerges in literature and popular culture the desire to articulate belonging to a greater community or a greater body of identification beyond the nation-state that may officially or unofficially reject blackness (6). Such writings, Mosby continues express not only the multiple geographical crossings that form ethnic, cultural, and national identity, but also articulate belonging to the African Diaspora through transnational literary and cultural linkages, particularly transnational blackness (5). "Imagining blackness beyond the borders of one's place or location within a nation-state", she concludes, "is an act of resistance and a response to centuries of inequality, discrimination, and racial oppression" (8). As Wendy Walters affirms, "the articulation of diaspora identity in writing is more than literary performance; it is in fact, a political act" (vii).

Moreover, the above global engagement has been closely connected to both national and regional Black identity discourses. From defining themselves as simply

[93] The notion of transnational blackness involves two disparate strands of creole identification posited by the anthropologist Edmund T. Gordon as "black" and "Anglo", wherein the roots (social memory of slavery and the idea of Jamaica, other Caribbean islands, and more distantly Africa as homelands) and routes (an identification with black Caribbean and North American popular culture) are the basis of the Creoles' black Diaspora identity. This Black Diaspora identity is present in the writings of the Afro-Costa Rican writers Quince Duncan, Eulalia Bernard, Shirley Campbell, and Delia McDonald (Mosby 6).

African, *pace* Aimé Césaire and Marcus Garvey, in their *Négritude* and Pan Africanist reactionary discourses respectively, Afro-descendant Latin American and Caribbean intellectuals would evolve to defining themselves in increasingly more miscegenated terms. This is in conjunction with the appearance of the Afro-Antillean movement in the 1920s and 1930s, the resurgence and dissemination of the concept of 'creolization' in the context of decolonial discourses in the 1940s through the 1970s, and the emergence of the *Creolité* movement in the 1980s.

It is against this backdrop that I wish to present the Afro-Hispanic global cultural producers, many of whom although not directly involved in, nor connected to, the primarily Francophone *Négritude* and Anglophone Pan-Africanist and Harlem Renaissance movements, found strength and took pride in their accomplishments, ofttimes using them as sources of inspiration, out of which they would develop localized aesthetic currents, cultural movements, and institutions suited to their own purposes. In addition, despite language and cultural barriers, there would be notable evidence of interconnectedness, entanglements even, of transnational contemporary and historical black experience between Afro-descendants of Hispanic America and other Blacks of the diaspora.

The Poetics of Identity and Relation of Nicolás Guillén, Nancy Morejón, and Manuel Zapata Olivella

Such was the case, for instance, of the Cuban national poet, journalist, political activist, and writer, Nicolás Guillén. Born at the turn of the twentieth century (1902-1989), Guillén would write his first collection of poetry *Motivos de son* in 1930. This

collection of eight poems would be initially published in the section "Ideales de una raza" (weekly column and Sunday page) of the island's local newspaper *Diario de La Marina* (1928-1931). Said to have been produced spontaneously, in one burst of inspiration, the collection would emerge following a visit paid to the Caribbean territory in 1930 by the celebrated Harlem Renaissance poet and social activist, Langston Hughes, and an interview had with him the previous year, from which time Guillén would develop and sustain a lifelong friendship with the American.[94]

This transnational association becomes even further nuanced when one considers that Hughes had a long-held interest and well-established connection with Haiti's history and culture from his formative years, a country he would pay his first and only recorded visit in 1931 and about which he would produce many important works.[95] Some critics have suggested that so impressed was Guillén with the peculiar brand of racial consciousness possessed by Hughes that he would embrace his suggestion to use the Afro-Cuban musical genre, the '*son*' as an organic base for his formal poetry, as did his American contemporary with jazz and blues.[96] This distinct probability is further

[94] Read more about this transnational connection in John Patrick Leary's "Havana Reads the Harlem Renaissance: Langston Hughes, Nicolás Guillén, and the Dialectics of Transnational American Literature" (2010).

[95] Read more about this connection in Langston Hughes', *I wonder as I wander: An Autobiographical Journey* (1956) and Philip Kaisary's chapter "Langston Hughes. Harlem and Haiti" in *The Haitian Revolution in the Literary Imagination: Radical Horizons, Conservative Constraints* (2014).

[96] This position held by many critics is contested by John Patrick Leary who argues that it derived from a misinterpretation of a letter the editor of the "Ideales de una raza", Gustavo Urrutía, wrote to Hughes following Guillén's submission of *Motivos de son* to the *Diario*. Leary indicates that the scholarly misinterpretations of Urrutía's letter overlook two aspects of his communication to Hughes: first, his apparent, surely strategic flattery of a famous and potentially powerful advocate for Guillén's work abroad, and second, the fact that Urrutía was carefully translating, for Hughes' benefit, Cuban cultural forms and racial regimes into a particularly North American vernacular that many U.S. critics misapprehended as a global one. See Urrutía's letter in Leary's "Havana Reads the Harlem Renaissance: Langston Hughes, Nicolás Guillén, and the Dialetics of Transnational American Literature," 2010, p. 134.

reinforced by the biographer, literary critic and academic, Arnold Rampersad, in his celebrated *Life of Langston Hughes* published in 1986.[97]

What is unarguable, however, is that Guillén would draw from his mixed African and Spanish ancestry and education to combine in *Motivos de son* his knowledge of traditional literary form (modernist poetics) with his firsthand experience of the speech, legends, and songs of the Afro-Cubans. Moreover, he would use his own mixed heritage as a metaphor for exploring the cultural identity of the island, which he understood to be miscegenational. To this point, Guillén affirms in the prologue to his seminal text *Sóngoro cosongo* published in 1931:

> To sum up, I will say that these are mulatto verses. Perhaps in them are to be found elements that make up the ethnic composition of Cuba, where we are all a little like the sapodilla fruit [...] The injection of the African into this land is so deep, and in our well-watered social hydrography intersect and cross so many capillary currents, that it would be the task of a miniaturist to untangle the hieroglyph. I therefore believe that a creole poem among us will not be complete if the black element is omitted. The black element–in my assessment–brings very strong essences to our cocktail. And the two races that come to the fore on the Island, seemingly distant, hold out an underwater hook, like those deep bridges that secretly link two continents. For now, the spirit of Cuba is mestizo. And from the spirit to the skin will come the definitive color. Someday, one will talk of the

[97] See Arnold Rampersad. *Life of Langston Hughes,* Vol. 1: *1902-1941: I, Too, Sing America*, Oxford U P, 1986.

Cuban color. (Guillén 1974)[98]

Guillen's progressive conceptualization of *mestizaje* that supported his Afro-Cuban poetics, must be considered a valid and valuable contribution to the cultural identity discourse of the region. In fact, it must be seen, moreover, as a direct response to the other more popular and dominant concept of *mestizaje* established since the nineteenth century that was used externally as a political tool to differentiate the region from the hegemonic North and internally to silence the voices of racially marginalized groups, such as the Afro-descendant communities.[99]

A few years later, in 1940, Fernando Ortiz would intervene in the discussion of Cuba's cultural identity with the articulation in his sociological study *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y azúcar* of the concept of *transculturación* (transculturation), one that must equally be contrasted with the notion of *mestizaje* proposed by Guillén. In fact, Ortiz conceptualized transculturation as a synthesis of diverse cultural processes that originated in violence, and I quote:

> We have chosen the word *transculturation* to express the very varied phenomena that originate in Cuba via the very complex transmutations of

[98] The original reads thus: "Diré finalmente que estos son unos versos mulatos. Participan acaso de los mismos elementos que entran en la composición étnica de Cuba, donde todos somos un poco níspero […] La inyección africana en esta tierra es tan profunda, y se cruzan y entrecruzan en nuestra bien regada hidrografía social tantas corrientes capilares, que seríatrabajo de miniaturista desenredar el jeroglífico. // Opino por tanto que una poesía criolla entre nosotros no lo será de un modo cabal con olvido del negro. El negro –a mi juicio– aporta esencias muy fuertes a nuestro coctel. Y las dos razas que en la islasalen a flor de agua, distantes en lo que se ve, se tienden un garfio submarino, como esos puentes hondos que unen en secreto dos continentes. Por lo pronto, el espíritu de Cuba es mestizo. Y del espíritu hasta la piel nos vendrá el color definitivo. Algún día se dirá color cubano" (113). Cited by Cynthia Gabbay in "Una Voz Atravesada: El viaje poético de Nancy Morejón al *Apartheid* Sudafricano", 2019, p. 255.

[99] Read further on this concept in Lourdes Martinez-Echazabal "Mestizaje and the Discourse of National/Cultural Identity in Latin America, 1845-1959 (1998) and D. Castro de Guerra, and María M. Suárez's "Sobre el proceso de mestizaje en Venezuela", *Interciencia*, vol. 35, núm. 9, septiembre, 2010, pp. 654-658.

> cultures that occurred here [...] the true history of Cuba is the history of its intricate transculturations. First, the transculturation of the Indian from Paleolithic to Neolithic and their disappearance for not adjusting to the impact of the new Castilian culture. Then, the transculturation of an incessant current of white immigrants: Spaniards, but from different cultures, they themselves extracted, [...] and transplanted to a New World [...] Concurrently, the transculturation of a continuous human stream of black Africans, of diverse races and cultures [...]. All of them wrested from their original social milieu and with their cultures shattered, oppressed under the weight of the ruling cultures here, like the sugar canes are flattened between the crushers of the mills. [...] And each immigrant, as one uprooted from his native land, in a double trance of mismatch and readjustment, *deculturation* or *exculturation* and *acculturation* or *inculturation*, and finally, the synthesis of *transculturation.* (2002, 254-255)[100]

While Ortiz's study and intervention focused more on origins, attempting to identify the historical and sociological factors that he perceived as foundational to Cuba's

[100] The original text reads thus: Hemos escogido el vocablo *transculturación* para expresar los variadísimos fenómenos que se originan en Cuba por las complejísimas transmutaciones de culturas que aquí se verifican […] la verdadera historia de Cuba es la historia de sus intrincadísimas transculturaciones. // Primero la transculturación del indio paleolítico al neolítico y la desaparición de éste por no acomodarse al impacto de la nueva cultural castellana. // Después, la transculturación de una corriente incesante de inmigrantes blancos: españoles, pero de distintas culturas, y ya ellos mismos desgarrados, […] y trasplantadas a un Nuevo Mundo […] Al mismo tiempo, la transculturación de una continua chorrera humana de negros africanos, de razas y cultural diversas […]. Todos ellos arrancados de sus núcleos sociales originarios y con sus culturas destrozadas, oprimidas bajo el peso de las culturas aquí imperantes, como las cañas de azúcar son molidas entre las masas de los trapiches. […] Y cada inmigrante como un desarraigado de su tierra nativa en doble trance de desajuste y reajuste, de *desculturación* o *exculturación* y de *aculturación* o *inculturación, y* al fin, de síntesis de *transculturación* (2002, 254-255). Cited by Cynthia Gabbay in "Una Voz Atravesada: El viaje poético de Nancy Morejón al *Apartheid* Sudafricano", 2019, p. 255.

cultural identity, Guillén's thrust was more existentialist and political, aiming to foreground a present absence in the national discourse, and by extension, its projection to the then world, that required both attention and resolution by the cultural and political elite of the then young nation.[101]

Parallelly, in the Caribbean Pacific Basin, another notable Afro-descendant Latin American and Caribbean cultural producer, critic, and intellectual, the Colombian, Manuel Zapata Olivella (1920-2004),[102] was investigating the same question of the region's cultural identity from his country's perspective. Zapata Olivella would add the concept of *trietnicidad* to the identarian discussion, expressing thereby the triple identity of the region, as exemplified in his native Colombia. Like his Cuban predecessor (Guillén), however, he would contest the majoritarian national/regional interpretation given to the concept of *mestizaje* with its associated invisibilization of the country's Afro-descendant and, in the case of Colombia, indigenous populations.[103] Nonetheless, unlike both Guillén and his Haitian contemporary (Price-Mars), Zapata Olivella would

[101] Cuba, unlike almost all of Latin America that had gained their independence during the early nineteenth century (1810-1825) except for Puerto Rico that still remains a US dependent country, gained its independence from Spain in 1898 and finally from the US in 1902.

[102] Born on March 17th, 1920, in the small town of Lorica on Colombia's Caribbean coast, Zapata Olivella was a self-confessed wanderer who travelled the length and breadth of his country gathering information on Afro-Colombian and indigenous traditions; the Americas, which he explored on foot from South through Central America, Mexico, and finally the United States (1943-1946) and the wider world, which he toured, showcasing the mixed-heritage traditions of the region (Europe and China), or collecting information on the history of the African diaspora (the USA, Spain, Africa, and Latin America). A prolific literary author and critic, Zapata also taught Latin American literature at the University of Toronto (1968-1969), Howard (1969-1970), and the University of Kansas (1970-1971). He is considered one of the most important writers of the twentieth century in Latin America and a tireless advocate for the oppressed. See John T. Maddox IV. *Challenging the Black Atlantic: The New World Novels of Zapata Olivella and Goncalves,* Bucknell U P, 2020.

[103] In the context of Cuba, Guillén's *Afrocubanidad*, while not eschewing the indigenous component was understood to incorporate more particularly the Afro-descendant and Spanish descendant ethnicities. *Afrocolombiedad,* in its turn, included the indigenous element that persisted in various spaces of the country.

replace the trope of cultural nationalism (the distinctiveness or uniqueness of the national cultural identity within a broader universal cultural production) with a more diasporic vision of the universal from the vantage point of the world's Afro-descendant populations. Thus, Zapata Olivella, while acknowledging his country's triple ethnicity, would later defend a double consciousness present in the region's Afro-descendants that linked them, as freed inhabitants of their adopted countries, to Africa and its diaspora.[104] In an essay that analyzes the autobiographical work of Zapata Olivella, *¡Levántete mulato! Por mi raza hablará el espíritu* ('Rise Up Mulatto! My Spirit Will Speak for My Race' (1987 French 1990 Spanish)), published in his journal, *Letras Nacionales*, the Latin Americanist, Jerome Branche, states the following:

> Zapata Olivella, one of the few Afro-Hispanic creative writers to practice the genre of the essay, confronted the racial bias present in the reflections of his celebrated predecessors, more notably Argentina's Domingo Sarmiento and Mexico's José Vasconcelos, and by embracing and vindicating his own tri-ethnic heritage recast the discussion around identity and diversity in Latin America, underscoring at the same time the elitist tenor of criollo/mestizo versions of Latin Americanism and its ultimate complicity with racialized power.

Guillén and Zapata Olivella's participation in the region's attempts to resolve the pesky issue of its cultural identity becomes even more significant as one considers the

[104] The concept of double consciousness would be best explored by Paul Gilroy in his celebrated work, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, Harvard U P, 1993. This concept of double consciousness in relation to the region's identity would also be advocated by the Afro-Brazilian intellectual Abdias do Nascimento who I will return to in the following chapter. Dorothy Mosby would further build on this concept to speak about triple consciousness in the Afro-descendant populations of the Central American countries of Panama and Costa Rica that received Afro-descendant emigrants from the West Indies during the nineteenth century, a concept that I will return to later in the chapter.

important role this matter has played and perhaps continues to play in shaping the efforts of the Latin American and Caribbean cultural and political elite to penetrate the modern Western world on an equal footing. Perhaps the region's most successful attempt yet to address its split subjectivity (desire for universality vs marginal conditions of enunciation) has been through what Ángel Rama describes as the *novelas transculturadoras* (transculturizing novels), one of the more popularly known expressions of which are the magical realist novels of the Boom era.[105]

These novels, as posited by Siskind, can be characterized by "the dialectic resolution of the contradiction between universality and particularity, between a modern universal desire to implode and overcome the protocols of realism and regionalism and the use of the local oral and popular traditions that constitute their cultural content and formal experimentation". Yet, despite this attempted resolution by the Boom authors, Siskind is constrained to admit that, although providing some agency to the latter as relates to the reception of their works beyond their borders, it has failed to resolve the region's cultural identity issue at home (*Cosmopolitan Desires* 13). In fact, the trope of *mestizaje/transculturación* and the irresolution of this regional cultural identity crisis continues to engage the cultural producers of the region, as is evidenced in the widely

[105] While it is indisputable that other types of works without an extra natural component also incorporate the narrative experimentation with renewed forms of introducing the regional culture in the Western context, Angel Rama would employ Ortiz's concept of *transculturación* to systematize an interpretation of Latin American novels from the 1950s and '60s that included Juan Rulfo's *Pedro Páramo*, João Guimarães Rosa´s *Grande Sertão: Veredas* (*The Devil to Pay in the Backlands*), José Maria Arguedas's *Los ríos profundos* (*Deep Rivers*), and Gabriel García Márquez's *Cien años de soledad* (*One Hundred Years of Solitude*). Categorizing these novels as *novelas transculturadoras* ('transculturizing novels'), Rama viewed transculturation as a critical concept that could mediate art and the revolutionary politics that intensified after the Cuban Revolution in 1959. See Angel Rama's *Transculturación narrativa en América Latina* (1982). Cited by Mariano Siskind in *Cosmopolitan Desires*, p. 12.

circulated and well received film, *Pelo malo* produced as recently as 2012 by the Venezuelan film maker, Mariana Rondón.[106]

Moreover, one only needs to recall the position articulated by the authors of the McOndo and Crack literary movements[107] in their respective manifestos vis-à-vis the widely globalized magical realist genre and its synecdochical representation by the Western world as the *bona fide* Latin American cultural identity.[108] Moreover, in some places, it was even being debated in the latter half of the twentieth century whether one could speak of a Latin American cultural identity.[109] Hoyos recounts an anecdote as recently as the early twenty-first century that perhaps best summarizes the sentiment of many contemporary creole mestizo and white Latino writers:

> Delivering a lecture on the work of Sergio Pitol (Puebla 1933), Jorge Volpi (México 1968) declared provocatively that Latin American literature does not exist. The year was 2006 and the place was, mind you, the Mexican embassy in Peking (El universal). The author was not impersonating some latter-day Marco

[106] *Pelo malo* recounts the daily life of Júnior, a pre-adolescent Venezuelan mestizo boy during the days before his return to school after the holidays. Júnior has a mestizo mother (appearing to be a mixture of white and indigenous) and a mulatto father (a black paternal grandmother and mulatto grandfather. Júnior is faced with the dilemma of presenting a photo to his school for his student card for the new term. He, however, has two problems: 1) his mother's momentary lack of money due to the recent loss of her job and 2) his obsessive desire to have straight hair for the photo. It is this latter obsession that drives the film's plot.

[107] McOndo was initiated by the Chilean writers, Alberto Fuguet and Sergio Gómez, in the 1990s while the Crack literary movement comprised an *ad hoc* Mexican group of five authors: Ignacio Padilla, Jorge Volpi, Eloy Urroz, Pedro Ángel Palou, and Ricardo Chávez-Castañeda. While both these movements served as a means for their respective authors to find their own voices and write beyond magical realism during the 1990s, the central focus of the latter movement was not necessarily the magical realist genre. For the former, however, it indeed was.

[108] See Alberto Fuguet's "Magical Neoliberalism" (2001), Sergio Gómez's McOndo (1997) and Fuguet and Gomez's "Mc Ondo (una antología de una nueva literatura hispanoamericana" (1996)) and "El país Mc Ondo" (1996).

[109] See Gustavo Guerrero's "La desbandada: o por qué ya no existe la literatura latinoamericana" (2009), Jorge Volpi's "La literatura latinoamericana ya no existe." (2006) and Jorge Fornet's "Y finalmente, ¿existe una literatura latinoamericana? (2007).

> Polo who reported about a faraway homeland. Given the worldwide standing of Gabriel García Márquez (Aracataca 1928) and his modern classic *Cien años de soledad* ('One Hundred Years of Solitude' (1967)), the audience, composed of diplomats, Chinese students of Spanish, and passers-by, was well aware of the existence of Latin American literature and would recognize by proper name at the very least a writer and a novel from that tradition. Indeed, as would be common knowledge given the setting, the prestigious Zhonghua Dushu Bao ("China Book Reading Weekly") had named García Márquez's novel as one of the most influential works of fiction in the country during the 20th century (Deming). Volpi's statement then, at first sight perplexing if not outright self-cancellating (sic), sought to bring the concept of "Latin American literature" to the forefront, questioning its validity as a category to describe contemporary phenomena. It went unsaid that, whereas the category could befit an author like García Márquez, whose works had possibly lured some in attendance into studying Spanish in the first place, it would somehow fail to describe the works of Pitol and Volpi. (*Gesturing* 1)

It is also important to note that even the cultural elite of the region´s Amerindian populations critically interrogate the representation of their cultures in the globalized magical realist genre, which many of their contemporary writers and critics view as superficial, more responsive to commercial preferences from the North than authentic

reflections of their unique cultural reality.[110] Parallelly, persistently excluded from the region's official cultural identity discourse, Afro-Latin Americans would not have seen themselves appropriately represented either in the transculturalized novels of the magical realist era, as these novels continued to duplicate the invisibilization, objectification and stereotyping of the region's Afro-descendant populations. T. Avril Bryan in her article "García Márquez: Perception of the Black as Seen in *El amor en los tiempos de cólera* reaffirms this viewpoint, pointing to the fact that García Márquez, who became the face of the magical realist genre to the world, only mentioned Afro-descendants thrice in his complete bibliography of magical realist works, and always in stereotypical roles. While this literary trajectory by García Márquez could be defended and/or justified based on the period the texts represented, in which Afro-Latin Americans were cast in specific roles, it still makes the point, failing to account for their absent presence, highlighting thereby the importance of interventions by cultural producers like Guillén and Zapata Olivella as counterpoints to this incomplete and, by extension, inaccurate projection to the world of the place of the Afro-descendant and their so-called 'popular culture' in Latin American and Caribbean cultural reality. It is also noteworthy to mention that despite the pushback made by Pitol and Volpi, many Latin Americans of all races and ethnicities from both the continent and the Latinx community, continued to write using magical realist aesthetics and techniques as a way of connecting to their Latin American heritage, both ethnic and artistic and as a means of offering an alternative representation of reality in the

[110] See Ana Brigido-Corachán and César Dominguez's article "Los mundos subalternos de la literatura mundial: hacia una comparación de las literaturas indígenas en Abya Yala/las Américas" in *World Literature, Cosmopolitanism, and Globailty: Beyond, Against, Post, Otherwise, edited by* Gesine Muller and Mariano Siskind, De Gruyter, 2019.

contemporary world. The most noteworthy amongst them being the Afro-descendant Dominican American Junot Díaz with his *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2008), and the Chilean American, Isabel Allende, who has published multiple works of this genre[111]. It also does not hurt that it is still a genre that attracts many readers.

Several decades later–in the 1980s and 1990s–then in the throes of the prolific literary and cultural production of the Afro-descendants of the region, Guillén's young mentee, Nancy Morejón, would find herself constrained to revisit and advance her mentor's decolonial rethinking of his nation´s identity (*Cubanidad*) with her essayistic writing and poetic creation that would promote and embody both his articulation and practice of poetic *mestizaje*, in conjunction with her own conceptualization of transculturation as it related to the Cuban spirit and its reflection in Afro-Cuban poetic expression.[112] Morejón, a world literary author in her own right, would insist on the term 'afrohispánico' as a more accurate description of Cuban culture. Vera Kutzinski opines that although this insistence on the part of Morejón "may be brushed off as political rhetoric or criticized for its apparent, and perhaps, inevitable reductiveness, it helps remind us of the dire need for a more unified and precise terminology, especially when dealing with such broad concepts as 'American culture', 'Latin American culture' or 'Afro-American culture'" (Gabbay 255).[113] Morejón's categorization could also be said

[111] Allende's classic novels, *La casa de los espíritus* and Eva Luna are two of her works in this genre that were published very early in her writing career. Today, she continues to use this genre.
[112] See, for example, Morejón´s *Recopilación de textos sobre Nicolás Guillén* (1974), *Nicolás Guillén, Nación y Mestizaje* (1982a), and "Lengua, cultura y transculturación en el Caribe: unidad y diversidad" (1996).
[113] Interestingly, this approach adopted by Morejón recalls the radical position taken by the Haitian revolutionaries in their post-revolutionary (1805) Constitution when they recategorized all the then inhabitants of the island as Blacks irrespective of their race, color, or creed.

to have been made, in a sense, in the same spirit of the Haitian labelling of all its inhabitants as Black in its 1805 constitution, according it a more worldly (hemispheric) connotation.

The consolidation in the latter half of the twentieth century of the literary and cultural production of the Latinx communities further problematizes the issue of an official definition of the Latin American and Caribbean cultural identity from the standpoint of its peoples, as many of these authors write in English.[114] While the marginalization of this group of literary and cultural producers may be operating at the level of identity discourses within the regional cultural space and in Academia, these diasporic cultural producers have been advancing and consolidating on the ground the work started by Guillén and globalized through the writings of the Boom authors. Appropriating primarily the post-modernist genre of the novel as they attempt to reconnect to their homelands, eminent contemporary Latinx writers, many of whom are Afro descendant, have been investigating and rewriting the region's history by integrating its popular culture as a mode of portraying and explaining the daily and inner lives of its multi-ethnic, multi-faceted, and multicultural populations. Two of these noteworthy works from Hispanic America are Junot Díaz's *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*

[114]A very good, abridged presentation and analysis of this aspect of the debate is offered by Charles Geyer in his article "Creolizing the Canon: Manuel Puig, Junot Díaz, and the Latino Poetics of Relation," U of North Carolina P, 2019, pp. 173-193. With the arrival of the digital age, the cultural identity discourse has moved beyond people to incorporate the aspect of medium and genre. See more of this expansion of the debate in Cecily Raynor's "Digital Geographies: Illuminating Spatial Relationships in a Collection of Literary Blogs." *DHQ: Digital Humanities Quarterly* Vol. 12, No.1, 2018 and *Latin America in the Millennium: Local Lives, Global Spaces,* Bucknell U P, 2021.

(2007) and Minelys Sánchez Luperón's *Ángeles nómadas* ('Nomadic Angels' (2016 trans. 2019)).

In support of these authors as part of the Latin American and Caribbean cultural identity, Charles H. Geyer, in his eponymous article, "Creolizing the Canon: Manuel Puig, Junot Díaz, and the Latino Poetics of Relation," argues against the reductionist categorization of Díaz's novel based on its publication in English. He points to the rich cultural mix of the text that is affected (on an aesthetic level) by 'high art' US and Spanish American literature as well as 'low art' pop culture and forms and (on a cultural level) by Dominican, African American, Anglophone and Francophone Caribbean cultures. He further elaborates that the hybrid, multicultural, and transnational nature of Latino writing unmasks the fundamental limitations of literary canons and the validity of cultures, languages, and literatures that are put in dialogue within Latino works exposes the artificiality of literary histories that create narratives of literary development based on geographic or linguistic boundaries (173).

Moreover, with the global circulation and favorable reception of Glissant's theory of creolization and poetics of relation, the incorporation of popular cultures into extant European and North American aesthetic forms and the revisiting and (re)interpretation of Western critical (philosophical) texts through the lens of creolization have emerged as a literary trend in recent times evidenced in the *Creolizing the Canon* series, published by Rowman and Littlefield in partnership with the Caribbean Philosophical Association.[115]

[115] This series revisits canonical theories in the humanities and social sciences through the lens of creolization.

To the above point, it is my considered opinion that Zapata Olivella may have with his concept of *trietnicidad* offered the region a possible solution to this centuries-old recurring national/regional identity debate. Not only did the Colombian intellectual and folklorist promote his country's tri-ethnicity, which he systematically studied and whose cultures he showcased throughout the world when provided the opportunity, but he would in his later life defend both within Academia and before the highest political fora in his country the uniqueness of each of these ethnicities and their own individual miscegenation that he insisted should be both acknowledged and celebrated.[116]

Thus, for Zapata Olivella, the definition of Colombian national cultural identity did not reside in any attempt to create one uniform identity out of many, but rather in the act of embracing, respecting, and showcasing equitably the multiple identities that make up the country. Admittedly, this type of thinking embodies a brand of multiculturalism that is rarely seen or promoted in the region or the Western world, engendering in many as a result a sense of disquiet. Yet, it must be received as a possible and very formidable solution for the region's split subjectivity and perhaps even one that is capable of breaking the current impasse of the multiculturalist debate within the world literary arena, embroiled as it finds itself between the underwriting of a triumphalist discourse of globalization and approaches that are averse to the latter uniformizing process, such as has been conceptualized and articulated by the Martinican philosopher and poet, Edouard

[116] Zapata Olivella repeatedly highlighted not only the triple ethnicity of his country but the multiethnic nature of each of the three main ethnicities, pointing to the fact that even the Spanish by virtue of their own history was a multiethnic nation.

Glissant.[117] Moreover, with its conceptualization of double, in some cases, triple consciousness of the region's multicultural and multiethnic inhabitants, Zapata Olivella's theorization provides a more universal explanation for the global literary and cultural engagement of the varying elements of the region's diverse population –mainstreaming as it does the diaspora (both past and present) as an integral part of the region's ethnic identity–that would englobe even the *deseo de mundo* of the creole mestizos and white Latinos as interpreted by Siskind.

Zapata Olivella's rhizomic approach to Latin America's cultural identity further echoes Glissant in his rejection of the theory of the single root and his embracing of the Caribbean concept of 'creolization' and its multiple strands as the foundation of his world literary discourse. While Glissant focuses on the relations that obtain in the archipelagic islands of the Caribbean as his model of world literature, Zapata Olivella extends his vision beyond Latin America and the Caribbean to foreground the connections and collaboration in both aesthetic and critical thought that comprise the African diaspora throughout the world.[118]

[117] Glissant's concept of creolization contains the seeds of a critical version of world literature, one that is averse to globalization (*mondialisation*), which he defines as the reign of the multinationals, standardization, and savage ultra-liberalisation on the global markets. He presents instead the notion of *mondialité*, translated as 'world mentality', 'worldliness', or 'worldling'. Glissant's translator, Michael Dash, describes the author's aim as a dismantling of the individual and the 'heroics of self-formulation (Dash 1989: 609) through situating the mind in the body and the body in relation to the world. For Glissant, the 'world' is therefore the relations between all things which appears threefold: as *tout-monde* (the world in its entirety), *écho-monde* (the world of things resonating with one another), and *chaos-monde* (a world that cannot be systematized)

[118] While Zapata Olivella interprets the world from an African diasporic perspective, his tri-ethnic opens up a frame of analysis that facilitates similar approaches by the other ethnicities; hence, pointing to parallel worlds that may or may not intersect.

Zapata Olivella's diasporic approach to penetrating the world sets the foundation for a more equitable discourse where each ethnicity secures its sense of place and belongingness within itself, thereby being empowered to share their unique cosmovisions and established identities with the world. While this approach affords the cosmopolitan individual the right to see him or herself as forming part of or to legitimately possess the desire to identify themselves with the prevailing hegemonic globalized culture, a trait that is characteristic of the elite classes of most post-colonial societies, it would make space for those individuals typically primarily from the less privileged and more marginalized classes, who may occupy parallel or alternative worlds, hold different visions of what constitutes modernity, and whose social and/or cultural realities preclude them from the very possibility of Western capitalist belongingness. While the thinking of both Glissant and Zapata Olivella may seem utopic, I agree with the former's assertion that utopia is not the dream, it is in fact what is missing in our world.[119]

Guillén and the Leftist World

Producing an extensive oeuvre that inserted itself into the ongoing regional cultural identity discussion defined at the time by language, Guillén would lay claim culturally to what his predecessors, despite their repeated efforts, had failed to obtain politically, economically, and socially–the integration of the Afro-descendant population into the Latin American world as full and equal citizens.[120] Assuming his Afro-Hispanic

[119] See Edouard Glissant's *La Cohée du Lamentin* (2005), p. 16.
[120] Read more on the repeated failed attempts by Afro-Latin Americans to become free and fully integrated citizens into their emerging national societies, despite their active participation in the region's

identity, the Cuban mulatto author would, with the stroke of his pen, first liberate the Afro-Latin American from the image ascribed to him in the public sphere of one possessing an ahistorical and/or pejorative past related to his African ancestry and, second, offer to the Hispanic American world a vision of itself that was culturally rich not only in prehistoric Indigenous myths and symbols, then current predominant European traditions and norms, but also in centuries-old African ancestral customs and modes.

Undeniably, Guillén's version of black (*negrista*) poetry that integrated Hispanic and Afro-Cuban elements, his literary activism against the picturesque portrayal of the daily lives of the poor, and his promotion of a mixed-race Cuban cultural identity (*cubanidad*), targeted the redressing of the historic invisibility of the expression and contributions of the Afro-descendant populations of Cuba and Hispanic America in the official discourses and historical recounts of the island and sub-region. Thus, it played the function of retelling the Latin American and Caribbean story from the perspective of its Afro-descendant populations, thereby offering through memory and research, a more accurate and complete picture of the history and cultural identity of the so-called 'New World'.

Moreover, it can be argued that similar to the aesthetic and critical production of other Black populations both in the region and the wider world, Guillén's poetics also represented, on a broader scale, open resistance to the worldwide systemic policies of racism, economic imperialism, and cultural assimilationism of the hegemonic West. In addition, it perhaps, more importantly, highlighted a critical element of the Black

independence processes in Quince Duncan's "From Gradualism to Afrorealism in Latin America" (2022), pp. 3-7.

diasporic world that was not being captured in the third-party accounts rendered previously: the power (resilience), beauty, and creativity of the Afro-descendant populations of Latin America and the Caribbean evidenced through the music, songs, dances, and religious ceremonies that were practiced and that enabled them to overcome in their daily lives. This element, still so often overlooked within current scholarship would be of extreme importance in the analysis of the literary and cultural production of Hispanic America, or indeed of Afro-Latin America and the Caribbean writ large. While the recent practice within the field of Comparative/World Literature has been to focus on displacement and loss in relation to texts that explore the theme of migration, what comes through more strongly in these works from the Afro-descendant cultural producers of the region is the superhuman resilience, the deadpan stoicism, the creativity, and ofttimes surprisingly, the unexplainable joy of the protagonists even in the most tragic of circumstances, an image that while it has been broadly circulated, albeit mainly within Academia, I believe still needs to be appropriately read and received by the world.

Likewise, despite the *de facto* intervention into the region's cultural identity discourse that Guillén's paradigm-shifting poetics represented and the proliferation of Afro-descendant literary and cultural production since then, there continues to obtain the exclusion of this aesthetic and critical production from the Latin American and (Latin) Caribbean official cultural identity discourse in places where they matter, such as the ongoing world literary debates initiated at the turn of the century. Moreover, Guillén's non-conforming engagement with the Spanish (European) tradition at the time still goes

unnoticed within the wider mainstreamed arena of world literature where his works are still to be recognized.[121]

Given the creation and circulation of Afro descendant works within a broader symphonic score of inequality and injustice that continue to haunt these literary and cultural producers throughout the world, I theorize that Afro-Latin American and Caribbean world literary and/or universal cultural production (like all cultural production marginalized in the current world literary system or space *pace* Moretti or Casanova) must be received beyond their borders with *attached* engagement in contrast to the *detached* sort of reading proposed by David Damrosch that, in his estimation, constitutes a defining characteristic of world literature.[122] While the former type of reading would relegate these important texts to being just national or regional contestations by localized racial groups occurring beyond one's borders, in short, essentialist texts, the former would rather elevate them, viewing them from the broader perspective of universal solidarity with the human 'other', who still writes and produces culturally to attain and cement their basic human rights of justice and racial equality.[123]

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[121] Although Nicolás Guillén is recognized as an acclaimed author within his country and the wider Hispanophone world (including Spain and Africa), and his works studied within Academia in African and African diaspora studies programs throughout the world both in translation and in its original form, he still remains absent within the official Latin American cultural historical discourse and he (nor any other Afro-Hispanic American) has not as yet made it into any of the mainstream World Literary Anthologies produced since the beginning of the twenty-first century.

[122] In his seminal work, *What is World Literature*, published in 2003, David Damrosch proposes an alternative definition to that which had previously obtained within North America–an established canon of European masterpieces–to that of a mode of circulation and of reading, *detached* reading of literary texts that he argues gains in translation.

[123] Guillén's works which are all part of the Afro-Latin American canon of works within Academia both with the region and in the more developed North have been translated into more than 25 languages and are regularly used as part of syllabi in courses related to Afro-Hispanid and/or Afro-Latin American studies.

Not surprisingly, Guillén's poetics would be deemed subversive by the early twentieth century Cuban cultural and political elite, who even though seeking ways at the time of defining their new nations that would distinguish them from the hegemonic and interventionist US to the North, still viewed and projected themselves and, by extension, their countries, as white, albeit, European. Moreover, they would remain espoused to the nineteenth century Western European Enlightenment ideology of Social Darwinism (scientific racism) and the practice of Eugenics that were still very much in vogue at the time in the Western world.

It was therefore to be expected that Guillén, like most of his regional intellectual Afro-descendant contemporaries, in their struggle against U.S. intervention and domination and the many U.S. sanctioned dictatorships to which the region would fall prey during the twentieth century, would embrace the anti-West worlds and ideologies of socialism, communism, anti-fascism, and anti-imperialism that were also rapidly globalizing at the time. Thus, Guillén would become a member of the Communist party in 1937 after being jailed the previous year. He would then travel to Spain for a Congress of Writers and Artists where he would also cover the Spanish Civil War as a magazine reporter.

From his sojourn in Spain, Guillén would produce two main collections, one of which *España: Poema en cuatro angustias y una Esperanza* ('Spain: Poem in Four Anguishes and One Hope'), he would defend a poetics of solidarity with Republican Spain, while also acknowledging the colonial and postcolonial history that problematizes that "transatlantic" aesthetic position. Particularly in the "Angustia primera" and in the

last poem "la voz de la esperanza," Guillén highlights the racial and cultural identity of the speaker to legitimize his solidarity with the Republican cause from the perspective of the Latin American subject, who feels their cultural roots connects them to Spain. The four "anguishes" or poems reveal the Latin American alliance with anti-fascist Spain and lament the tragedy of the death of Frederico García Lorca, while the last poem defiantly and optimistically underlines the ethical imperative to fight against fascism.[124]

Arrested and exiled on many occasions in the 1950s during the regime of Fulgencio Batista for his progressive poetics,[125] Guillén would receive the acclamation and recognition of his literary talent from the communist world in the form of two international prizes awarded him in 1954 and 1976 respectively: the Stalin Peace Prize, later renamed for Lenin under de-Stalinization, and the International Botev Prize. During the period of the Cold War (1940-1989), in general, and the decades of the 1940s and 1950s, in particular, Guillén would cultivate close friendships not only with the cultural elite of the Soviet Union but also with those of the Eastern Bloc countries that he visited as a political tourist within the framework of the USSR's VOKS (All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries) program that had as its mission to invite

[124] Guillén's five poems that comprise *España* are also an aesthetic and political homage to Antonio Machado, Federico García Lorca, Miguel Hernández, Rafael Alberti and Pablo Neruda, contemporary poets with whom he establishes an intertextual dialogue through a diversity of styles and poetic forms. See Cecilia Enjuto Rangel's "Nicolás Guillén y la Guerra Civil española." *Periphērica: Journal of Social, Cultural, and Literary History*, 2022, p. 132.

[125] Guillén had been refused entry into the US in 1941 due to his communist affiliations, then later into Cuba in 1953 upon his return from a visit to Chile. He would be forced to remain in exile in the South American country for five years until welcomed back into his native land by the then triumphant Castro-led communist revolutionary regime. His works, *Sóngoro cosongo* (1931), *West Indies Ltd.* (1934) are noted for their decrial of the oppression Afro-Cubans faced in their daily lives. The poems of *Cantos para soldados y sones para turistas* ('Songs for Soldiers and *Sones* for Tourists' (1937)) reflect his growing commitment to being politically outspoken. From his experience covering the Spanish Civil War came the poems collected in *España* ('Spain' (1937).

public intellectuals and writers from all over the world to the Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc countries, about which they were encouraged to write. Having joined the Eastern Bloc in 1948 after its Communist Party orchestrated a coup, Czechoslovakia was one of these celebrated destinations, the famous Dobríš castle in its capital Prague, seat of the Union of Czechoslovak Writers from the 1940s to the 1990s, serving both as a residence and networking (safe) space for the Cuban author.[126]

It was not rare that famous intellectuals from Latin America would meet for the first time in Eastern Europe as it was not possible to meet in their home countries, as the authoritarian and anti-communist governments in place simply would not allow it. Apart from Guillén, celebrated and emerging regional authors, including Jorge Amado, Gabriel García Márquez, Raúl González Tuñón, Graciliano Ramos, Ricardo Latcham, Pablo Neruda,[127] Efraín Huerta, and Luís Suárez would meet in the communist capital. Prague thus became a cultural leftist hub from the 1950s onwards, gathering both burgeoning and established leftist writers from around the world. In fact, according to the Latin Americanist, Michal Zourek, Eastern Europe played a crucial role for Latin American literature–if it wasn´t for the international communist movement, it is possible that the

[126] See Michal Zourek's article "Chateau Dobrís: the centre of Latin American Leftist intellectuals behind the Iron Curtain" in *Canadaian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 1, 2019, pp. 40-61.

[127] While never confirmed by him, it is suspected that Neruda may have in fact taken his artistic name from the nineteenth century Czech writer, poet, and journalist, Jan Neruda (the Chilean poet was born Ricardo Eliécer Neftali Reyes Basoalto). Photos of him walking the Neruda Street in Prague, or posing before restaurants and pubs named "Neruda," offer some solid ground for speculation. See Filip Noubel's post "During the Cold War, Latin American intellectuals found solace in communist Prague: Gabriel García Márquez, Jorge Amado, and Pablo Neruda were among the illustrious visitors" in *Global Voices* written from an interview given to the journal by Michal Zourek, a Czech academic focusing on the ties between the Eastern Bloc and Latin America and published in November 2020, pp. 1-7.

fabled 1960s generation of writers wouldn't have been so influential, including in the West. The works of engaged authors came out in enormous prints [in Czech, Polish, or Russian], much higher than the ones in their mother languages, and all of this happened behind the Iron Curtain (Filip Noubel 4). This global mapping by Latin American and Caribbean cultural producers with the leftist world during the Cold War era was indeed of such a magnitude that it ought not to be overlooked by any serious attempt to map an historical world literary trajectory for the region. As Zourek aptly demonstrates, these writings went beyond travelogues and propagandistic oeuvres, although they did include some of these indisputably global genres,[128] to encompass, particularly in the latter years, aesthetic and critical works that sought to engage both creatively and critically with the regional and global issues of the time.[129] The canons of these authors who participated in circuits of world literature related to phenomena and spaces of the socialist block undoubtedly echo the same internationalism constructed from the Non-Aligned Movement, the Cuban Revolution, organizations such as UNESCO[130] and ECLAC, as well as other expressions of the politics of the three worlds of the Cold World era. Undeniably, global mappings that transcend and challenge the idea of a single and/or

[128] Travelogues were considered among the first kinds of transnational writings effected by Latin American and Caribbean authors. Yet, the analyses done of these within the context of the present world literary debate remain to date very reductive in terms of theoretical framework employed, as well as authors and spaces assessed. See for instance the analysis done by Mariano Siskind of the Guatemalan literary critic and writer, Enrique Gómez Carillo with respect to his travels throughout Western Europe in comparison to European writers and the predictable conclusions that were arrived at.

[129] See Michal Zourek's article "Los viajes de los intelectuales latinoamericanos a Europa Oriental 1947-1956: organización, circuitos de contacto y reflexiones", *Ars & Humanitas*, 2017, pp. 331-347.

[130] The role of UNESCO in the formation of world literary circuits related to phenomena and spaces such as the Non-Aligned Movement and the socialist block has been well documented and studied by Sarah Brouillette (2014 and 2015), facilitating the creation of forms of thinking about the texts produced in peripherical spaces that have been erased by the postcolonial and world literary theories.

combined and unequal world literary system *pace* Franco Moretti and the Warwick Research Collective will require for their inclusion into the world literary theoretical space new methodology that, as posits the Latin Americanist, Ignacio Sánchez Prado, should issue from the material spaces of cultural production, including from the genealogies of marginalized authors, such as Juan Rulfo (70) and I may add Nicolás Guillén and other similarly talented and prolific afro-descendant transnational authors of the region. Nonetheless, it is work that must be done as without it this valid and valuable dimension of the region's world literary trajectory would be lost, but which thankfully is now being increasingly carried out by new and emerging world literary theorists from the margins.

Post-Revolutionary Cuba and the Transatlantic/Cosmopolitan Poetics of Solidarity

Another very noteworthy aspect of the global engagement of the Afro-Latin American within the Black diaspora was the circulation of books within this wider geographical space that it facilitated. Guillén's readership and influence, for example, would be extended both trans-continentally and trans-hemispherically by virtue of this phenomenon, penetrating the Hispanophone (Equatorial Guinea) and Lusophone African world. Many of these intellectuals would later inform of the impact that the aesthetic and critical writings of the Cuban national poet had on them and their attraction to his recounts of the social realities of the Cuban Blacks and the musicality and rhythm of his poetry that reflected the cadence of their own writings. Satty Flaherty-Echeverría corroborates this fact, stating that Guillén's two early masterpieces (*Motivos de son* and

Sóngoro cosongo) compiled in 1947 in the *son* collection acutely resonated with burgeoning African writers, such as Amilcar Cabral (Guinea Bissau/Cape Verde), Mario Pinto de Andrade (Angola), Francisco José Tenreiro, José Craveirinha, Tomás Medeiros (São Tomé e Príncipe), among others writing in Portuguese (107). Indeed, as Laranjeira further affirms the Lusophone African intellectuals received Guillén's writings so well in part due to the black internationalism of the time that comprised of a growing network of black intellectuals corresponding with each other through metropolitan areas and the spread of books, anthologies, and magazines, as well as letters and essays of black expression (A Negritude 35-37).[131] Moreover, they would arrange, translate, and collaborate with Guillén and his work, at times welcoming his oeuvre as authentically African while at other times preferring to identify with his *mulatez* or *mestizaje.*

Established as a transnational author from the beginning of his career through his friendship and collaboration with the North American, Langston Hughes, and his potential connection with the Haitian imaginary by virtue of the said relationship, Guillén would solidify himself during his post-revolutionary years as a Cuban national poet, a title he would receive in 1961.[132] In fact, it could be said that Guillén's cultural

[131] One important metropolitan center for these authors was Portugal and its main cities of Lisbon, Coimbra, and Porto, where they participated in a student cultural group called *Casa dos Estudantes do Imperio* (House of the Students of the Empire or CEI) which became one of the hubs for interacting with Guillén's texts. It is interesting to note that though originally intended as a unifying association of African student groups to follow the Empire's ideals, the CEI, since its inception, served as the group that fueled anti-colonial sentiments, worked for the recuperation of culture, and brought nationalist sentiments into existence through the Portuguese language, eventually fueling the independence struggles of the 1970s.
[132] Despite the many years he spent traveling the world and living in exile, Guillén never considered himself a writer in exile, preferring to refer to himself as a Cuban nationalist writer. An ardent supporter of Fidel Castro's 1959 revolution, he would permanently settle in his homeland after its triumph, becoming a member of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party and accepting Fidel's offer to serve as the Director of Cuba's Union of Writers and Artists (*Unión Nacional de Escritores de Cuba*), a position he would hold up to the time of his death in 1989.

nationalism (*Cubanidad*) in many ways echoed Jacques Stephen Alexis' Haitianness (*Haitianité*) with its firm insistence on the uniqueness of Haitian cultural production. It would be, thus, in his capacity as a nationalist writer and a cultural ambassador of the Cuban revolution that Guillén's work would be later circulated and received broadly within the African and Asian continents, where the Cuban maximum leader would launch primarily his country´s worldly mission of solidarity with the anti-racial, anti-colonial, and anti-imperialist struggles of selected countries of these regions.[133] Hence, within the context of his service to the Castro regime,[134] Guillén's influence in the countries of Hispanophone and Lusophone Africa would be further consolidated as these were territories with which Cuba was involved politically, militarily, and eventually culturally in a show of solidarity and humanitarian support with their own revolutionary processes and the ensuing civil wars that were ongoing in those parts of the world. Many other Cuban intellectuals would be involved in this broader cultural exchange, including the burgeoning international female author and essayist, Nancy Morejón.

[133] From the 1960s through the 1990s, Cuba would through its revolutionary focus show solidarity with African Americans, Vietnam, Africa (the Congo, Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and South Africa) as well as Latin America (Puerto Rico, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Chile) in their anti-racial, anti-colonial, and anti-imperialist struggles. These political acts of solidarity would ofttimes be accompanied by cultural engagement and exchange, leading ofttimes on the part of the Cuban revolutionary artists to what Antonio Willis describes as cosmopolitan (propagandistic) poetics. See Antonio Tillis's "Cultural Transnationality and Cosmopolitanism in the Poetic Journeys of Nancy Morejón (2011).

[134] During his years back in Cuba, Guillén would continue to travel widely, visiting China as well as several countries in Europe, Africa, and South America. In 1977, for instance, he would participate in the United Nations International Conference against *Apartheid* that took place in the city of Lagos between August 22 and 26 at the invitation of the Republic of Nigeria. In 1983, he would receive Cuba's inaugural National Prize for Literature. However, not only would his paradigm-shifting poetics gain international and national recognition, but also regional acclaim, as with the emergence of the *Criolité* movement in the 1980s, his by then substantive oeuvre would be received and celebrated as West Indian (*antillano*) by many Anglophone and Francophone Caribbean scholars and critics.

Inspired by a long line of anti-colonial gatherings, such as the meeting of the Afro-Asian Alliance in Bandung in 1955, the Cuban government would host in its capital in 1966 under the auspices of the Cairo-based Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organization (AAPSO) the first big international Tricontinental Conference (of Solidarity) that englobed Asia, Africa, and Latin America.[135] The Conference would draw to Havana over five hundred delegates from eighty-two countries from the three continents.[136] In an interview had with Cynthia Gabbay, Nancy Morejón confirms that the direct connection between African intellectuals and militants between the 1960s and 1980s began with the celebration of the Tricontinental Conference, she herself providing for the two-week event (3-16 January) her services as a French (and English) translator.[137]

The triumph of the 1959 revolution against the United States and Western imperialism consolidated Cuba in the imaginary of the countries of the so-called Third world as a legitimate leader, emboldening its efforts to spearhead anti-imperialist, anti-

[135] The Tricontinental Conference emerged from two main movements: the anti-colonial Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) that included not only radical regimes but also those with a more conciliatory attitude towards imperialism and the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization (AAPSO) that comprised movements with unfinished anti-colonial wars of national liberation that had a more radical edge to them. The NAM and AAPSO platforms would often collaborate, providing thereby the cultural space from which the Tricontinental would emerge.

[136] See The General Secretariat of the Organization of Solidarity with the Peoples of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, ed. *First Solidarity Conference of the Peoples of Africa, Asia, and Latin America* (Havana, O.S.P.A.A.A.L., 1966), 183. Cited by Sarah Siedman, p. 3.

[137] Known as the best known and translated woman poet of post-revolutionary Cuba, Morejón, a graduate of the University of Havana in Caribbean and French literature, is fluent in both French and English. A well-regarded translator of French and English into Spanish, she would translate several Caribbean writers including Edouard Glissant, Jacques Roumain, Aimé Césaire and René Depestre. Her own poetry has been translated into English, German, French, Portuguese, Galician, Russian, Macedonian, and other languages, and is included in the 1992 anthology *Daughters of Africa*, edited by Margaret Busby. Morejón, as of 2013, serves as the Director of *Revista Unión*, the journal of the Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba (*Unión de los Artistas y Escritores de Cuba* UNEAC), having been elected president of the writer's section of the latter organization in 2008.

colonialist, and anti-racist struggles across the world. As Gabbay further asserts, "a ojos de los movimientos independistas y libertadores africanos, Cuba y su cultura revolucionaria brillaban como un signo utópico, estrella que guía del otro lado del Atlántico" ('in the eyes of the African independence and liberation movements, Cuba and its revolutionary culture shone like a utopian sign, a guiding star from the other side of the Atlantic'). Thus, not only were the Cuban soldiers, doctors, and teachers who arrived on the African continent from the 1970s admired, but also the island's literature and music received particular attention (256).[138] The aforementioned role of Cuba, its revolution, and its mainly afro-descendant cultural intellectuals in the non-Western world has been only marginally, if at all theorized within the context of world literature and the, albeit newly emerging, concept of 'literatures of the world'.[139] Instead, the importance of the Cuban Revolution to Latin America and the Caribbean and the world has been particularly reductive in that sphere, focusing either on its short-lived illusionary impact on the region's intellectuals and the works that issued therefrom, i.e., those related to the Boom, individuals like Alejo Carpentier who although connected to revolutionary forms of creative expression that could be seen as anti-West (the surrealist movement, for example,) still embraced ways of writing that connected him to the Western tradition, or alternately, the adverse impact of the Castro regime on its pro-Western cultural intellectuals. A cursory example of the latter is Guillermo Cabrera Infante who received

[138] To cite two examples, the poems of Félix Pita Rodríguez and Roberto Fernández Retamar translated to English as "The Guerrillas Arrive" and "For an Instant", respectively, were published in the first number of the ANC's (the South African communist leadership against *apartheid*) cultural magazine, *Rixaka*, as well as Nancy Morejón's poem "Parque central, alguna gente."

[139] While Cuban literatures overall have served a model function since its revolution in 1959 that was definitely received at the level of world literature, as affirmed by leading intellectual publishing houses in the European and US reception landscape from 1959 to the late 1970s.

world literary acclaim for his literary clout that he developed through a political (anti-Castro) dimension, as well as through affinities with experimental modes of writing that were shaped above all in the French nouveau roman. Yet, Cuba's worldliness during the mid to latter segment of the Cold War era has been expressed in many cultural products of quality that proliferated throughout the period not always for mere propagandistic purposes, therefore also worthy of being categorized as world literature and received by the world as such.

Another important global literary and cultural space that Cuba and Latin America occupied during the Cold War was the great transnational movement of struggle against *apartheid* that had as important centers Europe, the United States and Africa, from which much rich world literary and critical production issued from the region, both within and beyond Academia.[140] The discourses against *apartheid* penetrated Cuba through

[140] In Academia, "it was Dr. Armando Entralgo, founder of the Center for African and Middle Eastern Studies (CEAMO) of Cuba, whose determined support, contribution in his analyses and liaison with the personalities and fronts of the African National Congress" (Lucena Morelo 2015: 65) disseminated the anti-apartheid struggle for the Latin American continent. In the lyrical milieu, the singer-songwriter Pablo Milanés, for example, gave voice to his song "Nelson Mandela, sus dos amores" (Milanés 1988). Nor did the presence of the famous South African writer Alex La Guma, who was exiled in Cuba between 1978 and 1985 until the date of his death in the city of Havana, go unnoticed. Alex and Blanche La Guma ran an educational institution in Havana for young Africans, who were being educated for the revolution (La Guma and Klammer 2011). Within the cinematic genre, as early as 1968, the Cuban Santiago Álvarez had included in his agitprop film, LBJ (Álvarez 1968), the music of the South African militant Miriam Makeba, known as "Mama Africa," and the images of the famous speech of her fourth husband, the black panther Stokely Carmichael. Later, Wifredo Lam participated with a drawing in the exhibition "15 Artists Against *Apartheid,"* held in Paris in 1983. That same year, the Spanish painter and writer Antonio Saura and the French interventionist painter, Ernest Pignon-Ernest, published an album of the exhibition, under the United Nations label, which includes the work of Lam (65 and 117). In the cultural space, then, the themes of *apartheid*, racial injustice and the South African fascist regime circulated, when, for example, in August 1988 the National Company of Cuba staged, in a Mexican exhibition, the play 'Mosquito' by author Athol Fugard, and South African actors John Kani and Winston Ntshoni. Rogelio Martínez Furé (National Prize for Literature 2015), a prolific translator of African literature, translated hundreds of Pan-Africanist voices to make them known in Cuba (see, for example, Martínez Furé 2014). I must also highlight the series of African literature produced in the literary field by the revolutionary *Editorial Arte y Literatura* ('Publisher of Art and Literature') and directed by Daniel García Santos where authors such as Henri Lopes, Ousman

journalistic texts, conferences, literature, and oral histories that were produced in the first instance around South African figures in exile (Gabbay 257). They were also influenced by the activity promoted by the Organization for the Solidarity with the Peoples of Africa, Asia, and Latin America (OSPAAL), among other actions, through a series of color posters that marked the Third World visual representation of the struggle against *apartheid*, which were published in the Tricontinental magazine.[141] All these elements made up an epistemological set that came into contact and tinged with pan-African colors the black Cuban discourses.[142] Given the global reach of the *Apartheid* movement and the large afro-descendant population of the LAC region, it should be expected that this theme would feature as a legitimate one in any articulation, framing, and/or analysis of global issues from a Latin American perspective. Yet, it doesn't, due primarily to the separation that presently obtains in the region's global literary discourse and the absence of the LAC

Sembène, Birago Diop, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Mohammed Dib, Wole Soyinka and Alex La Guma were published.

[141] At the Tricontinental conference, AAPSO was expanded to become OSPAAAL, whose Secretariat continues to function in Havana (Cuba). From Havana, OSPAAAL provided the infrastructure for mutual understanding amongst the movements in the three continents. It continues to produce the eponymous (Tricontinental) magazine that became famous as the purveyor of emblematic posters that carried forward the message of anti-colonial socialism. From the NAM and OSPAAAL came a series of important initiatives, many rooted in the United Nations. Some of these are inter-governmental organizations, such as the South Center based in Geneva, while others have little governmental support. What unites these initiatives is a commitment to the South–namely to the countries that continue to struggle against the histories and structures of imperialism–but also to humanity in general. See thetricontinental.org Accessed on November 6, 2023.

[142] Together with Nancy Morejón, these discourses were promoted by Emilio Ballagas, Miguel Barnet, Georgina Herrera, Pablo Armando Fernández and Excilia Saldaña, among others. Based on the tradition affirmed in the first half of the century by Negro literature with Lydia Cabrera and Lino Novás Calvo, and more clearly from *Négritude* with Nicolás Guillén and Alejo Carpentier–in turn in communication with the Afro-Caribbean movement, these discourses spread throughout the Latin American continent feeding local anti-racist, anti-imperialist and decolonial militancy. Authors such as the Afro-Peruvian Nicomedes Santa Cruz and the Chilean Humberto Díaz-Casanueva composed poems such as "Johannesburg" and "South Africa," the former, and "El niño de Robben-Island," the latter; one, reaffirms his own Pan-Africanist militancy, the other, denounces the white crimes that he himself had investigated in the framework of his work at the United Nations. The Colombian author Manuel Zapata Olivella also devised the lines of a theatrical play that he called *Apartheid... My love*.

afro-descendant canon within the field of world literature. I argue here that by continuing in this trajectory, not only is the field continuing to project a skewed vision to the world of the rich literary and cultural legacy of the region, but also depriving a large portion of the region's population of their legitimacy and due recognition as inhabitants and contributing actors of the Latin American and Caribbean region on the world stage. It stands to reason, therefore, that if Nazi tales can be justified as a legitimate theme for global LAC authors in face of the region's limited participation in the war and the small German population that it houses, then the region's post-revolutionary worldly overtures and global engagements spearheaded by Cuba in spaces such as anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist Lusophone and Hispanophone Africa and *apartheid* South Africa should be equally recognized and celebrated.

Poetic Creolization: An Afro-Cuban/Hispanic/Antillian Contribution to the World[143]

Guillén's combination of 'high art' and 'low art' in his poetics constituted an epistemological break away in Hispanic America from the classical Eurocentric scheme, exemplifying a current of thought that was clearly non-conforming to the Latin American mainstream literature and racial stereotypes, shaped as they were at the time by Europhilia (the unconcealed cult to Europe by creole mestizos, white Latinos and some

[143] Although I will be focusing on Guillén in this section as it pertains to Afro-Hispanic America specifically, it is important to mention that as part of Spanish-American Modernism, both Spanish and French Caribbean writers began to break away from European ideals from the 1920s and to identify themselves with their fellow West Indians, most of whom were Black. Apart from Guillén, the leaders of this movement, who were mainly poets, were Luis Palés Matos (Puerto Rico), Jacques Roumain (Haiti), Léon Damas (French Guiana) and Aimé Césaire (Martinique). The movement, however, which englobed various forms of art, including literature, music, ballet, singing, and painting, later known as the Afro-Cuban Movement found its fulness in Guillén. See G. R. Coulthard's "Nicolás Guillén and West Indian Négritude," *Caribbean Quarterly*, 1970. p. 52.

urban people of color), ethnophobia (fear of ethnic diversity which was seen as a threat to national unity), and endophobia (strong antipathy or aversion to the natives or traits of the group to which one belonged).[144]

Inspired by the popular Afro-Cuban musical genre, *son,* itself a hybrid (Spanish and African) form, and the daily lives of the Cuban working class and rural peasantry, the eponymous collection would be composed in Afro-Cuban vernacular, establishing, thereby, Black culture as a legitimate focus of Cuban literature. From thenceforth, African rhythm and terminology would cease to appear as decorative elements of Afro-Cuban literature (*literatura afrocubanista*), finding their real meaning in and for the Afro-descendant community.[145] In so doing, Guillén would present a more integrated perspective of the Cuban and, by extension, Hispanic American world, using his aesthetic and critical platform to give both voice and depth to one of the principal components of its three-pillar (European, American Indian, and African) racial and cultural formation, that hitherto had been silenced and/or negatively stereotyped.

Undoubtedly, Guillén's use of the Afro-Cuban vernacular and musical rhythms in his poetic writing exhibited confluences with other Hispanic voices of the time, as well as paralleled the increasing employment in the early twentieth century of creolized African forms and content within the poetics of the Francophone and Anglophone Caribbean. In addition, it could be said to mirror in some measure the transfer to musical score of the

[144] See Quince Duncan's "From Gradualism to Afrorealism in Latin America" (2022), pp. 7-9.
[145] Prior to Guillén's *Motivos de son,* Cuban black poetry (poesía afrocubanista) had been produced primarily by white writers, including Emilio Ballagas, José Tallet, and Alejo Carpentier, most of whom depicted the Afro-Cuban exclusively in pictorial terms. See The American, however, similar to Guillén, celebrated in his poetry the power and beauty of the Afro-American through their daily lives that contained music, songs, and dance.

lyrical poetry of the African American jazz and blues, hence, justifying his placement within the broader regional landscape of the wider Caribbean and the Americas. Given the fact that it was in Guillén that the Hispanic American *negrista* movement came to its fulness, I argue that his poetics should be rightly acknowledged as a distinct cultural contribution, not only to the Latin American and Caribbean region, but indeed to the Americas and the wider world. Reflecting as it does the historic specificity and cultural reality of the Hispanic Caribbean Island, it inserts itself within the concept of universal cultural production presented by Jacques Stephen Alexis as an addition to and/or improvement upon, through local/national creativity, of what already existed or exists in the forward march of humanity. The Cuban's contribution takes on greater magnitude when one considers the distinctiveness of the Spanish colonization process within the Latin American and Caribbean region that did not facilitate the development of a creole language in its colonies, yet at the same time promoted a level of Afro-descendant integration in its colonial societies that was unknown to North America, even if said integration only obtained at the level of political and cultural narrative.

Given its uniqueness,[146] it is therefore not surprising that this type of poetic creolization does not factor amongst any of the five characteristics that are comparably binding to the world literature(s) and 'literatures of the world' conceptualizations in Gesine Müller's juxtaposing of the notions of these two concepts effected in 2019 in her previously cited article (see Introductory chapter). Multilingualism, however, does, the

[146] Guillén's unique form of poetic creolization saw him employing a medium of spoken communication that was neither African nor Hispanic, but Afro-Hispanic American, or more particularly, Afro-Cuban that placed in relation, at the level of form, cultures (Spanish American and Afro-Hispanic) previously seen as unequal.

other four being 'movement', 'global-local', 'non-settledness', and 'the dominance of Europe and the United States'. Even though the concept of 'multiculturalism' is included within the framework of the theorizations emerging within the field of transnational literature, the former notion incorporates the understanding that the different cultures being compared whether within the same nation or beyond the nation will each have their own languages, entering the world of comparative/world literature either in these as originals or via translation. While the Afro-Cuban vernacular does not constitute a language *per se,* it does represent a way of communicating that was at the time not only used by Afro-descendants, but appropriated, by and large, by the Cuban working class and rural peasantry, irrespective of color and/or race.

This raises the question of how does one read this type of hybrid cultural production within a comparative/world literary setting? How should this now widely circulated contribution be received within the field? This was the very challenge faced by Langston Hughes in his early attempt to translate Guillén's first poetic work into English for a more global audience.[147] Despite his poetic prowess, knowledge of the Afro-Cuban historical and cultural realities and some Spanish from his visits to Cuba and friendship with Guillén, it still proved initially impossible to reconcile the differences between the distinct musical forms, types of racism endured, and economic realities of the two countries they represented.[148]

[147] See John Patrick Leary's "Havana Reads the Harlem Renaissance: Langston Hughes, Nicolás Guillén, and the Dialetics of Transnational American Literature," *Comparative Literature Studies,* Vol. 47, No. 2, 2010, pp. 133-158.

[148] Although Guillén's works have all since been translated into various languages, Leary points to the difficulties encountered in the translation of Guillén's *Motivos de son,* comparing two translations that were done by Hughes himself, while pointing to the many areas of untranslatability that were addressed not always in a satisfactory manner.

The above immediately brings into focus some of the challenges that cultural producers of popular cultures and/or oral literatures face in their bid to secure wider circulation for their works, within the arena of world literature, for example: issues such as readability and (un)translatability, particularly for non-native writers of either English or French, such as the Afro-descendant writers of Hispanic America. Ana Brígido-Corachán and César Domínguez speak to the matter of the issue of the distance between world literature and oral literatures in their article "Los mundos subalternos de la literatura mundial: hacia una comparación de las literaturas indígenas en Abya Yala/las Américas." Affirming that the Eurocentric conception of world literature maintains a conflictive relationship with orality, they point to the fact that world literature adopted its present form from three institutions based on the printing press: 1) the movements of massive alphabetization from the end of the nineteenth century, 2) the publishing industry, and 3) the university, all which have valued writing at the expense of a significant attention to orality" (79). They propose as a result an alternative labeling and methodology for their type of cultural production that they designate 'orature' (*oralitura*)[149] and *transindigeneidad* (transindigeneity) respectively that may be more relevant to Guillén's hybrid Hispanic American genre.

[149] The concept of "*oralitura"* as a product of the South-South theoretical dialogue (Haiti-Africa-Latin America) names a hemispheric movement promoted by artists (the oralitores) and academics of the South with institutional support. Constructed in opposition to "literature", *oralitura/orature* also distances itself from other concepts such as "orality," "Oral Tradition" and "Oral Literature." In their definitions, which do not always coincide, but are often contradictory, it can be seen that the ultimate goal is to appeal to the aesthetic dimension of oral verbal expressions on an equal footing with written ones. *Oralitura* is presented as a "contribution to the construction of a multicultural and multilingual society" (Chikangana/Mallki 2014: 75) in which it is the marginalized self who takes hold of the voice to say to himself through the combination of the orality that is still alive in the native community and the 'other' literature, in a search for memory and language. See Ana Brígido-Corachán and César Domínguez's "Los mundos subalternos de

While emphasizing that *oralitura* neither implies the negation of the validity of the written form nor a replacement of the songs of the indigenous communities, indigenous scholars highlight that in this kind of writing there is always a proposal to bridge the society in general. Adopted and employed by the indigenous community since the mid 1990s, the concept is said to have dubious origins and definition, believed to have emerged independently but concurrently in the 1990s within the context of the Workshop of Writers in Indigenous Languages (Taller de Escritores en Lenguas Indígenas) held in 1995 in Mexico under the leadership of the writer and activist Chihuailaf, as well as through the scholarship of an unnamed Argentinean researcher (1990) and his Senegalese counterpart, Yoro Fall. The ontological dubiousness notwithstanding, what is significant in the South-South conceptual trajectory of "oralitura" is its reformulation as a hybridization between the oral and the written form with aesthetic, political, and cultural aims.[150]

Transindigeneity, in its turn, as understood by Brígido-Corachán and Domínguez is an approach that privileges the practice of reading as an action that moves *along with*, *through* and *beyond* indigenous texts and contexts generally interpreted from their tribal and national idiosyncrasies, without undermining or excluding in any way but, rather, complementing the studies that analyze indigenous literatures from this necessary specific idiosyncratic perspective (tribal, ethnic or national) (80). This methodology being proposed by the indigenous scholars as a new one to be considered by the world

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la literatura mundial: hacia una comparación de las literaturas indígenas en Abya Yala/las Américas" in *World Literature, Cosmopolitanism, and Globality,* edited by Gesine Muller and Mariano Siskind, 2019, pp. 83.

[150] Cited by Ana Brígido-Corachán and César Domínguez in "Los mundos subalternos" 2020, p. 83.

literary field for the specific purpose of reading and interpreting the indigenous texts of the Americas seems particularly relevant for the interpretation of the hybrid texts initially crafted by Guillén.

Beyond Guillén: Mapping the Afro-Hispanic Realist World

Guillen's break with the totalizing European paradigm would influence a cadre of emerging regional Afro-descendant cultural producers from both within Cuba and across Hispanic America and the Caribbean, opening the floodgates for many of these individuals to transform themselves into writing subjects on themes pertinent to their daily lives while appropriating terms, expressions, myths and symbols from their African ancestry, presenting thereby a more fulsome picture of the Afro-Latin American world both in terms of time and space. The Costa Rican writer and critic, Quince Duncan, affirms that, with his book *Motivos de son*, Guillén initiated a new current of Black thought, without naming it, a novel intellectual vision, a well-articulated frame, that he expounded in such a way that over the years it would be embraced as a guideline for Latin American Afro-descendant writers. This current of thought and vision that would inform the writing of many later twentieth and twenty-first century Afro-Hispanic and Afro-Brazilian writers, Duncan ascribes the title of Afro-realism.[151] Duncan justifies the use of this nomenclature because:

> This literary current does not use the traditional referents of "mainstream" literature, as the writers of the "boom" do. It doesn't evoke Greek myth, or

[151] See Quince Duncan, *Un señor de Chocolate*, 1996 and "From Gradualism to Afrorealism in Latin America" in *Socio Criticism, Number XXXVI, Vol. 1, 2022.*

> folkorism. It is not black literature, nor does it subscribe to the dictates of the *négritude* current. It's not magical realism. It is a new expression, which performs an Africanizing subversion of language, resorting to mythical references that have never before been seen, or until now have been marginal, such as the Muntu, the Samanfo, the Ebeyiye, the vindication of the deities, such as Yemanyá, and the incorporation of elements of coastal Creole English. ("Afrorealismo")

Afro-realism represents therefore a political stand; a proposal for demystification, against the Eurocentric chain of denials, myths, omissions, victimhood, and blatant lies that constitute official history; a claim that people of African descent constitute an integral part of the Latin American communities, and as such, are full-fledged citizens, co-builders of these national states, having a clear understanding of multicultural identity. This stance would be later assumed by several nationally and internationally acclaimed Afro-Latin American poetic voices and storytellers. These include fellow Cubans, Nancy Morejón and Georgina Herrera; the Colombians Manuel Zapata Olivella and Jorge Artel; the Costa Ricans, Quince Duncan and Shirley Campbell; the Peruvian, Lucia Charún Illescas; the Dominican, Blás Jímenez, the Uruguayan, Christine Cabral; the Panamanians, Gerardo Maloney and Carlos (Cubena) Guillermo Wilson, to name just a few.

Duncan identifies several key characteristics of Guillen's Afro-realism that can also be found in the many Afro Latin American and Caribbean writers associated with this current, who as he underscores, differ in their use of traditional Western myths and symbols. In general, the current places emphasis on the use of ancestral elements and

experiences of the African community in diaspora. More specifically, it uses Afro-centric terminology to restore the African diasporan voice while equally representing an effort to vindicate African symbolic memory. Further, it constitutes an informed and critical restructuring of the historical memory of the African diaspora and the reaffirmation of the concept of ancestral community or what has been referred to elsewhere as "universal Black consciousness."[152] It adopts an intra-centric perspective, in other words, it self-criticizes, highlighting the tensions of class and color that persist within the Latin American and Caribbean Afro-descendant diaspora. Finally, it seeks and proclaims Afro-Latin American identity and foregrounds the recurrence of Afrocentric vision and reality.

Despite the inability of these hybrid texts to penetrate the wider world in the way the magical realist works of the Boom authors did, one cannot deny the agency that this Afro Realist current has afforded the associated cultural producers, who pride themselves in being allowed to do the important work of correcting through memory and research five hundred years of 'new world' history, as well as of (re)presenting in a more favorable and authentic light the worlds of the Afro-descendant communities of Latin American and the Caribbean.

Re(w)ri(gh)ting the Past … (Re)imagining the Future

The Proto-Futurist *Nuevo Muntu* (New World) novels of Manuel Zapata Olivella[153]

[152] This term was perhaps first used but undoubtedly popularized by Marcus Garvey in his Pan African manifesto.
[153] See Appendix B, pp. 217-219 for a detailed profile of this author.

Standing tall among the Afro Realist was the Afro-Colombian, Manuel Zapata Olivella, who through exhaustive investigation that would take him approximately two decades and all over the world, would elevate and transform Guillen's creolizing experiment into a novelistic genre that would connect in its ideology to Jacques Stephen Alexis' one world civilization, only this time with the African diaspora both as its originator and center. Correcting the absence of the African diaspora from the so-called trans culturalized novels, in the first instance, and then from the overall history of the New World, Zapata Olivella would with his 650-page masterpiece, *Changó, el gran putas* ('Changó, the biggest baddass') not only re(w)ri(gh)t(e) the history of the Americas, but also reimagine its future with an integrated and liberated Afro-descendant component. This innovative novelistic vision and genre he would label the *Nuevo Muntu* (New World).

According to John Maddox, the *Nuevo Muntu* is a vision of the Americas, or *América*, that unifies the history of the continent and makes the African diaspora its protagonist. It is a reflection upon slavery, the enslaved's point of view, and the importance of reimagining a just future for the Americas. It is the "New World" but reimagined. The term is an invitation to imagine a radically new future that includes histories of the marginalized in a quest for justice. *Nuevo* is Spanish and *Muntu* sounds like the Portuguese word for "world," *mundo. Muntu* is the singular of *bantu,* or "human," rooting civilization in Africa. However, it is more fluid than man is and includes contact between everything surrounding the subject (nature, community) and interaction with the dead and the spirits. Humanity is thus able to communicate with the

silenced enslaved of the past in these novels, or at least what these contemporary scholars understand of them, based on archival research as well as an understanding of syncretic oral traditions. In its texts, the enslaved's point of view, which is informed by an oral worldview, captivity, and a hybrid Western logic with non-Western mythology, is represented. It goes beyond the territory of the nation due to cultural mixture and frequent displacement. It empowers the enslaved and their descendants by showing that they have always been part of the experience of the Americas. They have black authors, a twentieth and twenty-first century phenomenon with important precursors. This revised view of the Americas from the margins allows the contemporary reader the awareness of slavery's injustices so that he or she can create the truly *Nuevo Muntu*, a new, just world for all (Introduction 2, 3, 7). Apart from Zapata Olivella's *Changó*, the 951-page novel,[154] *Um defeito de cor* ('A Color Defect', 2006), by the Afro-Brazilian, Ana Maria Gonçalves, is also considered as part of the *Nuevo Muntu* genre, an author that I will return to subsequently in Chapter 3.

Comparing Zapata Olivella's *Changó* with Paul Gilroy's *Black Atlantic*, Maddox concludes that "the Black Atlantic is too small, too young, and too blind to encompass the Nuevo Muntu, an American continent founded in slavery but whose branches spread to the entire world" (Introduction 1). Indeed, in his preface, Zapata Olivella describes his work as five different novels. These "novellas" are set in different historical/mythological

[154] The two novels, *Changó* and *Um defeito de cor* together comprise a total of 1,626 pages. John Maddox opines that the two authors resort to this narrative extreme to fill the near silence in literature and historiography regarding how the enslaved actually saw the New World. (While the enslaved Manzano told his story in Cuba and Mohamed Baquaqua escaped to Canada after living in Brazil, they are the only two enslaved black voices of the Afro-Latin American literary canon that lived and died before abolition). In this way, Zapata Olivella and Gonçalves compensate for Latin America's lack of a slave tradition (Introduction 27).

times and places: Mythical Africa / Historical Slave Coast, Central America; Colombia; Saint-Domingue; Venezuela, Brazil, and New Spain / Mexico; and the United States.

The Nuevo Muntu novels must be seen, therefore, as an expansion to the interventions so far made by Latin America in the ongoing world literary debate. First, they are extremely pertinent to the contribution made by Héctor Hoyos as it relates to Latin America's perspective of the global through what he categorizes as the global Latin American novel, offering as it does the global perspectives of its vast Afro-descendant and, in certain measure, indigenous populations.[155] Moreover, both *Changó* (1983 trans 2004) and *Um defeito de cor* (2006) were published in what Hoyos deems the latest phase of globalization (post-1989) and like the authors analyzed by him speak to issues of globalization both past and present that affect Latin Americans. I therefore submit that together with their interest in questions relating to the Nazis and the globalized drug trade, as well as the uniformization of the global capitalist world through institutions like the supermarket as foregrounded by Hoyos in his study, Latin Americans are also interested, in fact gravely concerned, regarding the perpetuation of slavery in the modern world through instances like the "incarceration-industrialization complex" (the prison system) in the United States and other parts of the Americas and its criminalization of poverty,[156] the continual disenfranchisement and disempowerment of Afro-descendants

[155] Hoyos book *Beyond Bolaño: A Global Latin American Novel* theorizes the place of Latin American fiction from the 1990s and the 2000s within a global framework, by studying ways in which authors reflect upon the experience of globalization and situate themselves beyond the boundaries of national literatures. His study presents a close reading, primarily of notable novels by the Chileans, Roberto Bolaño and Diamela Eltit, the Argentine, César Aira, the Colombian, Fernando Vallejo, the Brazilian, Chico Buarque and the Mexican, Mario Bellatin, although it does discuss works by other authors.

[156] Colombianist Fernando Esquivel-Suárez has shown that the war on drugs has created a Global Color Line" where communities of color are being disproportionately policed, jailed, and killed throughout the

throughout the world by virtue of Western capitalist expansion and its furtherance of institutional racism, including within Latin America and the Caribbean itself (for instance international commercial mining interests). Like Hoyos, I also argue here for the inclusion of talented, non-synecdochical authors, such as Manuel Zapata Olivella in the transnational canon of world literature, an author that unlike the ones analyzed by Hoyos was not only marginalized within international circulation but also faced local limitations to begin with.[157] Indeed, many Afro-Latin Americanists are of the view that for the excellent creativity and scholarship exhibited in his work *Changó,* it more than fulfils the requirements of a text that qualifies for the receipt of the Nobel Prize of Literature. It is interesting to note that like Bolaño, Zapata was a true transnational author, one that wandered throughout the world, residing in several places, and possessing a keen sense of the world as his home.

The *Nuevo Muntu* novels also can be situated within the notion of the "novelization of the global" extant in contemporary Latin American and Caribbean literary expression as theorized by Siskind. In contrast to Hoyos, Siskind's global begins from the nineteenth century with the industrial revolution and capitalist expansion of the

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Americas. He shows that Buenavista, a largely black Colombian city, epitomizes the deleterious effects of the military-prison-industrial complex on marginalized communities. Despite generating 60% of the country's trade, 64% of the city is unemployed, which fuels drug syndicates (2%). The militarization and paramilitarization of the region since 2008 have produced a spike in murders but no decrease in drugs. Afro-Colombians have been displaced from their ancestral homes to develop port infrastructure. Like the leaders of *Changó,* some of their leaders' struggle against the expansion of capitalism, militarism, and imprisonment has ended in violent death. Cited by John Maddox, p. 213-214.

[157] As mentioned previously, Zapata struggled with getting wider readership for his novels, in the English-speaking world, for example, a fact that may have also been connected to the time it took to obtain translations for his works. To date, almost two decades after his death, although things have changed favorably for him in this regard, much of his work still remains untranslated into English. In addition, as reiterates Maddox, there is still not enough scholarship on him with only seven books dedicated to him worldwide and only two of them dedicated exclusively to him, in English, and widely available (Introduction 4).

bourgeoisie with the novel serving as their main vehicle to disseminate their culture. The *Nuevo Muntu* novelists would reach even further back to the European expansion to the New World to locate their focus of globalization, in their attempt to finally be able to provide their perspectives on this global event, from which their centuries-long silencing had prevented them. Despite, however, their evident emphasis on the understanding of the past slavery and oppression towards black subjects, these New World novels can be and have been related to Afrofuturism, an aesthetic closely tied to science fiction and fantasy that includes previously absent representations of the African diaspora in their futures, just as these novels represent these communities in the past. Some critics have described Gilroy's book as proto-Afrofuturist, a term Maddox applies to Zapata's work, informing that the aesthetic has grown to become an inter-American phenomenon.

While *Changó* is not science fiction, it has Afrofuturist elements. Zapata called his aesthetic "mythological realism" because it relies so heavily on African myths. His thinking is not based on a positivistic search for truth, but rather, englobes and aesthetic that reveals the narrative construction of writing both history and future utopias. There is also time travel in *Changó* but it is not technology that permits it, but the Ancestors themselves. For this reason, the novel has a preface that tells the readers they are climbing aboard a slave ship–the narrative itself is a unique kind of time travel that was previously unknown for most. One of the injustices Afrofuturism symbolically corrects is the exclusion of Blacks from access to technology. In addition to a dearth of Afro-descendant characters in the spaceships of science fiction, there continues to be a racialized digital divide regarding access to the latest technology. This lack of access can

be traced back to slavery. Throughout the Americas, to be enslaved was to be illiterate. Writing was an extremely difficult power to attain, as Juan Francisco Manzano's biography shows. Slavery is a prime example of Walter Ong's assertion that writing is a form of technology that radically alters how one thinks and communicates. In *Changó* when heretic priest Domingo Falupo is imprisoned by the Inquisition, he uses his Catholic education to rebel against the Church, writing a letter to the pope in defense of African religions. Ultimately, Agne Brown, with her higher education, uses that technology alongside the knowledge of her ancestors to bring forth the beginnings of the Nuevo Muntu. Her working-class lover, Joe, recalls the oral tradition. He communicates with her using field hollers and earns a living playing the banjo, an instrument with African roots and displaying the alternative technologies the enslaved used in the absence of literacy. Writing history in a way that puts Africans and their myths at the center and looks forward to a racially integrated future in the Americas is a use of technology that was long denied to the enslaved and often coveted.

Scholar tobias c. van Veen considers Afrofuturism a form of "chronopolitics", or politics of reimagining the past, present, and future. It uses the past and the present as a means to alter how the future is imagined. "Chronopolitics is the temporal production of counter memories and counter realities to combat corporate, whitewashed, or techno capitalist futures of dystopia. The oppressive forces of our time shape not only how history is recorded but also how the future is imagined. *Changó* intervenes in this process in a time when black history as a field of study was almost nonexistent in Colombia and incipient in the United States. What is more, he reimagines the cosmic race in a way that

places black people at the center. Hence, he rejects what Ra calls the "manufactured history" that confines Blacks to passive entities in history.

Zapata reflects on his vision for the future in *Changó* and *¡Levántete!* in a 2001 interview with Margarita Krakusin. He admits that he was inspired by José Vasconcelos but notes that the Mexican's "cosmic race" of the future excluded blacks and Amerindians as "savages." He traces the human drive for discovery from the first inhabitants of the Americas to the conquistadors to those exploring space and the origins of the universe. He views revising and writing black history as part of this exploration, since humanity emerged in Africa. He believes the United States will be a leader both in exploration and in peace due to its technology, which must be turned from economic exploitation to the public good. He foresees the overcoming of racism and warfare. He believes humanity must work together to avoid a nuclear holocaust, expressing his realist perspicacity, as well as his deep optimism for a future determined by Afro-descendants alongside the rest of humanity.

Afro-Hispanic American and Caribbean Female Literary and Cultural Contribution to the World

I now turn my attention finally and more specifically to transnational Afro-Hispanic American and Caribbean female literary and cultural producers. Although it may seem from my research so far that the men of the region far outnumber their female folk in their production of aesthetic and critical works that pertain to matters of globalization and transnationalism, this is indeed not the reality, certainly not since the

second half of the twentieth century.[158] What is true is that the literary and cultural production of Latin American and Caribbean women, in general, and that of their Afro-descendant counterparts, in particular, have lagged behind their male equivalents in terms of time by virtue of the historic gendered reality of the region and world. This notwithstanding, these talented female artists, while not allowed to externalize their art for centuries, have during their time of invisibility served as mediators in the fields of literary and cultural production and studies, a fact that has been discussed and argued at length by many regional and world literary scholars and critics.[159] It is also true that the history of these writers goes way back before we sometimes imagine, as Myriam Chancy discovered and convincingly demonstrated in her research for her dissertation turned book–*In Search of (Searching for) Safe Spaces: Afro-Caribbean Women Writers in Exile*[160]–within the context of her reading for a Doctor of Philosophy in English within US Academia.

Regrettably, up to the time of the writing of her dissertation and book, early to late nineties (diss. 1994; book 1997), many of the talented authors she chose to foreground continued to labor under the well circulated and received global myth of their non-existence, particularly within academic circles in the developed world. As Chancy

[158] Although not directly involved in the International Feminist Movement that started in Europe in the latter half of the nineteenth century, internationalizing to the United States during the first half of the twentieth century, the movement sent its waves throughout the world impacting Latin America and the Caribbean although much later during the latter half of the century. As a result, from that time, the region witnessed an upsurge in the literary and cultural production of its female component that has continued to expand and explode since then, leading to a very strong and robust female production in the region.
[159] One such notable scholar and critic is the now demised French author and professor, Pascale Casanova.
[160] Chancy's dissertation which was defended at the University of Iowa in 1994 carried the title *In Search of Safe Spaces: Afro-Caribbean Women Writers in Exile.* The dissertation which was later turned into her book published three years later saw a slight adjustment in the title with "In search of" being replaced by "Searching for".

aptly surmises, “a myth that exists, as it does for the study of literature of people of color generally, in order to legitimize their exclusion from various Euro-centered canons of literature” (14). Undaunted by the cryptic and somewhat cynical response she received when she made it official in her doctoral program that she intended to specialize in the literature of Afro-Caribbean women, and more particularly that of non-canonized writers and I quote–“where she intended to find such writers”–she forged ahead and encountered that these authors were alive and well, writing, and being published. Although she soon discovered that they did/do not form a “cohesive” community, in the sense that they are not all from the same island (place) or reside in the same country of exile (area of the diaspora), what was clear was that they did/do speak from similar vantage points and express the same concerns for the necessity of preserving Black women’s ancestral and contemporary voices as they emerge from the Caribbean and from other nations where descendants of the African diaspora remain. She therefore concludes, including herself as part of this group of writers: as a group (we) are not invisible nor voiceless.

Indeed, like all female Afro-descendant literary and cultural producers, those of Hispanic America are neither invisible nor voiceless. They, in contrast, have been speaking very prolifically and articulately on matters of national, regional, and global (transnational) interest, making their contribution on these issues and many times leaving their mark as members of the Afro-descendant diasporic community. Many of these women have been mentioned before, some in detail, namely Aida Cartagena Portalatín and Nancy Morejón, while others only in passing, such as Georgina Herrera, Excilia Saldaña, Julía Álvarez, and Sherezade (Chiqui) Vicioso. Still many others remain

unmentioned, including the Costa Ricans, Eulalia Bernard and Shirley Campbell, the Puerto Ricans, Magaly Quiñones and Mayra Santos Febres, as well as many others from other territories of the region that have not been mentioned. These women are moreover representative of a group that has gestured in their writing towards spaces that reside beyond their specific territorial limits, themselves participating in international events about the black diaspora, while playing active roles in transnational academic and literary communities. Indeed, all have (re)claimed, through their cultural production, their identity as afro-descendants, challenging and ofttimes rejecting their own national and regional narratives to affirm the aesthetic and cultural validity and value to contemporary Latin American identity discourse of that very first forced black transnational diasporic connection.

Take, for example, Morejón, who has never allowed her nationalist commitment and engagement to overshadow in her work her consciousness of herself and history as an afro-descendant, in a society that still seeks to promote a "raceless" nationalism. Works such as "Mujer negra", Morejón's canonical 1975 poem, attest to this fact. ("Todavía huelo la espuma del mar que me hicieron atravesar/ Acaso no he olvidado ni mi costa perdida, ni mi lengua ancestral/ me fui al monte/ Mi real independencia fue el palenque/ y cabalgué entre las tropas de Maceo.") Home for Morejón, as for most of the Afro-descendant authors analyzed in this study, represents that imagined space replete with its history of forced migration from Africa, disenfranchisement, alienation, contradiction, contestation, and reconciliation. The Cuban revolutionary context has, however, unarguably shaped how she perceives the world and from where and in what manner she

interacts with it.[161] (Bajé de la Sierra/ para acabar con capitales y usureros/ con generales y burgueses").

Apart from the transnationalism evident in Morejón's diasporic consciousness through her memory of slavery and, by extension, transatlantic origins, lyricized in *Mujer negra*, this Spanish-speaking contemporary Cuban poet of African ancestry also explores in her work what Antonio Tillis describes as a propagandistic cosmopolitanist poetics. Two of her poems immediately come to mind: "En el País de Vietnam" and "Nana Silente para Niños Surafricanos." the historical reference provides a social and revolutionary mentioning that is a part of Morejón´s cosmopolitanist poetics, one that engages the transnational for the purpose of eliciting a response from other parts of the world regarding the disruption of "cosmic" conviviality. As a Cuban poet, literary manipulation is employed for propagandistic gain; in that via the poetic voice, Morejón, from her geographical vantage point, critically engages geopolitics of another region (Southeast Asia) in order to reveal global suffrage and triumph in lands very distant from her Cuba. In so doing, she exemplifies Tillis' notion of a cosmopolitanist discourse that informs the reader of the global occurrence as well as incites the need of revolution in any given moment when peace and festive co-existence is threatened (Transnational Culturalism 64).

The case of the Caribbean islands of Costa Rica and Panama is even more nuanced with the female authors sharing more than just one historic diasporic space–

[161] While, like the other Afro-Latin American female writers analyzed in the study, Morejón's work does produce work that engages spaces and themes beyond her national borders, she assumes a more cosmopolitan stance, connecting with other cultures, particularly those of other socialist nations, as evidenced in her poems… and criticizes others, mainly the European/American imperialist nations.

Africa–but rather tracing their immediate ancestry to much closer home, to the territories of the English-speaking Caribbean, within the context of an Afro-West Indian or Afro-Creole cultural continuum with roots in British colonial expansion and transnational commercial ventures of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Having maintained a significant presence on these territories since the nineteenth century, this ethno-cultural group is largely absent from the discourse of these nations despite the important contributions they have made to their social, political, and economic life (Dorothy Mosby 5). In fact, both Costa Rica and Panama have maintained discourses of whiteness that were consolidated in the nineteenth century–a period in which race and nation were considered homologous terms. This conflation during the modernist nation-building process assimilates some and excludes those who do not belong to the national ideal. For the small Central American nations, the construction of their national identity adheres to an image of these territories as states formed by white, Catholic, Spanish speaking peasants whose egalitarian attitudes towards one another and an absence of large-scale plantation economy supported by Indian and African labor forged an essentially democratic and peace-loving people. This *leyenda blanca*, "white legend," not only minimizes or excludes the contemporary presence of indigenous groups and peoples of African descent but also seeks to project an image of "whiteness" and Spanishness as fundamental to their identity (9). This engenders in these writers a double consciousness wherein they express the incompatibility of being Black and Costa Rican and/or Panamanian. They express a desire to belong not only to the nation-state as citizens but to form connections with a sense of Blackness outside of national borders. Afro-Costa

Rican and Afro-Panamanian writers express not only the multiple geographical crossings that form ethnic, cultural, and national identity, but they also articulate belonging to the African diaspora through transnational literary and cultural linkages, particularly transnational Blackness.

Dorothy Mosby identifies four ways in which Afro-Costa Rican writers convey the roots and routes of transnational Blackness: 1) by locating subjects in multiple geographic locations and cultures; 2) by writing to the Diaspora from the local to the global connecting a specific personal or national event towards a transnational Black community; 3) by engaging in an act of "naming and claiming" that joins the different locations, historical figures, and events of the cultures of the Diaspora into an imagined community through literature; 4) by making implicit connections with Black communities of the Americas and the Diaspora through global themes (10). These traits can be seen in the cultural production of Costa Ricans and Panamanians of African descent of all genders.

Shirley Campbell's second published collection of poetry, *Rotundamente Negra* (Absolutely Black, 1994), as well as the poems contained within it, make implicit connections with Blacks of the Americas and the Diaspora through local as global themes that reflect the tendency to articulate transnational Blackness through the local. The volume contains poems unified by the themes of children and Black motherhood, ethnicity, and history. *Rotundamente Negra* is dedicated "To my brothers and sisters in blood, skin, and above all, in hope" ('A mis hermanos y hermanas en la sangre, en la piel, y sobre todo en la esperanza), which is then followed by a powerful epigraph from

African American poet, Nikki Giovanni that well defines the collection's themes: "We feed the children with our culture that they might understand our travail" (5).

Eulalia Bernard, the Costa-Rican born daughter of Jamaican immigrants, has published several poems that address issues of the local and national, such as "Somos el País de Tres," (We Are the Country of Three) about diversity within Costa Rica as well as its Third World status and "Deseo" (Desire) about the restoration of Puerto Limón. She makes connections outside of regional and national borders with an eye towards the Diaspora. In the English language poem, "My Last Chains" from the collection My Black King (1991), the poetic voice proclaims, "I shall break my last chains/Never more shall I say 'Fatherland'/ My compatriots I shall seek/ Throughout the magnitude of the Universe/ From among those, in whose eyes/ I am reflected". She eschews the limits of the nation-state and seeks a compatriotism of social justice with others beyond national borders as they march "[t]owards freedom." A global and spiritual relationship is formed in "Mi Madre y el Tajamar" (My Mother and the Seawall) from Bernard's first commercially published Spanish-language collection, Ritmohéroe (Rhythmhero, 1982). "Mi Madre y el Tajamar" offers a gentle portrayal of a mother and daughter but also addresses the local Costa Rican situation in addition to the global. As they stand near the sea, which appears as a representation of exile and separation, the mother and daughter are separated from their cultural home of Jamaica and are "outsiders" to the various symbols of Costa Rican identity: the national identity card (cédula de identidad) denied to many Afro-West Indians before the 1948 revolution; the Catholicism of the nation's dominant Hispanic population represented by statuary imagery "crucified Christs" and

"deaf saints"; the transcontinental railroad and port at Puerto Limón built largely by Afro-West Indian labor but not owned by them; and the potent black-stone image of the patron saint of the nation, la Virgen De los Angeles, also known as "La Negrita" (The Little Black One). These symbols that seem inaccessible to the mother-daughter pair in Costa Rica are transcended by a spiritual connection to an ancestral history within the diaspora as she points to her "Coromanti ancestors" and her "Fanti ancestors." This vision that the mother offers that looks beyond the borders of their location in Costa Rica offers the possibility that "home is elsewhere, even though they are 'abandoned' in this land" and lies in their connection to the ancestors and the Diaspora. Although "Mi Madre y el Tajamar" appears to be a very specific, local expression of an Afro-Costa Rican experience, the outward vision of the poetic voice indicates engagement with issues of Blackness that cross national and spiritual borders.

Chapter 3

Brazil

World Literature as a Signifier of Universality in Specificity

Similar to the Afro-Hispanic experience, Afro-Brazilians also have been stereotyped, objectivized, and made invisible within their national territory by the agenda and ideology of white superiority advanced through the myth of racial democracy. The Latin American and Caribbean comparatist, Alexandra Perisic, points to the fact that within the literary space of the Portuguese-speaking world, perhaps the greatest blow to the Afro-Brazilian's dreams of national relevance[162] derived from the frequently cited work of Gilberto Freyre, *Casa-grande e senzala,*[163] with its coined term 'Lusotropicalism', that suggests a coherence of the Luso-Atlantic world, unified by the distinctive ideology of Portuguese colonialization (267). In tandem with the contestation proffered by their Hispanic American counterparts in relation to *mestizaje* and

[162] While the presence of the Indians in the New World before the arrival of the Europeans and their connection to the tropical landscapes earned for them a place in the imaginary of the future political and cultural leaders of the young nation, consolidated in the creation of historical literary movements, such as Indigenism and Regionalism, the Africans brought to the New World and their descendants have not only been systematically deprived of the African imaginary, but persistently denied a place in the national one.

[163] *Casa-Grande e Senzala* (English: *The Masters and the Slaves*) is a book published in 1933 by Gilberto Freyre, about the formation of Brazilian society. The book deals with race/class separation and miscegenation and is generally considered a classic of modern cultural anthropology. The book presented a utopian vision of the early years of colonization and a positive portrayal of miscegenation among Portuguese settlers, the indigenous peoples of Brazil, and African slaves. A response to the identity crisis Brazil was experiencing at the turn of the 20th century, Freyre's book marked a turning point in perceptions of racial differences in the nation, causing most of the Brazilian populace to view itself as either a racially or culturally mixed race. However, the book presents an overly optimistic view of early interethnic relations as Freyre sought to create a racial harmony that was a consistent part of Brazilian identity. Freyre's focus on a single identity in modern Brazil resulted not only in factual inaccuracies and distortions of reality but also in a larger societal refusal to acknowledge racism in modern Brazil. See Emma Wohl's '"Casa Grande e Senzala' and the Formation of a New Brazilian Identity" in *Modern Latin America* 8th Companion Website Edition, https://library.brown.edu/create/modernlatinamerica/chapters/chapter-11-brazil/moments-in-brazilian-history-2/casa-grande-e-senzala-and-the-formation-of-a-new-brazilian-identity/ accessed on 3 March 2024.

transculturación, Afro-Brazilian contemporary authors and literary critics would take advantage of the many fallacies identified in Freyre's Luso-Atlantic framework, first to create and mobilize the concept of the 'Lusophone Black Atlantic'[164] to dismantle it, then ultimately to recreate a set of linkages that move through and beyond the Lusophone context. By virtue of this critical discourse, Afro Brazilian intellectuals would not only contest the reductiveness of their country's global mappings, mainstreamed and proffered to the world by its dominant cultural and political elite as the *bona fide* representation of their country's historical and extant reality, but more importantly, insert themselves as subjects into the national cultural identity conversation that had historically invisibilized and silenced them. Moreover, in so doing, these critical theorists would through decolonial thinking extend both the geographical and conceptual borders of the nation's world literary and cultural production, first transcending the Lusophone colonial space of Portugal (Europe), Portuguese Africa, and Brazil, to include other areas of continental Africa and the African diaspora, then connecting intellectually with their counterparts in the Global South and other parts of the world in negating the hegemonic concepts of empire and literary and cultural supremacy of the Western cultural and political elite and their cosmopolitan promoters in the continental country.

[164] The 'Lusophone Black Atlantic' can be described as a space of historical and cultural production between Portugal, Brazil, and Africa. In their edited volume, *Cultures of the Lusophone Black Atlantic*, Nancy Priscilla Naro, Roger Sansi-Roca, and David H. Treece, demonstrate how this space is not just a result of the imposition of the Portuguese imperial project, but that it has been shaped by diverse colonial cultures. The study thus, on the one hand, transcends the risk of parochial colonial nostalgia implicit in the concept of 'Lusophone' while also overcoming the implicit Anglophone bias of 'the Black Atlantic'. On the other, it richly analyzes the historical and anthropological processes of colonial and diasporic formations as encounters, confrontations, and settings for cultural creation.

A very prominent voice in this counter discourse is the young female author, journalist and activist, Ana Maria Gonçalves, who would through her novel *Um defeito de cor* (2006), journalism, and activism, use history to debunk the myth of racial democracy in Brazil, as well as to inform the debates regarding racism in her country and the United States. Gonçalves inter-American approach to diasporic issues sees her connecting the Americas, even finding transnational solutions for local problems, thus mapping yet another set of diasporic links that are relevant for the Afro Brazilian cultural producer.[165]

Deprived of a national cultural identity, on the one hand, and separated intellectually from the imaginary of the rising Black diasporic 'intelligentsia' that was centered at the time (in the early twentieth century) in the Francophone *Négritude* and Anglophone Pan Africanist movements, Afro Brazilian intellectuals would be constrained to look within themselves to redefine their historical trajectory, finding thereby that 'sense of self' that would later facilitate the proliferation of their creative and artistic expression and its projection to the world. Though there would be others,[166] one of the main arbiters of this process in the early days would be the activist, politician, and literary and cultural producer, Abdias do Nascimento,[167] whose revolutionary ideology of

[165] For a more detailed review of the aesthetic and critical production of Ana Maria Gonçalves, read the introduction and conclusion of John T Maddox IV's *Challenging the Black Atlantic: The New World Novels of Zapata Olivella and Gonçalves*, Bucknell UP, 2020.
[166] Other Afro Brazilian thinkers of global significance are Carolina María de Jesus and Lélia Gonzalez. Like Abdias do Nascimento, their global significance lies in their outlining philosophical interpretations of Brazil that center race relations in the formation of the nation. See Rosmere Ferreira da Silva's article "Three Afro-Brazilian Thinkers of Global Significance" published in the journal *Philosophy and Global Affairs* on June 16, 2023.
[167] See Appendix B pp. 220-221 for a detailed profile on this author.

Quilombismo[168] would legitimize for Afro Brazilians a literary and cultural identity (locus of enunciation) that would be at once African and universal, Brazilian and international, hence introducing the Black diasporic concept of a double consciousness into the country's literary and cultural production. Creation of an adamant pan-Africanist, Nascimento's *Quilombismo* exhibited clear confluences and/or entanglements with the ideas being disseminated through the Black Diasporic movements of the early twentieth century. Indeed, as affirms Ribeiro et al., the structural similarities between the latter and *Quilombismo* confirmed its founder's original plan of creating connections with global identities while contemplating an original theory of Afro-Brazilian consciousness (Ribeiro et al. 1998). Nascimento's ideology also reinforces the theory advanced by the Haitian Jacques Stephen Alexis that universal cultural production (world literature) could not be limited to the few pieces that were produced within the context of the European technology of writing and circulated globally by the world's cosmopolitan elite, but must of necessity include those cultural products created by the economically and politically marginalized majority found in the peripheries of the world's societies, many of which for the very reasons never are able to find circulation beyond their local boundaries, but which nonetheless truly represent the spirit and daily lives of the world's people.

[168] *Quilombismo* is an ideological, philosophical, epistemological, and cultural movement that was fashioned by Nascimento and articulated by him to the world. *Quilombismo* rejects slavery as the origin of the Afro-descendant populations of Brazil. In addition, it views the Eurocentric human sciences as an inappropriate paradigm for the needs of Blacks. Instead, it advocates that Afro-Brazilians turn their gaze to the quilombos where their ancestors lived in freedom, had their own religion with their own (African) gods and built independent and successful societies modeled on the memory they had of Africa. It is replicated throughout Latin America and the Caribbean in the *palenques*, *cimarrones* and maroon societies. It therefore goes beyond national borders. It also goes beyond time and space, encompassing more than just remote communities of escapees, representing instead a heroic prototype of African American liberatory activism, in a constant process of revitalization and re-modernization. (Read more on this in Laura Premack "Teaching *Quilombismo*: An Afro-Brazilian Political Philosophy," *Black* Perspectives (2016)).

It is therefore not unexpected that the efforts of the Afro Brazilian to redefine him or herself as subjects in the Brazilian cultural identity discourse that had traditionally marginalized them would be consolidated and advanced not only through the critical ideologies of their intellectuals, such as the ones mentioned previously, but also through the aesthetic production of Afro descendant and peripheral communities. Thus, for instance, Nascimento himself would be involved in the production and dissemination of poetry, painting, drama, even creating a Black theatre and museum that would elevate these artistic forms not only in the marginalized spaces of Brazil, but also within the country as a whole, the region, and the world, hence giving voice to as well as externalizing the points of view of these previously voiceless groups. Likewise, his *Quilombismo* ideology would spark a literary movement, *Quilombhoje*,[169] that would later lead to the establishment in 1978 of a literary space called *Cadernos negros* (Black Notebooks)[170] for Afro Brazilians and peripheral cultural producers to express themselves aesthetically using the European technology of writing. Since its establishment, the series has produced yearly volumes that have alternated between poetry and prose (short stories). This literary space continues to grow and expand within and beyond Brazil, producing in 2023 its forty-fifth edition. In 2008 and 2018, it produced special editions

[169] Quilombhoje is a literary group of Afro-Brazilian writers formed in the early 1980s. Its original members were Paulo Colina, Oswaldo Camargo, Aberlado Rodrigues, and Cuti who began informally meeting between 1980-1982. Its purpose was to combine the literary, political, and cultural aspects of the *Movimento Negro* (Black Movement) in Brazil. Eventually other authors joined the group, namely Miriam Alves, Kibuko, Esmeralda Ribeiro, and Sonia Fatima da Conceição.

[170] *Cadernos Negros* is the cultural and publishing arm of the twentieth century Afro-Brazilian Black Movement that led to the foundation of *Quilombhoje*. It was released in 1978, prior to the foundation of the latter and has published one volume per year since its establishment, alternating poetry and short stories of many styles and from writers of various states of the country. The acclaimed contemporary Afro-Brazilian author, Conceição Evaristo, for instance, got her initial nurturing and exposure by writing for this publication from 1990 to 2011.

that were either translated into English or produced bilingually that sought to provide to the Portuguese and English-speaking worlds an historical, as well as an anthological overview of the series. Over the last decade, many of the writers associated with this literary space have launched themselves internationally, using creative means, such as literary translation as well as bilingual publications to have their works read and circulated beyond their country and the Portuguese-speaking world.

However, not only have Afro Brazilian efforts of (re)wri(gh)ting their country's literary and cultural history taken place within locally produced ideologies, but also these burgeoning intellectuals have appropriated similar ideologies issuing from contiguous spaces, such as the more recently globalized Cuban literary genre *testimonio*[171] that emerged in the mid-sixties during the early Castro era and that has been popularized in English as 'testimonial literature or narrative'. This narrative would regionalize, spreading throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, localizing in Brazil in the late twentieth century under the name *testemunho*. Employed by primarily female (and ofttimes feminist) Afro descendant or indigenous authors,[172] this literature emerged as a

[171] According to George Yúdice, Testimonial literature is "an authentic narrative, told by a *witness* who is *moved* to *narrate* by the *urgency* of a situation (e.g., war, oppression, revolution, etc.). Emphasizing *popular oral discourse*, the witness portrays his or her own *experience* as a *representative* of a *collective memory* and *identity. Truth* is summoned in the cause of *denouncing* a present situation of exploitation and oppression or *exorcising* and *setting aright* official history" (Yúdice 1985). These narratives differ from a biography or autobiography, because in most cases the author interviews an individual from a subaltern group, transcribing it to tell the accounts in a first-person format, giving the reader the sense the individual is recounting the story orally. In some ways this form of narrative is similar to an ethnographic work, but it emerges from a need to create social awareness and consciousness to marginalized groups and the exploitations they face.

[172] The Cuban, Miguel Barnet, is generally accepted as the first author of the Testimonial narrative with his *Biografía de un cimarron* (Biography of a Runaway Slave). The text tells the story of Esteban Montejo, a Cuban man of African descent, and his hardships as a slave, a fugitive slave, and a soldier during the Cuban War for Independence. This narrative worked to tell the story of an individual belonging to a marginalized group, while others work as an even greater social call to criticize and publicize the wrong doings of a

backlash to the mainstream Latin American literature, a way to write back and correct this literary narrative. In this vein, as Gugelberger and Kearney affirm, it was an attempt to create a "global reordering of a social and economic context of power / differences within which "literature" is produced and consumed" (1991, 6). Likewise, it constituted an effort to restructure and challenge mainstream literature, adding the real perspective and discourse of the "other," the politically and economically marginalized groups, and creating a consciousness of their existence and importance in the greater society. By challenging the mainstream canon, it affected the concept of the "natural" and accepted status quo, not only in the relevant countries and throughout the region, but also gathered immense global attention, centering the question of the exploitation and marginalization of subaltern groups.

A very well-known example of this literary genre is Rigoberta Menchú's book *I, Rigoberta Menchú*, originally published in 1983 that won her the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1992 and the Princess of Asturias Award in 1998. Within the Brazilian context have emerged in the latter half of the twentieth century, outside of the *Cadernos negros* authors, many of whom also produce much of the country's testimonial and memorialist work, two international authors: Carolina Maria de Jesus, whose biographical and autobiographical text *Quarto de despejo* (translated in English as 'Child of the Dark'), provides a first-hand account of life in the streets of São Paulo from 1955-

social class or political movement. A popular example is *I, Rigoberta Menchú* edited by Elisabeth Burgos-Debray. This testimony is the story of a young Guatemalan Quiche Indian woman and the tragic experiences of Indian communities in Latin America, dealing with military oppression, moral endurance and the struggle for justice. This testimonial narrative caught so much global interest that Rigoberta Menchú was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1992, for her efforts to end oppression of the indigenous people in Guatemala.

1960 and details the plight of an artist, writer, and single mother of three children, who while living in a hovel, supported her family by digging through the garbage for paper and scraps to sell. The other is Ana Maria Gonçalves, whose phenomenal historical and aesthetic text, *Um defeito de cor*, published in 2006, reenacts the Afro Brazilian's slave trajectory, bringing to life the story and contribution of one of her country's primary abolitionists, Luis Gonzaga Pinto da Gama. Still many others have used the tools offered by this genre to, *inter alia*, research, re(present), and memorialize in their nation, the region, and the world, the indisputably world-class and many times pioneering contributions of those literary and cultural producers, both past and present, of their politically marginalized communities that have been persistently silenced and/or invisibilized.

It is, moreover, not only to counter silencing by the historical and contemporary 'other' that Afro-Brazilians engage in testimonial and memorialist writings. Many do so for their own healing from the violence and trauma of the past and as a means of coping with its extant manifestations of alienation, exclusion, invisibilization, and exoticization (stereotyping). In this way, their writings continue to engage with the globalizing process and world, even if indirectly. This notwithstanding, not all Afro Latin American and Caribbean cultural producers were thus privileged to express themselves aesthetically via the written word. Many, for instance deprived of the Western 'technology of writing' as John T Maddox IV[173] aptly puts it, have continued, nonetheless, up to the present day to express themselves aesthetically and critically through the preferred performative forms

[173] See Introduction to *Challenging the Black Atlantic*, 2020.

of music, dance, and religion. Thus, while Afro-Brazilian and Afro-Hispanic literatures are yet to be recognized within the realm of what is considered world literature,[174] their oral counterparts have fared better, preceding them in the global trajectory. Hence, musical genres such as contradanza, bolero, salsa, zouk, and reggaeton, filtered through the U.S. market, are now received as global genres;[175] dance forms such as the Argentine tango and the Brazilian capoeira have also penetrated the globe, making their mark throughout Europe and beyond, while religious forms, namely the Cuban *Santería*, the Brazilian *Candombe*, and the Haitian *Vodou* continue to enjoy their globalizing runs.

Yet, despite the repeated and indisputably aesthetically appealing and critically sound efforts to right a historic wrong that has been meted out to the Afro descendant populations throughout the world, in general, and in Latin America and the Caribbean, in particular, the region continues to project to the world a regional cultural identity that excludes these contributions at worst and marginalizes them at best, while the world continues to misread and misinterpret the Afro descendant literary and cultural production that are constrained to remain committed to address these pesky global issues. In an insightful comment made in her preface to her recently produced anthology on Afro-Brazilian women writers *Enfim…nós: Escritoras negras brasileiras*

[174] Despite the many anthologies written since the turn of the century (Norton, Longman, and Bedford) to reflect world literary canons more in keeping with the wide variety of literatures of the world on the global market, Afro-Latin American authors continue to be visibly absent from any of them. Recently, the nationally acclaimed mixed-raced Brazilian and Cuban authors, Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis and Nicolás Guillén were included in David Damrosch's *Around the World in 80 books* and Volume 2 of *World Literature in Spanish: An Encyclopedia*, respectively.

[175] The characteristics shared by the different genres point toward a universalization of certain conventions that can be traced to the common colonial tradition and its integral part in processes of globalization. They are therefore referred to as meta-genres as they represent a complex of musical practices rather than a discreet and unique way of making music. See Noel Allende-Goitía, "The Rise of Afrodiasporic Meta-genres and Global Latinx Music," p. 281.

contemporâneas / Finally...Us: Contemporary Black Women Writers, first published in 1994 as a bilingual edition, together with the American scholar and critic, Carol Richardson Durham, the celebrated Afro Brazilian transnational author, Miriam Alves upbraids the white critics for failing to see the richness of Afro Brazilian literature, its 'universality in specificity', its universe of words that should be analyzed starting with its own manifestations, reducing it instead merely to content and theme. This sentiment is echoed by her *Cadernos negros* colleague and equally nationally and internationally celebrated contemporary, Maria da Conceiçao Evaristo de Brito, familiarly known as Conceiçao Evaristo,[176] who makes a similar appeal, requesting of non-readers of Black works, who she surmises before reading these texts already make a pre-judgment, or say that black authorship is an authorship of militancy, to read the texts, not only the biographies, although these are important, because they ofttimes may contaminate the reading of the text.

Indeed, a reading of Evaristo's prolific works would present a very clear picture of the 'universality in specificity' alluded to by Miriam Alves. This trend in her writing is not only evident in her poetic and prosaic aesthetic expression, but also articulated, more so, critically through the creation and presentation to her country, the region, and the world of the Afro Brazilian narrative concept of "escrevivência" ('lived writing').[177] The

[176] See Appendix B p. 221 for a profile of this author.

[177] A portmanteau of *escrita* (writing) and *vivência* (life experience), the term "escrevivência" can best be described in English as writing from personal experience as exemplified in her two major works, *Ponciá Vicêncio* (2003) and *Becos de memória* (2006). For a more detailed explanation of this concept by Evaristo herself, see her Youtube presentation Conceição Evaristo: Escrivivência at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QXopKuvxevY. The concept has also been further distilled and theorized through the collaborative work edited by Isabella Rosado Nunes and Constância Lima Duarte entitled *Escrivivência: a escrita de nós – Reflexões sobre a obra de Conceição Evaristo* that was launched

Brazilian authors, Luiz Henrique Silva de Oliveira, Nelson Martinelli Filho, and Cristina Michelly Lopes in their respective studies of the innovative concept through the author's works identify three main components of her writing: that of the body, of a condition, and of a black experience in Brazil. The first element that composes her writing, the body, refers to the subjective dimension of black existence, being an archive of impressions throughout life, marked on the skin and in the constant struggle for the affirmation and reversal of stereotype. The condition of black woman, the second element, highlights several problems inherited from the colonial situation, since through slavery, women were subjugated in different areas. The third and final element, that of a black experience in Brazil, chronicles the trajectory of a people to rid themselves of the scourge of denigration and discrimination that they have suffered historically and to insert themselves existentially as full and equal citizens of their country and world.[178]

In an autobiographical eponymous presentation made in the context of a talk entitled "Brazilian Readings" (Leituras Brasileiras) uploaded to the public Youtube channel, Evaristo prefaces her intervention by stating emphatically that her writings, whether in form of poetry, short stories, and/or essays all emerge deeply marked by her

in 2020. The text that comprises 15 chapters presents essays and opinions in five dimensions: historical, theoretical, critical, autobiographical and related to the literary literacy that the concept provides. An initiative of the Itaú Social (social program of the Itaú bank) and the Mina Comunicação e Arte, (Mina Communication and Art), the book is the result of the "Projeto Oficina de Autores–Memórias e Escrevivência de Conceição de Evaristo" (The Authors Workshop Project–Memories and Lived Writings of Conceição de Evaristo), that supports the theoretical development of the experience-concept and stimulates the approach to reading and writing as a right.

[178] For more detailed information regarding this concept, see Luiz Henrique Silva de Oliveira's article published in 2009 entitled '"Escrevivência' em Becos da memória, de Conceição Evaristo." *Revista Estudos Feministas* (in Portuguese). See also Nelson Martinelli Filho and Cristina Michelly Alves Lopes, published in 2018 under the title "A escre(vivência) presente em Maria Firmina dos Reis e Conceição Evaristo: Uma análise dos contos "A 'escrava' e 'Maria'."

lived experiences as an Afro descendant female in the Brazilian society. She further announces that they are in fact a portrait and/or reflection of the lived experiences of the Afro Brazilian people as a whole: men, women, and children and in large measure of the Black diasporic and marginalized communities of the world .[179] As a testament to this fact, Evaristo's major works have since transcended the borders of the slum dwelling neighborhoods in the center south of the capital of Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, where the author spent her formative and adolescent years to engage with the more cosmopolitan spaces of the country and, in more recent times, through the translations and bilingual editions of her latest works, crossed the frontiers of her native land, where they have dialogued with international texts and genres and experienced warm reception by their transnational / global readers who connect to the texts as a result of the universality of the author's localized experiences within these spaces.

Returning to Alves' comment that referenced content and theme, undoubtedly, these are of utmost importance to the prolific Afro Brazilian literary and cultural producers, as it is to all African diasporic production, often highlighting as they do important historic and current global themes that the dominant cultural and political elite of the Western world and their regional counterparts would prefer to ignore. Themes, such as slavery (both historical and present),[180] political, economic, and social marginalization and exclusion, urban violence, unemployment, and in the specific area of

[179] See Conceição Evaristo: Escrivivência at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QXopKuvxevY. Accessed on 10 March 2024.

[180] Connecting the struggles by Afro descendants in the United States and in Brazil, Ana Maria Gonçalves, like her Colombian counterpart Zapata Olivella, shows how the prison system designated by the Afro American civil rights activist, Angela Davis, the incarceration-industrialization complex and the criminalization of poverty that is occurring throughout the Americas are indeed modern forms of enslavement of Blacks.

the literary art form, invisibilization, objectivization, and stereotyping. What Alves in fact does through her above statement is provide the world an alternative and more productive way of reading these creations. I argue here that however disquieting the process, any comparative (world) literary discourse that attempts to appropriately reflect the 'literatures of the world' must first unshackle itself from the essentializing filters that presently beset the cosmopolitan readership and, as posits Alves engage this literature 'starting from its own manifestations'.

Indeed, this challenge is not a new one for the region, as we have seen prior, it also has reared its head in Hispanic America where it continues unresolved, dating back to the Romantic era of the sub-region where there emerged a division among the literary critics in relation to their perception regarding the authenticity of its romantic tradition. According to Férnández Retamar:

> this division among Latin American critics has perpetuated itself for several reasons, one of the main ones being the persistence among them of the application of the critical judgments of the European classical traditions to the new literary phenomena that emerged in the region with all that this implies of error, an incongruity that has become increasingly evident since the midst of the twentieth century as Hispanic American literature found acceptance and international recognition. One of the direct consequences of this methodology was the

> classification as non-literary of artistic expressions that did not adhere to the aesthetic principles of the Old World (Fernández Retamar 2).[181]

In his analysis of the differences in the themes explored by the Romantics of Hispanic America, as well as the treatment they gave to these themes during the period, distinguishing themselves as they did from their counterparts in the metropolis both in terms of their subject matter and approaches, Fernández Retamar affirmed that these differences stemmed from the concrete conditions that the two regions were experiencing at the time. He thus argues for a Hispanic American conscientized critique based on the specific historical realities of the subregion that will know how to value its own cultural production. In a similar vein, I present the case here for a conscientized critique that will also apply the new theorizations distilled from the Afro descendant critical works of the Latin American and Caribbean region together with the new methodologies being called for, albeit mostly from scholars who reside outside of the field of comparative and national literatures and criticism, that are more relevant to the aesthetic production of these historically marginalized groups and their cultural production. Further, together with the embracing of global mappings and/or entanglements that transcend the Western world, and the inclusion of methodologies that can also analyze oral literatures, another

[181] Cited from an unpublished paper written by Cecily Bernard entitled "Independencia, formación de nación y expresión literaria: repensando el papel cultural del Romanticismo europeo en Hispanoamérica." The original text reads thus: "esta división entre los críticos hispanoamericanos se perpetua por varias razones, una de las principales siendo la persistencia entre ellos de la aplicación de los juicios críticos de las tradiciones clásicas europeas a los nuevos fenómenos literarios surgidos en la región con todo lo que esto implica de error, una incongruencia que se ha hecho cada vez más evidente a partir de los medeados del siglo XX a medida que la literatura hispanoamericana encontraba acogida y reconocimiento internacionales. Una de las consecuencias directas de esta metodológica fue la clasificación como no literaria de las expresiones artísticas que no se ciñeron a los principios estéticos del Viejo Mundo" (Fernández Retamar 2). Read further on this in Fernández Retamar's article entitled, "Algunos problemas teóricos de la literatura hispanoamericana" published in 1975.

important methodology will have to be one that recognizes the existence of other aesthetic movements and themes during the periods of Western cultural domination of the Latin American and Caribbean region, including the present era.

Evidence of a similar type of critical reductiveness can be found in the recently published work, *Brazilian Literature as World Literature* (2018), produced within the Bloomsbury "As World Literature" series that presents a world literary trajectory for the South American nation that, while geographically transcending the limits of the hegemonic West to include Africa and Hispanic America, maintains the conventional locus of enunciation (literary historical and comparative paradigms of analysis), corpus of works (currently world recognized authors), and extant scope of the mainstream field of study (Latin American Literature as opposed to Afro Latin American Literature). While specific essays in the text address these issues frontally–the last two, in particular, as captured also in Coutinho's introduction to the text, point to the work that still needs to be done in the field of Comparative Literature–it is understandably constrained to operate within the given parameters, which Coutinho carefully delineates in his introduction in the following statements:

> *Brazilian Literature as World Literature* is an attempt to draw a picture of the relationship between Brazilian and world literature from the time of colonization to the present, focusing on some of its *most significant moments*. The chapters have been designed to offer a view of these moments, starting from one or more of *its representative figures* and moving outwards to the period as a whole. In this movement, topics and questions of world literature

> will appear and be treated from their *local, cultural, ideological, and historical aspects* …. As such, the book is meant to offer a contribution not only *to the study of Brazilian and world literature, but to comparative literature as a whole, as well as to Literary Theory and history*. (my italics)

By working within the confines set out above, Coutinho's text while of unquestionable merit to the field, fails to engage with many now world-recognized Afro descendant cultural producers. Likewise, the 2018 collaborative work precludes a more in-depth analysis of similarly globally projected twentieth and twenty-first century writers of African descent–some of whom are mentioned peripherally or alluded to in Coutinho's study–that could bring to light their world shaking, if not, shaping, contributions. To this point, it must be noted that apart from the internationally renowned figures of Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis (1839-1908), who comes close to assuming synecdochical proportions in the study and his Bahian counterpart Jorge Amado (1912-2001), and I quote "whose interest in the cultural values of his people led him to produce a highly inclusive type of literature that incorporated contributions coming from all social classes and ethnic groups of the Brazilian society, especially the Afro Brazilian culture," no mention is made by the eminent Brazilian scholars of the equally pioneering and thus world shaking Afro descendant cultural producers of the nineteenth century, namely Maria Firmina dos Reis (1822-1917), Luis Gonzaga Pinto da Gama (1830-1882), João da Cruz e Sousa (1811-1898),[182] Auta de Souza (1876-1901), and Afonso Henriques de Lima Barreto (1881-1922),[183] five extremely significant Afro-Brazilian literary and

[182] See Appendix A, pp. 212-213 for a detailed profile of this author.
[183] See Appendix A, pp. 213-214 for a profile of this author.

cultural voices of the period. These world-class artists, historically erased within mainstream accounts of Brazilian literary history, have now fortunately been memorialized through the diligent and stellar aesthetic and critical works and activism of the Afro Brazilian testimonial writers (*escritores de testemunho*) of the latter twentieth century.[184] It is my considered opinion, therefore, that the time has come for the Latin American and Caribbean region to confront this 'elephant in the room', so that it can get beyond this to embrace in its national and world discourses the cultural contributions that its large Afro descendant populations have made to the comprising nations and to the world. While the aesthetic and critical productions of Jorge Amado and Machado de Assis do showcase to the external world a picture of the Afro Brazilian reality of their times from their perspectives, they fail to represent authentic voices on behalf of these marginalized worlds which they themselves did not inhabit being rather members of the country's cultural elite. Contemplating Brazil as a world, therefore, there clearly needs to be a national dialogue between mainstream Brazil literature and its Afro Brazilian counterpart that in the words of Tzvetan Todorov "is on equal footing," in which "no one has the last word, where no voice reduces another to the status of mere object and where advantage may be taken from one exteriority to another" (Coutinho 18).

Apart from these visible invisibilities of the nineteenth century, other outstanding cultural producers of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, such as Solano Trindade

[184] Like their Afro Hispanic counterparts, the Afro Brazilian testimonial writers used their pen to rewrite and restore their predecessors back into their national literary history from where they were omitted. This writing as shown in the previous chapter also served as a form of healing and regaining of their own "sense of self" which as I argue throughout the dissertation does not derive in terms of their creative production from their geographical, economic, or political standing in the country and/or world.

(1908-1974),[185] Carolina Maria de Jesus (1914-1977),[186] Abdias do Nascimento (1914-2011), and Ana Maria Gonçalves (1970 -),[187] together with other prized Afro Brazilian literary groups that have made their mark on the country, region, and world during the latter half of the twentieth and into the twenty-first centuries. Attention is paid to the *Cadernos negros* (Black Notebooks) and *Quilombhoje* movements established in the 1970s and 1980s respectively and their associated authors, who have been categorized as part of a (political) minority grouping within the multifaceted postmodernist period that includes Indians and immigrants from the nineteenth century, brought together more by virtue of their temporal proximity than their world literary thematic and/or aesthetic connections. Paulo Lins' world literary writing and ultimate cinematic contributions to the world, for instance, cited within this category for his emphasis on violence and use of the slum areas of the big cities as his setting should also be categorized within the genre of testimonial and memorial writing and global themes of social marginalization and, in this vein, linked with his female precursor, Carolina Maria de Jesus. Similarly, the cinematic and theatrical works of Solano Trindade and Abdias do Nascimento ought to receive their due recognition and space within the mainstream canon of Latin American and Caribbean literature and therefore form part of any comparative (world) literary analysis that involves Brazilian theatre. In terms of poetry, the vast eclectic production of the *Cadernos negros* authors also should be integrated and recognized both for their

[185] See Appendix B, pp. 219-220 for a detailed profile on this author.
[186] Carolina Maria de Jesus is mentioned cursorily by Luiza Lobo in her essay as part of the post-modernist group of (political) minority writers. This categorization of Afro-Brazilian cultural producers as minority is quite misleading as it applies a political yardstick to measure cultural value and worth, an issue that needs to be addressed within Academia.
[187] See Appendix B, pp. 221-222 for a profile of this author.

aesthetic quality and worldliness (dialogue with the world), finding their place in any analysis of Brazilian poetry on the world's stage.

The above commentary, however, is not meant in any way to reduce the significance of Coutinho's book which has been produced within the then extant parameters of the field of Comparative Literature, providing in addition many clear indications of the work still to be done in the area. Referring, for instance, to a similar transition from object to subject undergone by the Amerindian in their editorial production during the twentieth century, Roberto Acizelo de Souza, in his essay "Indigenism and the Search for Brazilian Identity," in the following statement points to some of these areas:

> Such works, whose production and diffusion enjoy the benefits of today's political and pedagogical environment, marked as it is by multiculturalism, insert into the field several important problems and their correlatives. Among these being: the relationship between orality and writing, differences between myth and authorial fiction, limits between aesthetic value and politico-ethical functionality, as well as, and above all, the question of how and under what conditions the practice of literature, common in Western history, can be converted as instruments for other stories. (*Brazilian Literature* 94)

Consider, in addition, the very progressive approach adopted by Coutinho and his team in the study as recorded in his introduction to the text in his capacity as its editor, where the former describes Brazilian literature historically as always being marked by "a tension between the mere incorporation of a European tradition and the attempt to create a new

one of a local or native coinage." Rather than being simply influenced by European production, he continues: "Brazilian literature has turned to establish a dialogue with it, and it is precisely this dialogue that has projected the country's literature in international terms …" (1) This projection that he aptly demonstrates in his work has witnessed an expansion of the scope of his country's dialogue with the world to include continents situated beyond Europe and the hegemonic Western developed world. Indeed, as he correctly states:

> the new trends and movements that have appeared in different parts of the world and are spread out rapidly in times of globalization, no longer have a one-way itinerary into Brazil, nor are they merely imported without taking into account the cultural and historical differences of the context of reception. (1, 2)

This consideration of the context is what in fact substantiates the dialogue mentioned above, a space that was widely conquered in Brazilian modernism and that is now decidedly one of the main traits of Brazilian literature. This idea of Brazilian literature dialoguing with world literature on an equal footing in the contemporary era contrasts with the position conceptually assigned to the so designated 'peripheral' and 'semi-peripheral' countries within Moretti's or Casanova's world literary system or space that either precludes such type of participation or makes it highly improbable. This conversation as artistic equals finds, moreover, an echo in contemporary Hispanic American writing as demonstrated by Héctor Hoyos and Cecily Raynor in their seminal works *Beyond Bolaño: A Global Latin American Novel* and *Latin America Literature at*

the Millennium: Local Lives, Global Spaces where from their analysis of twentieth and twenty-first century Hispanic American and Brazilian authors, they separately and collectively advance the idea of Latin America and Caribbean societies that have come into their own culturally and are therefore capable of demanding an equitable seat at the aesthetic and critical tables with those from the other more economically developed parts of the world and when denied showing their capabilities to create their own tables, if/when necessary.

This trend is also clearly visible in the critical and aesthetic production of the Haitian authors analyzed in the dissertation. What evidently informs the ability of these writers to challenge established structures in their cultural production together with the progressively consolidating national 'sense of self' is their refusal to allow themselves to be limited by their externally assigned places of enunciation, defined by geography, politics, and/or language and their ability to reach out and find community wherever it is to be found in the world, an ability made more and more possible since the information technology and communication revolutions initiated at the turn of the twentieth century gave birth to its virtual offspring, the current digital age. This new contemporary reality thus necessitates a reframing of the traditional concept of 'place of enunciation' to include the idea of a 'sense of self' that may derive from spaces beyond the political and economic structures established by virtue of the colonial processes from which the so-called New World issued, be it at the individual, racial/ethnic, national, transnational / diasporic, and now even digital levels. In the specific case of the Afro Latin American and Caribbean cultural producer, this may derive from their own personal sense of

kinship and/or wider community within Black spaces inside and outside the country, such as the strength and solidarity found through diasporic connections, spiritual beliefs, or a national ethos crafted over years of communal self-valorization.

Undoubtedly, Brazil's contemporary cosmopolitanism can be traced more immediately[188] to the Modernist Movement launched in 1922 at the Semana de Arte Moderna (Modern Art Week) in São Paulo and the work of the modernists, Mario de Andrade, Oswald de Andrade, and Manuel Bandeira, who distinguished themselves not only in their country, but more so in the region, for their valorization of their own cultural identity and their placing of other influences (primarily Western European at the time) as mere sources of inspiration (the (not *tupi*) binary 'other' that the modern, cosmopolitan, united Brazilian *tupi* would 'eat up').[189] Since then, undoubtedly, Brazilian cultural production can be said to have exhibited this 'sense of self' across the board (irrespective of race, gender, ethnicity, and/or cultural movement) in contrast with their Hispanic American counterparts, who historically have experienced this self-empowerment vis-à-vis the external 'other' mostly at the individual level.

Moreover, Coutinho's collaborative text registers a clear intent to integrate into the Brazilian historical literary trajectory what it deems minority literary and cultural production, particularly through the inclusion of its two final essays, the former written by Luiza Lobo and focusing on Postmodern Brazilian Literature and the latter by

[188] Some scholars see the emergence of Brazil's more independent literary trend as occurring much earlier during to period of Romanticism, particularly with the consolidation of the then Indigenist literary and cultural movements.

[189]This movement commonly known as the Anthropophagous movement has been widely cited in Brazil, especially over the past few decades, as a paradigm for the creation of a modern and cosmopolitan culture, albeit an authentically national one. See Larry Bary's "Oswald de Andrade's "Cannibalist Manifesto" (1991).

Benjamin Abadala Jr. on Brazilian literature and its relationship with African literatures in the Portuguese language.[190] If one can identify an issue here, it would be the fact that the main actors in these exchanges are almost never themselves Afro descendant, hence having the potential to lead to a reductiveness in the global narrative discourse being proffered. While this perhaps could be justified in the context of the nineteenth century when the Brazilian cultural elite comprised mainly of Brazilians of Portuguese descent, with the occasional presence of a mestizo or a mulatto, such as was the case of Machado de Assis, the Brazilian literary and cultural scene has experienced a seismic change since then with the Afro Brazilian transitioning within the literary and cultural space from written object to writing subject since the latter half of the twentieth century.[191]

It is therefore important to yet again underscore the urgency for the embracing of new comparative and world literary methodologies, such as those proposed by Pheng Cheah, Ignacio Sánchez-Prado, Ana Brígido Corachán and César Dominguez, as well as Coutinho and his two last collaborators that would lead to the broadening of the theoretical and conceptual frameworks, ensuring thereby that Indo[192] and Afro Brazilian

[190] See these two essays entitled "Postmodern Brazilian Literature on the World Stage" and "Comparative Literature and Supranational Community Relations: The Administration of the Differences" on pages 291-315 and 317-337, respectively.

[191] Read further on this transition amongst nineteenth and twentieth century Afro-Cuban and Afro-Brazilian women writer in Dawn Duke's book *Literary Passion, Ideological Commitment: Toward a Legacy of Afro-Cuban and Afro-Brazilian Women Writers.* Bucknell UP , 2008.

[192] Though equally dehumanized and marginalized from Brazil's mainstream national literary production as a writing subject throughout much of the nineteenth century, the strength of the imaginary of the American Indian and his topography as autochthonous to the region, capable thereby of serving as a counterpoint to the hegemonic European and North American imaginary and to the likely construction of a national one, led to the emergence of Indigenist writing at the end of the nineteenth century within the Romantic era and later to Regionalism. These authentic Brazilian aesthetic movements have been recorded in the text in the following two essays: "Indigenism and the Search for Brazilian Identity: European Influences and National Roots" by Roberto Acíozelo de Souza and "Regionalism vs. World Literature in João Guimarães Rosa." A distinction must be made between the Indo and Afro Brazilian within the nation's literary history.

authors, such as the ones from the latter category cited above, do not continue to be marginalized within mainstream discussions of comparative and world literature. Such mentions and levels of analysis in my estimation would provide a more comprehensive picture of the country's engagement with the world in the contemporary era, enlarging, in particular, the global topics that sustained the interest and creative prowess of the sizeable and inestimable Afro descendant segment of the nation's population, an aim that I hope to accomplish through the work of this chapter. This having been said, I do appreciate the fact that Coutinho and his esteemed group of Brazilian scholars have written their texts as trained comparatists within the field of Comparative Literature, a space that while undoubtedly has undergone significant transformation over the past three decades from the effects of what Héctor Hoyos refers to as the latest phase of globalization,[193] will understandably take longer to see these translated into theories, methodologies and frameworks that can then be applied to any future studies. Indeed, as demonstrated prior in the dissertation, the call for and creation of these theories, methodologies, and frameworks are now taking place, understandably, however, for the most part by scholars situated outside of the field, primarily in parallel fields, such as anthropology, sociology, political science, and that of varying national "minority" literatures, as well as transnational, diasporic, post-colonial, and even to a lesser extent, world literatures. It is,

[193] This latest phase of globalization is the post 1989 world that saw the collapse of the Berlin Wall, the move towards social democracy by the then president of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev that occasioned the introduction of the policies of *glasnost* (openness) that allowed for enhanced freedom of speech and press and *perestroika* ('restructuring') that sought to decentralize economic decision-making to improve its efficiency. As a result of the broadening of the world's economic space that the above processes occasioned, there appeared an increased presence of non-Western literatures on the world market, both in their native languages and in translations, forcing a rethinking of the up to then seemingly inflexible policies of the field.

therefore, to these fields, that I turn in my attempt to highlight the world literary contributions of the nineteenth century Afro Brazilian literary and cultural producers, Maria Firmina dos Reis, João da Cruz e Sousa, and Afonso Henriques de Lima Barreto.

Beyond Jorge Amado, Machado de Assis, and Clarice Lispector: Afro Brazilian Literary and Cultural Production as World Literature/Universal Cultural Production

The Romanticist, Symbolist, and Pre Modernist Writings of Maria Firmina dos Reis, João da Cruz e Sousa, and Afonso Henriques de Lima Barreto

Writing during the periods of what could be considered Brazilian Romanticism, Symbolism, and Pre-Modernism, dos Reis, Cruz e Sousa, and Lima Barreto distinguish themselves as pioneering authors and *bona fide* representatives of these three distinct narratives that they mastered, appropriated, and employed to convey their worlds as Afro descendants in the politically, economically, and culturally dominated European (Portuguese) descendant patriarchal society of nineteenth century Brazil. Cruz e Sousa, moreover, would embark on what could be considered at the time the road less travelled, adopting the European Symbolist genre through his readings of Charles Baudelaire that he would filter subsequently through his own lived experience, introducing it in this innovative format to the new Republic. All three, descendants of slaves, though having differing trajectories due to their specific family connections, or lack thereof–dos Reis as an independent female was constrained to become a self-made author, having to produce many of her works anonymously in order for them to be published; Cruz e Souza, on the other hand, while able to access formal education by virtue of the name and protection he received from his mother's ex-slaveowner turned godfather, Guilherme Xavier de Sousa, had to contend with the fact that his father though freed under the law remained in reality

subjugated. He also suffered racism throughout his life, being ultimately denied the right of assuming the position of Prosecutor in Laguna, despite having been nominated for the position. Barreto, whose godfather, Afonso Celso de Assis Figueiredo, was the Viscount of Ouro Preto, and who by virtue of this circumstance also received the best education the land had to offer at the time, was for being black denied the opportunity to become an attorney as he desired.

Despite these setbacks, however, they all through their creative talent, brought black protagonists to the foreground, as they gave voice to their individual situations as Black men and women, exposing and contesting on behalf of themselves and their race the contradictions they faced, and the injustices meted out to them in the Brazilian society of their day. Lima Barreto would go even further to offer direct criticism of the varying facets of the then Brazilian society through the many satires he produced, some of which we will explore later in this segment. Based on the prior accounts, one can challenge the official accounts provided to the world in justification of Machado de Assis' success that race was not so much of a factor in the cultural life of nineteenth century Brazil.

Dos Reis' single novel, *Úrsula*,[194] constitutes one of the very first Brazilian romances published by a woman. Her novel is also historically established as the first Brazilian romance written by an Afro descendant–male or female. Told from an inside perspective–many of the main characters, including the protagonist, Úrsula, her mother, and some female slaves are portrayed from this perspective–the story presents an

[194] See Isabel Cristina Rodrigues Ferreira. *The Dialogue about "Racial Democracy" among African-American and Afro-Brazilian Literatures*. 2008, p. 82. U of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. PhD dissertation.

authentic historical point of view from Colonial Brazil. The novel tells the story of Úrsula, a weak and sweet girl with whom two men are in love: one is a good person, the other a villain. Úrsula is expected to fall in love with the good man. However, she falls for the villain and becomes a victim of his cruelty. She is condemned and mistreated for having made the wrong choice. Reis thus shows through her characters that whenever women and slaves deviate from the established rules of the patriarchal system or refuse to accept the rules of society, they are punished, hence presenting the first recorded Brazilian novelistic counter discourse against the established status quo by a woman, setting her as a precursor to the world acclaimed Brazilian feminist writer, Clarice Lispector.

Embraced within the field of Afro-Brazilian literature as a foundational figure and icon, Maria Firmina was a pioneer on several fronts. Through her cultural, intellectual, and literary activity, she situated herself in opposition to the dominant discourse of her time, her abolitionist narrative deserving special mention in this regard, inaugurating in the mid nineteenth century the Afro-Brazilian narrative, by making of her fiction a vehicle of political intervention, establishing a link with the African diaspora, and presenting a "certain black way of seeing and feeling," all elements that constitute Black literature. In this vein, she can be compared and contrasted with writers of the wider Latin America and Caribbean region as well as with consecrated Brazilian writers of the Romantic genre who wrote abolitionist novels, writers such as the Cuban, Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda with *Sab*, abolitionist novel written in 1841, the Peruvian, Clorinda Matto de Turner with her *Aves sin nido* published in 1889, Manuel Antonio de

Almeida, *Memorias de um sargento de milicias* (published as a newspaper series between 1852 and 53), fundamental text of Brazilian romanticism, *A escrava Isaura* by Bernardo Guimaraes (1875), and the famous abolitionist poem, *O navio negreiro* by Castro Alves (written in 1868 and published in 1880).

The scholar, Latin Americanist, and literary critic of the region's women's writing, Dawn Duke, for instance, categorizes dos Reis together with the Cuban writer María Dámasa Jova Baró, "as eminent precursors to a distinguished line of subsequent women writers" in the Afro-Latin American context. "Horácio de Almeida believed Maria Firmina dos Reis to be the first Brazilian woman writer. [...] Luiza Lobo has since, however, opposed the allegation by presenting Ana Eurídice Eufrosina de Barandas of Porto Alegre as the first female Brazilian novelist." But the "long-term symbolic value of Maria Firmina dos Reis's only novel *Úrsula* (1859) rests in its distinction as a work that lays the foundations for an Afro-Brazilian female literary consciousness." For Rita Terezinha Schmidt, "Maria Firmina dos Reis inscribes a black voice in the construction of national subjectivities engendering what Homi Bhabba defines as a counter narrative of the nation that "continually evoke and erase its totalizing boundaries–both actual and conceptual–disturbing those ideological maneuvers through which 'imagined communities' are given essentialist identities." In fact, not only a black voice, but on an extremely important global theme of the time, that of abolition. The writing experience of Maria Firmina dos Reis, a black writer, can also be perceived in the representation of her black characters. Maria Firmina presents black people in her novels, giving them human dimensions and gives a position as a subject of discourse, which can reveal an intimate

identification with the enslaved black person, presenting a solidarity that, in the words of Eduardo de Assis Duarte, "is born from a perspective of the other, through which the writer, sister to the captives and their descendants, expresses, through fiction, her belonging to this universe of culture." Apart from *Úrsula*, Maria Firmina also wrote an indigenist romance, *Gupeva*, (published as a newspaper serial in 1861; and as a volume in 1863), published a book of poems, *Cantos à beira-mar* (1871), in which she included poems dedicated to her mother and sister, love poems, and abolitionist and patriotic poems on the Paraguayan War. Besides this, she carried out studies on the folklore of Maranhão and collaborated with the local press. Today, Maria Firmina's name appears in dictionaries and/or literary encyclopedias, such as *The Bloomsbury Guide to Women's Literature* (1992) edited by Claire Buck; *Escritoras brasileiras do século XIX* (Brazilian Writers of the XIX Century (1999)), organized by Zahidé Lupinacci Muzart; o Vital Brazil; and *o Dicionario literário afro-brasileiro* (2007) by Nei Lopes, among many other reference works.[195]

Cruz e Sousa's two famous books of poetry *Missal and* Broquéis, published in 1893, are known to have marked the beginning of Symbolism in Brazil. Receiving at the time the attention of only very few literary critics and even a more restricted reading public, the merit of his work was only accorded attention with the passage of time as the genius of the author became recognized. Attacked by José Veríssimo and exalted by

[195] See also Norma Telles, "Escritoras, escritas, escrituras," in: História das mulheres no Brasil, organized by Mary Del Priore and coordinated by Carla Bassanezi (São Paulo: Contexto, 1997), 401-42; Hebe C. Boa viagem A. Costa, Elas, as pioneiras do Brasil: a memorável saga dessas mulheres (São Paulo: Scortecci, 2005); Anne Commire, ed., Dictionary of Women Worldwide: 25,000 Women through the Ages (Waterford, CT: Yorkin Publications, 2007); as well as a number of newer electronic sources. Cited by Cristina Ferreira Pinto-Bailey in "Na contramão: A narrativa abolicionista de Maria Firmina dos Reis" p. 1.

Sílvio Romero, the works seemed to have shocked the readers who were accustomed to Parnassian poetry that was dominating at the time. The first collection of poems "Missal," for instance, stands out by virtue of their form: They are poems in prose, a style that was quite unique for the national literature of that time. Influenced as it also was by the French symbolist, Charles Baudelaire, an author whose epigraph Cruz e Souza uses in *Broquéis,* the estrangement of the reading public could be understood as very few other Brazilian writers at the time were reading the French author.

Being Cruz e Sousa's first work in the Symbolist style, the style is still rather latent in this first collection, not attaining the required level of musicality, plasticity, and suggestion that is attained in the second collection. Two examples from this collection are "Oração ao Sol" ('Prayer to the Sun') and "Os Cânticos" ('The Chants'). As can be seen, mysticism and religion was one of the themes explored by the author in contrast to the more secular themes explored by the writers of the time who came under the influence of Enlightenment ideas. The second collection, "Broquéis," contains 54 poems, 47 of which are sonnets. This collection addresses a greater number of themes, namely the poetic act or condition of the poet, sensual and spiritual eroticism, extravagant portraits, mystic visions, and pessimistic allegories. It was in this second collection that Cruz e Sousa's Symbolist aesthetic orientation was clearly evidenced through his obsession with white as a color in his attempt to attain the absolute emptiness and complete imprecision that were the hallmarks of the genre. In these verses, he also attained the musicality that was also associated with the genre.

An aggressive social critic and satirical writer, Barreto authored several works that caricatured his native city and society of Rio de Janeiro and the country as a whole. His favored target of criticism was the perceived mediocrity of the Brazilian people, mainly the government and the commercial/military authorities. Some of best known novels include his first, *Os Recordacoes de Isaías Caminha* ("Memoirs of the Notary Public Isaiah Caminha*,"* published in 1909 a scathing and semi-autobiographical satire of the Brazilian society of the time; *Triste Fim de Policarpo Quaresma* ('The Tragic Fate of Policarpo Quaresma') is considered his *magnus opus*, first published in 1911 in feuilleton form and released as a book in 1915, presents a bitter satire of the first years of the New Republic (principally the 1890s and the first decade of the 20th century) and the life of that period; *Os Bruzundangas*, a collection of tales he published in newspapers over a period of 20 years that tells of the corruption present in every sector of Bruzundanga's life, from politics to education, an imaginary country he created to represent Brazil to escape from the persecutions of the politicians and other government authorities; and *Clara dos Anjos* that was published posthumously that exposes the disgraceful destiny of poor women in Brazil and the hypocrisy of the rich. In the above works, Barreto does not only lay bare the problems that exist in his society, but calls for reform at all levels, cultural, economic (agricultural), and military. Regrettably, despite the ironic humor present in his novels, his typically melancholic and quixotic protagonists, clothed in an innocence and naivety in relation to the possibility of restoring Brazil to a more humane society, are unable to cope with the mechanized urban society, militarism, and governmental organization, most often than not finding themselves vanquished by death.

His often-vitriolic social analysis and criticism are more direct and less refined than was the case of his older contemporary Machado de Assis. He also heavily criticized the baroque and difficult writing style which was popular among Brazilian authorities as a symbol of “intelligence” and “high social status.” Due to his feelings on this issue, Barreto adopted a simpler style in his books which was more accessible to a greater majority of the Brazilian people. This provoked an increasing number of criticisms against the author, who was persecuted by the Brazilian elite for his non-classical style.

Barreto also explored the psychological conditions of his characters, although he is not as well known for this aspect of his writing as other more prominent Lusophone writers, including Machado de Assis or the Portuguese José Maria de Eça de Queiroz. His books often explore the curious beliefs and thoughts of his characters: for example, Policarpo Quaresma was a radical and almost utopian patriot, and his beliefs led him to a tragic end. Policarpo was also innocent enough to believe the Brazilian “original nature” could be restored. Exaggerated innocence had also condemned the character Clara dos Anjos to a life of dishonor. As for the antagonists, Barreto explores their hypocrisy, ignorance, and indifference to the suffering of others. Psychopathy is presented in his posthumous book Clara dos Anjos through the antagonist, Cassi Jones, who has typical habits of a social psychopath: absence of care for other people's feelings, selfishness, and cold calculation to achieve his goals, no matter how vile they are.

It is evident that the above cited authors add an important dimension to the Brazilian literary histography of the nineteenth century. Not only do they bring the perspective of the Afro Brazilian subject to the foreground on issues related to their day,

but they also offer fresh insights on the Brazilian world, a presentation on which could not be complete, and in fact would be skewed for their absence. They additionally showcase the literary quality of these Brazilian citizens, whose absence from any literary and/or cultural representation of the country to the world deprives the country of this very rich inheritance. It is also clear that their world literary contributions also transcend mere mimetic aesthetic expressions of the globalized European genres they either represented or pioneered in the country, which they ofttimes customized for their own purposes, employing them to address urgent social matters of their day that derived from the colonial structures set in place from that first Western globalizing enterprise in the New World. Their literary production further magnifies their loyalty, commitment, and concern of Brazilian citizens who wanted to see their new country achieve greatness, at a time when they were being ostracized and not even considered part of the national imaginary, debunking the claims in some quarters of the Afro Brazilian not seeing Brazil as their country. The racist challenges faced by these Afro Brazilian cultural producers, who were denied their rightful places in the society of the day also refutes the claim made in Coutinho's collaborative work using Machado de Assis as a prime example that racism in Brazil during the 19th Century was more of an economic rather than biological nature.

Based on the above stellar contributions of these Afro Brazilian writers, I argue that Afro Brazilian literature should not be categorized as merely post-modernist but has existed since the birth of the nation, from the Romantic era through the pre-modern period with Symbolist and pre modernist writers. The post-modernist writing of the latter of the twentieth century and twenty-first century finds its roots in the nineteenth century

as can be seen with the slum writing of Paulo Lins and Carolina Maria de Jesus, hence, the calls for the expansion of categorizations that could include their participation.

The Internationalism of Carolina Maria de Jesus[196]

De Jesus offers a non-academic perspective on poverty and exclusionary economic expansion in Brazil, which was then rarely made by someone who did not come from the educated classes. The moment is particularly ironic, as it was a time when Brasilia, the symbol of a 'New Brasil', had just been inaugurated. Carolina Maria de Jesus had a great cultural impact on Brazil. Her decision to write about the struggles of the community versus strictly about her own struggles was something unprecedented in Brazil and was a perspective that was appreciated internationally. Still, her biography and memoirs provide insight into Brazilian favela life. While her life story can be seen as a struggle with tragedy, it is possible to regard her views as common Brazilian attitudes towards society, family life, equality, poverty, and other aspects of daily existence in the 1960s. Her book was read extensively both in capitalist areas such as Western Europe and the United States, as well as in the Eastern Bloc and Cuba, the wide range of the audience demonstrating how many people were affected by her story outside of Brazil. For the liberal capitalist West, the book portrayed a cruel and corrupt system which had been reinforced by centuries of colonial ideals they also shared. By contrast, for communist readers the stories depicted perfectly the fundamental flaws of capitalist production in which the worker is the most downtrodden part of the economic system.

[196] See Appendix B, p. 220 for a profile of this author.

As Brazilian historian José Carlos Sebe Bom Meihy noted, “many foreign specialists in Brazil year after year used her translated diary in their classes,” which indicates her worldwide role in providing an uncommon first-hand account of 1960s favela life. According to Robert M. Levine, “Carolina's words brought alive a slice of Latin American reality rarely acknowledged in traditional textbooks.” A biography about her was written by author Jarid Arraes as part of her 2015 cordel collection and book *Heroínas Negras Brasileiras em 15 cordéis*. On 14 March 2019, search engine Google commemorated de Jesus with a Doodle on the 105th anniversary of her birth.

The Latin American and Caribbean World: In Conclusion

Towards the Fulfilment of the World Literary Promise: Expanding Geographical and Conceptual Borders in Latin America and the Caribbean

This year, 2024, marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of Pascale Casanova's publication *La République Mondiale des Lettres* (1999) that initiated the ongoing world literary debates and the tenth anniversary of Mariano Siskind's *Cosmopolitan Desires: Global Modernity and World Literature in Latin America* (2014) that signaled Latin America's entrance into the conversation. Since these groundbreaking publications, much has advanced in our understanding within the sphere of world literature of the rich diversity of the world's literary and cultural production, in general, and that of Latin America (and the Caribbean) in particular. Yet, almost three decades later, there persists a paucity, when not, visible invisibility of the critical discourses of the marginalized (mainly Afro descendant) populations of Haiti, Hispanic America, and Brazil within the prevailing discussion. Addressing as its principal aim this disjuncture between the main texts produced to date by Latin Americanists and Caribbeanists in the context of the ongoing world literary debates and the region's extant literary and cultural reality, the dissertation first clearly demonstrates the existence and quality of the critical global discourses and world mappings produced and engaged in by the region's sizeable Afro descendant literary and cultural producers since the nineteenth century, thus mainstreaming for the first time these marginalized spaces as a corpus of works within the field of comparative/world literature. This preliminary outcome of the project is of unquestionable immense value, particularly when considered against the invisibilization, objectification, and stereotyping that these populations have endured historically and, in

large measure, continue to experience within the region and world. It is also of critical importance in underscoring the fact that Afro descendant literary and cultural producers have penetrated the world as subjects since the nineteenth century, providing their unique perspectives on global issues, charting their own courses, and mapping their chosen routes in the external world. Jacques Stephen Alexis' discourse on universal cultural production warrants special mention in this regard as it is the only conceptualization that I have encountered during my research throughout the entire Latin America and the Caribbean, apart from Glissant's "Treatise on the Whole World (Traité du Tout-Monde 1997), that attempts to theorize the world literary space as a whole. This theorization stands alongside those of Casanova, Moretti, the Warwick Research Collective (WREC), and Spivak who have all articulated their theorizations of the world from a literary/cultural standpoint and should therefore rightfully be put in dialogue with them. Further, the demonstrated corpus of critical works legitimizes to the world the region's historical specificity as one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse of the planet, thereby acquiring symbolic capital as a model to the world.

The inclusion of Afro descendant critical discourses in the global trajectory of Latin America and the Caribbean produced the significant corollary of an expansion of both the conceptual and geographical borders of the region as perceived and defined within U.S. academia, and by extension, the burgeoning world literary space. To this end, the dissertation advocates for a reconfiguration of the contemporary Latin American and Caribbean cultural discourse based on the region's present concrete reality that transcends the geographic and conceptual borders of Western Europe and its orientalist

gaze, deriving instead from the practices, claims, correspondence, and collaborations through which its multiethnic and multilingual cultural producers pursue a variety of international alliances. Moreover, it points to contemporary critical works emanating from the translocalized spaces of established diasporic communities, such as the Latinx population of the USA, as potential sources for the configuration of models that may provide for a more inclusive and pluralistic analysis of the region's cultural production. One such model is the one explored in my recently published article "Interculturality, Creolization, and Globalization in *Ángeles nómadas* by Minelys Sánchez" articulated by Pheng Cheah that conceptualizes world literature as world making activity, speaking to the force of literature to foster social transformation or make new worlds through its presentation of alternate worlds.[197]

Due to their traumatic historical trajectory within the region, Afro descendants have typically created both aesthetically and critically from within the black diasporic space, evidencing as a result many similarities in their transnational discourses with their Francophone and Anglophone Caribbean counterparts, as well as other Afro descendant cultural producers throughout the world. The employment of Haiti as an object of study, and therefore, as part of what I embrace as the Latin American and Caribbean world, reflects this reality. This French Caribbean country, however, also recommends itself as part of the Latin American imagined community based on its confluences and entanglements with the region since its independence, its French colonization that

[197] See Cecily Bernard's "Interculturality, Creolization, and Globalization in *Ángeles nómadas* by Minelys Sánchez" in *Comparative Woman*, Volume 2, Issue 2, *Conflict: Continuing the Conversation*, Louisiana State University's Digital Commons, 2024.

bequeathed it a Latin language, and its revolutionary imaginary that despite many external attempts at severing it from the Latin American psyche continues to live on in the region's Afro descendant populations. Interestingly, within the cultural space created by UNESCO since 1967 to study the region's cultural identity in its various expressions, namely literature, architecture and urbanism, plastic arts, music, the art of showmanship, and an history of ideas, many of the region's essayists adopt a broader definition of its cultural identity that transcends the culturally mainstreamed narrative being promoted in the developed centers, even embracing the diasporic Latinx community as part of the Latin American cultural identity. This presents a disconnect between the perceptions that exist within the U.S. academia that relate to the fields of Latin American literatures and cultures and those that obtain in the region itself. It is perhaps worthy of note that many of the intellectuals who contribute to the UNESCO project for various reasons do not issue from the academic community. One of the recommendations of this study would thus be to encourage increased linkages between the U.S. Academia that studies Latin America and the Caribbean and the literary and cultural producers in the region itself, particularly those departments involved in comparative/world literatures. It was good to learn, for instance, that the Latin American Studies Association (LASA) is this year holding its conference in Bogotá, Colombia, and seems embarked on making the region its preferred location for future conferences.

By placing the critical discourses of Afro descendant literary and cultural producers in dialogue with those of the region's cultural and political elite, the research underscores the importance of the perspective of these marginalized groups in the

consolidation of the region's world literary discourses, demonstrating how ofttimes these provide insightful theoretical and conceptual frameworks that once embraced would be capable of breaking the impasse that has held the region captive to discourses that prevent them from legitimately fulfilling their full leadership potential on the world stage. One thinks immediately of the concept of tri-ethnicity proffered by Manuel Zapata Olivella and its potential to break the identity impasse that has saddled the region for centuries and that continues to impede in some places the penetration of its literary and cultural producers in the global capitalist world on an equal footing. Another important regional critical discourse that comes to mind is that of double consciousness initially proffered by the African American, Paul Gilroy, and expanded by Afro-descendant thinkers in the region to accommodate the immigrant population of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to the region, many of whom possess a triple consciousness having migrated between different regional spaces and in some cases from spaces external to the region. Even, the critical discourses of the French Caribbean intellectual, Edouard Glissant of creolization (creolité), interculturality, and globality (mondialité) are invaluable and pertinent contributions to the theoretical and conceptual toolbox of the region as they advance the idea that the Caribbean and, by extension, (certain parts of) Latin America have, as a result of their unique New World experiences, and as in some cases as inhabitants of archipelagic locations, acquired an openness to the world and to diverse cultures that is now being sought after and in some places progressively attained, albeit at great political, economic, and social cost, by the rest of the world.

Within the context of Glissant´s "Whole World" philosophy, he promoted the idea of a Poetics of Relation that would be a useful tool to apply in further dialoguing of these concepts within the region. Likewise, considering the reconceptualization of world literature as a paradigm as opposed to an object of study, it now facilitates the comparing of literatures and cultures that exhibit major differences. In addition, there now exists in most departments of language and literature throughout the U.S., Latin American Studies units and/or programs that can further the conversation between what is now labeled Afro Latin American, Indigenous, and Latin American literatures and cultures. More importantly, there now also can be found publications on Latin America and the Caribbean that have brought together these elements of the region's cultural identity in a single volume in their attempt to promote a more comprehensive vision of the region.

As has been hypothesized in the dissertation, the selected literary and cultural producers and critics (as other similarly marginalized groups), from their realms of political, economic, and/or socio-cultural marginality within their nations, the region and/or globe are motivated by their desire to refigure and socially transform the present world and/or imagine and configure alternate worlds, invoking the world thereby either as a signifier of universality in specificity or as a space traveled in pursuit of identity, place and belongingness. Hence, we see them presenting critical discourses that range from contesting and challenging the status quo and prevailing discourses proffered by the global hegemonic powers and their regional cosmopolitan supporters, such as the imploding of the Enlightenment concept of racial inequality based on biological factors by the Haitian author and critic, Anténor Firmin.

Jacques Stephen Alexis' call for a new humanism and a socially transformed novelistic genre that reflect the concerns of the masses also evidences this reality as does also the various anti-colonialist, anti-imperialist, and anti-assimilationist discourses that connect them with geographical and conceptual spaces at odds with Western capitalist expansionist thinking, such as the communist and non-aligned worlds and the social realist, surrealist, and post-colonial movements. Likewise, Afro Latin American and Caribbean literary and cultural producers externalize their own inhabited and imaginary worlds, as well as interact with their diasporas not only spatially but also through the dimension of time, i.e., through (re)connections with their ancestors and ancestral practices through memory as well as cultural consciousness as a means of restoring their own sense of self and counteracting their invisibilization, objectification, and stereotyping within the region and world. They are therefore not only concerned with global themes that issue from the ever expanding global reach of capitalism (economic globalization) but with using their own brands of literary and cultural resources (oral literature, the marvelous, the mythical, the supernatural) to socially transform their lives and experiences within the marginalized spaces that they find themselves constrained to inhabit and to create alternate worlds both imaginary and real for themselves and their future generations.

It is important to note that these Afro descendant critical discourses of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries reflect recent theorizations that have emerged within and on the margins of the world literary debate particularly within the post-colonial theoretical space that distinguish the globe from the world, pointing towards

world connections not only through space but also through time that link peoples transnationally. Pheng Cheah, one of the leading thinkers in this regard notably not only makes the distinction between 'world' and 'globe' but recognizes in the concept of 'world' the possibility of a cosmopolitanism that allows for the creation of new worlds and/or the transformation of existing ones. Other intellectuals that have made similar distinctions in their critical discourses are Gayatri Spivak in the presentation of her theoretical framework of 'planetarity', Emily Apter in her challenge to world literature from the standpoint of the issue of untranslatability, and Edouard Glissant in his series *Les peoples de l'eau*,[198] that exposes and questions Eurocentric approaches to the purportedly exotic 'Other', thus responding concretely to a very central topic that has shaped the whole debate over world literature for the past two centuries.. Interestingly, except for Glissant, none of the mainstream Latin American and Caribbean global thinkers assessed have proffered any analysis that goes beyond the realm of the globe to contemplate the idea of doing the world without the world. The importance of this distinction, however, cannot be overstated as it provides for the inclusion of marginalized spaces such as the *cimarrones*, *palenqueros*, *garífunas*, *quilombolas*, *cumbes*, and even the rural populations of Haiti within the Latin American and Caribbean region that

[198] Glissant conceived this series and the underlying project of sailing around the world in collaboration with Patrice Franceschi, the captain of a three-mast sailing ship. Under UNESCO patronage, the *Boudeuse* set sail from Corsica with a twenty-four-person crew in July 2004 and returned in June 2007. During the voyage, twelve exhibitions culminated in visits to eight "peoples of the sea", who live on secluded islands, inaccessible riverbanks, or outlying coasts, groups such as the Yuhup in the Amazon Basin and the Rapa Nui on Easter Island. Writers and journalists selected by Glissant, including Régis Debray, Patrick Chamoiseau, J.M.G. Le Clézio, Antonio Tabucchi, and André Velter, each accompanied the team of scientists on one of the exhibitions, in testimony to the project's large impact. Read further in Gesine Müller's article "Debating world literature without the world: ideas for materializing literary studies based on examples from Latin America and the Caribbean" in *World Literature, Cosmopolitanism, Globality: Beyond, Against, Post, Otherwise,* De Gruyter, 2019.

remain untouched by or have survived unscathed from the far-reaching tentacles of economic globalization, continuing in their pursuit of temporal and spatial connections beyond the globe.

Over and beyond the above outcomes of the project, it views the present moment as opportune for the proposal of theoretical models and/or conceptual frames that may facilitate a more inclusive and pluralistic analysis of the region's transnational cultural production. Indeed, over the past decade, there has been voiced repeated calls by world literary critics and scholars, including many from the region, for more pluralistic models and methodologies to cater for the ever-expanding globe through Western economic globalization, the cultural production of which has similarly increased exponentially with the advent of decolonialization and post-1989 globalization. It is also, therefore, within the context of these broader conceptual debates that this study inserts itself, adding as it were another Latin American and Caribbean perspective to these ongoing conversations within the expanding field of World Literary Studies that has since attracted the attention and contributions of many Latin American and Caribbean scholars and critics. In addition, the project also extends regional discussions on Latin American cultural identity and place, problematizing thereby mainstream *a priori* fixed positions that have, notwithstanding, been slowly acquiescing, albeit begrudgingly, to the undeniably heterogenous nature of the region's cultural production, even if still only within the mainstream works of its European descendant authors. While the almost exclusively male criollo and/or white Latino cultural elite analyzed by Mariano Siskind in his monograph *Cosmopolitan Desires: Global Modernity and World Literature in Latin America* from

their place of enunciation identified primarily with modernity as imagined and promulgated by the 'developed' North, adopting thereby cosmopolitan discourses denoted by Siskind as "deseo de mundo/desejo de mundo"/desire for the world (Introduction 4), their non-European counterparts, unmistakably more diverse in gender, race, class, and genre eschew in the main from their place(s) of enunciation the capitalist project of economic and cultural modernity with its imperialist markings and Eurocentric modes of analysis, in short, the present Western globalized world and its hierarchical system(s), seeking rather to imagine or create alternate worlds for themselves and their future generations derived from their own recollections of their ancestral histories prior to the intervention of the colonial masters or through their present ever-expanding diasporic connections and interactions.

Moreover, by directly responding to the challenge thrown out by the Latin American scholar and world literary critic, Héctor Hoyos in the conclusion to his text *Beyond Bolaño* to perform an analysis of authors who not only are marginalized within the world literary system but that suffer local limitations to begin with, the research advances the work initiated by him that calls for the abandonment by the extant global publishing and marketing centers of regional works of their synecdochical representations of the region and the valuing instead of the rich diversity of quality global literary and cultural production that the region has to offer. It also complements and advances the work of both Siskind and Hoyos to present the region's literary and cultural production to the world from its own perspective as a corpus of works, field of study, and place of enunciation. In so doing, it inserts itself into the ongoing conversation standing alongside

other more recent regional productions that have emerged within the Bloomsbury *Literatures As World Literature* series, Eduardo Coutinho's collection of essays, *Brazilian Literature as World Literature*, Christian Moraru et al.'s *Francophone Literature as World Literature*, and Ignacio Sanchez-Prado's *Mexican Literature as World Literature* that have all attempted to present their country or region's worldliness from their own localized perspectives

Methodological Quandaries

The dissertation set out in terms of its methodology from the premise that Latin America and the Caribbean's transnational cultural production, from its modernist cosmopolitan origins in the late nineteenth century (Hispanic America) and early twentieth century (Brazil) respectively to its contemporary so-named post-modernist expressions, had been one marked by a pursuit of Western-style modernization as posited by the two main texts that served as its trigger. In the case of the region's Western European descendants, controllers of both political and economic power since independence, the study acknowledged that the aforementioned reality had converged predominantly with the quest for the homogeneous definition of a regional cultural identity equated with Western modernity, associated historically with the aesthetic and ideological traditions and expressions of Western Europe–primarily France, Italy,

England, and Portugal, and to a lesser extent Spain–and contemporarily with those of North America, particularly the United States.

As corroborated by the analyses carried out by Hoyos, Siskind, Jacques Stephen Alexis, and Coutinho, the twentieth century brought in its wake the expansion of the region's global connections by its still then mainly cultural elite to include other parts of Europe, extending further outward to distant continents, in particular Asia and Africa, and inward to South and Central America, and Mexico, problematizing as it were conventional notions of Latin American identity and place. With the rise in the transnational literary discourse of the region's African descendants and Latinx communities in the U.S. since the mid twentieth century, as well as its emerging digital expressions, the question of Latin American identity and place has become even more nuanced and problematized. The historical role of Latin America and the Caribbean's European descendant political and economic elite in the definition and delimitation of the region's cultural identity and place has occasioned and fostered within its official discourses the invisibilization, throughout the colonial era, of the cultural contributions and geographical and ideological spaces of its majority Afro-descendant and Indigenous populations, their exoticization, during the post-independence and modern periods, and marginalization in present times. Yet, despite the blurring of spatial lines within the region over the past century with the progressive increase of non-European descendant intellectuals, the separation of the European descendant political and cultural elite, the explosion of Afro-descendant, female, Indigenous, and diasporic cultural products in the latter half of the century, and the emergence and consolidation of transnational spaces

and flows within an increasingly globalized world, there has to my knowledge until now persisted the absence of a critical study that engages the transnational discourses of the region's marginalized cultural products putting them in relation to its mainstreamed ones, providing thereby a more comprehensive reflection of the region's perspectives on issues located beyond their national boundaries. This therefore constitutes another of the main contributions of this study to the field.

Taking advantage of the opportunity the world literary debates offered to insert marginalized cultural geographies of the region into this potential global turn, this project aligns itself with a current scholarly and critical trend visible in the region over the past decade that advocates for more inclusive methodologies and critical perspectives. In addition, the research foresees a wider contribution to the fields of transnational, post-colonial, and world literature through its promotion of Latin America and the Caribbean as a world that can provide a replicable model for other similarly diverse spaces in the world. Thus, notwithstanding the unique and diverse cultural cosmovisions of its three principal ethnicities, the project assumes Latin America and the Caribbean to be a world, first in the sense of a microcosmic foretaste of the planetary society being fashioned today through the ever-increasing diasporic connections and transnational flows, when not digital interactions, and then, more importantly, through the individual connectedness of its various ethnicities, wherever they may be found in the world, both in time and space to the historic specificities and concrete realities of the region.

It also recognizes that despite these indisputable similarities present among the three main ethnicities of the region, they do not share a common place of enunciation

neither in terms of their creativity nor vis-à-vis the external world. Viewing the region's cultural production as a whole, the project challenges the prevailing predominance within the realm of mainstream Latin American scholarship of the cultural production and expression of Hispanic America, on the one hand, and that of the region's largest and more developed urban centers (Buenos Aires, Mexico City, Santiago, São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro) with their attendant predominantly male European descendant populations, on the other, arguing for the recognition and inclusion of Afro-descendant, Indigenous, and female transnational cultural products with their associated ideologies and worldviews alongside those of the region's Euro descendants as legitimate and worthy elements of a Latin American and Caribbean mainstream cultural discourse. Moreover, given the present gloom and doom landscape within Latin American world literary scholarship regarding its Euro descendant cosmopolitan discourses as effectively posited by Mariano Siskind, it sees the theorizations posited by Alexis and Glissant as counterpoints that can provide hope for the regional literary and cultural producers where there may seem to be no hope. Indeed, Alexis' idea of a world ever advancing through the cultural production of its inhabitants and Glissant's of a world that is currently in chaos but that is capable through its poetics of relations to overcome this, attaining to that world in constant and progressive relation on an equal footing that is desirable, become of immeasurable value and importance to the ongoing discourse. Moreover, I beg to digress here to point to a regional reality that has been too often overlooked within the world literary sphere when we think of possible outcomes for the literary and cultural world and to which very little purchase has been given–that of multilateralism and economic and social democracy that

have taken place in Brazil, an undisputed regional precursor of literary and cultural penetration of the world beyond the globe, under the pragmatic leadership of Fernando Henrique Cardoso (President from 1995 to 2003) and Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (President from 2003-2011 and 2023 to present). It is indisputable that these two leaders have done equally as much for the literary and cultural imaginary and reality of the marginalized spaces of the region as has Fidel Castro in his time. Still, as pointed to in the dissertation, the world has recognized the impact that the 1959 revolution has had on the cultural imagination of the region, and I would wish to reword this to say more correctly the Hispanic sub-region yet continues to ignore the impact that these two regional leaders have had and continue to have on the marginalized spaces in the largest country of the region. I would therefore recommend further exploration of this reality within any future world literary project that intends to explore marginalized works of the Latin American and Caribbean region.

In arguing for the placement of the critical discourses of the marginalized space of the region alongside the mainstream regional literary and cultural narrative, the dissertation recognizes the need for the expansion of both the geographical and conceptual borders of the current field of study with all its attendant possible risks and threats. Although it is evident that both institutions and scholars have begun to adopt a more inclusive approach over the past few decades, most of the collective research work produced on the region still concentrates on assembling the various cultural productions, those of the region's African, Indigenous, and European descendants, for instance, either in the same volume or in sequential volumes, while analyzing them parallelly, as is

evidenced in recent compendia on Latin American literatures. Owing to this necessary yet incomplete effort, the project proposes that this mainstreaming process commence within the walls of academia, among the primarily transnational cultural intellectuals of the day who now populate U.S. Academia and through the various units and departments that now compartmentalize Latin American Literatures and Cultures. The dissertation points to both the more intellectual sphere of theoretical and conceptual enquiry and the material entanglements and confluences that exist among many of the main literary and cultural movements of the region and the world, such as magical realism, marvelous realism, and surrealism, or alternately the Africa-Asia-Latin America and Caribbean connection created within the political space of the Non-Aligned Movement as possible places to begin this dialogue. Indeed, in large measure and in a general sense, the conversation is already taking place at the global level within the textual and institutional spaces created by the ongoing theoretical enquiry to expand the cultural geographies, scope and reach of the fields of both national and comparative literatures as well as to explore and understand more in depth from the local perspective the literatures and cultures of the world, such as the recently established Harvard Institute of World Literature (2011-) and the Bloomsbury Academic *Literatures As World Literature* series and the UNESCO Latin American and Caribbean project. It finally points to the need for the reframing of the concept of 'place of enunciation' and the embracing of engaged reading as a defining characteristic of world literature. In relation to the latter, the project recommends an alternative mode of reading, one that is less detached, that would become necessary once the Afro Latin American literatures are given their rightful place within

the Latin American and Caribbean canons of literature, owing to the fact that many of these works externalize worlds of oppression, deprivation of basic human rights, social violence, and political and economic exploitation, all aspects of our world that should be of interest to the rest of the world as injustice anywhere is injustice everywhere. In relation to the need for the reframing of place of enunciation to also embrace the idea of temporal, spiritual, metaphysical, diasporic, in short non-spatial / geographical spaces, I now turn to the thoughts of some of the region's notable Latin American and Caribbean scholars from across the spectrum to further elucidate this point.

Re(framing) Place of Enunciation

Undeniably, one of the more important findings of the project is the need to reframe the concept of 'place of enunciation' articulated by Siskind and applied by Coutinho, broadening it to transcend geographical, political, and economic spaces. What has become very clear through the process of the research is the fact that marginalized literary and cultural producers do not and, to be truthful, cannot produce and create from the many times geographically, politically, or economically marginalized spaces they inhabit. They, in fact, find their places of enunciation in communal, ancestral, mystical, mythical, religious, and spiritual spaces, even in revolutions as still do many Haitian and Cuban artists. This understanding would preclude the categorization of the Afro descendants in Brazil, for instance, as a minority grouping, as does Coutinho in his collection of essays, as while they may be so politically and economically, they are

neither so numerically nor creatively. We know, for instance, from a census taken by the World Bank in 2010[199] of Brazil's Afro descendant population that they constituted 50.7% of the total population with 96.8 million persons. In 2015, this figure rose to 104.5 million, representing the largest Black diasporic community after Nigeria. While the numbers for Hispanic America are significantly lower both individually and as a whole, in Venezuela alone Afro descendants represented 55% of the population in 2010 with 14.5 million. Likewise, as reiterated by the Latin American and Caribbean literary and cultural producers, who have participated in the UNESCO project since 1967 and I quote:

> La cultura africana en el Brasil está lejos de ser una curiosidad etnográfica o una cosa de museo. Es una realidad viva y creadora que no se detiene en el mero pintoresquismo… A lo largo de la historia del Brasil la contribución de los negros a la formación de un espíritu nacional y de una cultura brasileña ha sido tan valiosa como su aporte al desarrollo económico del país ('African culture in Brazil is far from being an ethnographic curiosity or a museum thing. It is a living and creative reality that does not stop at mere picturesqueness... Throughout the history of Brazil: the contribution of blacks to the formation of a national spirit and a Brazilian culture has been so valuable as its contribution to the economic development of the country.') (Gilberto Freyre)

> El nuevo mundo ha sido desde la época prehistórica un centro de convergencia

[199] See in World Bank Report, entitled *Afro-descendants in Latin America: Toward a Framework of Inclusion* published by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank, 2018, Table 5 p. 98.

de razas y pueblos… De esta manera, la posible ascendencia asiática y oceánica de todos los pueblos americanos y la posible integración geográfica inmemorial de América con África son datos que vendrían a completar la universalidad de América; algo así como un anticipo del mundo futuro, donde, más allá de las razas y de culturas, el hombre será uno" ('The New World has been since prehistoric times a center of convergence of races and peoples... In this way, the possible Asian and oceanic ancestry of all the peoples of the Americas and the possible immemorial geographical integration of America with Africa are data that would complete the universality of America; something like a foretaste of the future world, where, beyond races and cultures, Man shall be one.') (Paul Rivet)

El indio no es solo historia y arqueología, sino presente, vivo, y viviente…, no es justo ni razonable ni digno restar de nuestra tradición la parte de ella que vemos todos los días en la canción, en la danza, en el libro, en la calle, en nuestras venas, y en nuestro corazón de hombres ('The Indian is not only history and archaeology, but present, alive, and living ... it is not fair or reasonable or worthy to subtract from our tradition the part of it that we see every day in song, in dance, in books, in the street, in our veins, and in our hearts as men.') (Andrés Iduarte)

In the specific case of Afro descendant cultural producers, it is important not to minimize nor dismiss the inevitable outcomes of the dehumanizing processes that they have been forced to endure under the yokes of slavery and colonialism. One such consequence in the Latin American and Caribbean region is the fact that its Afro

descendant populations have always needed to look beyond their shores for self-definition and solidarity.[200] It would be therefore short-sighted, in my view, to categorize the International negro movements that have emerged in the early twentieth century, such as *Négritude* and Pan Africanism, and the worlds they have mapped, as essentialist as some scholars and critics have been prone to do.[201] In so do, these scholars fail to apprehend the rich cultural production that has emanated from these communal spaces and that a correct reading of these texts would not fail to bring to light. I would, moreover, submit that these spaces have served as more authentic places of enunciation to Afro-Latin American and Caribbean cultural producers than their sterile geographical locations, rife with poverty, lack, and marginalization.

Mention has been made prior of the prolific production amongst Black intellectuals that followed the First International Congress of Black Writers and Artists, celebrated as it was, for having "killed the black inferiority complex." Likewise, it would be from similar spaces that would emerge the rich Afro-Latin American cultural production that would explode onto the world stage from the latter half of the twentieth

[200] Haiti's universalist discourse, for instance, was built in large measure on its need to look outside of its borders to self-define and find solidarity due to the dehumanizing circumstances it faced post-Revolution. Many of the authors that emerged in the West, for instance, that used the Revolution as a literary subject, ofttimes took advantage of the two favored plot devices of European Romanticism that was contemporaneous with it–the idealized noble savage, and dystopian depictions of gory violence–to denigrate both the Revolution and Haitian identity.

[201] The authors and critics Max Mirebelais and Edelmira Thompson de Mediluce express the view in their respective works that *criollismo* and *Négritude* were, in a strict sense, "racist" while Jean Paul Sartre described *Négritude* as "*racisme antiraciste*" (antiracial racism). Cited by Héctor Hoyos in *Beyond Bolaño* 43 from "Orphée Noir'' in *Anthologie de la nouvelle poésie negre et malgache* ed. Léopold Senghor, 1948, xiv). Hoyos himself notes in the same passage that "while ethnicity is always hybrid, both movements identified themselves with an essentialized mixture" while he does concede that "within their historical contexts these movements counteracted stronger forces: *criollismo* served the young Latin American nations in the cause of achieving cultural independence from Spain, while *Négritude* proposed an alternative to white European cultural dominance" (43).

century[202] and the activism in the region that would redefine and redirect the trajectories of many Afro-descendant populations, such as that engaged in by the activist, cultural producer, and politician, Abdias do Nascimento that led to the positive self-definition of the Afro-Brazilian, generating the *Quilombismo* ideology and its affiliated *Quilombhoje* Movement and *Cadernos negros* publications, within which many of the great contemporary Afro-Brazilian writers that emerged in the late 1970s were nurtured and mentored. It is, therefore, within the framework of the search for a 'sense of self' and black agency that one must also interpret the region's connection to and participation in the Black international cultural/historical movements (*Négritude* (the Césairean version[203]), Pan Africanism and The Harlem Renaissance)) that emerged in the Americas during the early part of the twentieth century. It is my considered opinion that these movements provided 'safe spaces' primarily for the Afro-Brazilian and Afro-Hispanic intellectuals (except perhaps those from Cuba), who forced to be exiled in their own homes, possessed the need for a place that they could call home, where they could feel a sense of belonging in order to contest the debasing and debilitating definitions that were

[202] The U.S. Civil Rights and Black Power Movements prepared the ground for the founding of numerous Afro-American programs, congresses, journals, and national publishing houses while the "Boom" of the Latin American novel–sponsored largely by the U.S.' aggressive investment in Latin American culture aimed at diffusing the political threat of a post-revolutionary Cuba–continued to draw international attention to Latin America to Latin America's literary production. The proliferation of Afro-descendant texts that followed these events can be found in Vera Kutzinski's Afro-Hispanic American Literature in The Cambridge History of Latin American Literature.

[203] It is important to establish a difference between Léopold Senghor´s essentialist version of *Négritude* and that of Aimé Césaire who authored the Latin American and Caribbean arm with his founding poetic text, *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal ('Notebook of a Return* to My Native Land). C.L.R James aptly reinforces the universal thrust of the text in the appendix essay to the second edition of *The Black Jacobins* published in 1963, praising Césaire´s *Cahier* for making "a union of the African sphere of existence with existence in the Western world,", for linking historically and logically mankind's past to mankind's future, and for offering a vision of independent African being and an integrated humanity. (Cited by Philip Kaisary, "Radical Universalism: The Haitian Revolution, Aimé Césaire, and C.L.R. James" in *The Haitian Revolution in the Literary Imaginary*, 2014.

being imposed upon them and to have the possibility of carving out more empowering definitions for themselves that would enable and sustain their ongoing creativity. I contend that these spaces served, moreover, as creative laboratories that would lead to the later explosion of Afro-Latin American/Caribbean institutions and cultural production that the region would see throughout the twentieth century.

In theorizing Afro-Caribbean women writers in exile from close readings of nine selected authors, Myriam Chancy identifies alienation as the first phase of a four-stage strategy of resistance or process towards empowerment to which these writers are forced to adapt and/or confront in their exile, the other three being self-definition, recuperation, and return (Prologue xxi). Although within the specific context of Chancy's work, exile is understood as flight from political persecution or types of oppression that single out women, i.e., a state that is experienced outside of one's homeland and that is specific to the female gender, the concept is undoubtedly applicable to both the historical and present reality of Afro-descendants (both male and female albeit to differing degrees) within Latin America, perhaps even more so given the heightened intensity of alienation experienced by those forced to be exiled in their own homeland. One cannot therefore overemphasize the critical role that a sense of self (positive self-definition) plays in the process of engaging with the 'other', particularly a known 'other' equated historically in the black world with violence and oppression. In his article written for the UNESCO's Special Edition on Latin America (1970), Antonio Candido de Mello e Souza cites his contemporary, Mario Vieira de Mello, one of the few Latin Americans to have studied the relations between underdevelopment and culture, who establishes an association

between ‘sense of self’ and cultural production. He reinforces his argument by pointing to a distinction in the Latin American perspectives before and after the Second World War, denoting the former as the phase of *la conciencia amena de retraso* (‘favorable consciousness of backwardness’) corresponding to the ideology of the *país nuevo* (‘new country’) and the latter the phase of *la conciencia catastrófica de retraso* (‘the catastrophic consciousness of backwardness’) corresponding to the notion of the *país subdesarrollado* (‘underdeveloped country’ (Candido 10)).[204] Louis-Philippe Dalembert and Lyonel Trouillot also express the importance of ‘sense of self’ in engaging the other in an excerpt from Émile Olivier’s novel *Mère-Solitude* (*Mother Solitude*) that begins their literary overview of Haiti (*Haiti, une traversée littéraire*) that is relevant to our point and that I will summarize here: They begin by stating that as one can imagine, when you are a Haitian writer and you encounter foreign journalists or members of the public, you will be quickly bombarded with a number of questions among which invariably you will find the following: “Where did you learn French?” “How do you explain so many writers and publications in such a poor country with so many illiterate people?” “Do you believe that Haiti will emerge from this?” Why do you write and for whom? “You speak about an island, in truth, about an almost island, do you believe that

[204] Candido indicates that from the former perspective strength was foregrounded and, therefore, the greatness not yet realized. From the second, the current poverty is emphasized, the atrophy: what is lacking and not what abounds” (the original reads thus: “se ponía de relieve la pujanza y, por lo tanto, la grandeza aún no realizada. Desde la segunda, se subraya la pobreza actual, la atrofia: lo que falta y no lo que abunda”). This he continues has had a clear impact on the cultural production of the two eras. See “Literatura y Subdesarrollo en América Latina” in América Latina. Esplendor de una cultura múltiple, *El Correo de Unesco*, p. 10.

you express anything that is universal?"[205] The responses will vary according to one's temperament. Émile Olivier aptly describes the scene in his afore-mentioned novel:

> Suddenly, a small man, sporting a moustache and wearing a straw hat and a colorful pair of beach shorts, turns to Uncle Gabriel. 'What a beautiful country, he said, but how poor you are! Despite it all, you give an impression of playfulness and even joy. May we ask you your secret?' Instantly, the smile disappeared from Uncle Gabriel's lips [...] and I hear him squeak: 'Please, Mr. Tourist, don't touch our joy [...]. We rub shoulders with death daily and yet we live in an inexplicable state of joy; maybe, because we hold a secret hope in our hearts. Hope is a crazy herb. It is ineradicable, tenacious, violent. Do not touch our joy and do not ask yourselves questions about its causes, they are elusive ... Mr. Tourist, there for a moment I was jovial, welcoming, hospitable, but now melancholy and soon anger will rise in me …'[206] (9)

I would therefore dare to add that it was also fueled by a 'sense of self' derived from the 'new country' phase that the pro-French modernists (their leader Rubén Darío, in particular) were able for the first time to turn the tables, so to speak, on the Europeans,

[205] The original text reads as follows: "Ou avez-vous appris le français ? – Comment expliquez-vous tant d'écrivains dans un pays si pauvre et avec autant d'analphabètes ? – Vous parlez d'une île, d'une presqu'île, croyez-vous d'exprimer quelque chose d'universel ? Les réponses varient selon le tempérament.''

[206] The original text reads as follows: "Soudain, un petit homme moustachu, coiffé d'un chapeau de paille et portant une culotte de plage bariolée, se tourne vers l'oncle Gabriel. 'Quel beau pays, dit-il, mais comme vous êtes pauvre ! Malgré tout vous donnez une impression d'enjouement et même de joie. Peut-on vous demander votre secret ?' Instantanément, le sourire disparait des lèvres de l'oncle Gabriel […] et je l'entends grincer: 'S'il vous plait, monsieur le touriste, ne touchez pas à notre joie […]. Nous côtoyons la mort quotidiennement et pourtant nous vivons dans un état inexplicable de joie ; peut-être parce que nous gardons une secrète espérance au fond de notre cœur. L'espérance est une herbe folle. Elle est indéracinable, tenace, violente. Ne touchez pas à notre joie et ne vous posez des questions sur ses causes, elles sont insaisissables … Monsieur le touriste, il y a un instant j'étais jovial, accueillant, hospitalier, mais voilà que maintenant la mélancolie et bientôt la colère vont monter en moi …'''

imposing cultural standards on the metropolis–even if only repackaged French ones–and receiving Spain's recognition of the value of their modernist experience through the prolongation of the Generation of '98 in the Peninsula (Rubén Bareiro Saguier 28). It was this very 'sense of self' I also argue that allowed Jorge Luis Borges to dialogue with Western literature as equal to equal from the margins of Latin America, as indicates the critic, Beatriz Sarlo.[207] It is equally a similar 'sense of self' or empowered 'place of enunciation' that would lead the post-independence Haitian authors (and some non-Afro-descendant Latin American critics)[208] to reject European mimetic practices, arguing instead that European aesthetics and critical expressions were unsuited to and unsuitable for appropriate communication of the regional reality, leading to the creation of the Indigenist and subsequent Marvelous Realist movement in Haiti and the Anthropophagic movement in Brazil. Based on the above, I therefore theorize that place of enunciation goes beyond geographical, social, economic, and even political location of a people to englobe the psyche, the spiritual, the mythical, the mystical, the metaphysical aspects that are ofttimes ignored by mainstream Western secularized, intellectualized, global culture but that needs to be taken into consideration if one were to correctly read and appreciate the cultures of Afro-descendant populations, in particular, and the worlds of the 'so called' under-developed cultures, in general.

[207] Cited by Mariano Siskind in the Introduction to his book *Cosmopolitan Desires*, p. 5 from Sarlo's work *Borges un escritor*, p. 16. In the original, the citation reads: "Desde su margen, Borges logra que su literatura dialogue de igual con igual con la literatura occidental."
[208] Some such authors are Roberto Fernández Retamar. See his article "Algunos problemas teóricos de la literatura hispanoamericana" in *Revista de Crítica Literaria Latinoamericana*, Año 1, No. 1, 1975, pp. 7-38.

It would aid, for instance, in peeling back the fact that none of the international Black movements really took root in Haiti where the Haitian cultural producers sometimes received them with suspicion, seeing them as capable of obscuring their own unique distinctiveness gained from the Revolution.[209] Neither did they feel the need to embrace in a big way other globalizing movements that were sympathetic with the plight of the oppressed peoples of the world, such as the Surrealist movement that globalized during the said period, even though Haiti was singled out as one of the recipient countries for a visit from its universalist leader, André Breton. Indeed, the outcome of the visit in Haiti in terms of expansion of the movement in the country could be contrasted with that of its island neighbor, the Dominican Republic, where the Surrealist movement did indeed take hold, at least during the short life of the *Poesía Sorprendida* movement, having an influence on the Dominican author, Aida Cartagena Portalatín, and many other mixed-raced Afro-descendants from the region, including the Cuban, Wilfredo Lam, who would be mentored by Salvador Dalí, one of the later leaders of the movement, accompanying him to New York from Europe and then taking his work to other parts of Latin America, the Caribbean and the wider world.

Mariano Siskind supports his argument for the deleterious effect Hispanic American and Brazilian marginal conditions of enunciation has had on their cultural

[209] In fact, Langston Hughes repeatedly referenced the Haitian cultural movements as being an inspiration to him, as opposed to the other way around. Jacques Stephens Alexis in *Du réalisme merveilleux des Haïtiens* states that the *Négritude* movement could be considered dangerous to the extent that it obscures the reality of the cultural autonomy of the Haitian people and the need for solidarity with all men as well as with those of Black origin. The original text reads as follows: ‘‘toutes les gloses et toutes les gorges chaudes en faveur d’une prétendue ‘négritude sont dangereuses dans ce sens qu’elle cache la réalité de l’autonomie culturelle du peuple haïtien et la nécessité d’une solidarité avec tous les hommes, avec les peuples d’origine nègre également’’ (Du réalisme 99).

producers who faced the contradiction between the former and their desire for universality, pointing to the anxiety and frustration of a split subject whose "impossible longing affirms [itself] as the limit of satisfaction" (9). He then goes on to highlight the way this limitation translated into a challenge or restriction when attempting to effectively (re)produce the Western imposed globalized world as a global totality of novelistic production, reception, and translation during the second half of the nineteenth century. Using the readings of the science fiction novels produced by the Frenchman, Jules Verne and the Argentine, Eduardo Ladislao Holmberg, during the period 1863 to 1876, he concludes that these novels "reproduce and sustain the process of globalization through very different narrative strategies and from very different positions from a field of signification that they help to create (19). I raise this here to reinforce my point on place of enunciation, pointing to the parallel process of proto-futurist and afro-futurist fiction that emerged within Hispanic America and Brazil from the Black International Movements despite the geographic, economic, and political marginalization of the cultural producers, a creative thrust that set out to reinvent the New World, the renamed *Nuevo Muntu*, even if just imaginatively, placing the Afro Latin American as the center.

Latin America as a World: A Proposed World Literary Model

I end as I began reflecting on the critical discourses that have materialized since the beginning of the millennium on the reemerging concept of world literature as a way of rethinking the field of Comparative Literature as it continues to grapple with the global

literary reality occasioned by the Appaduraian flows of the twentieth century.[210] This occurrence generated by the effects of the global flows of technology, ethnicities, media, finances, and ideas that characterize our present world, particularly the increased aesthetic and critical production from the so-called periphery and semi-periphery that have found their way on the global markets has penetrated not only academia but has transcended to include the world of publishing and in the academies of the North, primarily in translation, but also through the individual canons of scholars from these spaces turned professors that have multiplied over the last decades in these academies. These flows, the impact of which at the time of writing Appadurai declared were yet to be theorized, have unquestionably received their share of scholarly attention since, particularly within the spheres of transnational, post-colonial and world literature, the global literary triad of the twenty-first century.

With their resounding and united calls for the rejection of Eurocentrism and U.S. multiculturalism, the three contiguous and overlapping fields of literary studies have forged a path towards increasing inclusivity, plurality, and diversity, if not equity, that seems poised to attain the scope and reach of Spivak's planetary society. Yet, these innovative approaches that emerged from an increasingly more diversified and empowered academic space primarily within the developed world do not spell the death

[210] Arjun Appadurai in his seminal text "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy" published in 1990 proposes a framework of five landscapes or flows present since the twentieth century that represent not only imagined communities but imagined worlds: 1) ethnoscapes (ethnicity flows); 2) mediascapes (media flows); 3) technoscapes (technology flows); finanscapes (flows of money, capital, and credit); and ideoscapres (idea and information flows).

of the discipline but rather, to the contrary, seek to breathe new life into old spaces, as well as to promote new levels of theoretical and critical enquiry throughout the world.

It is against this background and based on the historical uniqueness of the Latin American and the Caribbean region–the so-called New World–both as a microcosm of the desired planetary society and a precursor in many ways as demonstrated by the findings of this dissertation that I conclude by re-presenting the region's contribution to the world since the nineteenth century from the prism of its rich and diverse historical and extant critical discourses, a collection of theoretical and conceptual frames that I designate 'Latin America as a World'. This proposed integrated frame recommends itself by first aligning with the extant world literary theoretical premise of there being multiple world literatures or literatures of the world, first posited by David Damrosch in his 2003 publication *What is World Literature?* and since then generally accepted by most, if not all, subsequent world literary critics. Beyond this undeniable heterogeneity, the region also possesses a sufficient level of homogeneity both in terms of time and space that justifies it being employed as a frame or model. Similar to Gayatri Spivak's post-colonial concept 'planetarity', 'Latin America as a world' also challenges universalizing or generalizing narratives, seeking to propose alternative (clear and transparent) language that is at the same time replicable (one can, for instance, speak in a similar sense of 'Asia as a World', 'Africa as a world', or possibly Europe as a world in the same way as one already speaks of the Francophone, Lusophone, Hispanophone and Anglophone worlds). Finally, it makes a distinction between 'world' and 'globe' as do both Spivak and Cheah, apprehending the term as a space and time that transcends the globe, thus hearkening

back to Goethe, Kant, and Marx. Yet, it also embraces the globe as many Latin American and Caribbean world literary critics also do.

It should be noted that while this model takes note of the *Nuevo Muntu* fictionalized by Afro descendant authors of the region and may indeed borrow some of its tenets, it does not intend to prioritize any of the region's races in the recreation of the propose New World imaginary. It therefore proposes the (universal) salad bowl as an appropriate alternative to the *ajiaco* (typical Hispanic American soup), one of the more popular images used to represent the region's cultural identity. While the former obscures (makes invisible), as it were, two of the dish's main ingredients, the water, on the one hand, lost in the necessary process of cooking, and the *Galinsoga parviflora* herb, on the other, integrated into the stock, or otherwise thrown in at the end for its aesthetic value, the latter showcases each ingredient alongside the other, thereby placing equal value to them all, while acknowledging the global influences that can no longer be ignored. The *ajiaco* representation also leads inevitably to separation from the table and the setting up of side tables to provide necessary spaces for new narratives to be written and/or reminders to be made of the importance of the water to the very constitution of the dish and/or the herb to its delightful and distinctive flavor. The salad bowl, however, facilitates the bringing together of the varying parts at one table, placing each ingredient in full view, and allowing each to choose from the rich array of ingredients available, whatever combination may excite their individual palate.

Fulfilling the Promise … Mapping the Future

If one were to summarize the world literary promise to which I have alluded throughout this conclusion, it would be found in the following global realities that have occurred within the sphere of world literature since the beginning of the millennium: 1) the volume of work that has been produced to date that proposes potential theoretical and conceptual frameworks for marginalized areas, both from within and without the wider Latin American and Caribbean region; 2) the recent expansion in the formulation and creation of institutional spaces within Academia, within which these broader theories, concepts, and methodologies can be further examined and explored 3) the movement towards a more multipolar and/or polycentric agenda that is more in keeping with and can therefore better respond to the cultural subjectivities and transnational discourses of contemporary Afro-Latin American and Caribbean cultural producers, and 4) the small changes that are becoming evident within the global publishing arena in terms of giving space to writers from marginalized spaces. Müller's presentation on the programmatic 'literatures of the world' paradigm and its present functionality within the sphere of transnational publishing, even if just within Francophonie, is extremely promising, boding well for other Afro-Latin and Caribbean literatures since these areas share many similarities with the Anglophone and wider Francophone Caribbean. A point to bear in mind here, however, is the fact that both English and French are languages of the world literary centers, which are housed in Paris, London, and New York, and that could have had some bearing on the wider reception of these works. Translation with its associated theories is therefore a variable that will need to be taken into consideration by writers as

they market their works. Many authors in the region have already begun to address this issue through the use of independent publishers, the provision of bilingual versions of their texts and/or their works in translation. The latter, however, does have its limitations as Emily Apter argues convincingly in her seminal monograph.

Yet while the field has evidently made great strides since the beginning of the millennium, there is still much more ground to cover as has demonstrated this dissertation. One clear next step would then be the introduction of the findings of this study into this wider more progressive space, in an effort to advance the dialogue and hopefully encounter the relevant synergies. Another, an obvious offshoot of this research project, would be the contextualizing and examination of these critical discourses within aesthetic works that have been produced in the three areas of the region analyzed. I have already commenced this work through my recent article where I examined the text of the Dominican American author, Minelys Sánchez Luperón, *Ángeles nómadas*. Some other texts of interest would be those of the Haitian authors, Louis-Philippe Dalembert (*Avant que les ombres s'effacent (2017)* and Myriam Chancy (*The Loneliness of Angels (2010)*); the Costa Rican, Quincy Duncan (*La audacia final de la inmigrante (2012)*); and selections from the poetry and short story collections of the Brazilians, Conceição Evaristo (*Poemas da recordação e outros movimentos (2008)*) and Esmeralda Ribeiro (*Contos do mar sem fim (2010)*). All the afore-mentioned texts are works that I had initially hoped to include in this study, but could not due to the very rich and abundant Afro descendant critical discourses that I found in the process of researching for the dissertation. Yet a third possibility for next steps that issues from this research project

would be a full compilation of the major transnational works from Afro Latin American and the Caribbean that could form the basis of a future anthology of Afro-Latin American transnational literary expression, as to date there seems to be no one place one can truly go to find assembled this literature. Still another ramification of this study could be deeper exploration into Afro-Latin American (transnational) literature as a field of study and how this could favorably impact an agenda that may seek to mainstream these studies into the wider field of Latin American Literature. There is unquestionably the need for more comprehensive scholarship to revisit the problem of how differentiation among regions as well as pertinent similarities, articulate a sense of belonging to broader, worldwide community. Finally, hopefully this study would inspire other marginalized communities within the Latin American and Caribbean region, such as the Indigenous communities to document their transnational trajectory since the nineteenth century, hence allowing for their full participation (as a corpus of works, place of enunciation, and field of study) in the ongoing world literary debates. Such a study would also further add to the collective of marginalized cultural geographies available as reference points for the debates, thereby contributing to making the latter project a truly globalizing event.

No doubt a very ambitious project, I was however quite excited to undertake it, as now completed it has the potential of contributing to filling the gap for an overall presentation and critical analysis of the Afro-Latin American transnational cultural expression within mainstream discourses of Latin American Literature. It also serves to assemble the rich critical work that has been done by these talented individuals in this area, ascribing to them contemporaneity as they reach beyond their places of economic,

political, and social limitation to penetrate and impact the world as survivors, resilient individuals invested not only in showing up for themselves and families in this current world that has invisibilized, exoticized, and marginalized them but in imagining, fostering, and building better worlds for themselves and future generations. It is my hope that through my commitment to this project that these deserving writers, many of whom are still alive and producing today, both literarily and culturally, will find their way made easier and their due recognition in a world literary sphere that could only be made better and stronger for their involvement.

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APPENDIX
APPENDIX A

PROFILES OF SELECTED NINETEENTH CENTURY AFRO HISPANIC AND AFRO BRAZILIAN LITERARY AND CULTURAL PRODUCERS

Martín Morúa Delgado (1856-1910). A distinguished writer and orator, Morúa Delgado became a leader in the 19th century anti-slavery movement. Morúa Delgado was a self-taught man, a voracious reader and completely fluent in various foreign languages. He became involved in the island's independence movement which by then included names such as Martí and Maceo, and he believed strongly that Cuba should be an independent nation. In midst of his work as a labor organizer and essayist for the cause of independence, Morúa Delgado wrote two novels, *Sofía* and *The Unzúazu Family*. Both novels dealt with the inhumanity of slavery and its toll on society. He also founded and served as editor of four newspapers: *La Revista Popular*, *La Nueva Era*, *El Pueblo*, and *La República*. In May 1910, while serving as President of the Cuban Senate, Morúa Delgado introduced a law that banned political parties based on race or class. The Morúa Law was a direct attack on the Black Independents and sparked a period of racist isolationism that led to the so-called "Race War of 1912." Morúa Delgado died the same year, shortly after being named Minister of Agriculture.

Maria Firmina dos Reis (1822-1917) is considered Brazil's first black female novelist and the founding mother of Afro Brazilian literature. In 1859, she published her first book *Úrsula*, which is considered the first Brazilian abolitionist novel written by a woman. The book tells the story of a love triangle, in which the system of slavery is put into question. In 1887, she published her short story "A escrava" (the slave) in the Revista maranhense. This short story follows an active participant of the abolitionist movement. Besides *Úrsula*, "Firmina dos Reis wrote poetry and short stories. She also wrote about Black slave life, and she fought for the abolition of slavery. While still in her twenties she began to collaborate with several local newspapers in her hometown of São Luis, an activity she sustained for many years. It was the only opening available for getting her works published." She also "wrote an intimate, melancholic diary written dating from 1853 to 1903 in which the themes of religious self-denial, death, and suicide recur." In 1975, the Brazilian scholars, Antônio de Oliveira and Nascimento Morais Filho, recovered the long forgotten *Úrsula* 1975 in a facsimile edition. Maria Firma dos Reis was very active in the intellectual community of the state of Maranhão: she worked with local press, published books, participated in various anthologies, was a musician, songwriter, and abolitionist. When she received her position as professor, at 22 years old, her mother wanted her to take a carriage carried by enslaved people to the ceremony, but she decided to walk, saying, "Black people are not an animal to ride upon." She also wrote the hymn of abolition "no longer slaves." As a "privileged free black woman within nineteenth-century colonial slave society," Maria Firmina dos Reis "stands out because she was very well-educated and a vigorous opponent of slavery." A biography about her was written by author Jarid Arraes as part of her 2015 cordel collection and

book *Heroínas Negras Brasileiras em 15 cordéis*. Maria Firmina dos Reis was honored in a Google Doodle on the 11th of October in 2019, on what was thought of as her birthdate, but was later proven to be her baptismal date. On June 9, 2021, Google announced on their Google Cloud blog that they will name a new undersea cable that is being constructed between Brazil and the United States after her. She is the only woman represented among the busts of important writers from Maranhão at the Praça do Pantheon ('Pantheon Square') in São Luís.

Luis Gonzaga Pinto da Gama (Luis Gama, 1830-1882)) was a Brazilian poet, journalist, legal activist, abolitionist leader, and former slave. His first book *Primieras Trovas Burlescas,* published in 1859 was a collection of satirical social commentary in the form of poetry. Its publication made Gama a prominent and controversial figure. Some of the best-known poems from the collection criticized Brazilian mulatto society for coldly disregarding their oppressed black countrymen and for romanticizing whiteness and the high social status associated with it. This poetic criticism was accompanied by Gama's increasing involvement with abolitionism. Gama joined the growing liberal political movement in Brazil and helped establish the anti-monarchy, pro-democracy Brazilian Republican Party. Gama established an abolitionist journal called *Diabo Coxo* in 1864. Four years later he also began writing anti-slavery pieces for a prominent newspaper, *O Ipiranga* and in 1869 he joined the editorial board of a newspaper called *Radical Paulistano.* In 1881, Gama started a fund, *Caixa Emancipadora Luís Gama,* to purchase the freedom of slaves. The following year he founded the Abolitionist Center of Sao Paulo.

Auta de Souza (1876-1901) was a mixed-race Afro-descendant Brazilian poet who wrote in the Romantic genre with some influence from Symbolism. She therefore can be categorized as a practitioner of world literature from the perspective of mimesis. Although she published only one book in her lifetime, *Horto* (1900), it received the recognition of the Brazilian literary and cultural elite at the time, being prefaced by the Brazilian Parnassian poet, journalist, and translator, Olavo Bilac. During her very brief life (she died at the tender age of twenty-four years), she collaborated with many local and national magazines and newspapers, including the *Oasis, A República, o Paiz* and *A Tribuna.* Several of her poems were also adapted as lyrics for *modinhas* (sentimental songs in Portuguese) – popular song forms of nineteenth century Brazil. De Souza is currently recognized by contemporary Afro-Brazilian writers and critics as one of the pioneers of Afro-Brazilian literature.

Joao da Cruz e Sousa (1861-1898). Known in the literary world as Cruz e Sousa, João da Cruz e Sousa was born to freed enslaved blacks, receiving the surname and protection of the slave master who sponsored him, Colonel Xavier de Sousa, and being formally educated, while his parents continued to live a life of subjugation. At the age of eight, Cruz e Sousa began his taste for poetry, when he recited verses of his own, which honored the return of colonel Xavier de Sousa from the Paraguayan War. Between 1871 and 1875, the young poet attended, as a scholarship student, the Ateneu Provincial

Catarinense, an elite educational establishment. His professor of natural sciences was the German naturalist Fritz Muller, Darwin's friend, and collaborator. Very intelligent, Cruz e Sousa excelled in Mathematics and Foreign Languages, such as French, English, Latin and Greek. In addition to these areas of knowledge, the poet was a voracious reader of writers such as Baudelaire, Leopardi, Antero de Quental, Guerra Junqueiro, among other European authors who were his contemporaries. This immense cultural baggage, however, did not prevent him from being a victim of racism in a highly slave-owning context. In 1881, he traveled from Porto Alegre to São Luís, in the exercise of his function as secretary of the Julieta dos Santos dramatic company. This trip allowed him to broaden his horizons about the conditions in which blacks were kept in the final years of slavery. Shortly thereafter, Cruz e Sousa became involved in the abolitionist campaign and, in Bahia, gave a speech, with a poem of his in honor of Castro Alves being transcribed in a local newspaper. The poet, thus, inserted himself once and for all in literary life, founding, with Virgílio Várzea and Santos Losada, in Santa Catarina, the weekly newspaper *Colombo*, a literary periodical of a Parnassian nature. He also participated in the group *Ideia nova*, and in 1885 he published, with Virgílio Várzea, the book *Tropos e fantasias*, a work in which abolitionist texts can be found. He directed the illustrated newspaper *O Moleque*, strongly discriminated against by local social circles due to his critical bias. He collaborated with the Republican and abolitionist newspaper *Tribuna popular*, considered the most illustrious newspaper in Santa Catarina of the period. In 1890, he moved to Rio de Janeiro, where he collaborated with several media outlets, in which he published articles-manifestos of Symbolism. He lived intellectually with Raul Pompéia and Olavo Bilac. In 1893, he published one of his main books, the work of prose poems *Missal and Broqueis.*

Afonso Henriques de Lima Barreto (1881-1922) was a Brazilian novelist, journalist, short-story writer, and an aggressive social critic, who re-created in caricatural fashion the city and society of Rio de Janeiro at the turn of the century. Lima Barreto was an active journalist throughout his adult life. He started writing for newspapers in 1902, but he achieved fame in 1905, writing a series of articles for the *Correio da Manhã* regarding the demolition of Castle Hill. In 1911, he founded, alongside some friends, a periodical named *Floreal*. Although it only lasted for two issues, it received a warm reception from the critics. In 1909, he published his first novel, *Recordações do Escrivão Isaías Caminha*, a scathing and semi-autobiographical satire of the Brazilian society. However, his masterpiece is generally considered to be *Triste Fim de Policarpo Quaresma*, which was published in 1911, under feuilleton form, being re-released under hardcover form in 1915. His often vitriolic social analysis and criticism are more direct and less refined than was the case with his older contemporary Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis. A lifelong *carioca* (resident of Rio), he depicts in his novels the main events of the new republic in Brazil (principally the 1890s and the first decade of the 20th century) and the life of that period. His ironic humor is evident in the creation of melancholic, quixotic protagonists who are unable to cope with mechanized urban society, militarism, and governmental organization. Lima Barreto's best known novels include *Vida e Morte de M.J. Gonzaga de Sá* (1919; "Life and Death of M.J. Gonzaga de Sá"), *Recordações do Escrivão Isaías*

Caminha (1909; “Memoirs of the Notary Public Isaiah Caminha”), *O Triste Fim de Policarpo Quaresma* (1915; “The Sad End of Polycarpo Quaresma”), *Numa e a Ninfa* (1915; “Numa and the Nymph”), and *Clara dos Anjos* (composed in 1904 but published posthumously).

APPENDIX B

PROFILES OF SELECTED TWENTIETH AND TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY AFRO HISPANIC AND AFRO BRAZILIAN LITERARY AND CULTURAL PRODUCERS

Wilfredo Oscar de la Concepción Lam y Castilla (1902-1982). Born in Cuba to mixed parents, a Chinese father and black mother, Wilfredo Lam was a global Afro-descendant Hispanic American Surrealist painter known for his unique surrealist aesthetic that combined European artistic movements with the imagery of his native country. Lam moved to Madrid in 1923 to study with Fernando Álvarez de Sotamayor, who had been the teacher of the famed Surrealist, Salvador Dalí. He then moved to Paris after seeing an exhibition of Pablo Picasso's work in Spain. Having arrived in Paris, he introduced himself to the painter who subsequently showed him his collection of primitive artworks. The two artists' interaction figured heavily in Lam's work throughout the remainder of his career. He died on September 11, 1982, in Paris at the age of 79. Today, his works are held in the collections of the Tate Gallery in London, the Reina Sofia Museum in Madrid, The Museum of Modern Art in New York, and the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., among others.

Aida Cartagena Portalatín (1918-1994) was nurtured and developed within the context of the avantgarde Dominican *La Poesía Sorprendida* ('Surprised Poetry' (LPS)) literary movement and journal with its global connections to the European surrealists and the world.[211] Born in 1918, the celebrated poet and essayist would be in her mid-twenties when the internationally recognized journal was launched. Indeed, in its time, writers from Latin America, Europe, and the United States recognized *La Poesía Sorprendida* as an important literary movement. Cartagena Portalatín was one of the most well-known *sorprendistas*, whose works were published in the journal, which included publications by progressive international writers from Argentina, Brazil, China, Columbia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Chile, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, England, France, Germany, Guatemala, Haiti, Ireland, Italy, Nicaragua, Peru, Puerto Rico, Spain, Turkey, Uruguay, and the U.S.[212] While the journal concerned itself more with literary quality than progressive politics, it is undeniable that the *sorprendistas* were guided by their political

[211] The *La Poesía Sorprendida* (LPS) movement existed from October 1943 when the first issue of the journal was published to May 1947 when it was closed by the Trujillo regime. Its editors were the Dominicans, Franklin Mieses Burgos, Mariano Lebron Saviñón, Freddy Gatón Arce, the Chilean, Alberto Baeza Flores, and the Spaniard, Eugenio Granell. During the almost four years of its brief life, the journal would publish a total of 21 editions (at 500 copies per edition) and 14 books of poetry, including many of the major modernists of the period and some of the most important works of 20th C Dominican literature.

[212] As may be imagined, the journal published a great number of the French surrealist and modernist writers, such as Breton, Paul Eluard, Robert Desnos, Antonin Artaud, and André Guide. They also published major writers, namely William Blake, Horace Gregory, Jorge Cáceres, Jorge Guillén, Francisco Matos Paoli, Charles Henry Ford, Archibald McLeisch, Jules Supervielle, Li Po, Tufu, Jorge Carrera Andrade, Hart Crane, Stephen Spender, Ramón Guirao, José Lezuma Lima, C. Day-Lewis, and James Joyce.

sympathies.[213] Rebelling against the nationalism and realism that prevailed in Dominican poetry at the time, they sought to cultivate a universal poetics that explored the psyche and soul in surrealistic ways. Yet according to Anthony Dawahare, LPS's greatest significance resided in its attempt to rescue the Dominican imagination from the ideological confines of the Trujillo dictatorship.[214] By necessity, therefore, the *sorprendistas'* project was clandestine, finding in surrealist literary techniques and forms a means to evade the cultural censors of the time. Having visited the French capital on several occasions after graduating with her Doctorate in the Humanities from the *Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo* in 1941, Cartagena Portalatín would eventually pursue a post-graduate specialization in Paris in Musicology and the Fine Arts at the École du Louvre from 1947. She would subsequently return in 1965 as an advisor to UNESCO. During her sojourn in Paris, particularly during her years with UNESCO, she would develop and cultivate relationships with several notable French and international writers, including Marguerite Yourcenar, Marguerite Duras, Rosario Castellanos, Aurora Bernabé, Julio Cortázar, and many of the principal intellectuals of the Pan Africanist and Negritude movements. It would be from these latter interactions that she would map a wider global (geographical and historical) and literary path for herself, paying multiple visits to the African continent while broadening her literary and personal connections with Afro-descendant cultural producers from the Latin American and Caribbean region. In the latter case, we recall in her well-known text *Culturas africanas* her epigraphic citation of the great Cuban Independence hero, Máximo Gómez, who was also born and raised in the Dominican Republic, her great appreciation for the studies initiated by the Cubans, Alejo Carpentier and Nicolás Guillén, as well as the Dominican, Pedro Henríquez Ureña, and her manifest pride in the work of the two Dominican sisters, Micaela and Teodora Ginés, freed black slaves of Santiago de Caballeros and memorialized as the first female musicians in La Habana and Santiago de Cuba, considered the originators of the *son* in the sixteenth century. From the 1960s onwards, Cartagena Portalatín would incorporate in her work concrete references to the Afro-Dominican world. She would also use her poetry and writing to react to the news of the injustices around the world. For example, in her last volume of poetry written in 1984, she includes a section she entitles "Memorias Negras" that has five brief poems that use the historic moment of the Sharpeville Massacre in South Africa. In fact, it is a lament for the condition of the black race since the arrival of the colonizers in Africa up to the then present moment throughout the world. It expresses that simply for being black, African descendants suffer and their lives don´t belong to them. The fact that humanity does not condemn this ethnocide enrages the I narrative voice. This addressing of issues on a more global scale that pertain to the black race to some extent is echoed in Cartagena Portalatín's epic archetypal poem, "Yana Tierra", in which she describes the

[213] For instance, in the first issue of the journal appeared a selection of William Blake's "Milton," a poem in which Blake criticizes (among other things) capitalist industrialization as "dark Satanic mills" and expresses his desire to fight "Till we have built Jerusalem / In England's green and pleasant land." See Eugenio de Garcia Cuevas' "Los comienzos de la Poesía Sorprendida en su contexto." Proquest. Thesis. 2009.

[214] See Anthony Delaware's ""La Poesía Sorprendida" or the Surrealist Poetic Imagination Against Neocolonial Dictatorship in the Dominican Republic, 1943-1947," 96-115.

significance of the arrival of the black boats directly from Africa and the implications of this for the future of the Americas (51). In this document poem, however, she would localize her concern in the region. Undoubtedly, Cartagena Portalatín's encounters and interactions with the Negritude movement, African cultures, and their respective "rebels with cause" well documented in her eponymous work.[215] It would not only be professionally transformative for her but, more importantly, personally life changing as she would through them awaken to her own acceptance of her blackness, develop a consciousness of being a black woman, and identify as well as show solidarity with the black race and its peoples. Speaking of her memories of the visits she made to the continent, she affirms: "Yo amo esos recuerdos porque somos un pueblo mulato. Lo soy. Y me alegro de poder objetivar aún más y rectificar mejor lo que con frecuencia los investigadores de gabinete repiten de África." ('I love these memories because we are a mulatto people. I am. And I am happy to be able to objectify and better rectify what government researchers often repeat about Africa' (26)). A prolific writer, several of her works which include books of poetry, short stories, and novels have been translated to English and several other languages. It is also well known that many of the young female Dominican poets after her, who would later write with clear references to the black diaspora, namely, Blás Jímenez (1949-2009), Sherezada (Chiqui) Vicioso, Nelly Rosario, Daisy Cocco de Filippis and Julia Álvarez, would find their inspiration in her.

Manuel Zapata Olivella (1920-2004) was an Afro-Colombian anthropologist, folklorist, physician, and writer (playwright, screenwriter, novelist, and essayist) whose work to preserve the history and culture of Afro-Colombia through oral history, television, radio, and literature is legendary. In the introduction to his recently produced monograph, *Challenging the Black Atlantic: The New World Novels of Zapata Olivella and Gonçalves*, John Maddox describes Zapata Olivella as follows: "Manuel Zapata Olivella is the most prolific and recognized Afro-Colombian writer in history, though his interests and accomplishments do not end there" (7). Known throughout Latin America as the "Dean of Black Literature," he is considered one of the twentieth century´s most important novelists. A self-proclaimed wanderer, he was born in the small town of Lorica on Colombia's Caribbean coast, from where he set out, inspired by literary adventurers and political ideals, subsequent to abandoning his studies after the qualifying exams, to explore the Americas (Central America, Mexico, and the United States) between 1943-1946. He would record this initial travel abroad in his first two autobiographies: *Pasión vagabunda* ('Wanderlust' 1949) that chronicles his trip to Mexico on foot, and *He visto la noche* ('I have Seen the Night' 1953) that records his experiences in the United States. His very first novel, *Tierra mojada* ('Wet Earth' 1947), a socialist realist tale of Colombian *campesinos* fighting for their land against the invasive *gamonales,* he published with the help of the Peruvian writer Ciro Alegría, whom he met at the end of his first journey to the U.S. Although Zapata Olivella never considered himself a magical realist, often using instead the terms mythical, mystical, and/or fantastical realism to describe himself, many Latin Americanist would ofttimes categorize him as an author of the "Boom" as a result of this novel and several others that he would produce

[215] See by Aida Cartagena Portalatín's *Culturas africanas: rebeldes con causa* (1984).

subsequently. In 1943, he established the Center for Afro-Colombian Studies in Bogotá. He traveled the country with his sister Delia, gathering information on Afro-Colombian and indigenous traditions, culminating in a tour of Europe and China. There he wrote a laudatory travelogue on the Chinese people and the Maoist Revolution called *China 6 am* (1954). He would later teach at several universities in the United States, including the University of Kansas and Howard University where a substantial part of his archive can be found, as well as in Canada, Central America, and Africa. He also founded and directed the literary magazine *Letras nacionales* (National Letters 1965) in which several of his essays were published and organized the First Congress of Black Cultures in the Americas in Cali in 1977. A prolific writer, he would publish more than a dozen novels as well as several essays, four plays, and two collections of short stories during the period 1940 to 1990. Three of his greatest novels have been translated to and published in English: *Chambacú: corral de negros* (Chambacú: Black Slum (1963 trans 1989)), *Changó, el gran putas* (Changó, the Biggest Baddass (1983 trans 2004)), and *En Chimá nace un santo* (A Saint is Born in Chimá (1964 trans 1991)). The second Changó was produced after a hiatus of twenty years from novelistic work during which time he sought more historical information and experimental ways of narrating the history of the African diaspora, gathering ten thousand notecards of information from the United States, Spain, Africa, and Latin America. Of mixed parentage (his father was *mulatto* (of African and European descent) and his mother *mestiza* (of Zenúe Indian and Spanish descent)), the main theme of his narrative is the history and culture of the inhabitants of the Colombian Caribbean, especially the blacks and natives. Zapata Olivella won several prizes for his works, both within Colombia and abroad, including the Premio Espiral (Spain) in 1954 for his dramatic work *Hotel de vagabundas. Detrás del rostro* was the recipient of the Prêmio Literário Esso in 1962 and then, in 1963, the same novel won the Premio Nacional de Literatura (Colombia). Also, in 1963, *Corral de negros* received an honorary mention from the prestigious Casa de las Américas (Cuba). His accolades continued with his masterpiece, *Changó, el gran putas* (1983) which won the Latin American Fiction Prize, the Prêmio Literário Francisco Matarazzo Sobrinho (Brazil) in 1985. *¡Levántete mulato!* (1990), originally published in French in 1987, won the Premio de Derechos Humanos (Paris) in 1988. The following year, Zapata Olivella was awarded the Premio Simón Bolivar. (Colombia) for his radio broadcasts on Colombian identity, and in 1995 France named him *Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres* (Gentleman of the Order of Arts and Letters). Despite this recognition, Zapata Olivella's writing never reached the kind of international audience to which he aspired during his lifetime. His final novel, *Hemingway, cazador de la muerte* (1993) was a personal disappointment in terms of its failure to create the kind of literary recognition he sought outside of Colombia. William Luis recounts that Zapata Olivella "felt that Hemingway's presence would be of interest to a wider audience, especially one residing in the United States. Nevertheless, more of his works have been translated in recent years and he has received greater critical attention among Afro-Hispanic scholars. Since his death in 2004, Zapata Olivella's works have begun to find their rightful place among Latin America's most significant writers. Indeed, there has been a boom of interest in the author over the past twenty years. In 2010, the National Bank of Colombia published his great masterpiece *Changó* alongside

the essays of *Manuel Zapata Olivella: Por los senderos de sus ancestros* (‘On the Paths of His Ancestors’) on a free online platform to promote his work. Vanderbilt University purchased his archives in the same year and has begun digitizing them. Currently, Colombian scholar, Darío Henao Restrepo is preparing a new edition of the complete works, including the previously unpublished novel *itxao el Inmortal*)’Itxao the Immortal’), which uses a mythical Afro-indigenous worldview similar to *Changó’s.* The University of Antioquia honored him by creating a *cátedra*, or research and cultural program headed by an academic specialist, in 2017. The Universidad del Valle announced in 2018 that 2020 is the Year of Zapata, honoring the centenary of his birthday with a symposium in his honor, one of a series of events Jairo Torres Oviedo and his team are coordinating. Henao will release Zapata’s complete works, an opera adaptation of *Changó* called *Ópera Maafra* will premiere, a black art museum and web space on Zapata will debut, and the black film series Afrocine will promote Zapata and Afro-Colombia. Taken from “Biography and Selected Correspondence: Manuel Zapata Olivella-Biography” from the Jean and Alexander Heard Library, Vanderbilt University. Accessed at mzo.library.vanderbilt.edu on 11.15.23 and John Maddox’s *Challenging the Black Atlantic* (2020).

Francisco Solano Trindade (1908-1974). Poet, filmmaker, painter, director of theater, and one of the greatest Brazilian cultural producers of his time, Francisco Solano Trindade was, for several critics, the pioneer of Black poetry in Brazil. Together with Abdias do Nascimento, he stands out as one of the most influential black Brazilian activists and intellectuals of the twentieth century. A native of Recife, Pernambuco, he participated in the formation of the Frente Negra Pernambucana (Pernambuco Black Front) in 1936. In 1937, with Vicente Lima and others, he established the Afro-Brazilian Cultural Center in Recife, which supported important publications, such as *Xangô*, a book by Lima himself. In the 1950s, together with his wife Margarida and others, he created the Brazilian Popular Theater. His theater had important repercussions, attracting black artists and addressing themes from Afro-Brazilian music, dance, and culture. During this time, he also moved into the arena of Brazilian folklore and his productions soon were aired on television and performed in theaters in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. Some of his films for television included “0 País dos Cadillacs,” “De Pedro a Pedro,” and “Magi Verde.” The latter film premiered at the Cannes Film Festival in 1955. In addition to producing “Magia Verde,” Trindade also took a turn as an actor in the film. He returned to Europe in 1955 and while there received outstanding praise from the theater and film critics in Warsaw, Poland, and Prague, Czechoslovakia. Trindade's productions in those two countries were performed before audiences which numbered on occasion twelve thousand or more. During his stay in Prague, he also produced a film, “Brasil na Dança.” After four months and a resounding success in Eastern Europe, the Brazilian Popular Theater gained legitimacy in Brazil. During his career, Trindade authored two small books, *Poemas d'uma Vida Simples* (1944), and *Seis Tempos de Poesia* (1958). Both books were later incorporated into a larger book, *Cantares ao Meu Povo (Poesia)*, in 1961. Perhaps his best-known poem in the *Cantares* collection was “Tem gente com fome.” Later, he rooted himself in São Paulo, specifically in the city of Embú, developing

a hub of Afro-Brazilian culture and traditions, a movement that still exists under the direction of his daughter, Raquel Trindade.

Carolina Maria de Jesus (1914 - 1977) was a Brazilian outskirts memorialist who lived most of her life as a slum-dweller. She is best known for her diary, published in August 1960 as Quarto de Despejo (lit. Junk Room, English title Child of the Dark: The Diary of Carolina Maria de Jesus) after attracting the attention of a Brazilian journalist, which became a bestseller and won international acclaim. The work remains the only document published in English by a Brazilian slum-dweller of that period. De Jesus spent a significant part of her life in the Canindé favela in North São Paulo, supporting herself and three children as a scrap collector. *Quarto de despejo* did not stop at being an editorial success; it also spawned theatrical plays, musical compositions (some by de Jesus herself), illustrations and sayings, and is a source for both individual and collective artistic creations, especially by other Black women from Brazilian city outskirts. De Jesus lends her name to community preparatory schools, theatre halls, saraus and collective action groups. The 2020 edition of the Festa Literária das Periferias (Outskirts Literary Festival) was held in honor of de Jesus' memory, on the 60th anniversary of the book's publication.

Abdias do Nascimento (1914 –2011) was a prominent Afro Brazilian scholar, artist, and politician. Also a poet, dramatist, and Pan-African activist, Nascimento created the Black Experimental Theater (Teatro Experimental do Negro (TEN, 1944)) and the Black Arts Museum (1950), organized the National Convention of Brazilian Blacks (1946), the First Congress of Brazilian Blacks (1950), and the Third Congress of Black Culture in the Americas (1982). From 1939 to 1941, Nascimento traveled throughout South America with a group of poets who called themselves the "Santa Hermandad Orquidea," or "Holy Brotherhood of the Orchid." The Black Experimental Theater premiered on May 8, 1945, with a production of O'Neill's The Emperor Jones, surprising skeptical critics with a presentation that was highly acclaimed for its technical and dramatic effectiveness. With intense activity in theatrical production, TEN organized the cast for the play Orfeu da Conceição, by Vinicius de Moraes, which was later adapted into the motion picture Black Orpheus, directed by Marcel Camus. Nascimento became a leader in Brazil's black movement and was forced into exile by the military regime in 1968. From 1968 to 1981, Nascimento was very active in the international Pan-African Movement and was elected vice-president and Coordinator of the Third Congress of Black Culture in the Americas. For the next decade Nascimento was a visiting professor at several universities in the United States, including the Yale School of Drama (1969-1971), and University at Buffalo, The State University of New York, where he founded the chair in African Cultures in the New World, Puerto Rican Studies Program in 1971. He held the position of Professor Emeritus at SUNY-Buffalo. Nascimento also taught at the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University) in Nigeria. Nascimento returned to Brazil in 1983 and was elected to the federal Chamber of Deputies as a member of the Democratic Labor Party (PDT). There, his focus was supporting legislation to address racial problems. In 1994 he was elected to the Senate and served until 1999. In 2004 he was

nominated for the Nobel Prize for Peace. A biography of Nascimento by the journalist Sandra Almada was published in 2009 as part of the Retratos do Brasil Negro series. Professor Emeritus, State University of New York at Buffalo, he was the first Afro-Brazilian member of Congress to champion black people's human and civil rights in the National Legislature, where in 1983 he presented the first Brazilian proposals for affirmative action legislation. He served as Rio de Janeiro State Secretary for the Defense and Promotion of Afro-Brazilian People and Secretary of Human Rights and Citizenship. While working as curator of the Black Arts Museum project, he began developing his own creative work (painting), and from 1968 on, he exhibited widely in the U.S., Brazil and abroad. He received national and international honors for his work, including UNESCO's special Toussaint Louverture Award for contribution to the fight against racism, granted to him and to poet Aimé Césaire in 2004. He was officially nominated for the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize.

Maria da Conceição Evaristo de Brito (1946-) was born on 29 November 1946 in Belo Horizonte (MG). She pursued undergraduate studies in Rio de Janeiro, graduating with a BA from the Federal University, after which she would pursue a career in teaching which she continued until her retirement in 2006. Her foray into the field of literature started in 1990, when six of her poems were included in volume 13 of the Cadernos Negros collection. Reconciling her work in teaching, literature and the production of theoretical studies, Conceição Evaristo earned a master's degree in Brazilian Literature from PUC-Rio, in 1996, with the dissertation *Black Literature: A Poetics of Our Afro-Brazilianness* and then as a PhD in Comparative Literature at UFF, defending, in 2011, the thesis *Poemas malungos, cânticos irmãos,* in which she analyzed the poetry of the Afro-Brazilians Nei Lopes and Edimilson de Almeida Pereira and that of the Angolan Agostinho Neto. Author of short stories, poems, and novels, some of them translated into English, French, and German, in addition to a vast theoretical work, Conceição Evaristo was a finalist for the Jabuti Award in 2015 and contemplated, in 2018, with the Literature Award of the Government of Minas Gerais for her body of work, being recognized as one of the most important Brazilian writers of contemporaneity.

Ana Maria Gonçalves (1970-) is an Afro-Brazilian writer, speaker, and social commentator, whose work includes novels, short stories, and blogs. She was born in the town of Ibiá in Minas Gerais, Brazil, an area with a large black population and a reputation for conservative politics. She moved to São Paulo and worked in advertising before realizing her dream of becoming an author. Her first short story was published as part of Portugal's Tribo (tribe) writers, but her work as a novelist began with her personal blog. It led to her first novel, *Ao lado e à margem do que sentes por mim* (Beside and at the Edge of What You Feel for Me, 2002). It is a Clarice Lispector–esque, melancholy love story that continues on Gonçalves's blog "100 meias confissões de Aninha" ("100 Half-Confessions by Aninha"), named in honor of the modernista poet of Goiás, Cora Coralina. Gonçalves wrote *Ao lado* after she left a relationship and a job in São Paulo for Salvador da Bahia, where she experienced an ethnic and creative awakening while investigating the history of Brazil's first capital. The result is the 951-page *Um defeito de*

cor (A Color Defect, 2006), her most groundbreaking work. After *Defeito*, Gonçalves lived in New Orleans for seven years, and she continues to write and speak on Afro-Brazilian history and identity in the United States and Brazil. She recently published a foreward to photographer, César Fraga, and historian Maurício Barros de Castro's travelogue on their journey through the African continent, retracing sites related to Brazilian slavery from Cabo Verde to Moçambique. In it, she contemplates the demonizing of the black body and liberating myths surrounding the return to Africa. Barros de Castro's essay contextualizes the photos, which depict many of the places depicted in Defeito: Bahia, Savalou, the São Jorge da Mina Fort, the home of the Chachá (African kingpin of the slave trade), the palaces of Dahomey, Vodum priests of the agudás (Brazilians like Kehinde who returned to Africa), and the "Brazilian" settlement of Lagos, Nigeria. Her current projects include a novel that imagines an Afrofuturist "racial democracy" in a futuristic São Paulo and a novel about transgender people. She was a columnist for *Intercept Brasil* in 2017. She is the leading Brazilian voice of historical novels about slavery that rewrite the history of the New World, incorporating black history into its cultural miscegenation, or syncretism, just as Zapata did many years before.

VITA

Born in Georgetown, Guyana, Cecily Philippa Bernard graduated from the Catholic High School, St. Rose's, with certification in French, Spanish, and English Literatures from the London Cambridge General Certification of English Advanced Level External Examinations. She went on to major in French, Spanish, and Portuguese Language and Linguistics at the University of Guyana where she also took courses in Russian Language to the Intermediate level. Then on to the Federal University of Pará, Brazil where she earned a Licentiate Teacher's Degree (consisting of full BA and High School Teacher's Certificate program) in Brazilian Language and Literature. For her Masters, she pursued studies at the University of Brasilia, Brazil earning a MA in International Relations, producing an unpublished thesis entitled *A República da Guiana e o mundo: fundamentos básicos para uma insercão guianense no novo contexto internacional* ('The Republic of Guyana and the World: Basic Tenets for Guyana's Insertion into the New International Context'). In May 2024, she graduated from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville with a Degree of Philosophy in Hispanic Studies and Portuguese. During this her most recent educational trajectory, she served as Graduate Teaching Associate, delivering undergraduate courses in Elementary and Intermediate Spanish and published one single-authored article entitled "Interculturality, Creolization, and Globalization in Ángeles nómadas by Minelys Sánchez" with Louisiana State University's digital journal *Comparative Woman.* Her dissertation project entitled *Transnational Discourses, Global Entanglements: Afro Latin American and Caribbean Literary and Cultural Production from the Nineteenth Century Onwards* argues the case for the literary and cultural production of Haiti, Hispanic America, and Brazil as universal cultural production (world literature) by extracting theories from aesthetic and critical products of the region's Afro descendant cultural producers since the nineteenth century and placing them in dialogue with extant paradigms from the Latin American and Caribbean region and the world. Her present scholarly interests include comparative (world) literature, Latin American and Caribbean literatures and cultures, African Diasporic Studies, and Global Studies. Prior to her involvement in doctoral studies, Cecily served as Foreign Service Officer II in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Guyana, Research and Protocol Officer in the Office of the Secretary-General of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat, and finally owner/founder and CEO of a private Foreign Language Institution in her native country, providing services of Translation, Interpretation, and Foreign and Second Language Teaching to the country's government, regional, and international organizations and their counterparts within the Latin American and Caribbean region and the wider world, as well as to the general public. During this period, she also embarked on studies of the Dutch language, which she completed up to the Elementary level. Cecily can be contacted at cecilybernard@gmail.com